

Friend of Canadian killed by Khmer Rouge in 1978 still seeks justice
David Kattenburg
June 26, 2011

A friend of a Canadian gunned down by a genocidal regime still seeks justice, even as the regime's senior leaders come to trial this week in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh.

Richmond B.C. native Stuart Robert Glass died in August 1978, at the age of 27, while sailing a little yacht off the coast of Democratic Kampuchea — as Cambodia was called under the ultra-Maoist Khmer Rouge.

Glass's bullet-riddled body was abandoned. His mates, a New Zealander and an Englishman, were trucked off to a Phnom Penh death house, codenamed S-21, tortured into declaring they were CIA agents, and finally killed. Four Americans and two Australians suffered the same fate. One of them may have been burned alive.

Last July, a UN-backed tribunal formally known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia sentenced S-21 chief Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch, to 30 years imprisonment for his crimes.

Duch's bosses will face the tribunal Monday. One of them, Democratic Kampuchea's Foreign Minister, Ieng Sary, helped direct a vicious maritime war against neighbouring communist Vietnam, during which hundreds of refugees and fishermen were gunned down or arrested.

Preeminent Khmer Rouge ideologue and internal security chief Nuon Chea — "Brother Number Two" — was the one who ordered S-21's captive yachtsmen killed and their bodies burned, Duch testified at his 2009 trial.

As Nuon Chea, Ieng Sary and two other top genocide leaders finally face justice, charged with the death of some two million — a fifth of Cambodia's population — less powerful deputies may soon be let off the hook. Among these is the chief of the navy platoon that seized the ill-fated yachtsmen. Meas Mut — a wealthy Buddhist recluse — says he knows nothing about their fate, a denial dismissed by observers.

In a one-line communiqué speaking volumes, the Khmer Rouge Tribunal's Cambodian and German "Co-Investigating Judges" judges announced at the end of April that their two-year investigation of the confidential, 48,000-page Case 003 file — presumed to involve Mut — was complete, leading some to conclude that the judges will soon close the case.

The tribunal's British co-prosecutor, Andrew Cayley, disagreed, arguing that Case 003 should move forward, and requesting that the judges visit potential crime scenes and alleged wrongdoers — something they have yet to do. Among hitherto confidential charges itemized by Cayley for more investigation: the “capture of foreign nationals off the coast of Cambodia and their unlawful imprisonment, transfer to S-21 or murder.”

The judges promptly denied Cayley's request. Citing political pressure, tribunal observers now predict the case will be terminated. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen — a Khmer Rouge vet himself — has stated he'd sooner see the internationally-staffed, Cambodia-dominated tribunal collapse than put people of Mut's rank on trial.

What the Canadian government thinks about the pursuit of justice for a young Canadian killed 33 years ago is unclear. Since 2006, it has contributed \$2.5 million to the tribunal.

Japan and Australia are the UN Tribunal's most generous benefactors, with outlays of \$55 million and \$11 million respectively.

“We have no comment on this case at this time,” said a Foreign Affairs spokesman. “As the full details of the investigation remain confidential, we cannot comment on whether a Canadian citizen has been identified as a victim in Case 003.”

Glass's family and friends have mixed views on the matter. Glass knew the risks he was taking, and surviving Khmer Rouge octogenarians will soon be gone, some say. “They're going to die and face their maker,” says one of Glass's cousins.

Glass's old chum Roy DeLong is less sanguine. Mut “isn't someone we'd pursue to Pakistan and kill,” says DeLong, now living in Washington State.

“If you don't pursue him, we might as well shut up. We sit here and talk high and mighty, preaching to others about human rights. Hey, one of our own citizens was killed. Let's put the guy on trial.”

David Kattenburg is the author of Foxy Lady: Truth, Memory and the Death of Western Yachtsmen in Democratic Kampuchea — the first account of Stuart Glass's life and death.