

crimes against ethnic minorities in Cases 003 and 004, support ethnic Vietnamese survivors to fully participate in the court and think how information gathered by the court could be used after the ECCC closes.

- Donors fund NGOs supporting ethnic minority survivors of sexual violence during Democratic Kampuchea, fund investigations of sexual violence and pressure the government to address the issue of past sexual violence.
- Civil society organisations deliver legal, medical and mental health services to ethnic minority survivors, establish support groups and work with law enforcement and local authorities to ensure protections for survivors who disclose their experiences.
- Educators and educational institutions provide information to students about

sexual violence against ethnic minorities during the Khmer Rouge rule, and deliver sexual violence prevention programs to promote gender equality.

- Researchers and historians investigate ethnic minorities' experiences of sexual violence, especially the impact of forced marriage on their cultural identity.
- The media report on these research findings and work with civil society organisations to ensure accurate and sensitive reporting.
- Community members educate themselves about sexual violence against ethnic minorities during the Khmer Rouge regime, talk about these issues with other people, support survivors to access services and demand accountability for perpetrators.

Copies of the full report and summary are available for download from <http://gbvkr.org/>



Interview practice



Shrine at Boeung Cheung Ek

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CAMBODIAN DEFENDERS PROJECT

Sexual violence against ethnic minorities during the Khmer Rouge regime

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The study

In 2013, Cambodian Defenders Project, a legal aid NGO, conducted a study to investigate the experiences of groups of ethnic minorities during the Khmer Rouge regime. The research was specifically interested in any sexual

violence against these groups. To collect information for this study, we interviewed 105 men and women of ethnic Vietnamese, Khmer Krom, Khmer Islam and Cham and other backgrounds who survived Democratic Kampuchea. Interviews were held in six provinces and respondents were asked about sexual violence against these four ethnic minority groups and impacts of the violence for survivors today.



Cham market

General findings

Our study found that, like the general population, ethnic minorities experienced sexual

violence during the Khmer Rouge. This included forced marriage, forced sex in marriage, rape, exchange of sex for food or other privileges (survival sex), sexual slavery, sexual mutilation and other abuses.

Some victims experienced sexual violence more than once and many incidents involved multiple victims and/or multiple rapists. In most cases, the victims were killed afterwards; sometimes bodies were mutilated. Almost all of the ethnic minority victims were civilian women and many were younger women.

Most incidents of sexual violence were carried out by men, between 18 and 30 years of age, or older. These men were almost always working for the Khmer Rouge and only Khmer Rouge authorities organised forced marriage and forced sex within marriage. In cases of forced marriage, some male spouses forced their new wives to have sex.

Sometimes perpetrators acted in groups, which suggests that sexual violence was accepted amongst perpetrators and that they knew they would not be punished. Other evidence suggests that perpetrators often showed off their crimes; for example, publicly displaying victims' sexual organs, leaving dead naked bodies in the open or openly discussing their sex crimes.

Some important differences were found between the experience of ethnic minorities and the general population. First, the Khmer Rouge forced some ethnic minority people to marry Khmer people in order to break up



Study site

these communities. Second, ethnic minority women and girls were sometimes targeted for sexual violence, for example, rape. Third, in situations where ethnic minorities were targeted for mass execution or purges, the women were often raped first. Fourth, there is evidence that the Khmer Rouge abolished religion, placed restrictions on cultural practices, and imposed forced transfer, imprisonment, torture and mass executions. Sexual violence in this context was another way of punishing, terrorizing and separating these groups.

Specific findings

A majority of those interviewed were asked by the Khmer Rouge to marry someone. One third agreed because they were afraid of being killed or being punished. Most of those who



Testimonial Therapy for Gender Based Violence Victims

refused were threatened or punished in some way and almost all eventually married a spouse selected by the Khmer Rouge. The forced marriage procedure involved up to hundreds of couples at one time and did not involve families. Some people did not know they were to be married until the procedure was being conducted. Those forced to marry were also usually forced by the Khmer Rouge to have sex to produce children for the regime; almost all couples were watched by the Khmer Rouge at night after the marriage ceremony.

The Khmer Rouge controlled food distribution and many people suffered malnutrition or starvation due to insufficient food. To survive, some people exchanged sex for food or easier work duties. All exchanges were risky for victims (and perpetrators) if discovered, with those involved likely to be executed.

Some respondents knew ethnic minority women who were forced by the Khmer Rouge to provide sex on a regular basis, in most incidents, to groups of men. In some cases, the women kept were eventually killed by their enslavers.

Many people interviewed experienced, witnessed or heard about sexual mutilation (before or after death), sexual mockery and unwanted groping. A few people witnessed the public display of a victim's sexual organs and some people described acts of cannibalism by sexual abusers.

While a few ethnic minority survivors continued to suffer some physical injury from sexual violence, most people complained of mental health problems, including anger, grief, fear, nightmares, depression and suicidal thoughts. Only a few survivors received medical treatment. Some survivors had contacted legal or mental health services, however, most survivors did not know about these services. Spouses or relatives helped most survivors to cope with the past. Others said religion and religious leaders, or mental health services helped them deal with their anger, despair and grief.

When asked what would help them today, survivors wanted: the Khmer Rouge leaders convicted and sentenced soon; a memorial to those killed or who died during regime; a record of what happened during the Khmer Rouge, particularly for the youth; and mental health and other services.

Recommendations

The report recommends that:

- The Cambodian Government acknowledge and condemn sexual violence during the Khmer Rouge regime, support investigations of such violence, provide memorials and reparations to survivors.
- The ECCC include broader sexual violence