



1st textbook on KRouge
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Cambodia on Wednesday officially unveiled its first textbook about the murderous Khmer Rouge regime, with officials handing out thousands of copies to students and teachers.

More than 1,000 pupils joined their teachers for a ceremony at Hun Sen Ang Snuol High School, a few miles from the UN-backed court set up to try top Khmer Rouge leaders who ruled the country in the late 1970s.

'You will all understand the size of the hurt and cruelty that happened in the regime,' said deputy minister of education Tun Sa Im in a speech. 'Before, some young people and even some foreigners did not believe that the genocidal event happened in Cambodia.'

The hardline regime killed up to 2 million people during its 1975-9 rule, and enslaved the Cambodian population in vast collective farms in an attempt to forge a communist utopia.

Very little has been taught up to now about the Khmer Rouge, largely because the topic is sensitive among political groups and other high-profile people who were once involved with the genocidal movement.

'I know some things about the Khmer Rouge from my parents. They told me the regime was very cruel. But I don't know deeply about the regime,' said 18-year-old student Voeun Makara.

But United States ambassador-at-large for war crimes Clint Williamson said its legacy must be remembered.

About 500,000 copies of the textbook will be distributed to more than 1,000 schools across the country.

The ceremony coincided with Cambodia's annual 'Day of Anger' when Khmer Rouge crimes are reenacted at one of the famous killing fields outside the capital.

The UN-backed war crimes tribunal, established in 2006 after nearly a decade of haggling, is currently trying former prison chief Kaing Guek Eav, alias Duch. He is one of five top surviving Khmer Rouge leaders being held for trial on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes.