

**Museums and Memorials**  
**Commemorating the Victims**  
**of Communist Dictatorships**

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# “Killing Fields” Memorial

**Choeung Ek.** The “Killing Fields” are now considered synonymous with the mass murder by the Khmer Rouge of their own people. In the years of their reign of terror between 1975 and 1979, more than 150 such execution sites were located on the territory of the entire country. In Choeung Ek alone—the most famous of the “Killing Fields” about twelve kilometres south of the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh—some 14,000 people were brutally executed, according to estimates of the genocide documentation centre. “In order to save ammunition”, the victims were beaten to death with iron bars, pickaxes and shovels, and infants were thrown against a so-called “Killing Tree for Children”. Most of the people who were executed had previously been subjected to torture in the infamous Tuol Sleng Prison.

Only 86 of the 129 mass graves in Choeung Ek were excavated by scientists, archaeologists and forensic experts after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge terrorist regime in 1979 and the mortal remains of the victims of execution exhumed. The remaining untouched execution sites were cordoned off by barrier tape and marked with information plaques. Integrated into the memorial architecture of the site is an elaborately designed memorial stupa, a tower-shaped construction from the Buddhist culture of commemoration and burial. Covered by a gilded roof, the remains of the victims are laid out in the interior of the construction—

according to a specific taxonomy. Stacked on top of each other, protected only by acrylic glass walls, are the remains of over 8,900 people.

**Location:** Choeung Ek, about 12 kilometres south of Phnom Penh

**Further reading:**

Documentation Center of Cambodia. Yale University Cambodia Genocide Program. Available online at: [www.dccam.org](http://www.dccam.org) (last accessed on: 29/11/2017). / Follath, Erich: Die Kinder der Killing Fields. Kambodschas Weg vom Terrorland zum Touristenparadies. München 2009. / Fröberg Idling, Peter: Pol Pots Lächeln. Eine schwedische Reise durch das Kambodscha der Roten Khmer. Frankfurt 2013.

▶ Marked execution site on the “Killing Fields”



ដើមចំណូក  
ដែលពេទ្យយាង  
បោកក្មេងសំខាន់  
KILLING TREE  
AGAINST WHICH  
EXECUTIONERS  
BEAT CHILDREN

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Memorial to the victims of the famine  
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