

## Chronology of Cambodian Events Since 1950

**Notebook:** vaordv's notebook

**Created:** 2/23/2015 1:48 PM

**Updated:** 2/24/2015 9:05 AM

**Location:** Cook County, Illinois, United States

---

- 1950 Cambodian communists join forces with Vietnamese against French colonialism.
- 1954 Geneva Conference: French withdraw from Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.
- 1954-70 Kingdom of Cambodia, under Prince Norodom Sihanouk: autocratic monarchy, non-aligned in foreign policy and neutral in the Vietnam War.
- 1962 Disappearance of Cambodian Communist leader Tou Samouth. Pol Pot takes his place, and makes plans for a rebellion. Visits China and Vietnam, 1964-5.
- 1965 US escalation of Vietnam War; Vietnamese communist forces increasingly seek sanctuary in Cambodia. Sihanouk breaks relations with USA, while continuing to crack down on domestic communists and other dissenters.
- 1967 Pol Pot group of Cambodian communists ('Khmer Rouge') launch an insurgency against Sihanouk in northwest Cambodia. Brutal government repression.
- 1969 US B-52 bombardment of Vietnamese sanctuaries in Cambodia begins.
- 1970-75 The Khmer Republic. Coup against Sihanouk establishes General Lon Nol as President of a US-backed regime, the Khmer Republic. Sihanouk, in exile in China, joins forces with the Vietnamese and the Cambodian communists (the 'Khmer Rouge'). Lon Nol's rule initially wins the support of the urban classes, but becomes increasingly dictatorial.
- 1973 US B-52 bombardment of Cambodian countryside in support of Lon Nol forces reaches its peak. 250,000 tonnes of bombs are dropped in seven months, before US Congress calls a halt to the bombing on 15 August. Toll from 1969 to 1973: 50,000 to 150,000 civilian deaths from the bombing. Pol Pot forces use the bombing's killing and destruction as recruitment propaganda and as an excuse for the abandonment of moderate socialist policies in the insurgent zones. Purges of moderate communists suspected of disloyalty to Pol Pot.
- 1975-79 Democratic Kampuchea (DK)
- 1975 Khmer Rouge forces led by Pol Pot defeat Lon Nol army and take Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975. Cities immediately evacuated, and the country is cut off from the outside world. Killings of surrendered Lon Nol officers, soldiers, and officials. Forced unpaid agricultural labour for all, and brutal persecution of Buddhist monks and ethnic minorities: Chinese, Vietnamese, Cham Muslim, and Thai.
- 1976 Massive starvation in parts of northwest Cambodia, following the deportation there of hundreds of thousands of evacuated urban dwellers. DK government announced with Khieu Samphan as Head of State, Pol Pot as Prime Minister, Ieng Sary and Son Sen as Deputy Prime Ministers. Zone commanders Chhit Choeun (alias Mok) and Ke Pauk assume control of the DK army. Pol Pot remains Secretary-General of the secretive Communist Party of Kampuchea, and Nuon Chea is Deputy Secretary.
- 1977 A second wave of bloody purges convulses Cambodia, centrally directed by Pol Pot group which attempts to eliminate all dissident communists and other moderates and recalcitrants. The purges spread to the mass of the peasantry as well as to the persecuted urban evacuees. Cambodia also launches military attacks across all three of its borders, massacring civilians in Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos.
- 1978 Cambodia declines to negotiate with Vietnam over the border war. Domestically, massive purges spark an uprising in eastern zone of Cambodia in opposition to the Pol Pot regime. Rebels are defeated and regroup across the Vietnamese border and call for help from Hanoi.
- 1979- People's Republic of Kampuchea. Vietnamese troops invade and overthrow Pol Pot regime. Former eastern zone rebel Heng Samrin is proclaimed President, Hun Sen

- Foreign Minister (later Prime Minister)
- 1989 First Paris Conference on Cambodia fails. Vietnamese troops withdraw from Cambodia. Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge and their allies (including Sihanouk) resume their attempt to retake power from Hun Sen's newly proclaimed State of Cambodia (SOC).
- 1990 Formation of the Supreme National Council (SNC), composed of six SOC members and two from each of the three opposition factions, including former DK President Khieu Samphan and Deputy Prime Minister Son Sen.
- 1991 Paris Agreement on Cambodia signed on 23 October by the four Cambodian factions and eighteen Foreign Ministers of interested countries. Khmer Rouge forces signed the agreement but declined to abide by its provisions for ceasefire, UN supervision, demobilisation and disarmament.
- 1993 General elections, boycotted by Khmer Rouge. Coalition government formed by Prince Norodom Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC Party, which won a plurality, and Hun Sen's People's Party. Khmer Rouge continue attacks on government forces.
- 1994 Khmer Rouge movement outlawed by Cambodia's National Assembly.
- 1996 Khmer Rouge forces split, with Ieng Sary defecting to the government in return for an amnesty.
- 1997 Turmoil within Khmer Rouge. Pol Pot executes Son Sen and is in turn placed in house arrest by Mok, Nuon Chea, and Khieu Samphan.
- 1998 Mutiny against Mok by Khmer Rouge units led by Ke Pauk, who joins forces with the government side. Pol Pot dies. General elections return People's Party/FUNCINPEC coalition to power, dominated by Hun Sen. Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan surrender to Hun Sen. Mok remains the last Khmer Rouge leader still at large.
- 1999 A United Nations Commission of Experts recommends the creation of an international tribunal and truth commission to judge the crimes of the Khmer Rouge period. Mok is captured by Cambodian army and sent before a military tribunal. Former DK prison commandant Kang Khek Ieu (alias Deuch) is also arrested.

