

SPEECH
of
His Holiness Samdech Preah
Aggamahasangharajathipati Tep Vong
The Great Supreme Patriarch of Kingdom of
Cambodia

- Your Holinesses and esteemed Religious Leaders,
- Most Venerables and Venerables
- Your Excellencies
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

War is always a ‘USELESS MASSACRE’.

All beings, not just humankind who wish to live within peace, happiness, and prosperity. Even though they wish so, but all beings especially human historically committed dramatic crimes against humanity again and again and they are continuing to do that at the present day and probably in the future too whenever people don't have loving-kindness and compassion toward each other. Here, I would like to invite you all to learn a little bit about a dramatic or a bitter past history of Cambodia about war which completely destroyed Cambodian society and country, and it remains affect to Cambodian society and country until today.

The beginning of the massacre in Cambodia

It was on 18th March 1970, Marshal Lon Nol did the Coup d'etat to oust king Norodom Sihanouk, head of state, from power, and immediately created Khmer Republic. Then, the civil war exploded for the whole country. The war between Khmer Republic led by Marshal Lon Nol and Kampuchea Democratic led by Pol Pot lasted for five years and it took many innocent people lives, interruption and destruction of the nation.

On 17th April 1975, Democratic Kampuchea won the war and came to power. Then Cambodian people and many leaders in the world hoped that the war in Cambodia would

be finished. Unfortunately, the war not just not be finished; but it was just the beginning of the genocidal regime. When they took over Phnom Penh City and other Provincial Capital cities, Pol Pot regime started to evacuate all people in the cities to countryside. During the evacuation people from cities to countryside, there were so many people were killed and starved to death because people did not have enough food to eat and did not have enough water to drink. Anyway, during the evacuation, some people died because too exhausted for forcing to walk with very long distance and with some diseases existed along the way. The Pol Pot regime or Democratic Kampuchea existed only for five years but with very brutal and mass killing that we called such killing as a 'Killing field'.

Until 7th January 1979, The Pol Pot regime was defeated by Cambodian Saving Front led by Samdech Heng Samrin, Samdech Chea Sim and Samdech Hun Sen. Even though Pol Pot regime was defeated, the civil war in Cambodia remained continue for more than two decades and during the continuation of the war for these more than two decades, people were killed almost every day and the infrastructures were destroyed. It was until 1998 just the civil war was officially finished for the whole country.

What the war affect to Cambodian society and country?

The bad affects of the war to Cambodian society and country as following:

1. Many people were killed and died: During Pol Pot regime for 3 years 8 months and 20 days more than two million people among seven million Cambodian population were killed.

2. Destructions of social infrastructures: Before the civil erupted, Cambodia was considered as a tiger cup in term of economic development in the South East Asia region. But because of the war, almost all social infrastructures were completely destroyed both in the cities and at the local levels.

3. Great loss of human resource: To live with peace and happiness and especially to build a prosperous society, it is very much relies on human resource. But, in Cambodia, when Democratic Kampuchea or Pol Pot regime came to power, they started to kill the high and well educated people for the whole country because they thought that if they kept all those people; they could not do any revolution as what they tended to.

4. The Destruction Education System: Before the war and Pol Pot regime existed,

The education system in Cambodia was very better in quality and schools spread everywhere in the country. But after the war started and Pol Pot regime controlled the country, well-high educated people killed and schools, buildings and education system were completely destroyed, thus the proper education was stopped. And at that time, only children were allowed to go school to study and the regime provided students to study only from grade one to grade six only. After finishing their study at grade six, all young adults were forced to work at rice field as old people. Because most of school buildings and other buildings were destroyed, students were taught under the former villagers' homes, and under big trees. After the fall of Pol Pot regime, the education system and quality in Cambodia still was very poor; many places in the country students remained study under the villagers' houses and trees and this issue continued until 1990s. And also affect to the present day too.

5. *Disrupted Economic Development:* As I mentioned earlier before the war Cambodian economy was very much pleasant, but during the war the economy suffered shocking impacts. During Pol Pot regime, every community for the whole country was required to eat together at one place. And most of people were allowed to eat cooked rice, but only one bowl of porridge for one time, and three times per day, that why so many people died of starvation at that time. After the falling of Pol Pot regime, the famine and economic depression continued, and partially impact the current economy of Cambodia.

6. *No proper hospital and medical treatment:* People did not eat enough and proper foods and they were forced to do over work. So, many people fell in sick and then they were left without taking care and died without providing any medical treatment.

7. *No religious practice:* Quickly after controlling the country, Pol Pot Regime did not allow to practice any religion, faith, or cult. They killed all high educated Buddhist monks and forced simple and novice monks to disrobe. If any monk did not follow them, they would kill that monk. Not only Buddhist that could not practice own religion but other religions and faiths too.

8. *The trauma caused by the atrocities and suffering:* In Pol Pot regime, Cambodian people saw the regime killed people in their sight quite often, and sometime their family members were dragged away and killed not far away from them. So, they were very very shocked with that scene. As a result, during and after that regime, Cambodia

mostly tend to keep quiet when they saw some bad incident happening in the society with their sight, and then if they were/are requested to tell or to be a witness what happening, they seldom tell or to be the witness because they feel that they were/are not really secured.

9. Creation of extensive emotional and physical stress: Because in Pol Pot Regime, they did not allow people to have high knowledge and skill and then people were forced to work with force to do overwork, they were not allowed to have enough food eat, the regime committed cruel violence upon them, and they were separated from family etc. So, their mental and physical health were so weak. As a result, they were very easy to suffer from stress, too emotion, to commit violence and to be every sensitive to anger.

That kind of matter impact to the young generation in the family and the society as whole today.

In conclusion, because of the civil war, Cambodia suffered painfully lost people, human resource, social infrastructure, education system, economic development, medical treatment, religious practices, and creation of trauma and stress. All those matters impact Cambodia at the present day and probably continue to the future for any period of time without limited. So, **War is always a 'USELESS MASSACRE'**. We are as state leaders and as religious leaders all over the world must work together to stop all forms of war.

Thank you for your intention!!!