Mapping the Khmer Rouge Killing Fields

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The Khmer Rouge Regime

- Held power roughly from April 1975 – January 1979
- Headed by the shadowy ‘Pol Pot clique’
- ‘Ultra-Maoist’ ideology and millenarian goals (‘Year Zero’)
- Intense xenophobia and fear of counter-revolutionary subversion
The Reign of Terror

- Forced evacuation
- Purges of ‘class enemies’ & ‘spies’
- Arbitrary detention
- Systematic torture
- Est. 2 million dead
Historical Debates

- The disputed death toll
- The degree of central planning and control
- The extent to which abuses meet the legal definition of ‘crimes against humanity’
DC-Cam’s Mapping Project

- 19,440 mass grave sites identified
- 177 former KR prisons found
- 85 genocide memorials located
- Over 170 surveyed districts
- Additional areas to be surveyed
• Using ARC View, users can zoom in on any level of detail

• Users can also add/subtract roads, rivers, etc.
Provincial Sites (Prey Veng)

- We gather additional data as security and weather permit.

- To find sites, we use documents, interviews, and exploration.
DK Political Geography

Khmer Rouge political map (1977)
Mass Grave ‘Density’

- Plots villages surveyed vs. mass graves
- Relatively even distribution in surveyed areas
- Implies central control
- Inconsistent with counter-insurgency or ‘loose cannon’ killing
Nexus to KR Prisons

- Striking correlation between mass grave sites & KR prisons
- Implies ‘systematic’ killing in many cases
Preserving Memory

- Street locations of memorials and other sites in central Phnom Penh
- Importance of helping the public remember the past so as to prevent similar tragedies in the future
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