

Khmer Rouge Leader Is Sentenced to Life

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PHNOM PENH, Cambodia -- A former Khmer Rouge leader was jailed for life in Cambodia for overseeing the 1994 kidnapping and murder of three Western backpackers.

Sam Bith, 70, was the most senior of three Khmer Rouge commanders charged with abducting Briton Mark Slater, Frenchman Jean-Michel Braquet and Australian David Wilson after a train ambush.

"The court sentences Sam Bith to life in jail," said Sok Sethamony, a judge in the Phnom Penh municipal court.

The radical Communist Khmer Rouge was responsible for the "Killing Fields" genocide during their 1975-79 rule during which an estimated 1.7 million people were killed.

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