

**Cambodia, from then to now:  
memory and plural identities in the aftermath of genocide  
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**Title: The Repatriation Process of Cambodian Refugees**

In Cambodia from 1975-1979, genocide by the Maoist Khmer Rouge led thousands of starving Cambodian survivors to seek refuge along the Thai/Cambodian border. Twenty years later, they were able to return to Cambodia under UN auspices. Many repatriates felt that it had been a mistake to return to their home country. This research was conducted from 2009-2010 in Cambodia, and is based on interviews with former Cambodian refugees who returned during the 1992-1993 repatriation process following the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991. It discusses the challenges they confronted in adapting to life at home. One finding of this research is that the former refugees faced discrimination by local citizens and government officials, which made it difficult for them to find employment and secure land rights. A key factor in this was the inability of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations overseeing the repatriation process to provide longer-term assistance in addressing the problems they encountered after resettlement. The interview results suggest that the repatriation process should have placed a greater emphasis on addressing conditions at the local community level and on providing returned refugees the tools necessary to sustain themselves over the longer term. Most important, to effectively assist current and future refugees in the repatriation process, humanitarian organizations need to assist refugees in developing the necessary skills to protect their property rights and to gain access to services such as education and health care.