

Captions:

DEFORESTATION IN CAMBODIA: A bloody trail paved with dollars

Photographic essay by

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Photo 01 - In the concessions granted by the government to foreign companies destined for future plantations, the trees are first cut down, then what is left is burned. Busra. Mondolkiri.



Photo 02 - A couple at the ritual celebration that marks the rice harvest for the Bunuong people, the animist majority in the Mondolkiri. Busra. Mondolkiri.



Photo 03 - Tree trunks and bare earth as far as the eye can see. In the past 30 years, Cambodia has lost 30% of its forests. Mondolkiri.



Photo 04 - This Bunuong family lives in the village of Putru: the father is gradually losing his sight, while his wife is pregnant with another child. This ethnic group is particularly affected by the deforestation: expropriations and forced displacement of the population are frequent occurrences. Mondolkiri.



Photo 05 - This plot has been cleared awaiting conversion into a plantation of hevea trees. Banlung. Ratanakiri.



Photo 06 - Members of the Bunuong « mon-khmère » animist tribe sacrifice a buffalo to mark major events during the year. This ritual follows precise rules and is an offering to the spirits of nature that the group worships. Busra. Mondolkiri.



Photo 07 - Felled trees stocked near a plot being converted into a plantation of hevea. Banlung. Ratanakiri.



Photo 08 - The Bokeo garnet mines: the unconsolidated shaft through which the earth is brought to the surface goes down ten metres before branching out into two horizontal galleries. The miners work in teams of two or three. In a good week, a worker can make thirty dollars, the equivalent of a month's earnings in the rice paddies. Ratanakiri.



Photo 09 - « They've killed the forest » : The bared hills of Mondolkiri stretch off into the distance all around, forming a mosaic of charred, clear plots alternating with some remaining stands of trees. In the past, the Mondolkiri region was nicknamed "the Switzerland of Cambodia".



Photo10 - After the harvest, these migrant workers, rice farmers from Kompong Thom, travel four hundred kilometres to work in the Bokéo garnet mines. « Every year, several people die in the mines in this region » according to Tup. Ratanikiri.



Photo 11 - The first conifer plantations starting to mature in Putru, destined for the production of paper. Mondolkiri.



Photo 12 - This man, in intensive care at the Sem Monorom hospital, is suffering from a high fever. The public health system in the country is in a terrible state: hospitals are generally under-equipped and lack medicinal supplies.

The town hospital here is managed by the government (30%), in partnership with a group of NGOs (Action for Health, U.S. Aid, etc...).

The *Mobil Clinic* project set up by the Italian association *Missione Possibile* gives free treatment and meals to children under the age of eight. The manager of the project complains of a lack of communication with the authorities and has requested oxygen supplies as well as an ambulance.



Photo 13 - Near Banlung, this hillside is being cleared with a view to planting more hevea. The locals live by fishing, hunting and gathering fruit in the forest; deforestation destroys their natural resources.



Photo 14 - The interior of a Bunuong home in Putru: extreme poverty is a daily reality for the ethnic populations in the Mondulkiri region.



Photo 15 - Once the harvest is over, this migrant family of rice farmers works in the hevea plantations of Banlung for a monthly wage of seventy-five dollars. Modest accommodation is provided by the Chinese concessionaire. Ratanakiri.



Photo 16 - Recent hevea plantations go on for dozens of kilometres. The dish catches the latex sap that oozes from a cut in the base of the trunk. Banlung. Ratanakiri.



Photo 17 - Poverty and destitution: this young couple from Battambang migrated to Sem Monorom looking for new opportunities. Seventy per cent of the Cambodian population live on less than 1,25USD per day. Mondolkiri.



Photo 18 - The Bunuong village of Putang is built on a plateau that is now laid bare. Mondolkiri.



Photo 19 - **Rehan**, The ethnic population uses wood for cooking fires. Compared to the deforestation that is currently underway, this practice has little impact on the surrounding forest. Putru village, Mondolkiri.



Photo 20 - In the Bunuong villages, the traditional wattle and bamboo houses are starting to disappear. Freshly harvested tubers hanging up to dry are visible in the foreground. Putru village. Mondolkiri.