



R-10

COUNCILWOMAN
SUELY
SARO

Date: April 13, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilwoman Suely Saro
Councilmember Daryl Supernaw

Subject: Recognition of Cambodian Genocide Remembrance Day

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to request the City Council to recognize April 17 as Cambodian Genocide Remembrance Day.

BACKGROUND

April 17, 2021 will mark both the 46th anniversary of the Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, seizing control of Cambodia and the beginning of the Cambodian Genocide.

On April 17, 1975, the lives of Cambodians were forever changed when the Khmer Rouge marched into Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, and evacuated the entire city as they forced people into labor camps and executed former government officials, doctors, artists, scholars among others. It became known as Year Zero as it was marked by the Khmer Rouge regime. Under that regime, it has been estimated that over 2 million lives were lost due to execution and starvation. Tens of thousands were made widows and orphans, and those who lived through the regime were severely traumatized by their experiences. Several hundred thousand Cambodians fled their country and became refugees, resettling in countries across the world to rebuild their lives.

Early connections between the United States and Cambodia began in the 1950s, when Cambodia sent bright and talented college students to universities, including California State Universities in Long Beach and Los Angeles, to study technical trades, engineering, and agriculture with the assistance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

After the overthrow of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, over 140,000 Cambodians came to the United States as refugees, making the City of Long Beach home to the largest Cambodian population in the United States.

The Cambodian genocide was a human tragedy and must be remembered for the scale of violence and devastation perpetrated against the people of Cambodia, so that it does not happen again, there or in any other country.

Therefore, we ask the City council to recognize Cambodian Genocide Remembrance Day to honor the lives lost, the survivors and their descendants for their courage, resiliency, and contributions to our city.

FISCAL IMPACT

Due to time constraints no fiscal analysis was conducted.

SUGGESTED ACTION

Approve Recommendation