



**Aom An, 78**  
Former Secretary  
of Region 41,  
Democratic Kampuchea  
Central Zone

August 1, 2011  
O Koky village,  
O Da commune,  
Kamrieng district,  
Battambang province  
Interview and Photo by:  
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**Aom An, 78, does not understand why genocide has been charged against the Khmer Rouge leadership. He said:**

I heard this [commentary on Radio Australia comparing the trial at ECCC to the Khmer Rouge expression saying “pull the grass and dig out the roots completely”] and I smiled at it. I was surprised, oh my god! This is what I thought: I was so straightforward when I joined in the struggle and very faithful to the nation and people. However, the struggle instead resulted in a linkage between Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge and genocide that doesn't make sense to me. I do not understand the word "genocide". I did not have such a thought or even such a position. I wonder if it is genocide to struggle to save people or to save wild life? If there are no people do we leave the land for only wild animals to live on? This is the point I want to make and to ask. I do not understand how it could be genocide against our own people. Let me think about how this could be. It was said [during the Khmer Rouge time that it was necessary] to pull the grass and dig out the roots completely. The question can be posed this way: What was the cause of Pol Pol's fall? What are the reasons the Khmer Rouge fell?

**Aom An does not have any comment on the Khmer Rouge trial. He said:**

I do not have any comment or even understand [the Khmer Rouge Tribunal]. I do not have any problem with this because I do not understand it. So, I do not know what to say. ... Later on, the controversy makes me confused. There was one lady on Australia Radio who said "Prosecuting the Khmer Rouge is to pull the grass to the root," which I smiled at. Oh, dear! It becomes a disaster. If they do this the Thai will take all of our land.

**Aom An does not want to have Khmer Rouge Tribunal Case 003 or 004. He said:**

Yes, it is better not to have [those Cases]. How long has the war been over? Over 30 years? Normally, a person has children, grandchildren and great-grand children. They would all not feel happy with this because they would not understand it. If there are 03, 04 or even 01000 [Cases] then it will be endless and lead to breaking apart again. Since the good implementation by the Prime Minister of the integration, no one has disappeared. This contributes to a quiet climate and to no war erupting again. Since then, each individual has tried to turn the world into a clear sky like the moon uncovered by clouds. Truthfulness is to speak the truth. This means that any true fact and true words are the virtue of truthfulness. I ask about today's roads, hospitals, schools, pagodas, and the King. Are these the virtue of truthfulness or what? Another point is that one can ask the question like this: After the reconciliation came, did unhappy things happen to the former Khmer Rouge? No, not at all. This is very good. No more Cases. I have no intent to speak about my goodness. But, it is the truth. [Otherwise it leads to] revenge. Having integrated already, let bygones be bygones. We already integrated [into society]. Let there be prosecutions to a certain number and no more. It should not be like pulling grass to the roots. From Koh Kong up to Dang Rek Mountain, the former Khmer Rouge men defend our territory against Thailand, face against Thailand along Ta Moan and Ta Krabei Temples and from Otdar Meanchey up to Preah Vihear. Oh, my God! To prosecute more for what?

For the last two days, I have been asked about so called Boeng Trakuon and further asked if I were brought to stand trial would I be happy to be summoned because I was one of the five suspects? I asked who are the five? They it is said Ta Mut, Met, Tit, Chaem and me. "Would you go?," they asked. I said, "How can you ask this? How can I be happy to be prosecuted? If you were me would you be happy to be prosecuted as such?" I was further asked if I was brought to stand trial would it affect society? I replied, "How can I alone be compared to society?". The society seems generally speaking to be the country, and if they bring me to stand trial how can it affect anyone but my own family? My wife will be a widow, my child will be an orphan and won't be able to complete school. My family will lose a husband, so my wife and children will not be really [happy], even if the husband has committed or not committed any mistakes. If that happens, it would be disastrous. Therefore it affects only my family but not the society. If you compare me to the society it is not right. If someone comes to arrest me, I do not fear it at all if they have power to come to arrest me as long as they carry out a decision made by Samdach Prime Minister. I would not go if they came [here] illegally. How can they arrest people violently when I am not living out of the society and I [do not] even hide myself, even my name. I have proper a civic ID and election ID. I came to live here not to hide myself. I live along this road in a small shelter. I won't run to escape. If I did something wrong and am brought to stand trial let it be for due cause. This is the fact. I appeal [for the Tribunal] not to prosecute more as I mentioned above.

[End]