

DCCAM'S PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT
PA's fieldtrip note in Kang Meas district, Kampong Cham Province

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On June 15th 2016, PA team (Long Dany, Sok Vannak and Seang Chenda) had another one-day mission in Kang Meas district, Kampong Cham province, in order to investigate and interview Khmer Rouge cadres. Consequently, as planned, we managed to interview three former cadres, two of whom were staffs of Region 41 Logistics Office and another who was a staff of Chamkar Kabas Union of Region 41. Below is a brief summary of the interviews:

- ◆ **The first interview** was with sixty-year-old Meach Tauy, male, a farmer, presently living in Angkor Ban 5 village, Angkor Ban commune, Kang Meas district, Kampong Cham province. Tauy is married to Thol Thoeun and has 5 children, three of whom are boys. Standing the youngest among 4 siblings in a farmer family, Tauy went to school until grade 9 (in the old system) which enabled him to read and write. Once a coup to depose King Sihanouk in 1970 took place, Tauy decided to quit school and instead help his parents in the rice field. In late 1971 and early 1972, Tauy along with other teenagers in his village were selectively recruited as district soldiers; meanwhile, his village became a liberated area. Later, Tauy was transferred to Kampong Cham frontline. A week later, he fled from the battle and returned home. In 1973, his elder cousin Nan aka So, a chief of logistics of region 41, came to take him to Prey Torteong. In the logistics office, there were approximately 10 staff members put in charge by So, a chief of Regional Logistics, while Sen, currently living in Krala (Vihear Thom) of Kampong Siem district, was deputy chief. As staff to transport food to the frontline, Tauy could recognize that [Ta] Sreng was a chief of Region 41 and [Ta] Taing was a deputy of the regional chief. When Kampong Cham provincial town and Phnom Penh were liberated in 1975, Tauy remained in the logistic office. Tauy was able to point out a few key persons in the North Zone and the region 41:
 - [Ta] Pauk was a chief of the North Zone.

- Soon after April 17, 1975 [Ta] Sreng was promoted as a deputy chief of the North Zone, [Ta] Taing became a chief of region 41 instead.
- [Ta] San was a deputy chief of the region, but later died in 1973; thus, [Ta] Ton was promoted as a deputy chief instead
- Meng was a chief of Economy and Set was a deputy chief. [Ta] Sen was a deputy chief of Economy.
- So was a chief of Regional Logistics. He married La, a younger sister of Sreng, a former regional chief. [Ta] Sen is currently living in Krala (Vihear Thom) in Kampong Siem district was a deputy chief.
- Sop was a chief of Krauch-Kor security Prison (Region 41 security prison) where most people were taken for execution, but after the southwest cadres took complete control, Sop was arrested and taken away to Kampong Cham.

In late 1976 – early 1977, the southwest Khmer Rouge cadres arrived and took charge of any leadership positions of the region. By that time, the north zone cadres were transferred and taken away, resulting in remarkable changes in the region.

- [Ta] Sreng and [Ta] Taing were arrested and sent to execution. [Ta] An was transferred in charge as a chief of region 41 while [Ta] Aun became a chief of regional office.
- [Ta] Ton became a deputy chief of the region after the death of [Ta] San. But, later, [Ta] Ton was taken to execution.
- After the arrest and death of [Ta] Ton, Sop, a chief of Krauch-Kor Regional Prison, where many people were taken to be killed, became a deputy chief temporarily, under [Ta] An's management. Three months after the southwest cadres took control of the Region; Sop was arrested and sent to Kampong Cham.
- After the arrest of Sop, [Ta] Aun was assigned as a deputy chief of the region and a chief of Regional Office, and [Ta] Maut from Cheung Prey became a chief of Krauch-Kor Prison of the region. Not long after, [Ta] Maut was captured and sent to Kampong Cham.

- So, a chief of Regional Logistics was transferred as a chief of Chamkar Kabas Union of region 41 before the arrival of the southwest cadres. [Ta] Hao from the Economic Office was promoted as a regional logistic chief but was later arrested and [female comrade] Koan was put in charge of Regional Logistics instead.

In late 1977, Tauy witnessed the arrest of his elder brother So, a chief of Chamkar Kabas Union. Tauy affirmed that So was called to the meeting at the regional office. Arriving in the meeting at [Ta] An's home, So was arrested and tied up. At noon, So was put in a Jeep and taken to Krauch-Kor Prison. Tauy said, "So and I looked at each other. But, I dare say nothing because I am afraid of any accusation of any involvement." After the arrest, So's family (his wife had just given birth to a baby) was later taken away. After a transfer of southwest cadres, most of arrestees sent to execution were cadres at village/sub-district/district levels. Tauy worked in regional logistics until the Vietnamese soldiers arrived in 1979. Tauy was scared of being shot to death by the Vietnamese soldiers, in actuality, just a rumor he had heard, so he fled on foot until arriving in Taing Kok. Later, Tauy and his friend decided to return home, where he has lived as a farmer until now.

Observation: It appeared that Tauy was very open and approachable for this interview. He felt no surprise about the interview and as a result, he provided us with the most significant information we've collected, relating to Logistic Office of Region 41. Nonetheless, Tauy seemed concerned after revealing the names of a few key persons in the region like Koan (whom we are looking for), Soeun, a sub-district chief, Heng and so on. All in all, Tauy felt no hesitation in narrating what he has been through and learned.

- ◆ **The second interview** was with sixty-two-year-old Phaok Srim, male, Angkor Ban 5 village chief, currently in Angkar Ban 5 village, Angkor Ban commune, Kang Meas district, Kampong Cham province. Srim is married to Hok Ren with whom he has had 7 children. Standing the 2nd eldest amongst 5 siblings in a farmer family, Srim was able to study until grade 8 (in the old system). In 1970, a coup to depose King Sihanouk broke out so he decided to quit school and help his

parents in the ricefield instead. In 1973, Srim, along with many others in the village, was selectively recruited as a district soldier under the control of Sey and Phat because his village became a liberated area. A week after the recruitment without any military training, Srim was sent to fight with Lon Nol soldiers in various battles like Kang Tanoeng, Chenla I & II. After such life-and-death experiences in battle, Srim decided to escape from battle and return home. Then, Srim was selectively sent to a mobile unit to build a dam and farm while Soeun was a sub-district chief. A few months later, both men and women were recruited to Chamkar Kabas Union of region 41 situated in Andaung Kralong; as a result, hundreds of people were in the field. Meanwhile, So was a chief of Chamkar Kabas Union and [Bang] The was a deputy chief. Arriving in the field, Srim was assigned as a staff of Chamkar Kabas Union Logistics. His assigned responsibility was to transport food from the region to Chamkar Kabas Union. After So was transferred in charge of Chamkar Kabas, Hao was promoted as a chief of regional logistics,, they used letters to stay in contact through Srim when he was on duty to transport food from the regional logistic office. But workers in Chamkar Kabas [Cotton Field] still did not receive sufficient daily ration. In 1976, Srim was married through Angkar's management. After his marriage, Srim was able to see his wife once a week. In mid-1977 with the arrival of the southwest cadres, Som was called to the meeting in Prey Torteong where an arrest took place. Srim was able to see So captured at a regional chief's home as [Ta] An was a regional chief. Srim was in Chamkar Kabas performing his duties but his wife returned home because she was concerned about safety. After the arrest of So, Pho was in charge of both military and Chamkar Kabas Union until Pho [female comrade] was arrested, , Met from the southwest zone was put in charge. Not long after, Srim and his friend Thi made the decision to run back home , due to concerns of being accused by the southwest cadres who took control. Arriving home for half a month, Srim and Thi were given a couple of cattle, an act which led him to believe he would survive this hardship. Then, Srim was sent to farm at Beong Long situated in Neay Pay. During that time, many of the Cham people were transferred there. In July and August of 1978, under the control of Kan, a chief of Kang Meas district, many Cham populations were captured, tied up and sent to O Tra Kuon Prison. At that time, they used about 15 ox-carts (that could carry 4-5 people) to transfer people to the prison. During the

rainy season of the same year of the arrest of the Cham people (1978), Srim was sent back. Later, he was captured and accused of stealing corn; fortunately, his elder brother-in-law, a chief of district agriculture, claimed that Srim did not steal the corn, but instead he had given it to Srim; that is how Srim was able to survive the hardships of KR regime a second time. After liberation in 1979, Srim decided not to escape anywhere; instead he continued living in the same village until now.

Observation: It's obvious this interview with Srim went well because he was ready and happy to give us any information that he knew. However, he could not remember some parts of his life. Srim was open, friendly and approachable to the interview.

- ◆ **The last interviewee was** sixty-six-year-old Tauch Chamroeun, aka [comrade] Soth (as a revolutionary name), male, in retirement, currently living in Chroy Krabao I village, Rorka-A commune, Kang Meas district, Kampong Cham province. Soth was married to his now deceased wife, Yim Narith alias [comrade] Koan, a former chief of Region 41 Logistics. His wife who had passed away in 2014 was originally from Trapeang Kanh Chhet commune, Kampot provincial town, Kampot province. Born 3rd amongst 8 siblings in a farmer family, Soth did not have a chance to receive any education. Instead of attending school, Soth helped his parents by tending cattle. In 1973 (three years after the 1970 coup erupted), Soth along with others, voluntarily joined the revolution in Peam Chi Kang of Kang Meas district, a liberated area, where the recruited received an indoctrination. Soon after receiving his education, Soth and his friends were sent to various places. Soth was transferred to a handicraft unit and then to Svay Poan. A few months later, Soth was sent to another handicraft unit situated in Reay Pay commune. Later, he was continually sent to Bos Khnul of Chamkar Leu district. After that, Soth was dispatched to the Logistic Office. After the liberation of Phnom Penh in 1975, Soth remained in Region 41 Logistics managed by [Ta] Hao. His assigned responsibility was to grind rice. By the time the southwest cadres took charge, most of the cadres were captured and taken away. Most of the arrests took place at a regional chief's home. Meanwhile, [Ta] An became a regional chief and [Ta] Aun was a chief of regional office. Later, after the chiefs of Regional Logistics (Hao and Set) were taken away, Soth's wife [comrade] Koan took charge of Regional Logistics. Soth affirmed that before the transfer to

Kampong Cham, his wife Koan had been a district medical staff. While Koan held a position as a chief of regional logistics, she often asked Soth to drive a motor for duty which is regarded as an immoral offense. Soth and Koan were married through arrangement by [Ta] An, the regional chief. In reality, Soth could have been killed after an accusation of immoral offense. Nevertheless, his wife Koan from the southwest zone would save him; as a result, they got married under [Ta] An's management. During his marriage, he saw many Khmer Rouge cadres from district and regional levels attend the event at Watt Ta Meh. When the Vietnamese soldiers arrived in early 1979, Soth and his wife escaped from the Vietnamese soldiers, arriving at the border of Kampong Chhnang. Later, he decided to secretly bring his family home, living as a farmer in the village he resides in now.

Observation: After the arrival of PA team at his home, Soth seemingly felt strange. However, after we informed him of our intention to meet his wife, Soth hesitantly began talking with us. Soth told us that his wife died two years ago of high blood pressure which caused a stroke. Hearing this unfortunate news, we redirected our efforts to convince Soth to give us an interview. Ultimately, he agreed to it. Soth seemed friendly and open because he let us know about almost all of his life experiences. Nonetheless, Soth forgot some parts of his life during the interview. In addition, he felt uncomfortable and hesitant when talking about his wife's position during the Khmer Rouge regime.