

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) MAPPING THE KILLING FIELDS OF CAMBODIA, 1997: khet KAMPONG SPEU [E-5-kampong speu/a-cb-ks]

Location	Site Name/ Date	# of graves	Est. of Victim	Witness	File # / ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
srok Chbar Morn	Ampephnum/ 18 April 1997	150 pits	4000	Chan Mai ចាន់ ម	R 041807A/ 50201	N 11°27'1129"	E 104°32'2938"
srok Chbar Morn	Wat Apmpephnum/ 18 April 1997			Chan Mai ចាន់ ម	R041807B/ 50202	N 11°27'1492"	E 104°32'3452"
srok Chbar Morn	Banteay Raong/ 18 April 1997	9 pits	5400	Long chea ឡុង ង ជា	R 041808 A/ 50203	N 11°27'3686"	E 104°31'4242"
srok Baset	Prey Tnong/ 22 April 1997	8 pits	300	Bou Chory ប៊ូ ចេយ	R 042203 A/ 50101	N 11°10'0614"	E 104°30'5413"
srok Baset	Toul Taloap/ 22 April 1997	100 pits	3000	Ouk Chim ឡុក ជឹម	R 042205A/ 50102	N 11°07'4714"	E 104°29'4243"
srok Baset	Phum Kneup/ 22 April 1997			Chan Chhum ចាន់ ឈុំ	R 042206A/ 50103	N 11°08'2557"	E 104°31'2530"
srok Baset	Phum Kneup/ 22 April 1997	120 pits	400-500	Chan Chhum ចាន់ ឈ	R 042206B/ 5104	N 11°08'3171"	E 104°31'1893"
srok Baset	Wat Baset chah/ 22 April 1997			Ou Nan ឡូ ណាន់	R 042207 A/ 50105	N 11°09'1324"	E 104°31'3386"
srok Kong Pisey	Sala Odong Meanchey/ 22 April 1997	80-100 pits	3500- 4000	Men Pom ម៉ែន ពុំ	R 042209 A/ 50301	N 11°18'3559"	E 104°38'2030"
srok Kong Pisey	Wat Odong Meanchey/ 22 April 1997			Men Pom ម៉ែន ពុំ	R 042209B/ 50302	N 11°18'4415"	E 104°38'1853"

Documentation Center of Cambodia

Searching for the Truth

(ស្វែងរកការពិត ដើម្បី ការបង្ហាញនិង យុត្តិធម៌)

On 18 April 1997 the document center assigned Mr. Sin Kin and Mr. Hak Sophal to go to Kampong Speu province in order to research genocidal activity of Pol Pot indicated by the documents in our possession. The team would investigate in three sroks, including srok Phnom Sroch, srok Chbamon and srok Samroang Tong.

At 9:40 a.m., we arrived at khet Kampong Speu and spent one hour meeting the chief of the provincial cabinet to inform him of our mission. After securing his authorization, we requested from the police inspector a police escort to provide security in the three sroks. After an hours wait, he provided us with two policemen :

- 1- Mr. Tit Y (Master sergeant)
- 2- Mr. San Koeun (Sergeant second class)

The death toll in khet Kampong Speu:

- Farmers	:	117,853
- Civil officials	:	3,215
- Monks	:	4,031
- Minorities	:	2,031
- Cripples	:	3,187
Total Victims	:	127, 130

There were 50,808 people petitioned the government urging the National Assembly to declare May 20 as Hatred Day in opposition of Pol Pot's genocide program.

Geography of Kampong Speu province

Kampong Speu province extends 50 kilometers from Phnom Penh along National Road # 4 towards Sihanoukville.

Khet Kampong Speu is in the western zone and Region 32. It is bordered by khet Kandal on the east, by khet Koh Kong on the west, by Kompot and Takeo provinces on the south, and by Kampong Cham and Pursat provinces on the north.

We drove to the Provincial Culture Department at 10:40 a.m., but the office was closed. So we decided to go to srok Phnom Srok.

srok Phnom Sroch

At 10:50 a.m., we visited munti srok, where we met with srok governor. He could not give us any pertinent information, because he had no documents. However, we did meet a staff member of the Office of Culture, who told us that documents were kept by the deputy chief of the Office of Culture. Unfortunately, since the deputy chief was absent that day, and lived far from the office, we could not see the documents. We decided to go to khum Au in srok Phnom Srok .

We arrived at the khum Au office at 11:50 a.m.. We could not locate srok chief. In stead, we met with the vice district chief, who led us to the criminal center Toul Da. This place is 4 kilometers from munti srok. The site is 4,800 meters from the National Road on the left hand side. This place is a killing field; it is not a prison. The site contains a lot of mines, and is marked with a "do not enter" sign. A soldier guarding the entry forbade us from entering, and indicated that he would not be responsible for us if we chose to enter.

With this warning in mind, we decided to collect information from a witness named Kiev Samoeun, 62 years old, 1.62 m tall, black hair and yellow skin. During Pol Pot's regime, he lived in phum Trach, khum Au, srok Phnom Srok, khet Kampong Speu . He worked in a mobile work brigade and in an economy unit communal cooking hall at that time. Nowadays, he lives in phum Romduol, khum Au, and he is a deputy commune chief of Chom Tok 1, khet Kampong Speu .

In 1977, while he was tending his buffalo, he saw the bodies of many victims. Many of the bodies had been stacked in piles; others had been partially buried. The victims here were soldiers and their families, and even the monks, taken from the fortress at Doh Kamchea, which once housed 6,000 people. He also told us that Lon Nol's overall commander in this region was General Sak Sotsakhoun. and Doh Kamchea was commanded by one of his subordinates.

Civil officials, teachers, students, intellectuals, base and new people were killed here between 1976 and 1978. Generally, if someone was accused of a wrongful act, his or her entire family was gathered to be killed. A wrongful act might include being politically active, or being related to or befriending a soldier or policeman, especially one in Phnom Penh. Victims were collected from srok Phnom Srok, khet Kampong Speu and Phnom Penh city.

The total death toll was 1,000 to 1,200 persons .

The first witness told us that a criminal center, composed of a prison, security office and a big killing site, was located in phum Sway Peim, khum Sangke. It is located 16 kilometers from national road 4, eight kilometers from khum Au, and 20 kilometers from the district office of srok Phnom Srok. The location is currently unsafe, due to the mines and theft. The local authorities could not guarantee our security if we chose to go there. The chief of the prison at the time of the killing was Heang. He is now missing.

From 12:30 to 1:00 p.m., we had lunch. At 2:00 p.m., we arrived at the Amper Phnom criminal center, which is 2 kilometers from the district office of srok Chba Mon. The criminal center is in Wat Amper Phnom.

Ampephnom criminal center

This criminal center was composed of:

- Monk homes that had been converted to security offices for Pol Pot's men
- A Buddhist temple that was used as a prison
- Many pits along the edge of a pond with a total area of 1 square kilometer
- A memorial covering 100 square meters

Since all we knew about the site was its location and appearance, we sought a witness who might have personal knowledge about it. We found 3 old men who live there.

Witnesses:

The first witness

Mr. Chan Mai is 65 years old, black eyes, white hair. In Pol Pot's time, he lived in phum Amper Phnom, khum Svay Kravan, srok Chba Mon. He later was relocated to Prek Lavie in Takeo province. In 1979 when he returned to his homeland, he saw fresh blood on the wall of the church, swollen dead bodies and numerous pits filled with dead bodies. Grave robbers excavated these pits looking for gold in 1979. Between 1980 and 1982, local authorities began exhuming the remains to be deposited in a memorial in Wat Amper Phnom. A large number of the existing pits remain to be exhumed. A proportion of the remains in the memorial were taken from the fortress Rong Kor. The death toll at this site was approximately 4,000.

The victims killed at this site were collected from many provinces. Some of the victims were from khet Takeo or Region 55 in Pol Pot's time. Pol Pot's men deceived the victims by offering to return them to their homelands. People accepting the offer were gathered in trucks, and taken to be killed at this site. Other victims were evacuees from cities, base people, and prisoners.

At 2:40 p.m., we arrived at the criminal center located 400 meters in front of the Kampong Speu governor's office in phum Troh Sala, khum Svay Kravan, srok Chbar Mon. The criminal center is comprised of:

- Banteay Roang Kor prison, which had been the home of General Sosten Seknandes;
- the security office, which has since become the police headquarters of khet Kampong Speu; and
- a killing site.

The second witness

Mr. Long Chea, 47 years old, 1.55 meters tall, gray hair, light black skin, said that in Pol Pot's time he escaped to live in khet Takeo. After 1979 he moved to phum Troh Sala, khum Svay Kravan. He is the chief of his village. When he returned to his homeland, he saw people excavating burial pits in search of gold, and putting the remains in a memorial in Wat Amper Phnom. He also testified that Pol Pot's men used General Sosten's house as a prison. Banteay Rong Kor, in which the prison was located, covered one hectare.

Pol Pot's men used their own disabled soldiers to control and ultimately execute the prisoners at this site. These soldiers were very tough mentally, and apparently were merciless and dispassionate in their work. No prisoners survived. Among the prisoners at this site were soldiers, policemen, drivers, teachers, and custom officials.

The witness reported that some prisoners, who initially said that they were merely simple soldiers, confessed to being high ranking soldiers when Angkar suggested that such individuals would have a place in its armies. After confessing, they were killed. Many victims were evacuees from Phnom Penh.

The pits of dead body

In the compound of fortress Rong Kor, a total of 80 pits, some big and some small, were arrayed over the one hectare area. The large pits could contain 30 bodies, while the small pits could contain 1 to 3 bodies. We estimate that between 2,400 to 3000 persons were buried here.

At 4:00 p.m., we traveled to srok Samroang Tong and met with the district chief. We asked him whether any criminal centers were located within his district. He responded that the only criminal center in the district is located at Wat Amper Phnom. Formerly Wat Amper Phnom was under the control of srok Samroang Tong, but now it is part of srok Chbar Mon.

CONCLUSION

The results of our research in Kampong Speu were not as significant as in the other provinces, for the following reasons:

1- Our visit occurred just after the Khmer new year, so many of the people we wanted to see were not in their offices. Also, the political situation in the province was not very stable. Our communication with the local authorities in the province was not helpful, since most of the officers had not returned to work from the new year, and we met with the Cabinet chief only briefly before he left. We did not speak with the provincial governor at all. Besides this, the cultural officer closed down the office the entire day. We did not meet any cultural officers who could facilitate our research or gather any information from the cultural office.

2- we realize that there are several criminal centers, but we chose not to go because security, mines, and robbery are problems, especially in phum Svay Pmem, khum Sangke. In srok Phnom Sruoch, there have been recent reports of kidnapping and hostage taking.

Therefore, based upon the statistics of the victims throughout the province, we should return for a second visit in order to shed more light on the existing documents. We should allot more time for research on the next visit.

Report on activities in search of relevant documents
about genocidal crime of Pol Pot's clique
in Borseth and Kampong Pisey district (2nd time)
Kompong Speu province
(Phnom Penh, 23 April 1997)

On 22 April 1997, DC-CAM assigned Mr. Sin Khin and Mr. Hak Sophal to go in search of documents related to genocidal crimes of Pol Pot's clique in Baset and srok Kompong Pisey in khet Kompong Speu for the second time.

At 7: 30 a.m., our research team set off to the two districts, driving 61 kilometers along National Road 3 passing through khet Takeo and khet Kampot, then turning right a further 21 kilometers to srok Baset. At 9: 30 a.m., we arrived at the office of srok Baset, where we met Mr. Sin Sophon, chief of srok, Mr. Som Chan Than, district first-deputy chief, and Mr. Men Noeun, srok second-deputy chief.

We asked for relevant information about criminal centers throughout srok Baset. We were then arranged to have Om Neu, sergeant-major, Pang Yorn, 2nd-class sergeant, and Morm Sarin, sergeant-major work with us.

Geographical location of Borseth district

Srok Baset is 115 kilometers east from khet Kompong Speu and was in Region 33, Northwestern zone in Pol Pot's time. It is bordered on the north by srok Kong Pisey in khet Kompong Speu , on the south by srok Tram Kak, on the west by srok Phnom Sruoch in Kompong Speu province, and on the east by srok Samrong in khet Takeo.

Srok Baset consists of 15 khums in which there are 218 villages, with a population of 106,187, of whom 57,413 are female. There are 2,516 families. Most inhabitants work on farms or rice fields, make sugar from palm tree fruits, cut wood, and grow some dry-season rice.

Criminal centers:

There are many killing sites of various sizes throughout the district. The large ones contain many bodies. We decided to examine the more important places in which there are many pits, such as:

1. Prey Thnung site, in phum Trapaeng Phong, khum Baset, srok Baset.
2. Phum Boeung (now phum Romduol, khum Baset)
3. Phum Kneut, khum Baset.
4. Phum Kring, khum Kat Pluk, srok Baset.

Since our time was limited, we were able to visit only 3 killing sites. Initially, we went to the Prey Thnung site in phum Trapaeng Phong, khum Baset.

After a 9 kilometers drive from the district office, we arrived at the killing site Prey Thnung in phum Trapaeng Phong. There is no security office and no prison, except for a temporary detention center used to hold prisoners for the period of 3 months. Victims

were later imprisoned at Phnom Kring, 10 kilometers away, in khum Kat Plouk. And afterwards, victims were returned to be killed at Prey Thnung.

We arrived at 11: 30 a.m., and while asking people where phum chief was, we found a witness named Mr. Bou Choy. Bou Choy is 46 years old, 1.50 meters tall, black skin, black hair, good teeth. In Pol Pot's time, he worked in a palm climbing unit as a base person in phum Trapaeng Phong, khum Baset, srok Baset, where he is now group chief.

He testified that the Prey Thnung was used as the killing site, whereas the victims were detained near a palm tree in phum Chas. The victims were forced to work very hard, then taken to be killed. A wide range of other victims were brought from Phnom Kring prison headed by Pheap to be killed in the Prey Thnung as well. 300 victims were killed here. They were Lon Nol's soldiers taken from Banteay Tramkok and Tramkhnar in Takeo.

He added that one day while he was tending the cows and walking past Prey Thnung, he witnessed victims being beaten to death. One of the victims ran to him for help, but he could do nothing. He was nearly killed. Luckily, his life was spared because he was a base person and worked in a palm climbing unit.

He also said that no prisoners survived. The victims were accused of eating human flesh, then taken to be killed. The skinny victims were forced to do very hard labor, and given a spoonful of thin rice soup to eat. Some fell to their deaths from palm trees while trying to pick the palm fruits to fill their hungry stomachs.

As for pits, he said there are 8 mass graves and many small pits dotting the area of 1 hectare. He was also present during the excavation of remains to be deposited in wat Chas during 1979-80. Many remains are still buried. The big pits contain 10 to 12 bodies, while the small ones hold 1 to 3 bodies. The execution was normally conducted in the morning and the evening. We photographed the site and the witness for the record.

At 11: 30 a.m., we headed for another site of killing in phum Beung (now phum Romduol), khum Baset, srok Baset, khet Kompong Speu, 4 kilometers from the Prey Thnung site. The killing site in phum Beung is 11 kilometers west of the district office, 1 kilometer from phum Romduol. It is called Prey Khmoach or Tuol Chamkar Prey Talub.

There is no security office or prison in this location. It is a 1 hectare killing site. It used to be covered with trees but has since been cleared and converted into farmland and residential land.

There, we found a witness named Ouk Thin, male, 60, 1.66 meters tall, white skin, gray hair, broken teeth. In Pol Pot's time, he worked in a plowing unit in phum Romduol village, where he now lives.

He is a very important witness because he has been living here since 1975. He knows about the kinds of victims killed here. In 1973, the victims were Lon Nol's civil servants, officers, soldiers, police who were relieved and anyone who had committed some wrong-doing. During 1975-79, particularly in 1976, the victims were people evacuated from Phnom Penh, Takeo, and Kampong Speu. Families of victims young and old of both sexes were carried by ox-carts or by boats, and lines of people were marched here to be killed during the evening and at night.

Pol Pot's men told the people brought here that Angkar was taking all of them to live a new village where it was happy and food was plentiful. "It was wonder," he said, "that victims were walked or brought by ox-carts or boats everyday, but they had disappeared by the next morning and he saw none of them."

When he first came here in 1979, he saw spokes used to beat victims lying near the corpses. With more than 100 big and small pits, he said approximately people were killed here. Crowds of victims were brought here during a period of 3 months. After that time, there were occasional killings until 1978-79.

At 1: 30 p.m., we departed from the killing site phum Prey Khmoach in Romduol to another site at Chamkar Tuol in, phum Khnit where there are a security office, a re-education center and a detention center. The location is 4 kilometers from the Prey Khmoach site, and 2.50 kilometers from munti srok.

This security office was different from most others. It was built in 1972 and dismantled in 1975. The security chief was Chhem. This place was marked by the surrounding milk fruits and palm trees. The victims were soldiers and prisoners of war, laymen and monks who were accused of siding with Lon Nol's soldiers. The killing site is 100 meters west of the security office. At the killing site, we met with 2 witnesses who gave us additional information. The security office was called Region 33, southwestern zone.

The first witness was Koy Sao, male, age 72, 1.55 meters tall, white skin, gray hair. In Pol Pot's regime, he lived in phum Khtib. Now, he lives at Chamkar Tuol, khum Baset.

The second witness was Chan Chhum, male, age 49, and he also lives in phum Khtib. Chan Chhun knew that, after 1975-76 until 1978-79, the site was still used to kill people but there was no security officer detention center. People were brought to the site and killed right away. The site was previously in the forest.

The victims after 1975 were people evacuated from the city and the base people. It was found to have 100 to 200 pits with approximately 400 to 500 bodies.

The excavated remains were taken to be deposited in the former Wat Baset. Then, we went to visit the memorial and photographed some of the remains kept in the stupa. We do not know where the other excavated remains claimed by srok Baset authority are, and we did not ask.

At 2:00 p.m., we had lunch. Then, we drove back over national road 3 to srok Kong Pisey.

srok Kong Pisey

When we arrived at the office of srok Kong Pisey, we met with the 2nd deputy chief, Men Pom, who arranged for us to ask about information and to locate killing sites throughout srok Kong Pisey. There are in fact many sites, but the most important ones are:

1. Wat Oudong Mean Chey killing site called Wat Bakkor in phum Bakkor, khum Prey Gneat. The site is located 2 kilometers north of the srok Kong Pisey office. It was a temporary detention place, not a prison or a security office. Soon after victims were taken to the place, they were all killed right away.
2. Wat Chrey O'Pnov killing site: The site consists of the biggest security office and the biggest prison in srok Kong Pisey. Unfortunately, time did not allow us to visit there as it was already 6:00 p.m. when we finished our work.

Geographical location of srok Kong Pisey

Srok Kong Pisey is bordered by srok Kandal Stung on the north, srok Baset on the south, srok Samrong Tong on the west, and srok Bati in Takeo on the east. This district was in Region 33, southwestern zone in Pol Pot's time.

There is a population of 97,410 people, of whom 50,494 are women. Most of the 118,536 families grow rice and crops to make their livings.

- Rice field area	:	12,446	hectares
- Farming area	:	3,005	hectares
- Mountainous area	:	7,223	hectares
- Dwelling area	:	10,265	hectares

- Irrigation area : 147,256 hectares
Total area : 28,412 hectares

At 4:30p.m., we went with the second deputy chief of srok Kong Pisey to visit Wat Oudong Mean Chey killing site (wat Bakkor).

The site was previously an elementary school and it is presently still used as an elementary school. The school is 1 hectare. At that time, the religious temple was converted to a detention center with many security guards around. The site of killing was directly in front of the temple.

Our first witness here was Mr. Men Pum who, in Pol Pot's time, lived in phum Thmor Kda, khum Chung Rouk, srok Kong Pisey, khet Kompong Speu, and who is now the second deputy chief of srok Kong Pisey. Also, we found a laymen whose testimony matched that of the first witness.

In those days, Mr. Men Pum lived on the east side from the killing site. He saw victims being carried from every part of the southwestern zone throughout khet Kampong Speu and many others from khet Takeo as well. Over a period of 15 days, people saw a convoy of trucks transporting victims. The victims arrested and brought here were high-ranking soldiers from second lieutenant upwards, civil servants, officials, srok chiefs, and khet governor. They were tricked into coming with the promise of being able to pursue the occupations they had once had.

Some of the low-ranking soldiers who confessed to being second or first lieutenants hastened their deaths. At this site, families of young and old people were executed. No one survived. One family by one family, people were respectively called their names and then taken to be killed.

In 1979, Pol Pot's men excavated the remains to be burned for making fertilizers. Later in 1979-80, people unearthed the remains seeking for gold. Some would find up to 5 tales of gold (Damleung) because the victims included the wives of high-ranking officers and soldiers.

Many pits were scattered around the former school campus. The big pits were located near a big Samroang tree, which was cut down when the school was rebuilt. The school was rebuilt on the location of the pits.

There are an estimated 80 to 150 pits with approximately 3,500 to 5,000 victims at the site. The estimate is based on the number of remains burned to make fertilizers. An oven had to be built for the purpose of cremating the bodies. Since we found neither documents nor a memorial, the estimate is based on the best guess of the witness and our research team.

Conclusion

Our renewed research in srok Baset and srok Kong Pisey brought about better results since we communicated well administratively with the chiefs of the two sroks.

We tried every possible means to get to the killing sites, traveling by ox-cart on a very difficult road. We regret that we missed visiting two other known killing sites due to security problems. The sites (munti of security and prison) are located 10 kilometers away on the Phnom Kring mountainous slope. The location of the sites is called Phnom Kring criminal center.

We faced some difficulties traveling on a very bad road which required us to speed up our work. However, the difficulties were not the primary problem. We have been very concerned about the unstable political situation in our country recently. To some extent, the work has been under the eyes and on the minds of many. The research we are doing is controversial, and appears to have captured the imagination of our troubled country.