

# មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

## MAPPING PROJECT 1999:

### KAMPONG SPEU PROVINCE

On July 13, 1999, the Documentation Center of Cambodia sent three staff members to do research in two districts of Kampong Speu Province, Phnom Sruoch and Oral. The team was made up of Mr. Sin Khin, Mr. Ouch Samoeun and Mr. Long Chandara. We had previously visited Phnom Sruoch District in 1977, but at that time missed two important genocide sites. On this trip, our team aimed to visit Phnom Sruoch first, because that district is easier from a logistical point of view.

At 9 am, the mapping team arrived at the office of the provincial governor, where we met the Chief of the Provincial Cabinet. We presented to him our letter of authorization, and described our main objectives. The Provincial Cabinet Chief expressed his support for our team's work, and then signed and sealed a permit for us to give to the district authorities, authorizing them to offer work and security cooperation to our team.

At 10 am, we arrived at the Phnom Sruoch District Office, but we did not manage to find any district officials in residence. With the governor's permit, however, we managed to get two police officers to accompany us to the target locations, Dambauk Rong Sub-district and Phnom Sruoch Sub-district. At 10:20 am, we arrived at the Dambauk Rong Sub-district office. There we met Mr. Muong Lao, sub-district chief, and Kang Khem, sub-district militiaman, along with some sub-district policemen and a few villagers.

According to Chief Muong Lao, the Khmer Rouge security prison was located in Trapeang Svay Pha-em, ten kilometers from the sub-district office. At present, nobody lives there because the place is surrounded with dense forests. There are only two ways to get there, by foot or by ox-cart. If we decided to visit this location today, we would not get back to the sub-district office until 4 or 5 pm. As for execution sites, he said there are six genocide sites:

Dok El,  
Trapeang Say,  
Trapeang Ambel,  
Tong Long (or Prey Pra Mang Pong),  
O Pha-av (or O Chaol Cheal), and  
Tuol Chea.

After collecting this information, we asked the chief for his suggestions on the best ways to reach those execution sites. His people told us that since this was the rainy season, no vehicles or motorbikes were available. Both sides of the path were surrounded with water and forests, and there are no inhabited dwellings in that area, either.

The sites vary in distance, from six to twelve kilometers from the sub-district office. Because of our time limitations and the distances between one location and the next, we would have to

limit our visit only to one important site. We calculated that to visit all six locations would require approximately five days, and would involve seeking accommodation from villagers and packing provisions for the mission. Security and landmines are not a concern in this area.

## Victims

The victims killed in this area include:

The New People evacuated from Phnom Penh city in 1975, including soldiers, police, teachers, professors, officials, civil servants, male and female youth, as well as children and spouses. They were kept for four to five days before being executed. In 1975 and 1976, about ten to twenty families were brought to be killed each time;

Soldiers in Phnom Sruoch District's Doh Kanh Chor Fortress, one of the last areas liberated by the Khmer Rouge. According to the first witness, Mr. Muong Mao, officials, civil servants, soldiers and their wives, and monks were slaughtered separately. The total number of victims is approximately 10,000, perhaps more;

Those taken from the security prison located in Tuol Svay Pha-em were killed in the areas surrounding the prison, with some corpses left lying in open areas in the forest. There is nothing left of the remains today. In 1978, the Khmer Rouge ordered the villagers to burn the remains for use as compost; and

Those suffering from leprosy. These victims were the last to be killed. In 1979, when people, including Mr. Kang Khem, police officer of the sub-district, came to excavate the killing pits for jewels, the human flesh remained putrid. After execution, the corpses had been covered with salt. They were all killed at Tong Long execution site, where there are about five to six killing pits with approximately 1,352 victims from more than one hundred families.

Mr. Muong Mao estimated that the total number of victims executed at the six locations is about 30,000, including 10,000 killed at the Doh Kanh Chor Fortress, 20,000 people evacuated from the city, and some base people.

## **Background of Mr. Muong Lao and Mr. Kang Khem -- witnesses:**

### **Muong Lao:**

In Sangkum Reastr Niyum (the "Popular Socialist Community" during Norodom Sihanouk's reign), Muong Lao lived in Dambauk Rong Sub-district, Phnom Sruoch District, Kampong Speu Province. In the Lon Nol regime, he served as a soldier in Phnom Penh. In the Khmer Rouge time (1975-1979), he lived in Trapeang Trach village, Dambauk Rong Sub-district. In 1979, he acted as Chief of Dambauk Rong. With this experience, he had learned much about the killings, and about the perpetrators. For this reason, he is our witness. He disclosed that the perpetrators responsible for the execution of the victims in the six locations previously mentioned were:

1. Mao Thom, living in Dambauk Rong Village, Dambauk Rong Sub-district; and
2. Mei Khuon, living in Sam Bour Village, Dambauk Rong Sub-district.

Unfortunately, we could not meet with these two killers, because they allegedly had no free time.

## **Kang Khem:**

Mr. Khang Khem had previously served as a militiaman in Dambauk Khpuos Sub-district. He was born and has been living in Khlong village, Dambauk Rong Sub-district. In the Pol Pot time, he served in a "Leading Front Troop Cell." In 1979, he witnessed the excavation of the killing pits. He had known that Ms. Ruos Serei Sothear, the most popular singer in Cambodia, had been killed at Kok Pring Embankment, Khlong village. During the Khmer Rouge time, during lunch breaks, he used to listen to her singing songs over a microphone for at least half an hour every day. Later, he and others around him had no idea where she was taken to be killed. This should be considered as "indirect" information from our witness.

## **Our Investigation**

After considering the six locations, we decided to visit Tong Long or Prey Pra Mang Pong, five kilometers from the sub-district office. Four people accompanied us, including Kang Khem, sub-district militiaman, Sieng Saret, police officer, Khim Vang, police officer, and Nhanh, a villager. Among these, only Mr. Kang Khem and Nhanh knew the location of the killing pits well.

At 1 pm, we arrived in Khlong village and parked the car. Then it was a four kilometer walk on ox-cart tracks through dense forest, where without a police escort, we certainly would not have felt secure. At 1:30 p.m., we reached our destination, the Tong Long execution site, where we saw a B-52 bomb crater, ten meters in diameter and two meters deep. Part of the crater had been filled in with soil. The witnesses said in this area, there were many B-52 bomb craters, in each of which two to four victims were killed. Some corpses were left scattered in the Tong Long forest. This site is located in the eastern part of the sub-district, about five hundred meters south of the mountains. It is about seven kilometers east of Kok Pring Embankment. In addition to the many small pits containing just a few victims each, there are a number of larger pits, also B-52-bomb craters, each containing approximately fifty to sixty execution victims. The estimated total number of victims killed in these six to ten larger pits is 300 to 600. At 3 pm, we returned to the sub-district office, and from there made our way back to Phnom Penh.

## **July 14, 1999**

### **Oral District**

The next morning, we set off from Phnom Penh City and headed for Oral District, traveling along National Road #4. We turned off on Road #42, a road built by the NGO, Lutheran World Service. The team arrived at Oral District Office at 9:20 am. There, we met with Mr. Ou Thuch, 43, District Deputy Governor, and informed him about the aims of our mapping trip.

Oral District Office is fifty-four kilometers northwest of Kampong Speu provincial town. It is on the south side of Road #42. In the Lon Nol regime, there were no settlements in this area. Between April 1970 and 1975, the district was completely under the control of the Khmer Rouge. In 1985, the former Government of the State of Cambodia captured the district, and then in 1989, the Khmer Rouge recaptured it. In 1995, the Cambodian Government rebuilt the district office. During the period of 1985-1989, for safety reasons, the district office was moved to another location, thirteen kilometers from Kampong Speu provincial town. All of this drove us to the conclusion that there is high likelihood of instability in this district; even the district office is located in an inappropriate place, and the Department of Cults and Culture has not yet been well organized. Hence, we discovered a problem for our research:

documents relating to Khmer Rouge killings were not available and the District Deputy Governor was not particularly familiar with the details. Oral District is rich in huge mountain ranges and densely forested land, but arable land is scarce. In this district, malaria usually starts to spread from October.

For the time being, security is not a problem due to the absence of hostile Khmer Rouge elements. Mine clearance on both sides of Road # 42 was underway while the team was in the area. It was therefore important to keep our vehicle on the small track to avoid the possibility of a mine explosion.

The district has an area of 2,373,000 square meters, equal to 287,300 hectares. This includes 40,112 hectares of rice farming land; 25,590 hectares of other farmland; 1,624 hectares of housing land; 100,140 hectares of mountains; 1,585 hectares of reservoirs; and some hectares of mineral land as well as the valleys of Phnom Bat, situated in Chha-en and Ro Leak Kang Cheung Sub-districts. The district could offer recreation opportunities by exploiting a unique tourist site featuring hot springs, if the transportation infrastructure was developed.

### **Execution sites:**

The district governor did not have a good grasp of the history of his district. Worse yet, no district official had any knowledge of Khmer Rouge executions in the area, due to prolonged instability in the district. A permanent headquarters was not even established until recently. However, we had been informed in advance by the Chief of Provincial Cabinet that there are two execution sites. One is located at Office 99, Sre Muoy Rory, Trapeang Cho Sub-district, about twenty kilometers from Oral District Headquarters. The other is located in Reaksmei Samaky Sub-district. It is possible to reach the latter site by fording a small river near Phnom Sruoch Mountain.

At 11 am, we decided to go to Trapeang Cho via a twenty-kilometer ox-cart trail, which the locals use regularly for timber transport. Mr. Kim Seun, the district environmental official, accompanied the team. We managed to cross a ruined bridge and then continued our trip along the ox-cart trail through dense forests, observing no houses along the way. Bikes and motorbikes were not available; ox-carts were the only means of transportation. After a ten kilometer drive in the quiet Prey Tadok forest, finding many deep muddy potholes which nearly blocked our progress, we decided to turn back. If we had gotten stuck in one of the big holes, then there would be no way to get help. The area is uninhabited and outside cell phone range. The district officials themselves were not certain of the road conditions, but told us that they had seen some NGO vehicles traveling along this trail.

We think that the two main execution sites in this district should be visited in the dry season, and accessed by motor-taxi. That will be the most efficient and practical approach.

### **Conclusion:**

We have managed to visit only one genocide site. There are still five others to be surveyed. We estimate the required time will be four days. Given the local conditions, it will be necessary to carry out further expeditions here during the dry season. These sub-districts are all densely forested. It might save time to pack food provisions for a trip such as this. For this trip, Khmer Rouge forces were not the problem; mines and bandits, however, did worry us. Having gained knowledge of the situation in this district, our next trip should be more successful.

### 3. KAMPONG SPEU PROVINCE

District	Site Name/ Visited Date	Site Type	Est. Victim	Witness	File #/ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
Phnom Srouch	Pralay Tuol Tong Long/13 July 99	Burial 5-6 pits	300-400	Muong Lao <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	R 071306A/ 050606	N 11 <sup>0</sup> 15'5472''	E 104 <sup>0</sup> 21'0592''