

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA

VICTIM PARTICIPATION PROJECT: A FIELD TRIP TO KAMPONG CHAM, PREY VENG, AND SVAY RIENG PROVINCE

3-12 November 2010

Members of the Team: Kimsroy Sokvisal, Seng Kunthy, Sar Sengkear, and Ry Lakhena

From 3 to 12 November, 2010, staff members the Victim Participation Project (VPA) went on a fieldtrip to distribute the notification letters issued by the Office of Co-Prosecutors (OCP) of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) to complainants in three provinces namely Kampong Cham, Prey Veng, and Svay Rieng. Under the Khmer Rouge regime, according to the administrative division of Democratic Kampuchea, these three provinces were located in east zone, whose secretary was Sao Phim.



A mosque in Sen Chey village, Romchek commune, Memot district, Kampong Cham province.

The purposes of the trip were to distribute notification issued by the OCP to those who filed complaints before the ECCC with our assistance, to provide updated information regarding the ongoing progress made by the court, and eventually collect their reactions through interviews. These tasks were done to ensure that the complainants are aware that their story written down in victim information forms play important role for both the ECCC and the Documentation Center of Cambodia and have more understanding about the court.

As a result, the team has distributed 127 letters to complainants in the three provinces. There remain five letters to be distributed and the team could not meet with individual complainants for various reasons. That said, the team had already distributed the remaining letters to their relatives in Phnom Penh. During the nine-day field trip in the provinces, the team managed to conduct 17 interviews due to the time constraints. Aside from distributing notification, the team also distributed 1200 copies of DC-Cam booklets about Case 001 and Case 002 and Searching for the Truth to farmers, officials, students, complainants, and vendors whom the team met along the ways and during the meeting.



Cham Muslims reading DC-Cam booklets "Genocide: Who are the Khmer Rouge Leaders to be Judged? the Importance of Case 002" and "The Duch verdict: The Khmer Rouge Tribunal Case 001" at a mosque in Ponhea Krek district, Kampong Cham province

There were some challenges the team had faced during the delivery. First, there were a lot of complaints to meet during this tight schedule. Secondly, most of the complainants live far away from each other and this made our trip relatively difficult. On a few occasions, the team had to travel 70 kilometers to meet only one complaint as the person does not own a cell phone. Thirdly, as

most complainants are farmers, they normally rushed back to their paddy fields after the meeting and some were unable to attend the meeting. For this reason, collecting interviews were quite challenging.

The followings are the description of the team's daily activity and achievement.

### **03 November 2010**

The team headed to Batheay, one of the districts of Kampong Cham province, in the morning of 3 November. The team arrived in Sandek commune, Batheay district at 1:30 p.m., because the traffic was really bad, and the village is located far away, 18 kilometers, from the national road.



Left to right: a busy harvesting rice reason and fishing at cannel at Daun Daok village, Cheach commune, Kamchay Mea district, Prey Veng province.

Then the team successfully distributed the notification letters to four complainants. They were:

1. Dim Chhuon (ឌីម ឈួន) (VPA-KC0015) was not at home. His son accepted notification letter on Mr. Chhuon's behalf.
2. Seng Yoeung (VPA-KC0010) welcomed and informed the team that she was once invited by DC-Cam to attend Ieng Thirith's hearing at the ECCC. Yoeung was slightly sick and the team decided not to interview her.
3. Huot Savorn (ហួត សាវ៉ុន) (VPA-KC0014) was at home and busy looking after her grandchildren.
4. Khai Hy (ខៃ ហ៊ី) (VPA-KC0001) recalled the application form she filed when she was observing the hearings. Hy was tending her ducks while receiving the notification letter.

According to what the people told the team, all of the above persons followed the hearings on both radio and TV, but not regularly as some of them did not have TV. Some said their children are more interested in movies than following the trials. They had little information about the trials developments.

That said, most of the villagers -- the young, the adult, and the old -- came asking for DC-Cam outreach materials. They started to read as soon as they received the books.

Next, the team went to Ly Matt (លី ម៉ាត់), a Cham Muslim complainant who lives in Sdaeng Chey commune, Cheung Prey district, Kampong Cham province. The team found it hard to locate the right Ly Matt, because there are a few men named Ly Matt living in the village. He knows about Case 001 and keeps following the news regarding the prosecution of the Khmer Rouge leaders at the ECCC.

### **04 November 2010**

Today, the team set to meet with 8 complainants in four districts: Koh Sotin, Kang Meas, Prey Chhor, and Cheung Prey of Kampong Cham province. In early morning, the team sought permission letter from the provincial hall. The team was told to pick up the letter the following days.

Then, the team left provincial town and crossed the Mekong by local ferry to meet a complainant named Him Toulouh (ហ៊ឹម ទួល័ស) (VPA-KC0034) who lives in Prek Ta Nung 7 village, Prek Ta Nung commune, Koh Sotin district, and Kampong Cham province. Before the team arrived his house, the team called him but was told that he had gone to Sri Lanka. Then the team decided to leave notification with his daughter, Toulouh Sarifah (ទួល័ស សារីហ៊ាស).



Passengers read DC-Cam booklets on a ferry in Koh Sotin district, Kampong Cham province.

After taking the ferry back from Prek Tanung 7 village, the team travelled to Kang Meas district to locate three Cham Muslim complainants: Keu Sleh (កើ ស្មែន) (VPA-KC0031, 07-VU-00052), Toulos Sleh (ទួល័ស ស្មែន) (VPA-KC0042, 07-VU-00117), and Loeb Srul (ឡើប ស្រុល) (VPA-KC0043, 07-VU-00111). Fortunately, the team met Keu Sleh (កើ ស្មែន), *Hakim* of the community in Angkor Ban I village.

He recognized the team immediately without waiting for an introduction as he has participated in a number of DC-Cam's events in Phnom Penh. Thereafter, the team rushed to find two other Cham Muslim complainants and faced the same problem - several people shared the names the team looked for. To solve the problem, the team sought assistance from *Hakim* Keu Sleh and he travelled with and directed the team to those two complainants. As a result, the team met and provided them with the notification letters. The team could only provide them with brief explanation as at the time they were also preparing for a village meeting.

At around 3 p.m., the team drove far from the Kampong Cham town to Cheung Prey district to deliver notifications to other three complainants: Khay Sothay (ខែ្ល សុខែ្លថៃ) (VPA-KC0016, 08-VU, 00872), Leang Lout (លែង លៃត) (VPA-KC0009, 08-VU-00879), and Chum Chin (ជុំ ជិន) (VPA-KC0008, 08-VU-00878). For Chum Chin and Leang Lout, the team did not meet personally with them and left the notification letters with their relatives. Chin was in Phnom Penh for the *Kathin* ceremony and the other was busy doing his work elsewhere. The team however, met with Khay Sothay, the village chief and delivered him the letter.

Lastly, the team came back in the evening from Cheung Prey district to Prey Chhor to meet one Cham Muslim complainant, Toun Sari (តួន សារី), in Prey Khcheay village, Baray commune, Prey Chhor district. It was easy to get to the complainant's house. Unfortunately, he had gone to Malaysia for more than a month. Therefore, the team left the notification with his wife.



Young people work on their rice paddy and collect rice yields in Ramduol district, Svay Rieng province.

To sum up, the team could not conduct any interview due to time constraint. In spite of getting the task done in five districts of Kampong Cham province within 2 days, the team still had 7 more districts to go – 1) Kampong Siam, 2) O Raing Ao, 3) Chamkar Leu, 4) Krouch Chmar, 5) Ponhea Krek, 6) Tbound Khmomm, and

7) Memot.

### **05 November 201**

Due to difficulty in reaching complainants who live far away from one another, the team could not finish all of the notification delivery in Kampong Cham as schedule. After consultation with VPA's team leader, the team decided that it would continue to work in Prey Veng and Svay Rieng respectively as scheduled and would return to finish the remaining notifications in Kampong Cham. The reason was that meetings had already been set up with other complainants in the other two provinces. There were three remaining notification letters to be distributed in Kampong Cham.

Next, the team continued to distribute the notification. Today, the team faced with a number of challenges. The biggest challenge today was that the roads were far from village to village, commune to commune, and district to district, and in bad condition. The team could not get the plan for today done, despite working from dawn to dusk. Another challenge was that a number of complainants went to work in the farm, sometimes the whole family went to the

farm, and some left their home village. The last challenge was the error spellings of names, which made it hard to locate the persons.

## **06 November 2010**

Going with Mr. Phann Ana (ផាន់ អណា), the team headed for Daun Daok village, Cheach commune, Kamchay Mea district, Prey Veng province. Though the road was far from Kampong Cham provincial town, the team arrived an hour – 8 a.m. – earlier for the meeting. Upon arrival, the team was welcomed by both all the complainants and Mr. Ana's family.

Among all the complainants who the team helped file the application forms before the ECCC, 25 came to the meeting, while the other 5 did not. Two complainants named Pol Hang (ប៉ូង ហង់) and Sok Suo (សុក សួ), Mr Ana's mother, passed away two years ago. After the meeting, each of the team member conducted interviews with one complaint. As a result, the team had four interviews: VPA- PV0011, VPA-PV0027, VPA-PV0021 VPA-PS0012.

What the team learned were that everyone was happy to receive the notification, that some complainants were not happy with the Court, that some shed tear during the interview. The team also got some information relating to the purge of the Eastern cadres and people.

There were two challenges: 1) villagers were really busy harvesting rice and 2) four people asked the team why they did not receive the notification letters like others. After the meeting, most of the participants left immediately, because they needed to harvest rice in their paddy fields, to transport a large amount of their sheaves of rice from the field to their house, and to thresh the rice.

In attempt to find out why the four did not receive the notification letters, the team tried to ask them several questions:

1. Did you attend the meeting a few years ago?
2. Were you interviewed by one of the DC-Came staff member after the meeting?
3. Were you asked to place your thumbprint on every sheet of the application form?

Those four were:

1. Mrs. Kai Song (កៃ ស៊ីង), 49, a singer during the Khmer Rouge regime, attended the meeting, but was only asked to sing revolutionary songs at that time. Then she became aware why she did not receive the letter.
2. Mr. Phan Phan (ផាន់ ផាន់), 66, only attended the meeting a few years ago, but did not file the application form. He only came to listen. Then he knew why he did not receive letter.
3. Em Chhan (ឯម ចាន់), 73, informed me that she was interviewed by DC-Cam staff member. Of course, it was one-on-one interview. The team was not sure about this case. But the team promised her that the team will check and inform her later. The team did inform her and Mr. Ana about protective measures and 1500 notification forms left.

4. Man Soen (ម៉ាន ស៊ីន), 73, attended the meeting a few years ago. But he was not interviewed by DC-Cam staff member. Then he knew why he received the notification.

**November 07, 2010**

After having breakfast in Prey Veng provincial hall, the group quickly headed for Svay Antor communal hall, located in Svay Antor village, Svay Antor commune, Svay Antor district, Prey Veng province. According to the schedule, the team supposed to meet 16 complainants.



A complainant was interviewed at Daun Daok.

Unfortunately, only 12 complainants attended the meeting, while the other four did not. The reasons were because: 1) one of the complainant's mother had passed away a day earlier prior to the meeting, 2) some are old and unable to leave their houses, and 3) some were busy harvesting their paddy fields.

After the meeting, each of the team members conducted an interview, except Visal. Lakana interviewed Lach Kry (ឡាត ក្រី)

(VPA-PS0043), Sengkea interviewed Pek Pach (ប៉ែក ប៉ាត) (VPA-0063), and Kunthy interviewed Suon Sea (ស៊ួន ស៊ីវា) (VPA-PV0071).

Though it was Sunday, the team was surprised to see the commune staff members and village chief attending the meeting. There were four of them – each of whom provided the team such warm welcome and cooperation.

Once again, interesting lessons learned will be included in the individual report. However, there was one interesting suggestion raised up by one of the complainants. He suggested that every verdict of the Khmer Rouge leaders be included in the text books. Doing so, every student will be able to know the result of those who committed mass crimes under their regime.

After the meeting, the team returned to have dinner at the provincial hall. Informed that there was a shortcut route from Kamchay Mea district of Prey Veng province to Svay Rieng province, the team decided to meet three Cham Muslim complainants who live in Neak Leung commune and Kampong Trabek commune. The team could manage to meet three of them. The team conducted interview with no one, because two of them were not at home, and the other was in Phnom Penh.

Then the team travelled back to meet three complainants who live Pea Raing district of Prey Veng province. The road was really far and difficult. Then the team took the shortcut route to Svay Rieng. Every villager the team asked along the way informed the team that the route to Svay Reing was fine. Unfortunately, the car got stuck for almost 10 minutes. The team decided not to take that road and returned a long the way through Neak Leung to Svay Rieng.

The team arrived in Svay Rieng at around 10 p.m. Everyone was extremely exhausted. The team was committed to finish the work in Svay Rieng and returned to complete unfinished task in Kampong Cham province.

### **November 08, 2010**

Today, everyone got up late, since the team arrived in Svay Rieng pretty late at night and, of course, extremely exhausted. In the morning, the first thing the team did was to get the permission letter signed at the provincial hall. The team spent the whole morning getting the permission letter signed.

In the afternoon, the team went to find Mr. Norng Sarath (នង សារ៉ាត់), who, in fact, lives in Siem Reap – not Svay Rieng province. Before the team left for his home village, the team did call him and asked him whether he allowed the team to give the letter to his siblings, on his behalf or not.



The car was stuck on rough road during raining reason in Romeas Haek district, Svay Rieng province.

The challenge today was a long way from the provincial hall to Mr. Norng Sarath's home village. And it took almost one whole afternoon to find his siblings. First, he told the team to find his brother. Then when the team arrived at his brother's house, the team found no one at home. His family had gone to Phnom Penh. Then the team tried to find his sister. The team had to wait for his sister for an hour.

There was no interviews conducted today.

### **November 09, 2010**

This morning, the team went to Nhor commune, Kampong Ro district, Prey Veng province. According to the plan, the team was supposed to meet complainants in two different villages: Nhor village and Ro village. Prior to the meeting, the team managed to meet two complainants who live in Nhor village and then continue to hold a meeting in Ro village.

During the meeting, there were 9 complainants attending the meeting. After Sengkea finished his briefings on ECCC developments, the team started to fill in the reports of the delivery of notification letters and interviewed the complainants. Therefore, the team had four interviews for this morning. In the afternoon, there was a meeting held in Pornng Teuk commune hall. Only 5 complainants attended the meeting. No interview was conducted. After the meeting, the team tried to find 6 complaints who live in different villages and commune of Ramduol district.

Every participant was busy. A few had a meeting, while the rest needed to go back and work on the paddy fields. Fortunately, commune deputy village provided such wonderful assistance. He walked with the team across many paddy fields to find one complainant working in the paddy field.

### **November 10, 2010**

According to the schedule, today the team was supposed to meet 13 complainants in two consecutive meetings: 6 from Trapaing Ploah village and 1 complainant from Srah village, and 6 complainants from Prey Chheu Teal in Prey Thom commune, Svay Rieng province.

It took nearly 2 hours to reach the village. Informed by villager along the way, without knowing how the way was, the team was taken a detour on difficult muddy road that the car again got stuck in the mud for 15 minutes stuck. However, even though the team were late for 2 hours, the village chief and complainants were kindly pleased to see the team arrived.

After an introduction, the team successfully delivered notifications to 5 complainants; 1 was receiving the notification on his wife's behalf. Another one was travelling to Phnom Penh for her personal reason, so the team left the notification with her village chief.

The team also received one complainant's husband's photo taken in 1973, in Khmer Rouge uniform: black pajamas with *Krama*. The team took picture of the photo and was later informed by telephone to announce the searching for the missing person in the photo in Searching the Truth Magazine and DC-Cam's to be published Book of Memory.

As soon as the first meeting was completed, the team rushed to the second meeting in Prey Chheu Teal village, not too far from the first village. There were 6 complainants during the afternoon meeting.

Comparing between the first meeting in Trapiang Plaoh and the second meeting in Prey Chheu Teal village, the team found some distinction between participants. While the participants in the morning understood, followed the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT), and cared about new information provided to them, the participants in the afternoon were not that interested in the new information given to them.

Totally, the team interviewed 6 complainants. Interviewed by Lakana, U Lun (ឥន្ទ្រ លុន) said that she has sense of closure with Duch's verdict 19 year-imprison even though other four Khmer Rouge leader had not been tried as yet. Nevertheless, another complainant interviewed by Kunthy said that Duch is not very important for her. The most important case for her is Case 002. She wants to see the next trials, Case 002.

### **November 11, 2010**

There were no interviews for today as the team had to travel from house to house in order to find 9 complainants in five different districts of Kampong Cham province – Kampong Siem, Chamkar Leu, Krauch Chmar, and Memot.

In the morning, the team went to get permission letter from an official of Kampong Cham provincial hall and was unfortunately informed to return later to pick up the letter. The team proceeded to work anyway.

The team headed from district to district to find *Hakims* and *Tuons*, who submitted their complaints in 2007. The team went to Kampong Siem, Chamkar Leu, Krauch Chmar, Memot, and Suong city respectively.



Eventually, most of the notification letters were delivered to complainants in Kampong Cham province. There were four notification letters left. Nonetheless, those four notification letters would be delivered to their relatives who live and work in Phnom Penh after the team returned to Phnom Penh the next day.

The challenge today was distance from place to place and it was difficult to find the right person. Sometimes, there were three or four people with the same name living in the same village. Those complainants had no telephone contact and thus made the search all the difficult. The simplest way the team did was to go from house to house.

### **November 12, 2010**

After getting our permission letter in Kampong Cham province, the team would go back to office.

End.