

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) MAPPING THE KILLING FIELDS OF CAMBODIA, 1997: khet BANTEAY MEANCHEY [A-1-banteay meanchey/a-cb-bm]

Location	Site Name/ Date	# of graves	Est. Victim	Witness	File #/ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
srok Sisophon	Chamka knao/ 29 April 1997	100 pits	20000	Khuon Say ហ្មួន សាយ	R 042903A/ 10601	N 13°35'3087"	E 102°57'2689"
srok Sisophon	Wat Sophak Mong Kol/ 29 April 1997			Sien Neang ស៊ីន នាំង	R 042904A/ 10602	N 13°35'1272"	E 102°57'4308"
srok Mongkol Borey	Cham Ka Yeay Heum/ 29 April 1997	40 pits	200	Kol Phorn កុល ភន	R 042907A/ 10201	N 13°24'4006"	E 103°01'0109"
srok Mongkol Borey	La-ang Kouy Yum/ 29 April 1997	10 pits	500	Oum Phon អុំ ភន	R 042908A/ 10202	N 13°25'5664"	E 103°00'4330"
srok Mongkol Borey	Wat Banteay Neang/ 29 April 1997	200 pits	5000	Khuon Say ហ្មួន សាយ	R 042909A/ 10203/ 4	N 13°30'4094"	E 103°00'5054"
srok Preah Net Preah	Chamkar Ta Leung/ 30 April 1997	6 Pits	720	Tum Seun តុំ ស៊ីន	R 043002A/ 10401/2	N 13°35'5637"	E 103°10'4707"
srok Preah Net Preah	Prey Ta Rut/ 30 April 1997	200 pits	3892	Plieang Phong ព្រៀង ផុង	R 043003A/ 10403	N 13°37'3836"	E 103°10'4334"
srok Preah Net Preah	Phum Chet Chrey		3570	Plieang Phong ព្រៀង ផុង	R 043003B/ 10404	N 13°37'2411"	E 103°10'4502"

At 7:00 a.m., we set off from Phnom Penh to khet Banteay Meanchey via khet Battambang along the national road 5. The provincial town of khet Banteay Meanchey is 352 kilometers from Phnom Penh.

Documentation Center of Cambodia

Searching for the Truth

ស្វែងរកការពិត ដើម្បីការបង្កប់និងយុត្តិធម៌

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On 29 April 1997, at 9:30 a.m., we arrived at the governor's office, where we met with Mr. Tat Sohun, acting provincial governor. We asked him for permission to conduct research in the three districts of police of khet Banteay Meanchey.

Geographical location of khet Banteay Meanchey

Khet Banteay Meanchey is bordered by khet Battambang on the south, khet Siem Reap Udor Meanchey on the east, and Thailand on the north and west.

Death toll under Pol Pot's regime in khet Banteay Meanchey and khet Battambang:

- Peasants	: 271,541	people
- Civil servants and workers	: 54,230	people
- Monks	: 1,525	people
- Cripple people	: 14,219	people
- Minority	: 92,573	people

Total death toll	: 471,761	people
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The number of people filing petitions is 429,480. Be assured that the figure is worked out by adding the death toll in Khet Banteay Meanchey with that in Khet Battambang because previously Khet Banteay Meanchey was not yet formed, and it was a part of Khet Battambang. Therefore, when the survey was conducted, all districts in Khet Banteay Meanchey were within Khet Battambang.

In Pol Pot's time, Banteay Meanchey was on the northwestern part of the country, in Region 5. At 10:10 a.m., we contacted the office of culture, where we met with Mr. Eung Tim, cultural chief, Mr. Ly Sreang, chief of the district administrative office, and Mr. Prak Sophal, chief of the district office of culture, who helped collaborate with us to conduct the field study in srok Serey Soaphon and srok Mongkul Borey.

We next went to the commissariat of the provincial police where we met Mr. Tim Ratanak, deputy chief of regulation military police; Mr. Suos Borith, staff, and Mr. Chhel Sandu, staff, who escorted us to the three districts until we finished our work.

At 11:00 a.m., we headed for srok Serey Soaphon, 2 kilometers away from khet Banteay Meanchey. On arrival there, we did not meet with any officers of the district. However, since we had 2 officers from the provincial office of culture, together with security forces escorting us, we found the criminal center right away.

The criminal center Chamkar Khnol (Wat Chamkar Khnol) is in phum Au Ambil, khum Au Ambil. It consists of a security office, a prison and a killing site. The criminal center is 2 kilometers from the office of srok Serey Sophon. We met with the committee of laymen of wat Chamkar Khnol as well as some witnesses.

The first witness was Chin Sarorng, age 65, male, 1.67 m tall, gray hair white skin, big and tall. In Pol Pot's time, he was evacuated from his birth place. After 1979, he came to live in phum Au Ambil, khum Au Ambil. He said he saw, and even joined in, the excavation of the remains in search of gold during 1983-84 at the site of killing.

The excavated remains were taken to be deposited in the memorial in wat Sopheak Mangkul in phum Au Ambil, khum Au Ambil, srok Sisophon in order to hold a wishing ritual every day. Before 1977, the rest of the remains had been stolen. We were then taken by the first witness to visit the site of killing and the pits. We took pictures of the locations of the pits and the witness. The site is located on the area of one square hectare, between Phnom Kaum Khla, Phnom Svay and Phnom Agn Chaeng.

The pits are scattered around the mountain's slope. The site was formerly a jack fruit plantation, but it is now the villager's plantation. Many pits were completely buried and some were not. He told us that when he excavated the pits and saw people excavate the pits, each pit was 5 m wide, 6 to 10 m long, 1.50 to 2 m deep. All the pits were full of bodies. The sheer number of pits made an accurate count very difficult. We could not say exactly how many there were at that site.

The second witness was San Mean, male, age 68, layman in wat Sopheak Mongkul, 1.60 m tall, robust, gray hair, white skin. During 1970-75, he lived in phum Khnang, khum Kampong Svay, srok Serey Sophon. During 1975-79, he lived in khum Samrong, srok Serey Sophon as an ordinary person.

He is a very important witness. He told us that the criminal center was comprised of 2 big sites of killing:

- 1- Chamkar Khnol
- 2- Phnom Kaun Khla (located between phnom Agn Chang).

He is the chief of all the laymen throughout the district and he was the first one to return to live in his birth place. At that time, he used money obtained from the temple to hire people to collect bones during 1979-1983. But he and his team could not excavate all the remains.

He said victims killed there were people carried by trucks from everywhere. Ten to twenty trucks operated continuously. The victims were deceived into thinking that they were being taken to Thailand. They included soldiers, civil servants, students, teachers, professors, military police etc. There were families of Khmer, Chinese and Vietnamese people, young and old, who were killed. For more detailed information, we recorded the interview with him on cassette for keeping as a document.

The third witness was Khnon Say, male, layman, former assistant to the chief of monks in wat Banteay Reang. In Pol Pot's time, he was imprisoned at wat Chamkar Khnol. He testified that one evening at 7:00 p.m., he watched as 20 thousand people were tied, shackled, and carried away in 20 big trucks. At 9:00 p.m., the trucks returned, carrying only the people's clothes. He said the victims had been told that they were being carried to Thailand but in fact they were all taken to be killed.

So, the site of killing at Chamkar Khnol, wat Chamkar Khnol was presumed to contain more than 2,000 victims (approximately 25,000).

At 11:45 a.m., we went to visit the remains deposited in the memorial in wat Sophaeak Mongkul close to the national road 5. The remains are properly maintained. Unfortunately, before 1997 some of the remains had been stolen. The layman Kuon Say said it could not be protected because the theft of ten happened at night. But there have been no more remains lost since the Khmer Rouge defection. We also took pictures of the remains for keeping as documents.

At 2:00 p.m., we left for srok Mongkul Borey. Since no one was working in the district office, we went to the criminal center at once. The criminal center La Ang Phnom Kuoy which is located behind Au Prasath college is the site for killing victims taken from the prison in phum Thom, khum Au Prasath. It was a big killing field.

Another criminal center is in phum Phnom Tanch where lived the commune and district chiefs of Pol Pot's partisans, and the killing site was at Yeay Him's farm. We examined the places and met with a **witness named Nut Vign**, male, age 61, 1.66 m tall, black skin, black hair, big, who lives near the sites. In Pol Pot's time, he was the chief of the communal cooking house. He was imprisoned for ordering children to kill pigs to serve as food.

He mentioned that there were prisoners with him, classified separately according to the seriousness of their offenses. The victims charged with serious offenses were shackled night and day in the prison, and were not walked to work. The minor case victims were walked to work. Regardless, they were all killed in 1978 and early 1979 in the prison in phum Thom located behind the Au Prasath college.

The victims were taken from every part of the country to be held in the prison in phum Thom, and then taken to be killed at La-ang Phnom Thom, at Cheung Phnom Thom in srok phnom Thom, and at Cheung Phnom Thom in srok Mongkul Borey. He told us that the commune chief Nhin and the district chief Bo were at that time very cruel.

The second witness is Ol Vuth, male, age 40. He used to live in phum Thom, khum Au Presath, srok Mongkul Borey. In Pol Pot's time, he was a quarry worker and he was imprisoned during 1978-79. Presently, he lives in phum Phnom Thom, khum Au Prasath, srok Mongkul Borey. He testified that he was one of the 100 quarry workers who were arrested and taken later to be killed by the Southwestern squad. Out of the 100 victims, only a few survived; their imprisonment and liquidation was part of Pol Pot's response to the threat of advancing Vietnamese forces who were about to liberate this region in 1979. The victims were killed at La Ang Phnom Thom (or La Ang Kuong Yum) behind his house.

The third witness is Um Porn, male, age 50. His testimony was similar to the second witness'. Like the second witness, he now lives in phum Thom. He knew that people were transported and executed nearly every night. The number of victims killed there was around 100 to 200 people.

At 3: 00 p.m., we went to examine the killing site Chamkar Yeay (Yeay Him's farm), where we met a witness named Tol Pon, age 53. In Pol Pot's time, as now, he lived in phum Phnom Tauch Khang Cheung, khum Phnom Tanch, srok Mongkul Borey. When he came back to live here in 1979, he saw the site of killing with some 100 bodies. The site was a canal which is now behind Yeay Him's house.

At 4:30 p.m., we went on to Wat Banteay Neang criminal center which is comprised of a security office, a prison and a site of killing. We also met with a witness named Khum Say, layman, age 58, 1.66 m tall, big, white skin. In Pol Pot's time he was imprisoned during 1976-77 in the prison Chamkar Khnol, wat Chamkar Knol, srok Serey Sophon. He now lives in phum Thom, khum Banteay Neang, srok Mong Borey.

Another witness is Sreb Thlang, age 60, living in the same phum, khum and srok as the first witness.

According to the two witnesses, the criminal center at that time was in the compound of wat Banteay Neang. The Buddhist building turned out to be the prison, and the resting house for monks was used as the security office. The site of killing and the place for interrogation were just in front of the wat Banteay Neang. We were next taken by the witness to visit pits in front of the wat Bantey Neang. The pits are now nearly completely covered with soil.

They told us that there are an estimated 100 to 200 pits scattered on the area of 1 square hectare. The distance between one pit and another is only 1 meter. Yoa Thea canal, which is 500 to 1000 meters long, is full of pits. They estimated each pit could hold 20 to 25 bodies and sometimes up to 30 bodies. In front of the Buddhist building there was a large pit.

At that time, the Khmer Rouge planned to gather all the people in the phum and khum by holding a meeting and promising the people that they were going to be allowed to eat khmer noodles (vermicelli) afterwards. The plan failed because the country was liberated on 7 January 1979,

two days before the meeting. In 1979, Vietnamese soldiers came to take the handcuffs and shackles from the Buddhist building. The witnesses did not know where the handcuffs and shackles were taken.

An estimated 3,500 to 5,000 victims or more were killed here. They were civil servants, prisoners held in the Buddhist building, Chinese and Vietnamese as well. We took pictures of the witnesses and the prison in the Buddhist building, and recorded everything on cassette for keeping as documents.

Srok Preah Net Preah, khet Banteay Meanchey

On 30 April 1997, at 7 a.m., we set off 23 kilometer to srok Prah Wet Prah. After a 4 kilometer drive from the district, we reached a criminal center. The road was more difficult than others in the province. At 8:30 a.m., we arrived at the district, where we met with Mr. Hap Soeun, chief of the district office and Mr. Thlang Thong, chief of the district office of culture and fine arts.

Geographical location of srok Preah Net Preah

Srok Preah Net Preah is bordered by srok Thmor Puok on the North, srok Monkul Borey on the South, the provincial town of srok Banteay Meanchey on the west, and srok Kra Lanh on the East. Srok Preah Net Preah is located on the eastern site of khet Banteay Meanchey and was in region 5, Northwestern Zone (in Pol Pot's time).

The district is comprised of 8 khum and 101 phum. There are 12,324 families with 69,883 people, of whom the female population is 35,456. They grow rice and various other crops to make their livings.

- Rice-field area	: 43,437 hectares
- Farming area	: 3,790 hectares
- New-explored area	: 30,400 hectares

Total area	: 98,340 hectares
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There are many criminal centers throughout the 8 khum, but we could only manage to visit some of them. A number of them were far away, the roads were bad, and security often posed a problem. Several were completely isolated in the jungle and were simply inaccessible to any kind of traffic.

As for srok Preah Net Preah, it is easy for us to go there because the district office of culture gave us documents, surveyed in 1974, regarding phum and khum.

According to the documents obtained, the total death toll throughout the 8 khum was 78,496 in 33 sites of killing. However, in srok Preah Net Preah, we went to examine 3 criminal centers:

1. Wat Preah Net Preah criminal center with the site of killing at Chamkar Ta Ling, 100 meters from Wat Preah Net Preah. Near the entrance to the wat, there was a commune committee and a prison. In the wat there was a Pol Pot hospital. The death toll was 253.
2. Prey Taruth criminal center which is located 100 meters behind the district hospital. There was no security office or prison; it is a killing site with a death toll of 3890.
3. Phum Chakrey criminal center which is located on the west side of the district office of srok Preah Net Preah. At this site of killing, with a death toll of 3580, victims were killed by being stabbed with a bayonet, or by being bound and hit against a coconut tree.

At the 3 criminal centers we visited, we met with witnesses, recorded the interview with them on cassette for keeping as documentation. We also took pictures of the witnesses, the site of killing and the location of the pits. But all the pits have now been completely filled with soil, while the remains have been taken to be deposited on the top of Phnom Chi Krang.

Now, the remains have been all destroyed and stolen.

Witnesses:

At the Wat Preah Net Preah criminal center (Chamkar Taling) in phum Poay Samrong, khum Preah Net Preah, we met with a witness named Tom Soeum, male, age 45, 1.60 m tall, black hair, white skin. In Pol Pot's time, he lived in phum Poay Samrong, khum Preah Net Preah, where he continues to live.

He witnessed people being killed at other places, but at the site of killing in the wat Preah Net Preah criminal center, he joined in the excavation of the pits, which were 4 meters square and 2 meters deep. Each pit held around 110 to 120 bodies. According to this witness, the total death toll is about 660 to 720. However, the documents indicated that there were only 467 bodies and that the killing site at Chamkar Ta Ling was just 50 meters behind wat Preah Net Preah. At Chamkar Ta Ling, a tile-roofed house owned by Pol Pot's commune committee was used for holding prisoners. When the old prisoners were killed, new ones were taken to detain in the house.

Based upon seeing the skulls of the victims, we assume that most of them were adults under age 45. They were civil servants evacuated from the city and all of them were men. There are no remains left because older villagers ordered to have all the remains burned.

At 10:00 a.m., we went to Prey Ta Ruth killing site in phum Choup, khum Chup Vary, near the district office. We met with a witness named Thlang Thong, age 49, 1.66 m tall. He lives in phum Bosdey, khum Preah Net Preah, srok Preah Net Preah and now works in the office of culture of srok Preah Net Preah.

At that time, he did not know where the victims had been taken from; he just knew about the site of killing. He took the remains to deposit in the memorial Phnom Anh Chang, but the remains were stolen due to lack of preventative measures. According to some information he heard from others, there was no security office or prison in this location. Victims were taken to be killed at once. He was also unfamiliar with phum Chakkey because he arrived later on. We are sorry that we did not have the chance to meet in Phnom Penh officer Kong Bun Thouch and the district member who conducted the survey on statistics of victims in 1984. We found it very difficult to find witnesses.

Since time did not permit, the road was bad, and the security was poor, we could not wait to find witnesses, or continue our research in a major criminal center like Phnom Tra Yoang, which is composed of a security office, a prison and a big killing site with around 40000 victims. We had to go 20 kilometers on a very bad road to get there, so we decided to go back khet Battambang on the evening of the 30 April 1997 at 2:00 p.m.

Conclusion

In khet Bantey Meanchey, we have done quite a good job in terms of administrative procedure with the officers in the districts and the province. The fact that we had previously met with these officers beforehand in Phnom Penh facilitated our research in the districts.

We also made good communication with the chiefs of the offices and the commissariat of police but we did not meet with some others because they had gone. Therefore, the result was not really good without help from all the responsible officers of each office, especially the cultural officers and the technical officers who assisted us in clarifying more information. There are some places we were not able to reach there because of the situation in the province and the country as a whole.

The places we have been to are:

Srok Serey Sophon:

- Chamkar Knol (wat chamkar Knol).

- Site of killing phnom Kan Khlar and Chamkar Knol.
- Memorial wat Sopeak Mongkul.

srok Mongkul Borey:

- Criminal Center in phum Phnom Thom (prison and criminal center).
- Site of killing La Ang Phnom Thom (La Ang Knong Yum).
- Site of killing behind O Prasat junior school.
- Criminal center in phum Phnom Tanch, khum Phnom Tanch.
- Site of killing Chamkar Yeay Him.

Srok Preah Net Preah:

- Criminal center Wat Preah Net Preah (prison and security office).
- Chamkar Ta Ling.
- Site of killing in Chamkar Taling 100 or 200 m near the temple.
- Prey Tarat behind the district hospital.
- Phum Chakkrey in front of the district office.

We got more information but the results were not in detail because we did not have documents, the time was short, and we failed to meet with the responsible officers in the districts. We had good results in srok Preah Net Preah because we received documents from the provincial office of culture. So, we hope through these experiences we will be able to improve both the quality and quantity of our results.

We would like to suggest that if we could afford to have a video camera to make documentary films on the genocidal crime, and if we had enough facility, we would certainly get more substantial and accurate documents. We are sorry that we did not have such a valuable video camera for our previous research.