

**Mapping Report 99**  
**Kampong Thom Province**  
**by Vanthan Peou Dara**

A team composed of Phat Kosal, Sin Khin, Uch Sam Oeun, and Peou Dara went to conduct the research on crimes committed by Khmer Rouge during its reign 1975-1979 in Kampong Thom Province. The target of the team is going to Sandan District, Kampong Thom Province to gather information concerning the events happened in the actual place. We were interviewing the witnesses who survive from the Khmer Rouge regime, gathering data of genocidal sites by using Global Position System Unit (GPS) and collecting documents if possible.

On 6 July 1999, this team traveled in a car towards Kampong Thom Province. It took 4 hour in the speed of 80km per hour to get Kampong Thom Province. From Road 6A to the province, we saw big bridges which on every bridge's head we saw picture of Kangaroo which represents Australia. On both sides of the road, there were people's houses and fields with rice growing.

The same day at 11 AM, our team arrived in Kampong Thom Province. We then looked for accommodation and had lunch. At 2 PM we contacted local authority at Kampong Thom Provincial headquarters. First, we did not meet provincial governor as he had to attend weekly work meeting of the province, but then Mr. Sin Khin tried to meet with Mr. Chhun Chou Hut, chief of provincial cabinet. He brought Mr. Sin Khin to meet with Hem Savong, 1<sup>st</sup> deputy governor of the province. Mr. Hem Savong issued a letter for Mr. Sin Khin for official use. After meeting with the first deputy governor, we contacted Cults Officers of the province to ask for documents concerning crimes of Khmer Rouge regime and how to get Sandan District which was our target. Mr. Leam Sarun, deputy chief of Cults Office of province, informed us that to reach Sandan district, we had to travel by machine boat in the Sangke river and we could also travel by Motor-taxis, but it was very difficult because the road was muddy and we had to travel across the forest and we could have security problem because we were strangers for the villagers and easy for law breakers to recognize. If we travel by machine boat, we had to spend overnight to reach Sandan District. We could not spend a day by machine boat to get Sandan District. So, the only way to spend a day (7AM-11AM) to get Sandan District was we had to travel by speedboat.

After getting this information, we contacted fishery office of agriculture department of Kampong Thom Province to ask for speedboat. Unfortunately, we were not successful in borrowing the speedboat as all the speedboats were used to crack down illegal fishing in the Sap River. So, we could not borrow the speedboat. The officer said sorry to our team.

Talking about seeking way to get Sandan District, we tried by all means. Our team left the problem unsolved for the time being and would consider it later.

When our team met with Mr. Leam Sarun, he told us about some cruelties committed by Khmer Rouge during their reign in Sandan District. He said that in Pol Pot regime it was quiet and fairly secure in the district. There was not much killing.

Late 1978 and early 1979, the killing committed by Khmer Rouge was noticeably increasing. Mr. Sarun added that if we wanted to know it clearly we should ask Mr. Chim Vuthy who used to lived in Sandan District in that regime.

Failing to reach Sandan District made us think about seeking for witnesses who used to live in Sandan District in Pol Pot regime and who know the events happened in the area and who now live in the provincial town. So, we interviewed Mr. Chim Vuthy at Mr. Sarun's suggestion.

The following is the interview with Mr. Chim Vuthy :

### **Witness**

Mr. Chim Vuthy, 51 years old, was born in Sandan District. He is now deputy chief of Environment office of Kampong Thom Province.

He told us that he lived in Sandan District in 1975-1978. So, he knows clearly what happened in Sandan District. He said that in Sandan District in Khmer Rouge regime, 1975-1979, there was a security office used to detain all kinds of people. Some of whom were Sandan district people who were accused of being betrayers, and cadres who were wrongdoers in villages, and sub-districts, in the district. This security office is well-known to everyone in the district, especially to Mr. Chim Vuthy. It was called " Prey Kanleng security office ". It is about 5 or 6km far from Sandan district town and it is bounded by Chheu Teal sub-district and Sandan sub-district. Mr. Chim Vuthy told us that he knows Prey Kanleng security office clearly as he used to do the dry-season farming near the place. The security office is now in Prey Kanleng village, Chheu Teal sub-district, Sandan district, Kampong Thom Province.

According to Mr. Chim Vuthy, there were over 100 people detained in Prey Kanleng security office and Khmer Rouge took people from the security office to be killed near the security office. They killed people and buried in pits near the security office. After cruel regime of Khmer Rouge collapsed, district authority excavated pits near Prey Kanleng security office in order to take all bones to store in pagoda to be worshiped. Mr. Chim Vuthy estimated that there were about 100 skulls. He knows it clearly because he used to be chief of Sandan District for one year (July 1983 - September 1984). Mr. Chim Vuthy told us that Khmer Rouge massacred Lon Nol soldiers everywhere in the fields and buried in the forest in Sandan district, but he does not know about this as clearly as he knows about the security office. Generally, people living standard is not so difficult. Mr. Chim Vuthy gave the example " each cutting-tree worker get 3 cans of rice ". However, people who live in Ngorn sub-district, have difficult lives because the farming is not so fruitful. He added that grand father Chheng Phon, former Minister of Information and Culture in the regime of State of Cambodia and former chief of election committee 1998, used to live in Sandan district with him in Khmer Rouge regime.

Mr. Chim Vuthy said late 1977 and early 1978, there was replacement of district chief. Southwest cadres came to take control of the district and the former cadres were arrested by the Southwest cadres. Those who arrested people were security officials of the district. Rin was security chief, Kan was chief of Sandan district, and Chhorn had been security chief before Southwest people came to the district. According to Chim Vuthy, Chhorn had been an ordinary teacher and then he joined the revolution and during 1975-1976, he was appointed to be a security chief. His deputy was Yorn.

In the end, Mr. Chim Vuthy clarified that besides Prey Kanleng Security office, there was not any other places. We also asked him if he knew any woman who were raped by Khmer Rouge cliques before taking to be killed during 1975-1978 in Sandan district. Mr. Chim Vuthy said he knew a woman named Natt, living in Kampong Trabek village, Sandan sub-district, Sandan district, Kampong Thom Province. This woman was accused of committing "moral offenses" and she was then arrested and detained in "the prison" of Prey Kanleng. Natt could escape from Khmer Rouge hands because Vietnamese troops came to liberate. He said if we want to meet Natt, we can ask people at Sandan district headquarters, everyone knows her.

The interview is also attached with photographs of witnesses and tapes of interview with the witnesses.

## **Conclusion**

For the trip to conduct the research on genocidal crimes committed by Khmer Rouge in Sandan district, we were unable to get access to the district to use GPS to collect site data. We have the problems because ( We did not have enough time, ( The travel means were not available, ( The district was far (85km from the provincial town by land and 200km by water). However, our team met and interviewed a close friend of Duch's who is now being detained. The interview was written separately.