

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

REPORT OF CGP MAPPING TEAM VISITS TO KANDAL SITES

13 November 1995 29 February 1996 1 March 1996

Tuesday 27 February

When we arrived at Kandal Provincial Office in the morning, we met the Governor's private secretary who then arranged a meeting that afternoon at 2.30pm. This meeting was chaired by the Third Deputy Governor Mr. Chhun Sirun, and was attended by Deputy Commissioner of Police, the Chief of the Dept. of Cults and Religion, Culture and Arts, Information, and the Chief of the Cabinet Office.

The meeting discussed the important Genocide Sites that we should visit in Kandal Province, except for the Prey Rokar site in Kandal Stung, which had been visited in 1995. It was decided that the team visit sites in Saang and Koh Thom Districts the following Thursday, and Kean Svay and Leuk Dek Districts that Friday. The team was to be accompanied by an officer from the Dept. of Information, and two policemen.

13 November 1995

Sala Trapeang Sva

Kandal Stung

080101

This is the site of the former National Education Center of Bati, a Teachers College of Pedagogy built in 1965, which was used as a prison and burial site by the KR from 1975-79. The College was built on the Northern side of Tonle Bati lake, about 50 kilometers South of Phnom Penh. Part of the former college, was probably the assembly hall, has been converted into a memorial, where thousands of skulls, stacked about two meters high, have been placed on a raised stage (approx. 4m x 7m) at the end of the hall. The skulls were taken from the mass graves nearby after they were excavated in 1979.

There are two areas of mass graves, one close to the College with 15 graves, and the other about 500 meters away, nearer to the lake, with more than 80 mass graves. Witnesses estimate that about 7-10,000 victims were killed and buried at this site.

Thursday 29 February

Por Tonle

Koh Thom

080401/02

After driving 58 kilometers along Hwy. 21 down the Western side of the Bassac River, we arrived at the Northern end of Koh Thom District, where we crossed by boat to Por Tonle island. This memorial was built in 1990 by some of the relatives of the victims who were executed at this site, to hold the bones excavated from the pits nearby. The number of mass graves excavated at this site is 55, and the number of victims killed there is estimated as 35,027 about 500 meters North along the river is the site of the prison, and there we interviewed the witness Yem Khom, aged 67, who had been a prisoner there in 1977. She made the following statement:

" I was put in prison in the Pol Pot regime because the KR thought that I was the wife of a Lon Nol officer, and a rich person. I was in this prison for four months in 1977,

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and had only rice bran and banana tree to eat. The KR used the bolt of a door to hit us on the head when they counted the number of prisoners before they gave us food. The prisoners were shackled, with the women separated from the men. The prison was built of wood and roofing tiles, and was as big as this field (she indicated a field approx. 20 meters square). The name of the prison chief was Kan.

Most of the prisoners were New People, and they were taken to the end of the island to be killed. Some of the prisoners died in the prison, and were buried behind the prison. She was forced to carry the pot of excrement used by prisoners, but could not lift it because she was so weak. The KR then knocked her to the ground and were kicking her, and when her son saw them doing this from upstairs in the prison, he cried out loudly: "Oh my God, my mother, how can I help you because my foot is shackled." She said that the KR took her son away then and killed him because of what he had said.

She was released after 4 months when the KR realized that they had not made a mistake, because her husband was only a mechanic, but by this time her husband and two of her children had been killed. Another son survived, but was permanently disabled from being beaten by the KR. Now she spends her days praying at the memorial which she knows may contain the bones of her family.

Koh Kor

Saang District

081001/02

We then drove North back along Hwy. 21 to Saang District HQ, where we again crossed the Bassac, and drove approx. 7 kilometers North along the Eastern side of the river to a point where we left the car. The Manager of the Koh Kor Island Development Area met us there, and we then walked about 1 kilometer across an estuary to Koh Kor island, where he showed us the site of five mass graves, and a wooden memorial containing more than 1,000 femurs. There were some skulls, but the Manager informed us that many of the skulls had been removed from this memorial, and taken to several Wats in the area. We were informed that there had been a purpose to built prison at this site during the Pol Pot time, but were unable to interview any witnesses at this site. Estimated 5-7,000 victims killed there.

Friday 1 March

Koh Thmey

Saang District

081003/04/05

On the Friday morning we drove 52 kilometers down the Eastern side of the Bassac River, through Kean Svay District to the Southern end of Saang District, to Kpork Commune, where we met the Commune Chief, Ms. Sok Bol who then accompanied us by ferry across to Koh Thmey island. Here she showed us the ruined Wat and School which had been used as a prison by the KR. In 1967 New People, including her husband, were imprisoned and killed here, and after 1976 Base people were imprisoned and killed at this site. Her two children were taken to Koh Kor and killed.

Sok Bol then took us to the house used as Santesok HQ, and then to a broken wooden memorial located near the pits. The memorial contained thousands of skulls and bones, slowly sinking into the ground, and being eaten by animals. 120 mass graves

were excavated there in 1979, from a total of approx. 200 mass graves. Estimated 5-7,000 victims killed at this site.

Wat Champuh Ka-ek

Kean Svay

080201/02/03

We drove back along the road (Hun Sen Hwy.) through Saang District to Kean Svay, and after lunch we arrived at Wat Champuh Ka-ek, which is only 5 kilometers South of the Kabal Thnal Bridge on the Eastern side of the Bassac River. Here we met the Deputy Chief of the District, and were shown the Wat and school buildings, which were used as prisons in the KR time, with mass graves all around these buildings, and a large brick and tile memorial containing thousands of skulls. We were told that many New People had been brought here in 1976 to be killed, and also that many victims were loaded onto boats at this Wat and were taken down the Bassac to the islands (Koh Por and Koh Thmey) to be killed. We were able to interview two witnesses who were prisoners at this site:

Witness Say Um (male) aged 68 years:

He said that he was a "base person", and that he was put in that prison because he was accused of being an accessory to thieves who had stolen from Champuh Ka-ek. The thieves were former KR soldiers who had escaped from their camp, and who were looking for food. He happened to be in the area where the soldiers were captured, cutting bamboo. His hands were then tied, and he was sent to the Wat, where he was put in a stupa and interrogated. When he did not confess, he was hit with a chair and wooden sticks, then shackled and put in the prison with 25 other prisoners. The men were put in the monk's dining room, and the women were put in the school nearby. Prisoners were provided with gruel to eat made from boiled rice and a little corn and at 6 o'clock every evening they were taken away to be killed.

25 East soldiers were brought by truck with their hands tied (1978?) and put into another school. Later he saw 25 East soldier's uniforms drying in front of the Wat, and the soldiers had disappeared. Around this time he was released, and became a cook for the prison. One day he saw many fresh gall bladders drying in a stupa. He was in the prison for eight months in 1977, and after he worked at the Wat until liberation.

Witness Bun Theun (female) Age 40 years:

" I know that my parents were sick, and I went to visit them. I was caught by Santesok and put into the school which was used as a prison (at Wat Champuh Ka-ek) with four other.