

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) MAPPING THE KILLING FIELDS OF CAMBODIA, 1997: khet PURSAT [O-15-pursat/a-cb-ps]

Location	Site Name/ Date	# of graves	Est. of victim	Witness	File # / ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
srok Sampou Meas	Bortey Ateavy/ 22 May 1997	7 pits	700	Somrith Voun សំរិត វៀន	R 052210 A/ 150501/2	N12°32'2035 "	E103°55'2236"
srok Kandieng	Bortey Por Chrey/ 23 May 1997	5 pits (4 pits & 1pond)	8000-9000	Seng Chhorn សេង ឈន	R 052302A/ 150201	N12°41'3394 "	E103°58'1285"
srok Bakan	kon Tnaot/ 23 May 1997	3 ponds	400	Dourng So ដួង សូ	R 052308A/ 150101	N12°36'0038 "	E103°40'5576"
srok Bakan	phum Rum Lech/ 23 May 1997			Doung So ដួង សូ	R 052309A/ 150102	N12°35'5582 "	E103°41'3788"
srok Bakan	wat Rum Leach/ 23 May 1997			Tach Sok ថាច់ សុខ	R 052309B/ 150103	N12°36'0147 "	E103°41'4817"
srok Bakan	Tarang Bal/ 23 May 1997	100 pits	500	Dourng So ដួង សូ	R 052309C/ 150104	N12°36'2316 "	E103°42'0538"
srok Krakor	Tuol Leap/ 24 May 1997	500 pits	7000	Nhem Dol ញ៉ែម ខុល	R 052402A/	N12°32'2586 "	E104°01'5758"

Documentation Center of Cambodia

Searching for the Truth

ស្វែងរកការពិត ដើម្បីការបង្ហាញនិងយុត្តិធម៌

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					150301/2		
srok Krakor	Monti Tavet/ 24 May 1997	50 pits	150	Nhem Dol ញ៉ែម ឌុល	R 052402B/ 150303/4	N12°31'4724 "	E104°05'0043"
srok Krokro	Andong Tapok/ 24 May 1997	2 pits	150	En Savy ឡែន សាវី	R 052403A/ 150305/6	N12°31'4609 "	E104°12'4436"

On 22 May 1997, DC-CAM assigned Mr. Sin Khin and Hak Sophal to go in search of witnesses, factual evidence and documents related to the genocidal crimes of Pol Pot's clique in several districts in khet Pursat including:

- 1- srok Kandieng
- 2- srok Pursat
- 3- srok Bakan
- 4- srok Krakor

Khet Pursat is located in the Western part of Cambodia. Traveling along National Road # 5, khet Pursat is 165 Kilometers from Phnom Penh. It shares boundaries with khet Kampong Chhang on the east, khet Battambang and Thailand on the west, Tonle Sap lake and khet Battambang on the north, and khet Kompong Speu and Koh Kong on the south.

There are 5 sroks in khet Pursat. They are srok Pursat, srok Kandieng, srok Bakan, srok Krakor and srok Phnom Kravanh. All these sroks are divided into 44 khums and 464 phums. It is planned to form a new srok called srok Veal Vong.

In 1980, there was a population of 172,332. In 1997, the figure has risen to 331,562 people, of whom 173,411 are women. There are 6,334 Chinese, Vietnamese and Islamic people, of whom 4,980 are women. There are 63,386 families. Khet Pursat covers 1,158,800 hectares, which is equal 11, 588 square meters which are divided into:

- Forest area : 879,900 hectares

- Planting area : 114,200 hectares
- Farming area : 2,100 hectares
- Vacant area : 164,700 hectares

Total Death Toll of Victims in khet Pursat is 94, 752

At 2:00 p.m. of May 22, 1997, we contacted munti khet in order to ask for permission to work in collaboration with the office of culture, the commissariat of police and the office of cults and religion of khet Pursat.

We met with Vong Sam Ol, cabinet chief of khet Pursat.

srok Pursat

At 4:45 p.m., we visited a criminal center comprised of a prison and a killing site. Now, the criminal center is a military fort of khet Pursat. It is located in phum Prey Nhi, khum Prey Nhi, srok Pursat, khet Pursat. It is 500 meters from munti khet. The old French colonial buildings which housed soldiers were used to detain 17 April people during Pol Pot's time. In the fort, the killing site included a pond, 5 wells and a water basin.

After 1979, some handcuffs and shackles were left in the fort, and some other iron spikes remained near the prison. The pond and the wells were filled with bodies. In 1979, some people came to unearth these locations to find the bodies of their recently-killed relatives. The corpses had not decomposed yet, and their identities were still recognizable.

The victims killed here were mostly Pol Pot's cadre who were guilty of alleged crimes and base people who committed wrongdoings, had freedom of movement, stole potatoes to eat, etc. They were gathered from small and main units in collectives. No prisoner could escape from his or her death.

The prison was built between 1976 and 1979. In 1979, many people came to excavate the locations in search of gold. We met with some witnesses named Samrith and Voeum, who came to the fort with Vietnamese soldiers and witnessed the corpses filling the wells, the water basin and the pond.

There are 5 wells, each of which is around 11 to 15 meters deep and 2 meters in diameter. The corpses in the wells have not yet been buried. The pond is 4 meters wide and 8 meters long. The water basin has remained unchanged. Based on the witnesses' testimony, we estimate that 700 victims were killed in the heavy artillery fort.

We also have 3 other witnesses:

- 1- Yun Voeun is a first lieutenant in the heavy artillery fort. He has used this location as a military base since 1979.
- 2- Ouk Savuth is now deputy chief of the office of culture of khet Pursat.
- 3- Om Salat is chief of the office of culture of khet Pursat.

We have got all this information from these 4 men who witnessed these occurrences in 19-----.

srok Kandieng

At 8:30 a.m. on May 23, 1997, we traveled to srok Kandieng and met with the district chief. Together with the district chief, khum chief, and a major with his soldiers, we went to Tuol Purchrei criminal center which is 15 kilometers from the governor's office of khet Pursat.

Tuol Purchrei criminal center

Killing site

The Tuol Pursat killing site is the former military fort of a battalion of khet Pursat soldiers in Lon Nol's time. The fort is called Purchrei, 15 kilometers from munti srok of srok Kandieng. The killing site is at Purchrey, which is located in phum Pring Khpuos, khum Sre Sdok, srok Kandieng, khet Pursat.

The commander of the battalion was Norng Chea. The fort is 600 meters wide and 800 meters long, surrounded by 4 fences at 10 meter intervals. Each fence is about 2.50 to 3 meters high. The fences were made of a kind of tree branches with thorns. The fort was built between 1970 and 1975 with help from local inhabitants. During the 5-year period, the Khmer Rouge were unable to break the fort.

The killing site is 6 kilometers from Tonle Sap lake. It is on a plateau with a big pond from which soldiers drew water for their use. People were transported to the site by large trucks, ordered out of the trucks, tied up at gun point, and marched to be killed. There was no prison at this site.

Kinds of victims

There were several phases of taking people to be killed:

- First phase (1975): The Pursat governor, chiefs of srok, chiefs of khum, officers, and soldiers of all ranks throughout khet Pursat, were gathered to be killed. Pol Pot's men deceived the people into thinking that top-level Angkar were allowing them follow a transitional course of study, and that they would have a chance to directly meet with top leaders. A short period after the study, people were to be able to resume their former occupations.

- Second phase(1975): Civil servants, teachers, professors, medical workers and functionaries of all fields throughout khet Pursat were gathered. Students were also taken. Ten truckloads of prisoners were brought to the compound at a time. When the trucks arrived at the killing site, the people were herded at gun point, bound and killed immediately. Pol Pot's men were deployed around the compound to prevent prisoners from escaping. Once all ten trucks were empty, they began the process again. Some people, eager to meet top-level Angkar, ran to get into the truck. Those who had not been selected could be found walking along the route, equally eager to meet top-level Angkar.

-Third Phase(1976): Farmers, base people in phum, khum, srok, whose relatives were civil servants, soldiers, or military police were gathered from khet Pursat, Phnom Penh and other places to be killed there.

- Fourth phase(1977-78): People from Eastern Zone such as khet Svay Rieng and khet Prey Veng, were brought to be killed there. Those people were provided by Pol Pot's Angkar with striped krama (scarves) for easy notification that they were Eastern people.

Pol Pot's men used machine guns to kill the victims, unlike most other places. Because of the large number of people killed there, tractors were used to bury the corpses. Victims were often killed in groups of 2, 3 or sometime 5 at a time.

Total Death toll at Tuol Purchrey:

1. 6,863 soldiers, teachers, professors, or laymen throughout khet Pursat, including the provincial governor Prum Li Huon.
2. 2,500 people who were involved in other trends.
3. 1,000 people from Eastern Zone.

In total, 10,363 people were killed throughout Tuol Purchrey:

We gathered this information from a witness named Seng Chhorn, who is now the commune chief of khum Sre Sdok, srok Kandieng. He has been khum chief since 1979 (photo and cassette recording enclosed).

srok Bakan

Srok Bakan lies along National Road 5 leading from Phnom Penh to Wat Battambang and Banteay Meanchey. We reached munti srok at 2:00 p.m. We met with munti srok, and with officers working in the office of culture, the office of cults and religions, and the commissariat of police of srok Bakan. We also obtained documents regarding statistics of people in communes throughout srok Bakan.

Wat Chan Rainsey Rasmey Romlech Criminal Center

Wat Chan Rainsey Rasmey Romlech is located in phum Romlech, khum Romlech, srok Bakan, khet Pursat. This criminal center is 15 kilometers from the district office of srok Bakan. It is comprised of:

- A killing site in phum Kaun Thnot, khum Romlech
- A killing site west of the school in phum Romlech, khum Romlech.
- A memorial Wat Cham Rainsey Rasmey Romlech in phum Romlech, khum Romlech.
- A killing site at football playground in phum Pralay Romdeng, khum Romlech, srok Bakan, khet Pursat.

We quoted information from a witness named Doung So, age 54, 1.64 (1.70) meters tall. In Pol Pot's time, he lived in a collective in phum Prum Ses, khum Bak Kandoal, srok Bakan. Since 1979, he has been chief of khum of khum Romlech.

The killing site in phum Kaun Thnoat, khum Romlech, srok Bakan, khet Pursat has 3 ponds into which victims were thrown. The death toll was approximately 400 victims. Khum Romlech is a place where families of young and old people of both sexes were shot dead and piled up under a big tree near the road from khum Romlech to khum Ta Loa.

The killing site in phum Pralay Romdeng, khum Romlech, srok Bakan, khet Pursat was a football playground riddled with around 100 to 150 pits with bodies. It is now covered with low bushes. Patients who died in the hospital in srok Bakan were buried here. Many other victims were taken from collectives. They were patients accused of pretending to be ill, or being lazy at work. Pol Pot's soldiers always tried to find way to kill all patients staying in hospitals.

srok Krakor

Srok Krakor is located 32 kilometers from the governor's office of khet Pursat along National Road # 5. It is 153 kilometers from Phnom Penh city.

Srok Krakor shares borders with the Tonle Sap on the north, with srok Kandieng on the northwest, srok Pursat on the west, srok Kravanh on the southwest, srok Tuk Phos in khet Kompong Chhnang on the southeast, and srok Banbo in khet Kompong Chhnang on the east. It is composed of 98 phums, 13 khums and 716 solidarity leagues (for planting).

At 9:15 a.m., we reached munti srok of srok Krakor and met with deputy chief. Then, we asked En Savoeun, cultural officer, about the existence and locations of criminal centers. We also found a witness named Nhem Duch who took us to Tuol Leap criminal center.

Criminal center

Tuol Leap criminal center contains a prison and a killing site, and is located in phum Tuol Leap, khum Beung Kantuot, srok Krakor, khet Pursat. It is 17 kilometers from munti srok of srok Krakor. The prison and the killing site are both in a forest area (Pha-chek and Tbeng). The distance between the prison and the killing site is only 100 meters. The prison was built from 1976 until 1979. The forest (Tuol Leap) is 3 hectares wide and 2 hectares long. The whole forest area is filled with approximately 400 to 500 pits, each of which is long enough to hold a corpse, and occasionally wide enough to hold up to 7 corpses.

300 people were imprisoned here at any one time. The prisoners were forced to do hard labor-digging up tree stumps. The ability to perform hard labor only allowed the laborer the chance to live a little longer. Anyone unable to complete the work was killed at once. The prisoners had nothing to eat but thin rice soup; they quickly became very thin and weak. When the 300 prisoners were interrogated and gradually taken to be killed, another 300 victims were brought in by horse-carts.

The victims killed here were a mixture of base and new (17-April) people gathered from collectives in khums throughout srok Krakor. There was a total death toll of -----victims. We received all this information from the witness Nhen Dul, age 58, who was imprisoned here until 1979. In Pol Pot's time, he was a carpenter making plowing tools. He was a base person. Every day and night many prisoners were killed and he was the one who buried them. He was the last man who had buried corpses for 2 months. Now, he lives in phum Chra Long, khum Anglong Thnoat, srok Krakor, khet Pursat (pictures of the witness, and interview on cassette included).

At 10:15 a.m., we arrived at another criminal center.

Ta Vet criminal center

Ta Vet criminal center is composed of a prison and a killing site. The center is in phum Beung Kamtuot, khum Beung Kantuot, srok Krakor, khet Pursat. It is 15 kilometers from munti srok of srok Krakor.

Victims imprisoned and killed here were taken from the 9 collectives in the 9 khums throughout srok Karkor. Secretly, at a time, one family was taken to be killed at night without notice from people living nearby. The victims were young and old, base and 17-April people, and included laymen, Chinese, Vietnamese and Islamic people.

There are approximately 50 to 60 pits with a total death toll of 100 to 150 victims. This information was also provided by Nhen Dul.

Criminal center (wells of Ta Pak)

Audaung Teuk Ta Pak (the wells of Ta Pak) are located in phum Samrong, phum Kbal Trach, srok Krakor, khet Pursat. They are 1.50 kilometers from munti srok of srok Krakor. Victims were taken from the prison in srok Krakor, which is 200 meters away. The prison now serves as the srok Krakor hospital. Generally, at 4:00 p.m., many prisoners were brought to be killed and thrown into two ancient wells with no pulley. When there was water, the wells were used by all the villagers. Other than prisoners, many other victims were taken from phum Chra Long, Khum Kampong Luong, khum Kbal Trach. They were simply people who committed slight wrong-doings such as stealing potatoes to eat or being sickly. The death toll in those wells is 100 to 150.

This information was provided by En Savoeun, cultural office of srok Krakor. In Pol Pot's time, he was supposed to make palm juice and sugar from palm trees. When he was on the top of the palm tree, he witnessed victims being killed just 300 to 500 meters away.

At 11:00 a.m., we visited a memorial located in Wat Bopha Sovann Botum. It is a stupa where remains excavated from the wells of Ta Pak and from other places have been properly kept. Very few remains are displayed. They are kept as a symbol for the 20 May Hatred Day holiday every year. (GPS was not used because there were too few remains.)

Conclusion

We have visited 4 sroks such as srok Bakan, srok Kandieng, srok Pursat and srok Krakor. We found important criminal centers comprised of prisons and killing sites, found witnesses and fixed the site locations using the GPS machine. Although the roads were very difficult, we still tried to use them to reach our destinations. To summarize, we visited 8 sites and 2 memorials.

We have also enclosed documentation copied from a srok Bakan survey detailing the number and location of sites, prisons, pits and victims killed under Pol Pot's time. We hope our survey team will be able to visit again when we have the chance.

Since we informed the authorities in phum, khum and srok of the purpose and the goal of our mapping project, we received helpful support each step of the way. For some locations which may have caused security problems, we were accompanied by security guards to the locations.