

មជ្ឈមណ្ឌលឯកសារកម្ពុជា

Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) MAPPING THE KILLING FIELDS OF CAMBODIA, 1997: khet SVAY RIENG [T-20-svay rieng/a-cb-sv]

Location	Site Name/ date	# of graves	Est. of victim	Witness	File #/ ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
srok Svay Rieng	Phum Chong Prek/ 20 March 1997	1 pit	40	Ream Kimsan រៀម គីមសាន	R 032009 A/ 200601	N 11°04'7402"	E 105°47'5019"
srok Romeas Hek	Prey Rom deng/ 21 march 1997	1 pits		Chear Choem ជា ជីម	R 032103 A/ 200402	N 11°26'1827"	E 105°43'6979"
srok Romeas Hek	Prey Bos Tnaot/ 21 march 1997	10-15 pits	1000-1500	Touch Chea តូច ជា	R 032104 A/ 200403	N 11°27'6441"	E 105°43'9844"
srok Romeas Hek	Toul Akream/ 21 march 1997	80 pits	2000	Mom Sar Morn ម៉ី សាម៉ន	R 032104 B/ 200404	N 11°25'9924"	E 105°42'9081"
srok Romeas Hek	wat Kompong Trach/ 21 March 1997	1		Chab Sarom ចាប សារ៉ុំ	R 032102A/ 200401	N 11°24'5980"	E 105°47'6494"
srok Romeas Hek	Wat Svay Tan Teum/ 21 March 1997				R 032108 A/ 200405	N 11°18'3255"	E 105°45'4230"
srok Romduol	wat Kampong Ampeul/ 22 March 1997	1	425	Meas Thoeun មាស ធៀន	R 032202 A/ 200301	N 11°17'2997"	E 105°48'2222"
srok Rumduol	Kporp Ampeul/ 22 march 1997	9 pits	425	Meas Thoen មាស ធៀន	R 032203 A/ 200302	N 11°17'3024"	E 105°47'9672"
srok Rumduol	Wat Ba Krong 22 March 1997	1	404	Choum Ven ឈឹម វែន	R 032207 A/ 200303	N 11° 09'9729"	E 105°46'7033'
srok Rumduol	Tuol Por Pork Veeul/			Choum Ven	R 032208 A/ 200304	N 11°08'8469'	E 105° 47 '4911'

Documentation Center of Cambodia

Searching for the Truth

(ស្វែងរកការពិត ដើម្បី ការបង្ហាញនិងយុត្តិធម៌)

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	22 March 1997			ឈឹម ផែន			
srok Rumduol	Phum por Pork Veul/ 22 March 1997	1		Om Son អ៊ុំ សុំន	R 032208 B/ 200305	N 11 ⁰ 09'0661"	E 105 ⁰ 47'5784"
srok Chan Ttrea	Bontop Ksach/ 22 March 1997			Kong Vassa គង់ វ៉ាសា ១	R 032303 A/ 200101	N 10 ⁰ 59'6553"	E 106 ⁰ 05'5049"
srok Chan Ttrea	Tuol kontu Chkai/ 23 march 1997			Kong Vassa គង់ វ៉ាសា ១	R 032303 B/ 200102	N 11 ⁰ 59'6341"	E 106 ⁰ 05'3781"
srok Chan Ttrea	Boh/ 23 March 1997	1		Kong Vassa គង់ វ៉ាសា ១	R 032303c/ 200103	N 11 ⁰ 59'8320"	E 106 ⁰ 05'3754"

Geographical location of Svay Rieng

Svay Rieng is a province located in Eastern Zone and in Region 23. It shares borders with Vietnam on the south and east, and with khet Prey Veng on the west and north. We traveled down national road 1 from Phnom Penh to the provincial town of Svay Rieng, 125 kilometer from Phnom Penh. We arrived at 11:00 a.m.

Statistic of victims in Svay Rieng according to the Renakse Report

-Peasants : 77,387 people
-Civil Servants : 16,922 people
-Monks : 234 people
-Disabled : 155 people

Total death toll : 96,760 people

There are 34,737 family members of victims filed petitions.

At 2:00 p.m., we went to the cabinet of the province in order to proceed with the work with the provincial governor of Svay Rieng. We met:

- 1- Mr. Mom Oam-first deputy chief of the cabinet.
- 2- Mr. Prom Uy-second deputy chief of the cabinet.

Then, we got to the provincial office of culture and fine arts. We met:

- 1- Mr. E Vy-chief of the provincial office of culture.
- 2- Mr. Sok Sopheap-deputy chief of the provincial office of culture.
- 3- Mr. Bun Sat-deputy chief of the unit of patrimony under the provincial office of culture.

We contacted the office of culture in an attempt to obtain relevant documents. We took many photographs and indicated genocidal sites, killing fields and memorials on the map of the provincial town. The office of culture then appointed Mr. Bun Sat and several other cultural officers to accompany us to the said three districts to help us with our research. With regard to relevant documents, Mr. Y Vy promised to have his officer make a copy for us. Unfortunately, since our visit occurred on a weekend and the officer responsible for the documents was absent, we could not get copies of the documents.

Next, we contacted the commissariat of provincial police and met Mr. Daung Saroeun, who was a sub-commissioner of the province. Mr. Daung Saroen then assigned 2 policemen.

- 1- Mr. Mom Samorn-security policeman.
- 2- Mr. Keo Lorn-security policeman.

At 3:00 p.m., we traveled to a killing site in phum Chong Prek, Sangkat 1, around 1.50 kilometers west of the administration office of the provincial town. At the site, we asked about information from an elderly lady Ream Kin San, age 60, who was a witness living in the commune before 1975.

After 1975, she was evacuated by Pol Pot's men. When she returned to live there in 1979, she was the first evacuee to do so. She elaborated that previously she lived in a house she built herself. At first, she did not realize there was a pit. The pit was covered with clear water she used to water her crops every day. One day, she had the pit dug for use as a toilet. When dug, the pit was 1.50 meters wide, 3 meters long, and 1.50 meters deep. It contained skeletons, skulls, cloth used for covering the face, hair and black clothing still in good condition. About 40 bodies were found arranged side by side in the pit in early 1979. She assumed that these victims were not simple people; they were, of course, Pol Pot's cadre members killed in late 1978 and early 1979.

Through the clear elaboration of the old lady Ream Kim San, we decided to record her interview on cassette and take her as a witness. Presently, she lives in phum Chong Prek, Sangkat 1, Svay Rieng provincial town and her house is right next to the site.

srok Romeas Hek

On 24 March 1997, at 8:00 a.m., we took a trip to srok Romeas Hek along National Road 3, 42 kilometers from Svay Rieng.

We arrived at 9:30 a.m. and we met:

1- Mr. Kong Ret-district chief.

1- Mr.Chap Sarum-chief of the district office of religious affairs.

1-Mr. Uong Soeun-chief of the district office of culture.

Geographical location of srok Romeas Hek

Srok Romeas Hek is located in the northernmost part of khet Svay Rieng. It is bordered by Vietnam on the east, khet Prey Veng on the west, srok Kamchay Mear on the north, and srok Romduol in khet Svay Rieng on the south.

Statistics of population of srok Romeas Hek

There are 112,384 people, 59,121 of whom are women. They mostly cultivate rice, coupled with subsidiary businesses like making sugar from palm tree fruits, and weaving a variety of containers made of basket cane or bamboo. The district covers 78,460 hectares, of which 33,776 are brushwood and inundated forest, and 35,460 are rice paddies.

According to information provided by officials in srok Romeas Hek together with the map featuring the province, we realized that there were sites at Tra Paeng Sdao in phum Prey Rom Deng, khum Chrey Thom, 14 kilometers from the district office. The security office (prison) in phum Prey Rom Deng, khum Chrey Thom, srok Romeas Hek, is now marked by a big banyan tree. The forest that had previously surrounded the killing site has since been cleared by farmers seeking land for growing rice.

First witness

Chin Chin is 48 years old, male. In Pol Pot's time, he was a base villager who lived in phum Rom Deng, khum Chrey thom, srok Romeas Hek, where he continues to live. He told us that there are around 100 victims in this village, 10 percent of whom are female. The victims were guilty of committing immorality, secretly stealing something to eat, and talking about something arbitrarily. The victims were also accused of being White Heads, of joining a political party and generally getting involved politically, and of harboring animosity against Pol Pot. The victims taken to be confined here had to work one or two days and then somehow disappeared. At nights, the victims were shackled.

Fortunately, there was a prisoner detained there who has survived. His name is Ta Chhay, now living in phum Dak Por, khum Chreg Thom, srok Romeas Hek, khet Svay Rieng. We failed to meet him because we did not inform him in advance (we may not meet him).

Second Witness

Touch Chea is 56 years old, male, 1.70 meter tall, fairly black complexion, and has lost some teeth. In Pol Pot's time, he was a chief of a communal cooking house and lived in phum Thmey in the same khum, srok, khet as the first witness. After 1979, he was a chief of phum Thmey in the same khum, srok and khet.

He informed us that there was another big site of killing in Prey Bos Thnoat located in phum Thmey, khum Chrey Thom, srok Romeas Hek, khet Svay Rieng. Everyday, around 40 to 50 victims were ordered by the killers to walk in lines. They were people from Svay Rieng and many others from Phnom Penh during 1975-76. He also added that the duration of taking people to be killed was about 3 to 4 months.

Sometimes, he saw victims being walked in the evening toward Prey Bos Thnoat. This site of killing was located completely in the forest, at a place where Viet Kong soldiers had previously built defensive trenches after fleeing into the forest. Each trench was 3 meters wide, 4 meters long and 2.5 meters deep. So, presumably, there were roughly from 1,000 to 1,500 victims in one pit. In total, there were 10 to 15 pits and one well.

At 12:00 noon, our research team went on our trip to another killing site called Prey Akrien in phum Ansoang, khum Chrey, srok Romeas Hek, khet Svay Rieng. There we met a witness named Mey Samorn, male, aged 41, now living near the site about 100 meters from the site Prey Akriem, where he has lived since 1979. In Pol Pot's time, he joined an infant unit in the above-mentioned phum, khum, srok and khet.

He told us that he saw victims being taken to be killed there. Most of the victims were male members of the 17-April people evacuated from Svay Rieng and the city. Other victims were people chosen through their biographies and those taken from security office in phum Prey Romdeng, khum Chrey and from security office Veal Svay. He said that in 1977, victims were brought to dig pits in that Prey Akrian. In 1978, lines of 40 to 50 victims were taken to be killed there during the night time.

He then led our team to check the site, showing us approximately 80 pits. Each pit is 2 meters wide, 4 meters long and 1.50 meters deep, in which there are presumably around 20 to 30 victims. In total, there were from 1500 to 2000 victims in the compound,

which covers an area of about 1 square kilometer. Now, many small bushes have grown around the place. He furthermore gave more information in detail, which we recorded on cassette. We also took several photos for keeping as documents.

At 3 p.m. we were off to another killing site, a security office in phum Svay Tateum. Now, we use this place as the communal administrative office.

The interrogation office in wat Svay Tateum is marked by Kul Chres Yeay Tep hut. There is a prison in front of wat Svay Tateum in phum Svay Tateum, khum Trapaeng Sdao, srok Romeas Hek, Khet Svay Rieng. This site is 18 kilometers west of the administrative office of srok Romeas Hek. There are 2 prisons for detaining victims, each built in 1976, and each of which is 3 meters wide, 12 meters long. We have found 2 witnesses living there.

First Witness

Tok Chim is 67 years old, male, 1.62 meters tall, white skin, and gray hair. In Pol Pot's time he lived in phum Khneal, khum Trapaeng Sdao, srok Romeas Hek, khet Svay Rieng. Now he lives in phum Svay Tateum, khum Trapaeng Sdao, srok Romeas Hek, hket Svay Rieng. His job, both now and during Pol Pot's time, is to build houses, bridges or sewage systems.

He confirmed that he witnessed victims being walked in lines, taken from everywhere, especially from srok Rom Duol. Approximately 50 to 60 persons walked the victims to wat Svay Tateum, where the killers waited, received and temporarily put the victims in prison. During the following days, victims were interrogated and taken to be killed gradually during the night. During the day, victims were forced to do manual labor, such as digging out tree stumps and digging water canals. He also told us that none of the victims have survived. In late 1977 and 1978, all the victims were killed; there were no survivors.

Second Witness

Khvi Samouth is 60 years old, male, 1.67 meters tall, fairly black skin and black hair. In Pol Pot's time, he lived and grew rice in phum Svay Tateum, Khum Sdao, srok Romeas Hek, khet Svay Rieng. Now, he is a chief of phum Svay Tateum in the same khum, srok and khet. He said that the victims taken to be killed in the prison in wat Svay Tateum included military police, soldiers, policemen, civil servants, teachers, and students during 1976 and 1977. Until 1978, it was a mass and cruel killing.

This witness testified that he was a member of a group who disinterred many of the victims' remains, and deposited them at kul Chres in front of wat Svay Tateum-presently Yeay Tep hut. Most of these remains have since been eaten by cows. For more

detailed information, this second witness largely confirmed what the first witness had said. We recorded his testimony and interview on cassettes for keeping as documents.

srok Rom Duol

At 8:30 AM, on 25 March 1997, we traveled down the national road 13 bound for srok Rom Duol, 10 kilometers far from Svay Rieng provincial town. We met Mr.....in charge of the affairs of srok Rom Duol Cambodian People's Party, and Mr.....in charge of the office of culture in srok Rom Duol.

Geographical location of srok Rom Duol

srok Rom Duol is in the Northern part of khet Svay Rieng, in Region 23, Eastern Zone (in Pol Pot's time). It is bordered by Vietnam on the East; srok Svay Chrum on the West; srok Romeas Hek on the North; and srok Svay Teap on the South.

Site of killing

The killing site at Khpoap Ampil is located 15 kilometers from the district office of srok Rom Duol, through the gateway of wat kampong Ampil, exiting left off of the national road 13. The victims taken to be killed here included soldiers, civil servants, teachers, students, and intellectuals. They were people of both sexes and of all ages. In 1975, during a period of 2 to 3 months, victims evacuated from Phnom Penh were taken to be killed here. It was the first phase of killing. Near the site of killing were the killers' houses with big tall mango trees, hedged by tall bamboo trees. Victims whose hands were tied were walked into this site and then killed and placed into the pits in the forest nearby.

Pits of victim bodies

We went with the witnesses to visit the site and saw 9 big pits and many other small pits. The location of the site is on a lowland plain which is always flooded during rainy season. At this time of year, however, it is dry. Each pit is 3 meters wide, 4 meters long and 1.50 meters deep. Unearthing of the remains began in 1981. Presumably there are around 420 bodies buried there.

Memorial for depositing remains

At a distance of around 500 meters from the site of killing is a memorial built in 1992. The memorial, made of concrete with tile roof, is reasonably small enough to keep 425 remains (with photos included).

Security office, prison and site of killing

The site of killing: Khpoap Ampil is in phum Kampong Ampil, khum Kampong Ampil, srok Rom Duol, khet Svay Rieng. The memorial is also in wat Kampong Ampil.

The security office and the prison, which were in phum Kampong Yuon in Pol Pot's time, are now located in phum Kampong Ampil, khum Kampong Ampil, srok Rom Duol likewise.

Victims were taken from the prison in phum Tuol Chres, khum Tuol Chres, srok Rom Duol, khet Svay Rieng. Victims taken to be killed at Khpoap Ampil were both prisoners taken from Tuol Chres prison and people evacuated from the city. In addition to the victims taken from the security office and the prison in phum Kampong Yuon, many other victims were also taken from the security office of srok Samrong which is in srok Rom Duol, khet Svay Rieng.

Victims were walked by the killer during the day time to the site of killing at Khpoap Ampil. Then, the killers would rest for a while. From 1:00 PM in the afternoon, they took all the victims to be killed at once. Note that at the site of killing are the houses of perpetrators who permanently resided there, a cadre who waited for victims taken from prisons and security offices. This group is distinct from those persons who led the victims to the site and handed them over the victims to the killers. The perpetrators were Phann, Keut, Suon, and Chhum, who was their chief and who is now missing. All the information about the site of killing at Khpoap Ampil was obtained from 2 witnesses. We interviewed them and recorded their testimony on cassettes for keeping as documents.

First witness

Meas Thoeun is 54 years old, male, 1.66 meters tall, with white skin and gray hair. In Pol Pot's time, he was a construction worker of houses, bridges, and sewage systems for Pol Pot's clique, and lived near the site in phum Kampong Ampil, khum Kampong Ampil, srok Rom Doule, khet Svay Rieng, where he still lives. He is currently a chief of the administrative office of khum Kampong Ampil, srok Rom Doule, khet Svay Rieng.

Second witness

Ros Pot is 35 years old, male, 1.64 meters tall, with fairly black skin, black hair and a bald head in the middle. In Pol Pot's time, he joined a mobile work brigade, and lived in phum Kompong Ampil, khum Kampong Ampil, srok Rom Duol, khet Svay Rieng, where he still lives.

According to the information provided by these two witnesses, we have learned that a perpetrator named Phan still survives in khum Sang Khor, srok Svay Teap, khet Svay Rieng. Due to the distance and lack of warning of the perpetrator's existence and whereabouts, we could not go to meet him in person.

At 4:00 PM, our team continued our trip to the site of killing, the security office and the prison at Tuol Popok Vil in phum Popok Vil, khum Popok Vil, srok Rom Duol, khet Svay Rieng. This site is 7 kilometers from the district administrative office, West of the administrative office of srok Rom Duol. Tuol Popok Vil is a hillock surrounded by dense thickets of bamboo trees. Near the hillock is a big lake. Note that the security office and the prison were built on this high ground (hillock), whereas the site of killing is on the West around 400 meters from this hillock Tuol Popok Vil.

We found 2 witnesses there.

First Witness

Chhin Venn is 58 years old, male. In Pol Pot's time, he was a chief of brigade (communal authority) at Trapaeng Cham Bok, khum Svay Chek, srok Rom Duol, khet Svay Rieng. Presently, he lives in phum Chork, khum Chork, srok Rom Duol, khet Svay Rieng, and from 1979 until now, he has been an officer of the district office. In 1977, he retired. He told us that he also joined in the excavation of remains in 1981 and 1982. The remains excavated were brought to deposit in a memorial in wat Ba Krong. He helped accompany us to the site of killing at Tuol Popok Vil.

He further told us that all the victims were taken both from the security office and the prison at Tuol Popok Vil as well as from Trapaeng Veng in phum Tuol Chres, khum Chork. Among the victims were civil servants evacuated from the city and from all the collectives throughout srok Ror Duom.

In 1976, people were moved from one commune to another throughout the district. At that time, people were selected to be killed in accordance with a trend that anyone who was a soldier, second lieutenant, or first lieutenant was the first to be killed; subordinators, policemen, military police and spies were preferably the first to be killed. Although civil servants, teachers and students were deceived into thinking that they were assigned to plant potatoes and bananas, and would be allowed to have enough to eat, they instead were taken to be killed one by one gradually.

Prisoners found at fault for breaking a plow or hoe, or for taking leather rope used to bind buffaloes for cooking, were accused of being enemies, and were subsequently taken to be killed. For more detailed information, we recorded the interview on cassette for keeping as a document.

Second witness

Om Son is 65 years old, male, gray hair, small, short, black skin, gilded Teeth, 1.57 meters tall, and blind in his left eye. In Pol Pot's time, he was a new deportee and lived in phum Tuol Popok Vil, khum Popok Vil, srok Rom Duol, khet Svay Rieng, where he still lives. We visited the killing site with him.

Pits of victim bodies

There are 9 big pits and some 400 to 500 small pits. Each victim family of 4 to 6 members were put in small pit, while 40 to 50 victims were buried in big pit. To sum up, there were around 2000 to 2500 people killed in the period of 1975-77; the number of killings increased in 1978. As with the first witness, this second witness told us about the kinds of victims taken to be killed here. We recorded the interview on cassette for keeping as a document.

srok Chan Trea

At 8:30 AM, on 23 March 1997, we reached srok Chan Trea, traveling along the national road 1, turning right leading to the district town which is 49 kilometers from khet Svay Rieng.

Geographical location of srok Chan Trea

srok Chan Trea is bordered by Vietnam on the East, by srok Kampong Ro on the West, by srok Svay Teap on the North, and by Vietnam on the South. Srok Chan Trea lies in Region 23, Eastern Zone (in Pol Pot's time). Since 1979, 11,771 families and a total of 39,640 people, of whom 21,599 are female, live in this srok. Cham Trea is composed of 10 khum.

- Rice field area is 20,036 hectares.
- High land area is 17,117 hectares.
- Dwelling area is 14,912 hectares.
- Forest area is 865 hectares.

- Water area (Lakes, ponds, streams,...) is 3527.90 hectares.
- Flooded area is 10386.78 hectares.

Total area is 42777 hectares.

There are also several thousands of hectares of mineral and muddy area. Most people grow rice and sell some kind of product to make their living. Upon arrival, we went to meet Mr. Kong Vassa, district chief of srok Cham Trea. We asked him about how to find the criminal center, the security office, the prison and the site of killing. He then took us to meet the first commune chief of khum Mes Thngok, who accompanied us to the criminal center.

The criminal center is in the area Khtoap Khschach (given name). The security office and prison are in phum Bos, khum Mes Thngok, srok Cham Trea. In order to get to the place, we went approximately 7 kilometers from the district administrative office, turning left and taking another 200 meter drive there. The local people refer unofficially to the site of the killing as Tuol Kantuy Chhke. We found a witness named Kong Vassa who was imprisoned here for 5 months in 1975 when he was a student from Phnom Penh city.

First witness

Kong Vassa is 48 years old, male. In Pol Pot's time, he lived in phum Po, Khum Mes Thngok, srok Cham Trea, khet Svay Rieng. Now, he is the district chief of srok Chan Trea. He spent part of his life in the prison and the security office in phum Bos, and was therefore very familiar with the site. He testified as follows:

There were 6 security offices and prisons built with tile roof during 1974-75. The building was used to detain students, policemen and military police. Civil servants in 1975 were the kinds of people evacuated from the city and Svay Rieng, etc. When interrogated, victims were all forced to confess, contrary to the truth, that they were second or first lieutenants. Those victims who readily confessed to being lieutenants, as they were forced to do, were the first to be taken to be killed. Any one who denied to answer was kept aside for some reason for awhile. Every day, people were forced to do manual labor, such as building dikes, digging canals or digging ponds. If anyone could not fulfill their work, they were to be taken to be killed one by one. The killing lasted from 1975-78; after this time, the prison was relocated.

Location of the pits

The site of killing is called Tuol Kantuy Chhke. Accompanied by the witnesses, we went to examine and take pictures of the site, pits and remains. As the witnesses said, the pits had not been covered yet. There are hundreds of pits-big and small. Many were already dug, while others were not. Each small pit contained 1 to 2 bodies, whereas the big one could hold 4 to 5 bodies. Small pits scattered in the rice field, on the rice embankments are now covered with soil; therefore, accurate estimation is difficult. However, according to the witness, people have found many remains while plowing. Therefore, we can estimate that there are approximately from 1500 to 2000 victims. The killing lasted from 1975-78.

Second witness

She is 48 years old lady 1.50 meters tall. In Pol Pot's time, she lived very near the compound of the prison in phum Bos, khum Mes Thngok, srok Chan Trea, khet Svay Rieng. She knew more about the brutal torturing in the prison and at the site of killing. We acquired more detailed information which we recorded on cassette. Her testimony comported with what the first witness had said.

Conclusion

In Svay Rieng, our team successfully completed our research. We have visited many places in a relatively short time, and pursued our objective diligently from the outset. We did research first in srok Romeas Hek and then in the neighboring district srok Rom Duol. Criminal centers are far away from the districts though, the criminal centers are also near one another. we spared no effort in the fulfillment of our work. As for srok Chan Trea which is in a far distance, we did research on Monday that was the last day.

We therefore made great effort mentally and physically in untiringly carrying out our responsibility. The provincial office of culture promised to get documents copied for us. Unfortunately, the officer responsible for the documents was off on Friday, and had returned to his home, which is somewhere far from the province, for the weekend. And as we were on Saturday and Sunday, we decided to obtain more documents later.

Documents we have in our possession include a map indicating sites of killing and memorials, which enabled us to get right to the indicated sites in the districts. However, there are still some other places we have not visited yet. Hopefully, we will investigate them when time permits.