

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA

PROJECT TO PROMOTE ACCOUNTABILITY: A VISIT TO DISTRICT 109,  
SOUTHWESTERN ZONE

14-18 JULY 2010

Prepared by Terith Chy

GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

Kirivong district is one of Takeo's 10 districts and is located along the national frontier between Cambodia and Vietnam. Approximately 40 kilometers on a smooth paved road from the provincial town of Takeo, Kirivong is now home to a total population of 100,000 residing in 12 communes.<sup>1</sup> During the Khmer Rouge regime, the district was codenamed District 109, located within Region 13 of Democratic Kampuchea's (DK) Southwestern Zone. Region 13 covered most of Takeo province during the Khmer Rouge period and District 109 was one of the Region's 5 districts, namely District 105 (Tramkok), District 106 (Angkor Chey), District 107 (Treang), District 108 (Koh Andeth), and District 109 (Kirivong).<sup>2</sup>



A huge rice paddy in District 109 where people were forced to work restlessly with little food ration.

From 14 to 18 July 2010, DC-Cam's Project to Promote Accountability (PA) made a field trip to Kirivong district or District 109 of Southwestern Zone. The zone was infamous due to its leader, Ta Mok, also known as Pol Pot's butcher, who died in military prison in 2006 just before the ECCC began to function. The Project's purpose is to

<sup>1</sup> "General Population Census of Cambodia 2008, National Report on Census Results," (Phnom Penh: National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, 2009), p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Socheat Nhean, "Democratic Kampuchea: Chain of Command and Sociopolitical Structure of the Southwest Zone," May 2010, p. 61, available on [http://www.dccam.org/Tribunal/Analysis/pdf/Chain\\_of\\_Command.pdf](http://www.dccam.org/Tribunal/Analysis/pdf/Chain_of_Command.pdf).

locate former members of the Khmer Rouge's organization and the Project believes these Khmer Rouge members possess monumental information as to the hierarchical commands and orders and the administrative structure of control.

## METHODOLOGY

Before the field trip, several meeting sessions were taken place at DC-Cam as to prepare staff for this important activity. The preparation includes the discussion on methodology as to how this information gathering should be conducted and the use of existing questionnaires so as to be in line with DC-Cam ethics and conducts. Ten staff members were divided into three smaller teams and these three teams would roam the various communes in District 109 trying to locate the former members of the Khmer Rouge and obtain information, using the existing contacts and available biographical documents. These are the composition of the three teams:

Team 1: Sokvisal Kimsroy, Sengkea Sar, Kunthy Seng and Rasy Pheng-Pong

Team 2: Suyheang Kry, Pechet Men, Terith Chy

Team 3: Vannak Sokh, Sotheany Hin, Lakhena Ry



A farmer worked on the ricefield in Kirivong.

Using available data and existing contacts, the Project sought to locate, identify and interview former members of the Khmer Rouge organization from the most inferior to the most senior. To begin with, the team identified previous contacts in District 109 the Project had established since 2001 using biographical data. Stemming from these contacts, the Project continued to locate, identify and interview other former Khmer Rouge currently residing in the District. This has been tremendously effective in the sense that informants usually point to their former colleagues and this had resulted in ascertainment of facts confirmed by multiple sources. A set of questionnaire carefully designed and reviewed by lawyers were used for the purpose of this interview, with an emphasis of avoiding self-incrimination by informants.

## GENERAL OBSERVATION OF DISTRICT 109 DURING DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

District 109 was located within the administrative control of Southwestern zone, which was then headed by a secretary and Pol Pot's right hand Ta Mok. Ta Mok

died in a military prison of old age in 2006 just before the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, known officially as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, was up and running. According to Ben Kiernan's interview and confirmed by informants from Kirivong, District 109 was controlled by a district secretary named Tith, who was Ta Mok's brother-in-law. There has been conflicting information as to the whereabouts of Tith at the moment. According to informant Chhouk Khim<sup>3</sup>, Tith is at the moment holding an important position in the government and living in Phnom Penh; whereas another informant told the Project that Tith lives a decent life in Saen Chao near Thai border, with big house and many cars. The team has not been able to locate the whereabouts of Saen Chao.<sup>4</sup> Another informant said that both Tith and his wife, Ken, are still alive, but does not know where exactly.<sup>5</sup>

Socheat Nhean, a researcher whose research focused primarily on the functioning of Southwestern Zone, recommended that the Project make further field trips to District 105 - currently Tram Kakk District, in particular 4 communes namely Cheang Torng, Samraong (Ta Mok's birth place), Trapaing Thom, and Pork Trabaek (today, O-Saray) - should it needs details as to the information and whereabouts of Tith, leaders in District 109 and many other leaders across DK. According to Socheat, these communes of District 105 were the base area, where many high ranking leaders were trusted by the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) and were promoted to leading positions across the DK.

For more individual stories, please see the daily report by each team below.

## SECURITY SYSTEM



Wat Preah Theat Memorial and Remains and Shackles left over from the Khmer Rouge regime. Memorials as such across the country are in immediate need for preservation.

<sup>3</sup> Chhouk Khim lives in Trapaing Run Village, Trapaing Run Commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Tim Phal, 59, a former member of Standing Committee in Kampaeng Commune, now living in Samraong Khang Keut village, Kauk Prich Commune, Kirivong District, Takeo Province.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Hay Yim, 50, former medical staff of the district, living in Thom village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.

Wat Preah Theat Suosdei was a main security center and execution site in District 109. According to DC-Cam's mapping report, there were a lot of bone fractions when the grave sites were dug in 1984.<sup>6</sup> Today, due to poor preservation, only a small pile of bone fractions remained at the memorial site, locked in a backyard of the Wat. The project found at least two survivors who were security forces of the security center, both of whom refused to speak to the team. Many informants told the team that head of Wat Preah Theat security center were dead. According to interviewees, there were a few more small-sized security centers in communes throughout District 109 at least until 1975.

## CHALLENGES

In general, the team noticed an environment of certain-level of fear amongst those the team had met and sought to interview, a fear for prosecution or implicating her/himself or others in prosecution currently conducted by the ECCC in Phnom Penh. Although generally informants agreed to be interviewed and provide information he/she possesses as to the functioning of the Khmer Rouge organization, a small number of these individuals refused to be interviewed or identified. Most, if not all, informants the Project sought to meet or met have certain extent of information relevant to the prosecution of surviving Khmer Rouge leaders and, thanks to relentless efforts by the ECCC and many Non-governmental Organizations working to promote the success of the Khmer Rouge tribunal, this is an extremely positive indication as to the outreach of ECCC' works.

During the period, PA team was able to locate and conduct interview with 19 individual members of the Khmer Rouge's members; although, the team would have been able to collect more interviews had informants not refused to be interviewed. These interviews were recorded in audio and visual format. It should be noted that some of these informants refused to be recorded visually. At least in one instance, an informant who otherwise possesses incredible amount of information in regards to the functioning of the Khmer Rouge's navy refused to be tape-recorded and visually recorded and taken picture for his personal reasons. Nonetheless, PA team was allowed to take note of the interview. The reason is understood, however, given the fact that the ECCC is concurrently prosecuting senior members and those most responsible for the crimes committed during the period between 1975 and 1979.

END.

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<sup>6</sup> Youk Chhang and Kosal Phat, "Mapping the Killing Fields of Cambodia, 1998," Documentation Center of Cambodia.

## DAILY TEAM REPORT

**Team:** Sokvisal Kimsroy, Sengkea Sar, Kunthy Seng and Rasy Pheng-Pong

**Date:** 14 July 2010

### **Geographical Description:**

At about 40 kilometers from the provincial town of Takeo, there located Tun Loap commune of Kirivong District. It took us about 35 minutes to get to the commune. From Tun Loap, we continued our trip to Kampaeng commune, another 20 kilometers from Tun Loap. The target places where the team was to work were in the villages of Wat Phnom and Hantea of Kampaeng commune. First, we went to Hantea village where we met one biography owner who PA team member met a few years ago. The village was quite close to Tany commune of Kampot province. To get to the village, we passed many hills and mountains and beautiful scenery of running rice paddies.

### **Summary of Interviews:**

We did not conduct interviews this afternoon. Instead, we collected information of former members of the Khmer Rouge who still live in and out of Kampaeng commune. We met Priek Kea, a former salt paddy worker in 1975 and a medical staff in 1977. She was a biography owner, already interviewed by DC-Cam's PA team. Dressing in a farmer uniform, she walked slowly across the road and glanced at the team. She was working on her farm when we arrived. She did not recognize us at first. After we gave her a Searching for the truth magazine, she realized that we came from "Searching for the Truth" office. A lot of villagers came to us and looked at the magazine. Kunthy Seng, Sengkea Sar and Sokvisal Kimsroy distributed a lot of magazines and Case 002 booklets to the villagers. Then we started working with few older villagers, one of whom was Priek Kea. We noted down information from villagers, particularly biography owner Priek Kea, 50, and non-biography owner Nget Thien, 64.

As a result, we got information as below:

- a. Phal (family name unknown), female, lives in Prey Cheung village, Kauk Prich commune, Kirivong district. She was a chief of women unit during Khmer Rouge regime. Her house is in the east of Wat Chambakk.
- b. Phy, (family name unknown), female, lives in Prey Cheung village, Kauk Prich commune, Kirivong district. She was a cadre of Kampaeng commune during Khmer Rouge regime. She was Phal's sister. According to Nget Thien, Phal and Phy used to torture people, especially the "new people."
- c. Horn, (family name unknow), female, lives in Koh Kong province. She was also a chief of women unit during Khmer Rouge regime.

- d. Norng Kuor, female, lives in Prasat village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district.
- e. Nouch Nan, female, lives in Anlong Veng district, Oddar Meanchey province. She used to visit her home village in Hantea village (50 meters from Kea's house). She was a worker of salt paddy unit.
- f. Pok, (family name unknow), female, lives in Veal Rinh commune of Kampong Som province. She was a worker of salt paddy unit.
- g. Ang, male, lives in Stung Hav district of Kampong Som province. Thien said that Ang wished to return to live in his home village a few years after the liberation in 1979, but he chose not to as he was afraid that people in the village would attempt to kill him for what he did in the Khmer Rouge time.
- h. Ke Uch, male, KR soldier, lives in Hantea villager, Kampaeng commune.
- i. Phann Sokh, male, KR soldier, lives in Hantea villager, Kampaeng commune.
- j. Kean Chev, male, KR soldier, lives in Daun Chrung village, Kampaeng commune.
- k. Ngim, male, KR soldier, lives in Daun Chrung village, Kampaeng commune.
- l. Tha, male, chief of Battalion's Tank Unit, lives in Prasat village, Kampaeng commune.

**Observation/Leant from interviews:**

People living in this small village were friendly and very kind. A large number of people in the village were base people. During Khmer Rouge regime, all base people were evacuated to Koh Andet district and new people to district 105 (Tram Kakk district). After the evacuation, KR brought Khmer Kampuchea Kraom to live in this village. Before KR evacuated people to district 105 and 109, KR killed people without detaining them. There was no security office in Kampaeng commune. KR did not kill base people; they killed new people and buried in craters of B-21 bombs. The team met two women, who talked about her husbands who were killed by KR cadres. They said of almost same story about killing "new people."

**Challenge:**

Priek Kea told the team that she is scared of the return of the dark regime again. She recalled that at first she, while at 16, was told by a village chief at her house to join the revolution. And the second time she was interviewed by PA team member about her life during the KR regime. The team explained her to our purpose and work again as she didn't seem to understand. At the end, she was happy to share her story with us. All villagers in the village have never known and/or received our searching for the truth magazine. Moreover, they do not know the process of ECCC. Priek Kea said that she has never listened to any radio broadcasting the news about KR tribunal. A commune policeman said that he used to receive and read the magazine once in a few years ago.

**Team:** Vannak Sokh, Lakana Ry and Sotheany Hin  
**Date:** 14 July 2010

## Geographical Description

Today, we went to work in Prey Liep village, Prey Ampork commune, Kirivong district. It took us approximately 1 hour to get to the place from provincial town of Takeo. Along the way, the area was most picturesque with rice paddies lining up as far as the eyes could see and hills and mountains on the horizon.

## Summary of interviews

The group asked to interview Mrs. Maong Mach, (ម៉ាង ម៉ាច) (TKI0506, I00313).



Maong Mach (TKI0506)

However, she told us that she was busy cooking *num korm* (Khmer traditional cake) for her children. We then asked her give us names of other former members of the Khmer Rouge who are alive today and living there. She gave us four names. Unfortunately, one of them has already died; the other three have moved to live in Battambang and Ratanak Kiri province. To confirm

the information received, the team asked for information for the four people from neighbors and they gave the same information.

## Observation

In the village, people are friendly, but a few ladies were unhappy and did not want to talk to us. We suspected that they were afraid.

## Challenge

We didn't interview Mrs. Maong Mach because she is busy making cakes for her children. So we postponed the interview to lunch time of the next day.

## Learns from interviews

Today, we learnt of geography of Prey Liep village, Prey Ampork commune, Kirivong district and of people's daily living. We never know people eat *chrach* (small local plant) and make sour soup with *chrach*.

END

**Team:** Suyheang Kry, Pechet Men and Terith Chy

**Date:** 14 and 15 July 2010

### **Geographical Description:**

In Cambodia, rainy season normally starts from May to October. Due to various reasons including the climate change, the rain this year started in July, two month later than it used to be. Thus, this month most of the farmers were busy with their farming – ploughing and planting. Our target villages – Trapeang Khchao and Trapeang Run – were approximately 50 km from the provincial town. Along the road to the village, we could see the beautiful greenery view of rice fields coupled with the quiet and traditional way of life of the people.

### **Summary of Interviews:**

On 14 July, the team met with Uon Phan (ឃុំ ឆៀន), village chief of Kakoh, Angprasat commune, Kirrivong district. Uon Phan allowed the team to conduct interview with him at his house. He was also a village chief under the Khmer Rouge regime. According to the interview, he once visited Wat Preah Theat, the security centre. He did not give much information as to what he had seen, except for the place was run. The village comprised mainly of “base people” with occasional deposition of the new people before they were sent on to other places. Uon Phan did not allow the team to take his photograph.

On 15 July, we firstly looked for the village chief of Trapeang Kchao in searching for Ms. Sin San (TKI0541) with whom PA Project used to conduct the interview 4 years ago. Having talked to Ms. Sim Leng, deputy chief of the village, we learnt that Mr. Roeung (រ៉េង) who lives in Trapeang Run village also served as KR cadre and came from Anlong Veng. After meeting Ms. San, we went on to Trapeang Run village and finally we managed to meet Mr. Roeung. After introducing ourselves and our purposes of the visit, Mr. Roeung agreed to give us interview, but he did not allow us to take any photograph and record his voice. We were only allowed to listen to his KR experience and take note as much as we could. Mr. Roeung joined the navy division 164 soon after the KR totally controlled Cambodia in 1975. His superior was Meas Mut who is Ta Mok’s son-in-law. He directly received order and reported to Meas Mut. There were about 10,000 forces in the Division located in Kampong Som. He said he was on the sea during the DK regime that was why he had little knowledge about the situation on mainland. According to Mr. Roeung, during the KR regime, there were always small disputes with VN but not significant ones. He added that he learnt about the killing, evacuating, or torturing only in 1979 which then causing him to have no trust on KR anymore. He then tried to stay away from KR but he knew it was a life and death matter. After that, he along with around a thousand of villagers lived in Say Kei camp which supported by UN until circa 1992 the camp was eliminated and people were ask to go back home. He did know a lot

about the maritime issues and KR structure, including the water frontier on the map. He once used to be interviewed by an American Journalist when he was in the camp. Since then, he said, he wanted to keep a quiet and happy life and he wished we would understand.

Next, in the afternoon, we were introduced by Sin San (the owner of Biography No I00284) to meet with Chhouk Khim (ឈួក ឃឹម). We were told that Khim used to be a District Medical Staff and her husband was the Trapeang Run village chief during KR period. Different from what we experienced this morning with Roeung who was afraid of being known, Khim instead was very friendly



Chhouk Khim (TKI0757) was interviewed at her home.

and she wanted her story to be published, if possible.

Despite under the name of being a Khmer Rouge medical staff who normally known as cruel and rude towards the patients, she stated, the villagers even today expressed thanks to her for her kindness and help when they were in the hospital, take for example Yeay Sae and Chhoeun. Initially at the beginning, Khim was conscripted from her home village of Kampaeng, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district to join the army in the jungle. However, she could only stay there for three days and came back home along with other thirty eight women whose age roughly were between 13 and 15 years old.

After, she was transferred to do the rice planting for the army near Phnom Din. There she worked for about three months. She again was transferred to the Kirivong District to be a tailor whose job was to make clothes for the army and ordinary villagers. She was not trained beforehand but forced to do the task or she would be punished. She worked there for around one year under the supervision of Yeay Khoeun, a woman deputy chief of the District. She then was transferred to work as midwife without any prior training in Wat Mongkul, hospital for pregnant women. She regularly had argument with the chief of that place, Yeay Roeun. At one point when there was a District Meeting among hospitals' staff of hundreds of people, she went on the stage and reported to the meeting about inequality and bad treatment in the hospital. Exactly three days after her report, she was once again transferred to the cooperative; so then she could be killed anytime without any knowledge of anyone. There she and her husband, Trapeang Run village chief, were married. When the VN troop invaded Cambodia, her family fled along with KR soldiers into the jungle. There she was separated from family and almost died. Luckily, she said,

her good deeds saved her life. She survived after dreadfully walking away from the living hell.

**Observation/Leant from interviews:**

Through our observation, though it was 30 years ago, Mr. Roeung has not yet been able to talk openly about his KR experience. We sensed his fear. Though, he verbally said that he was not afraid of telling, we could understand he wanted to maintain his living condition free of disruption and implication. He never told his children about what had happened during KR but he did suggest that "It's better for them to learn it from school rather than from me". Also, he supported the tribunal by claiming that the tribunal brings a sort of relief as people breaking their hatred and sufferings.

**Observation/Leant from interviews:**

Despite losing everything and begin with her empty hands, Khim struggled to live her life again though under the former name of KR medical staff. She is now happy as she has a decent living condition. She said she wanted her children to learn more about the regime in order to avoid its' recurrence. She was very friendly and helpful. She gave names of some more cadres. One of them was a close subordinate of Ta Tin, chief of Region 13, whose name is Chong living nearby the village of Trapeang Run. Second, it is a guy name Chhoeun who used to work as a security police in Wat Preah Theat security office.

**Challenge:**

It's quite challenging for us to build trust within such a short period of time. It seems to us that most cadres apparently did not reveal everything in order to keep them safe and not being noticed. At least in one instance, we managed to take note when the interview was not allowed to be recorded. Apparently, locating former cadres is not a tough task, but making them voluntarily give us information is a very difficult one.

END

**Team:** Vannak Sokh, Lakana Ry and Sotheany Hin

**Date:** 15 July 2010

**Geographical Description:**

Today, we worked in two village and two communes as Prey Liep village, Prey Ampork commune, and Hann Tea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. The villages were located approximately 65 Kilometers from Takeo provincial town. Along the way, the team passed many mountains surrounding by rice fields.

**Summary of interview:**

Rasy Pheng-Pong has had previous contacts with former Khmer Rouge cadres who were living in Hann Tea village. He asked that my team interview two people in this village. From these two villages, we conducted three interviews. The followings are the summary of the interviews:



Mr. Phos Chev aka Phos Chhean (TKI0752)

Mr. Phos Chev aka Phos Chhean (ផ្លុស ចេវ ហេវ ផ្លុស ឈាន), aged 55, former Khmer Rouge soldier in Division 520, Battalion 16, living in Hann Tea village, Kampaeng sub-district, Kirivong district, Takeo province. In 1970, he volunteered to serve as a soldier at Kirivong district town with three guys who were the same him, because of

complaint from two ladies, Horn and Kou, who claimed that he was a worthless tea's person [it means that he was not equal useful tea yet]. He received a military tactics before being sent to the front line. And then, he was sent to guar at Khmer Vietnam border line in Division 520, Battalion 16. Phea was his company chief. In 1971, he fought against the Vietnamese troops. In addition to serving as a soldier, he had to do the farming in the paddy fields whenever his position was substituted by another assigned soldier. While fighting, he sometimes had nothing to eat because there was no one bringing food for him and his group.

In 1977, the Khmer Rouge made a deal with the Vietnamese, sending Khmer Krom to Vietnam and asking the Vietnamese authority to return the defected Khmers.

Chev did not remember the number of people being exchanged. He was wounded four times. Only when wounded did the Khmer Rouge allow him to visit his family. Upon his visit, he was sympathetic towards his family members who were put to work in extreme condition. After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, he returned home and reunited with his family in 1980. He has always kept listening to news regarding an on-going process at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal on radio. Speaking of the Khmer Rouge leaders being put on trials at the ECCC, he firmly stated he wants to see those leaders receive a life sentence and, if possible, death penalty. He said this because he was angry with the Khmer Rouge leaders who led the country down to year zero.

Mrs. Maong Mach<sup>7</sup> (TKI0506, I00313), aged 50, former Khmer Rouge Medical Staff in P-6 Makara hospital, living in Prey Liep village, Prey Ampork sub-district, Kirivong district, Takeo province. In 1975, upon reaching the age of thirteen, she was forced to serve as a medical staff at Prey Ampork hospital, located in Prey Ampork commune, Kirivong district. Born during the war time, Mrs. Maong Mach could not go to school. Though knowing that she was illiterate, a village chief still chose her to work as a medical staff for the Khmer Rouge. Ren and Phally, chiefs of Prey Ampork hospital, gave her medical training and instruction. She said that she learned nothing from the training and their instruction. Still, she eventually was put to inject patients with medication. To cure the patients, medical staff at the hospital used rabbit dropping-like pills and herbal medicine. They used *Phity* (a kind of small plant) to treat those who had swelling disease.

After working there for almost two years, she was sent to work at P-6 Makara hospital in Phnom Penh. Before assigning her to work in the hospital, the Khmer Rouge medical staff at P-6 Makara hospital trained her for a week. To survive, she needed to clean the wound of the patients and treated all kinds of patients. Being unable to work well, she had been reeducated a few times. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime, she went back to her home village. She is now a farmer. In regard with the court established to prosecute the Khmer Rouge leaders, she said that she had such little knowledge of it. Having had no interest in listening to on-going process broadcasted on radio, she knows nothing about the court.

Mrs. Pao Nhorn (ប៉ៅ ញ៉ែន), 60 age, former Khmer Rouge Medical Staff in Kirivong district, living in Hann Tea village, Kampeng sub-district, Kirivong district, Takeo province. Born to a poor family, unable to go to school, she helped her parents do the farming to make a living. At one point, she married Mr. Sim Samin, a



Pao Nhorn (TKI0753)

<sup>7</sup> She never had been interview before because when PA was in her house, she was busy to join her son's wedding at Kampong Som. So we met her again to conduct interview as possible.

military during the Sangkum Reasniyum regime. In 1970, her husband volunteered to enter the marquis for the purposes of liberating the country and restoring King [Sihanouk] back to his throne. In 1972, he was a regiment chief. He had a messenger to protect him anywhere he went. At that time, he was shot dead from Wat Angkor Chey by an unknown monk when he led his subordinates into the *wat*. After the death of her husband, Angkar sent her to serve as a district medical staff, honoring her husband who had served Angkar and sacrificed his life in the fight. First, she soaked *Sleng* fruit (a type of poisonous fruit), *Damlaung Mee* (the kind of potato), *Kduoch* (a kind of small tuber) into water, pounded them together and produced the finally products which looked like rabbit droppings. Originally, this type of medicine was used to cure ague. However, the herbal medicine was used to treat any kind of illness when there was no other alternate medicine. If a patient died, Angkar did not allow us to inform their family and the information should be buried. In late 1976, she got married with Sam Net who was a member of the village's economic unit. Then she returned home to serve as a cook at a cooperative. She never saw Angkar arresting people, but new faces came to serve as medical staff all the times. Ta Mok used to pay a visit to her district hospital once. At the time, she witness a visit of a delegation; Ta Mok greeted them.

Below is the information of other members of the Khmer Rouge, obtained from the above interviewees:

1. Mr. Heng Pril, former Khmer Rouge cadre, lives in Prey Liep village, Prey Ampork commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.
2. Mrs. Khann Kim, former medical staff of the commune, lives in Hann Tea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.
3. Mr. Am Kun, former Khmer Rouge cadre, lives in Hann Tea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. He is now a teacher.
4. Mr. Khann Sokhorn, former Khmer Rouge soldier, lives in Hann Tea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. He is now a deputy chief of the village.

### **Observation/ Challenge/ Learn from interviews**

In Hann Tea village, many former Khmer Rouge cadres are still alive today. Some of them were apparently afraid. They did not want to talk to us at least in the beginning. Some of them had already been interviewed by the Project some years ago. Nonetheless, they had been significantly motivated to speak out so as to preserve these testimonies as historical records for young generation.

During interview, Maong Mach's husband was drunk and kept interrupting the interview session. Vannak Sokh managed to take him away from the interview.

From interview with Pao Nhorn, the team learnt of how the Khmer Rouge's herbal medicine was made of and for what purpose. The team also learnt of the information that at some point Khmer Rouge reached a deal with the Vietnamese

authority for an exchange of Khmer Kraom with defected Khmers sheltering in Vietnam. Despite these sources, the team believes the information needs further corroboration.

END

**Team:** Sokvisal Kimsroy, Sengkea Sar, Kunthy Seng and Rasy Pheng-Pong  
**Date:** 15-16 July 2010

## Geographical Description

Today, we continued to work in two communes, Kampaeng and Kauk Prich.

## Summary of Interviews



Norng Kou (TKI0754)

**Norng Kou** (នីង គូ), aged 62, female, lives in Prasat village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district. She joined the revolution in Kampaeng commune when she was 16 years old. Before joining the revolution, she studied at Wat Kampaeng School. After 18 March 1970, some schools in Kampaeng commune were closed because of bombings. She was in grade 11, at the time, and

today she cannot read and write. Two years later, her village was strongly attacked by bombings. For example, Horn's mother and some villagers died from bombings in Hantea village. A lot of people knew this event. Kou said that the reason of why American came to bomb at her village because there were some Vietnamese soldiers hiding in the village. Kou herself used to hear those soldiers speaking in Vietnamese. She added that the VN soldiers stole her mother's belongings. Many younger females were raped by the soldiers. "I hid myself in the trench under my house when I saw the VN soldiers on the road." Ream was rapped by the soldier. Nop was a commune chief of Kampaeng at that time. "My father Norng Suong was a village chief and he was also chief of an ambush unit" in Kampaeng commune. In 1971, KR cadres persuaded him and his team to join the revolution.

"From 1975, I was a group chief of district mobile work brigade of Kirivong. There were 26 members in my group, and the responsibility was to construct dam and canals, produce and harvest rice and perform other works in the district," said Kou. She worked for the mobile work brigade until 1978. She told me that she wished to have a higher position than this, but she could not. Angkar knew that she had some neighbors working for Lon Nol and Sihanouk regime. She also told that:

1. Bo, female, deputy chief of Kirivong district. She came from district 105.
2. Khoeun, female, was a chief of regional women unit. Presently, she disappeared.
3. Chron, female, was a chief of mobile work brigade of district 109. She now disappeared.

4. Phy, female, was a chief of women unit of commune. She is now living in Kauk Prich commune of Kirivong. I plan to interview her the next day.
5. Phal, female, former deputy chief of Kampaeng commune. She used to work as soldier of Platoon 1, Company 21, and then she was promoted to commander of Company 21. She is now living in Samraong Kaet village, Kauk Prich commune, Kirivong district.

In 1978, Kou moved to live in Saom commune of Kirivong after she got married with her husband in mid-1977. Her husband was a soldier. 55 couples got married at the same day as Kou.

**Tuy Tha** (តួយ ថា), aged 54, former KR soldier, lives in Prasat village, Kampaeng commune. "I was born in Srae Khcheay village, Angkeo commune, Treang district. I was a soldier during KR. Then I was a commander of a tank battalion. Maong Yang is my father. My wife's name was Chring. I married her in 1977. Right now I have three daughters. The oldest one is 31 years old. Before March 18, 1970, I was a student in Wat Baray. When I finished grade 9, I volunteered to join the revolution as a soldier in Takeo province. Sary introduced me to join the revolution. My first fighting was at Prey Sandaek and La-vae. From 1973-1979, I became a soldier in Southwest zone. I was very young at that time. Sam Bit was a commander of division 2 of Southwestern zone. After the liberation, I was a commander of Unit "KH". In 1976, I worked as road repairer at Slakou (Kampong Speu) and at the same



Tuy Tha (TKI0755)

time retained my position as a commander. I spent only a few months working with this unit. I was not allowed to visit home. I got married with my present wife, together with other 6 couples in my military company. My wife was also female soldier who worked for the same company, but different unit. After married, I was promoted to commander of Company 13, Division 210. I didn't know who promoted me, though. My soldiers and I went through a lot of battles together."

**Keo Uch** (កែវ ឌុច), 51, a former Khmer Rouge soldier in Division 250, now lives in Hantea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. Born to a peasant family, Koe Uch, the fourth child in the family, had to quit studying at grade 10 due to the military coup in 1970 and U.S bombings. All schools in his commune were closed and there were no students and teachers coming to school. Like other

peasant children, to make a living, he helped his family do the farming. Life during the period was not easy. Everyone needed to do the farming to survive and had to be on alert all the time in order to survive the U.S bombings. One day during the Lon Nol regime, his father died in a tragic bomb explosion.



Keo Uch (TKI0762)

In 1974-1974, unknown Khmer Rouge (KR) soldiers forcibly evacuated the entire villagers to Angkor Chey district of Kampot province. Those unknown KR soldiers told villagers that the area was not stable due to the fight between two groups: (1) Thieu-Ky (South Vietnamese military) and Lon Nol soldiers, backed by the U.S against the Khmer Rouge forces. His family, consisting of four siblings and a mother at the time, lived together

with other with base people in Angkor Chey commune from that moment until the liberation day of Phnom Penh, 17 April 1975. His family lived there, helping others do the farming. After hearing that the Khmer Rouge seized power from the Lon Nol in Phnom Penh on 17 April 1975, his family decided to return to his home village.

Life became normal for a while after the liberation of Phnom Penh city by the Khmer Rouge; everyone reunited with their family and continued to make live on farming. At the time, a cooperative dining hall had not been created. However, in 1976, everything started to change and it did so dramatically. We no longer had rice to eat, but watery rice soup. In 1976, Ang, a youth chief, put other children and Uch to work in a production unit that was located in Angprasat village, Angprasat commune. While working in the unit, he had malaria. As his condition became worse and worse, his unit chief sent him to be hospitalized for a week. After fully recovering from malaria, he was enlisted in the army.

Prior to being sent to the frontier between Cambodia and Vietnam, other children and Uch received a military training tactics at two places – (1) Ta-O pagoda and (2) a mountain where he and other children were trained to shoot in both a short and long distance and used the rifle effectively.

He said he served in division 250. His group was stationed only on the frontier, while other special forces were ordered to fight and moved into Vietnamese territory. It was probably in late 1978 or early 1979 that the Khmer Rouge soldiers retreated and ran away from the frontier. Like others defeated soldiers, he tried to escape as soon as possible without thinking of anything, except to save his life. Then upon his arrival at Angkor Chey district of Kampot province, he decided to stop

running away, changed his uniform, threw away his rifle, and walked back home. Fortunately, he travelled home safely, reunited with family, and made a new life.

**Phan Sokhan** (ផាន សុខាន), aged 53, a former Khmer Rouge soldier in Division 250, now lives in Hantea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. After the coup against King Sihanouk in 1970, Phan Sokhan, the oldest son of a peasant family in Hantea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, had to quit school at grade 10 because (1) all teachers decided to go Phnom Penh, escaping the fight between Lon Nol soldiers and the Khmer Rouge in this area, and (2) the U.S bombings in the area. Sokhan, now a fifty-three-year-old man, recalled that he tended the cows and helped his parents do the farming after leaving school.

At one point which he cannot recall, Ta Nhep (deceased), a commune chief at the time, ordered all male youths in the commune to do the farming at Bandenh pagoda, located in Reamandeuk commune, Kirivong district. Mr. Sokhan worked and lived there for almost a year. First, he was an ordinary youth, who had to do the farming, produce rice, and dig canal. Later on, he was appointed a security force, who took villagers to work and performed assigned tasks.

Then after the liberation of Phnom Penh city on April 17, 1975, he was put to work in a mobile work brigade. Speaking of working condition, he worked from place to place and daily. Then in mid-1976, Ta Ang, a unit chief, suggested that he serve as a district

soldier. Then he agreed. Later on, after being sent to receive a military tactics, he was ordered to station along the border between Takeo and Vietnam. Then his group was summoned to station at Svay Rieng. Over there, he was wounded and sent to Nak Leung hospital and later 6 January hospital.

After the wound on his left leg fully recovered, he decided to go back to his home village. Upon arrival at home, the Khmer Rouge put him to serve as a cook in the previous force (division 250). Luckily, at this time, instead of carrying a rifle and shooting, he just cooked rice and food for the soldiers. After the Khmer Rouge soldiers retreated, he escaped with others soldiers, and at one point, returned to his home village and reunited with his family.



Phan Sokhan (TKI0756)



Tim Phal (TKI0760)

**Tim Phal** (ទីម ផល), aged 59, a former commune standing committee of Kampaeng commune, now lives in Samraong Khang Kaet village, Kauk Prich commune. “I studied at Wat Cheung Prey School. I stopped studying in 1966. Then I was 19 years old. In 1971, I joined the revolution with Phan at Kauk Prich commune office. At the end of 1971, I moved to live temporarily in Tram Kakk district.” The reason of moving was that her family was always bothered by VN soldiers. “In Tram Kakk, I worked for Office 150. In December 1972, I was promoted to chief of women unit in Khporp Run commune. After that I became a female soldier in region 13. Khoeun, chief of women in Region 13, was my superior. Saom was chief of region 13. In 1973, I was promoted again to commander of company 13.” From 1974-1978, she was a member of standing committee of Kampaeng commune. Nhep was a

chief of standing committee, and Sarou was deputy chief. During interview, she said:

- Saom, male, chief of Region 13.
- Khoeun, female, chief of women unit of Region 13.
- Tom, male, was chief of Kirivong district. He was accused of disloyal to Angkar and arrested in 1978.
- Bo, female, was a deputy chief of Kirivong district. In 1978, she was transferred to work in Kien Svay district, Kandal province.
- Tith, male, was a deputy chief of Kirivong district. His wife is Ken who is Ta Mok’s sister. Ken was a chief of hospital of Kirivong district.
- Sokh, male, was a member of standing committee of Kauk Prich commune.
- Aun, female, was member of standing committee of Ream Andaek commune of Kirivong district.
- Khann, was a standing committee of Prey Ampork commune of Kirivong district.
- Horn, female, was a chief of women unit of Kampaeng commune. She is now living in Kampong Som province.

#### **Observation/Leant from interviews:**

Through an interview we conducted with Uch, we observed that he did not honestly tell us what happened to him when sent to the frontier. For example, yesterday, he stated he of course had gone to fight inside the Vietnamese territory. But today, he said that he had been put to station along the border only. Another thing was that when asked whether he had knew or heard about the Khmer Rouge tribunal, he said that he had never heard anything regarding the court. But his wife sitting nearby said they both heard news about the Court. After we informed him some

information relating to the tribunal, he said he supported the court and wanted to see justice being done as well.

He was honest and told us almost everything about his life. However, at one point, when speaking of the time his unit and he were summoned to station in eastern zone, at frontier between Svay Rieng and Vietnam, he was reluctant to give details of what happened.

With the interview conducted with Mr. Uch this morning, we learned that the Khmer Rouge only trusted poor peasants and base people whose relatives did not work for the previous governments, namely King Sihanouk's and Lon Nol's. Though Mr. Uch served as a soldier, fighting for the Khmer Rouge, his mother and siblings, who lived in the cooperative, were not well treated. Moreover, we became aware that the Khmer Rouge drafted the youth and immediately sent them to the frontier after a short training. We received lots of useful feedbacks and wonderful tips for other interviews. These were the lessons learned. We tried our best to obtain useful information from other former Khmer Rouge cadres we met. Just like other former Khmer Rouge cadres who now live in the village, Mr. Sokhan is of little knowledge regarding the Khmer Rouge court.

### **Achievement**

Aside from the information recorded during the interview, we learnt that there are many other former Khmer Rouge soldiers and cadres, who are still alive and living in nearby villages. Uch this morning gave us two more names: (1) Ang, a former youth chief, who now lives in Stung Hav, Kampong Som province and (2) Sang, a former chief, who now lives in Chhann Chum village, Chhan Chum commune, Chum Kiri district. What's more, he pointed to his former comrade-in-arm, Mr. Phan Sok. With the information received from Mr. Sokhan, we learned that Mr. Keo Uch served in a special unit of division 250 summoned to go into the Vietnamese territory. But he was not sure whether Mr. Uch had gone to fight in the Vietnamese territory or not.

### **Challenge**

It was hard to convince Uch to tell us information he possessed. Of course, we did not use the leading questions. At some point, it took us a long time to get information from him. We could see that sometimes the interviewee gave us irrelevant answers or information, though he understood our question well.

To us, at the very beginning of our talk, Mr. Sokhan looked reluctant to give details of his life during the Khmer Rouge regime. After providing an extensive explanation, particularly mentioning the name of Mr. Keo Uch, a guy who recommended us to meet Mr. Sokhan, we could see Mr. Sokhan give us a friendly nod.

There were four challenges we faced while interviewing Mrs. Tim Phal. Firstly, Mrs. Tim Phal seemed nervous to talk with us. She said, "I am getting afraid, talking with strangers [our group.]" However, after Rasy explained her about the purpose of our coming and why we wanted to conduct interview with her, she smiled and allowed us to start asking. Secondly, there were lots of people gathering around us, being eager to know what we were talking about.

### **Impact**

With the information we obtained from the interviewees this morning, we could find more and more Khmer Rouge cadres. Information given by Mr. Sokhan could guide us to find more cadres: Ta Pal, a former unit chief, who now lives in Tbal Ken village, Banteay Meas commune, Touk Meas district, Kampot province and Phan, a militiaman chief, who now lives in Andaung Chraung village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district.

END

**Team:** Vannak Sokh, Lakana Ry and Sotheany Hin

**Date:** 16 July 2010

## Geographical Description

Today, we worked in Andaung Chrong and Hann Tea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.

## Summary of interview

We were interviewing two people who were former Khmer Rouge cadres, who are still alive in Hann Tea and Andaung Chrong village as below:

**Mr. Am Kun** (អំ គុណ), 58, chief of blacksmith unit of District 109, now lives in Andaung Chrong village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. He is now a teacher and principal of Sok An Ang Svay primary school. He quit school at grade 3 of old regime (now grade 9). In 1971, he was ordained a monk at Wat Kampaeng in order to avoid being conscripted to join the Khmer Rouge military. In 1974, [Yeay] Bo visited the Wat and then Bo volunteered to join the military. Other monks, including the Wat's patriarch, also joined the revolution at the same time. Their jobs were to raise pigs. Kun was later assigned to learn to make pots and from 1976 was making pots for Angkar. In late 1977, Kun was sent to assist Kirivong's military in the fight against Vietnam. Kun was scared as then he did not even know how to handle guns. His jobs then included transporting food and carry the wounded soldiers. He added that [Yeay] Bo, Ta Tith, Ta Tom were former Kirivong chiefs of District 109. He was a blacksmith group chief of the district. Ta Um was a handcraft district chief. When he was ill, [Yeay] visited him a few times. He stayed near [Yeay] Bo's office. So, he witnessed the arrest of [Ta] Nhep, Kampaeng commune chief due to his commission of moral offence with married woman.



Am Kun (TKI0758)

Because he stayed near district office, he once witnessed an event in which perhaps hundreds people coming from Vietnam holding white handkerchiefs in their hands demanded to talk to Khieu Samphan. He was told that these people were Khmer Kraom. Their request for meeting with Khieu Samphan had been denied and instead they all were sent to Wat Preah Theat security prison. Kun said there were prisons

in District 109, one in Kauk Prich for light offence and Wat Preah Theat for serious offence. Kun said that in late 1977, [Ta] Sieng was replacing [Yeay] Bo. [Ta] Sien came from Tram Kakk district or District 105. In late 1978, Kun was assigned to work along the Khmer-Vietnam frontier, carrying food to battlefield. In 1980, he married and now has 6 children, five daughters and a son. He knew about the ECCC from radio.

**Mrs. Khann Kim** (ខ្មែរ គីម), 50, former commune medical staff, now lives in Hann Tea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. Kim had 3 brothers and 4 sisters. One of her seven siblings died. Her father's name is Khann Khom and his mother's name is Phann Keo. Kim dropped out of school at grade 12 in the old days (now grade 1) at Hann Tea Primary school. She quit school to help

her family tend cows and do household chore. In 1975, she was became a medical staff in Hann Tea village and at the time there were three female medical staff. Sokh Nang, chief of commune medical staff, was her superior. The village medical center treated light illness and commune medical center serious illness. In 1976, Kim was promoted to be commune's medical staff. The commune medical center had approximately 50



Khann Kim (TKI0759)

staff, most of whom were women, and was located in Wat Phnom of Kirivong district, now a school for children. Kim was a medical staff from 1976 to 1979. Staff as well as chief of the medical center were replaced and didn't know where they had gone. First, the chief was Siem, female, from Tram Kakk (District 105) and later Riem, female. Kim received medical training for one month with a fair-skinned foreigner, who was assisted by a translator. She did not know what language was used. According to Kim, a lot of patients ended up dead at the commune medical center. It was difficult to treat those with swelling disease, caused by malnutrition. Both ordinary villagers and the medical staff ate gruel as food was scarce. Some of the prisoners were transferred to district medical center and Kim did not know what happened to them. Kim said that liquid medication for injection was imported and tablets were made locally.

After interviews, the team was given many names for further interviews such as:

- [Ta] Um, chief of District 109's handcraft unit, now lives in Chroy village, Prey Ampork commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. His father's name was Kong Lok.

- Mr. Kann Phan, chief of district's textile unit, lives in Panlai village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. His mother's name was Phen.
- Mr. Prakk Chea, chief of district's mechanical unit, lives in Ta Peou village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.
- Mrs. Sieng Ly, midwife during Khmer Rouge regime, living in Thom village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. Her husband's name was Chhuon.
- Mrs. Yim, sub-district medical center medical staff, living in Thom village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. Her husband's name was Chien and father's name was [Ta] Norn.

**Notes: The following two people had not been interviewed as yet because when they were busy farming afar from home.**

- Mr. Heng Pril, former Khmer Rouge cadre, living in Prey Liep village, Prey Ampork commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.
- Mr. Khann Sokhorn, former Khmer Rouge soldier, living in Hann Tea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. He is now a deputy village chief.

### **Observation/ Challenge/ Learn from interview**

We met two former Khmer Rouge cadres who allowed us for interviews. They permitted to take their story for historical records, but, according to our personal observation, they were not telling the whole background during the Khmer Rouge period.

Mr. Kun was very interested in our work. He was very happy to share his history during Khmer Rouge regime. Otherwise, his wife was not quite happy; she sometime walked around and interrupted the interview. At the time, there was a heavy rain and the noise affected our recording and, thus, we paused and began when the rain stopped.

The day before, we interviewed with Pao Nhorn. Nhorn pointed us to Khann Kim, who was a commune medical staff. Ms. Khann Kim was angry with Ms. Pao Ngorn for giving us her name. Kim became angry when a neighbor reported to her that Nhorn had given her name to us. Vannak Sokh tried very hard to explain and calm her anger. Kim finally allowed us to interview her. The team did visit the village again to see if anything had happened between the two due to our visit and found out that Vannak had dealt with the situation.

END

**Team:** Suyheang Kry, Pechet Men and Terith Chy

**Date:** 16 July 2010

### **Geographical Description:**

Today, we worked in roughly in the same area as yesterday's. We worked in three communes back and forth looking for individuals referred to us by informants, namely, Kauk Prich, Ream Andeuk and Prey Rumdeng.

### **Summary of Interviews:**



**Mao Chhaom (TKI0763)**

a. Mao Chhaom (ម៉ៅ ឆាម), aged 62, lives in Trayoeng village, Ream Andeuk commune, Kirivong. Chhaom was an interesting man. He had only one year of education and became a monk after he quit school in 1967. Just before the military coup against King Sihanouk in 1970, he left his monkhood after three years of studying dharma in the pagoda of his village. According to Chhaom, he intended to join the resistance force, fighting against Lon Nol government right after the appeal by the King. However, he was late to join the forces supporting the King and found himself joining the Viet Cong in Kirivong, which was also fighting against South Vietnamese troops and Lon Nol's, together

with some 14 other villagers. The Viet Cong gave a one-month military training to him

and his villagers in a jungle on a small mountain near the Cambodia-Vietnamese border. Chhaom's task was to carry wounded soldiers from the combat zone to the hospital on the mountain. The soldiers he and his villagers carried were the Viet Cong troops. He was with the Viet Cong for one year, after which he and his fellow villagers were transferred to join the Khmer Rouge forces. He held no important position within the Khmer Rouge ranks as he had an elder brother, working as a soldier for the Lon Nol's. In 1975, his brother was captured and imprisoned. He was later released and able to live in the village without harm as other villagers. Chhaom had for a short while been used as a messenger for chiefs of district 109. His memory of the names of individuals working in district 109 and region 13 were mixed up and did not offer much of information of these individuals.

b. In the afternoon, after delicious lunch at a villager's house, we moved on to locating other former KR members in Trapeang Run village. We intended to find Mr. Sim Chheoun, aged 52, referred to us by Khim who we met yesterday. He was a former KR security police whose base was in Ream Andeuk commune. Mr. Chheoun was in grade 9 (nowadays grade 4) when he dropped his school 2 years before the

coup d'etat in 1970. There, the commune chief forced him to work as a security police in 1974. When we mentioned about who was his head and who else was working with him, Mr. Chheoun became hesitant to answer the question and requested to stop the interview.

**Observation:**

Mr. Sim Chheoun (ស៊ីម ឈឿន) said that because of his illness and exhaustion, that was why he requested to cut off the interview. According to observation of the interviewer (Pechet Men), Mr. Chheoun was afraid to let us know who his head was. He did not allow us to take photo of him either. We believed he was scared to give us information. With the trials going on in Phnom Penh and broadcast quite broadly all over the country, the fear is understandable. Mr. Chheoun was not an exceptional case. According to the team's

general observation, many feel the same.

**Challenge:**

We'd been trying whole afternoon to locate former KR members in three communes of Kirivong district. However, the effort was not successful for mainly two reasons: not avail at home and refuse to give interviews. Below is a list of individuals requested to be interviewed by the team:

- a. Sim Chhoeun, 52, requested to cease the interview for, according to him, health reason (please see summary "b").
- b. Pann Sarou, aka Chou, aged approximately 70, lives in Samraong Khang Keut, Kauk Prich commune. From the outset, he appeared to be very sick and frail. He refused to be interviewed, saying that he did not know the truth to give us and that he was only following orders. According to villager, he was one of the chiefs of Kampaeng commune under the Khmer Rouge regime. At the start of the introduction, the conversation was also interrupted by a drunk man in the village.
- c. Taing Nguon, referred to the team by Sim Chhoeun, lives in Trayoeng village, Ream Andeuk commune, Kirivong district. According to Chhoeun, Mr. Nguon was also a security police. He was not at home when arrived at his home.
- d. The team met with a village chief in Prey Rumdeng commune of Kirivong district. The chief hinted a few names of individuals who were members of the Khmer Rouge regime, which include Vit Khut whose wife is Y, Chen (now living in Trapaing Chey village, Ream Andeuk commune), and Chea whose wife is Meas. First, Khut, now 70, was a unit chief during the Khmer Rouge regime. We did not meet him at his home and were told he was tending his



Sim Chheoun, a former security police at Wat Preah Theat

cow away from the village. Second, Chen was also away, caring for his wife at a hospital. Third and last, Chea, now more than 70 years old, lives in Svay Sar village, Ream Andeuk commune. Chen was a unit chief in the same village during the Khmer Rouge. He also refused to give an interview, saying he is now old and did not remember the events.

END.

**Team:** Vannak Sokh, Lakana Ry and Sotheany Hin

**Date:** 17 July 2010

### **Geographical Description:**

Today, we worked in Thom village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. It is approximately 40 Kilometers from provincial town and near Hann Tea village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. Today, we took a shortcut to get to the village.

### **Summary of interviews:**

We interviewed two people who were former Khmer Rouge cadres in Thom village.



Vann Sieng Ly (TKI0764)

**Mrs. Vann Sieng Ly** (វ៉ាន់ស៊ីងលី), 55, a midwife

during the Khmer Rouge era, living in Thom village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. She quit school at grade 9 (grade 4 today). She joined to Khmer Rouge revolution because she was inducted by Kou

(female). Then, she was sent for a re-education in

Damrei Romeal Mountain [Kampot province]. After two months, she ran back home for being able to manage hard working condition and starvation. Later, she was injured and taken to a medical center [forest place]. There, she looked after herself, which included medical injection and wound cleaning. With the capacity to look after herself, Ly was called by Ms. Khoeun to work as medical staff at the place. Khoeun came from region 105, Tram Kakk district, Takeo province. Ly was trained on general illness and midwife skills before she was allowed to take care of patients. Roeun and Neng were chiefs of the medical center of Kauk Prich commune. They came from region 105. Ly was later sent to work at Kirivong district hospital [Kirivong high school today]. She was forced to get married with Pakk. Her father, Vann Hou died of starvation during the Khmer Rouge regime. Her mother, Sess Youn, was died of illness. She learnt of the information in relation to the prosecution of Khmer Rouge leaders on radio. If someone committed a crime, he or she should be held responsible for that act.

**Mrs. Hay Yim** (ហាយ យ៉ឹម), 50, former medical staff of the district, living in Thom village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. She married Sou Chien. They have 6 children, four sons and two daughters. She has three siblings. After delivering the third child, her mother passed away. She quit school at



Hay Yim (TKI0765)

grade 10 in the old days (now grade 3). In 1975, she was 15 years old; she worked in mobile work brigade. Then, she was selected to be a medical staff; she did not want it due to her illiteracy. She received a 10-day training, after which she was allowed to look after patients. Her tasks included prescribing medicine, giving medical injection, and measure blood pressure. According to her, the main cause of death was starvation. Ken, chief of district hospital, was Ta Mok's sister and Tith was her husband. Ken was later transferred to a different place and Mr. Kann took over the job until 1979. She said Ken and Tith are still alive, but did not know where. She knew Ken came from region 105 [Tram Kakk district].

**Notes: Some of interviewees were busy with their livelihood and did not have adequate time for a long interview.**

Ta Um, chief of handcraft of district 109, now lives in Chruoy village, Prey Ampork commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. His father was Kong Lok.

Mr. Kann Phan, chief of textile unit of the district, now lives in Panlai village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province. His mother's name was Phen.

Mr. Prakk Chea, chief of machinery unit of the district, now lives in Ta Peou village, Kampaeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.

### **Observation and Challenge:**

When we started to conduct interview, many people were around us and asked something about what and why we conduct interviews. That's why, there have some irritating noise in recorded interview. During an interview, Chief of Kampaeng commune came in and observed our interview. He was interested in our work and read Searching for the Truth magazine and Case 002.

During the interview, interviewees had troubles remembering dates.

END

**Team:** Sokvisal Kimsroy, Sengkea Sar, Kunthy Seng and Rasy Pheng-Pong

**Date:** 17 July 2010

(Morning)

## Geographical Description

This morning, after having a quick breakfast, our group came across Samraong Khangkeut village, Kauk Prich commune, Kirivong district. At one point, Sengkea realized he had been to this village before, visiting his friend's house. We stopped in front of a newly built house which belonged to the family of Sengkear's friend. After stopping by, we became aware that Mrs. Sach Den, aged 53, was a former Khmer Rouge cadre. Therefore, we began our first interview with Mrs. Sach Den, in Samraong Khangkeut village, Kauk Prich commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.

## Summary of the interview

Born to a poor peasant family, Mrs. Satt Den (សាត់ ដែន), quit studying at grade 7 because of the military coup against King Sihanouk, US bombings, and the fights between two groups: Lon Nol and Thieu-Ky, both backed by the U.S and the Khmer Rouge forces.



Satt Den (TKI0761)

After the Khmer Rouge soldiers seized power in 1975, Mrs. Den and her family returned home. Later, comrade Ny, a female youth chief of Kauk Prich commune, assigned her to work in a special female mobile work brigade. There were more than a thousand female youth working in her unit. Their job at the time were to carry the earth, dig canals, grow vegetable, and do the farming. She

recalls Ny was the chief (alive), and the deputy chiefs were Pong and Siem.

In 1976, after being bitten by a snake, Den could no longer work. Knowing that Den was bitten by a snake, Phy sent her to work in an economic unit. While working in this unit, she needed to transport rice, fish, and vegetables to every unit in the village. From that moment on, Den always had enough food to appease her hunger.

In 1978, Phy selected some female youth to get married with guys from male units, according to Angkar's plan. Den was one among the selected women. At the time, she had to marry a guy whom she had never known or met before. She did not deny the arrangement because she did not dare to confront Angkar. After the marriage, Den was sent to work in a farming unit, while her husband was put to work in another unit, far away from her.

In 1979, after Den and her husband reunited, she learned that her husband had been imprisoned under the Khmer Rouge regime. She was sympathetic towards her husband, hearing of sufferings he endured. At the end of the interview, she mentioned Ny was a good person who never mistreated people, who helped hide any wrongdoings her subordinates committed, and who had sympathy towards other people.

### **Observation**

During the interview, we observed that Den complemented Phy many times. To Sengkear, Den complemented Phy because Phy, the female youth chief, always helped her. Den answered all of Sengkear's questions without hesitation. The ways she talked at the time showed no fear at all. This was because Sengkear knew her brother quite well. We believe that she told us everything in details because she herself did not commit any wrongdoings under the Khmer Rouge regime.

### **Achievement**

The information we obtained from Den helped our group go and find Phy at a nearby village.

### **Challenge**

There were lots of people gathering around us during the interview. They wanted to know what we were discussing about, and worse than that, they sometimes interrupt our conversation. To deal with this problem, Visal called those people to walk out, gave them magazine and Case 002 booklets, and explained those two books to them. Unlike Pou Nak, Bang Rasy, and Bang Terith who are skillful with PA questions, we had troubles formulating questions.

### **Learned from the interviews**

With this interview, we knew that building trust before starting the interview is really important. To make interviewees, former Khmer Rouge cadres, feel like

talking and giving information takes time, is of course not an easy task to do. In order not to make them feel afraid, we stated our objective clearly and asked them one by one since the beginning.

END

**Team:** Sokvisal Kimsroy, Sengkea Sar, Kunthy Seng and Rasy Pheng-Pong

**Date:** 17 July 2010

(Afternoon)

## Geographical Description

In the afternoon, we went to a nearby village, Cham Bakk village, a place where we were supposed to meet a former female youth chief named Phy. Her village was not far from Samraong Khangkeut village. Therefore, we only took a quick drive there. Like Samraong Khangkeut village, Cham Bakk looks so beautiful during this month when every field looks so green. The majority of people who live in this village were farmers.

## Summary of the interview

Mrs. Tim Phy (ទីម ភី), a former female youth chief of Kamprech commune under the Khmer Rouge regime, now lives in, now lives in Chambakk village, Kamprech commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province.

Among all of her siblings, Mrs. Phy was the only daughter who could reach grade 8 before dropping school due to the coup against King Sihanouk in 1970 and poor living condition. Nonetheless, she could read and write Khmer well; moreover, she could read and translate some French words too.



Tim Phy (TKI0766)

years.

After helping her poor family do the farming, Phy as well as people who lived in her village, was evacuated to live in office 109, located in Damnak Snuol of Kampot province. While living there, all she did was doing the farming, singing and dancing (Khmer Rouge songs and performance), and constructing rice dykes. She mentioned that she lived in Damnak Snuol for about two

After the liberation of Phnom Penh city on 17 April 2010, the villagers and Mrs. Phy returned home. Immediately, upon reaching the age of 18, she was appointed a female youth chief of Kamprich commune. She stated that the Khmer Rouge appointed her as a female youth chief because she came from a poor peasant family and some Khmer Rouge district chiefs, such Ta Tum, Ta Tim, and especially Yey Bo, knew her.

Almost under the whole period of the Khmer Rouge regime, she spent time working with her subordinates in various places. Her unit had to do the assigned tasks. Sometimes, her unit was put to do the farming, build rice dykes, dig canals, build dam, or carry food for soldiers at the frontier. Supervising female youth unit in thirteen villages of Kamprich commune, she sometimes held a meeting with female chiefs in every village, and then she reported the finished tasks to her superiors.

In addition, Mrs. Phy mentioned she had attended several meetings presided over by high ranking cadres, for example Ta Mok, Ta Saom, a regional chief, Yeay Bo, Ta Tum, and Ta Tith. When asked what they discussed about during the meeting, she said that she could not recall what happened during every meeting. She said she never did any harm to her subordinates, those who defected home, those who could not do the assigned work well, and those who did not want to get married with unknown guys.

Approximately in 1978, Mrs. Phy was promoted to be a mobile work brigade chief of district 109. Then when the Vietnamese troops came, she, together with other people and Khmer Rouge soldiers, escaped to mountainous areas, running towards Cambodian-Thai border. At one point, she decided to return home. It took her quite a long time to walk back home. At first, she was reluctant to return home, fearing that people who lived in the village might harm her. However, eventually, she and her husband, a Khmer Rouge medical staff, arrived home and started new life. Some people scorned her, asking for their children whom she had selected to serve as Khmer Rouge soldiers. In response, she said she did not know because the fact was that her job under the Khmer Rouge regime was to lead female youth to work according to the assigned task.

Mrs. Phy has heard quite a lot about information regarding the prosecution of the Khmer Rouge leaders in the Khmer Rouge tribunal, formally known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia, because she has both radio and TV. She said that she just listened to what people said about the court, but she could not understand it well.

## **Observation**

While conducting an interview with Mrs. Phy, we became aware that she, of course, was actually trying to hide some information. She always said that she treated her subordinate well. For example, she never punished female youth who ran home to see their family. She always said she had nothing to do with killing or arresting, though she knew that people disappeared or were killed.

## **Achievement**

From her testimony, we learned some of regional chiefs and district chiefs. For instance, Ta Saom was a regional chief but, after the disappearance of Ta Saom, Ta Pot became a regional chief. People at district level were Ta Tum, Ta Tit, and Yey Bo.

## **Challenge**

During the interview, she was initially trying to hide her position under the Khmer Rouge regime.

## **Learned from interview**

Like other former Khmer Rouge cadres, Mrs. Phy was afraid and, without a doubt, reluctant to tell us about what she did under the notorious regime. We learned that only people from Tram Kakk district were appointed district chief, commune chief, or other chiefs. People selected from other places were appointed deputy chief only.

END

**Team:** Suyheang Kry, Pechet Men and Terith Chy  
**Date:** 17 July 2010

### **Geographical Description:**

Today we went to two different communes namely Prey Rumdeng and Kok Prech commune; however, it's on the same road. It's about 50 kilometers from the provincial town.

### **Brief activities of today's trip:**

As there were no any targets for us to approach in order to conduct interview, we went directly to Damnak Tha-ngann village chief's house so as to get some information regarding the surviving former KR cadres. As expected, we did get some surviving former KR cadres' whereabouts. We also learnt that he, the village chief (name Mr. Voeun), was one of Prey Rumdeng commune's security police. He feared when asked of his time under the Khmer Rouge. We noticed that his hands, feet and voice were shaking, coupled with his refuse to our request for an interview with him. Despite all of this, he told us the whereabouts of former Unit Chief, Mr Touch Yan (60 years old, living nearby Mr Voeun's house), and a former Chamreh village chief, Mr. Ok Ngin (71 years old, living in Chamreh village, Prey Rumdeng commune, Kirivong district, Takeo province).

Once we reached Mr. Touch Yan's house, the same problem appeared as he refused to give us interview. What was curious about him was that he changed his facial expression completely as we mentioned KR period and he seemed not to be sincere when telling about his experience during that time. Totally different from what Mr. Voeun told us that he was a former unit chief, he recalled that he was only an ordinary person whose job was to transplant rice and did other tasks as normal people. The team had a feeling that he did not tell the truth.



Uk Ngin (TKI0767)

After, we went to meet with the second person, Mr. Uk Ngin (អ៊ុក ឆីន), as Mr. Voeun told us. This time was different as Mr. Ok Ngin agreed to give us interview and seemed to be happy in recalling those memories. He was former group leader in his village during Lon Nol regime. However, this position was only symbolic as it gave him no power.

Then when his commune was liberated by KR circa 1971-1972, he became a security police in the village. After that he resigned and worked as a

farmer. In 1976, when Ta Tip, former Chamreh village chief was arrested because of moral offense, he was assigned to be the village chief to replace Ta Tip's position. According to his account, his main job was to keep an eye on the villagers doing the rice field. He continued that no one in his village disappeared as far as he remembered. However, he said that when cows in the village disappeared, he reported this news immediately to the commune chief named Ta Chann so then the commune security police would look into the case. And if people were arrested, he had no idea of where they were taken away. He also mentioned that there was a detention in Ream Andaek commune located in Wat Ang Run, but he never went there. So did the Wat Preah Teat security office as he used to hear the name during that regime but had never been there. After the collapse of the regime, he fled to jungle along with other soldiers. A few months later, he came back to the village. He was again appointed as village chief after several years of the People Republic of Kampuchea.

After taking a rest having lunch with all of the groups, we continued our trip to Kauk Prich commune. We pursued our strategy of identifying former KR cadres by asking Village or commune chief. There, we stopped by Kauk Prich village chief (Pou Ling)'s house and ask for information. We were told that some of the chief KR cadres had disappeared and died. However, he introduced us two people namely Kung Ien, former unit chief, and Ngauv, former unit chief and prisoner at Wat Preah Theat security office and is Pou Ling's father-in-law.

Unfortunately, we could not meet with these two people. Instead, we met and interviewed with Mr.

Kam Nhorm (កម ញ័រម), Pou Ling's brother-in-law. Mr. Nhorm was former prisoner in Kraing Svay security center located in Kauk Prich commune. With respect to his account, he said Kraing Svay



**Kam Nhorm (TKI0768)**

security center was created in 1973 and he along with other 6 prisoners was the first to be detained in that security center. Before they were sent to Kraing Svay, they were temporarily kept in a house in Samraong Keut where they were tied up to the house's columns one by one for exactly one month and four days. The reason why he was arrested was that KR accused him of stealing chickens and rice to give to his brother who fled to VN. In Kraing Svay, he was detained for almost three years. There he had little food to eat and lived under harsh condition.

After that he was released to transplant rice nearby the security center but under the control of the security guards. After three months of transplanting rice, he was allowed to go back to the village. He said that this because there were many 17-April-people arrested and they needed more space for those prisoners. He further that during the time in the center, he witnessed many people were arrested and were also taken away too. After a long time in prison, in the beginning of 1976 until 1979 he lived in the village doing the tasks assigned by the unit chief and village chief which mainly was about transplanting rice. After KR were ousted from power, he along with his family fled with the soldiers. However, he tried all the ways to return home and ultimately could manage to do so. Along the way back home, he witnessed a cart burnt due to landmine employed nearby the road. He had to follow the trace of the previous cart so as to avoid explosion. He continued that nothing could be able to describe what he had endured during that time. This has scared him for life. Never ever will he be able to forget this experience.

END.