

*Searching for*

# THE TRUTH

- ◆ Performing a Play about Khmer Rouge to Remember
- ◆ What Are the Reparations that the Civil Parties Would Receive in Case 002/01?

*"I want to remind my children and grandchildren of my past and show them the suffering that people experienced. The Khmer Rouge killed my parents and two of my siblings"*

*-- Ly Kosal, 46 years old from Banteay Meanchey*

**Special**  
English Edition  
Second Quarter 2014

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Villagers attend the Public Forum at Thala Borivat district, Steung Treng province



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# PHOTOS FROM “MEMORY OF TUOL SLENG GENOCIDE MUSEUM”

*Socheat Nhean*

In April 2014, the Documentation Center of Cambodia installed 2 photos in the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum compound. These two photos were installed under the theme of “Memory of Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum” and were part of the Museum of Memory Project. The first Photo was taken by a Vietnamese soldier on January 10, 1979. It was installed at the east entrance of today’s Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum. The photo shows 7 male and female veterans of the Khmer Ronakse liberators, standing with 4 children who were discovered by the veterans when they entered the former S-21 or Tuol Sleng Prison on January 7, 1979. This photo was kept in a Vietnamese archive until 2009, when it was given to the Documentation Center of Cambodia.

The 4 children in the photo were survivors of Tuol Sleng Prison, after their parents were killed by

the Khmer Rouge in that place. Among those children were Norng Chanphal, 7 years old at the time, and his younger brother, Norng Channy, who was 5 years old at that time. Norng Chanphal and Norng Channy’s father had been sent to S-21. Later, both children and their mother were sent to the prison. Norng Chanphal’s mother, whose name was Mom Ngauv, was sent to Tuol Sleng Prison on January 1, 1979, 7 days before the Khmer Rouge’s collapse.

On January 10, 1979, Vietnamese soldiers found 5 children who survived in the Tuol Sleng Prison compound. Among all, there were two children whose names were unknown. A child was named “Makara” (Khmer name of January) by Vietnamese soldiers as s/he was found in January. The other child was still an infant. This infant was weak because s/he had no food to eat for many



First photo: three male and female Khmer combatants talk to child survivors of S21 on January 10, 1979

days. S/he died without having any name. The other child was known as "Socheat". However, nowadays, we have got no information from him at all.

This photo has been exhibited in a wide open area, located between Building "A" and Building "B", which allows all museum's visitors to see it when they walk from one building to the other.

The purpose of displaying this photo exhibition under the theme "Memory of Tuol Sleng Museum" is to reveal that besides the adult survivors of Tuol Sleng Prison, there were also five child survivors who have never been mentioned

1979. Cambodians, both young and old, who left their home villages to live at other places throughout the country for about 4 years, could return to their own home village and look for their surviving relatives. Unfortunately, one among four Cambodians died during the Khmer Rouge regime, which caused each Cambodian family to lose, at least, one family member. This photo shows about hope and resilience of Cambodians and the beginning of new life from zero after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge in January 1979.

In the near future, the Documentation Center of Cambodia will exhibit 1,000 photos of Tuol Sleng



Second photo: people return back to their hometown after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed in 1979

whenever talking about survivors of Tuol Sleng Prison. At the same time, this photo aims to let the public know that children are just like pieces of blank paper. Arresting children was such a cruel act, and it was a crime that the Khmer Rouge perpetrated.

The second photo displays the journey back to Cambodian people's home villages after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime in January

Prisoners. These black-and-white photos are rare to the public as they were recently discovered by the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Displaying these photos provides Cambodians a chance to search for their lost relatives in Khmer Rouge regime.

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### *Socheat Nhean*

# PERFORM A PLAY ABOUT KHMER ROUGE TO REMEMBER

*Socheat Nhean*

Ronorm Phearith has never gone through the Khmer Rouge regime, yet he performs the play about this 3-year-8-month-20-day regime every year. In the age of 27 and being a student of Royal University of Fine Arts, Phearith performs a play about life in the Khmer Rouge regime twice a year. First, it is on January 7, the date which the Khmer Rouge collapsed. Second, it is on May 20, the date that the Khmer Rouge first divided people into cooperatives (May 20, 1973).

May 20 is recognized as a “Day of Remembrance” by the Royal Government of Cambodia, which has been celebrated since 1984. At that time, it was called “Day of Hatred”. Every May 20, a play about life during the Khmer Rouge regime is performed at Cheung Ek Killing Field, and thousands of government officials, monks, nuns, and students participate in this event. This

performance describes briefly about life during the Khmer Rouge regime, including forced evacuation, family separation, starvation, mistreatment, torture, execution and the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime.

Every year, Phearith portrays a victim, executed by Khmer Rouge cadre. In contrast, this year, he portrays a unit chief who has power and kills whoever he has accused of offending Angkar’s regulations. Portraying a unit chief, Phearith has to keep his beard and acts out a fierce and angry face and gestures to scare the people.

Phearith learns about the Khmer Rouge through what his parents have told him since he was young. During this regime, his parents lived at Muk Kampul District, Kandal Province. They did as many tasks as other people did. Besides learning from his parents’ stories, Phearith also learned

about Khmer Rouge in class. Before performing as the unit chief on this May 20, Phearith has watched a lot of movies related to the Khmer Rouge regime at school with other students, and he has also rehearsed many times.

Phearith said that he performs the play related to the Khmer Rouge regime to let the public be aware of what happened during this regime even though his performance is not exactly the same as the real incidents.



Nem Phearith performs a play of the events in the Khmer Rouge regime at the Cheung Ek Genocide Center

*Socheat Nhean*

# OEUN ALIAS BOEUN, FORMER VETERAN OF MINISTRY OF LOGISTIC, DIVISION 174

EXTRACTION FROM CONFESSION J00169

*Thona Ho*

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Oeun alias Boeun, former veteran of the Ministry of Logistic, division 174, was arrested by Angkar on October 17, 1977. In his 53-page confession, Oeun alias Boeun described his betraying plan against the revolution as well as his networks who join in this activity until Angkar arrested him. The following is the summary of the confession of Oeun alias Boeun:

Oeun, whose revolution name was Boeun, was 27 years old and was born in Veal Pring Village, Chheu Teal Commune, Sandan District, Kampong Thom Province.

In 1962, the Khmer Rouge entered my village. At that time, the district chief, named Sorn, called the commune chiefs, police and soldiers to surround the village to catch the Khmer Rouge. Those people also gathered villagers who went to guard their field into the village to guard the village, instead.

Adults were assigned to guard the village day and night. They also educated the villagers that the Khmer Rouge had killed the innocent people who stayed at their field and took away their cattle to eat in the jungle. Youths were trained to be their spies to destroy the struggling movement of the people. They called youths to join the party and provided 200 Riel per month to each of those youths as a bribe. Those appointed youths had 10 members, including myself, Rau, Au, Choeun, Lun, Chun, Leng, Rem, Hau, and Hauy. The leader of this group is Sep Mut, the village chief; Bin, the deputy village chief; and, Om. After appointing us to be spies, Mut and Bin asked me to contact Sok, the layman at Ngorn

Commune, who was also a spy of Sep Mut. There were five members in his networks; those were: Sok who had ordained for five years and was the former chief of cooperative at Roneam Village, Mean Chey Commune, Sandan District; Phan had ordained for three years and was the chief of battalion in Sandan District; Moeun had ordained for three years and was the cooperative veteran at Som Khva Village, Sandan District; Rak had ordained for three years and was in a cooperative at Som Khva Village, Mean Chey Commune, Sandan District; Oeu had ordained for five years and died in the battle field in Trapeang Veng Village in 1974. After contacting them, we took action in investigating and found out a person who gave food to the Khmer Rouge. It was Chy, living in Ngorn Commune, and two other people, whose names were Tyon and Khuy, from Cheu Teal Commune.

In June 1969, Sep Mut and Bin called me, Au and Rau to meet at Cheu Teal Commune hall. When we arrived there, Mut and Bin assigned two plans to us. Plan 1 was to gather more spies, while plan 2 was to follow the revolution force that hid themselves in the commune. Coming back, we followed Mut and Bin's instruction. Later, I advised Pen and Hak to serve as spies to destroy the Khmer Rouge. I told them that if they could perform the task well, they could get a higher position and be well-paid. Then, Sorn and Mut called me, Au and Rau to meet at Sandan District hall. In 1969, I involved myself with the C.I.A. with the assistance from Mut and Sorn. Later, I determined to serve the

C.I.A. and drank the swearing water.

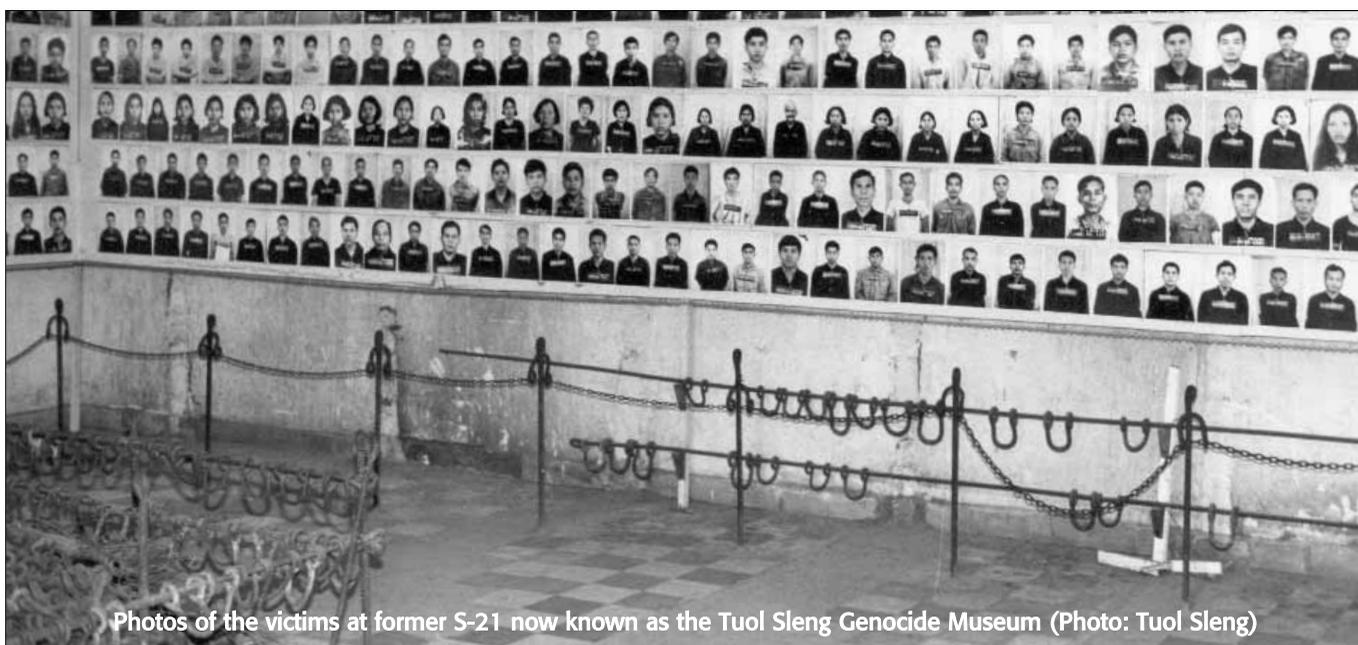
In 1970, there was the coup d'état to overthrow Samdech Sihanouk. Bin and Mut took 12 of us to join in revolution with Meng who was Bin's spy. Meng assigned me, Au and Rau to take action in destroying the revolution, which was to poison 10 pigs and 30 ducks. Moreover, we also made 50 sacks of rice and 30 of salt get wet as well as made one ton of dried fish be damaged. We also urged the economic conflict and broke down the solidarity.

In June 1971, Angkar at Sandan District sent 42 soldiers to the battlefield at Kampong Thom. At that time, Meng ordered me, Au and Rau to go to the battlefield at Kampong Thom. At the same time, Meng wrote a letter to inform his C.I.A. network, whose name was Chhuon, a militiaman at battalion 710 and division 174. Three of us joined each battlefield and separated. Au and Rau went to join division 308 at Kampong Thom's south side battlefield, while I joined the battlefield at Kampong Thom's north side.

Later, Chhuon introduced his other two C.I.A. networks to me. Si was the former grade 3 student and was the chief of a battalion in Koh Chreng Village, Chreng Commune, Kratie District, Kratie

Province (He went back home at the end of 1973). Chhai was a former chief of a battalion and worked at Village 32 Hospital in Kampong Thom. Chhuon assigned Si, Chhai and me to build the C.I.A. force by gathering five more members to destroy revolution forces. Later, we called those five new C.I.A. members to educate. Those were La, deputy unit chief at Stong District, Kampong Thom Province; Phal, a member of a battalion (died in the battlefield at Trapeang Veng in 1974); Sren, a disabled veteran at Stong District Hospital in zone 43; Kam, a former farmer and a deputy chief of a battalion (died in the battlefield at Daun Kdey in 1975); and, Tong, a former doctor of a regiment (died in the battlefield at Aur Kanthor). After being educated, those five members were assigned by Chhuon to urge the veterans to flee home, 10 at the first time and 25 at the second time. They led veterans to leave their territory to allow the enemy to enter.

In 1972, Angkar sent their soldiers to Siem Reap, instead. After the battle, I got injured and was sent to hospital. I stayed there for one month. From June to July, Angkar sent back their soldiers to Kampong Tom and Kampong Cham. Chhuon told me that "If you were injured, you do not need to go



Photos of the victims at former S-21 now known as the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum (Photo: Tuol Sleng)

with those soldiers. After you leave the hospital, you could go with Suo as I had told him already. Suo was also a member of the C.I.A. and he would connect you to the network to take action against the revolution.”

After I left hospital, I went to work at logistic center with Suo. Later, Suo called his 10 C.I.A. members for a meeting. Those 10 members contained myself; Norn, chief of gravel section of the Ministry of Industry; Vat, chief of water transporting and state commercial regiment; Thai, deputy chief of military hospital in zone 106 (Siem Reap); Pram, member of military hospital 106 (Siem Reap); Chhaom, member of military hospital 106 (Oddar Meanchey); Un, chief of medical laboratory of military 106 (Oddar Meanchey); Chy, chief of logistic section of military 106; Tha, chief of the logistic section of division 174; and, Den, chief of the economic logistic of division 174.

After connecting the networks, Suo assigned three C.I.A. members to destroy materials of the revolution; those were Chy, Tha, and Den. After this assignment, they started to implement the plan by adding medical substance into the water to make it become colloidal and could not be used. Besides, they also made the rice wet, and it could no longer be used.

In 1973, Suo called his four C.I.A. members for a meeting; those were Tha, Thai, Chy, and I. Suo instructed four of us to gather at least two additional C.I.A. members. Later, we advised Tim, deputy chief of military section 106, and Nan, member of the logistic section of military 106 to join the C.I.A. by persuading then they would get a high position and have countless property. At that time, I damaged a car by driving it without filling in the water and petroleum. At last, the car’s machine stopped working, and some of its spare parts were burned.

In 1974, Suo connected all of his C.I.A. networks to let us work at ease. Those networks

were myself, Tha, Den, Thai, Pram, Chhaom, Un, Chy, Tim, Nan, Vin and Vy. In September of the same year, Suo was changed from the Ministry of Logistic to work as Puok District committee member. Ly replaced his position. Suo introduced Ly, who was also a C.I.A. network, to us. Ly assigned me, Vin and Vy to strengthen the C.I.A. force and start the destroying action. At that time, I added extra forces’ names to the C.I.A. network; those were Choeun, Lanh, and Run. At that time, I made 100 sack of salt get wet and destroyed 3 hectares of rainy season rice at Svay Chrum by draining the water away to let the rice dry. Vy and Vin chased two cows to run into enemy’s territory.

In May 1975, Ly gathered three C.I.A. members, including myself, Tha and Den. Ly instructed three of us to continue destroying the revolution. After this instruction, three of us damaged 15 rolls of black clothes by letting the rats eat them. We also damaged 20 bottles of sweet serum by letting ants and rats destroy them. Moreover, we also wasted other medical products by allowing everyone to take them as much as they wanted. In July 1975, Ly told the new plan to three of us. Three of us started to destroy a rice machine by using it without filling in petroleum, and, at last, they could no longer use it. In September 1975, Ly assigned Tha and Den to kill two pair of buffaloes by adding poisonous substance into the hay. They also destroyed two tons of fishes by making it grow worms and mildew, which could no longer be eaten.

In October 1975, I, Yoeun, Tha and Pha destroyed a hectare of rice in Boeng Kok Field by letting the water in. We also damaged a CMC car by driving without filling water. On October 17, 1977, I was arrested by Angkar, as I was caught burning the weapons warehouse.

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**Thona Ho**

# LIFE OF ING SIMONAVY: SEPARATION, GRIEF AND FRIGHTENING DURING KHMER ROUGE REGIME"

*Bunthorn Som*

Ing Simonavy was just about 10 years old during the Khmer Rouge regime. Yet, she encountered separation from her beloved family, grief, and frightening when witnessing Khmer Rouge military killed her family members and the incident remained in her mind.

## **Personal Background and Family Members**

Ing Simonavy was born in 1963, in Sangkat 5 (Sangkat Tuol Tompong) Phnom Penh. Simonavy's father is Ing Simona, a teacher at Trapeang Kraleng High School located in Phnom Sruoch District, Kampong Speu Province. In 1972, her father changed his occupation to serve as a soldier of the Lon Nol government. Her mother is Nhem Yin who was a housewife. Simonavy's mother returned to live in Romeas Heak District, Svay Rieng Province soon after the break-up with her father. Later, her father married a new wife and had 4 children, living in Kampong Speu Province.

Since then, Simonavy went to live with her grandfather, Ing Tun, and her grandmother, who had bought a piece of land and built a house in Kampong Speu Province as her grandparents had a son, Ing Moeng, (Simonavy's uncle) who was a



Ing Moeng

government representative in Kampong Speu Province. There, Simonavy's grandfather took Simonavy to register at Ang Serey Primary school, which he took part in building. When she did not need to attend class, at the weekend,

Simonavy came to visit her grandparents' house at Kliang Romsev in Phnom Penh; she was taken back and forth by driver as her family had a good living standard at that time. This was because her first uncle, Ing Moeng, was a government representative; her second uncle, Ing Ngov, was an embassy official; her third uncle, Ing Barn, worked in the mapping section at the Ministry of Cadastre; her father, Ing Simona, had been a teacher and became a colonel after the coup d'état; her fifth uncle, Ing Simony, was a customs officer; and, her aunt, Ing Sokha, had a husband who worked in the second-rank police in Kampong Speu Province. All of her uncles and aunt had their own houses in Phnom Penh.

Simonavy studied at Kampong Speu until grade 8. She, then, moved to study at Tuol Tompong High School in Phnom Penh as she came to live with her grandmother and her aunt, Ing Sokha, with her aunt's two daughters.

## **Khmer Rouge Entered**

Simonavy continued her study until 1975 when the Khmer Rouge liberated Phnom Penh. People were along every road to welcome them. At that time Simonavy's grandmother was very excited as she thought that her country was at peace. She would take her family members to her home village in Svay Rieng Province once. All of Simonavy's family members were excited. However, a moment later, Simonavy's uncle assigned a person to tell her grandmother and her uncles and aunt that "He could not come to meet them (without giving any reason). And, this achievement was not about peace." At that day, Simonavy's father wrote a letter, describing the incident regarding the Khmer

Rouge's entering, and sent it to her grandmother. Getting this news, Simonavy's grandmother stopped feeling excited and turned to be worried about her children's well-being; she started to cry.

### Leaving Day

At around 11 am, Simonavy's grandmother and aunt had cooked foods and prepared it on the table and were waiting for the children to come to eat together. There were members from families, including Simonavy's uncles' and aunt's, except her father's and grandfather. And, there were also 5 cars parked in front of her aunt's house at Kliang Romsev. Having not had any food, all were told by a Khmer Rouge soldier, "Please leave your house! There will be a bombing." Immediately, Simonavy's uncles and aunt did not take any clothes and other materials along. They took only bread and some sorts of food, remaining from Khmer New Year, which had been held during April 1975. Moreover, Simonavy's uncles and aunt did not realize that the Khmer Rouge would evacuate them from home. Suddenly, her grandmother stated, "If they (the Khmer Rouge) do not allow us to take along anything, we should at least take some canned fish

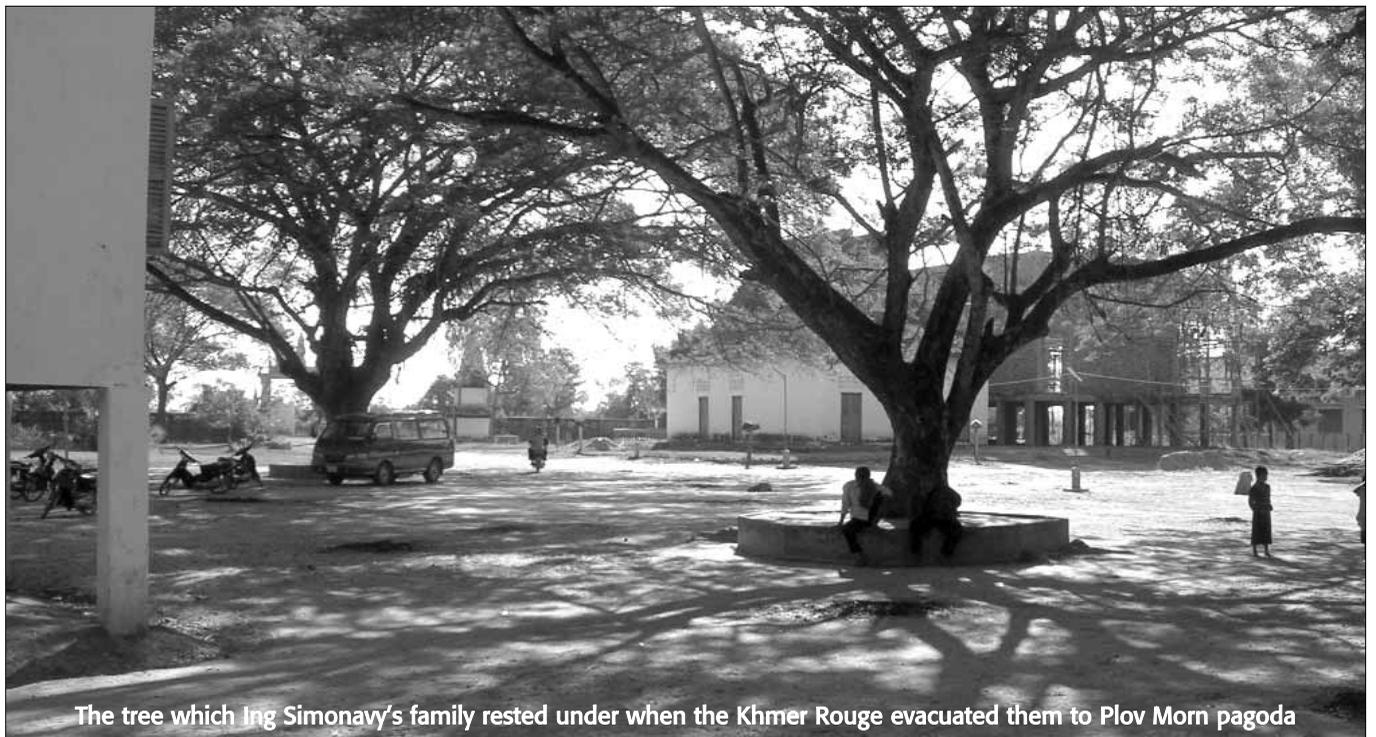
and more new clothes along with us." At that time, Simonavy's uncle, Ing Simony, who was a customs officer, usually took new clothes home.

Simonavy's grandmother took the canned fish and a sack of new clothes to put into the car trunk as well as some amount of money. Then, they headed to Kampong Speu Province along National Road 4. However, when they reached Kampong Trach in Ang Snuol District, some of Simonavy's uncles asked to leave them and went to live with their wives. Only her grandmother, her uncle, Ing Moeng, driver, a servant, her aunt and husband with two daughters remained. During the journey, Simonavy saw enormous numbers of people were leaving along the way. There were people sleeping under tree shade, and money was thrown along the way. Simonavy's family also threw away their belonging as Angkar claimed that they would provide food.

### Disappear Forever

After her children left, Simonavy's grandmother headed to the sugar production factory and rested at there for one night.

In the morning, there were a man carrying a



rifle who came to ask Simonavy's family who was Ing Moeng. Hearing the question, the driver dared not answer, but her uncle admitted that he was. That militiaman said "Comrade! Angkar asks you to work in Phnom Penh." The driver drove Simonavy's uncle and a servant followed that militiaman. As for her uncle's wife and 4 children, they moved to live in France before the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh.

Simonavy's grandmother, aunt and uncle in-law looked forward to seeing her other uncle for a week. There was no information. Khmer Rouge militiamen chased her grandmother to continue the journey, seized away their car, and said "Arriving here, Angkar no long allows using car." They seized their car and gave a tricycle to them to transport their belongings. Simonavy's grandmother left the place and camped at other place to wait for the returning of her son. During that month, the weather was extremely hot because it was in the fourth month of the year, which enabled Simonavy to remember now.

In one evening, there was a Khmer Rouge spy came to Simonavy's family and said: "No need to wait! Ing Moeng who was taken away (by militiaman) was killed." Simonavy's grandmother asked that spy, where was he killed? The spy responded that it was near Srang Mountain. Hearing that response, Simonavy's grandmother felt grief and hopelessness. As a result, she could not walk; she needed other to help when walking.

Simonavy's family decided to go to Srang Mountain to search for news of her uncle and to hide their identity, as they thought that they knew a lot of people at that place. Moreover, her grandparents had helped people at Srang Mountain area during the war between Lon Nol and Khmer Rouge by digging bomb protecting hole at Ang Serey farm to let them hide themselves from bombs as well as supplying them food, water and medicine.

### The Villagers Reported

Simonavy's family went to live near Srang Mountain in Korng Pisey District. When they arrived, Angkar took away all their watches, gold, and silver. Then, Angkar assigned Simonavy to raise dam. Having no black clothes to wear, Simonavy traded new clothes for the black clothes with base people to wear. Simonavy stayed in the raise dam unit for one month and, later, was called by Angkar to return to her village. But, being curious, she asked why she needed to return to the village. Angkar said that this was to let her prepare to live in Pursat Province. Hearing that, Simonavy realized that the villagers knew about her background and reported to the high ranking. She knew this because people who worked at the dam site whispered to her. Hence, it was contrary to what they had expected. Instead of helping her family, they reported her family for being business people and officials in the previous era. As a result, Angkar sent her family to



— Plov Morn pagoda's gate

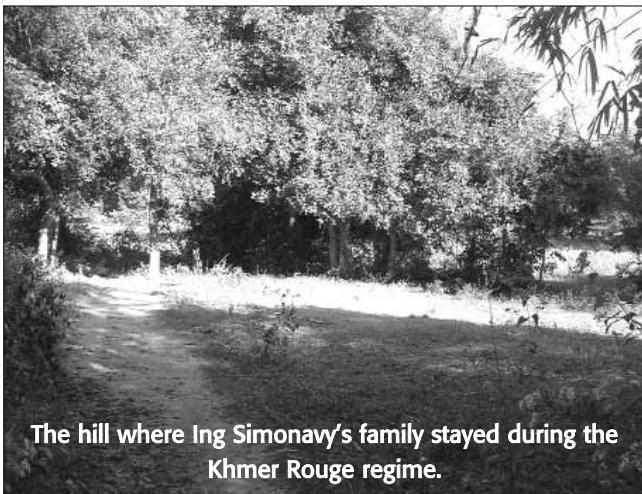
Pursat Province where there was serious training.

Arriving at the village, Simonavy saw her grandmother could no longer walk; she could just move up and down the stairs. One day, Simonavy bumped into her grandfather; he was walking with other villagers. He had been separated from her family since the day of the evacuation. Seeing him, Simonavy called him and took him to live together with her family.

In November 1975, Angkar sent Simonavy's family and thousands of other families to Pursat Province by military truck branded GMC. During the journey, her grandmother faced a lot of hardship as she had to sit on the truck floor, while other people were standing tightly. Others often fell on her. The driver stopped in front of the gate of Sovann Satharam Pagoda a.k.a. Plauv Moan Pagoda at noon. It was the first day that Simonavy knew Pursat Province. Angkar told her family to get off the truck and continue the journey by walking.

### **New Shelter**

Simonavy's uncle in-law, Phat, who was the husband of her aunt, Sokha, looked for a palm rib to let her grandmother sit on as her family had no cart. When they arrived, her family did not have



The hill where Ing Simonavy's family stayed during the Khmer Rouge regime.

many belongings except some clothes. Simonavy and family had walked for 3 kilometers to reach Plauv Moan Pagoda. They slept at the pagoda for one night with hundreds of other families. In the

morning, Simonavy, her uncle, her aunt, and her two cousins went to look for a small hill to build a hut, while her grandparents waited for them at the pagoda. As it was in the rainy season, there were fewer hills; Simonavy had to walk in the water. Simonavy's uncle found a big enough hill. Then, he removed the bushes and laid down the rubber rug. Her uncle picked some leaves to put on the rug in order not to let it get heated and to protect it from wind as his two daughters were very young, i.e. one was 7 years old, while the other was just 5 years old.

### **Grandmother Passed away**

After a week, Simonavy's grandmother, who stayed at Plauv Moan Pagoda, got sick because of having no food. Simonavy's grandmother, then, passed away in that pagoda before Simonavy returned. Simonavy and her grandfather took her grandmother's dead body to bury next to the west fence of the pagoda. Then, her grandfather moved to live with them at the hut. Simonavy's family had



The burial site of Ing Simonavy's grandmother near a tree

nothing to eat since Angkar gave each family only a can of rice. Therefore, Simonavy's uncle went to look for other food for the family. Besides, Simonavy, possessing male-behavior and agile, went nearby to the military camp to dig the banana stump and pick some Ferroniella Lucida tree and Water Hyacinth to mix with gruel. Later, Angkar gave gruel to each family.

### **The Next Person**

After Simonavy's family lived at the hill for three months, Simonavy's grandfather got severely ill and passed away. Before he died, he listed all of his children's names. At that time, Simonavy, who was just 13 years old, begged nearby people and got two pieces of wood to lay on her grandfather's dead body. Some villagers came to help carry her grandfather's dead body to bury on a hill near her family's living location, located approximately two fields away at the west of Plauv Moan Pagoda.

A week after her grandfather's death, evacuated people from Kampong Speu Market arrived. Those people, previously, had lived near Simonavy's family. They reported to the Khmer Rouge militiaman that Simonavy's uncle was Ing Moeng's younger brother. Two days later, that militiaman came to call her uncle to Phnom Penh. Her aunt asked why did he need to go to Phnom Penh?; that militiaman said that Angkar called him to work. Her uncle disappeared forever.

At the beginning of January, 1976, Angkar asked the remaining four members of Simonavy's family, including Simonavy, her aunt and her two cousins, to leave home and live with new people at the 40-meter long booth in Aren Cheung Plerng Village, Snam Preah Commune. 4 months later, Angkar divided Simonavy's family and sent her to a mobile unit, her aunt to a senior unit, and her two other cousins to a children unit. Working in the children's unit for just about two months, both cousins got swollen and were sent to the village hospital by Angkar.

Every evening, after returning from work, Simonavy usually saw her swollen bodied cousins inside the hospital compound. But, three days later, her cousins disappeared. She asked people living nearby the hospital, and realized that both of her cousins had passed away. Simonavy's aunt got very



**The burial site of Ing Simonavy's grandfather**

depressed and no longer wanted to complete Angkar's assigned task after knowing about her daughters' death.

### **The Last One**

One day, during the noon break, Simonavy secretly looked at how people bound the seedling in the mobile unit. In the afternoon, the unit chief asked her to pull out seedlings. Simonavy was not good at pulling out seedling, so whenever she threshed the seedlings, it scattered on her entire body. However, she could bind the seedlings. Seeing that, a spy who did the surveillance on her family for a long time said, "Comrade! Female Comrade! Were you the daughter of businessman or elite?" Simonavy replied, "Businessman? Elite? I have no idea." "Comrade Bang! I was poor, so I



The monk's dining hall located in Snam Preah commune, Bakan district, Pursat province

came to serve Ing Moeng's family to earn some money for studying," Simonavy lied.

During the rainy season of 1977, Simonavy's aunt was assigned to do the transplantation by Angkar. Every time she did the task, she often folded the seedlings, and those seedlings floated in the field. Simonavy knew that she was no longer performing well as she was hopeless because of the death of her daughters, husband, siblings, and parents. One day, when her aunt was transplanting, three militiamen came to take her away and hit her with a bat made from the Sangke tree, to death. They then called people who worked in the field nearby to come to see the enemy of Angkar. No one wanted to see her aunt, for it was such a shocking and despicable incident. Simonavy, who was carrying seedlings on her shoulder, saw those militiamen beat her aunt. She could not say anything as she was so stunned and could not move on. Immediately, a Khmer Rouge spy pointed

at her and yelled: "This is the model of those who went against Angkar!" When Angkar rang the bell calling everyone to have lunch, Simonavy went to take her aunt's dead body from the water and bury her nearby Aren Cheung Plerng Village Hospital where her 2 cousins dead bodies were, with the help of four men in the mobile unit.

#### **Lonely Life**

After her aunt passed away, Simonavy had to live alone. Later, Angkar sent her to a special unit though she was still underage, which was different from other children. Angkar assigned Simonavy to pull out 400 seedlings per day, and she had to perform other tasks that Angkar assigned. Pitying her, other seniors in the special unit who could pull out the seedlings at a fast speed secretly gave some seedlings to her in order to let her fulfill the assigned task. At the same time, some of the seedling counters helped her by hiding her incompleteness at the task.

After Simonavy worked in the village for quite a while, Angkar sent her to cut trees at Romlech in order to use the land to plant sugarcane. There, Angkar did not provide any food. Still, she could pick some Kuy, Pha-nheanh, and other kinds of fruit that grew in the forest to eat. Since then, Simonavy has known many kinds of wild fruit. Simonavy lived in Romlech for six months, until the rainy season. Angkar then sent her to work at the field in Aren

“[I] don’t think we will be imprisoned just because of stealing this potato. In the past, my grandfather filled his farm at Angserey with potatoes. Potatoes were transported in cars, unlike nowadays.” Later, a Khmer Rouge spy knew about this and called all mobile unit members in order to find out those who stole the potatoes. Among all of those who stole, no one dared raise up their hands, except a 50 year-old lady, a former colonel’s child, and



(From left to right) Ing Simonavy’s mother, Nhem Yin, Ing Simovina and her husband Oeu Il while offering food to monks at Plov Morn pagoda in 2007

Village, Snam Preah District. Before starting to work in the field, she was assigned to measure gruel and distribute it to the old in each house. Simonavy saw that a lot of exhausted people slept in the hut and some others had already died before she took them the gruel. She called those people to wake up as she had no idea who was dead or alive.

### **Military Prison**

Half a month later, Simonavy went to work at the transplanting unit where she got only water gruel. Thus, when coming from transplanting, Simonavy and many other members of the mobile unit went to dig out pieces of potatoes which were remaining in the farm. At that time, Simonavy said,

Simonavy. Three of them thought that if they did so, they would show their honesty, and Angkar would forgive them and provide them enough food to eat.

Then, the spy ended the meeting by saying, “Those who were not honest to Angkar must go back to do the transplanting, while the honest ones go to eat.” The spy led Simonavy and two other to have gruel at the kitchen. After eating, the Khmer Rouge spy took Simonavy and the other two to put them on a chain at the military location next to the railway. After three hours, they were freed, but they had to remain in the prison compound (Today, the prison track is located 100 meters at the east of Snam Preah Commune hall, Bakan District). Later, a

white and tall Khmer Rouge militiaman asked Simonavy and other prisoners there to stand in line. Then, they used rattan sticks to hit people in line one by one. When it was Simonavy's turn, she begged that militiaman, crying, "I am really afraid of rattan stick! Please do not hit me." That militiaman forgave her. After hitting those people, that Khmer Rouge militiaman ordered them to dig a canal and cut down the hill. Each of them was given only a ladle of gruel. Whenever she went to work, the Khmer Rouge militiaman who forgave her previously usually whispered to her to pick up Thnoeng leave and unripe tamarind to eat. One day, that militiaman told her, "Female comrade! You, previously, did not originate from a poor family. Yet, you have to bear as our nation will not always be like this."

### **Angkar's Enemy**

One night, when Simonavy was sleeping, the Khmer Rouge spy came to take the girl who stole potatoes with Simonavy away. In the morning, the Khmer Rouge militiaman, a guard at the prison, told Simonavy to take that girl's clothes to wear as she was taken away by Angkar. Simonavy was so scared when hearing about that. One day, there was a severe rain. Angkar changed Simonavy from digging a canal to constructing a dam. When the sleepy guard fell asleep, a hungry youth climbed up the tamarind tree to pick tamarind and dropped it to Simonavy and others. Suddenly, Khmer Rouge militiamen saw that and ran speedily to catch the youth. Being panicked, that youth jumped down from the tamarind tree. Unfortunately, he was caught, and his chest was cut by the Khmer Rouge militiaman. He died under the tamarind tree. Then, the militiaman ordered the male mobile unit members to pull his dead body to be buried. Simonavy was panicked and stunned when seeing this cruel killing incident.

### **Overtime Work**

Beside digging canal and cutting the hill,

Simonavy and other members had to cut lake fish, transport them to Khmer Rouge militiaman, to make dried fish. Some days, Khmer Rouge transported a lot of fish, so Simonavy had to work until dawn. Moreover, in the morning, she had to go to work. Sometimes she closed her eyes, carrying earth, as she had not slept at night.

At the end of 1978, Angkar sent Simonavy to work at Sre Pongro near Tonle Sap Lake. Living there for quite a while, she got malaria. Then, Angkar sent her to the hospital at Bakan District. After Simonavy became better, Angkar ordered her to lead cattle at Svay Att Village. Beside leading cattle, Angkar assigned her to help with farm work and dig canal.

### **Situation Changed**

One day, Simonavy heard a gun firing sound. Immediately, Khmer Rouge evacuated her to Tonle Sap Lake. Every night, Angkar assigned Simonavy to guard. She was given a knife as the situation was so chaotic. When guarding, she usually fell asleep as she was so sleepy. There, Simonavy got to know a boy, Pet, whose parents were killed by the Khmer Rouge. That boy lived in the children's unit and had more food than Simonavy. Seeing Simonavy, that boy pitied her and stole some food to give her every evening. Simonavy asked Pet where his mother's homeland was. He said that it was in Phnom Penh. They, then, became friends. Simonavy took Pet to live with her when it was chaos.

Later, Simonavy heard an extreme gun firing noise. She and Pet followed other people running everywhere. Eventually, Simonavy and Pet arrived at Battambang, but they did not know that it was Battambang until they heard from others. There, people took rice from a nearby warehouse to cook and eat individually. Simonavy and Pet stayed along a tree shaded area for one week, and, later, they walked back to Pursat Province by following other people, even though they did not know any direction (at that time, there were also Khmer

Rouge mixed up with others).

Arriving at Pursat Province, Simonavy and Pet stayed at a rice warehouse, located at the east of Pursat Bridge, for two nights. They then met two siblings. Both siblings asked Simonavy in loud voice: “Vy Comrade! Where is your hometown?” Simonavy replied, “My hometown is in the east.” She dared not honestly answer as she was afraid of the Khmer Rouge. Both siblings told Simonavy that Vietnamese had entered. Hearing that, Simonavy told them not to say anything as Angkar would take them to the kiln. At that time, the Khmer Rouge had built a kiln to burn ones who Angkar accused of betrayal; in general, people called that kiln the “human burning kiln”. As they all were going in the same direction, the siblings invited Simonavy and Pet to go with them and asked them to put their rice sack on their cart. They travelled together to Phnom Penh.

### Saw Only Signs

Simonavy took 2 months to reach Phnom Penh. Simonavy spent a full day walking to the house where she used to live and her uncle and aunt’s house. What she could see was just a sign written “die”. Both siblings who joined the journey with her had met their relatives at Porchentong. At the same time, a woman Simonavy did not know asked Simonavy for Pet to adopt, as she claimed that she had no children. Thinking that she could provide Pet a bright future as the woman’s living standard was quite high, Simonavy allowed her to take Pet. Simonavy still feels regret about this incident, even today.

### New Life

After being in Phnom Penh for two months, Simonavy met her aunt in-law (Ing Ngauv’s wife) who worked as a hospital staff member at Toek Laak Hospital. Simonavy lived with her aunt and started to work at that same hospital. Later, Simonavy’s stepmother and her children



(Second from left): Ing Kenh (Ing Simonavy’s cousin), Oeu Il, Ing Choy (Ing Simonavy’s aunt) and Nhem Yin at Kathina Ceremony at Plov Morn Pagoda

(Simonavy's step-siblings), living in Kampong Speu, came to look for Simonavy and they met each other in Phnom Penh. At that time, Simonavy knew from her step-siblings that Angkar assigned her father to raise dam at Trapeang Thma Reservoir in Phnom Srok District, Banteay Meanchey Province. Later, he was killed by the Khmer Rouge at the potato field just a short while before the Khmer Rouge were overthrown.

In 1982, Simonavy went to live in Say Thou Camp as she intended to meet with her cousins, Ing Moeng's children, who lived in France. However, at the camp, the monitoring was strict, and some women were raped by Thai soldiers, while others were killed to take their gold, diamonds, and other property. Seeing the situation, Simonavy had no idea how to communicate with her cousins. Later, she worked at the Womens' Rescue Association, which had a close relationship with UNBRO, at Rithisen Camp.

Simonavy worked at that camp until February 1991. It was time for refugees along the border to

return to their own country. Simonavy came to work with HOLT to help the refugees, especially, the children and the old, at Tomnop Kap Srov to be able to meet with their relatives at their hometown. Later, Simonavy joined with some other NGOs until 2012. And, she came to work at a private company run by her cousin on her mother's side.

In 2007, Simonavy went to places where she had lived and the graves of her grandmother, grandfather, aunt and cousins. However, she could not recognize where their graves were. Therefore, Simonavy's family decided to celebrate a ritual at Plauv Moan Pagoda with the participation of other Buddhists to honor all of her dead relatives.

Simonavy usually tells about her and her family's experiences to her children as she would love them to know and remember about these experiences and her uncle, aunt and grandparents who pitifully and unfairly passed away during the Khmer Rouge regime.

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**Bunthorn Som**

## SEARCHING FOR ELDER BROTHER

My name is Lim Kieng, now 43, born in Phnom Penh. I am currently living in Ampeou Dieb village, Chrouy Neang Nguon commune, Srey Snom district, Siem Reap province. My father is Lim Chea Thai (deceased), and my mother is Muy Chou (deceased). Including me, I have six siblings: Mr. Lim Sreng (disappeared), Mr. Lim Khim (disappeared), Ms. Lim Kieng (Me), Mr. Lim Pheng (died of disease in Khmer Rouge regime), Mr. Lim Uy (died of disease in Khmer Rouge regime), and Mr. Lim Sak (died of disease in Khmer Rouge regime).

I am searching for my two brothers—Lim Sreng and Lim Khim—who disappeared. The three of us (Lim Sreng, Lim Khim and I) were traveling home in 1979 but lost our way and were separated. We departed from Sraeng Bridge to return to our home. When we arrived in Kralanh district, my two brothers—Lim Sreng and Lim Khim—searched for an ox-cart for me to ride because I was crippled from birth. I was on the ox-cart when my two brothers went to search for food. They did not return after a long wait. Since then I never saw my brothers again. Later on, I met a middle-aged woman who pitied me and adopted me where I currently reside in Ampeou Dieb village, Chrouy Neang Nguon commune, Srey Snom district, Siem Reap. I won't be able to recognize my brothers because we were separated since I was nine, but if you happen to have met or know either Lim Sreng or Lim Khim, please contact me at 097 413 4145 or contact the Documentation Center of Cambodia at #66, Preah Sihanouk Blvd., Phnom Penh. Tel: 023 211 875.

# ESCAPING THE KHMER ROUGE ATROCITY THE STORIES OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEES INTO LAOS

*Dr. Sok-Kheang Ly*

## Introduction

As the Democratic Kampuchea-Laos diplomatic relations were forged and maintained throughout the DK rule (1975-1979), the escaped Cambodian refugees into the Laotian border area were quietly welcomed and the plight of the people on Cambodia's side of the border were simply ignored or unaccounted for. During the Public Village Forum (PVF), organized by DCCam's Witnessing Justice Project on April 3, 2014, nearly two hundred villagers from Preah Rumkel commune, Stung Treng province, reported that the Khmer Rouge's (KR) harsh treatment of people forced many to escape to Laos. This happened throughout the first half of the 1970s and continued during the early years of the KR. Although the stories from these refugees became a stark indication of the KR atrocities, the refugees had no choice but to seek shelter elsewhere to ensure survival. The historical facts of this area went

unnoticed for the most part. Many of the children born after the regime have taken little, if no, notice of this area's history. Visiting the commune for three days, the team of PVF facilitated five key speakers who had experienced the life-and-death migration to discuss with students the history and the trial proceedings at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC). The team also sought to find an estimated number of refugees from each of the commune's eight villages. In this report, there will be an examination into the historical narrative of the status of refugees. It will be followed by reactions from both the villagers and students.

## The Forum: The Status of Cambodian Refugees into Laos

The morning of April 3rd, 2014 brought villagers, students, teachers and local leaders to gather at a local pagoda to engage in a public discussion. While the KR history in general was



The monks' dining hall located in Preah Romkel commune, Thala Borivat district, Steung Treng province where DC-Cam organizes the Public Forum of the Democratic Kampuchea

initially discussed, special attention was paid to the exodus of the Cambodian refugees into Laos, given the commune's close proximity to Laos's territory. The Laos authority offered some help and assistance to settle the refugees, as Laos retained its good diplomatic relations with DK. According to Nayan Chanda's "Brother Enemy: The War after the War," Laos Ambassador Khamphan Vilachit and his six-member staff remained inside the embassy compound and were in a state of bewilderment about the incoming war, which was later known as the Vietnamese forces. While the diplomatic existence was rather symbolic, it's highly unlikely that Laos took any kind of open humanitarian actions for the Cambodian refugees.

The total triumph of the KR regime on April 17, 1975 was generally viewed as the starting point for the extreme hardship of the Cambodian people. However, most of the people in the Cambodian countryside were already suffering since the coup staged by Lon Nol on March 18, 1970. The KR expanded its forces and took control of most parts of the countryside, thus leading to the subsequent evacuations that began in the early 1970s. Preah Rumkel commune was no different. The informants at the village forum pointed out several factors for their migrations.

First, the KR began endorsing collective farming and properties, angering many people, while a sense of insecurity prompted them to escape. For example, Mr. Yan Suntak, first deputy chief of the commune, recalled continuous fierce fighting between the KR and Lon Nol's forces and the stripping of the people of their rights to property.

Second, the KR created an atmosphere of fear and threat in the first half of 1970s. Coming alone, wearing a very nice dress to participate in the forum, Ms. Leang Pheang, 66, of Preah Rumkel commune, Talabariwath district, Stung Treng province, said she fled to Laos in either March or

April of 1972 because her father's escape to Laos was highly likely to put all family members in danger of being killed. She was scared and decided to leave for Laos. For this reason, Ms. Pheang further told the participants that she decided to walk for two hours from Preah Rumkel commune to a crossing point. Ms. Pheang, together with three other families (10 people), crossed the border and



swam across the Mekong river at Sandet Island at 7 pm and got into Laotian territory at 11 pm. After coming across some Laotian fishermen, she was brought to a village. At first she was not able to search for any information about her relatives from the border area, but Ms. Pheang later realized that there were some more people that crossed the border. She feared that other villagers from where she escaped might have mistreated her family, because there were some cases of people being implicated, captured and disappeared.

Third, the KR implemented a mass execution in her community, while starvation was also widespread. Ms. Leang Pheang recalled how much better it was when she was in Laos. All of the escapees were welcomed and provided with food and the right to set up a provisional shelter. She stayed with her friend, who was a Laotian named Yeay Korng. She made a living by fishing on the Laotian side of the river, as she continued to look out at her former village from a distance. She often saw people wearing black uniforms at the mountain on the Cambodian side. In the forum,

she also expressed her discontent with the fact that six months after her escape everything was quiet from inside Cambodia. No one knew what was going on. The escapees were known to have fled to Laos, but she wondered why the KR's Angkar did not make any effort to bring them back. At this point, there was a possibility that Laotian authorities might have helped hide Cambodian refugees from the jaws of death by the KR. Laotian cadres at the commune level would often pay a visit to the escapees. In Laos, Ms. Pheang had a feeling that there were killings that were happening in her native community.

Fortunately, Ms. Pheang met with her father. Several months later, she heard that there was mistreatment in her community in Cambodia. The Laotian local authority warned everyone against any trespassing into Cambodia. The Laotian village chief frequently visited the escapees. As for Mr. Khim Phon, 81, of Preah Rumkel commune, he received a warm welcome by O-Luy Lang, a Lao cadre.

While many refugees in Laos were skeptical of the regime killing its own people, the general sentiment shared among the refugees was that it was extremely hard for anyone to flee, given the KR's strong border protection. The people who lived close to the border and were able to speak the Laotian language were evacuated to other places, while they were replaced by other people who could not speak the Lao language, according to Huon Em, 71 years old, of Preah Rumkel commune. However, Mr. Sam Kit, born in 1953, of Preah Rumkel commune, was an exception, and made a very dangerous journey from Phnom Penh to Laos.

In the forum, Mr. Kit said on April 17, 1975, he entered the French Embassy as he got to know some officials at the Embassy. He saw many foreigners there. Then the KR entered the embassy and ordered all of the Khmer citizens to leave for Phsar Thmei market. There were three truckloads of Cambodians leaving the embassy. In the afternoon

of April 18, 1975, he, along with others with their hands tied behind their backs, were transported out in trucks. He remembered that the people in the first two trucks were killed by gunshots. But people in his truck were clubbed to death and pushed into a well. Everyone was ordered to kneel down at the edge of the well. He was one of the last two victims in line for execution. He was clubbed with a metal iron behind his head. All the victims were then shot to make sure they all died. Luckily, Mr. Kit survived but the KR also covered the well with a metal cover. He tried many times to climb up out of the well. At midnight, a few KR soldiers came to check again. He succeeded in climbing up shortly after the inspection and escaped. Then he hid himself in houses as people had already been evacuated. He told the participants that on April 19, 1975, a KR soldier came and demanded to know if there was a person inside the brick house that he was hiding in. He responded "Yes." He then got out of the house and followed others on that day. He kept walking.



He then joined with an elderly couple and arrived at Kilo meter 6 on April 20, 1975.

Mr. Kit continued his talk by saying that on April 21, 1975, he headed for Prek Kdam and then the KR pushed back. The KR ordered all the evacuees to take a ferry and continue to walk to Kampong Cham province. It had taken him several months to arrive in Stung Treng province where he arrived on July 24, 1975. He was dispatched to Snam Chey Island but he fled from Snam Chey

along with four other people. The four decided to join their relatives in Preah Rumkel commune, while Mr. Kit chose to retreat into the forest. Later he found that they all were killed. It had taken him another three nights to cross the Mekong River and arrive in Laos.

When he entered Laotian territory in August 1975, the local authority asked if he was a KR cadre. He was later sent to live with the locals. Laos was not liberated until December 1975. A Laotian cadre, Mr. Pha Sy, told Mr. Kit that when both countries were at peace, all of the escapees were to be sent back to Cambodia.

However, Mr. Kit refused and said that if he would be sent back, he'd rather be killed. Mr. Sy then sent one of his cadres to Cambodia and was killed. Then Mr. Sy believed Mr. Kit's claims. The Laotian authority allowed him to set up a temporary camp and provided him with clothes and assigned him to live with a Laotian family. It was hard for Laos to save other Cambodians inside the country as the KR kept shooting anyone who would get close to the border.

There were many Cambodians who fled into Laos. All of the escapees reported the killings and starvation inside Cambodia. Mr. Kit believed the claims. He once met his brother in Laos. He had fled through Seam Pang district. However, it was hard for Laotian people to believe in the narrative of the escapees as, after the liberation, the Laotians under the communist rule lived a good life with no killings. He always narrated the killings in Cambodia at the time but he did not know whether the Laotian people and authorities believed him. He was not asked by any media either. He believed that it was because the KR and Laotian government were communists and were not in the position to meddle in each other's affairs. It was like three different houses—Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. They differed in that the KR killed the people, while cadres of the past regime in Laos were reeducated,

trained, released and re-integrated into society. Mr. Kit estimated that the escapees could be in the thousands. After the collapse of the KR, many refugees decided to return only after they found out that people were able to cross the border back and forth again.

### **Reactions to the Forum**

After the forum, comments, suggestions and feedbacks were elicited from the participants.

Mr. Bun Lin, 75, of Kandal village, Preah Rumkel commune, said it was great to have a narrated history in detail for the children. It was good to do this activity. The people in this commune were able to escape into Laos in the early 1970s but that would have been almost impossible during the KR period. Those who were able to escape were lucky. When seeing the children listening to the talk, Mr. Lin expressed his content. He heard about the trial through the radio and said, 'it's important for the people.'

Ms. Leang Pheang, 66 years old, of Preah Rumkel commune, said she usually told her story to her children. They believe her story. But Ms. Pheang has no knowledge about the trial in Phnom Penh. She finds that it's important for her children to learn about the history of the Khmer Rouge.

Khan Ratha, 16, a ninth grader of Preah Rumkel secondary school, Stung Treng province, said the forum was important to learn about the KR killing and to learn about how some managed to flee into Laos. She expressed sympathy for the plight of Ms. Leang Pheang who fled into Laos for fear of death. Ratha appealed for a general effort to prevent any future genocidal act to recur. She asked that DC-Cam provide more materials to the students there. Before she came to the forum she had very little knowledge about the history of the area and the KR. Ratha thanked DC-Cam's team for choosing Preah Rumkel commune.

Mr. Yat Suntak, first deputy chief of Preah Rumkel commune, said the forum was a good

space for him to share personal experiences during the KR period with others. Narrating this history to the younger generation enabled him to feel a sense of relief. It was a reaffirmation of the reality of the KR regime. Mr. Suntak valued the forum as a place where he could speak about his sufferings to let youths know the true nature of the atrocity. He was content with the forum and wished to have more in the future.

Mr. Suntak proposed that the next forum focus on how the KR ruled the country because he believes that some of those born after the KR regime raised some doubts over the existence of the regime. Mr. Suntak believed that ECCC would deliver a credible justice for the Cambodian people.

Ms. Ny Thai, 70, of Preah Rumkel commune, said it was good to bring the topic of the KR history, especially the status of Cambodian refugees in Laos at the time, into discussion among the villagers and students. He constantly followed the court's hearings against the surviving KR leaders. He wished for continuing work toward an effective prevention of such a regime.

Khun Vuthy, 17 years old and eighth grader of Preah Rumkel Secondary School, said the forum established a fruitful connection between the villagers' narratives and the textbook he read. This

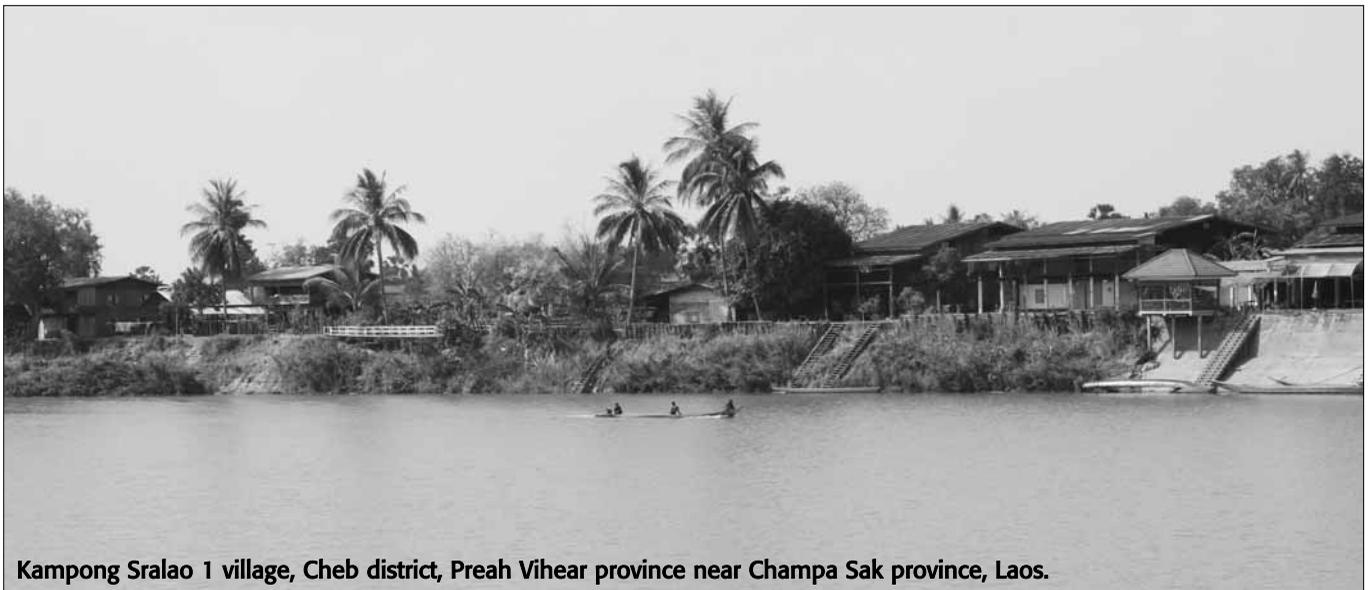
re-affirmed for him the reality of the regime, which caused so many people to die. However, Vuthy expressed his regret for not following the trial proceedings at the ECCC, given his attention to schoolwork.

### Conclusion

Although the Laos Embassy existed in Phnom Penh during the DK rule (1975-1979) that was blamed for the death of nearly two million people, the embassy was simply quiet and kept out of the state affairs of the DK regime. However, it has shown some helpful gestures toward the refugees who fled Cambodia for survival. The humanitarian act was acknowledged by the many refugees in Preah Rumkel commune. They were accommodated by the Laotian people and made their living free from any sort of mistreatment. However, the tragic stories that the refugees have conveyed were simply heard by Lao authorities, but received no intervening measures. Given the short time frame and few individuals involved, the PVF was only able to show estimated figures provided by the local people and authorities about the number of refugees who fled into Laos.

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*Dr. Sok-Kheang Ly*



Kampong Sralao 1 village, Cheb district, Preah Vihear province near Champa Sak province, Laos.

# LIVING CONDITIONS OF PEOPLE IN PREAH ROMKEL COMMUNE DURING AND BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

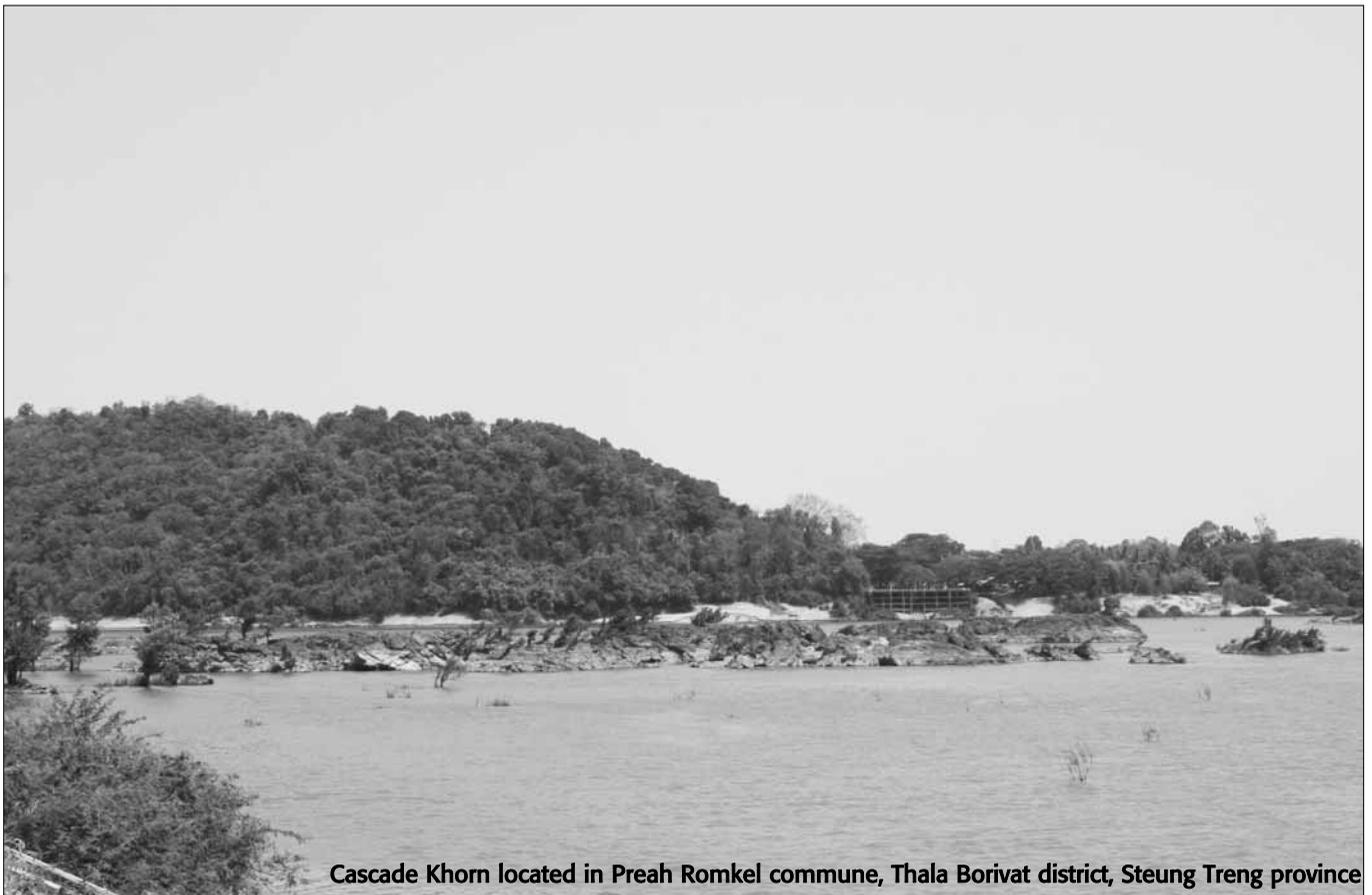
*Sanas Min*

People in Preah Romkel Commune had fled to Laos, beginning in 1970. As there was little to no research related to the cause and effect of this flight, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) team selected Preah Romkel Commune, Thala Borivath District, Stung Treng Province to hold a forum on the History of Democratic Kampuchea and the process of prosecuting the former Khmer Rouge leadership.

Ly Sok-Kheang, team leader, had presented the participants the forum's objectives, which were to share their experiences during the Khmer Rouge regime and to inform them about the prosecuting process of former Khmer Rouge leaders. This forum

provided the victims who survived the Khmer Rouge regime a chance to heal their emotional wounds and to promote mutual understanding in order to achieve forgiveness and prevent the regime from re-occurring.

Preah Romkel Commune is located next to the Lao border. Cambodians as well as Laotians, living along the border, have good relations and trade with each other. However, in 1970, after the coup d'état to overthrow Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge completely captured this commune. Being afraid, some of the commune residents fled to Laos. Due to the good relations, Lao authorities allowed those Cambodians



Cascade Khorn located in Preah Romkel commune, Thala Borivat district, Steung Treng province

refugees to live temporarily in their territory.

Sharing her experience with young people, Leang Pheang, 65 years old, reminded the audience that she fled to Laos in 1974 after the Khmer Rouge found that her father fled to Laos before the Khmer Rouge first came to power in this commune. Thus, the Khmer Rouge considered her family members as enemies and intended to “smash” (kill) them. Knowing this, Pheang and her husband, as well as another five members ran away from home during the night time. Pheang and some of the villagers went into the jungle, climbed

up Kantom Chek Mountain, and crossed the river. Eventually, they reached Laotian territory. As Cambodians and Laotians had visited and had good relations with each other, Cambodian refugees were not mistreated by Laotians. Yet, the relationship between the two was cut off after the Khmer Rouge came to power in 1975. When Pheang and other Cambodians entered Lao Territory, Pheang’s Laotian friend took Pheang and those refugees to meet with the chief of Leav Village. Later, after the village chief asked about what had been going on, those Cambodian refugees were allowed to live temporarily there.

Khim Phon, 81 years old, was not so different from Leang Pheang. He told the students that in 1971, he escaped to Laos as there was a lot of bombing in his village. Phon managed to escape because the Khmer Rouge guard along the river thought that he rowed the boat to fish. That guard also said to him, “Find some fish for me, too.” At that time, there were also other people who followed. Those were previous Lon Nol soldiers.” Still, we did not ask each other much; we just cared for ourselves and lived on our own”. Phon added that from 1971 to 1975, there were 30 Cambodian families living near him. In 1975, he went to live and did farming at the National Rescue Association. There were 10 other Cambodian families there; land in Laotian territory was provided to them to have proper houses built on. Lao authorities gave freedom to the Cambodian refugees to go fishing. After the Khmer Rouge



Khim Phon at the Public Forum of Teaching the History of Democratic Kampuchea

regime was overthrown, Phon and other Cambodians requested the Lao authorities to return to their own motherland.

In general, the DC-Cam team has found that people living in Preah Romkel Commune, tended to flee to Lao altogether. Nevertheless, as there were many members in each family, it was hard for the whole family to run away and many had to endure hardship during the Khmer Rouge regime. For example, Nhem Leng described during the public forum that, in 1972, because he could speak Laotian, Khmer Rouge cadre assigned him to trade with Laotians. Trading materials during that time included salt, Sugar, gasoline, clothes, and particularly medicine. Leng added that those who came from Laos were not just ordinary people; they were colonels and Lao royal family members. Before trading with those Laotians, the Khmer Rouge cadre threatened Leng by telling him not to talk about the country's politics or have the

intention to flee to live in Laos. If he did not follow, his relatives, living in the village, would all be killed. Leng continued that when he could escape, he dared not do so as he thought of his relatives at home. During trade, there was a Laotian colonel asking Leng why Cambodian soldiers killed their people who did fishing along the border. Though this unfortunate thing happened, Laotians still helped and took care of Cambodians who fled to live in their country. These are the experiences of the residents of Romkel Commune that they have gone through and faced before and after the Khmer Rouge came to power in April 17, 1975. Sharing these stories with the next generation allows the young people to understand and critically think about and gain knowledge regarding the history of their own village.

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*Sanas Min*



Nhem Leng tells students about the Khmer Rouge regime during the Public Forum of Teaching the History of Democratic Kampuchea

# I AM THE ONLY SURVIVOR IN MY FAMILY OF ORIGIN

*Sarakmonin Teav*

“To me, May 20 was not only the day of remembrance, but also the day of pain. It was the Khmer Rouge regime that made me lose my parents and eight siblings. Eventually, after the collapse of this regime, among my 11 family members, I am the only one who survives.”

This is the aggrieved statement made by Un Chheam, who attended the day of remembrance of the Khmer Rouge regime on May 20, 2014. Every year, Chheam joins this celebration to honor his parents, siblings, and relatives who died during the Khmer Rouge regime. Though he is 77, he is still healthy and energetic, compared to other elders his age.



ENC School until the Khmer Rouge liberated Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975.

When the Khmer Rouge military entered Phnom Penh, Chheam was working at school. Then, he left school to meet his wife and child before the Khmer Rouge evacuated people. Not very different from other city people, Chheam and his family were forced to leave home. The Khmer Rouge claimed that people needed to leave for just three days.

## **Takeo Province**

Chheam and his family were evacuated to Takeo Province, which was the first stop on his family's journey. However, evacuation to Takeo was just the

Remembering what happened during the Khmer Rouge era under a tree shade in the compound of Cheung Ek Killing Field, Chheam described his experience during the Khmer Rouge regime, even though he has lost some of his memories as those incidents took place around 30 years ago. He attentively describes those experiences.

## **Family**

Un Chheam was born in Peareang District, Prey Veng Province. He lived in a big family, consisting of his parents, his 8 siblings and himself. Chheam studied up to grade 7. After the coup d'état to overthrow Samdech Preah Sihanouk, Chhem left his home alone to work in Phnom Penh. He then got married and had a child. He and his wife, whose name is Em, lived in Sak Sampeou Village (Dangkor District, nowadays). He worked at

temporary one; they stayed there for just two or three months. Walking for many days, eventually, Chheam's family arrived at Takeo Province. At first, Angkar did not assign any tasks to people. Regarding eating, it was not a problem as they ate privately. Base people also did not mistreat the evacuated people. Moreover, villagers often provided food or medicine to the evacuated people.

## **Train Journey**

Two months later, Chheam and his family as well as some other people were evacuated by Angkar to Battambang Province by train. A huge number of people boarded the train. Chheam had no idea where those people came from. During the journey, the Khmer Rouge provided five cans of rice and some dried fish to each individual. As there were three members in Chheam's family, they got

15 cans of rice. Arriving at a place with water, the Khmer Rouge postponed the journey and allowed people to cook rice before moving on.

### Arrived at Snay Moan

After a one day and one night journey, Chheam and his family arrived at Snay Moan Village. Chheam was not sure in what commune and district Snay Moan Village was located. Upon arrival, Angkar required all evacuated people to look for a living place; a family could live together in one place. Chheam continued that he and his family were quite fortunate as at every place he evacuated to, there was not much hardship for his family. In fact, he got sympathy from cadres and from base people. Regarding tasks in each unit, he often joined in the units whose chiefs were kind and forgiving. At Snay Moan, Angkar assigned Chheam to plant vegetables. Life at Snay Moan was not so hard for Chheam and his family. Regarding eating, though there were only two meals per day,

he could eat sufficiently. Sometimes, he could have rice, gruel or dessert.

### Moved to Ka Koh

Chheam and his family lived at Snay Moan for just a little while. Later, Angkar moved him and his family, as well as some other families, to Ka Koh. Chheam did not know if Ka Koh was a village, commune or district. He just knew that it was in Battambang Province. Arriving at Ka Koh, Chheam's wife was assigned by Angkar to work in the kitchen, while his son, who was just about 6 year-old, was sent to the children's unit. Chheam was assigned to work at the hospital. He was not a doctor. At that time, Angkar provided 5 hectares of field to the hospital to sustain their own unit. Hence, Chheam and ten other members took on the farming role at the hospital's field. Unlike other starving people in other units, Chheam's unit could have sufficient food. During lunch time, the females at the hospital brought rice to them in the field. Also, there were



Buddhist monks bless at a religious ceremony at Choeung Ek Genocide Museum

desserts twice per week.

While other families were separated by Angkar, Chheam could live with his wife and son. Every night, after finishing work, he could come to stay with his wife and son.

Living at Ka Koh, Chheam's family and other families did not face much hardship. They could have sufficient food. Though they ate collectively, they sometimes could have rice, gruel and dried fish. Chheam did not know whether the other places had the same conditions as he. However, walking across the work site, he observed that most people were skinny. He thought that those people must have insufficient food ration as they even could not pull their leg up from the ground. Chheam was curious why some places had enough food, while others did not. For instance, at Chheam's living place, though Angkar assigned tasks to people to do without a break time, people could still have enough food. Chheam did farming at Ka Koh until the Vietnamese soldiers entered.

#### **The Presence of Vietnamese Soldiers**

One day, while Chheam was farming, an airplane flew across, but he did not notice. Several days later, Chheam saw a lot of Khmer Rouge trucks, driven across the land which he lived on. He had no idea where those trucks went to. Later, Vietnamese soldiers arrived at Ka Koh. The Khmer Rouge cadres fled away, while people ran backward. During this chaotic situation, Chheam was separated from his wife and son. Luckily, he met his wife and son again at Mong Russey.

#### **The Start of New Life**

After the reunion, Cheam and his family continued their journey to Phnom Penh. Arriving in Phnom Penh, he and his family stayed at ENC where he had taught. After staying there for two months, he decided to go to his house at Sak Sampeou Village. He has been living there ever since. During 1980 to 1981, he was a teacher at Sak Sampeou Primary School. Frequently, he took his

students to visit Cheung Ek and Tuol Sleng to let them know about the recently ended Khmer Rouge regime.

Chheam was separated from all his family of origin since the day he came to Phnom Penh. That day was the last time he saw his family members' faces. After being a teacher for a year, he went to work at the Ministry of Agriculture until he retired.

Currently, Chheam is living at Sak Sampeou Villag, Dangkor District, Phnom Penh, with his wife and four children. Even though the Khmer Rouge regime has ended for almost thirty years, it seems like it just happened to him. What it left him with was the pain of losing his parents and siblings.

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#### **Sarakmonin Teav**

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF GENOCIDE EDUCATION**

- ◆ *Your questions empower and give meaning to those who have suffered. Asking your parents and grand-parents about the Khmer Rouge will further the conciliation of the Cambodian nation.*
- ◆ *Teaching children about the Khmer Rouge regime means teaching students the difference between good and evil and how to forgive. Broken societies must know their past in order to rebuild for their future.*
- ◆ *Teaching children about the history of the Khmer Rouge regime, as well as stimulating discussion between children and their parents and grand-parents about what happened, are important to preventing genocide both in Cambodia and the world at-large.*

# BRINGING THE KHMER ROUGE EXHIBITION TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY: THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION ON "THE FORCED TRANSFER: THE SECOND EVACUATION OF PEOPLE DURING THE KHMER ROUGE REGIME"

*Savina Sirik, Kunthy Seng, Pechet Men, Davin Chhay, and Channimol Cheang*

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## Introduction

The ministry of culture and fine arts and the Documentation of Cambodia (DC-Cam) have together set up and opened two exhibitions on Khmer Rouge history titled "The Forced Transfer: The Second Evacuation of People During The Khmer Rouge Regime" at Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provincial museums on June 24 and 27, respectively. This exhibition was part of the reparation projects requested by civil parties before the Khmer Rouge Tribunal in Case File 002/01, which focuses on the evacuation of Cambodian people by the Khmer Rouge and the crimes committed at Tuol Po Chrey. This exhibition was also the result of DC-Cam's collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts to develop exhibitions on the Khmer Rouge, individually tailor local exhibits, attract new visitors, and increase the role of the country's 24 provincial museums in documenting the Khmer Rouge regime period.

The second case before the ECCC (case 002/01) has almost entirely focused on the forced transfers of Cambodian civilians perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge regime. In tandem with this, the exhibition's theme centers on the narratives of survivors and the historical background of the forced transfers. The bulk of the population was moved by train across various parts of the country. Families were separated and deposited at work sites and cooperatives where starvation, executions and hard labour awaited them. The Ministry of

Culture and Fine Arts and DC-Cam chose to use the train journey as a common thread linking the exhibitions across these provincial museums. The content of the exhibitions focuses on the experiences of the Cambodian people both during the forced transfers and on the aftermath of these mass population movements. At the same time the exhibitions also reflect the lives of former Khmer Rouge cadres who worked at the various train stations situated in important Khmer Rouge zones. These former cadres witnessed the arrival of significant numbers of people, destined for cooperatives and work sites. The exhibitions also draw together the histories of former Khmer Rouge prisons, burial sites, and memorials.

The Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and DC-Cam hope that by bringing these localized stories to provincial museums, Cambodian people living in villages across the country will be empowered to speak about their experiences during the regime's rule. It is also hoped that the exhibits will prompt dialogues and exchanges between the older generation of survivors and the generation of young Cambodians who were born after 1979.

A key focus of these groundbreaking provincial exhibitions is to also honor the stories of civil parties and complainants who came forward and bravely participated in the trial process by submitting their stories or speaking in court. These survivors have also provided a voice for those who were executed or forcibly disappeared.

Nearly 250 villagers, civil parties and complainants, Khmer Rouge survivors and young students attended the Opening Ceremony of the exhibition in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey Provincial Museums, in addition to the heads and/or representatives of the Department of Culture and Fine Arts, directors of Battambang and Banteay Meanchey Provincial Museums, and representatives from the Khmer Rouge Tribunal's Victim Support Section.

### Background

Between 1970 and 1975, people fleeing the conflict between the Lon Nol regime and the Khmer Rouge forces flooded the capital of Cambodia. As a result, the population of Phnom Penh mushroomed to several million people.

The Khmer Rouge forces entered Phnom Penh on 17 April, 1975 and began the first phase of what they described as an 'evacuation' but what would later come to be termed as forced transfer.

During this period, Phnom Penh was emptied of all its inhabitants. Men and women of all professions, the elderly, children and monks, as well as sick people from hospitals, pregnant women, or women who had just given birth were forced to leave the city. Many people were forced to leave on foot, heading north, south, east and west along the country's national roads. They did not know where to go and most people were told to simply go back to their birthplace. People from Phnom Penh were identified as "New People" or "17 April People," while people who were deemed to be trustworthy or loyal to the regime were identified as "Base People." New People were often targeted for discrimination because of their association with an urban, Western or wealthy upbringing, regardless of whether this characteristic was actually true. Armed Khmer Rouge soldiers dressed in black or green khaki uniforms, with kramas around their necks, kept the people moving, occasionally threatening,



The Inauguration of the exhibition titled "the Forced Transfer" which was organized by DC-Cam at Battambang Museum on June 24th, 2014

beating or stealing from the people. People slept on roads or under trees, and many people survived on only steamed rice for their long journey. People experienced health problems such as swelling in their limbs, dehydration and exhaustion. In all, close to a million people were forced to leave the city and it is estimated that up to 3,000 people died along the way.

From around September 1975 until 1977, large numbers of people were also moved from the central and southwest parts of the country (provinces such as Kandal, Kampong Thom, Takeo, Kampong Speu, Kampong Chhnang and Kampong Cham) to Siem Reap and Preah Vihear. In addition people from the central and southwest parts of the country were also relocated to the Northwest Zone (Battambang, Pursat and Banteay Meanchey provinces).

Documents from the Khmer Rouge Regime show that from 400,000 to 500,000 people were to be added to the Northwest Zone and 50,000 people were to be moved out of the East Zone (Prey Veng and Svay Rieng provinces).

Train operators saw thousands of people being sent by train through Phnom Penh to their destinations in Pursat and Battambang provinces in the Northwest Zone.

People were transported using all means possible, such as train, civilian and military trucks, boat, oxcart, tractor and by foot. People were packed into crowded train carriages and were given little or nothing to drink or eat on these long train journeys to the northwest of the country. Troops and militiamen of the Khmer Rouge supervised these movements. They stood guard over people on trains, boats and ox carts, and they oversaw the reception of people at train stops.

Battambang and Banteay Meanchey (prior to 1988, Banteay Meanchey was within Battambang) provinces have been traditionally well known for rice production and output that, most believe, could

feed the entire country. For this reason, the Khmer Rouge forcibly transferred city dwellers or "17 April" people to this fertile province. Banteay Meanchey province is dotted with 16 crime sites, according to DC-Cam's mapping report. The seven districts of Banteay Meanchey average three to four crime sites each. An unknown portion of these deaths, for instance, is attributable to the construction of Trapeang Thma Dam. As survivors recalled, people were forced to work as slaves to satisfy the production goals set by the CPK Center, while their social welfare needs were totally ignored, leading to widespread death from disease, exhaustion, and execution. Countless people died because of the horrendous work conditions and the harsh policies implemented by the regime.

### **When the Khmer Rouge Survivors and Young Generation Meet**

During the Opening Ceremony of the exhibitions at both Battambang and Banteay Meanchey Provincial Museums, university and high school students had a chance to meet directly with Khmer Rouge survivors, civil parities and complainants before the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, enabling a lively discussion.

Many of the young students the team had interviewed said that they'd only heard about the Khmer Rouge period from their grandparents and parents. This made it hard for them to believe the stories. They had difficulty in picturing how brutal the regime was and how much their parents, grandparents and relatives suffered.

In one instance, Chheng Kimhouy, a 22-year old female student from Cambodia University for Specialties (CUS) in Banteay Meanchey Province said that by meeting with former Khmer Rouge survivors and visiting the exhibition, she realized that her grandmother's stories about the Khmer Rouge regime were true. She also told the DC-Cam team that the young generation should remember this period of Cambodian history in order to ensure

there would be peace in Cambodian society. Saing Thong, a third-year male student of Khmer Literature at Battambang University felt the same when visiting the exhibition. Thong also commented that the exhibits were very easy to read and that it was good to have bilingual panels so that students like him could read the narratives in both Khmer and English. He also remarked that the exhibits were visually well presented and that he would tell his friends to visit it. He said he too would return to see the exhibition again.

While the students had an opportunity to learn about the Khmer Rouge history through the exhibition and survivors, the former Khmer Rouge survivors, who attended the Opening Ceremony, were happy to see the Khmer Rouge history displayed in a museum at their home province. Most of the survivors the team interviewed thought that it was beneficial to have the Khmer Rouge exhibition situated at in the local community because it ensured that this period of history would not be forgotten by the young generation.

60-year old Matt Him, a Cham Muslim from Banteay Meanchey Province, said that the exhibition reflected what he himself experienced during the Khmer Rouge Regime. He was happy to see the Khmer Rouge exhibition at his provincial museum, as it would serve to always remind people of the Khmer Rouge period. He added he would bring his family and his children to visit the exhibition again in the future. 64-year old Banteay Meanchey resident El Khan commented that the exhibition would serve as a useful tool to remind young people about the past. Before she left the event, Ms. Khan said that she would inform her neighbors about the exhibition, and that they should bring their children to visit the museum and the exhibition. Ms. Khan's family was evacuated by train during the Khmer Rouge Regime from Kandal Province to Pursat Province. During the evacuation by train, both of Ms. Khan's grandparents died on

the train, and their bodies were thrown out of the train by the Khmer Rouge.

### **The Guest Speakers**

Guest speakers at the Opening Ceremony in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey Provincial Museums included representatives from the National Museum of Cambodia, DC-Cam's Museum of Memory, Provincial Museums in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey, and from the Khmer Rouge Tribunal's Victim Support Section.

Mr. Kim Sophorn, Director of Battambang Provincial Museum, welcomed the audience and spoke about the historical background of Battambang Provincial Museum. According to Mr. Sophorn, Battambang Provincial Museum was used as a detention center during the Khmer Rouge Regime. There were shackles found inside the museum's compound after the Khmer Rouge fled the country in 1979.

Mr. Yong Taing Kuoy, Director of Banteay Meanchey Provincial Museum, welcomed the audience and announced the opening of the Khmer Rouge exhibition at his museum on June 27, 2014. Mr. Kuoy was grateful to have the Khmer Rouge exhibition displayed at his museum. He hoped that the exhibition would educate the young generation about the dark history of Cambodia.

Mr. Tes Chhoeun, the representative from the National Museum of Cambodia, briefed the audience on the collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and DC-Cam in creating the Khmer Rouge exhibition at provincial museums.

Mr. Dy Chhunsong, representative from the Khmer Rouge Tribunal's Victim Support Section, briefed the audience about reparation projects proposed by civil parties before the Khmer Rouge Tribunal in Case File 002/01, which this exhibition project is a part of.

### **Conclusion**

By bringing the Khmer Rouge exhibition to local museums, the Ministry of Culture and Fine

Arts and DC-Cam hopes to decentralize access to knowledge and awareness of this vital and dark part of Cambodia's history. By creating exhibitions in provincial museums, the Ministry and DC-Cam hope to also make it easier for villagers, survivors and young Cambodians living in provinces outside the major cities to visit the museums and learn through dialogue.

**COMMENTS BY PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED THE  
INAUGURATION OF THE EXHIBITION**

**Thoeun Chan Kumpheak, male, a student  
majoring in Khmer literature at Battambang  
University**



I think the Khmer Rouge exhibition is very important for the younger generation to remember the history of their country. I am so proud that the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts and the

Documentation Center of Cambodia organized this exhibition which can enhance my knowledge of the Khmer Rouge history. I knew the Khmer Rouge regime through my parents and my neighbors. I also used to follow the proceedings of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal on television.

**Ngim Socheat, female, 25 years old, a student  
majoring in management at Cambodian University  
of Specialties and a teacher at a primary school,  
from Banteay Meanchey province**

I did not know much about the Khmer Rouge regime but when there is an exhibition at my province, I can learn more about that regime. When I see the pictures of people working at the dike and carrying the earth, it reminds me of what my parents told me about the Khmer Rouge regime

and their experience. I think this exhibition is very important for the younger generation to learn about the Khmer Rouge regime because history can repeat itself if we do not know our own history. I would request to have more pictures in order to attract more visitors.

**Kob El, male, Khmer-Islamic, a plaintiff at the  
Khmer Rouge Tribunal, from Battambang province**

I think the exhibition is great and it plays a role in reminding the younger generation of the Khmer Rouge regime because they do not know the stories and the destruction caused by the Khmer Rouge. The stories of the victims on display here are important to explain to the next generation. If the exhibition is presented once again in the future, I will visit it again.

**Rooun Sovannarith, 20 years old, a freshman at  
Battambang University**

My mother used to tell me about the stories happening during the Khmer Rouge regime. My



family was evacuated from the city to Battambang province. Then, the Khmer Rouge separated my mother from her family to live in a children's unit. I think the study of the Khmer Rouge history

is compulsory. It helps the younger generation understand the leadership style of the past. It makes the younger generation think critically and know how to use the appropriate leadership style. When I saw a picture of people working at a worksite to raise the dike, and dig the canal, I remembered what my mother told me. I feel sympathetic toward those people when I see the pictures. I never visited the museum before. Frankly speaking, I never knew there was a museum opened to the public. I will come to the exhibition

again in order to learn more.

**Riyas, male, 56 years old, Islamic, from Battambang province**

After visiting this exhibition, I don't feel well because it recalls what I experienced during the Khmer Rouge regime. However, the organization of the Khmer Rouge exhibition is good. During the Khmer Rouge regime, I lived at O Sra Lao commune, Battambang province. I worked at Slor Kram cooperative. My step-father died because of illness.

**Koeut Nhean, male, a civil party at Khmer Rouge Tribunal, from Banteay Meanchey**



I am very delighted when I see that the stories of the victims are being displayed at the exhibit, especially at the provincial museum where I live. I would like to request to put the Khmer Rouge regime in the

school curriculum throughout the country. Therefore, the younger generation would remember the stories of the victims and prevent the Khmer Rouge regime from happening again.

**Meas Sophy, female, 45 years old, a history teacher at Samdech Oeuv high school, Battambang province**

This exhibition is important because it includes the stories of the victims during the Khmer Rouge regime and shows the lives of other people who used to live in that regime. This exhibition will help students to learn more about the Khmer Rouge history.

I have some comments on how the exhibition should be improved. I request a documentary film of the Khmer Rouge. Some important information should be bold, italicized or use the star sign to catch the attention of the

visitors.

**Mat Hoem, male, Islamic, 60 years old, civil party at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, from Banteay Meanchey province**

This exhibition shows what I experienced during the Khmer Rouge regime. I am appreciative when I see the exhibition at my province. This exhibition will remind people of what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime.



I will bring my wife and my children to the exhibition again if I have free time. I think this exhibition is important since it can remind the next generation of the memory and understanding of the Khmer Rouge regime. This exhibition will make the next leaders to build a peaceful country.

**Sang Thong, male, a junior majoring in Khmer Literature at Battambang University**

I never attended an exhibition related to culture before. This is my first time. I think the Khmer Rouge exhibition shows us the Khmer society during that period. It can prevent this atrocious regime from happening again. I used to hear the stories of the Khmer Rouge regime from my parents and teachers at school. I believe in everything that happened during the Khmer Rouge regime because my parents also experienced it. I will try to read more documents in order to understand the Khmer Rouge comprehensively. I used to attend seminars on the Khmer Rouge regime. The understanding of the Khmer Rouge regime helps me and the younger generation to remember their past and to live in harmony. This exhibition is a message to remind the next generation to prevent this atrocious regime from happening. I think it is correct that the Khmer

Rouge exhibition is shown at the archaeological museum. At the same time, we have a chance to explore the flourishing era of Cambodia even though we later fell into the dark era. Due to the propaganda of the Khmer Rouge, Cambodian society was separated. I think this is a great idea to show the bright and the dark history at one location. We should study history in order to understand the present time.

For the pictures and articles at the exhibition, I think they are easy to read. I really like the articles at the exhibition which are written in two languages, Khmer and English. I can read Khmer and I can learn English. The decoration of the exhibition is very attractive and clear. When I go back, I will tell my classmates about this exhibition. I will explain this exhibition to my classmates. I will visit this exhibition again since I am studying Khmer literature. I need to deeply understand about Cambodian arts, culture and history.

**Vorn La, male, 46 years old, a history teacher at Net Yong high school teaching grades 9 and 11, Battambang province.**

I recall what I experienced when I visited the exhibition on “the forced transfer”. When the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh, my family was evacuated from our house near Phsar Thmey to Battambang by train. I am the one who survives from the Khmer Rouge regime. Other family members died one by one. What I remember the most during the Khmer Rouge regime is that I cried every night because I missed my family.

Nowadays, I am a history teacher. Through teaching the history of the Khmer Rouge, I believe the younger generation will know more about what



happened in the past. Moreover, I think my students will understand more since the Khmer Rouge exhibition is being held at my provincial town. This exhibition will facilitate my teaching.

**Khun Nay, female, plaintiff at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, from Battambang province.**

Although I cannot read, but through the pictures I can understand that the exhibition illustrates the overview of what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime. I think more stories should be included.

After seeing the pictures taken during the Khmer Rouge regime, they remind me of what happened during that regime.

The majority of the younger generation do not believe the stories that occurred during the Khmer Rouge regime. Therefore, I don't want to tell my story to other people. During the Khmer Rouge regime, my brother disappeared at the railroad in Pursat province. I hope I can attend similar exhibitions in the future.

**Khon Nay, male, a plaintiff at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, from Battambang province**

Even though I cannot read, I can understand the stories of the exhibition through the pictures. The organization of the exhibition is great but there should be more pictures. The pictures that were taken during the Khmer Rouge regime remind me of my experience during the Khmer Rouge regime. Because the younger generation does not believe that there was such a regime, I do not want to share my experience with them. I lost a brother who went missing on the railroad to Pursat province. I want to see this exhibition because the faith in history is declining.

**Sann Roun, male, 53 years old, Islamic, plaintiff at**



**the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, from Battambang province.**

I think the exhibition at the provincial museum is very important because it can show people living in the community about the stories that took place during the Khmer Rouge regime. I appreciate this exhibition. I regret that I did not bring my children with me. My children never see the Khmer Rouge's former security centers or cooperatives. One day I will bring them here to visit the exhibition and to understand the Khmer Rouge regime. I will encourage people in my village to come and visit the exhibition at the provincial museum since we can see the Cambodian artifacts and the Khmer Rouge exhibition. During the Khmer Rouge regime, I lost two siblings. I never forget anything that happened during the Khmer Rouge period. I hope Cambodian people will never forget that regime.

**Chheng Kimhuoy, female, 22 years old, a freshman at Cambodian University for Specialty, from Banteay Meanchey province.**

After visiting the Khmer Rouge exhibition, I think it is a great exhibition because it allows the younger generation to learn and understand the Khmer Rouge regime, especially the forced evacuation. Although there are too many pictures or information shown, this exhibition can show me that the Khmer Rouge regime did exist. Moreover, this exhibition shows the stories like my grandmother told me about the Khmer rouge. Therefore, the younger generation has to remember what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime and help the next leaders of the country to build peace in the future. For me, I want a leader to tell the meaning of the exhibition to the visitors. What I know about the Khmer Rouge regime from my grandmother is that my grandparents used to raise the dike at Ang Trapeang Thmor at Banteay Meanchey province.

**Puy Pheakdey, female, 28 years old, a teacher at**

**Rolom primary school, from Banteay Meanchey province**

Honestly, I never knew that there was a museum at Banteay Meanchey province. I just knew when I came to visit the exhibition on "the forced transfer". This is a great opportunity to understand more about the Khmer Rouge regime.

As a teacher, I will teach my students about the history of the Khmer Rouge. If I have a chance, I will take my students to the provincial museum in order visit the Khmer Rouge exhibition. I would like to request the organizers to show a documentary film of the Khmer Rouge and show a map of Banteay Meanchey during the Khmer Rouge regime.

**Chheng Nom, male, a plaintiff at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal from Battambang province**

I remember that I filed a suit at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal but I don't recall which year it was. What I remember is that I told the court I lost my uncle, brother-in-law, and some cousins during the Khmer Rouge regime. I used to work in the mobile unit to transplant rice seedlings. At that time, I lived in Region 4.



After I visited the Khmer Rouge exhibition, I think it will make the next generation know the truth and the stories during the Khmer Rouge regime. In this exhibition, I saw people being forced to work. If possible, I want the organizers to display the materials that the Khmer Rouge used to torture people, with the purpose of showing the cruelty of the Khmer Rouge to the younger generation. I will bring my children and grandchildren to this exhibit since they do not believe what I told them about the Khmer Rouge regime.

**Kol El, male, Islamic, a plaintiff at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, from Battambang province**

The organization of the exhibition is good and it is the memory for the younger generation. Many people, especially the younger generation, do not know how much the Khmer Rouge destroyed our nation. The stories on display at the exhibition are very important because it tells the next generation the situation of our country under the Khmer Rouge regime. If there are new exhibitions, I will visit them.

**Tea Chanreaksmey, male, a junior majoring in Khmer Literature at Battambang University**

As Cambodians, we have to know our history. Besides watching TV and listening to the radio, I think the exhibition is a good method in distributing and disseminating history. Previously, I did not know much about the stories that happened during the Khmer Rouge regime. However, I think if the Khmer Rouge did not exist, people could not talk about the same stories. I will encourage my classmates to visit the exhibition because most of my classmates do not know much about the Khmer Rouge regime.

**Suos Navann, female, 25 years old, a junior majoring in Khmer Literature at Battambang University**

I visited the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum a few times. It is a terrifying place. I think the exhibition on the “forced transfer” will enhance my understanding of the Khmer Rouge regime. Moreover, this exhibition provided me additional information on what my parents told me about the Khmer Rouge regime.



**Benoit Viault, male, a tourist visiting Battambang province, from France**

I would like to congratulate you on the exhibition. The bad history should not be melancholically described. Meaning, the description of the truth and pictures should make it easy for the visitors to understand and remember. Thank you for your great work.

**Ly Kosal, 46 years old, from Banteay Meanchey province**

I think this is a great exhibition because it can help the younger generation to learn more about the Khmer Rouge regime. I really appreciate this exhibition. Next time, I will bring my children and grandchildren to visit the exhibition. I want to remind my children and grandchildren of my past and show them the suffering that people experienced. Moreover, when I return back to my village, I will share this information with my relatives and neighbors, and explain to them what I saw here. During the Khmer Rouge regime, I lived in Kampong Cham province. The Khmer Rouge killed my parents and two of my siblings.

**Huor Kimheng, a student majoring in accounting at Cambodian University of Specialties, from Banteay Meachey province**

I want more exhibitions like this at my province because I want the younger generation to understand and study their history more. My mother used to tell me about the stories during the Khmer Rouge regime. I do not want the Khmer Rouge regime to happen again.

**Pech Chanthy, female, a student majoring in Khmer Literature from Battambang University**

This exhibition is very attractive. The height of the exhibits is technically organized so that it enables visitors to easily stand and read the descriptions. I would like to request a guide to explain the stories to the visitors because people will not understand the stories on display. I want to see this kind of exhibition, especially at my

university. Next time, I will tell my friends to visit this exhibition because I want them to learn more about the Khmer Rouge regime. After visiting this exhibition, I feel shocked to know that many people were killed in Pursat and Battambang province.

**El Kon, female, 46 years old, from Banteay Meanchey province**

I think the size of the exhibition is big enough for the visitors. The Khmer Rouge exhibition is very important for Cambodian people and it can help the younger generation know more about the stories that took place

during the Khmer Rouge regime. When I return back home, I will tell my neighbors about the exhibit. During the Khmer Rouge regime, my family was evacuated



by train from Kandal province to Pursat province. During the evacuation, my grandparents passed away. The Khmer Rouge threw their corpses from the train. I did not witness it. During the Khmer Rouge regime, I lived in Pailin with my husband. In 1977, my mother died due to starvation at Pursat province. Later, my siblings also died.

**Phat Sopheak, a novice monk from Battambang province.**

I feel delighted when I see this exhibition. This exhibition demonstrates the hardship during the Khmer Rouge regime. I think the exhibition should be included or changed (the stories) because there are more stories of the survivors from the Khmer Rouge regime that should be shown. I will tell my friends to visit the exhibition next time.

**Srey Ho, female, 21 years old, a student majoring in agriculture at Battambang University**

I think we should learn more about our

history in order to lead our country. We should learn from the elders about their leadership style. I used to hear the stories about the Khmer Rouge regime from my parents who used to carry earth, dig canals and work at the rice field. Besides my parents' stories, I used to learn about the history of the Khmer Rouge through TV and other sources but it was not detailed.

I want to see the pictures of the Khmer Rouge killing people. Although those pictures are cruel, they will remind Cambodian people of the history that Khmer killed Khmer.

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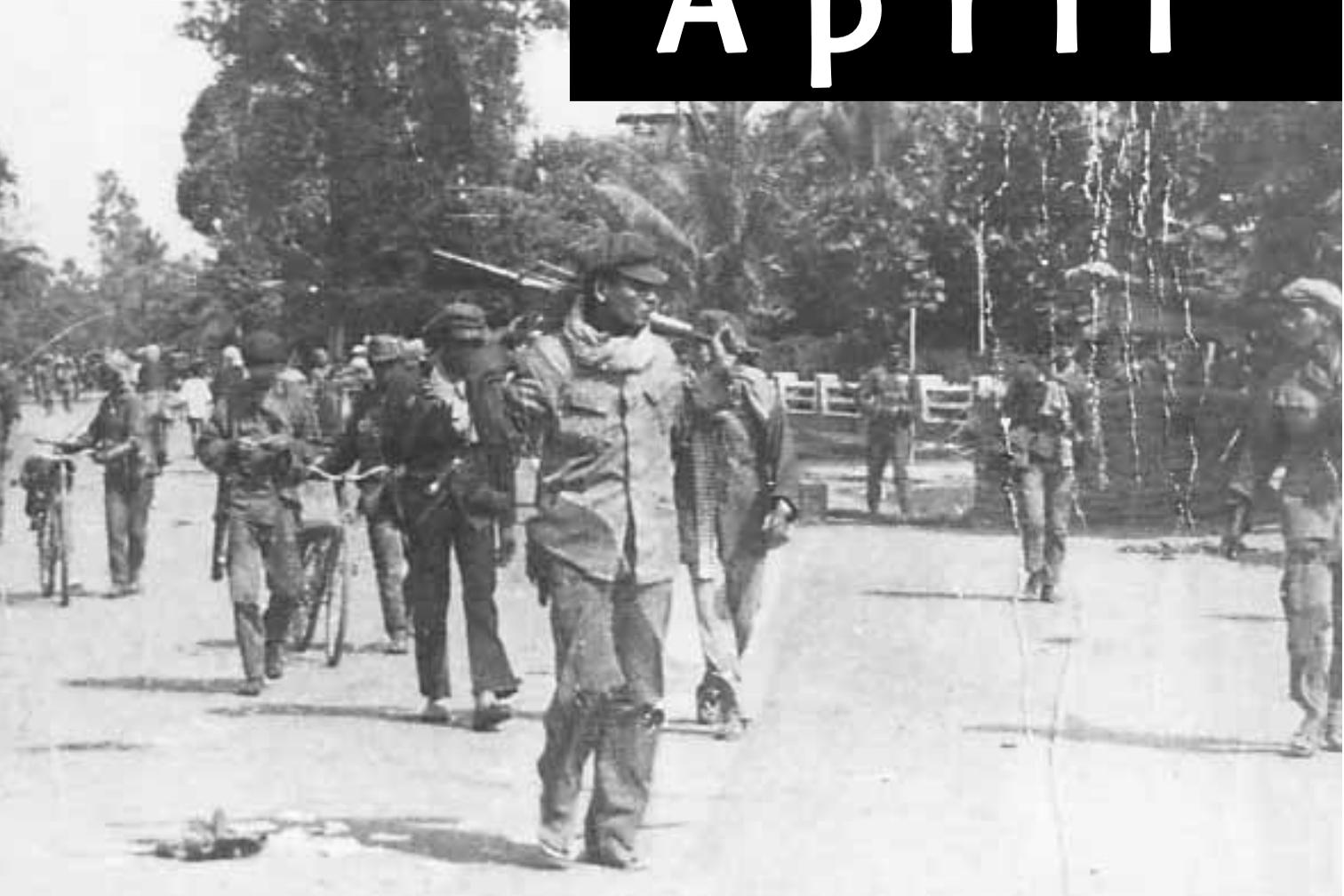
**Savina Sirik, Kunthy Seng, Pechet Men, Davin Chhay, and Channimol Cheang**

## SEARCHING FOR LOST FAMILY MEMBERS

My name is Nhan Sy and I am currently working at the Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction. I would like to search for a missing person, a Mr. Ier Ieng who was born in 1933 in Trapaing Kraloeng village, Taing Sya commune, Kampong Speu province. Before 1975, Mr. Ier was a sailor in a vessel company in Singapore. He then returned to Cambodia and lived in Sangkat III, Phnom Penh. He disappeared in 1975 and was last seen in Kampong Tralach district, Kampot Province. There have been rumors that Mr. Ier was spotted in Kampong Tralach sometime in 1975. After 1979, Mr. Ier's wife and children immigrated to Germany. If anyone knows him or has met him, please contact me directly at #476G, Monivong BLVD, Sangkat Tonle Bassak, Khan Chamka Morn, Phnom Penh or call 012 958 546; E-mail: nhansy04@yahoo.com or contact the Documentation Center of Cambodia, address: #66, Preah Sihanouk BLVD, Phnom Penh.



April





1975



# April





# WHAT ARE THE REPARATIONS THAT THE CIVIL PARTIES WOULD RECEIVE IN CASE 002/01?

*Cheytoath Lim*

## Introduction

Internal Rule 23 quinquies (3) of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia states "if an accused is convicted, the Chambers may award only collective and moral reparations to the Civil Parties." In the context of the former Khmer Rouge leaders' trial, the Chamber is not responsible to award individual, financial compensation to the Civil Parties as found in domestic law.

During Case 002/01 trial, the Civil Party Lead Co-Lawyers submitted documents concerning reparations projects proposed by civil parties to the Trial Chamber seeking recognition as reparations

for them. The reparations projects submitted by the Civil Party Lead Co-Lawyers consist of three main categories and are divided into thirteen projects. The three categories are: 1, Remembrance and Memorialization 2, Rehabilitation and 3, Documentation and Education.

The Civil Parties' requested reparations projects is not targeted against the convicted persons but rather to ensure that the reparations are funded by the international community and acknowledge the sufferings of the Civil Parties; therefore, the projects could be implemented as soon as the announcement of the final judgment is



People visit the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum organized by DC-Cam

made. Some of the projects are already carried out by NGOs although the Chamber has not announced the final judgment yet. These proposals, however, would not become reparations unless the official recognition of these projects by the Chamber is made or else they could not be recognized as reparations for the Civil Parties.

In order to ensure the approval of the projects, the Chamber requested that the Civil Party Lead Co-Lawyers has to make sure the submitted proposed initiatives have sufficient funding. Additionally, all reparations proposals must demonstrate the proof of consent and cooperation of any involved third party, and any necessary additional information such as detailed description including sketches and/or pictures and budget plans of proposals. If not, the proposed projects are at risk of being rejected by the Trial Chamber.

The internal rules state clearly that if an Accused is convicted, the Chamber may order the convicted person to pay for the costs of the reparations projects. But, civil party proceedings before the ECCC against a charged person or an accused shall end on the death of that person, this is in contrast to Article 24 of the Criminal Procedure which states “the civil party in a civil action can claim compensation for injury from accused’s successor if the accused dies during the proceedings. Even though the criminal action is ended, the criminal court still has the authority to decide a civil action against the successor of the deceased.” Under the ECCC laws, the claim for reparations to be pursued against the successor of the accused is not allowed.

To date, there is not an official recognition of the reparations proposals and the Trial Chamber have already notified that a number of initiatives are not detailed enough or do not have the proof of consent and cooperation of any involved third party. In the document which was sent to the Civil Parties Lead Co-Lawyer on 19 December 2013, the

Chamber reiterated that the reparations projects which are not technically correct are at risk of being rejected.

Below are the detailed proposal initiatives submitted by the civil party to the Chamber seeking for official recognition as reparations for civil parties in Case 002/01.

### **The first category: Remembrance and Memorialization**

This category is to pay tribute to the deceased and victims, and allows the survivors including the Civil Parties and future generations to reflect on what had happened and practice their belief and religion. This category contains four reparation projects: 1, National Remembrance Day 2, Public Memorials Initiative 3, Memorial in Remembrance of Victims and 4, Memorial for the Khmer Rouge Victims in France.

#### **1. National Remembrance Day**

National Remembrance Day is a reparation project proposed by the Civil Parties seeking the establishment of an official remembrance day which should be different from annual national holidays. The requested dates for the National Remembrance Day by the Civil Parties are April 17, May 20, or March 30. It would be celebrated throughout the country as an official recognition of crimes committed during the Khmer Rouge regime.

The main purpose of the National Remembrance Day is to restore the honor of the Khmer Rouge victims, both the deceased and survivors, to remember the suffering of their loved ones, to maintain the memory of crimes committed during the Khmer Rouge regime, to overcome the psychological wounds, and to rebuild the honor of the victims. Besides, this day would also play an important role in educating and preventing the occurrence of genocide again in Cambodia. This project also gives the chance to the Civil Parties and Cambodian people in reuniting and organizing religious practices.

The Royal Government of Cambodia already gave its consent to the project and designated May 20 as the National Remembrance Day in the Cambodian holiday calendar. The Royal Government would soon issue a subdecree concerning the official establishment of Remembrance Day along with the Circular and guidelines for the related authorities and the implementation of the project. The Civil Party Co-Lawyers stated that this project needs a large amount of funds, so the implementation of the projects would take awhile.

## **2. Public Memorial Initiative**

The project concerning the building of public memorials was proposed by all the civil parties in Case 002/01. The building of public memorials is to collect the ashes of the deceased during the Khmer Rouge and allows the Civil Parties, victims, perpetrators and the public to burn incense and organize religious ceremonies to honor those who lost their lives under the Khmer Rouge regime in a suitable and collective manner.

The primary objective of this project is restoring the honor and dignity of the civil party and repairing their mental illness. The project aims to maintain the memory of dead people, and to promote the knowledge and collective reflection on the Khmer Rouge history. Furthermore, it also focuses on educating local communities about the facts of the Case 002/01 and gives the Civil Parties a chance to talk about their bitter experiences. The public memorial construction would fight against the divisions resulting from the Khmer Rouge regime in the interest of social reconciliation and the prevention of such acts from happening again. However, this project has not had enough funds to implement it yet.

## **3. Memorial in Remembrance of Victims**

Memorial in Remembrance of Victims is an artistic project "in tribute to those who are no longer here" initiated by French- Cambodian artist,

Sera. He ranks among the top 101 French artists of 2002-2012. The project directs toward the remembrance of forced transfer of Phnom Penh residents on April 17, 1975, marking the commencement of tragedy of the Cambodians. The evacuation from Phnom Penh by the Khmer Rouge caused an uncertain future and endless suffering. The memorial sculpture would be placed in front of the French Embassy on the roundabout near Chroy Changvar Bridge. The reasons in choosing the front area of French Embassy for placing the sculpture are that it was where masses of people were transferred and also a gathering place for the last thousand refugees before leaving the city. The Civil Parties, the victims of the evacuation, and other civil parties, whose relatives were evacuated when the Khmer Rouge conquered Phnom Penh, would have a place and sculpture for worshipping and celebrating ceremony according to their religion. This project is funded by the French Government and many other donors so it could be implemented at any time.

## **4. Memorial for the Khmer Rouge Victims in Paris, France**

This project is proposed by Cambodian people living in Paris, France so that they could have a place to pay their respects to those who died during the Khmer Rouge regime, and also for people in general so they can worship and pray anytime that they want. Besides, the monument would become the gathering place for Cambodian people to celebrate their religious and annual commemoration. It is even more of an important place because most Cambodians cannot find the bones of their fallen relatives. Such a construction project would serve as the permanent reminder and collective memory of the victims, as well as raising the awareness among young people and the public about what happened during the Khmer Rouge regime. To date, Paris City Hall already gave its consent to the project but it is still in the process

of securing funds for implementation.

### The second category: Rehabilitation

This category is divided into two projects: testimonial therapy and self-help groups for rehabilitation. The primary object of these two projects is treating the psychological trauma of the victims in the wake of the Khmer Rouge.

#### 1. Testimonial Therapy Project

The Civil Parties Lead Co-lawyers stated in the proposed reparation documents submitted to the Trial Chamber that most of the Civil Parties had

Their stories establish a written document- that is called "Testimony". These testimonies, then, would be read out a loud in the public ceremony across the country and these ceremonies will take place near the civil parties' residence. These ceremonies may include the Khmer Rouge survivors, family members, community members, religious leaders, politicians and NGOs. Once the ceremonies come to an end, all the testimonies would be returned back to the civil parties.

This project is going to promote the



People visit the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum organized by DC-Cam

requested the reparation in the form of mental illness treatment from mental health professionals for the mental sufferings caused by the Khmer Rouge. "The Testimonial Therapy Project" requires the Civil Parties, in the presence of mental health professionals and other people, to talk about the suffering and mental illness that they, their family members or relatives had to endure because of the crimes committed during the Khmer Rouge regime.

treatment and national reconciliation through mental and collective reparation, and the establishment of mental and physical health care services for the civil parties who suffered or were injured because of the notorious Khmer Rouge regime. Furthermore, it would improve the mental health of the civil parties in Case 002 by restoring their dignity, self-esteem, energy and actions. The project also allows them to find a balance in their

emotions and how to manage their past and the still-existing psychological problems resulting from that past.

## 2. Self-help Groups for Rehabilitation

Self-help Groups for Rehabilitation shares some similarities with the Testimonial Therapy Project. A Self-help Group is the gathering of volunteers, who all share a common desire to overcome their sufferings, to understand better, and to manage their emotions by an exchange of words and experiences. Through this project, the civil parties, the forced transfer victims in Case 002, would talk about what they had to endure. These talking sessions begin the healing process of the pain that the civil parties have suffered and serve as a means of breaking the loneliness and sense of isolation by building a relationship with other participants.

Both the Testimonial Therapy Project and the

Self-help Group Project have been implemented by Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO) for 16 months; these projects are partially funded by the German Government and many other donors.

## The Third Category: Documentation and Education

The Civil Parties Lead Co-lawyers reiterates that the reparations project in the third category concerning documentation and education aims to maintain and deepen the knowledge of the Khmer Rouge history and experiences of each victim. This category consists of seven projects proposed /by the Civil Parties Lead Co-lawyers on behalf of the Civil Parties. The projects are:

1. Permanent Exhibitions
2. Mobile Exhibitions
3. New Chapter on Forced Transfer and Tuol Po Chrey Execution Site
4. Peace Learning Center
5. Publication of Booklet on Case 002/01 Pro-



Victims queue to enter the courtroom on trial hearings of Case 002/02 regarding the accused Nuon Chea and Khieu Samphan at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal

ceedings

6. Publication and Distribution of Case 002/01 Judgments in Full and Summary

## 7. Publication of Civil Parties' Name on ECCC Website

### 1. Permanent Exhibitions

This measure of reparation was sought by Case 002 civil parties, many of whom were the victims of forced transfer on 17 April, 1975 as well as during the following days. Forced transfer is one of factual allegations in Case 002/01.

To preserve the memory of the Khmer Rouge regime, the project retains all kinds of evidence in specific locations intended for this purpose. The long-term preserved evidence will contribute to the knowledge of the regime. This project is a tribute to the victims and also serves as a way for the Civil Parties to share their stories with future generations, both national and international.

Educating is another purpose of the project. Teaching the younger generation about the past experiences can achieve national reconciliation. In addition, the initiative allows the Civil Parties and other victims to share their experiences and expand knowledge of the Khmer Rouge regime. It will also develop a history educational program and make the Civil Parties' stories available to the public.

The Permanent Exhibitions is implemented by the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) in close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Art under the framework of preservation and development of museums in 24 provinces and cities throughout the country. The Royal Government of Cambodia already gave approval to DC-Cam. Therefore, DC-Cam will prepare the documents and design exhibitions about the Khmer Rouge regime throughout Cambodia.

Primarily, Permanent Exhibitions will be held in five provincial museums- firstly, at Battambang and Banteay Mean Chey, followed by Kampong

Thom, Takeo, and Svay Rieng. The two main reasons in choosing these five provinces for the exhibition are the good progress and intact building structure of the museum. Besides, these locations are related to Case 002/01 because many victims were forcefully transferred there. Although the concept of the exhibition is about the Khmer Rouge history, the first main topics are about the first and second phase of forced transfer and what happened at Tuol Po Chrey.

The project is planned for sixteen months- starting from September 2013 to December 2014. The first phase of the project is from September 2013 to April 2014 and is mainly about the preparations. The exhibitions are open from May to December 2014. A number of the Civil Parties will participate in this project by narrating and sharing their experiences under the Khmer Rouge regime as well as their participation in the trial proceedings. The Permanent Exhibitions would be the reparation for the Civil Parties in Case 002 and the implement of the project is funded by the German Government.

### 2. Mobile Exhibition

This project is set up to: 1) encourage the public to recognize the Civil Parties' suffering caused by forced transfer, 2) inform the public about Khmer Rouge history and importantly about forced transfer, and 3) revitalize Cambodians' reflection on the Khmer Rouge regime and its root causes in order to prevent such atrocities from happening again. It also aims to promote peace, culture and national reconciliation through moral and collective reparations. The Civil Parties will be supported with equipment, and take part in the exhibition design as well as many other educational programs.

Youth for Peace in concert with Kdei Karuna are going to implement this reparation project in six different areas. The implementation is divided into two phase: the first phase includes the exhibition

## A HISTORY CLASSROOM AT FORMER KHMER ROUGE S-21 PRISON

The Khmer Rouge regime turned public schools and pagodas into prisons, stables and warehouses. Tuol Sleng prison, also known by its code name of "S-21," was created on the former grounds of Chao Ponhea Yat high school, originally constructed in 1962. The Khmer Rouge converted the school into the most secret of the country's 196 prisons.

Experts estimate that somewhere between 14,000 and 20,000 people were held at Tuol Sleng and executed. Only seven known prisoners survived after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed. The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) held that at least 12,273 prisoners passed through Tuol Sleng in its trial judgment against former Tuol Sleng commander Kaing Guek Eav alias Duch. As the number of survivors has received less attention, most Western media repeated the figure of seven survivors and this

has been repeated for over 30 years. However, after several years of research, the Documentation Center of Cambodia estimates that at least 179 prisoners were released from Tuol Sleng from 1975 to 1978 and approximately 23 additional prisoners survived when the Vietnamese ousted the Khmer Rouge regime on January 7, 1979.

Today the four buildings in the compound of the prison form the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, which was opened to the public in 1980. People from all over the world visited the museum and currently, approximately 250 people

visit on an average day. Many Cambodian visitors travel to Tuol Sleng seeking information about their relatives who disappeared under the Khmer Rouge.

While the museum has been a success in generally raising awareness of the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge, it still lacks a thorough educational dimension, which could make the experience of visiting more dynamic, educational and memorable. Since its conversion from a place of learning to a place of horror and degradation, Tuol Sleng has never reclaimed its original status. However, in the future, in order to reclaim the positive, educational heritage of Tuol Sleng and add an educational element to the museum, a classroom has been created to provide free lectures and discussions on the history of the Khmer Rouge regime and related issues, such as the ECCC. The classroom will also serve as a public platform for visitors and survivors to share information and preserve an important period of Cambodian history for future generations to learn from.

- ◆ **LECTURERS:** Staff members from the Documentation Center of Cambodia and Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.
- ◆ **GUEST SPEAKERS:** National and International Scholars on Cambodia and S-21 Survivors
- ◆ **TOPICS COVERED:** Who were the Khmer Rouge? u How did the Khmer Rouge gain power? u The Khmer Rouge Hierarchy u Khmer Rouge Domestic Policies u The Khmer Rouge Security System u Office S-21 (Tuol Sleng Prison) u Khmer Rouge Foreign Policies u The Fall of the Khmer Rouge u The Verdicts of the ECCC.
- ◆ **SCHEDULE:** Monday 2pm-3pm u Wednesday 9am-10am u Friday 2pm-3pm.
- ◆ **VENUE:** Building A, top floor, 3rd room.



design, the production of documents, exhibition on panels, the production of media materials, education, and organizing project activities such as public forums, seminars, theatrical or musical performances, religious ceremonies, screening and making a film about the exhibitions. In the second phase of the project, the two organizations will create an individual team to implement the above plans. The German Government is the donor for this project.

### **3. New Chapter on Forced Transfer and Tuol Po Chrey Execution Site**

This project is proposed by the Civil Parties to include an additional chapter on forced transfer and the Tuol Po Chrey execution site in the Teacher's Guidebook: The Teaching of a History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979). The main purpose of the project is to gain formal and permanent recognition of the Democratic Kampuchea history and victims' stories. This kind of reparation project also promotes the learning of historical events and teaches the younger generation to be responsible and moral in order to prevent crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge from happening again.

The chapter will be written and distributed by DC-Cam. DC-Cam has already published, circulated and used the teacher guidebook. Therefore, the chapter on forced transfer and Tuol Po Chrey execution site will be added into the book following the pronouncement of the tribunal's decision. The title of the chapter is "Participation of the Civil Parties and the Judgments in Case002/01" divided into four lessons within 16 pages. The first lesson deals with objectives and the policy of the forced transfer and the different stages of these transfers. The second lesson describes the living conditions of the Civil Parties during the evacuation. The third lesson discusses the negative effects of forced transfer on the victims. The fourth lesson is about Tuol Po Chrey execution sites with a particular focus

on conditions and massacres there, as well as the civil parties' experiences and testimonies.

Different from other projects, it could be implemented only after the pronouncement of Case 002/01 judgment. The Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia stated clearly that the Chamber has not yet officially recognized this project because this reparation initiative relates to the factual allegations that are currently under judicial consideration and need to be finally adjudicated. If the charged persons are found guilty and a verdict is made, there will be enough requirements for the Chamber to approve.

### **4. Peace Learning Center**

The project is part of an effort to develop critical thinking and methods in maintaining the process of peace and good governance; allow the victims and youth to hold discussions and later on young people can reflect based on these discussions; and prevents the crime against humanity and atrocities in the future. It will be implemented in Battambang province. The Civil Parties are going to talk about their experiences regarding the evacuation and tortures particularly in Battambang and Pursat under the Democratic Kampuchea to establish documents explaining the events and the process of ECCC. The center will be transformed into a place for compiling, broadcasting, training, discussing and educating.

The center will be constructed on the execution sites under the Khmer Rouge regime but currently it belongs to the community. Other activities of the projects are skill development and good governance, public forum with 100 participants, handicrafts, the creation and improvement of library management system, youth camping, and documentation on the execution sites.

Youth of Peace will implement this project for two years starting from September 2013 to August 2015 and the Swiss Agency for Development and

Cooperation (SDC) is the donor.

### **5. Publication of Booklet on Case 002/01 Proceedings**

This project is to publish a booklet using simplified words, images and drawing to allow the readers to easily understand the development of ECCC. This booklet will help the readers to know more about the Khmer Rouge regime and understand the history so the readers can use the knowledge for reflection. This book is also a tribute to the Civil Parties who have participated in the trial proceedings on behalf of other victims. The project will be carried out by Cambodian Human Rights Action and Committee (CHRAC) made up of twenty-one associations and GIZ funds this project.

### **6. Publication and Distribution of Book on Case 002/01 Judgments in Full and Summary**

Publication and Distribution of Book on Case 002/01 Judgments in Full and Summary is proposed by the Civil Parties to the Chamber to recognize it as a reparation initiative. The Civil Parties suggest the ECCC's office of administration to be in charge of this project. The office of administration will publish and distribute the books to the Civil Parties, public and law professions.

The project would also help the public to understand more about the trial proceedings and national reconciliation. However, there are not enough funds for the publication. Once the Chamber recognizes this project, it would be implemented for about four months.

### **7. Publication of Civil Party Names on ECCC Website**

This project is sought by the Civil Parties in an effort to show and value the participants in the trial proceedings. The publication will include the names of the Civil Parties in Khmer and Latin, the code number issued by The Victims Support Section (VSS), and other elements to make the name searching easy. The project will be carried out for three months once the Trial Chamber

pronounces the judgment. VSS and the ECCC's office of administration are responsible for this project.

The Chamber stated clearly that all the proposed projects are not yet officially approved to be reparations for the Civil Parties. The detailed reparation projects which have already been submitted by the Civil Parties Co-Lawyers and VSS is done for the purposes of informing and maintaining the scope and effectiveness of the proposed initiatives, and allowing the Chamber to have a chance to review and comment whether such projects satisfy the criteria set out by the Trial Chamber. Provided the Trial Chamber rules that the projects are not suitable for implementation, the Chamber will not recognize the proposed projects as reparations for the Civil Parties in Case 002/01.

To date, the Trial Chamber has already made an announcement that a number of projects are at risk of not being recognized due to the lack of cooperation and consent proof, insecure funding, and incompleteness of necessary information. Those projects are the Public Memorials Initiative and Memorial in Remembrance of Victims; there is no specific information about funding, detailed descriptions including sketches and/or pictures, and more importantly the lack of official approval for the construction from Phnom Penh City Hall since the chosen locations are on public property.

The Chamber already informed the Civil Parties Lead Co-Lawyers that it will not recognize any requested projects not meeting the established requirements or having only partial funding. However, the Trial Chamber has extended the deadline until 31 March 2014 for the Civil Parties Lead Co-Lawyer to provide further details on the projects that are at risk of being rejected. The Trial will take into consideration any information submitted after the date.

To ensure that all the requested projects recognized by the Chamber, both the Civil Parties

Lead Co-Lawyer and VSS need to make more effort in searching for cooperation with the third party for technical support and funding.

### Conclusion

Although a number of requested projects do not have secure funding for the implementation, the Chamber should not make any rejections before the pronouncement of final judgment. Under Rule 23 quinines of the ECCC internal rules, if an Accused is convicted, the Chamber may order the convicted person to be financially responsible for the project that is not fully funded.

If the convicted person cannot pay for reparations, ECCC shall transfer the responsibility to the third parties who have enough funds and are willing to implement. The Chamber would assign the Victims Support Section to secure more funding for the initiatives that are not fully funded. Therefore, the Chamber should officially recognize all the reparation projects proposed by the Civil Parties Lead Co-Lawyer as rewards for the Civil Parties in Case 002/01.

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**Cheytoath Lim**

## CAMBODIA TRIBUNAL MONITOR

The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor ([www.cambodiatribunal.org](http://www.cambodiatribunal.org)) provides extensive coverage throughout the trial of two former senior Khmer Rouge officials accused of atrocity crimes. The Monitor provides daily in-depth analysis from correspondents in Phnom Penh, as well as complete English-translated video of the proceedings, with Khmer-language video to follow. Additional commentary is provided by a range of Monitor-affiliated experts in human rights and international law. The Monitor has been the leading source of news and information on the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC) since its inception in 2007. The website hosts an archive of footage from the tribunal and a regularly updated blog containing analysis from expert commentators and coverage by Phnom Penh-based correspondents.

An estimated 1.7 million Cambodian citizens died under the Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 and 1979. The former Khmer Rouge officials to be tried in the ECCC's "Case 002" are Nuon Chea, former Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea's Central Committee and a member of its Standing Committee and Khieu Samphan, former Chairman of Democratic Kampuchea State Presidium.

The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor was developed by a consortium of academic, philanthropic and non-profit organizations committed to providing public access to the tribunal and ensuring open discussions throughout the judicial process. The site sponsors include Northwestern University School of Law's Center for International Human Rights, the Documentation Center of Cambodia, the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation and the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. The concept for the website was conceived by Illinois State Senator Jeff Schoenberg, a Chicago-area legislator who also advises the Pritzker family on its philanthropy.





# THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE





# BRANCE ON MAY 20<sup>TH</sup>





**May 20**





0, 2014



# CUSTODIANSHIP OF OFFICIAL HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS IN TRANSITIONAL STATES

*John D. Ciorciari*

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## **Relevant Legal Framework**

International law defers heavily to state sovereignty in the management of official records and archives, designating them as “cultural property” of the state that produced them. The law does not include exceptions for the records produced by odious governments, such as the Nazi regime in Germany, military dictatorships in Latin America, or communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Their records have been treated consistently as the property of successor governments in the states in question.

In keeping with the principle of archival inalienability, international law provides no clear basis for entities other than the state ownership over official records. However, it does allow entities other than the state to exercise custodianship over official records in some instances. Occupying armed forces may manage official records and archives during periods of military occupation, and non-state entities may exercise custodianship with the consent of the state.

Domestic laws, including archives laws in many states, typically empower the government to retrieve official records held by private or non-governmental organizations. Cambodia’s 2005 Law on Archives makes clear that the government may retrieve “public archives” held by non-state entities. It is not clear that the official records of Democratic Kampuchea (DK) held by DC-Cam would qualify as “public archives” given the vague definition of that term in 2005 law. Nevertheless, it is certainly possible that the government could declare those files to constitute “public archives” and order their return. Any such order would be difficult for DC-

Cam to challenge successfully in the domestic legal system. The same would likely be true for NGOs in other transitional states.

## **Prevailing Archival Ethics**

State ownership of official records and archives exists in tension with human rights norms when the state lacks the evident will or capacity to preserve and organize records or to manage an effective system for access and dissemination. In a recent article in the *American Archivist*, archival scholar Michelle Caswell argues that custodianship of archives in transitional states should be governed by a principle of trust rather than the principle of inalienability. She uses the example of DC-Cam’s management of DK records to argue that NGO custodianship of official records should be regarded as legitimate—and indeed desirable—when the NGO in question is a more trustworthy steward of official human rights records than the state.

Although this argument is compelling from an ethical standpoint, it does not yet reflect the state of the law or prevailing archival ethics, which generally support the principle of inalienability. The American and Canadian archival associations strongly criticized the U.S. government and non-governmental Iraq Memory Foundation (IMF) for removing files produced by Saddam Hussein’s Baathist regime after his overthrow in 2003—as well as the IMF’s agreement with the Hoover Institution to store some of the records there—and demanded their prompt return to the Iraqi National Library and Archives (INLA). Archivists did not argue that Iraq had superior technical capacity to manage the files but reasoned that the materials belonged to Iraq and that once the INLA made an ownership

claim, applicable law and ethical principles required that the materials be returned.

### **Why DC-Cam's Custodial Arrangement Works**

As compared to the case of Iraq, international lawyers, archivists, and the Cambodian government and public generally have regarded DC-Cam's custodianship of DK records as lawful and legitimate, and it has not been subject to significant challenge. The success of the DC-Cam model has depended on at least three key factors: (1) the consent of the Cambodian government, (2) international support from the United States and other donors, and (3) DC-Cam's development of technical capacity and trustworthiness. The Cambodian government has had a sustained political interest in shedding light on the abuses of the DK regime, and without its consistent support and consent, DC-Cam's custodianship would rest on a fragile legal and ethical foundation. That consent, coupled with DC-Cam's technical capacity and trustworthiness, give DC-Cam a strong basis for legitimate custodianship and diminish the government's incentives to alter the arrangement. International and public support also boosts the Center's capacity and legitimacy and would make it

politically difficult for the government to seek control over the files.

The same three factors are likely to be keys to effective and sustainable NGO custodianship of human rights records in other states. Sustained international support and effective NGO leadership and capacity-building can provide much of the foundation for success, but a stable custodial arrangement will also hinge crucially on the durability and extent of the host government's commitment to allow the NGO-led archival process to proceed. Laws and archival ethics continue to give states extensive authority to manage official records and thus considerable power to block any custodial arrangement lacking government consent. Building an effective NGO-led archive in other transitional states that lack capacity and/or trustworthiness will thus require regular and robust engagement with the host government to demonstrate the added technical sophistication and public legitimacy that such an arrangement can sometimes provide.

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**John D. Ciorciari**

## SEARCHING FOR HUSBAND

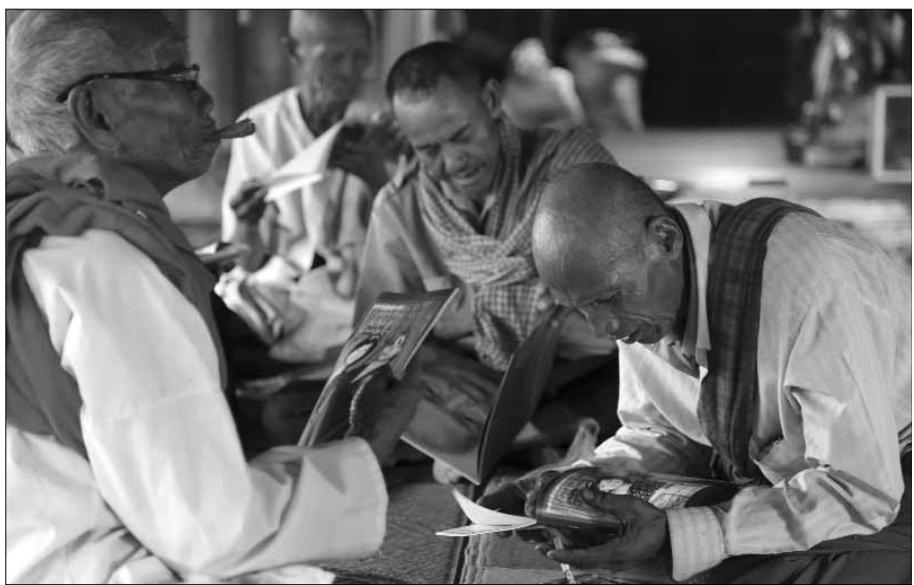
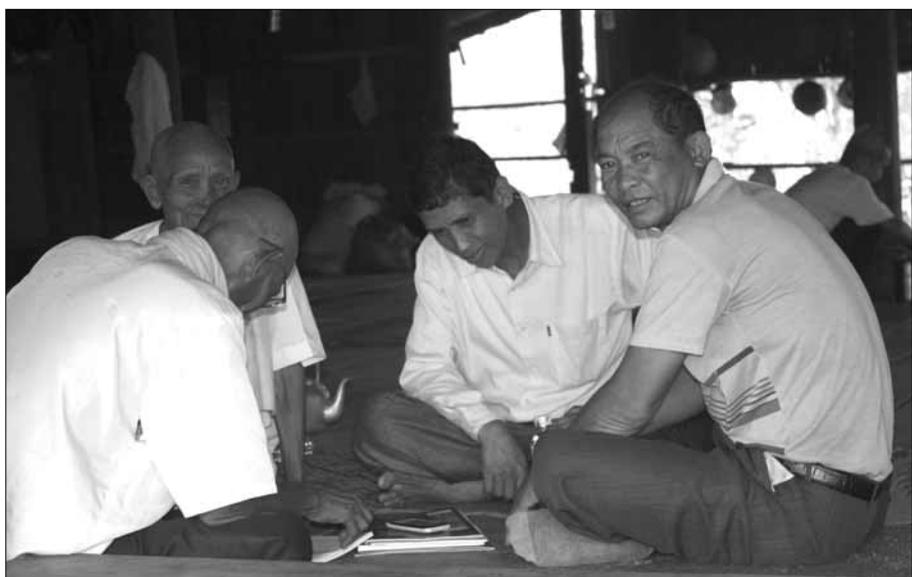
During the Sangkum Reastr Niyum period, I, Vang Phon, aka Nget, lived in Boeung Tumpun village, Phnom Penh. Nowadays, I live in Tuol Kraing village, Kraing Yov, Sa Ang district, Kandal province. I was separated from my husband, Ith Phanna aka Yort ever since the Khmer Rouge evacuated us from Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975 at 9 a.m. At the time, I carried my 4 year-old-daughter, Ith Chanry aka A Srey, along the roads and I was also pregnant with a second child. Later, I heard from some villagers who had told me that my husband came to find us after the Khmer Rouge regime collapsed, but the neighbors informed him that I had passed away. I did not know exactly when my husband came to find me. We (my children, Bang Phal, Phan, and I) are now living in Tuol Kraing village. If you or someone happens to get this information and know of my husband, please contact me at above-mentioned address or by phone: 012 992 171. You can also contact the Documentation Center of Cambodia at #66, Preah Sihanouk Blvd., Phnom Penh.

# Genocide Education Public Forum at June



# Koulen district, Preah Vihea province

2014



# MY MOTHER'S LIFE DURING THE KHMER ROUGE REGIME

*Mab Chum*

My mother is Khim Chhon, currently living in Batheay Commune, Batheay District, Kampong Cham Province. In the Lon Nol era, she lived in the Khmer Rouge liberated area, at Tuol Village. When the Khmer Rouge came into power, Angkar took her cousin, whose name was Van (knowledgeable person) away by telling him that he was assigned to cut the trees in the jungle. He was ordered to prepare his clothes and got in the waiting truck.

My grandmother and my mother's relatives burst into tears when knowing about this. They knew that the Khmer Rouge would certainly take him away to be killed. Since then, they received no news from him.



Mab Chum's Mother

Later, my mother was evacuated to live at Pong Tik (at the south of Batheay Village), where Phim had control. There, she carried earth as well as carried water to supply the kitchen and unit members, for that place lacked water. She had to take the water from far places with the worst road conditions. She had to take the water twice per day by ox cart. Sometimes, she arrived at the unit at 9 or 10 at night. Along the way, she was scared and hungry. Regarding water for bathing, she had to find it on her own. Some unit members could only have a bath once per half month.

Besides carrying water, she had to distribute gruel to whichever location was set by Angkar. Not allowing her to rest, Angkar also assigned her to carry earth. She constructed the dam at the south of Chealea Village; the dam still remains today. During her work, she injured her ankle with a hoe, and the scar is still there. Regarding her marriage, she did not face any forced marriage as her marriage was recognized by the parents of both sides. At that time, my father asked for her from Angkar. Angkar arranged the marriage for my parents and other people; some were in that village and some were from other villages. The marriage was held near the current Batheay Primary School.

After marrying, Angkar assigned her to build a dam at Pneuou village. Later, she was sent back to her father's village (the current village which she is living in now).

At that time, my mother did not see any new people, evacuated to her village. She also never saw any execution. Until 1978, Angkar transported people to kill them at the bottom of Batheay Mountain. According to the skulls, found and kept at a booth at the east of Batheay Pagoda after the

liberation in 1979, there were approximately 500 people killed. My mother had no idea where they were transported from; she just knew that they were from the south.

At that time, my mother could only get two meals per day. Sometimes, she got rice, while sometimes just gruel. Angkar provided only a ladle to each person. Regarding food, there was only fish paste and sour soup which was mixed with banana stump, Water Lily, and papaya. My mother never ate sufficiently. Sometimes, she caught fish, frog, and lizard to grill. When she went to the farm, she stole some grains of rice and kept them in her pocket as reserve food when she was starving. At that time, children stole Angkar's food to eat. Some unit chiefs who were kind would forgive those children when they were caught stealing. Such eating habits caused my mother to become weak, yet as she was

afraid of Angkar and was forced, she kept following orders. One day, my mother got ill and stayed in the hospital for 15 days. The doctor gave her a rounded black pill though they had no idea what it was. The patients around her were pale and skinny. The doctor ordered my mother to leave the hospital for work though she was not yet better.

Today, my mother has no idea about the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, as she was too busy with earning money to support the family. However, she would love the court to seek a genuine justice for all the victims, including the dead ones as well. She does not want this regime to happen again. And, she does not want her next generation to endure such regime.

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**Mab Chum**

## [www.cambodiatribunal.org](http://www.cambodiatribunal.org)

The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor ([www.cambodiatribunal.org](http://www.cambodiatribunal.org)) provides extensive coverage throughout the trial of two former senior Khmer Rouge officials accused of atrocity crimes. The Monitor provides daily in-depth analysis from correspondents in Phnom Penh, as well as complete English-translated video of the proceedings, with Khmer-language video to follow. Additional commentary is provided by a range of Monitor-affiliated experts in human rights and international law. The Monitor has been the leading source of news and information on the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC) since its inception in 2007. The website hosts an archive of footage from the tribunal and a regularly updated blog containing analysis from expert commentators and coverage by Phnom Penh-based correspondents.

An estimated 1.7 million Cambodian citizens died under the Khmer Rouge regime between 1975 and 1979. The former Khmer Rouge officials to be tried in the ECCC's "Case 002" are Nuon Chea, former Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea's Central Committee and a member of its Standing Committee and Khieu Samphan, former Chairman of Democratic Kampuchea State Presidium.

The Cambodia Tribunal Monitor was developed by a consortium of academic, philanthropic and non-profit organizations committed to providing public access to the tribunal and ensuring open discussions throughout the judicial process. The site sponsors include Northwestern University School of Law's Center for International Human Rights, the Documentation Center of Cambodia, the J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation and the Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center. The concept for the website was conceived by Illinois State Senator Jeff Schoenberg, a Chicago-area legislator who also advises the Pritzker family on its philanthropy.



Performs a play of the events in the Khmer Rouge regime at the Cheung Ek Genocide Center

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