

**DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA
Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

MAPPING PROJECT 1999:

KAMPONG CHHNANG PROVINCE

On June 9, 1999, the Documentation Center of Cambodia sent a mapping team to Kampong Chhnang province. The team was comprised of Mr. Sin Khin, responsible for contacting the local authorities and interviewing witnesses, Mr. Ouch Sam Oeun, responsible for utilizing Global Positioning System (GPS) to identify genocide sites, Mr. Peou Dara, responsible for preparing the report, and Mr. Ros Sam Peou, responsible for drawing maps of the genocide sites.

Our team traveled on National Route #5 from Phnom Penh toward its destination, Kampong Chhnang Province. After some fifty kilometers by car from Phnom Penh, we took a small country road on the left-hand or west side of the highway, exiting to the Headquarters of Samaki Meanchey, about twelve kilometers from the main route. On arriving at the headquarters around 9:30 am, we met the District Governor, Chhuong Khoeun, 48, and his Deputy, Chan Voeun, 44. We proceeded to have a long discussion with them about our mapping and genocide research program.

The Governor told us that Samaki Meanchey was a new district, split off from Kampong Tra Lach in December 1985. This split was first of all necessitated by the need to protect people from harassment by the Khmer Rouge. Secondly, it also facilitated defense of the railroad from the Khmer Rouge, as the railway is situated in proximity to the district. Those concerns and tensions, however, had been substantially scaled back following the integration of the last big wave of Khmer Rouge soldiers into the Government, coupled with the improved situation shortly before the general election in 1998.

The current district is composed of nine sub-districts comprising eighty-five villages, with a total population of 60,489, including 31,989 females in 12,144 families. The Governor continued that most people in the district are farmers, depending mainly on rice cultivation. A small number earn their living by making sugar out of palm juice and by growing a variety of subsidiary crops such as peanuts, watermelons, and so forth.

During the discussion, we asked the Governor to recount his personal story of life during the Khmer Rouge period. He recalled that in the Pol Pot regime, he had at first lived in Ampil Toek Sub-district, Kampong Tralach District, Kampong Chhnang Province. In 1977, he was transferred to Prey Khmer village, Chrey Bakk Sub-district, Rolea Phieat District of the same province, where he was supposed to work in a mobile brigade in Region 31. He mentioned that the work of the mobile brigade involved moving earth, digging canals and building dams. As for manslaughter by the Khmer Rouge, he said most people in the mobile brigade knew very little about that. He did say, however, that he had seen two or three members of the mobile brigade convicted in meetings that took place once in a while, and that those convicted were taken to be killed. The Khmer Rouge simply killed ordinary people of the collective. For instance, he lost his both parents and three siblings, as well as three nieces and

nephews, all of whom who had lived in Ampil Toek collective and were executed by the Khmer Rouge in 1976.

To provide additional information, the Governor invited Mr. Kim Porn, Deputy Chief of the District Agricultural Office, to give us an interview. Porn was a victim of the Khmer Rouge, and had been through a lot of experiences during the Khmer Rouge period.

Mr. Kim Porn is 48 years old, born in Kraing Sra-ma Village, Svay Chuk Sub-district, Kampong Tralach District (presently, Samaki Meanchey District), Kampong Chhnang. In 1976, he served as Chief of Sre Praing mobile work brigade in Kraing Sra-ma Village, Svay Chuk Sub-district, District 12. He was later arrested and imprisoned from April 1977 to October 1978. He was detained in a security prison of District 12, known as Prey Damrei Srot Prison, which was located in Damrei Srot Village, Svay Chuk Sub-district, Samaki Meanchey District, Kampong Chhnang Province. The cause of his imprisonment was that he had shown kindness to "17 April" people by having his staff cook rice for the "17 April" people to eat. He claimed that he had not been forced by the Khmer Rouge to do hard labor, nor was he tortured as punishment. His fault was classified as light, so he was only required by the Khmer Rouge to transport earth in shoulder baskets.

Porn explained that the prisoners in Prey Damrei Srot Prison were divided into two categories, those with light offenses and those with heavy offenses. Those considered light offenders were prisoners who had committed small mistakes, for instance, planting a type of rice seeds other than that suggested by Angkar, letting cattle eat rice, etc. The prisoners in this category were not ordinarily confined to the prison, instead remaining free of shackles outside of the prison.

Those viewed as serious offenders were sentenced to very hard labor, and they were permitted to move about only with their legs cuffed. This made the prison staff call them the "Unit of Elephants," because of the way they walked when shackled. The heavy offenders walked in lines to work sites, legs cuffed together, making a sound like elephant feet; the space between their legs was about the same size as an elephant foot. They worked without rest until they returned to the prison at the end of each workday. With both legs still cuffed, they had to sleep in rows, with their heads alternating in opposite directions. One prisoner's legs were bound propped up against another's legs by a long iron bar linked firmly to the cuffs.

Most of those classified as heavy offenders were soldiers and spies of the previous Sihanouk and Lon Nol regimes. The remainder were all teachers, as well as some persons previously accused of light offenses, who had been charged by prison guards with additional offenses during their imprisonment.

Kim Porn went on to say that prisoners were both old and young, including children that came with parents who had been arrested by the Khmer Rouge. Incredibly, not many inmates in Prey Damrei Srot were executed, *per se*. Most of them died from starvation. Sometimes the dead were left lying in the prison with both legs shackled. Many others died from compulsory overwork. The surviving prisoners were ordered to take the dead bodies, cut each of them into two, and then bring the halves to be buried in pits where potatoes and coconut trees were to be planted.

Kim Porn, who was charged with only light offenses, added that prisoners in his category had to get up at 5 am at the ring of the wakeup bell beaten by the Khmer Rouge security staff, and go to work at 6 am. They were allowed a short break at noon for some gruel. After an hour and a half break, they resumed their work until 5 pm, when they were returned to confinement. If there was a full moon, the prisoners had to work at night. At the beginning of planting season, until the work of transplanting seedlings was finished, they had to work day and night. Kim Porn stressed that the prison security guards brandished their handguns and whips each time the prisoners walked to work. The guards were a group of a dozen, one half controlling heavy-offense prisoners, and the others controlling light-offense prisoners. The security chief was called Em, and according to Kim Porn, he is dead. Another person named Ol, who also served as a prison chief, now lives in Chres Village, Chres Sub-district, Kampong Tralach District, Kampong Chhnang Province. Suon, perpetrator-cum-interrogator, was killed in the vengeance of villagers following the liberation of Kampong Chhnang in 1979.

Kim Porn cited names of inmates at Prey Damrei who are still alive today: Mat Maut is Governor of Kampong Tralach District; Ta On and Ta Sim are villagers in Peam Sub-district, Kampong Tralach District, Kampong Chhnang Province. Finally, smiling, he told us that he would testify before the court if he were needed to give evidence.

We decided not go to any genocide sites following our interview with Kim Porn. The sites are far-flung from the Samaki Meanchey District Office. There was no road directly to the sites from the District Office. We would have to detour to another road, which people indicated is close to the boundary of Wat Kolampavoan.

At about 2 pm, we left Samaki Meanchey District Office for Kampong Chhnang provincial town, staying there overnight and preparing for our visit the next day to the genocide sites in Chumteav Chreng Village, Kraing Lvea Sub-district, Samaki Meanchey District, Kampong Chhnang Province. As planned, we departed from Kampong Chhnang provincial town toward Chumteav Chreng Village a little after 6 am on the tenth. After more than an hour drive, we got to the entrance to Chumteav Chreng Village, near the fence of Wat Kolampavoan. (For more details on how we got there, see the attached map drawn by Ros Sam Peou.)

Close to the Wat, near the entrance to the village, we met Deputy Governor Chan Voeun of Samaki Meanchey District. He was awaiting us in his residence. Upon meeting us, he took us to see the village chief and witnesses who know the genocide sites in the village. In his capacity as District Deputy Governor, Chan Voeun invited local security forces to accompany us to the genocide sites. To reach our destination, we traveled through a forest, across two streams and down several zigzagging roads. We would never have found these sites without the local people to guide us, even if we had already been there once before. We got out of the car when we reached the second stream, and continued by foot for about two kilometers through a dense forest before finally reaching the site.

According to our guides, the site was called Prey Trapeang Ampil. There we saw mass grave pits, pointed out to us by the witnesses. The pits were hardly visible, nearly flattened to ground level. The witnesses estimated that the site covers an area of about two hectares, and contains some 500 pits, each holding roughly twenty to fifty corpses.

First Witness:

Our first witness was Bin Met, male, 59, a former chief of Chumteav Chreng between 1970 and 1975. During the Pol Pot regime, and presently, he lives in Chumteav Chreng Village, Kraing Lvea Sub-district, Samaki Meanchey District, Kampong Chhnang Province. He is currently Chief of the Committee of Laypersons for Wat Kraing Lvea. Bin Met said that the site called Prey Trapeang Ampil was considered in the Khmer Rouge time to be a “mixed region,” because all sorts of Khmer Rouge victims were gathered here from various places like the Oddong battlefield, the Kampong Chhnang battlefield and many other places. The people who were killed had been accused of serving the enemy. Not only the old, but also people too young to know right from wrong were taken to be killed, simply because they were with their parents when they were arrested by the Khmer Rouge. The Khmer Rouge used the phrase, “Angkar lets you brothers go to learn,” as a method to pacify people being taken for execution.

According to Bin Met, once having merely heard the phrase, “Angkar lets [people] go to learn,” everyone vied for the privilege. Bin Met said that he saw the Khmer Rouge returning to the village after taking people “to learn,” carrying hoes, clothes, sleeping mats and nets. Concerning who decided which people would get “to learn” in this way, Bin Met asserted that Ta [Uncle] Sarin was the one who gave orders. He was the most powerful cadre in the region, as he was the Region Security Chief. Other powerful Khmer Rouge cadre in the region were Nai, his Deputy, Ta Laing and his Secretary, Kuon. Ta Sarin's wife was named Tom. Every time they took people to be killed, the Khmer Rouge drank wine or fermented palm juice and got drunk. Bin Met said the Khmer Rouge also gathered women from all over and confined them in a special place. Before they took any woman to be killed, they raped her to their full satisfaction. None of the women held there survived the Khmer Rouge regime. Ta Bin Met himself lost three siblings and five cousins in the Pol Pot regime. At the end of our meeting, he mentioned another witness named Ta Til, who lives in the same village as him. During our trek into Prey Trapeang Ampil, District Deputy Governor Chan Voeun, Witnesses Bin Vet, Chumteav Chreng Village Chief Uong Cham, and Kraing Lvea Sub-district Security Chief Svay Theng accompanied us. The village chief, Uong Cham, was the only one who knew the way better.

Back at Chumteav Chreng Village, we went to interview Ta Til, the witness brought to our attention by Ta Bin Met. Fortunately, we met Ta Til as planned. The interview is as follows:

Second witness:

The second witness is Kim Til, 69, born in Chumteav Chreng Village, Kraing Lvea Sub-district, Kampong Tralach District, Kampong Chhnang Province. Presently, he lives in the same village, but the district's name was changed from Kampong Tralach to Samaki Meanchey when the new administrative divisions were formed, as mentioned above.

During the Pol Pot time, Ta Kim Til was chief of a 5-to-6 person unit responsible for cultivating rice fields. However, he had no right to impose any tasks for his unit to fulfill. All his unit tasks were imposed by the Khmer Rouge. As for the matter of killings, he said he saw with his own eyes as the Khmer Rouge arrested people and led them away to be killed. People were brought from everywhere. He recalled seeing people with their hands tied behind their backs being walked through his village to a killing place in the forest north of the

village. In fact, the forest north of the village, as described by Ta Kim Til, was precisely the place where our mapping team had just come from.

It was Prey Trapeang Ampil, located south of Chumteav Chheng Village, about five kilometers from his house. Ta Kim Til told us that village cadre named Ta Vong and Ta Kei appointed him to be Chief of the Village Unit. Intriguingly, he told us little about what happened in the village during that time. He claimed that he did not know much about that. Thus, we ended our interview with him and carried on to seek another witness, named Nam, to whom we were referred by the District Deputy Governor.

Third witness:

Yeay Nam's full name is Kol Nam, aged 64, born in Kraing Lvea Village, Kraing Lvea Sub-district, Kampong Tralach District, Kampong Chhnang Province. Presently, she lives in the same village, though as previously noted, the district's name has been changed to Samaki Meanchey. She stated that her husband was arrested and taken away by the Khmer Rouge in 1973. They even seized her rice fields, cattle and ox-cart. After that, she was brought by the Khmer Rouge to live in Chumteav Chheng for nine months.

Later during the Khmer Rouge regime, she was transferred to Kraing Lvea Village, Kraing Lvea Sub-district. She traveled with village mobile work brigades that were supposed to build dams, and cooked rice for them. She said people in the village were provided with a rice ration only for two months during harvest season. They had to eat gruel rations, with a group of two or three people sometimes having only a single can of rice, depending upon how much rice the Khmer Rouge said was available. In fact, according to Yeay Nam, the people of her village produced a good rice yield. But the Khmer Rouge did not provide sufficient rice for consumption, giving the excuse that the rice was to be traded for materials such as hoes and cloth. Villagers were brought to be killed, on the accusation of being enemies, though she did not know for sure where the execution sites were.

Her unit was all-female, and yet led by men, though she failed to remember their names. But she did remember the names of those who oversaw the village, such as Ta Sarin, confirming Ta Bin Met's information. Having met and interviewed all the witnesses we could find, we returned to Kampong Chhnang provincial town. There we proceeded to prepare for our mapping research in another location the next day, Damrei Srot Village, Svay Chuk Sub-district.

We set out at 6 am on the twelfth according to plan. We proceeded from town to the home of Samaki Meanchey District Office Chief Kao Hun, located near School 5. Upon arrival, we saw him waiting for us right in front of his house. He traveled with us to Trach market, where he took us to meet the Chief of Svay Chruk Sub-district. He instructed the Chief of Svay Chruk Sub-district to take us to an execution site and a prison named Prey Damrei Sar. That execution site is the same one described to us by Kim Porn on June 9, 1999. The road providing access to the site is indicated on the map attached to this report.

Upon arriving at Uk Yun's house, we met the Sub-district Chief, who was waiting for us along the road to Prey Damrei Srot. We rode together to Wat Chrak Sangke, where we parked our vehicle. Here the Chief of Samaki Meanchey District Office invited the Chrak Sangke Village Chief, Kruoch Kruy, to guide us to the prison at Prey Damrei Srot. Heading south on foot about 2500 meters into the forest behind the Wat, we arrived at the Prey Damrei Srot

prison. To reach that Khmer Rouge prison, we walked through dense forest, along difficult paths with many twists and turns among the saplings, making it hard for us to know where we had been or where we were going. We would never have made it there without our local guides.

When we reached the place, our witness, Ok Tuon, Chief of Svay Chuk Sub-district, pointed out the building which had housed the Khmer Rouge officials for this region. The building, four meters wide and over eight meters long with a tiled roof, is now in pieces. Then, we were off to the location of the prison, about fifty meters from the residential building. The prison itself no longer exists. What remains of the prison is nothing other than flat ground covered by grass and marked by a big tree. Only people who had previously seen the prison could identify the location. We took the opportunity to interview the Svay Chuk Sub-district Chief, Ok Tuon. The following is the essence of our interview with him.

Witness Ok Tuon:

Ok Tuon is 61 years old, and now lives in Svay Chuk Sub-district, Samaki Meanchey District, Kampong Chhnang Province. He became Chief of the sub-district in 1979. He was born in Taing Krang Village, Svay Chuk Sub-district, Kampong Tralach District -- which, as noted, has been renamed Samaki Meanchey. During the period from 1975 to 1979 under the Khmer Rouge regime, he was an ordinary person living in Taing Krang Village, Svay Chuk Sub-district, Kampong Tralach Leu District (called District 12, Region 32, in the Khmer Rouge nomenclature). He told us that he knew of the prison at Prey Damrei Srot, because he often transported cattle manure by oxcart for disposal near the prison. The prison was about seven meters wide and twenty-one meters long, made of wood, with a thatch-roof and no walls. It could hold hundreds of prisoners at a time. All the prisoners were kept with both of their legs shackled to one of two iron bars, prisoners alternating on each side of the bars. They slept with their heads in opposite directions. According to Ok Tuon, most of the prisoners considered light offenders were Lon Nol soldiers. They had to walk to the work site with their legs shackled, hopping in the same manner as a frog jumps. Some prisoners died as a result of forced labor.

Other prisoners were viewed by the Khmer Rouge as heavy offenders, those accused of being White Khmer [or Free Khmer]. They were people who did not like the Khmer Rouge regime and wanted to carry on organized resistance against it. The heavy offense prisoners were confined in the prison, with their both legs cuffed steadfast, and were not allowed to go out to work anywhere. They were held in the prison until they died, with their legs remaining shackled. Prisoners accused of heavy offences were arrested along with all their family members -- none of the relatives of the accused were spared. Ok Tuon stated that a majority of the prisoners died from starvation, overwork, disease, lack of medical treatment, and long shackled confinement, rather than simply by outright execution. The surviving inmates were ordered to remove the dead bodies of deceased fellow inmates and place them in pits where coconut trees were to be planted. Each pit sometimes contained two whole corpses, sometimes one whole corpse, or sometimes a corpse cut into two parts.

The account by Svay Chuk Sub-district Chief Ok Tuon conforms with the statement made by Chhak Sngke Village Chief Krauch Kruy; both noted that the bodies of the prisoners were buried where coconut trees were to be grown.

The plot of land that had been used to plant the coconut trees was about one square kilometer, according to the witnesses. Both Tuon and Krui showed us the location, and pointed out where the pits left by coconut tree saplings were still visible. These spots were almost completely covered by soil, and the coconut trees themselves had been plucked out. The grove had been covered with more than two hundred coconut trees, now all gone. The trees disappeared because villagers in the region came and removed them, taking them to plant at their houses. As the Sub-district Chief told us, he himself took three of the trees to grow near his house, where they still survive. A second cause for the destruction of the coconut grove was that Khmer Rouge cadre who survived after the fall of their regime in 1979 came and cut the buds of the coconuts for food. In this spot, coconut trees as well as potatoes had been planted and grown using human fertilizer.

The witnesses told us the names of the persons in charge of Prey Damrei Srot prison. They were Ul, Chief of the prison, and Ul's immediate subordinates, Suon Em and Soeun. Of these, only two are still alive: Em lives in Tbeng Khpuos Village, Tbeng Khpuos Sub-district, Samaki Meanchey District, and Ul lives in Chres Village, Chres Sub-district, Kampong Tralach District, Kampong Chhnang Province. According to Ok Tuon, Em was the most brutal perpetrator in Prei Damrei Srot prison. However, Ok Tuon appeared afraid to tell us about Em's activities at the prison, because he feared that Em would come and harm him. Ok suggested that if we were to interview him, we not tell Em that he had told us about him.

On our next expedition to this area, we should find the time to interview Em. We photographed the location of Damrei Srot prison, identified the location using the GPS unit, and took pictures of the witnesses. Then we departed the forest, going to the compound of Wat Chrak Sangke. On our way back, when we got to Trapeang Mtes Village, a witness named Uk Yun, 60, male, currently living in Trapeang Mtes Village, Svay Chuk Sub-district, Samaki Meanchey District, indicated to us there was another execution site in the village. So, we went all along with him to examine that site.

Witness Uk Yun:

According to Uk Yun, the site at Trapeang Mtes Village is called Prey Ta Kuch. It is located just north of the village, about one hundred and fifty meters from the main street. He told us that everybody in the village knew of the site. Concerning its history, he told us that the location was used by the Khmer Rouge as an execution site in 1975. The site contained around ten pits, each of which was five meters square and one meter deep. At first, the Khmer Rouge brought people from all around into the village. Then they took people in groups or in families to be killed at the execution site. Before killing them, the Khmer Rouge undressed the victims, taking their clothes back to the village. The witness told us that executions were committed at this site only four or five times, with approximately three hundred to five hundred people having been taken to be killed there by the village security forces. We saw with our own eyes small bits of the victims' bones and remains, and pieces of clothing on the rim of several pits. We completed our mission by identifying the locations, interviewing the witnesses, and photographing them.

We then returned to Phnom Penh, proud that we had succeeded in surveying several locations that had eluded us in the past. Samaki Meanchey District in Kampong Chhnang Province is now well on the way to being comprehensively mapped.

Conclusion:

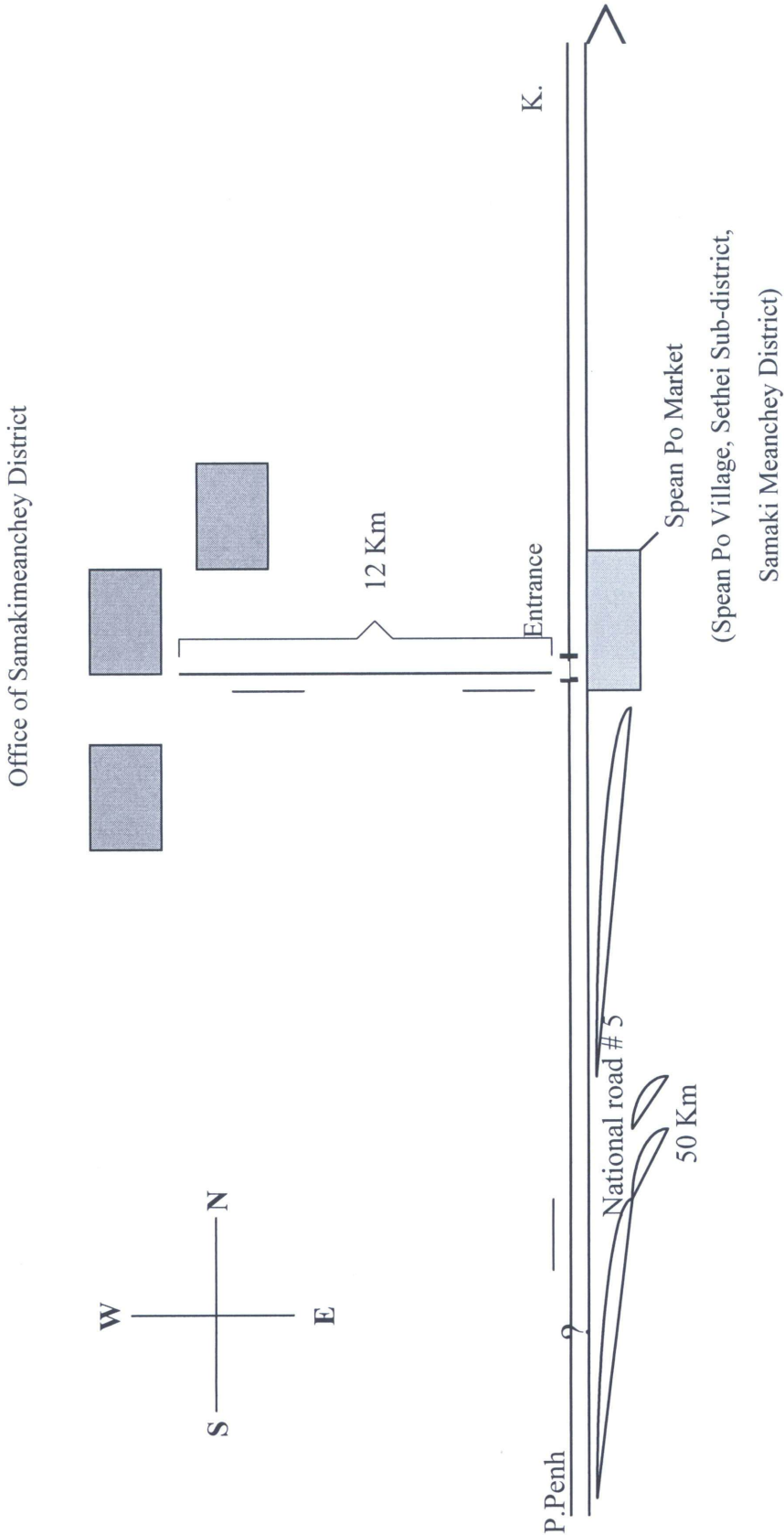
We may conclude that our three day visit to the killing fields and prison in Samaki Meanchey District, Kampong Chhnang Province was a fairly great success for the team. We have surveyed three execution sites:

Prey Trapeang Ampil in Chumteav Chreng Village;
Prey Damrei Srot in Chrak Sangke Village; and
Prey Ta Kuch in Trapeang Mtes Village.

We have also collected solid information from eyewitnesses who lived near the three sites, and who had also been confined in the prison. Furthermore, both the local authorities and the witnesses whom we met and interviewed were all very helpful to and cooperative with us, providing us means in one way or another to facilitate our work to its proper completion.

However, we remain unsatisfied, since the information in our report is not complete. We failed to visit the place called Chrolong Ta Put -- which is reputed to have been a big execution site in 1975. Our failure to visit that place was due to the fact that we were running out of time, and the weather was about to turn bad. We also failed to locate and interview Em, who, as witnesses informed us, had been a key perpetrator at the Prey Damrei Srot prison. District Chief Kao Hun told us that before we could interview Em, we had to inform Mr. Em's sub-district chief, so that he could arrange for us to meet and interview the subject. Mr. Em rarely allows anyone to meet him and inquire about his story during the Khmer Rouge regime. We think it would be ideal if we could find some way to meet and interview Em in the future.

LOCATION OF SAMAKI MEANCHEY DISTRICT

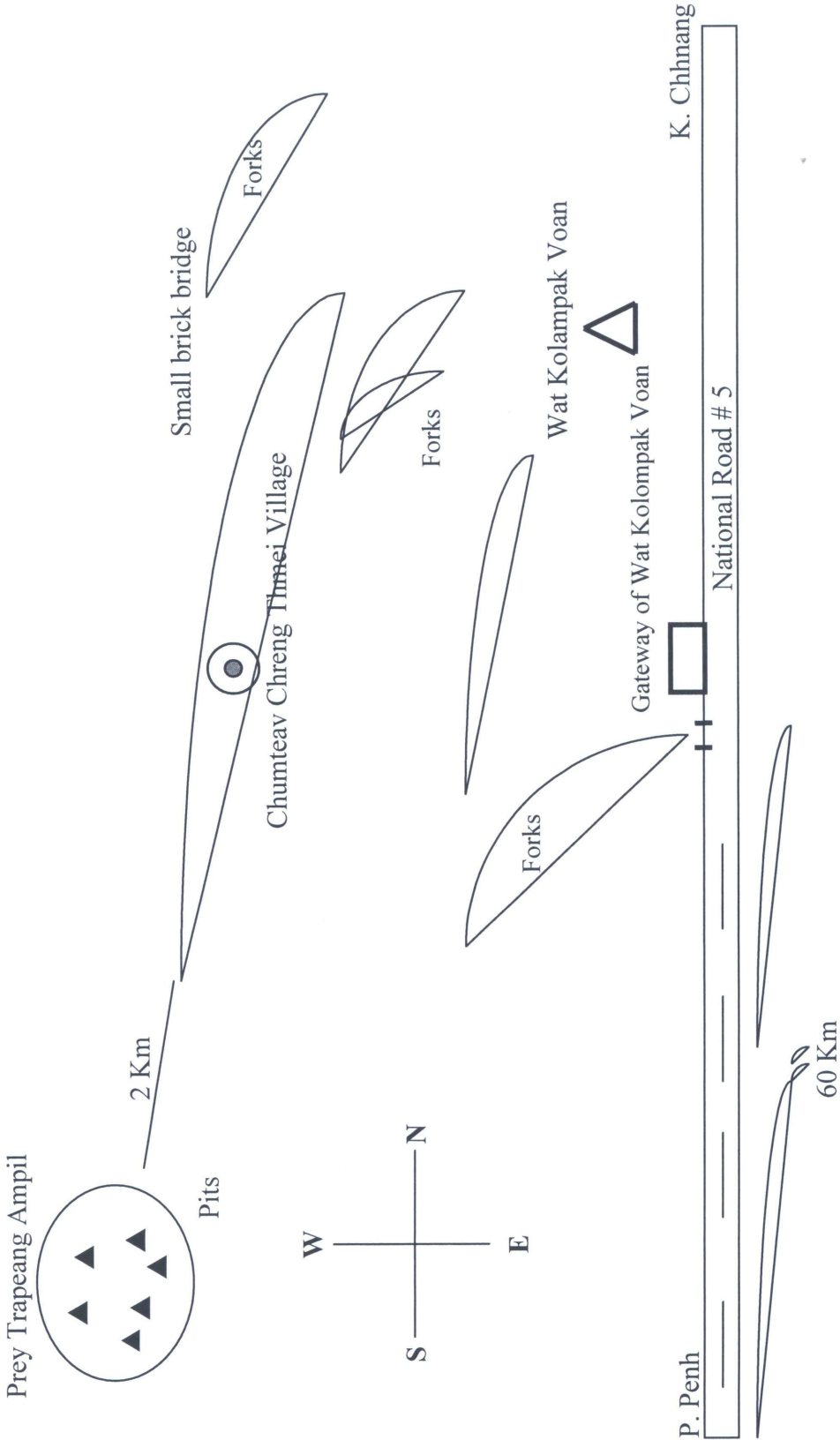


Distance from the Entrance to the office of Samaki Meanchey District

around 12 Kilometers

Distance from Phnom Penh to Spean Po Market around 50 Kilometers

LOCATION OF PITS AT PREY TRAPEANG AMPIL

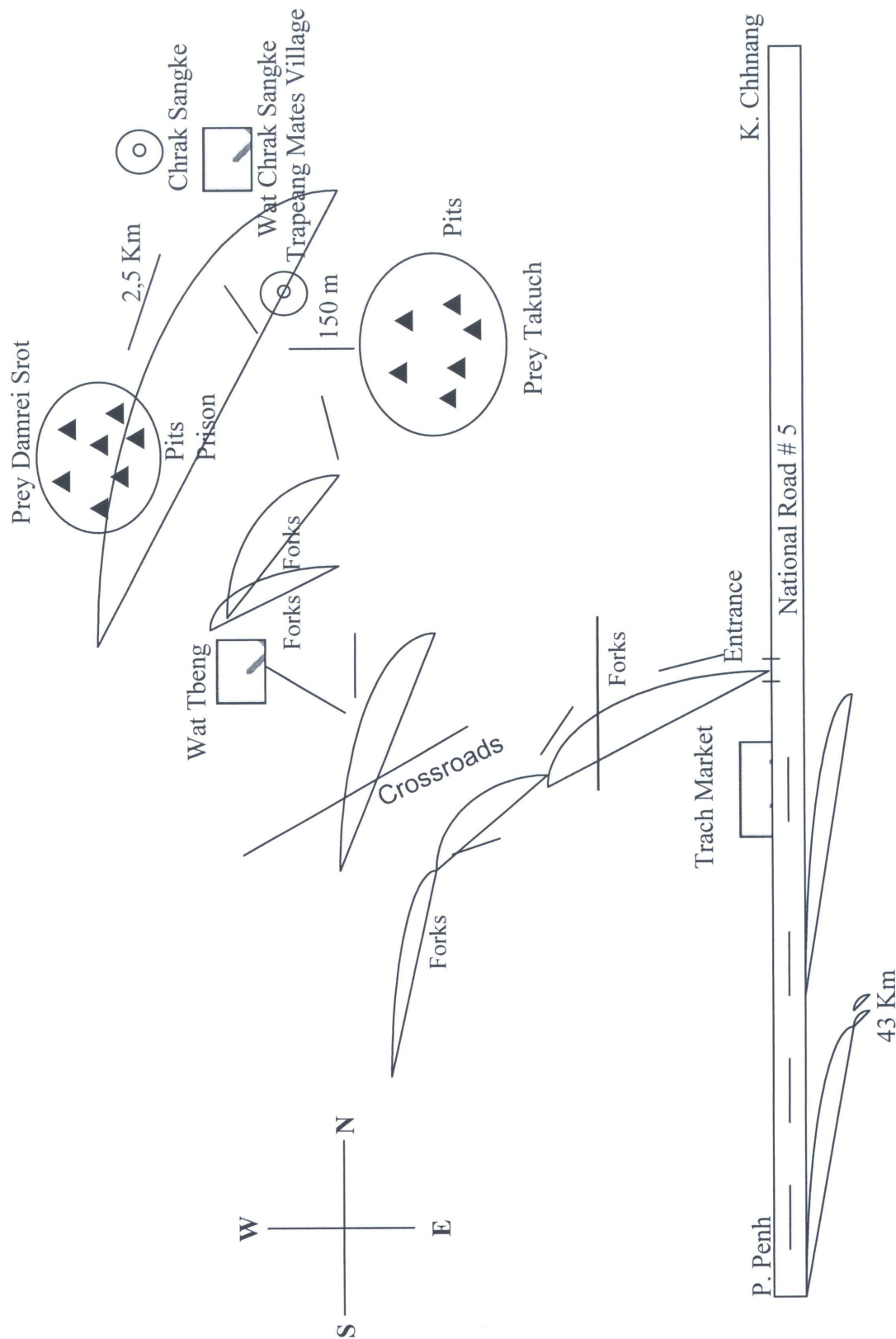


8 Distance from the Entrance to the location of pits at Prey Trapeang Ampil over 17km

8 Distance from Chumteav Chheng Thmei Village to the location of pits at Prey Trapeang Ampil : around 2

Kilometers (in the woods)

LOCATION OF PREY DAMREI SROT



8 Distance from the entrance to the location of pits at Prey Damrei Srot around over 19 Kilometers

* Distance from the entrance to the location of pits at Prey Ta Kuch around 1950m

2. KAMPONG CHHNANG PROVINCE

District	Site Name/ Visited Date	Site Type	Est. Victim	Witness	File #/ID Code	Latitude	Longitude
Samaki Meanchey	Damrei Srot/ 11 June 99	Burial site 200 pits	400	Kruoch Kruy គ្រូច គ្រួយ	R 061102B/ 040705	N 11°48'0645"	E 104°33'4953"
Samaki Meanchey	Prey Damrei Srot/ 11 June 99	Prison 200 pits	400	Kruoch Kruy គ្រូច គ្រួយ Kim Phan គីម ផាន	R 061102A/ 040704	N 11°48'0447"	E 104°33'5430"
Samaki Meanchey	Prey Takuch/ 11 June 99	Burial site 10 pits	300-500	Uk Yun ឡុក យុន	R 061104A/ 040706	N 11°48'4665"	E 104°33'1461"
Samaki Meanchey	Sre Chrauv/ 10 June 99	Prison No pit	N/A	Bin Met ប៊ិន ម៉េត	R 061003A/ 040703	N 11°57'0244"	E 104°43'3110"
Samaki Meanchey	Trapeang Ampil/ 10 June 99	Burial over 500 pits	1,000 up	Bin Met ប៊ិន ម៉េត	R 061002A/ 040701	N 11°56'3434"	E 104°33'1341"
Samaki Meanchey	Trapeang Ampil/ 10 June 99	Burial over 500 pits	1,000 up	Bin Met ប៊ិន ម៉េត	R 061002B/ 040702	N 11°56'2846"	E 104°33'1688"