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DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA
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The *Duch* Verdict: A DC-Cam Report from the Former Khmer Rouge Stronghold of Phnom Voar

Witnessing Justice, Village Screenings of the First Khmer Rouge Verdict
of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Court of Cambodia (ECCC)

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Railroad track where three foreigners were captured by the Khmer Rouge forces in 1994.

Screenings held in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and funded by U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) with the core support from USAID and Sweden. OSI, Denmark, Australia and Norway provided the screening materials.

Overview

The Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam)'s Living Documents Program hosted a forum about the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC)'s first verdict on September 29th in the former Khmer Rouge stronghold of Phnom Voar commune, Kep province.

On July 26, the ECCC issued its judgment against Kaing Guek Eav *alias* Duch for crimes committed in connection with the S-21 detention center, sentencing him to 35 years, minus five to remedy his illegal pre-trial detention. Because he has already served 11 years in detention, he has less than 19 years to serve of his sentence. Since the pronouncement, DC-Cam has hosted 12 live and replayed screenings of the sentencing in ten provinces and Phnom Penh to collect and evaluate participants' reactions.

Although limited to one detention site, the *Duch* trial raised numerous legal, political, historical, and moral challenges. It also provided the first opportunity for Cambodians to hear public discussion and debate on policies of the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) period that resulted in the deaths of nearly two million people in only three years, eight months, and twenty days. Duch's confession of his crimes and the Court's judgment of his actions can be meaningful even for survivors unconnected to S-21, as they speak to the responsibility of the many other prison chiefs still living who will never be held accountable for similar acts.

Verdict screenings are intended to generate discussion about the meaning of the *Duch* verdict in local communities and to raise awareness of upcoming case 002, the second and most important trial of senior Khmer Rouge (KR) leaders Nuon Chea, Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary, and Ieng Thirith. This is the first verdict screening at which an S-21 survivor and an S-21 prison guard have helped lead the discussion. It is also the first screening to be attended by an ECCC official.

Background on Phnom Voar Commune

Phnom Voar was a Khmer Rouge stronghold from 1973-1995. Soon after the fall of Democratic Kampuchea, PRK authorities reported attacks on the Kampot-Phnom Penh train in this area and the deaths of some passengers. According to the Report of the meeting of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK)'s Department of the People's Revolutionary Committee in Kampot, prior to June 1981 Pet (Nuon Paet) set up a military base at Phnom Voar consisting of 12 members. In the general area, around 70 KR were believed to be active, "mingling" with villagers, periodically skirmishing with PRK forces, engaging in robbery, and recruiting locals to join them or buy them supplies.



Government's (PRK) soldiers attacked and killed several Khmer Rouge at Phnom Voar in 1983.

By 1994, the Khmer Rouge in the area had expanded their activities to robbing and kidnapping Western tourists. On March 31, 1994, American Melissa Himes was kidnapped by Khmer Rouge troops near Phnom Voar and released in May for a ransom of \$5000 and a truckload of food and building supplies—a substantial reduction from the original demand for \$50,000. Thirty kilometers away,

Australian Kellie Wilkinson and two British companions were captured and executed on April 11th. Then, on July 26, 1994, Khmer Rouge forces based at Phnom Voar attacked an overloaded Phnom Penh to Sihanoukville train, killing 13 Cambodians. They systematically robbed passengers, and kidnapped David Wilson (Australia), Jean-Michel Braquet (France) and Mark Slater (UK). The three backpackers were held for \$150,000 ransom during almost two months of stalled negotiations. When the Cambodian government launched a military offensive on the mountain, someone, though it is not entirely clear who, made the decision have the three killed. They reportedly dug their own graves and were bludgeoned to death, possibly on September 28th. More information about the KR history of the area and additional perspectives on the 1994 murders can be found in interviews below.

For their roles in the killing, three Khmer Rouge cadres were sentenced to life imprisonment, despite the fact that at least two of them were eligible for a general amnesty from prosecution for having defected to the government shortly after the attack. General Nuon Paet, the commander of KR Division 405



A Khmer Rouge was captured by the Government in 1983.

and Phnom Voar base, was arrested and jailed for life in 1999 for ordering the killings. Two other KR commanders, who had been made high-ranking officers in the Cambodian Armed Forces after their defections to the government, were tried and convicted only several years later. Sam Bith, the senior Southwest Zone commander who was found to have planned the operation and ordered the killings, was sentenced in 2002 and died in 2008. He denied the charges, saying he had been transferred out of the area, but Nuon Paet testified that Bith had ordered the killings. Colonel Chhouk Rin, who reportedly led the attack on the train, was sentenced in 2002 but remained free on appeal until 2005. He argued that he had attempted to negotiate the release of the hostages when he defected to the government in October 1994—most likely after they were already dead.

Today, the Phnom Voar area is sparsely populated, with many fields lying fallow despite it being planting season. The train tracks where the three backpackers were kidnapped are in close proximity to the village, a constant reminder of those crimes and their impact on the community. In addition to former Khmer Rouge cadre who settled here, new people, including KR victims, have moved to the area. Although the commune is only 20 minutes from the popular resort town of Kep City, many families have been unable to make a living from farming and small business and have moved away in the last few years. More intend to leave soon.



Villagers standing in front of their house located in Chamkar Bei village (Phnom Voar area)

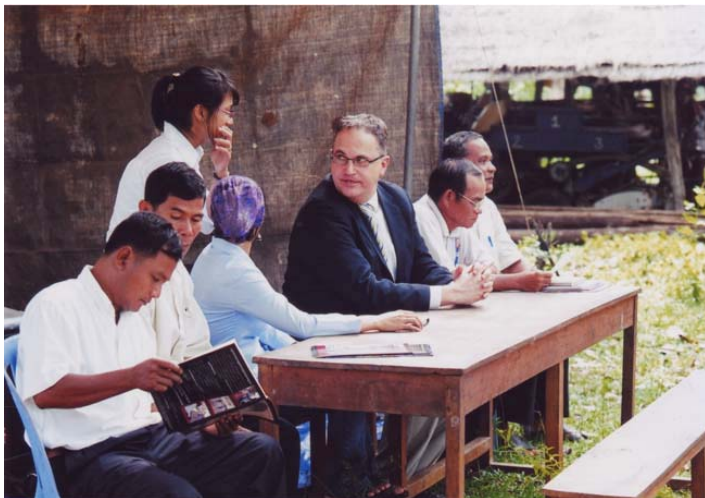
Phnom Voar Forum

The forum was held on the grounds of the Community Vocational Training Center, Chamkar Bei (three plantations) village, Pong Toek commune, Damnak Chang'er district, Kep province. As the forum began, around 200 participants and large number of children were in attendance, including 22 members of the Cham Muslim community from Phnom Thmei and Sbov villages (deputy Imam Khet Kep, *hakim*, *tuons*, and women), and 20 teachers who participated in DC-Cam's Genocide Education project. Due to the lack of any large buildings in the area, the forum was held outside.



Lon Dany (left), DC-Cam PA Team Leader with Chum Nuong, Pong Toeuk commune council member.

Chum Nuong, a commune council member welcomed participants. He told attendees to think critically about the films and their views. He said it was good that so many people had come, and that they must be respectful. As he spoke, village chief Saroeun whispered to the staff that Nhuong was a former KR cadre. When Saroeun spoke, he said the meeting provided an opportunity to raise villagers' awareness about the ECCC and also for villagers to express their views.



ECCC Deputy International Prosecutor William Smith (middle) preparing to speak to villagers at the forum.

ECCC Deputy Prosecutor William Smith told participants that the KR tribunal was about bringing people who were responsible for large-scale killings to justice and creating a safe society for the future development of Cambodia. He compared Democratic Kampuchea atrocities to those committed in Germany during World War Two, Bosnia in the mid-1990s, and Rwanda in 1994, and said that the Cambodian government and the UN had decided to establish the Court to ensure that such crimes never happen again in Cambodia.

Although it is not possible to bring everyone to justice, those most responsible and senior leaders were being prosecuted, and this honors victim's memories. He encouraged audience questions, noting that, as the prosecutor's office represents society, they want to know the public's views so they can take them into account.



Participants at the Forum.

When asked for a show of hands, most participants had never heard of the S-21 prison, however several of the people who asked questions had visited the court on DC-Cam-assisted tours. One man who had attended ECCC proceedings and visited Tuol Sleng Museum and the Choeung Ek killing fields asked when the Court's trial of the four surviving senior leaders would begin. Mr. Smith said that trial was expected to begin in April and that, due to there being four accused and many crime sites throughout Cambodia, the trial would last around a year and a half. He emphasized that while everyone recognizes that the trial needs to be conducted as quickly as possible, in particular because of the accused's advanced age, it also had to be fair. "If the accused were just arrested and then killed, the Court would be acting no differently than the Khmer Rouge."



Participants at the Forum.

One woman, who had also visited the ECCC and memorial sites, asked what maximum sentence the senior leaders could receive. Mr. Smith explained that neither Cambodia nor the UN supports the death penalty, so the maximum sentence would be life in prison. When asked if any more after the four accused would be prosecuted, Mr. Smith



ECCC Deputy International Prosecutor William Smith speaking to villagers.

said that that there was an investigation ongoing of five more suspects, and that would make 10 people prosecuted in all. The Co-Prosecutor's office believes that number is consistent with the Court's mandate and will not be seeking more indictments. Asked what will happen if the leaders die in prison, Mr. Smith said that the trial will continue with whoever survives. All the accused will be considered innocent until proven guilty.

The team then played “Tuol Sleng 1979,” graphic footage taken by the Vietnamese when they first discovered the detention center, but cut it short due to a bright glare on the screen and thus poor visibility for the audience. The team did not show “Behind the Walls of S-21” for the same reason. This was unfortunate since S-21 prison guard Him Huy was in attendance. He is interviewed in the documentary, and his presence would have been even more meaningful for the audience if they had seen him and S-21 survivors discussing the detention center on film. The audience was however shown a short clip of Duch apologizing and the president of the Trial Chamber reading his sentence.

After the screenings, Him Huy and S-21 child survivor Norng Chan Phal addressed the participants. Huy spoke about his work history under the Khmer Rouge and how he ended up chief of the guards at S-21. He also mentioned that his younger sibling had been killed there. He is happy about the verdict in the *Duch* case. He recalls the fear he had at the time that if he stayed with Duch much longer, he too would be killed. In his view, Duch was the one making the decisions at S-21.



Him Huy, former S-21 guard speaking to the villagers.



Norng Chan Phal, former S-21 child survivor, speaking to the villagers.

Chan Phal spoke about how his father had been sent to S-21 and he and his mother and brother been taken there a few months later. The audience was silent and listened closely to his words as he described how witnessing the mistreatment of his mother and how he survived near starvation until Vietnamese troops arrived. He suffered for a long time, but the daily business of making a living made him forget for a while. Because of the court, he found the murderer who killed his parents and had the opportunity to file a complaint. When the verdict against S-21 prison chief Duch was issued on July 26, he felt very happy to have participated in the trial. It was significant for him that Duch has confessed and asked that the door be kept open to forgive him, though he does not believe Duch confessed 100%.

Living Documents team leader Savina Sirik asked the audience what they thought about Him Huy and Norng Chan Phal attending the forum together. Does this show that cadres and victims can live together and reconcile? The six participants who spoke all said yes. One woman emphasized that Him Huy had not been a prison guard of his own free will but had been acting under orders. Another woman pointed out that Huy was not a senior leader, and that Chan Phal was not brought to Tuol Sleng because of him. A third woman thought they could live together, but noted that both still have sadness. If they live together they will continue to recall the suffering of that time, but if they live separately they can forget. Another



speaker said that she was also a victim as both her families had disappeared. For her, revenge never ends. People can live together and with education they can get along to build a future. Finally a fifth woman, the wife of the former KR commune chief, said that both had the same suffering, except one lost his whole family. She believes that if people think deeply they cannot take revenge. All people suffer but on different levels.

Savina Sirik, Living Documents Team Leader, meeting with the village chief Saroeun and other local authorities.

Regarding the Duch verdict, one man said that he hoped the ECCC can find justice for all Cambodians. He was against the reduction of the 35-year sentence to 19 years. Thirty-five would be okay because Duch would be more than 100 years at the end of it, but with the reduction he might get out of prison. To his mind, the ECCC must have followed rules in deriving 19 years. So, though he wants a longer sentence, he supports



Participants at the Forum.

the Court because he believes it is independent. He used to think that no court could bring justice for the KR, but the ECCC is the best court in Cambodia. Referring to Chan Phal, he said that he has some relief now because he has a family again. But with the tribunal, he has even more relief.

All participants received copies of the ECCC *Duch* verdict summary, DC-Cam's booklet entitled *Genocide: The Importance of Case 002, Searching for the Truth* magazine, and the textbook "A History of Democratic Kampuchea (1975-1979)."

Additional Viewpoints

Before and after the forum, several members of the community were interviewed about their backgrounds and their views of the ECCC. Stories of four of the interviewees are below.

Nhem Thoeun, male age 56



Nhem Thoeun, deputy village chief.

Nhem Thoeun lives in Chamkar Bei village, but was born in Banteay Meas district, Kampot province. In 1970, Nhem joined the revolution with the Khmer Rouge after Prince Sihanouk's call to help return him to power. By then, the Vietnamese helped the KR to invade and take over Lon Nol-controlled area. Nhem was with Vietnamese soldiers until 1971 when the KR revolution became more independent. Then he fully became a soldier of the KR, known at that time as the Revolutionary Army. Thoeun moved

around in Kampot province and fought against Lon Nol soldiers. After the KR victory in 1975, Thoeun was assigned to the southwest to protect the border. Then he served in Division 230.

Thoeun married his wife Hem Chi in 1976 in a marriage arranged by the KR. They were wed at the military base in his division commander and his colleagues' presence. They had a small party to celebrate the wedding. In 1977, he was promoted commander of a special regiment in Division 703 because he had a lot of battlefield experience, and was sent to fight with Vietnamese in Tai Ninh province. In 1978, the Vietnamese defeated his troops. They ran back to Cambodian territory, and he went to Phnom Srang, Kampong Speu province where he was injured in the leg. In total, he was injured five times by bombings and mines. He still has bomb fragments under the skin of his left leg and scars all over his body.

On the way to Kampot with the KR, he met his relatives who informed him about the deaths of his family members. Two of his brothers and a cousin were killed by the KR. He had never had a chance to visit his home and see his parents since joining the revolution. Hearing all the stories from his relatives, he felt sad and realized that all he had devoted to serving the KR was meaningless. The KR killed his family members while he was fighting for them. In 1979, he decided to defect to the government and returned to his hometown, Banteay Meas district, Kampot. He didn't have much land to cultivate but still grew rice.

He moved to live in Chamkar Bei village when Chhouk Rin (later convicted of the 1994 backpacker killings) asked him to return to Phnom Voar to help him fight against the KR. He and Chhouk Rin had served in the same division from 1976 to 1978 when the Vietnamese invaded. Even though Thoeun was far below his rank, they spoke frequently and knew each other quite well. Once Chhouk Rin learned Thoeun's whereabouts he asked Thoeun to move to Phnom Voar and serve with the government army to defeat those KR who hadn't yet defected. The government army was assisted by KR defectors to break KR strongholds. Chhouk Rin then gave Thoeun some land to build house and cultivate. He told Thoeun that he had been based at Phnom Voar since they were separated in 1978.

While Chhouk Rin was with the KR, he controlled the area today known as Chamkar Bei village. At that time, KR families farmed to earn a living. Chamkar Bei was the primary location for the Khmer Rouge forces. After Chhouk Rin and his followers defected in 1994 with 30 other soldiers, the government built houses for them on Phnom Voar land. Chhouk Rin wanted to defect because he had some kind of relationship with the government and thought that staying with the KR was useless.

According to Thoeun, when Chhouk Rin defected, he wanted to bring government troops to defeat the KR and pressured the KR to release the three hostages. However, the foreigners were killed before the government troops arrived. Chhouk Rin told him that when the KR captured the three he was injured and treated in hospital; therefore he didn't know about their arrest.

Nuon Paet controlled the whole area from the east side of the mountain to the other side in Dang Tung district, Kampot. Nuon Paet was the head of a mobile unit during the KR regime and had no military experience. He then was assigned to be military commander at Phnom Voar. Thoeun helped Chhouk Rin to defeat Nuon Paet using both "hot" and "cold" strategies. First, Thoeun negotiated with Nuon Paet, using radio communications to speak to him. Since they had known each other, Paet agreed to meet and Thoeun and others went to see him at an assigned location. When they

fought against Nuon Paet, they took over his area.¹ When Nuon Paet was defeated he escaped to Koh Sla. Chhouk Rin and Thoeun fought his troops at Koh Sla until he defected to the government. After Nuon Paet defected, he moved to live in Pailin. In total, around 90 KR families defected to the government at Phnom Voar.

At Phnom Voar there were a few top ranking officials whose names Thoeun knows. Nak today lives in Koh Sla. Chum Nuong, Ta Mao, Prak Cheu, and Srey Sam, live today in Chamkar Bei village. He isn't sure which positions they held. Today, there are only some 50 KR families left. Most of the KR at Phnom Voar are from Kampot, Takeo, and a few are from other provinces. Gradually, they sold their land and moved out of Chamkar Bei, buying cheaper plots Koh Sla. Some also returned to their home land.

During his life as a KR soldier, the only senior leader Thoeun met was Ta Mok, Southwest Zone secretary. He saw him during seminars conducted at a Zone base and some other times on the field when he was inspecting the army. Thoeun was disarmed last year when he became the deputy village chief. Thinking back to the past, he is so regretful that he served the KR because the regime caused a lot of death to the Cambodian people, including Thoeun's family members. Thoeun is very happy that this tribunal was established to try senior leaders. He thinks that those who acted under orders were innocent.

Chum Nuong, male age 65

Chum Nuong, 65 years old, lives in Chamkar Bei village and is a member of the Porng Toeuk commune council. His birthplace is Prean Tum village, Sre Chea commune, Kampong Trach district, Kampot province. Chum's wife, Hun Nuon, 60, was also born there. Chum has five children: three sons and two daughters.

During the Democratic Kampuchea period, Chum was Malis village chief in Angkor Chey village, Sre Chea commune. He was sent there after Sean, chief of Kampong Trach district, was sent to work in a new position in the Eastern Zone in 1978.

Chum said there were many "new people" (people who were evacuated from Phnom Penh) sent to live in his village. Almost of the new people were then supposedly



Chum Nuong

¹ Note: There is a discrepancy in his story as on one hand he claims to have negotiated successfully with Nuon Paet without using force, while at another point he said he joined with government forces to fight Nuon Paet and soldiers.

sent to new villages. In fact, the KR soldiers took the new people to be killed in a forest. Chum recalled with deep regret that among the new people was the family of his god brother, a Lon Nol major. The family was evacuated from Phnom Penh to live in Malis village. When the KR said they were taking Chum's god brother's family to the new village, his god brother gave to him a package of gold and precious stones. His god brother told him that if his family met with Chum again, they would be happy to share with Chum half of the package. However, if his family was killed in the new village, he wanted Chum to help organize a funeral ceremony for them following Khmer tradition. A few months after they were taken away, Chum's wife became afraid that Angkar (the authorities) knew about the gold and stones and she took them to the KR in Sre Chea commune. Chum said that he had helped a few people to escape to Vietnam when he knew that they would be taken to be killed by KR soldiers at Kampong Trach district.

When the Vietnamese soldiers entered Phnom Penh in 1979, Chum's family escaped to live at Phnom Voar. At that time, there were around 100 people there (30 soldiers and 70 administrators & civilians). Phouen was the first KR commander at Phnom Voar. He was killed by a Vietnamese soldier in 1980. After that, Ta Phon controlled civilian matters and Sokh was the military commander at Phnom Voar. In 1983-84, Ta Phon and Sokh were sent to Koh Sla to work with Sam Bith, the chief of zone number 4 (Southwestern Zone). Then in 1984, Phnom Voar was controlled by comrades Sat and Nuon Paet. Between 1985 and 1995, Nuon Paet and Yung Vorn were the commanders of the area. Chhouk Rin was the KR commander who was responsible for the battlefield of Kampong Trach district. Seth controlled Kampot (Toeuk Chou district) and Svay That controlled National road number 3.

In 1994, Chhouk Rin's group captured three foreigners from the railroad and took them to the KR office at Phnom Voar. Young Vorn and Auk Pon killed the three foreigners at Snach Prey at the west part of Sre Chea pagoda, because they were angry with Hun Sen's soldiers for coming to fight them at Phnom Voar. Young Vorn was killed by his subordinates in 1995, when some KR integrated with the government and other refused to join. Auk Pon was killed by his father in 1995.

Chum was second deputy of the transportation section of the Southwestern Zone between 1983 and 1995. After integrating with the government, he was assigned to be chief of Chamkar Bei village and a commander of Company 1 at Chamkar Daung, Kep province. From 2002 to present, has been an elected member of Porng Tirk commune council. Chum said he strongly supports the ECCC. He hopes that Cambodian people, especially the younger generation, can learn about the tribunal and DK regime.

Neak Phou, female age 51



Neak Phou

During the Democratic Kampuchea period, Neak Phou lived in Chhouk district, Kampot province, and worked in the youth unit. She hid her biography because her father was a policeman and the KR accused the family of being capitalist. But everything could not be hidden from the villagers, who killed her older brother because they knew he was highly educated. Her family survived the KR period because they work hard like other villagers. In 1992, her mother, her younger brother, and his

wife moved from Kampot to live at Phnom Voar but in 1996 her brother died fighting with Khmer Rouge against the government and his wife died from illness. Neak came to live in Chamkar Bei village in 1995 after the KR's integration because her family needed land on which to farm.

After liberation from the DK regime in 1979, Khmer Rouge cadres lived at Phnom Voar because they were afraid Vietnamese troops would capture the area. In 1979, Nuon Paet was the province chief of Kampot, Chhouk Rin was the Kampong Trach district chief, Chhuon Seth (deceased) was the Kampot district chief, Vorn was the Chhouk district chief and Chum Nuong was in charge of transporting food. A group of around 200 KR families lived in the Phnom Voar area. During the KR period, Nuon Paet was the regiment chief and Chhouk Rin was the unit chief in Touk Meas district, Kampot province. Phnom Voar had a separate military unit, police station, and district administration. People lived in the area but they dared not to buy food so the KR often bought food and other things for villagers. The situation in Phnom Voar was not safe because Khmer Rouge were always fighting against government soldiers. Neak said that the Khmer Rouge brought weapons from the border, but she did not know which border.

According to Neak, Chhouk Rin was the one who ordered the arrest the foreigners at the railway. She met the foreigners detained at the house and was assigned to work with the villagers while visiting her mother's house. Khmer Rouge wanted the government to exchange the foreigners for food and money, but the government disagreed and fought with Khmer Rouge, so they were sent to Nuon Paet and killed. Around one month later, Chhouk Rin was the first leader who integrated with the government because his group was not able to fight with the government. Chhouk Rin requested the other groups in Koh Sla and Kampot district to join with the government but Nuon Paet and ten other KR cadres refused to join. In 1996, they fought with Chhouk Rin and governments

soldiers. Later, the government appointed new officials to replace the KR, but some of them still work as village chiefs.

Sen Han, female age 55



Sem Han

Sen Han is a former chief of a KR women's squad. Her husband was a commune committee official in Daun Yay commune, Chhouk district, during the KR regime and passed away in 2006. Sen Han was born in Chrak Keh village, Dang Tung district, Kampot province. Soon after the coup against Prince Sihanouk in 1970, she decided to join the KR revolution in Sre Cheng village for several reasons. First, being 18, she was concerned about her safety when Lon Nol soldiers came to her

village. Some of her villagers were abducted by Lon Nol soldiers and that made her afraid. Second, she bore a grievance from the fighting between Lon Nol and KR soldiers that destroyed her house. According to Han, five other women in her village were also drafted into the revolution along with many other men.

Han was sent many places. First, she was sent to Kampong Speu province to undertake agricultural work under Tasun's supervision. Han was promoted to be chief of the squad and supervised three to six women. She believes she was promoted because of her hard work. After Kampong Speu, she moved to Chhouk district. In Chhouk the KR arranged for her to marry Suon Sith. She accepted the proposal. After the marriage, she lived apart from her husband for about three months, but she lived with him for years later on. Suon had been a monk at Unna Loam pagoda. His home town was in Chum Kiri district. Han delivered a baby girl named Sen Chantha in 1976. Her daughter still lives near her.

In 1977-1978² Han fled to Battambang when Vietnamese troops came. On the way to Battambang, she was viewed as a perpetrator by people in the Northwestern Zone. She said that things were much more difficult for her as she was asked to do more work and lived in fear. When describing her and her husband people said: "Preserved fruit is almost finished, the wet and fresh fruit will be next." This literally meant that she should have died as many others from the Southwest Zone did as they traveled north. Her

² She likely means 1978-1979.

husband suggested that they should travel separately from each other in order to save the family; however, Han refused and tried to find another way.

Han was then sent to Boeng Ponlei in Pursat province. Some villagers in Tuol Ponlei wanted to take revenge on her husband because he had been a commune committee member, while others did not want to kill him and defended him. Han defended her husband, who was arrested, and asked for him to be brought back. She sees herself as a victim.

Soon after the KR collapsed, she decided to travel back home alone, carrying her child, a newborn baby, and some rice. Her husband also returned to the village, but took a different way so they would not be recognized by the Vietnamese as KR cadre. When asked why she decided to come back to her home village, she said she was not afraid of anything as she did nothing wrong. The villagers welcomed her and gave her some food. However, life was difficult again due to the lack of food and other necessities.

Due to insecurity and fear, her husband fled to Phnom Voar to hide himself from the Vietnamese-installed government. After hearing that her husband was ill, she collected some herbs and brought them to him on the mountain. She then decided to live with him there, leaving her two children with her parents.

Phnom Voar was divided by regions and controlled by several former KR cadre, the most powerful one being Nuon Paet. During the interview she did not reveal that her husband had been a district chief in control of some parts of the mountain, but other villagers told the team. Han integrated into the government in 1994 and lived in Chamkar Daung, Damnak Chang Er district. Then she moved to Chamkar Bei village, where she lives now.

Han said that the KR regime was not good because they killed people barbarously. She recalled the story of her uncle who was shot. One of the villagers had borrowed her uncle's roof tiles before the KR time, and the villager did not return the same type of tile, so her uncle did not accept them. This disagreement became a wound that festered until the KR came. Villagers accused her uncle of being a spy and shot him in front of his house.

She visited the ECCC courtroom, S-21 prison and Choeung Ek killing fields several years ago. She thinks that the KR tribunal is right to seek justice for the Cambodian people, and a way of preventing the regime from happening again. She agrees with Duch's 35 year sentence. "If you did something wrong you have to take responsibility."

Han did not know much about the arrest of the three foreigners in the 1990s. She said she only heard about it. Nor does she remember the chronology of events clearly. When recalling her story, she sometimes got the years confused, as she admitted. She wept when recalling her experience on the way from Battambang, and tended to emphasize her life in 1978 and 1983 at Phnom Voar rather than her roles and duties during the KR era. Today, she is still seen by many villagers in Chamkar Bei as someone responsible for crimes during the DK period.

Him Huy, male age 53



Him Huy, former S-21 prison guard and Norng Chan Phal, former S-21 child survivor at the forum.

Him Huy, the former chief of guards at S-21 prison, joined the KR at age 12 and was assigned to the prison when he was 18. Among other things, he was responsible for loading 20 or more prisoners on trucks each night and transporting them to Choeung Ek, where he would methodically double check their identity before sending them to the pits outside to be executed by a pipe to the neck. Of the estimated 14,000 people who died there, he claims to have killed only five personally, as part of a test of loyalty to his supervisors.

After the forum, Him Huy spoke for the first time about a neighbor of his who, like him, had been a guard at Tuol Sleng. To this day, his parents do not like Huy, and for 25 years accused him of being responsible for the death of a second son, who disappeared during the regime. They still do not like him even though the son returned one day, having made a new life for himself in Japan. Huy, whose own brother was killed at Tuol Sleng by Duch, said bitterly that the family is Vietnamese, and thus he could have had the prison guard son killed at any time, if he had told Duch. This is the first time information has come to light that a Vietnamese guard worked at Tuol Sleng.

Conclusion

The necessity for an outdoor screening due to the absence of any buildings large enough to hold more than 20 persons was unfortunate as the films were difficult to view and therefore had less impact. The seating area also became hot as the morning went on and shade became scarcer. Because of this many people stood up during the film screenings and left with their restless children before the end of the forum.

Nevertheless, there was a large turnout for a small and somewhat remote village. The audience knew of the Court, but not many details, so the forum provided an opportunity to educate them about Case 001 and start them thinking about the next trial. The participation of Deputy Co-Prosecutor William Smith, Him Huy, and Norng Chan Phal increased the impact of the discussion and helped focus the comments on problems of survivor reconciliation. The team also gathered new information about KR history in the area, and collected the names and locations of cadre to contact on future trips.

About the Living Documents Project

The Living Document's Program seeks to increase the participation of ordinary Cambodians in the work of the ECCC, help them better understand DK history and the Court's legal processes, and provide them with an opportunity to see Court proceedings and to speak to Court officials. Since ECCC proceedings began in 2007, the Program has brought around 10,000 people, including 1500 commune chiefs and nearly 400 Cham Muslim religious leaders, to Phnom Penh to receive legal training, observe proceedings at the ECCC, and participate in discussions about what they have seen. In addition, the Program holds forums about the ECCC around Cambodia.



Left: Outreach's team members with Cham-Muslim children in Trapeang Ropov village, Kampot province. Right: Bunthan Meas, DC-Cam's staff member distributing ECCC's Duch Verdict summary and DC-Cam's outreach publications to villagers in a local market near Chamkar Bei village, Pong Toek commune, Damnak Chang'er district, Kep province.

Media Coverage

The Phnom Voar forum was covered by Italian television and *Reaksmey Kampuchea*.

THE LIVING DOCUMENTS PROJECT
http://www.dccam.org/Projects/Living_Doc/Living_Documents.htm