

FACT SHEET on "S-21"

Tuol Sleng Prison

Written by: Dacil Keo; Compiled by: Nean Yin
December 6, 2010

Following the odor of decayed flesh, on January 10, 1979 Vietnamese soldiers drove towards a barbed wired compound that served as the Khmer Rouge regime's highest level security center. At the security center, coded named *S-21* ("*S*" for *Santebal*, the Khmer word meaning "state security organization" and "21" for the walky-talky number of former prison chief Nath), prisoners were brought in often handcuffed to be photographed, interrogated, tortured, and executed.

The interrogators based their technique on a list of 10 security regulations which included, "While getting lashes or electrification you must not cry at all." Although prisoners often had no idea why they had been arrested, interrogators forced them to confess their crimes. If they did not confess, they would be tortured. However after confessing, they were marked for execution. Initially, prisoners were killed on the grounds of the prison, but as the mass and stench of the corpses rapidly increased and became unbearable, prisoners were then transported en mass to a nearby open field known as *Boeung Choeung Ek* ("Crow's Feet Pond") to be killed. Often, they were made to dig their own graves or the graves of other prisoners and then killed using rudimentary weapons.

The Tuol Sleng prison, *S-21*, located in Phnom Penh, Cambodia was a microcosm of the terror, paranoia, and brutality that took place across the country under the reign of the Communist Party of Kampuchea from April 17, 1975 to January 7, 1979. The shocking numbers commonly associated with the prison- 14,000 killed and 7 survivors- rank the prison as one of the most lethal in the 20th century. These numbers however have been disputed by scholars and experts; and recently the hybrid Khmer Rouge Tribunal offered their figures based on its criminal case involving Kaing Geuk Eva, alias Duch, the head of *S-21*.

The number of prisoners taken to *S-21* ranges from the Tribunal's conservative estimate of at least 12,272 to some expert's figure of approximately 20,000. The number of survivors has received less scrutiny however with most of Western media generally accepting the figure of 7 survivors. This figure of 7 has been repeated for over thirty years now, giving *S-21* its notoriously brutal image. The origin of this

numbers comes from a 1981 film titled, *Die Angkar* ("The Angkar"), produced by Studio H&S of the former East Germany. In this film, the photograph of 7 survivors of S-21 was shown. There is some speculation that 7 survivors were shown to parallel the 7th day of January, the "day of victory" in which Vietnamese forces overthrew the Khmer Rouge regime.

After several years of research however, DC-Cam estimates that at least **179 prisoners** were released from 1975-1978 and approximately **23 survived** after Vietnam ousted the Khmer Rouge regime on January 7, 1979. The release status of the 179 prisoners (of which 100 were soldiers) is based on numerous Khmer Rouge documents and interviews compiled primarily by Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum senior archivist Mr. Nean Yin. Most of the 179 who were released have disappeared and only a few are known to have survived after 1979. Of the 23 who survived after 1979, more than half have disappeared or have died since. Several of the survivors who are alive today have recently made the news: Norng Chanphal for being a witness for *Case 001* of the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, Vann Nath and Chum Mei for being featured in documentary films, and Bou Meng for having a published about him.

The names below (surname first) provides the most up-to-date record of survivors of S-21, both those released before 1979 and those who survived after Vietnam entered the country. If known, a person's alternate name or nickname is also given in parenthesis.

Child Survivors who were found by Vietnamese soldiers on January 10, 1979.¹

1. Makara (full name unknown)²
2. *Name unknown*³
3. Norng Chanly
4. Norng Chanphal⁴
5. Socheat (full name unknown)

Survivors who are alive today

6. Bou Meng⁵

¹ The discovery of these five child survivors was captured on video footage by Ho Chi Min City Television (HTV). Two of the five child survivors, brothers Norng Chanphal and Norng Chanly, publically confirmed their S-21 imprisonment status.

² Makara was named by a Vietnamese soldier after the Khmer word for January, when Vietnam invaded Cambodia.

³ This prisoner, a baby, died upon discovery by Vietnamese soldiers on January 10, 1979.

⁴ Norng Chanphal was a witness for Case 001 of the Khmer Rouge tribunal involving head of S-21, Duch.

⁵ Bou Meng is the topic of Huy Vannak's book titled, "Bou Meng: A Survivor from Khmer Rouge Prison S-21, Justice for the Future, Not Just for the Victims," published by Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2010.

7. Chum Manh (Chum Mei)⁶
8. Heng Nath (Vann Nath)⁷
9. Nhem Sal⁸
10. Touch Tem⁹

Survivors who died after 1979

11. Eam Chann
12. Phann Than Chann
13. Ruy Nea Kung
14. Ung Pech

Survivors who disappeared (witnesses reported that these men were alive after 1979, but since disappeared)¹⁰

15. Dy Phon¹¹
16. Eng (full name unknown)¹²
17. Leng (full name unknown)¹³
18. Mok Sun Khun
19. Pol Touch
20. Tuon (full name unknown)

Survivors who are thought to be alive, but status uncertain

21. *Name unknown*¹⁴
22. Pheach Yoeun
23. Sok Sophat

Prisoners (from Khmer Rouge army *division 420*) released between 1975-1978 before Vietnam entered Cambodia¹⁵ (they have since disappeared)

24. Bo Boeun (Phal)
25. Chan Chan
26. Chan Chhoeun (Than)
27. Chea Va (Tva)
28. Chhay Sei
29. Chhim Hin (Sei)

⁶ Chum Mei was featured in DC-Cam's documentary film, "Behind the Walls of S-21: Oral Stories from Tuol Sleng Prison" (2007) and Rithy Pan's documentary film, "S-21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine."

⁷ Vann Nath was featured in Rithy Pan's documentary film, "S-21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine."

⁸ Person claims S-21 prisoner status, but there are no supporting documents

⁹ Person claims S-21 prisoner status, but there are no supporting documents

¹⁰ Interview with Heng Nath aka Vann Nath

¹¹ Dy Phon's confession at S-21, cited in Irene Sokha's article in *Searching for the Truth* (Jan. 2000).

¹² It is possible that this is the same person as #60 (Khuon Tai Eng) or #145 (Khiev Eng) on the list.

¹³ It is possible that this is the same person as #62 (Kim Leng) and #176 (Roeun Leng) on the list.

¹⁴ DC-Cam was informed of a former S-21 prisoner currently living in Ratanak Kiri province but there are no supporting documents

¹⁵ The status of these prisoners has been confirmed through DC-Cam's archives

30. Chhoeung Soeung
31. Chhum Bun
32. Chhum Than (Cheat)
33. Chin Seng Eam (Voar)
34. Chum Chan (Khem)
35. Chum Mey (Vorn)¹⁶
36. Chuob Meng Uor (Chev)
37. Chuon Srei
38. Di Don (Vy)
39. Dib Thau (Rin)
40. Dieb Phan
41. Duong Chheng Pat (Rit)
42. Duong Sambat (Chum)
43. Ean Hun (Hak)
44. Hai Run (Rin)
45. Ham Cheum (Khom)
46. Hang Han (Huon)
47. Hang Lay
48. Hem Muon (Muon)
49. Heng Ruon
50. Heng (Nea)
51. Hing Muon (Vuth)
52. Ho Phan (Phat)
53. Hun Uy (Chhoeun)
54. Huon Samphai (Muon)
55. Huot Sok (Sokha)
56. Im Boeun (Ly)
57. It Aun
58. Keo Lonh Ret
59. Khem Siem Muoy (Peou)
60. Khuon Tai Eng (Lan)
61. Khut Krauch
62. Kim Leng (Heng)
63. Lach Saom
64. Lach Sarun (Van)
65. Lim Uong (Vin)
66. Lom Lon
67. Mak Thoeun (Thon)
68. Mam Vin (Bol)
69. Meas Lan (Loeun)
70. Meas Noeun (Theng)
71. Meas Set

¹⁶ Not to be confused with Chum Mei #7 on the list)

72. Meun Chin
73. Miech Phon (Phal)
74. Neou Nan (Ol)
75. Nhem Chhon
76. Noem Nem (Sim)
77. Nok Nan (Nem)
78. Nou Chhoeun (Sit)
79. Nouv Samneang (Van)
80. Oeur Phat (Roeun)
81. Pak Thiev (Thon)
82. Pan Kung
83. Pat Fy (Yang)
84. Pech Soam
85. Pen Tak (Van)
86. Phal Nhoeun (Khan)
87. Phauk Sam (Sim)
88. Phon Sun (Srun)
89. Poan Pin
90. Prak Samnang (Tep)
91. Prik Chhon (Rung)
92. Prum An (Rai)
93. Prum Leap (Yan)
94. Sam Mak (Rin)
95. Sam Rith (Hang)
96. San Mab (Ma)
97. Seng Hun (Hat)
98. Seng Yan (Oeun)
99. Siek En (Kren)
100. Soam Phon (Nan)
101. Soeng Tha (Vorn)
102. Srei Yun (Sdaeng)
103. Suon Oeun (Der)
104. Suos Ram (Pheap)
105. Suy At
106. Suy Kim Sat (San)
107. Suy Than (Sim)
108. Svay Kenh (La)
109. Te Na (Thy)
110. Tep Sary (Ran)
111. Thab Ruon
112. Thi Than
113. Thlang Rin (Rum)
114. Uk Van

115. Um Voar (Yi)
116. Un Sao (Sen)
117. Van Ngauv (Pan)
118. Ven Chamroeun (Yen)
119. Yan Yeun
120. Yang Khe (Seang)
121. Yem Yoeun
122. You Han (Phal)
123. Yu Mon

Prisoners released from 1975-1978 before Vietnam entered Cambodia¹⁷ (only a few are known to have survived while the vast majority has disappeared)

124. Beng Pum
125. Bou Ngorn Ly
126. Cheng Sron
127. Chhean Vik
128. Chheang Pech
129. Chheang Praing
130. Chhem Chan
131. Chhiev Sun Heng
132. Chhim Pauch
133. Chou Pin
134. Dai Peng
135. Ea Chhai Pauv
136. Ea Ho¹⁸
137. Ea Kok
138. Han Nhauv
139. Hem Sambath
140. Hin Chi
141. Hong Chin
142. Ik Chheng Eang
143. Im Phal
144. Im Saom
145. Khiev Eng
146. Khlauk Sran
147. Khon Kuoy
148. Kim Sruo
149. Kong Van Tha
150. Kong Van Than
151. Kruy Cheat
152. Kry Sok Heng

¹⁷ The status of these prisoners has been confirmed through DC-Cam's archives

¹⁸ Ea Ho filed a civil party complaint to the Khmer Rouge tribunal through DC-Cam.

153. Lao Seng Kim
154. Long Neng
155. Men Ol
156. Meun Yeng
157. Mi Sri
158. Min Kan
159. Muo Pech
160. Muong Ny
161. Muy Ruos
162. Ngjin Hon
163. Nhem Man
164. Noeu Pheap
165. Pa Chhun Try
166. Pao Chheng
167. Pech Muom
168. Pech Phuong
169. Phai Yim
170. Phan Yoeun
171. Pheng Oeun
172. Pong Pan
173. Prach Torn
174. Proeung Si leang
175. Ring An
176. Roeun Leng
177. Sa Ke
178. Sa Sam Ang
179. Sam Sas
180. San Khmao
181. San Song
182. Sao Voeun
183. Saom Song Heang
184. Saut Chhorn
185. Seang Kry
186. Seth Kalkhann¹⁹
187. Sim Yeng

¹⁹ Seth Kalkhann, who has an Arab father and Lao mother, was sent to S-21 with his family and an Indian family on April 11, 1976. The published report, "People's Revolutionary Tribunal Held in Phnom Penh for the Trial of Genocide Crime of The Pol-Pot-Ieng Sary Clique (August 1979)" (Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1990), gives an arrest date for Seth (April 11, 1976) but not an execution date. DC-Cam's senior researcher Dany Long discovered and interviewed him on August 27, 2008. In the interview, Seth states that he was imprisoned for a month, made to write an autobiography, and beaten. His family was kept in a separate room. After a four hour meeting with Khmer Rouge cadres, Seth and his family were sent back to Prek Dach commune, where they had been evacuated to on July, 1975.

188. Sin In Ny
189. Sla Dek
190. Ta Chi Veng
191. Tao Kim Huy
192. Thong Nget
193. Tim Kim Eang
194. Tim Sy
195. Ting Hai
196. Tit Chuon
197. Tit Kan
198. Try Chak
199. Try Chea
200. Van Yeng
201. Ven Sovan Ny
202. Yun Loeun