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# CHAM MUSLIMS

Justice for the Cham Muslims under the Democratic Kampuchea Regime

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**Sman Sleh aka Leng Sokha, Roun Math aka Roun Savy,  
Sa Math aka Savoeun, and Man Tech  
4-7**

Sman Sleh, Roun Math, Sa Math, and Man Tech knew one another from childhood. The first three lived together in Po Tonle Kraom village and Man Tech lived in nearby Cham Leu village.<sup>116</sup> All four joined the Khmer Rouge military and were arrested separately. Under Khmer Rouge interrogation, each confessed to treason, and three of the men implicated one or more of the others. All four were sent to S-21 and later killed.<sup>117</sup>

In November 1971, at the age of 16, Sman Sleh became a Khmer Rouge soldier and in 1975 was assigned to Unit 99 of Division 703, which was based at Ta Khmau.<sup>118</sup> Before 1971 he and his mother lived in Po Tonle Kraom village, Koh Thom subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province. His father Sman died during the Sangkum Reastr Niyum era, and his mother Mah died after 1979. Four of his surviving

<sup>116</sup> Author's interviews with:

Ruon Nop, age 55, elder sister of Roun Math, at Cham Leu village, Prek Thmei subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, 8 November 1999.

Lah Sarah, age 48, sister-in-law of Sa Math, Cham Leu village, Prek Thmei subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, 10 November 1999.

Sman Nop, age 67, elder sister of Sman Sleh, at Phum Cham Leu, Prek Thmei subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, 9 November 1999.

Math Dullah, friend of Man Tech, op. cit.

Cham Leu village is across the river from Po Tonle Kraom village.

<sup>117</sup> Many Khmer Rouge letters maintained in the Documentation Center of Cambodia archives describe the transport of people from various units to S-21 (Tuol Sleng). For example, on 30 May 1977, Men of Division 502 wrote a letter sending people to Duch: "On the evening of 28 May 77, I sent 27 traitors with rebel connections in Divisions 310 and 450. At 7 or 8 pm this evening I requested to send four more that are connections of 25 old ones. At 10 or 11 pm this evening I sent seven more contacts of Mao and Mut. Yesterday Brother said [I might] take a copy of the confession of Mao, and if Angkar does not object I do request that document for use in finding other enemies." On 3 April 1977, San of Division 310 wrote to Duch, "Request to hand over seven persons to you, Comrade. As decided by Brother Nath. So please accept them..." On 1 June 1977 the port at Kampong Som sent a letter to Duch: "Today, we request to send Vang to you."

<sup>118</sup> *The Confession of Sman Sleh*, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D02685.

siblings live in Cham Leu village, Prek Thmei subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province.<sup>119</sup>

Before 1973 Roun Math helped his father and mother fish at Po Tonle Kraom village. He became a Khmer Rouge soldier on 11 July 1973 at the age of 19 and was a combatant in Platoon 732, Company 73, Battalion 117 of Division 703.<sup>120</sup> On 4 January 1974 Math worked for Tum, chairman of Office 13, and went to Office 04 in April 1975. He was trained as a driver at Office 90 in May 1975 and worked in that capacity at the Office of State Commerce beginning in June of that year. In September 1975 Math was arrested and sent to Prison 43.<sup>121</sup> His parents, Sop Roun and Ly Chip, died during the Pol Pot era. Today his siblings live at Cham Leu village.<sup>122</sup>

Sa Math lived with his parents, El Sa and Sor, at Po Tonle Kraom village. On 27 April 1975, at the age of 17, he became a Khmer Rouge soldier, where he served in Unit 99 of Division 703.<sup>123</sup> Four of his siblings now live in Cham Leu village.<sup>124</sup>

Before he became a Khmer Rouge soldier some time prior to 1975, Man Tech lived at Cham Leu village. In March 1975, at the age of 23, Tech was with Office 04.<sup>125</sup> Today his parents and siblings live in Cham Leu village.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Author's interview with Sman Nop, op. cit.

<sup>120</sup> *The Confession of Sman Sleb*, op.cit.

Author's interview with Him Huy, Anlong San village, Prek Sdei subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, 4 January 2002.

<sup>121</sup> *The Confession of Roun Math*, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D02674.

<sup>122</sup> Author's interview with Roun Nop, op. cit.

<sup>123</sup> *The Confession of Sa Math*, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D02676.

<sup>124</sup> Author's interview with Roun Adikah, age 41, sister-in-law of Sa Math, at Cham Leu village, Prek Thmei subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, 10 November 1999.

<sup>125</sup> *The Personal History of Man Tech*, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number K02614.

<sup>126</sup> Author's interview with Math Dullah, op. cit., 8 November 1999.

## The Arrests

Sman Sleh was arrested at 8:30 pm in July 1975 at a Khmer Rouge military post near Krapeuhar pagoda in Ta Khmau district, Kandal province. No source could be located that states whether Sleh was held in another prison before being sent to S-21. His confession was not recorded by S-21 interrogators, as the following note appears in the upper margins: “Approved for transport to M21 [Munti 21, or Office 21] because of too much involvement with networks, creating the opinion that his parents and birth siblings are involved with the Cham,” dated 17 December 1975.<sup>127</sup> This note indicates that on 17 December 1975, Sman Sleh was sent from some unidentified prison to S-21.

Fellow KR soldier Sleh Ly recalled Sman Sleh’s arrest: “During one evening in July 75 about 8:30 pm, myself, Sman Sleh, and Sa Math were sleeping in the same mosquito net in a house west of Krapeuhar pagoda. The roof was galvanized tin, a hut. I saw five or six persons dressed in black with *kramas* [scarfs] around their necks, each carrying weapons. They called the group [squad] leader outside the house. There were twelve persons in the house. They grabbed Sman Sleh out from the net (the one I was sleeping in as well) and carried him out through the door. I saw them kick Sman Sleh head over heels and pitch him into a vehicle.” Ly added that “I saw it clearly ... And not only Sman Sleh was arrested that round, but five Khmer as well were arrested.” Sleh Ly continued, “After the arrests, the unit commander called everybody to a meeting and told us not to lead one another into rebelling and running back home... be careful that [we] would be like those five ... Sman Sleh was arrested, and the unit commander told me that Sman Sleh had led my group to run away back home. But in fact we all knew that no one had led anyone to do anything, because it was really hard in that place.”<sup>128</sup>

Roun Math was arrested in September 1975 from a state commerce transport unit in which he was a truck driver delivering supplies to various offices. His confessions reveal that the vehicle parking area for his unit was located “in Tuol Kork, 500 meters south of the TV antenna” and his vehicle was “a Chinese four wheeler.” Immediately after his arrest, Math was detained in Office (Munti) 43,<sup>129</sup> and was later transferred to S-21. Although the date of his transfer to S-21 is unclear, there is a note from the S-21 document examiner on Math’s confession “approving the imprisonment” dated 3 January 1976 and another note to “ask for clarification” dated 10 March 1976,<sup>130</sup> indicating that Math arrived at S-21 on or before 3 January 1976 and was still held there on 10 March 1976.

<sup>127</sup> *The Confession of Sman Sleh*, op. cit.

<sup>128</sup> Author’s interview with Sleh Ly, age 42, former KR soldier with Sman Sleh and Sa Mat, at Slap Leng village, Svay Rumpea subdistrict, Boset district, Kampong Speu province, 22 March 2000.

<sup>129</sup> *The Confession of Roun Math*, op. cit.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

Soh Min recalled the story of Roun Math's arrest. While he and others were carrying merchandise at Ta Khmau, a friend of Roun Math whispered to Min: "Roun Math drove his vehicle into a light pole and they [the Khmer Rouge] put him in prison." Min could not remember the name of the person who told him.<sup>131</sup>

Roun Nop, the elder sister of Roun Math, stated, "My younger brother Math was taken by the Khmer Rouge to be a soldier. He was gone about a month when he became ill and was staying at the hospital (I don't remember the name of the hospital). My mother and father found out and asked him [the chief doctor] to allow him to rest at home and also see a Khmer traditional herbalist. When he had improved a little, the military commander came and took him back. This time he fled back home again for five days, but they were after him and he ran off to Po Tonle where village chief Him Leh helped hide him. Math was at Po Tonle for about three months when they caught him and took him back to be a soldier again. In 1975 he fled back home once again, then he was taken to the Unit again; since that time all news ended."<sup>132</sup>

Sa Math was arrested in November 1975.<sup>133</sup> Although Sleh Ly and Sa Math were together on the evening of Sman Sleh's arrest, Ly did not know of the arrest of Math: "After Sman Sleh's arrest they [the unit command] separated Sa Math and myself, and Man Tech was separated from the time we got to Koh Khsach Tonlea," said Saleh Ly.<sup>134</sup>

Math's confession states he was arrested from Unit 99 of Division 703, deployed at "Ta Khmau" (there is no clarification as to the exact position) and held in the Division's reeducation office.<sup>135</sup> His confession states: "done on 17th day of the 11th

<sup>131</sup> Author's interview with Soh Min, 44, former KR soldier, at Hanuman village, Kandoeng subdistrict, Bati district, Takeo province, 23 March 2000.

<sup>132</sup> Author's interview with Roun Nop, op. cit.

<sup>133</sup> *The Confession of Sa Math*, op. cit.

<sup>134</sup> Author's interview with Sleh Ly, op. cit.

<sup>135</sup> Author's interviews with Muy Tech Leng, age 47, at Baren Kraom village and Mao Nil, age 47, former KR soldier in Division 703, at Village 8; in Svay Prateal subdistrict, Sa-ang district, Kandal province, 13 March 2000. Leng and Nil revealed that Division 703 had more important responsibilities than other divisions and was trusted by the CPK (Communist Party of Kampuchea). The division was created in early 1971 as Division 12, which later became Division 703, and first operated in Koh Thom district and part of Sa-ang district. After 17 April 75, the division had the mission of guarding Phnom Penh. The two men explained that in early 1975 the division was commanded by Nath and Pin. Sim Mel aka Man (a Cham who was imprisoned at S-21) was Nath's messenger. Leng and Nil did not know of changes inside Division 703 after 1975, since they were sent to the Vietnamese border.

Ea Meng-Try's interview with Cheam Soeu aka Soeu, age 38, former Division 703 soldier, at Sapor village, Ta Ches subdistrict, Kampong Tralach district, Kampong Chhnang province, 20 February 2000. Soeu stated that "Division 703 had the mission of guarding the perimeter of Phnom Penh, especially at important points such as S-21, the Monivong bridge, Tuol Tumpung and Boeng Trabek."

Ea Meng-Try's interview with Thlong La, age 38, former soldier in DK Division 502, at Krang La-vea village, Anhchanh Rong subdistrict, Boribo district, Kampong Chhnang province, 6 February 2000. He stated that two divisions in Phnom Penh had city security missions, the 502nd and 703rd. La stated that the commander of the 502nd was Comrade Thy.

month of 1976, at the reeducation office 703,<sup>136</sup> where Nuon Chea was in charge.<sup>137</sup> Later Math was sent to S-21.

Man Tech was the last to be arrested, on 17 June 1978 at S-21 Kho (aka Munti 24). Many Khmer Rouge documents show that S-21 Kho was a branch of S-21.<sup>138</sup> S-21 Kho's chairman was Huy,<sup>139</sup> sometimes known to Khmer Rouge cadre as "Ricefield Huy" (Huy Sre), while S-21 was commanded by Duch.<sup>140</sup> Before his arrest Tech was a *yuthachon nesat* (fisherman combatant) at Munti 24 (S-21 Kho). After his arrest he was

<sup>136</sup> *The Confession of Sa Math*, op. cit.

<sup>137</sup> Author's interview with Him Huy, op. cit. This Nuon Chea was not the Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea.

<sup>138</sup> A Documentation Center of Cambodia brochure states that, "there were two other branches of S-21. One, S-21 Kha, was located at Ta Khmau, Kandal province, south of Phnom Penh. The second, S-21 Kho, was at Prey Sar [an old prison of the French protectorate era] west of Phnom Penh in Khan Dongkao, Phnom Penh, which was also known as Office 24 and was used as a reeducation camp. Furthermore, S-21 Kho had the mission of supplying S-21 with food."

Many S-21 Prisoner Execution Lists in the Documentation Center of Cambodia archives show the relationship between S-21 and S-21 Kho. For example, one S-21 Prisoner Execution List signed by S-21 deputy Hor on 23 July 1977, notes that "List of prisoners [to be] smashed, section of Brother Huy Sre," meaning the prisoners came from S-21 Kho (Huy Sre). The list also shows that Hor ordered the execution of 18 prisoners and 160 children on 23 July 1977.

*The Confession of Sim Mel aka Man*, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D02678, notes that Mel was sent from S-21 to farm rice at Office 24 (S-21 Khor).

<sup>139</sup> Huy (or Huy Sre) was chief of S-21 Kho or Office 24. Originally named Nun Huy, he was born in March 1951 at Tonle Bati village, Bati district, Takeo province. Huy joined the revolution on 7 April 1970. In the Sangkukreasnyum era Huy was a farmer. His wife Prok Samuth (aka Prok Khoeun) was born in 1953 at Rumchek village, Thnaot subdistrict, Bati district, Takeo province. She joined the revolution in March 1972. In 1977 the Party removed Prok Khoeun from the military staff hospital to S-21. Huy's father was Nun Ros and his mother El Nan; they lived at Tonle Bati. *Personal History of Prok Khoeun*, 1977, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number K08273.

Many prisoner execution lists at the Documentation Center of Cambodia were signed by Huy Sre. For example, on 10 May 1977, he ordered the killing of 21 prisoners. On 7 April 1977, Huy signed two prisoner execution lists. The first list contains the names of 18 prisoners and an annotation that, "request only 4 prisoners to be interrogated and the rest must be smashed." The second list contains the names of 11 pregnant female prisoners and a number of unnamed children.

Another KR cadre at S-21 was also named Huy (formerly named You Huy, now Him Huy). He was born in 1954 at Kbal Chroy village, Pothi Ban subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province. He joined the revolution on 7 October 1972 and had been a soldier, section leader, deputy squad leader, squad leader, and company commander, and was later made responsible for the defense unit at S-21. Huy's father was You Him and his mother Seam Cheu. He had eight siblings. *Personal History of You Huy*, 10 November 1977, Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D00016. Today, Huy lives in Anlong San village, Prek Sdei subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province.

<sup>140</sup> Duch, aka Kaing Guek Iev, or Kiev, was born in 1942, although his ID card claims he was born in 1943. His father was Vietnamese and his mother of Chinese extraction. They lived in Stong district, Kampong Thom province. Duch was always at the top of his class in mathematics and ranked first in the national mathematics examination. In 1961, he studied for baccalaureate I. During 1964-1965, he taught physics, chemistry, mathematics, and Khmer literature at a school in Skun district, Kampong Cham province.

In 1966, Duch was arrested and imprisoned until 1970, when Lon Nol came to power and released all prisoners in the country. Duch then moved to Unnalaom pagoda where he taught again. During this period, he was known as a Khmer

transferred to “house number 31, large cell number 4, small cell number 1” in S-21.<sup>141</sup>

Rouge leader. He was close to Sok Thuok, aka Vorn Vet, and Khieu Samphan. His Unnalaom teacher, who was close to Samdech Preah Sanga Raja Chuon Nate, told Duch, “Don’t enter politics.” Duch answered, “Lok ta, do politics to liberate people, to help people.” In 1973, he left to go into hiding in the forest, bringing with him many young people from Unnalaom. (Phat Kosal and Vanthan Peou Dara’s interviews with Kim Sour, former student of Duch and Learn Sarun, former close friend of Duch, 7 July 1999.)

Duch was known as a talkative person who made jokes, and not as a cruel man. He did not like to argue, and if anyone insulted him, he did not respond. If someone were to physically assault him, he would console his adversary. And the angrier he became, the more he smiled. He was close to his students, who loved him, and did not gamble, womanize, or drink (but he did chain smoke).

In 1971, Duch became chief of Office 13 in Tumneap village, Amleang subdistrict, Thpong district, Kampong Speu province, which was then in a liberated zone. Report 65/75, Issue 18 of the *Khmer Republic*, dated 22 January 1975 (Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number L00562), talks about “Amleang detention office,” with Duch as its chief and Chan as its deputy chief: “both were brutal.” A former prisoner at Office 13, for example, testified that a prisoner named Son was burned with a torch there, and then had rubber dripped all over his body. Vanthan Peou Dara’s interview with Ham Im, at Sdok Saat village, Meanchey subdistrict, Udong district, Kampong Speu province, 13 July 2001, in *Searching for the truth*, Number 22, October 2001, pp. 21–24.

Office 13 was disbanded after April 17, 1975, and Duch and his deputy, together with other cadres, were sent to work at the newly established detention office in Phenom Penh. Ibid. Duch was made chief of this office, which was called S-21. While there, he read and/or signed thousands of confessions and gave orders for follow-up and interrogation. The earliest note believed to have been written by Duch was the 28 July 1975 confession of Ke Chhang, where Duch wrote: “Take political measures and always be guarded, do not let [him] die, torture in a way that won’t leave a scar.” Two days later, Duch wrote, “take heavy torture measures because it is decided 100% that he has a rank between first lieutenant and captain; he is a long-time spy.” The Confession of Ke Chheang, Car and Train Mechanic, Arrested 28 April 1975, TSL K-125. Ke Chheang was killed on 16 September 1975. The 30 August 1975 confession of Nhep Dim aka Ong Chhorn, age 53, also bears handwriting that is exactly like that of Duch: “This contemptible person is so stubborn; beat him until he is unconscious.” Documents related to Duch, TSL Catalogue Number N-212.

Duch was also involved in torture. A note believed to be written by him appears on the confession of a woman named Prum Sam Nieng: “This contemptible person spoke out too little! No need to summarize! I did not explain anything. I beat her with 30 lashes of a whip and pushed her to write again. This afternoon, if I am not satisfied, I will assign a person to torture again and write again. This person is not doing well at this moment.” TSL Catalogue Number P-153.

There are many letters from units handing over prisoners to Duch. For example, a letter from Battalion 414 states: “To Dear Comrade Duch: Request to hand over 17 persons to you, so kindly take them, they all joined the CIA according to the confession of Meun Khan sent 26-4-77.” Documentation Center of Cambodia Catalogue Number D01078.

The last known note written and signed by Duch is dated 23 December 1978. It appears on the confession of a prisoner named Kim Sok: “Respectful Brother, this issue of hiding the Vietnamese happened in Region 25 and relates to the father of Eang (Huy’s father). The important person left is this Tring. Follow up on his activities. I request that I won’t keep this person long. Once I can learn about his activities and contacts, I request that I will take [kill] him.” The Confession of Kim Sok, Chief of Unit 11, Office 24, TSL Catalogue Number K-346. On 7 January 1979, Duch escaped from Phnom Penh. He was arrested on 10 May 1999 and today is in a military court prison pending a hearing.

<sup>141</sup> *The Personal History of Man Tech*, op. cit.

Confessions

The confessions of all four men were found at Tuol Sleng Museum (the confessions of Sman Sleh and Sa Math were not made in S-21, but were sent along with them to S-21). Sman Sleh’s confession was 6 pages, Roun Math’s was 74 pages, and Sa Math’s 8 pages. Tech’s was only a one-page personal history, not actually a confession. The table below shows the “treasonous connections” each claimed, including their friends from the village and Khmer Rouge military comrades.

Friends Implicated		Other “Conspirators”		
		The names of those still living are in bold; Names followed by an* were interviewed for this study		
Roun Math	Sman Sleh	<b>Kaly Hak*</b>	Sren Man	Math Set
	Sa Math	Sa Him	Mit Min	<b>Sam</b>
	Man Tech	Kae	<b>Soh Min*</b>	San
		Soh Kae	Rieh	<b>Ly Treh</b>
		<b>Him Leh*</b>	Sa	Tum
		Kaup Leh	Sa Roun	Taheu Safi E
		Sa Lim	Sleh	<b>Ly You</b>
		<b>Sleh Ly*</b>	Sleh San	Ya Soh
Sman Sleh	Roun Math	Chhlaunh	Oeun	<b>Top Vorn*</b>
	Man Tech	Eng	Heng Oeun	Try
		Seng Kim	Pros	Tum
		Kuoy	Him Put	Tuy
		<b>Chiev Ly</b>	Math Set	Huo Vat
		Math	Soeun	Sen Ya
		Muth	Srei Thiep	
Sa Math	Roun Math	Heang	Ly Man	
	Man Tech	<b>Sleh Ly*</b>	Set	
	Sman Sleh		Vuth	
Man Tech	--	--	--	--

At least nine of those listed survived the regime, five of whom were interviewed for this study.<sup>142</sup> When asked about their activities against the Khmer Rouge as stated in

<sup>142</sup> Author’s interviews with:  
  
Him Leh, connection of Roun Math, op. cit., 8 November 1999.  
  
Kaly Hak, age 55, connection of Roun Math, Cham Leu village, Prek Thmei subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, 8 November 1999.  
  
Top Von, age 50, connection of Sman Saleh, Village 8, Pothi Ban subdistrict, Koh Thom district, 11 November 1999.  
  
Sleh Ly, connection of Roun Math and Sa Math, op. cit.



the confessions, some could not recall anything they had done in rebellion, while others admitted to secretly opposing the Khmer Rouge. All were startled and professed their happiness at having survived the regime, despite the fact that their names had reached S-21. Those who survived probably did so because of Khmer Rouge confusion over their Cham names, which were difficult to pronounce and write in the Khmer language.<sup>143</sup>

Sman Sleh wrote that “I, Math Set, Tech [Man Tech], and Savy [Roun Math] met in a boat in the middle of the river. Set said that it was easy to run off to Vietnam, comfortable, the food was good, there was a salary, that our goal of being soldiers, making revolution, was very difficult.” Sleh further wrote that he had gotten a secret plan from Tum, chairman of Office 13, just as Roun Math had. “Tum advised me to prepare to open fire during October 1975, and there would be an outside force to make demonstrations at Ta Khmau.”<sup>2144</sup>

Sleh’s confession lists Top Vorn, a Khmer Rouge soldier, as a rebel connection, stating that Vorn was a leader inciting rebellion at the hospital: “During the attack on national highway 21, I was wounded and sent to the hospital [the name of the hospital was not stated]. In that hospital Vorn advised me ...he was hospitalized because he had shot himself in the arm. He told me that if I was afraid I should shoot myself and stay in the rear, and he urged me to tell other troops to wound themselves.”<sup>2145</sup> But Vorn told a different story. He could barely recall Sleh (Leng Sokha), saying that the first time they met was at Hospital 24 at Prek Ta Kok village. Vorn stated, “During approximately 1973 I was resting at Prek Ta Kok (in Sa-ang) hospital because I had been working with a machine gun and because of carelessness was wounded in my right arm. While at the hospital I saw someone named Sokha [Sman Sleh]. I saw his leg bandaged, but don’t know where he was wounded because his wounds were cleansed at another place. I can’t remember whether it was the right or left leg. I met with this Leng Sokha for about ten days. As for his parents and family, I don’t know where their birthplace was.”<sup>2146</sup>

He also denied advising or inciting Sleh: “I can dare to say that my wound was accidental. If you don’t believe me, go ask my *nirasa* (messenger). He is still alive.” Vorn added, “I never knew Sokha [did not have contact with him]. I only met him in

Soh Min, age 44, connection of Roun Math, op. cit.

<sup>143</sup> “They called everybody by the wrong names. My name was Ji, they called me Chi, so I told them I was called Ji, not Chik,” Saman Kaji recalled. Youk Chhang’s interview with Sman Kaji, op cit.

“They [the Khmer Rouge] called my name incorrectly as “Mak Chi,” but my name was Man Jet.” Author’s interview with Abdul Majet bin Abdullah, op. cit.

<sup>144</sup> *The Confession of Sman Sleh*, op. cit.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Author’s interview with Top Von, op. cit.

the hospital. How could I dare incite him? I never said anything against anyone, only told the youth to prepare their fighting spirit.”<sup>147</sup>

Lach Mao also provided some information related to Sleh. A former Khmer Rouge prisoner at Office 15, he knew a Cham named Math while they were imprisoned together. “We all were suffering so much, as they were beating us and taking us away to be killed, or persecuting us day and night. Out of fear, Math said he would go to Vietnam first, and if he succeeded he would come back to take us away... there were 55 prisoners at Office 15.” Mao also said, “About a week after Math left the office the Khmer Rouge captured him at Prek Chrey in Koh Thom district and sent him back to Office 15 for killing.”<sup>148</sup> Math’s name appeared in Sleh’s confession as having urged Sleh to run off to Vietnam.

Roun Math’s confession stated, “I entered the revolution on 11 July 73, introduced by El Him, the chief of Cham Leu village... on 7 September 73 after I was at Prek Ta Don hospital for 25 days, [I] fled back home. On 4 January 1974 I went with Tum, chief of Office 13, and Tum had me go back home. During July 1974 I lived with Him Leh, chief of Po Tonle Kraom village. In January 1975 I re-entered the revolution, introduced by Saleh Him, deputy chief of Po Tonle Kraom village. In March 1975 five of us ran off back home.” Concerning his stay at Prek Ta Don hospital on 7 September 73, he wrote, “When I was in Unit 117 [the unit he joined on 11 July 1973] at the Prek Chrey battlefield, I was preparing to attack the enemy and a 105mm round hit my trench and collapsed it. My spirit was somewhat weak. Later the enemy fired an M72 round which again collapsed my position. My spirit was really broken for sure then. Angkar sent me for medical care to the [Prek Ta Don] hospital. When I recovered I ran away home.”<sup>149</sup>

Roun Math had much to say about his rebel activities: “After receiving advice and organization from Him Leh for three days, at 8:00 pm [one day] during June 1974 I brought Math Set, Leng Sokha [Sman Sleh], Man Tech and Sa Math to meet together in the middle of the river. I advised them all that if we feared the battlefield and were to avoid the battlefield we had to follow Him Leh. He wants us to go among the people and incite them to hate the subdistrict committee members named Heng, Soh [Riev Soh] and Math, and incite the people to run off to Vietnam. And he [Him Leh] said that for the tactics of moving among the people, he would give us a boat and a net. All four agreed with me.” He wrote about another rebel plan that “When I took rice to Ta Khmau, I met [the chief of Office 13] during May 1975. Tum told me about the plan to parade in demonstration to Phnom Penh during October 1975, and wanted me to await the demonstration column in Ta Khmau.”<sup>150</sup> According to Him Huy, the

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Author’s interview with Lach Mao, age 45, former Khmer Rouge prisoner at Office 15, at Village 8, Pothi Ban subdistrict, Koh Thom district, Kandal province, 11 November 1999.

<sup>149</sup> *The Confession of Roun Math*, op. cit.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

chief of region 25, a man named Ta Sok had led a demonstration toward Phnom Penh and later was arrested.<sup>151</sup>

Him Leh was Khmer Rouge village chief of Po Tonle Kroam from 1971-74. He responded to Math's charge, stating that the Khmer Rouge had ordered him to arrest young people and force them into being soldiers, but he did not carry out that assignment. He agreed with Roun Math's confession that "At that time myself and the people were dissatisfied with Angkar, they persecuted the youth into becoming soldiers, and when they fled back home they were arrested, imprisoned, and mistreated in every way. Then I had the youth attack Riev Soh, a member of the Prek Thmei subdistrict committee, because if any Cham youth fled to avoid becoming a soldier, he captured them, beat them, and sent them to prison. And [he] ordered the *hakem* to close the mosque." Leh also stated that, "At that time I ordered about ten people to take a net and a boat to fish at Prek Sdei, fish as a cover in order to look for a route out to Vietnam. But it did not work out, since Riev Soh found out in advance." Leh explained that "Roun Math and Man Tech were among those ten persons. I can't remember the others."<sup>152</sup>

Roun Math's confessions stated that "Him Leh received a rebel plan from Tum, chief of Office 13," but Leh totally denied this, saying "I never knew Tum... the people and myself were dissatisfied with Angkar. No one ordered this; I did all of this at my own initiative."<sup>153</sup>

Kaly Hak was the youth chairman at Po Tonle village from 1971-73. According to Roun Math's confessions, "Kaly Hak mobilized the Cham youth not to go to the front, mobilized the Cham youth, male and female, to run off to Vietnam."<sup>154</sup> Hak responded that "When upper echelon sent down a plan, I never did carry it out....I incited the youth not become soldiers." He added: "No one ordered this, it was just because I hated the Khmer Rouge very much."<sup>155</sup> This differs from the Roun Math's confession, which stated "Kaly Hak took orders from me [Roun Math] to do these things."<sup>156</sup>

Roun Math was interrogated by the Khmer Rouge many times and in more detail than Sman Sleth, Sa Math, or Man Tech. His confession was the cause of the arrests of Sa Math and Man Tech, and the tracking down of 24 others on his list of connections, the majority of whom were Cham. Him Leh and Ly Treh were arrested before Roun

<sup>151</sup> Author's interview with Him Huy, op.cit., 4 January 2002.

<sup>152</sup> Author's interview with Him Leh, connection of Roun Math, op. cit.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> *The Confession of Roun Math*, op. cit.

<sup>155</sup> Author's interview with Kaly Hak, op. cit.

<sup>156</sup> *The Confession of Roun Math*, op. cit.

Math, but were released after more than a year of detention at the Kampong Kong Office.<sup>157</sup> Roun Math's document examiner made notes on his confession to track down and arrest his contacts. He circled the names of Leng Sokha (Sman Sleh), Math Set and Ly Treh, and wrote, "Comrade Men, ask 262 that if these people are there, follow them." The interrogator did not know of the arrest of Sman Sleh two months prior to Roun Math's. Next to Him Leh's name, an examiner wrote, "It is necessary to examine the clear personal history, opinions, and activities of Him Leh to evaluate this connection more clearly." An examiner also underlined the names Man Tech, Sleh Ly, Sa Lim, Sa Math, and Mit Min, and next to them wrote "Comrade Men! Write a letter to ask all units involved in this, ask all units, and if not found, ask 99 again. Write in the name of the office chief. If any of them have fled anywhere, state the details so they can be found." At the end of the confession of Roun Math is the sentence "Propose that Angkar imprison this one first."<sup>158</sup>

Sa Math did not write in any detail about rebel activities, only that "Roun Math and Man Tech were the rebel leaders."<sup>159</sup> Man Tech left no documents about rebel forces or plans.<sup>160</sup>

Sa Math's confession states, "In late May 1975 when I departed the political school at Koh Khsach Tonlea<sup>161</sup> and had been at Unit 04 for ten days, I escaped and ran away to home." He also wrote that, "Someone named Sleh Ly urged me to betray the revolution."<sup>162</sup> Ly responded: "I incited no rebel connections. In June 1975 myself, Sa Math, Sman Sleh, Loh Him, Hak and Math Set only discussed running back home because things were difficult, they only gave us three scoops of soup once a day, had us till the rice fields without a plow, and had us excavate the earth. Our living place was west of Krapeuhar pagoda [in Unit 99, Battalion 142, Division 703.] We fled home to Cham Leu village. We returned before we ever reached home. We split up on the way back."<sup>163</sup>

Sman Sleh, Roun Math, Sa Math and Man Tech became Khmer Rouge soldiers because they were forced to do so, since many villages in Koh Thom district of

<sup>157</sup> Author's interview with Him Leh, op. cit.

<sup>158</sup> *The Confession of Roun Math*, op. cit.

<sup>159</sup> *The Confession of Sa Math*, op. cit.

<sup>160</sup> *The Personal History of Man Tech*, op. cit.

<sup>161</sup> "The KR used Koh Tonlea [Tonlea Island] as a reeducation camp for women whose husbands had been taken and killed or were separated from their husbands because of accusations that they were soldiers or workers for the Lon Nol regime." In interviews with five widows who had been sent to live on Koh Khsach Tonlea, Kalyanee posited that, "this entire matter shows the absolute attempt of the KR to break up family ties and the traditional relationship between husband and wife, between mother and child among Cambodians." The name of the island was published incorrectly in Kalyanee's article as "Koh Khsach Tonle." (Koh Khsach Tonlea is a subdistrict of Sa-ang district, Kandal province.) Mam Kalyanee, "Koh Khsach Tonlea, Island of the Widows," in *Searching for the truth*, Number 4, April 2000, pp. 58-61 and Number 5, May 2000, pp. 55-60.

<sup>162</sup> *The Confession of Sa Math*, op. cit.

<sup>163</sup> Author's interview with Sleh Ly, op. cit.

Kandal province had been controlled by the Khmer Rouge since 1971. Dullah said, “In the Khmer Rouge era, the youth that became soldiers did not do so out of their own hearts. They were gathered up by youth chairmen, taken from the age of 15 years ... No one volunteered. Many disappeared from Cham Leu village here, more than 30 as I remember, and only two or three were ever seen to return.”<sup>164</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Author’s interview with Math Dullah, op. cit.

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