

Transcript [partial] of the interview with Mr Ong Thong Hoeung

Date of interview: 22 November 2008
Corresponding audio recording: D141/1R

OCIJ Investigators: Bernard Brun and Svay Samnang
Witness: Mr Ong Thong Hoeung
Interpreter: Bell Sak-Pheakdey



[00.50.59]

INVESTIGATOR: What was the... my... in my question, was: who were the founding members? Who ran the student movement? And what was the student movement involved in?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

WITNESS: The... the movement... (inaudible) the movement was created much later, ... by Pol Pot, Saloth Sar. (Inaudible) Khmer students, Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan, Thiounn Mumm. ...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

INVESTIGATOR: Pol Pot...

WITNESS: (Inaudible) all that in my book... [...]

[00.51.43]

[00.52.26]

INVESTIGATOR: [...] Ok, so, Pol Pot, in his book, Saloth Sar.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Saloth Sar: S-A-L-O-T-H; S-A-R.

[Several people speaking at the same time]

INVESTIGATOR: Sar..., Sar..., Ieng Sary, Khieu Samphan... were the three founders of the movement?

WITNESS: There were others, there were others, I don't remember [them], but that is recorded in the

history of the Khmer students, in... [...]

[00.53.05]

[04.20.02]

INVESTIGATOR: [...] I would like you to take a look at this document.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It is in French, it was recorded...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

INVESTIGATOR: It relates to the question that... that Mr Samnang just asked you.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

INVESTIGATOR: While we... take notes, I would like you... please take a look. The document was recorded by the Court as No. 00142162. Please tell me if you recognise... the statement, it bears your name.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

(Brief pause)

INVESTIGATOR: It is mainly paragraph 3, regarding...

WITNESS: Euh... I did not say that. That is not true.

(Brief pause)

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible)

WITNESS: I believe there is a misunderstanding here.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible) Did you see... Khmer Rouge divisions come (inaudible).

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

INVESTIGATOR: We are going to answer.

WITNESS: Here... I think there's a mistake.

INVESTIGATOR: Why don't we begin... you can comment on the document. Please answer the

question that Mr Samnang has asked.

In this... in this interview, you do acknowledge something, that... this is something you said.

WITNESS: Yes.

INVESTIGATOR: Yea?

WITNESS: Yes, indeed, but...

INVESTIGATOR: Ok. Let's... we shall return to that in detail... we shall return to that in detail. In paragraph... in paragraph 3 of the... of the interview, you said: "Ieng Sary and Khieu Samphan used to come to Boeng Trabek to preside over political meetings. I personally saw Ieng Sary when he came in October 1978. My wife saw Khieu Samphan there presiding over a meeting."

WITNESS: A meeting at "*kor-dop-pram*" [K-15], at "*kor-dop-pram*" [K-15]. It was prior to my arrival.

INVESTIGATOR: So ... when you say, "Ieng Sary and Khieu Samphan used to come to Boeng Trabek to preside over political meetings..."

WITNESS: Euh... I said at Boeng Trabek...

INVESTIGATOR: Yes.

WITNESS: ... Ieng Sary came to preside after our return "to" Red Earth, in 78, so seven years later.

INVESTIGATOR: In October 78.

WITNESS: Yes, that's correct.

INVESTIGATOR: You said: "I personally saw Ieng Sary when he came in 78".

WITNESS: Yes, I did...

INVESTIGATOR: So you're saying that you saw him at Boeng Trabek ?

WITNESS: I did... at Boeng Trabek, yes.

INVESTIGATOR: So, it is not correct...

WITNESS: Not Khieu Samphan, not Khieu Samphan.

INVESTIGATOR: No, no, but we asked "Did you see other Khmer Rouge leaders coming to visit Boeng Trabek"...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

INVESTIGATOR: You said: "as far as I know... "

WITNESS: I... One thing. At Boeng Trabek before we left Red Earth... before we left for Red Earth. And ... after departure for Red Earth, the return to Boeng Trabek.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

INVESTIGATOR: But, when...

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

WITNESS: (inaudible)

INVESTIGATOR: When you are asked... In general... in general, when... when... when my colleague asked "Did any senior officials visit Boeng Trabek, either before or after your return", while you were at Boeng Trabek, physically present at Boeng Trabek: did you see any officials there, such as Khieu Samphan, Ieng Thirith, Ieng Sary and so on?

WITNESS: I... I... I was speaking in chronologically.

INVESTIGATOR: Uh, uh.

WITNESS: Boeng Trabek, the camp at Boeng Trabek, before the departure for Red Earth. So before, ...

INVESTIGATOR: I see, so, "not to my knowledge, before my... departure for Red Earth".

WITNESS: Before I left for Red Earth, Boeng Trabek, I did not see Ieng Sary or Khieu Samphan.

INVESTIGATOR: I see, ok. So for Red Earth... for the Red Earth camp... for the Red Earth camp, I... I...

[Several people speaking at the same time]

WITNESS: After my departure for Red Earth...

INVESTIGATOR: "Red Earth, not to my knowledge", yes...

WITNESS: I did not see because (inaudible).

INVESTIGATOR: "I recognise these documents."

WITNESS: ... In this case, you must follow chronologically... the date.

INVESTIGATOR: "I recognise this document... I recognise this document. It's an interview... "

WITNESS: And let me add...

INVESTIGATOR: ... an interview...

WITNESS: ... I saw Ieng Sary at Boeng Trabek in 1978.

INVESTIGATOR: I see. "I recognise... I recognise this document..."

WITNESS: ... And let me add...

INVESTIGATOR: it's an interview..."

WITNESS: ... and Boeng Trabek, ... I mentioned, it was... in 77.

INVESTIGATOR: I see
, I believe... "Before I left in 1977, for... "in 1977..."

WITNESS: And before my...

INVESTIGATOR: ... 77, for the camp in Red Earth. I see. "I recognise this document, it's an interview I gave to the investigators from..."

WITNESS: I did not... euh, I...

INVESTIGATOR: You don't know? Ok.

WITNESS: It's an interview, eu... I did not...

INVESTIGATOR: You don't know. Ok. "I gave", "I gave".

WITNESS: No, I... I did not give, I did not...

INVESTIGATOR: No?

WITNESS: No, I did not...

INVESTIGATOR: I did not give this...

WITNESS: No, no, no. I was not (inaudible) anything at all.

INVESTIGATOR: I see. "I recognise... I recognise this document".

WITNESS: It's...

INVESTIGATOR: Ah! You have never seen it before, this...?

WITNESS: No, I have never seen it before.

INVESTIGATOR: Oh, I see. "I have never seen this document before."

[Several people speaking at the same time]

WITNESS: (Inaudible)... after, I gave an interview early in the evening, I was invited to eat here, at the same restaurant as the one we were a few moments ago, and I... with some friends, had a conversation, casually, we spoke...

INVESTIGATOR: I see, this could be the report of the interview. I see: "I have never see this document before. I am discovering it now."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

So, when we mention this document in our report, it is a good idea... it is a good idea to mention that too.

INVESTIGATOR: Ok. It's done. We have made a note of that.

WITNESS: No, I was not... I was not asked to come.

INVESTIGATOR: I see.

WITNESS: It's a normal interview...

INVESTIGATOR: "I have not seen this documents, I am... I am discovering through you. I am seeing it for the first time I, in fact... this is the first time I am seeing it."

WITNESS: I swear to you that I (inaudible).

INVESTIGATOR: I se. "I have note... I have noted something... some errors..."

WITNESS: Notes some errors.

INVESTIGATOR: "... but with regard to Ieng Sary and Khieu Samphan coming to Boeng Trabek, this happened in 1978, correct?."

WITNESS: No, I said that I saw Ieng Sary in... after my return to Red Earth, a few months before the arrival of the Vietnamese, in 1978. I did not (inaudible) that. And as for Khieu Samphan, as I... as I told you earlier, Khieu Samphan... saw [him] at "*kor-dop-pram*" [K-15].

INVESTIGATOR: I see. "I noted some errors, and I'll... I'll point them out to you. However, I confirm what is written here, that I saw Ieng Sary at Boeng Trabek..."

WITNESS: (Inaudible)

INVESTIGATOR: ... In October... er, in October 1978.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: "That I saw leng Sary..."

INVESTIGATOR: "That I saw leng Sary at Boeng Trabek."

WITNESS: I recount that... in Chapter 1 of my book, in fact, (inaudible) leng Sary.

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: Several times?

INVESTIGATOR: No, no, not several times.

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: Several times or...

INVESTIGATOR: Several times?

WITNESS: Several times

INVESTIGATOR: I see, several times. Pardon. "Not to preside over meetings." Is that correct?

WITNESS: To preside over meetings.

INVESTIGATOR: In October. "In October 1978, after my return from Red Earth."

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: And "several times", does that relate to October or just October (inaudible).

INVESTIGATOR: Starting in October.

WITNESS: I also wanted to point out that there is an error here.

INVESTIGATOR: Ok... we'll ahead and mark it here.
An error... the error concerns paragraph 2.

WITNESS: Yes. Here, it is chapter...

INVESTIGATOR: Paragraph 2.

WITNESS: ... at the factory, I spoke of...

INVESTIGATOR: "And concerns my... and concern my stint at Factory D-2."

WITNESS: It's a friend of mine named Gngang (phonetic), who asked to be sent to the cooperative. I did not say... I did not say that he was arrested and sent... I did not say that. I said, ..., as I wrote in my book, (inaudible) the factor manager, named Sok (phonetic), convinced me, instead, convinced me that to do that, tell your... tell your friend not to ask for that. In fact, he is still alive. Gngang (phonetic), he is still alive. And I don't know why that was written.

INVESTIGATOR: I am a little confused, in your... (Inaudible). "Factory D-2, and in particular..."

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

INVESTIGATOR: "And in particular the segment concerning my friend Gngang (phonetic)."

WITNESS: I don't know why they wrote that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Inaudible) a contradiction, that individual was not executed, she... she is still alive. That's what (inaudible).

WITNESS: Yes, yes, she is still alive. And in fact I wrote in my book.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

INVESTIGATOR: My friend, G... G-N... I did not (inaudible) no... (inaudible)...

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: (Inaudible)

INVESTIGATOR: Where... I wrote... I wrote... where I wrote that: "He wanted to go to the cooperative and was taken away by the Khmer Rouge never to be seen again. That's a mistake, because the individual is still alive and is not..."

WITNESS: And I... (Inaudible), and I do not accept... that... I did not (inaudible). I don't know why, in fact, it was summarised like that without asking me (inaudible). I don't think it's the way to proceed.

INVESTIGATOR: The purpose... the purpose of this interview, to correct any mistakes.

WITNESS: (Inaudible)

INVESTIGATOR: Did he go to the cooperative?

WITNESS: No.

INVESTIGATOR: No. "He is still alive. He was not able to go to the cooperative."

WITNESS: No, no. I should say that five of us went to ... with me to the factory. Three... two disappeared, but reasons other than...

INVESTIGATOR: I see.

At the back of this... at the back of this page, you say: "Throughout my... throughout my detention, I did not see anyone die of hunger or illness."

Do you... do you stand by that?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: [Khmer]

WITNESS: I stand by that statement. There were... illnesses, yes. I... in general, I... I did not read about that. I am uncertain why I was not given a chance to read it over before it was published. I don't know why.

INVESTIGATOR: Do you stand by that statement? Did you see... You did not see anyone die of hunger or illness, but did you see anyone die? With your own eyes, that's what I mean.

WITNESS: At Boeng Trabek, after my arrival at Tuol Sleng, I saw one... someone who got a heart attack and was sent to (inaudible). After that, I was told that he he died.

INVESTIGATOR: I see. In the... in the same document referred to earlier, in the same document...

WITNESS: Er... (inaudible) I question the document. I don't know why they...

INVESTIGATOR: "In the same document, it is stated in the last paragraph... it is mentioned in the last paragraph that throughout your stay in detention you did not see anyone die or hunger of disease... your stay in detention, you saw... you did not see anyone die of hunger or disease."

Do you stand by... that statement?

"I do, but... but the only person I... but..."

How should we put it?

"I confirm that I did not see anyone... that I did not see anyone die of hunger... I did not see anyone die of illness, except one co-worker at..."

At the factory?

WITNESS: No, at Boeng Trabek, after my return...

INVESTIGATOR: "... at Boeng Trabek, who got a heart attack..."

WITNESS: ... after my return, in 1978.

INVESTIGATOR: Ok, "who got a heart attack after... after my return, in 1978."

WITNESS: And after, his wife was told that he had died.

INVESTIGATOR: "That is the only person who died in front of me... in front of me, to my knowledge..."

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: Yes.

INVESTIGATOR: "... who got a heart attack after my return in 1978."
"I should mention... I should mention that I question this document, that I did not sign, and..."

WITNESS: I was not given a chance to read it...

INVESTIGATOR: "... that I... did not read or sign."

WITNESS: It only reflects part of what I...

INVESTIGATOR: (Inaudible) an attachment, we'll add it as attachment?
Ah ! OK. So let's add another paragraph.
Document... Document ERN 00142162. ERN, "E-R-N", sorry, did I say "IRN", I meant "ERN".

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: OK.

INVESTIGATOR: I mixing things up... ERN 0142162 it is attached as Annex 1, that is presented (inaudible).

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: [Khmer]

INVESTIGATOR: It is... it is initialed by the investigators and the witness.

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: I have a doubt. I am not sure.

INVESTIGATOR: About what?

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: I have a doubt about "initial"...

INVESTIGATOR: No, it's ok. No, it's ok. It's ok.

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: (Inaudible)

INVESTIGATOR: It'll be... No, it's not (inaudible).

UNIDENTIFIED [FEMALE] SPEAKER: "It'll be initialed by the investigators."

(Brief pause)

INVESTIGATOR: We will add it as an attachment to the record.

(Brief pause)

INVESTIGATOR: (Inaudible)

WITNESS: The name is wrong. The name is wrong. Ok.

INVESTIGATOR: We'll go ahead and add the further specifications here.

WITNESS: Ok. Do I have to sign?

INVESTIGATOR: Yes.

WITNESS: "The month of June... "
Why do I have to sign?

INVESTIGATOR: Well, to attest to the fact that we are attaching your... to your interview.

WITNESS: In general, I question the document because it does not reflect...

INVESTIGATOR: That's precisely why we're attaching it.

WITNESS: ... it is not an exact reflection...

INVESTIGATOR: That's why we're attaching it.

WITNESS: It is a casual conversation, and it does not quite reflect (inaudible).

INVESTIGATOR: Absolutely.

WITNESS: However, I...

INVESTIGATOR: So... Yes. What is not... what's incorrect? Leng Sirivuth? [...]

[04.41.25]