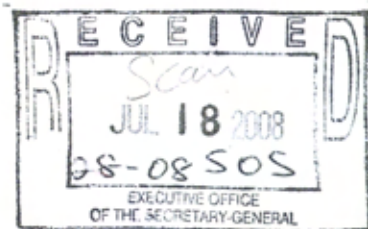


Cambodia
Thailand
DPA

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Note to the Secretary-General

CAMBODIA/THAILAND: BORDER TENSIONS



1. On 17 July, a confrontation between Cambodian and Thai troops around the border area resulted in near violence, as the dispute between the two countries over the Preah Vihear temple escalated. It is reported that over 500 Thai and 800 Cambodian troops are deployed as of today.
2. The ancient temple has long been a source of contention between Cambodia and Thailand, as both sides have claimed the temple and the area around it over the years. In 1962, the International Court of Justice ruled that the temple belonged to Cambodia; the Court however did not resolve a 1.8 square mile area near the temple. The current military confrontation is taking place near a pagoda compound situated in this un-demarcated zone.
3. A joint-communiqué signed on 18 June by the Thai Foreign Minister and the Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister, endorsing Cambodia's application for UNESCO World Heritage Status, seemed to have prompted the current crisis. The communiqué resulted in a general outcry in Thailand. Subsequent to UNESCO's approval of Cambodia's application, the Thai Constitutional Court ruled that Foreign Minister Pattama's signature to the communiqué was unconstitutional, which led to his resignation on 10 July.
4. On 16 July, Thailand began to deploy its troops to the pagoda compound. In response, Cambodia sent its troops, accusing Thailand of border violations. The next night, 50 Cambodian troops entered the pagoda, allegedly to protect food supplies for the monks, with a threat of an armed confrontation between both sides, although violence was eventually averted. Both Cambodian and Thai authorities stated that the situation had stabilized and was unlikely to escalate further.
5. In an attempt to resolve the issue, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen sent a letter to Thai Prime Minister Samak on 17 July requesting the withdrawal of Thai forces. A meeting between their respective Border Committees is scheduled for 21 July at Sa Kaew, a Thai border province. Deputy Prime Minister Sok An is expected to head the Cambodian delegation; there has been no confirmation from the Thai side.
6. The current crisis could further destabilize Thailand's already volatile political landscape as the opposition could use it as further justification to rally anti-government sentiments. There has not yet been any indication as to how the situation is impacting Cambodian politics and Prime Minister Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party in its run up to the 27 July parliamentary elections. An if asked statement attributable to the Spokesperson of the Secretary-General has been prepared (attached). APD/DPA is closely monitoring the situation in consultation with the UN Resident Coordinators in Bangkok and Phnom Penh.

JUL 21 2008

B. Lynn Pascoe
18 July 2008

IF ASKED

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE SPOKESPERSON FOR THE SECRETARY-
GENERAL

CAMBODIA/THAILAND: TENSIONS ON THE BORDER
NEAR THE PREAH VIHEAR TEMPLE

The Secretary-General is closely following the situation on the Cambodia-Thailand border near the Preah Vihear Temple. He is concerned about the current escalation of tensions between the two countries, including the build-up of troops. The Secretary-General calls for restraint on both sides and hopes that this matter can be resolved peacefully and by diplomatic means in the context of the excellent relations that traditionally exist between the two countries.

New York
18 July 2008