

# Alert

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No 05/2011 - Cambodia & Thailand

## 30,000 people displaced in border clashes between Cambodian and Thai armies

Geneva, 10 February 2011

### Brief Description of the Emergency

Armed clashes that flared up on 4 February 2011 between the Cambodian and Thai military over a disputed stretch of border surrounding a 900-year-old temple have killed both soldiers and civilians. The exact number of deaths and injuries due to the clashes is unknown as both sides report different numbers. According to a report on Alert Net at least 11 people have been killed and thousands evacuated<sup>1</sup>. Although the fighting has stopped, the situation remains tense. The Cambodia government has called on the UN Security Council to intervene while the Thai government still wants bilateral talks. It is expected that the UN Council will discuss the issue on Monday.

On 8 February, Deutsche Presse-Agentur and Asia Pacific News reported that more than 10,000 Cambodian villagers had fled their villages near the temple of Preah Vihear. According to an IRIN report of 9 February, up to 30,000 people (15,000 in Cambodia and 15,000 in Thailand) were reported to have been displaced since the fighting began. The director of the Thai Red Cross confirmed that an estimated 15,000 people on the Thai side of the border had fled to makeshift shelters and other villages to escape the fighting while the Cambodian Red Cross officials estimate that a similar number were displaced on their side of the border.

According to the National Committee for Disaster Management (NCDM) - Cambodia, about 1,000 families had also fled to another border area called Anlong Veng to seek safety in Siem Reap and Battambang provinces. This was confirmed by Asia Pacific News which also confirmed that they were sheltering in pagodas and school compounds and urgently needed temporary shelter, food and water.

### Impact

ACT member, The Lutheran World Federation, Department of World Service (LWF/DWS), carried out an initial assessment of 1,315 displaced families in Cambodia who have fled their homes near the conflict areas and found temporary safe shelters in six different locations within Choam Ksan and Koulen districts. Many have been settled in pagodas and school grounds while others are sheltering in military compounds without adequate shelter or tents.

Another ACT member Church World Service (CWS), which has staff living in villages in Choam Khsant district, has evacuated its staff and is preparing to assist those who have fled the area. The Commune Councils and Village Chief have informed CWS of about 2,200 to 2,400 families which have been

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/thais-cambodia-face-diplomatic-pressure-to-end-dispute/>

evacuated from the fighting zone. These families are now sheltering in three camps, in Koulen district, about 70-80km from the fighting areas. Two camps are located in two primary schools, one in Thmey village and another in Takeung village. The third camp is in a pagoda called Toul Andet.

The NCDM Deputy Secretary General says that people staying in temples and schools do not have adequate access to water and children cannot attend school<sup>2</sup>.

#### **National and International Response**

Cambodian government and civil society groups have closely worked together to assess the situation and prepare emergency response.

According to Asia Pacific News, authorities are providing some relief in the form of rice and money, but it is not sufficient. CARITAS has provided 25kg bags of rice, and basic kits comprising a blanket, mat and mosquito net to 1,096 families and plans to provide 900 other families with kits. OXFAM and Cambodian Red Cross have provided 789 water tanks of 80 litres and 820 water tanks of 16 litres, however the response is not sufficient.

#### **ACT Alliance members' response**

Local authorities and the NCDM have requested ACT members in Cambodia - LWF/DWS and CWS - to help with immediate food assistance. Nutrition needs, particularly for women and children, have not been met. An assessment team comprising staff of a LWF/DWS partner, along with several other groups, is currently assessing the situation.

LWF/DWS plans to buy canned fish for about 1,315 families which it will transport to Preah Vihear when it carries out its assessment.

CWS Cambodia has received US\$ 3,000 from its head office in New York for immediate response. It plans to conduct an assessment in the coming days and foresees provision of basic food and non-food items including water containers, water purifying tablets, health kits, mosquito nets and plastic tents. CWS Thailand is closely monitoring the situation while planning for the next step.

**Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to Jean-Daniel Birmele, ACT Chief Finance Officer ([jbi@actalliance.org](mailto:jbi@actalliance.org)).**

**Thank you for your attention.**

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/JARR-8DWH2X?OpenDocument>