

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Cambodia and Thailand: Internally displaced people

Information bulletin n° 1
14 February 2011

This bulletin is being issued for information only, and reflects the current situation and details available at this time: Cambodian Red Cross (CRC), with the support of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) will accept direct assistance in cash and kind for rice and food items; water containers, blankets, mosquito nets, warm clothes, sleeping mats, *sarongs* and *krama*. Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS) has determined that external assistance is not required.

Summary

There has been ongoing tension on the border between Thailand and Cambodia because of the long-disputed ownership of a 900-year-old temple which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A skirmish on 7 February 2011, however, escalated into an exchange of heavy artillery and gunfire. As a consequence, many people in Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani and Surin in Thailand, and the Preah Vihear province in Cambodia, left their homes. More than 25,000 people have been affected, with six dead and 28 others injured.

Both the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) and Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS) are acting within their respective national disaster response plans, and are providing health and care, and relief assistance.

[<click for a map of the affected area, or for contact information>](#)



Local branches of Cambodian Red Cross assisted with preparing relief items.
(Photo: Cambodian Red Cross)



The Thai Red Cross mobile kitchen served over 7,000 meals each day, staffed by a combination of volunteer beneficiaries and Red Cross staff.
Photo: Thai Red Cross

The situation

Armed forces from both Cambodia and Thailand exchanged sporadic but intense artillery and gunfire over a four-day period. Since Tuesday, 8 February, there has been no new fighting. The violence is the worst between the two countries in years, although the situation in the border area has been tense for some time. As a

consequence, thousands of families on both sides of the frontier have been displaced because of the violence. Many of them have been evacuated and temporarily settled in various city halls, schools, and pagodas in villages away from the border area while they wait for hostilities to end.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Both Cambodian Red Cross and Thai Red Cross Society are well-positioned in their national disaster response plan with clear mandates, mainly in health and care (i.e. first aid, provision of medical supplies, blood collection and psychosocial support) and relief assistance (i.e. food and blankets). Effective coordination with the authorities and government officials at both regional and national level is in place.

Through its Cambodia country office and the Southeast Asia regional office based in Bangkok, IFRC remains in regular contact with its Cambodian and Thai Red Cross counterparts as well as with partner national society representatives operating bilaterally in Cambodia. Regular contact with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Phnom Penh and Bangkok has also been maintained to monitor the situation and support both National Societies as and when requested.

The preparedness efforts of both national societies, combined with the strong and respected mandate of the Red Cross Red Crescent and their recognized role in the national disaster plan, have been seen to make a difference during this crisis.

IFRC accompanied Thai Red Cross Society on a field mission to the Si Sa Ket province on 10 February. They joined an ICRC assessment team present in the area.

Cambodian Red Cross

The communities living near the border were mostly evacuated to three places:

- **Location 1:** As many as 101 families moved to Bantheay Thmor Thom; 107 families to Choam Ksant pagoda; and 120 families to Sam Em district.
- **Location 2:** Up to 387 families moved to Stung Sen Monorom school, Kulen district (50 km from Tbeng Mean Chey town, 2 km from a military fort on the new road to Preah Vihear temple). They were provided water containers for cooking, washing and bathing, although more water was needed. Up to 643 families moved to Thol Bambek pagoda. The CRC Preah Vihear branch president and staff were on standby at Kulen district. The branch provided relief items to families housed at Stung Sen Monorom School, which included 625 kg of rice, 13 boxes of instant noodles, and 200 cans of fish.
- **Location 3:** In Preah Vihear town, 153 families moved to Toul Andet pagoda, Thmey commune; and 445 families to a nearby school. Up to 185 families remain in a new village nearby.

The CRC president thanked all Red Cross Red Crescent partners for their support and urged the coordination of all Red Cross Red Crescent Movement relief. Personnel from CRC national headquarters, CRC Phnom Penh branch and CRC Preah Vihear branch have re-assessed needs on a regular basis, and monitored the number of families evacuated. Relief distributions continued over the weekend for 3,000 families, with fish sauce, soy sauce, canned fish, drinking water, and salt being added as supplementary items to the standard CRC relief kit. The CRC headquarters has been coordinating domestic donations to help people affected.

Discussions were held on the building of two temporary centres for displaced persons to relieve the pressure of too many evacuees on the pagodas.

To date, the CRC headquarters has sent the following to Preah Vihear Red Cross branch: 400 plastic sheets, 4,000 *sarong* (traditional women's skirt), 4,000 *krama* (towel), 3,000 blankets, 4,000 shirts for cold weather, 1,000 boxes of instant noodles, and 1,000 cans of fish. CRC is procuring 60 tonnes of rice (2,000 bags of 30kg each) from neighbouring provinces such as Kampong Thom and Siem Reap. Meanwhile, CRC's Siem Reap branch distributed 20,000 riel (some CHF4.9) in cash to each of 280 families in Choam Ksant pagoda.

Long-term needs have been identified as rice and other staple food items; water for drinking and daily use; sanitation and shelter.

A CRC field team has left to conduct a vulnerability and capacity assessment (VCA) among affected communities in Otdar Meanchey and Preah Vihear.

IFRC continues to support CRC in the management of its response to the crisis as well as in liaison with ICRC in their efforts. IFRC has been particularly active in helping to coordinate the support of partner national societies active in Cambodia, including the Australian, Danish and German national societies.

Thai Red Cross Society

In Si Sa Ket, Ubon Ratchathani and Surin provinces, Thai Red Cross Society's chapters together with the Surin Health Station, are working and coordinating closely with the provincial department of disaster prevention and mitigation (DDPM).

TRCS has provided relief kits, drinking water, and blankets. According to the assessment, psychological support for children in shelters was identified as a priority. Provision of toys and candies was organized for the children. In addition, the TRCS national headquarters deployed mobile kitchens and provided some 7,500 meals to both evacuation centres and evacuees being housed in remote villages. Moreover, TRCS provided supplies for the Red Cross sub-district branch in Si Sa Ket to prepare meals for villagers in other shelters.

Rapid assessment teams have been monitoring the border situation daily. Up to 4,000 relief kits, pre-positioned in the Surin health station warehouse, were being distributed to displaced people in collaboration with local authorities.

The TRCS secretary-general also visited the border area to discuss subsequent response with the provincial Red Cross branches as well as to meet with the local authorities to further facilitate good cooperation.

In Thailand, up to 3,866 families from eight districts were evacuated and relocated to 32 temporary centres. The number of people in the centres varied from day to day given the uncertainty of the situation.

With the cooperation of the provincial Red Cross chapters in Si Sa Ket and Ubon Ratchathani as well as the Red Cross health stations, TRCS visited villagers in several temporary shelters in both provinces. Hundreds of relief items were distributed at the shelters. During the first seven days of the crisis, TRCS provided daily necessities to more than 17,448 villagers who had fled the border zone.

TRCS acted as a responsible auxiliary partner to the government in ensuring that adequate additional support was provided to those displaced. Within its mandate, TRCS has the primary responsibility to the Thai people in all types of disasters to assist in a support role to its government by ensuring:

- relief is provided;
- medical support and medical supplies are delivered;
- blood supplies are ensured; and,
- its role as a channel for foreign assistance, if so required.

During this crisis, coordination between the authorities and TRCS functioned well with the role of the national society clear and respected.

It should be highlighted that while TRCS supported government humanitarian efforts appropriately, the displaced people themselves were the prime movers in many of the efforts of care and support in the border region.

On Saturday, 11 February the governor of Si Sa Ket declared that all relocation centres be closed, and that families should return home.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of nonviolence and peace.

Contact information

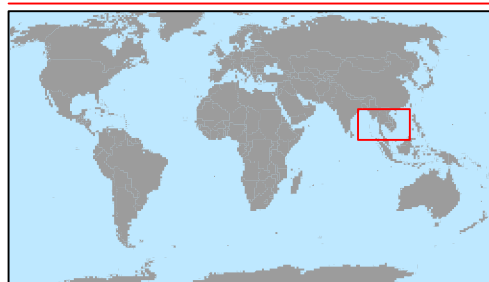
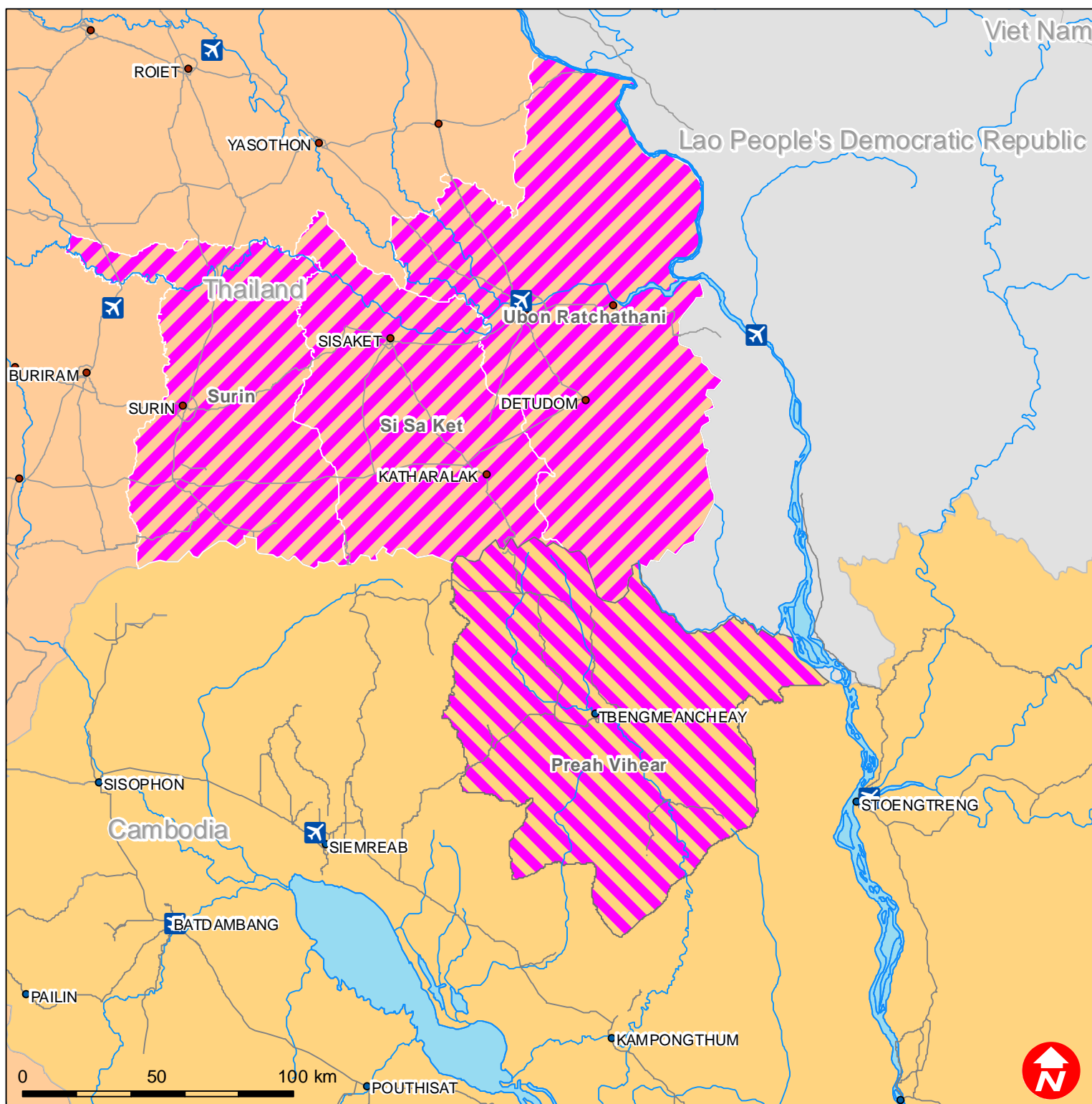
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[<map below: click here to return to title page>](#)



Cambodia/Thailand: Internally Displaced People



- Cities in Thailand
- ▨ Affected districts in Thailand
- Cities in Cambodia
- ▨ Affected province in Cambodia