

Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; the Special Rapporteur on the right to education; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the right to food; the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation and the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls

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23 April 2026

Excellency,

We have the honour to address you in our capacities as Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Special Rapporteur on the right to education; Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; Special Rapporteur on the right to food; Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; Special Rapporteur on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context; Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences; Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation and Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 59/12 , 53/7, 53/4, 58/10 , 60/10, 52/10, 59/20, 51/19 and 59/14.

In this connection, we would like to bring to the attention of your Excellency's Government information we have received concerning the alleged large-scale internal displacement of civilians, destruction of homes and livelihoods, and the precarious humanitarian and human rights situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the context of the 2025 Cambodia-Thailand border conflict. In particular, concerns are raised about the limited access to essential services such as food, health care, safe water and sanitation, and barriers to adequate education.

According to the information received:

The current situation arises from escalating hostilities between Cambodia and Thailand since 2025. A first escalation reportedly occurred between 24 and 28 July 2025, during which more than 130,000 Cambodian civilians were forced to flee their homes. At least eight civilians were reportedly killed and 50 others injured. Although a ceasefire agreement was signed on 28 July 2025, sporadic violence reportedly persisted thereafter.

In September 2025, tensions reportedly escalated in Prey Chan and Chouk Chey villages in Banteay Meanchey province, following clashes between Thai forces and Cambodian villagers in a contested border area. Thai military forces and other authorities reportedly deployed tear gas and rubber bullets against villagers protesting the installation of barbed wire, preventing several families from returning to their homes. Dozens of Cambodian civilians were reportedly

injured, and displaced. The Cambodian Government relocated them to makeshift shelters with basic assistance. Displaced families reportedly stayed in the area, hoping they would be able to return to their homes.

In October 2025, Thai forces reportedly expanded land-clearing operations and road construction in Prey Chan village, resulting in further destruction of farmland. Reports also indicate they used intimidation tactics, including the nighttime broadcasting of threatening messages, featuring ghost-like sounds from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. between 10-14 October 2025. The Thai army warned residents that they could face a fine of up to 100,000 Thai Baht and/or imprisonment for up to 15 years if they refused to leave areas. It is alleged that Thai authorities issued eviction notifications to the remaining villagers, notifying the Cambodian provincial Governor.

It is further reported that on 26 October 2025, Cambodia and Thailand reaffirmed their commitment on the margins of the 47th ASEAN Summit, to uphold and implement the ceasefire agreement. Tensions reportedly remained high since 12 November 2025. The Thai military allegedly injured at least three Cambodian civilians in a reported shooting incident in Prey Chan village. On 7 December 2025, hostilities reportedly resumed on a larger scale and continued for approximately 21 days, affecting Cambodian civilians across six provinces along the Cambodia-Thailand border. During this period, approximately 640,000 Cambodian civilians were displaced, the majority of whom were women (336,302) and children (204,992), including the villagers from Prey Chan and Chouk Chey villages, who were relocated to an IDP site in O'Bei choan district of Banteay Meanchey province. At least 32 Cambodian civilians were reportedly killed and 93 others injured. Thailand and Cambodia reached a ceasefire agreement on 27 December 2025. Both parties committed to the protection of civilians, the safe return of displaced people, and the continuation of border demarcation efforts through the Joint Boundary Commission.

In 2025, the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (NHRCT) issued three statements during the 2025 Cambodia-Thailand border conflict addressing violations of international humanitarian law and the protection of civic space. On 25 July 2025, it condemned attacks by Cambodian forces against civilians and medical facilities, finding that such conduct may constitute war crimes under the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute. On 21 October 2025, the NHRCT called upon all parties to uphold freedom of expression and human dignity and urged against inciting racial hatred targeting Cambodian nationals residing in Thailand in connection with the border conflict. On 16 December 2025, it reiterated serious concern over indiscriminate attacks and the obstruction of civilians' right to return, finding both Governments inconsistent with obligations under international humanitarian law.

Situation of Internally displaced persons

As of early April 2026, 34,439 individuals, including 11,449 children, reportedly remain in IDP camps Cambodia, while many others are believed to be living with host families. As of February 2026, at least 60 IDP sites remain operational across several provinces, including Banteay Meanchey, Oddor

Meanchey, Preah Vihear and Siem Reap. These sites are located in temporary shelters such as schools, *pagodas* and evacuation centres and are reportedly managed by the Cambodian Government with the support of humanitarian actors. Two major sites hosting 2,749 families with a total of 11,820 people, including 2,940 children, are reportedly in Banteay Meanchey province. As of February 2026, two sites remained operational in Oddor Meanchey Province, one of which reportedly hosted 800 families or approximately 2,600 individuals, while the two sites in Siem Reap province hosted in total of 694 families originally from Oddar Meanchey.

The Government of Cambodia has reportedly taken measures to respond to the displacement, including through the provision of temporary shelters, basic assistance, and the establishment of temporary education and healthcare services, primarily operated by displaced teachers and volunteers. Authorities have also reportedly developed plans for relocation and reconstruction of affected communities.

However, it is reported that living conditions in IDP sites remain inadequate. Shelters consist primarily of makeshift tents that do not provide sufficient protection against heat, flooding, snakes and other environmental hazards. Flooding has reportedly affected some sites, including incidents impacting hundreds of families. Some camps were reportedly flooded in July 2025 and in March 2026, reportedly affecting 400 families in an IDP camp in Banteay Meanchey. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation reportedly remains limited, with insufficient supply and a lack of gender-segregated facilities, raising concerns regarding safety and dignity, particularly for women and girls. It is further reported that the direst conditions were observed in Preah Dak site in Siem Reap, where several IDP women reported having no income from work or economic activity since the conflict began in December 2025, and despite receiving monthly cash transfers through family package, they remain unable to afford baby formula, diapers, and other necessities for their small children. Protection risks have therefore worsened with reports of gender-based violence particularly affecting women, children, and older persons and persons with disabilities.

Many internally displaced persons have lost their livelihoods and lack access to income, limiting their ability to meet basic needs. Female-headed households have been impacted by their lower income base prior to displacement and have reported significantly lower current incomes, which could contribute to increased vulnerabilities. Temporary education and health services have reportedly been established but remain dependent on volunteers and may not meet adequate standards.

Despite the cessation of hostilities, many internally displaced persons reportedly remain unable to return to their homes for several reasons. Some IDPs are unable to return as their homes are located in areas reportedly under the control of Thai forces, while others cannot return because their homes have been completely destroyed or severely damaged during the conflict. In addition, even in areas not under Thai control, IDPs face significant obstacles to return, including security risks posed by the proximity to military installations and the presence of

unexploded ordnance. Furthermore, the lack of economic opportunities and livelihoods in their areas of origin continues to deter displaced persons from returning, leaving them with little prospect of rebuilding their lives. Approximately 13,000 individuals are reportedly affected by this situation. In addition, many homes have reportedly been destroyed or severely damaged. Over 1,500 civilian houses were affected during the December 2025 escalation, with reports of entire villages being burned or destroyed.

Relocation and reintegration of IDPs

It is reported that on 23 December 2025, the Cambodian Government established a working group to support post-conflict recovery. The group is tasked with assessing livelihoods, damaged infrastructure, and restoration needs, including homes, schools, healthcare facilities, roads, bridges, water systems, and electricity networks.

On 11 February 2026, the Government reportedly approved a plan to temporarily relocate 2,749 families (11,820 individuals, including 2,940 children) from O'Bei Choan and Kork Romeat communes to sites about 10 km from their original villages. The relocation is reportedly pending Cambodia-Thailand border negotiations, expected to be completed within six months, with efforts to accelerate before the rainy season. The plan reportedly includes houses on 20m x 30m plots, as well as schools, *pagodas*, health centers, and administrative offices. It is not clear whether IDPs were aware of the plan and whether meaningful consultations were held regarding the new sites.

It is also reported that following the approval of the plan, dozens of families moved into the relocation site. Each family is reportedly expected to receive a 30m x 40m housing plot and two hectares of farmland. For damaged homes, the Government will reportedly provide repair or reconstruction support, though no specific timeline has reportedly been provided. As of 7 March 2026, shelters were reportedly handed over to displaced families from Samraong city and Banteay Ampil district.

It is further reported that on 1 January 2026, the National Bank of Cambodia instructed banks to prioritize loan repayment relief for individuals affected by the Cambodia-Thailand border situation, including frontline personnel, following earlier guidance from 10 December 2025. It is reported that loan repayments have been postponed until the end of March 2026. Most displaced persons reported no income since the conflict, with only limited earnings from small shops at displacement sites or temporary work in nearby provinces, and were unaware if the postponement could be extended.

While we do not wish to prejudge the accuracy of the information received, we express serious concern at the reports regarding the large-scale internal displacement of civilians, destruction of housing, land, property and livelihoods, and the precarious humanitarian and human rights situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the context of the 2025 Cambodia-Thailand border conflict. We are also concerned about the limited access to essential services such as food, health care, safe water and sanitation, and barriers to adequate education in the IDP camps. We are particularly

concerned about the protection needs of women, girls and children who are reportedly disproportionately affected by the conditions in the IDPs sites. We are also concerned about the reported obstacles preventing safe, voluntary and dignified return of IDPs to their places of origin. Finally, we would be concerned that your Excellency's Government might not have adequately consulted affected Cambodian civilians regarding relocation and resettlement plans.

In connection with the above alleged facts and concerns, please refer to the **Annex on Reference to international human rights law** attached to this letter which cites international human rights instruments and standards relevant to these allegations.

As it is our responsibility, under the mandates provided to us by the Human Rights Council, to seek to clarify all cases brought to our attention, we would be grateful for your observations on the following matters:

1. Please provide any additional information and/or comment(s) you may have on the above-mentioned allegations.
2. Please indicate what measures have been taken to initiate prompt, impartial, thorough, and effective investigations into allegations of civilian killings, the destruction of homes and other civilian objects. Please also provide information on steps taken to ensure accountability for those responsible, including individuals bearing superior or command responsibility.
3. Please provide information on measures taken by your Excellency's Government to ensure the protection and assistance to internally displaced persons, both in IDP camps and in resettlement sites, including access to housing and shelter, food, healthcare, water, sanitation and protection services, with particular attention to the needs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities. Please provide information on measures taken or envisaged to facilitate the safe, voluntary and dignified return of internally displaced persons.
4. Please provide additional information on the measures your Excellency's Government has taken to consult IDPs and involve them in decision-making prior to approving the above-mentioned temporary relocation, resettlement and reintegration plans, including efforts to ensure participation of groups at risk of marginalization, such as women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, ethnic or linguistic minorities.
5. Please provide information on measures taken and the timeline envisaged to conclude the assessment of the lost or damaged housing, land, property and infrastructure, and recovery and reconstruction needs as well as measures taken or envisaged to compensate for damaged or destroyed housing, land and property. Please provide information on whether the timeline of repair or reconstruction support as well as compensation plans were communicated to the affected communities.

6. Please provide information on what barriers do IDPs face in securing or renewing documentation proving their tenure rights in areas of displacement and return, and how does this influence access to rehabilitation, resettlement and eventually to reconstruction programmes? What measures can your Excellency's Government take already in the short-term to address these barriers?
7. Please provide information on humanitarian assistance, early recovery, peacebuilding.
8. Please provide information on measures adopted to ensure the removal of unexploded ordnance and to enable safe agricultural activities, housing reconstruction and livelihood restoration conducive to durable return.
9. Please provide information on whether ceasefire, security, demining or stabilization arrangements reached between Thailand and Cambodia? have explicitly addressed freedom of movement, access to land, and safety guarantees for internally displaced persons or any reparation for housing and civilian infrastructure destroyed or damaged during the conflict.
10. Please provide information on any mechanisms in place to monitor, investigate and prevent human rights violations in IDP sites. Please provide information on specific measures taken to address the needs of women, girls, children and other persons in vulnerable situations.
11. Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that the killing of civilians in the context of hostilities is investigated promptly, effectively, independently and impartially, in accordance with the Minnesota Protocol on the Investigation of Potentially Unlawful Death (2016), and that accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure effective remedies and reparations for victims and their families.

This communication, and any response received from your Excellency's Government, will be made public via the communications reporting [website](#) at the 60 days mark. Should Your Excellency's Government respond within 60 days, both the communication and the response, may be published before the 60 days mark. The communications and responses will also be made available in the subsequent periodic report to be presented to the Human Rights Council.

While awaiting a reply, we welcome the ceasefire and encourage all parties to engage in continued dialogue to ensure that the ceasefire holds and to seek more permanent solutions towards lasting peace. We urge that all necessary interim measures be taken to assist and protect IDPs and facilitate their safe, voluntary and dignified return of to their places of origin, halt the alleged violations and prevent their re-occurrence and in the event that the investigations support or suggest the allegations to be correct, to ensure the accountability of any person(s) responsible for the alleged violations.

We may publicly express our concerns in the near future as, in our view, the information upon which the press release will be based is sufficiently reliable to indicate a matter warranting immediate attention. We also believe that the wider public should be alerted to the potential implications of the above-mentioned allegations. The press release will indicate that we have been in contact with your Excellency's Government to clarify the issue/s in question.

Please be informed that a letter on this subject matter has also been sent to the Government of Thailand.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.

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Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons

Farida Shaheed
Special Rapporteur on the right to education

Morris Tidball-Binz
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Annex

Reference to international human rights law

In connection with above alleged facts and concerns, we would like to draw your Excellency's Government's attention to the relevant international human rights norms and standards applicable to the situation described.

We would like to refer to several international human rights treaties relevant to the issues raised in this communication, including the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, to which Cambodia acceded on 26 May 1992; the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, to which Cambodia acceded on 15 October 1992; and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which Cambodia ratified on 15 October 1992.

We would like to recall article 11 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which recognizes the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate housing, food and water, and the continuous improvement of living conditions. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its [general comment No. 4](#), has clarified that the right to adequate housing should not be interpreted narrowly as shelter, but rather as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity (para. 7). The Committee further emphasized that adequacy includes elements such as legal security of tenure, availability of services, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy.

In its [general comment No. 7](#), the Committee underscored that forced evictions and displacement resulting in homelessness constitute prima facie violations of the Covenant and may arise in contexts including armed conflict and internal displacement (para. 5). I further recall that the right to adequate food, as elaborated in [general comment No. 12](#), requires States to ensure physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or the means for its procurement, and is intrinsically linked to human dignity and the realization of other human rights (para. 4).

We also like to refer to the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, derived from articles 11 and 12 of the Covenant and elaborated in [general comment No. 15](#), which requires that water for personal and domestic use be sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable (para. 2). States should give special attention to refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and returnees, and in particular should grant them the right to water on the same conditions as granted to nationals. All water facilities and services must be of sufficient quality, culturally appropriate and sensitive to gender, life-cycle and privacy requirements. Physical security should not be threatened during access to water facilities and services.

We further recall article 12 of the Covenant, which guarantees the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. In its general comment No. 14, the Committee clarified that this right encompasses the availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of health facilities, goods and services, as well as the underlying determinants of health, including access to safe water, adequate sanitation, food and housing (paras. 9 and 11).

With regard to civil and political rights, we would like to refer to articles 6, 9 and 12 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, which protect the rights to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom of movement. These provisions require States to take appropriate measures to protect individuals from threats to life and physical integrity and to ensure that any restrictions on movement are lawful, necessary and proportionate.

Furthermore, the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, in articles 2, 3 and 12, obliges States to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure their equal access to health care and adequate living conditions. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in its [general recommendation No. 30](#) has emphasized that women in displacement settings face heightened risks and that States must ensure their access to essential services, including health care, housing, water, sanitation and livelihoods, as well as provide specific protection and assistance.

Moreover, the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, in its report on health and safety (A/HRC/32/44), stressed that women's safety should be addressed as an integral aspect of women's health. Women's exposure to gender-based violence in both the public and private spheres, including in conflict situations, is a major component of women's physical and mental ill health and the destruction of their well-being, and constitutes a violation of their human rights. In addition, in its report on sexual and reproductive rights in crisis (A/HRC/47/38), the Working Group highlighted that crisis responses must be gendered and require a combination of emergency and long-term measures. They must be developed and implemented with the active participation of women and girls, taking into account their urgent medical needs and the pervasive structural discrimination against them, while protecting individual autonomy and freedoms, through a coordinated and holistic approach. The Working Group stressed that sexual and reproductive health matters are intrinsic to every woman and girl and tied to their ability to live with dignity and exercise their agency. It expressed deep concern about the widespread impunity for violations of the sexual and reproductive health rights of women and girls. The experts emphasized that women and girls are entitled to receive adequate reparations, including restitution, compensation, satisfaction, rehabilitation and guarantees of non-repetition, for violations of their sexual and reproductive health rights. The Working Group recommended expanding the availability of sexual and reproductive health services, including through telemedicine and mobile clinics, to reach diverse populations. The Working Group also recommended ensuring access to a full range of contraceptive information and services for women and girls, including emergency contraceptives. It recommended expanding access to safe abortion services, including medical abortion and post abortion care, and removing legal barriers to abortion, in particular in situations of crisis.

We would also like to refer to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, in particular articles 3, 6, 24, 27 and 28, which require that the best interests of the child be a primary consideration and recognize the rights of the child to life, health, an adequate standard of living and education. These provisions are particularly relevant in situations of displacement, where children are entitled to special protection and assistance.

We further recall article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, according to which every human being has the inherent right to life and no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of life. The Human Rights Committee has clarified that the right to life is the supreme right from which no derogation is permitted, including in situations of armed conflict. It has further affirmed that, in such situations, the arbitrariness of a deprivation of life falls to be determined by reference to the applicable rules of international humanitarian law, while international human rights law continues to apply. We further recall that article 6 of the Covenant also entails a duty to investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute potentially unlawful deprivations of life, to ensure accountability, and to provide effective remedies and full reparation to victims and their families.

In situations of armed conflict, international humanitarian law applies alongside international human rights law. We draw the attention of your Excellency's Government to the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, which require parties to distinguish between civilians and combatants, and between civilian objects and military objectives, prohibit direct attacks against civilians and civilian objects, prohibit attacks expected to cause incidental civilian harm that would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated, and to take all feasible precautions to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects. The displacement of civilians is prohibited unless required for their security or imperative military reasons, and all possible measures must be taken to ensure that displaced persons are received under satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition.

Furthermore, the presence of unexploded ordnance poses serious risks to civilian life and may impede the safe return of displaced persons. Under international humanitarian law, parties to a conflict are required to clear, remove or otherwise render harmless explosive remnants of war and to take measures to protect civilians from their effects.

Finally, we would like to remind your Excellency's Government that, as provided by the international humanitarian law, in case of displacement, all possible measures must be taken in order that the civilians concerned are received under satisfactory conditions of shelter, hygiene, health, safety and nutrition and that members of the same family are not separated (rule 131 and additional protocol II, article 17). Displaced persons have a right to return and their property rights must be respected (rules 132 and 133). Women and children are entitled to special protection (rules 134 and 135). Each party to the conflict must respect and ensure respect for international humanitarian law by its armed forces (rule 139), and war crimes allegedly committed by nationals or armed forces must be investigated and the suspects prosecuted (rule 158).

We would also like to refer to the 1998 Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which establish the need to respect and ensure respect for international human rights law to prevent and avoid conditions that might lead to the displacement of persons (principle 5). We moreover stress that according to the guiding principles, every human being shall have the right to be protected against being arbitrarily displaced from his or her home, including situations of armed conflict and based on policies resulting in altering the ethnic or religious composition of a population (principle 6). It is incumbent upon the authorities undertaking displacement to ensure

proper accommodation is provided to displaced persons, under satisfactory conditions of safety, nutrition, health, and hygiene, and that members of the same family are not displaced (principle 7). Displacement should not be carried out in a manner that violates the right to life, dignity, liberty, and security of the displaced (principle 8). Indigenous peoples and minorities, peasants, pastoralists and other groups with a special dependency on and attachment to their lands should be particularly protected from displacement (principle 9). Internally displaced persons should be protected against genocide, murder, summary execution, indiscriminate acts of violence, starvation as a method of combat, use as shields, attacks against their camps and settlements, landmines, rape, and arbitrary detention (principles 10-12). Internally displaced persons should enjoy adequate standard of living, which includes basic shelter and housing, food and water, and access to medical services (principles 18-19). The property rights of internally displaced persons must be respected, and their property and possessions should in all circumstances be protected from pillage, indiscriminate attacks, destruction as a form of collective punishment, and arbitrary and illegal appropriation, occupation, or use (principle 21). All authorities concerned should not impede the passage of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons, and humanitarian workers and supplies must be respected (principles 25-26). Internally displaced persons are entitled to a durable solution of their choice, i.e. safe, voluntary and dignified return to their places or origin, settlement elsewhere in the country or local integration (principles 28-30).

Finally we would like to draw your attention to the Guiding Principles on Resettlement (A/HRC/61/43) that include the right to safe and voluntary return of persons arbitrarily displaced, specify their right to compensation and reparations, and provide guidance should a safe return be impossible, how resettlement should be organized in conformity with human rights. In addition, the Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing would like to highlight the Draft Guiding Principles on Reconstruction for Conflict-affected Countries and Territories, that specify various rights in reconstruction efforts, including the rights of displaced persons to return, full and fair compensation and reparation, meaningful participation, safe and clean environment, and adequate housing. They provide useful human rights guidance in the context of reconstruction.

The full texts of the human rights instruments and standards recalled above are available on www.ohchr.org or can be provided upon request.