



By: TA | AP Brief

Thailand and Cambodia reaffirm ceasefire after China-brokered meeting in Shanghai



Thailand and Cambodia reaffirmed their shaky ceasefire after days of fighting along their border, as China stepped into negotiate with the two countries.

The ceasefire **reached** in Malaysia was supposed to take effect at midnight on Monday, but was quickly **tested**. Thailand's army accused Cambodia of launching attacks in multiple areas early Tuesday, but Cambodia said there was no firing in any location. The Thai army then reported exchanges of gunfire into Wednesday morning but said there was no use of heavy artillery.

"Such act of aggression constitutes once again a clear violation of the ceasefire agreement by Cambodian forces and their apparent lack of good faith," said Thailand's Foreign Ministry in a statement Wednesday morning.

By Wednesday afternoon, however, both sides appeared to have reaffirmed their commitment to a ceasefire, with representatives appearing smiling in a photo with a Chinese vice minister Sun Weidong at a meeting in Shanghai.

"Cambodia and Thailand reiterated to China their commitment to the ceasefire consensus and expressed appreciation for China's positive role in de-escalating the situation," a statement from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

China said the informal meeting was its "latest diplomatic effort" and it was playing a "constructive role in resolving their border dispute," according to the same statement.

Violating the ceasefire

The fighting Tuesday night occurred in Phu Makhuea, a mountain in a disputed area next to Thailand's Sisaket province.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and Thailand's acting prime minister, Phumtham Wechayachai, agreed on Monday to an "unconditional" halt in fighting, which has killed at least 41 people.

The meeting was hosted by Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim as annual chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. He called the ceasefire a "vital first step towards de-escalation and the restoration of peace and security."

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"President (Donald) Trump and I are committed to an immediate cessation of violence and expect the governments of Cambodia and Thailand to fully honor their commitments to end this conflict," Rubio said in a statement.

Hun Manet said Tuesday that Trump had called to offer congratulations for the peace move. He posted on social media that Trump pledged the U.S. would join the monitoring process along with Malaysia to ensure the ceasefire is implemented.

The Thai government separately said it has complained to Malaysia, the U.S. and China about Cambodia's alleged breach of the ceasefire agreement previously.

By Wednesday, there were signs of calm along the border, with some of the more than 260,000 people **displaced** by the fighting returning to their homes.

Cambodia and Thailand have clashed in the past over their 800-kilometer (500-mile) border.

The fighting began Thursday after a land mine **explosion** along the border wounded five Thai soldiers. Tensions had been growing since May when a Cambodian soldier was killed in a confrontation that created a diplomatic rift

and roiled Thailand's domestic **politics**.

Residents face limbo

While some residents near the border have started returning home, many remain behind in evacuation shelters, uncertain of their fate.

Vendor Kanchana Sukjit, 33, said she fled home near the Ta Muen Thom temple with a few belongings and her small white-colored dog Nam Khaeng, which means ice in Thai. The temple had been one of the main flashpoints in the conflict over the past week.

It was the first time she had to flee home like this and she was worried as she waited for clearer instructions about what happens next.

"I'm stressed when I read the news, like when reports said they were going to fire (a long-range rocket), because my home is right next to a military camp. I was quite stressed that day because I was afraid that my home would get caught in a crossfire," she said.