



By: TA | AP Insight

Thailand and Cambodia are resuming negotiations in a new attempt to stop the armed conflict



Thailand and Cambodia will resume talks later this week to work toward a more durable **ceasefire** along their border, Thailand's foreign minister said, stressing that progress depends on detailed bilateral negotiations rather than public declarations that internationalize the dispute.

A **ceasefire agreement** in October was rushed to ensure it could be witnessed by U.S. President Donald Trump and lacked sufficient details to ensure the deal to end the armed conflict would hold, Thai Foreign Minister Sihasak Phuangketkeow said after an Association of Southeast Asian Nations foreign ministers' meeting in Kuala Lumpur.

While Cambodia has publicly said it is ready for an unconditional ceasefire, Bangkok never received any direct proposal and Thailand believed such statements were aimed at increasing international pressure rather than resolving the issue, Sihasak said following the ASEAN meeting that was arranged to seek ways to end the crisis.

The general border committee involving both nations will meet Wednesday to iron out detailed measures toward a lasting ceasefire, he said.

Thailand appreciates the U.S. effort but "in the end, it's up to the two counties to be ready and sort things out bilaterally," he said.

"This time, let's thrash out the details and make sure the ceasefire reflects the situation on the ground and the ceasefire is one that really holds, and both sides are going to fully respect the ceasefire," Sihasak told a news conference.

Both sides continue to trade accusations

The border conflict escalated into deadly combat two weeks ago and derailed the agreement **promoted by Trump**, which ended **five days of fighting** in July.

The agreement was brokered by Malaysia and pushed through under pressure from Trump, who threatened to withhold trade privileges unless Thailand and Cambodia agreed.

The ceasefire was formalized with more detail at an October regional summit in Malaysia attended by Trump.

Meanwhile, fighting persists and both sides continue to trade accusations.

The Philippines, who takes over as ASEAN chair next year, said that it is prepared to assume the role of mediator between Cambodia and Thailand

Cambodia's Defense Ministry in a statement on Tuesday condemned Thai aggression in its territory that it said targeted civilian areas.

It said Cambodia wants a just, equitable and lasting solution to the dispute and demands that Thailand halt combat and withdraw its troops.

Malaysia, who is this year's ASEAN chair, said in a statement after Monday's meeting that ASEAN foreign ministers "expressed hope for de-escalation of hostilities as soon as possible."

The Philippines, who takes over as ASEAN chair next year, said in a separate statement that it is prepared to assume the role of facilitator or mediator between Cambodia and Thailand if necessary.

International concern

The fighting has drawn international concern. The U.S. Department of State on Sunday urged both sides to "end hostilities, withdraw heavy weapons, cease emplacement of landmines, and fully implement the Kuala Lumpur Peace Accords, which include mechanisms to accelerate humanitarian demining and address border issues."

The **fighting** is a result of a dispute over patches of territory claimed by both nations along their shared border.

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Since then combat has broken out on several fronts, with Thailand carrying out airstrikes in Cambodia with F-16 fighter jets and Cambodia firing thousands of medium-range BM-21 rockets from truck-mounted launchers that can launch up to 40 rockets simultaneously.

More than three dozen people on both sides of the border have officially been reported killed in the past week of fighting, while more than half a million have been **displaced**, according to officials.

Land mine explosions

Under the October truce Thailand was to release 18 Cambodian soldiers held prisoner and both sides were to begin removing heavy weapons and land mines along the border.

But the two countries have carried on a bitter propaganda war with minor cross-border violence.



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Cambodia insists the mines were remnants of its decades-long civil war, which ended in 1999.

"These were clearly newly planted landmines, and this was confirmed by the ASEAN observer team," Sihasak said Monday, calling it a "clear violation" of the October agreement.

The Thai navy said Sunday one of its marines on the front line sustained serious injuries to his right leg from stepping on a land mine.

The navy also claimed to have discovered a large number of abandoned weapons and explosive ordnance while securing an area described as a Cambodian stronghold, which showed "deliberate planning and intentional use of anti-personnel landmines" against Thai troops.

The Thai Foreign Ministry said it would send letters of protest to Cambodia and Zambia, the current chair of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, also known as the Ottawa Convention, to pursue further action under the convention's mechanisms.

Cambodia did not immediately respond to the Thai claims.