

Mr. Speaker,

I want to provide a progress report to the House on international efforts to end the violence that has gripped Cambodia for fifteen years. The Cambodian people have suffered greatly from invasion, unparalleled abuses of human rights, and civil war. We wish to ensure that Canada does its part in helping to break the cycle of suffering in Cambodia.

There are measures Canada can take to address the suffering of Cambodia, and which will contribute to the building of a lasting peace.

The recent history of Cambodia is a saga of unending war, turmoil and death. During the Vietnam war, approximately 600,000 Cambodians were killed. With the end of the war in April 1975 the Khmer Rouge forces overthrew the Cambodian Government of Lon Nol. The subsequent atrocities perpetrated by the regime of Pol Pot between 1976 and 1979 have been condemned by the international community and by Canadians from every walk of life.

The expulsion of the Khmer Rouge at the hands of the Vietnamese in 1979 led to an extended civil war pitting three Cambodian parties against a government installed by the Vietnamese army. Eleven years later, in spite of diplomatic efforts, the war continues, and Cambodians continue to die. Indochina's limited resources are being tragically squandered on the battlefield.

In September of 1989 Vietnam withdrew their troops from Cambodia. Since that withdrawal, we have seen the two sides of the Cambodian conflict intensify the civil war. We have seen the battlelines shift, but with little overall change from where they began eleven years ago. Time and time again the military solutions have been chosen over political solutions.

The victims remain the same: the people of Cambodia, and indeed all of the people of Indochina who have borne too long the burden of protracted military struggle.

From the beginning of the war, Canada has helped fund the efforts of the United Nations and its agencies to care for the 300,000 Cambodians seeking refuge on the Thai-Cambodian border. Our commitment continues to these people, and this fiscal year it will amount to \$3 million in food and other aid.

We also recognize the need to assist the 8 million Cambodians still living in their country whose lives have been disrupted by the armed struggle. Their needs are immediate and real. A response to their suffering must not be held forever hostage to progress towards a political settlement.

With that in mind, the Government is now in the process of re-establishing the eligibility of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, the three countries of Indochina, for official Canadian development assistance.