



# Statements and Speeches

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No. 79/24

## THE SITUATION IN KAMPUCHEA

A Statement by Mr. Douglas Roche, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs and Representative of Canada to the Thirty-fourth Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, November 14, 1979

Canada takes the floor in this debate as a country which has had a long involvement in supervisory mechanisms established as a result of various attempts by the international community to restore peace and stability in Indochina. It is therefore with concern that we have watched the developments in Kampuchea over the past years; we have a deep sympathy for the plight of the people of that country. When the war in Vietnam ended, many of us were able, after the decades of strife Indochina had seen, to hope that peace was at hand. However, hope gave way to horror.

Canadians have followed the situation in Kampuchea with extreme concern. We have felt revulsion at the stories of the tragic suffering of the people. As these stories have gradually emerged they have become not vague images but vivid reality. Incalculable numbers of people have died from the conflict and from famine. The promise of Kampuchea's future has been dimmed by the deaths of educators, doctors, skilled workers and managers, and most sadly, virtually a generation of children.

The people's appalling circumstances were only beginning to be made known to the world when their suffering was compounded by the aggression of a foreign power embroiling them in active conflict. Kampuchean have been forced to flee from their homes, to separate from their families and to face starvation and death.

Conditions continue to deteriorate. The pitiful few who have been able to reach refuge in Thailand tell of the decimation of the population through disease and famine. Villages have been sacked by troops — by regulars, guerrillas and deserters — water supplies have become contaminated, and people are reduced to eating seed grains and whatever else they can get by foraging. Children, the future of the nation, are dying by the thousands. The distended bellies and bewildered eyes of the infants tell of the horror of life and death inside Kampuchea. Canadians feel outrage at the enormity of this obscenity.

The Secretary-General should be congratulated for convening the Pledging Conference held November 5 for emergency humanitarian relief for the people of Kampuchea. The generosity of those who responded to the plea and pledged some \$210 million will mean that some lives are saved in the coming months.

Canada appeals to all parties to extend their co-operation to the humanitarian relief effort. The most recent reports of the aid effort speak in terms of a six-month period within which \$110-million worth of food, medical equipment and agricultural supplies should be distributed. The international community must recognize that this

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