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VIETNAMESE ATTACKS ON CAMBODIAN REFUGEE CAMPS AND INCURSIONS INTO THAILAND

The Department of External Affairs issued the following statement today regarding the escalation of the conflict along Cambodia's border with Thailand.

The Vietnamese military offensive began on March 31 and has resulted so far in the destruction of several Khmer refugee camps along the Thai-Cambodian border, the deaths of several hundred Khmer civilians, the displacement of over 40,000 Khmer civilians into Thailand, armed Vietnamese incursions against Thailand and attacks on Thai civilians and property.

Canada deplores the increased aggressive military action by Vietnamese forces in Cambodia and Thailand. This action has increased political tensions and threatens stability in Southeast Asia. Canada regrets that the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, by its actions on this occasion, has again spurned the efforts of the United Nations and the vast majority of the international community, including Canada, to find a peaceful solution to the problem of Cambodia in accordance with resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the 1981 International Conference on Kampuchea.

Canada particularly regrets the invasion and attempted occupation of Thai territory by Vietnamese forces and attacks on innocent Thai civilians and property. Thailand and other member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have worked assiduously to contribute to peace and stability in Southeast Asia. The actions by the government of Vietnam against Thailand demonstrate disrespect for this peace process

and a blatant disregard for the principles of international law and normally accepted international rules of conduct with respect to the territorial integrity of Thailand.

Canada is also concerned by the deepening human tragedy which the Vietnamese offensive has inflicted on the Khmer people. The loss of civilian lives, the wounding of innocent people and the destruction of relief facilities provided through international relief organizations is deplored. The government of Vietnam must be held responsible for this wanton destruction of life and property. Canada calls on Vietnam to desist from further aggressive acts and to cooperate in the pursuit of peace and development in Southeast Asia.