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THE SITUATION IN KAMPUCHEA

Letter dated 17 December 1979 from the Permanent
Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith, for your information, the text of a joint statement issued at the end of the informal meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), held at Kuala Lumpur on 14 December 1979.

It is requested that the text of the joint statement be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 123.

(Signed) Tan Sri ZAITON Ibrahim

ANNEX

Joint statement issued at the end of the informal meeting of the
Foreign Ministers of the Association of South-East Asian Nations
(ASEAN), held at Kuala Lumpur on 14 December 1979

1. The Foreign Ministers of the ASEAN countries held an informal meeting at Kuala Lumpur on 14 December 1979. They exchanged views on developments in Kampuchea and along the Thai-Kampuchean border and discussed ASEAN efforts to contribute towards the implementation of General Assembly resolution 34/22 of 14 November 1979 on the situation in Kampuchea. They also exchanged views on ASEAN co-operation and on other matters of common concern, including the problem of Indochinese refugees/displaced persons.
2. The ASEAN Foreign Ministers expressed their grave concern over the growing seriousness of the conflict in Kampuchea, particularly the situation along the Thai-Kampuchean border, which was marked by increasing armed incursions of foreign forces and cross-border shellings into Thai territory, thereby heightening tension with the possibility of escalation and widening of the area of conflict. The continued fighting along and near the Thai-Kampuchean border has caused a massive influx of over 120,000 Kampucheans into Thailand with another 600,000 poised along the border to enter Thai territory. It has also resulted in the uprooting of some 80,000 Thai villagers from their traditional places of domicile along the border. The Foreign Ministers agreed that the situation along the Thai-Kampuchean border constitutes a serious threat to the peace, security and stability of the South-East Asian region as a whole.
3. The Foreign Ministers called for appropriate effective measures to reduce the tension and to prevent any future escalation and spill-over as well as the possible widening of the area of conflict. Increased international presence in the area would have a beneficial effect on the situation along the border. In that connexion, the Foreign Ministers agreed to support Thailand's request to the Secretary-General to send a team of observers to Thailand and increase the number of United Nations relief personnel along the Thai side of the border with Kampuchea.
4. The Foreign Ministers further expressed their full support of the efforts of the Secretary-General and of the international community to render urgent relief assistance to all the needy civilian population affected by the Kampuchean conflict. They expressed concern over numerous reports that relief supplies are not reaching the intended recipients. They requested the Secretary-General to further seek ways and means to effectively distribute such relief assistance to all needy Kampuchean civilians on an urgent and non-discriminatory basis. They appealed for the fullest co-operation of all parties concerned to achieve this end.
5. They reaffirmed their joint statement of 12 January 1979, issued at Bangkok, and agreed to work actively with the Secretary-General in the search for a peaceful solution to the Kampuchean conflict. They reiterated their strong support for the

General Assembly resolution on Kampuchea, which provides the framework for a comprehensive solution of the Kampuchean problem and which, in particular, called for the cessation of hostilities and for a political solution of the conflict on the basis of the withdrawal of foreign forces from Kampuchea, self-determination for the Kampuchean people and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in South-East Asia.

6. The Foreign Ministers also resolved to intensify their efforts towards a peaceful solution of the Kampuchean conflict which would ensure the restoration of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Kampuchea. To this end, they called upon the Secretary-General to take concrete steps towards the early implementation of the General Assembly resolution, including the convening of an international conference on Kampuchea.

7. They further agreed to continue consultations with concerned countries towards achieving a political solution of the Kampuchean conflict. In this connexion, the Foreign Ministers requested the Foreign Minister of Malaysia to visit Hanoi in his capacity as Chairman of the ASEAN Standing Committee, and to indicate that ASEAN is prepared to have a dialogue with the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

8. The Foreign Ministers emphasized that they have always had reservations about Pol Pot and have made this clear in their statements. The Foreign Ministers stated that they will continue to recognize the Government of Democratic Kampuchea whose credentials were accepted by the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session. To do otherwise would only be to put the stamp of approval on the act of foreign military intervention and the imposition of a régime which is sustained by foreign military forces. It would also hamper efforts to seek a lasting political solution to the Kampuchean problem. In this context, the Foreign Ministers were encouraged by the recent forthright statements by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand to continue to recognize Democratic Kampuchea.

9. The Foreign Ministers emphasized that, in calling for a political solution in Kampuchea, they were motivated solely by their desire to ensure that all countries in the region of South-East Asia can enjoy peace and stability, based on respect for the principles of peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States and freedom from subversion or coercion by outside Powers. They stressed that, far from taking sides with any party to, or major Power involved in, the conflict, it is their desired goal to secure South-East Asia as a region free from interference by outside Powers or from involvement in great Power rivalry.

10. The Foreign Ministers agreed that the problem of refugees coming overland into Thailand has become more serious as a result of the continued fighting in Kampuchea. The four ASEAN Foreign Ministers welcomed the efforts being made by the Government of Thailand in coping with this problem in line with its "open-door" policy based on humanitarian grounds. They also expressed their conviction that the land cases be enabled to return to their homeland as soon as possible. They called on the international community, including the United Nations and its agencies, to continue to render every possible assistance to the Government of Thailand to alleviate the

problem. They further urged the resettlement countries and other countries in a position to do so to increase the number and speed of their intake of the land cases.

11. On the problem of the Vietnamese boat people, the Foreign Ministers noted that Viet Nam is co-operating in tackling the problem at source. They stressed the hope that Viet Nam would continue to co-operate in the resolution of the problem. The Foreign Ministers also expressed their appreciation for the contributions made so far by donor/resettlement countries and the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in alleviating this problem. With a view to a speedy solution and in order that ASEAN countries will not be saddled with a residual problem, the Foreign Ministers further urged resettlement countries to step up their intake of Indochinese refugees/illegal immigrants from ASEAN countries.
