



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/35/174
14 April 1980
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Thirty-fifth session
Item 22 of the preliminary list*

THE SITUATION IN KAMPUCHEA

Letter dated 11 April 1980 from the Permanent Representative
of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-
General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, for your information, the article entitled "Refugees under the control of the Khmers rouges" written by Hervé Chabalier in the newspaper Le matin of 15-16 March 1980. It reflects the current situation on the borders of Kampuchea and, in particular, the untenable life of the Kampuchean refugees under the "control" of Pol Pot's people and the role played in the affair by Peking in violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of Kampuchea.

I should be grateful if you would have this text circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under item 22 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) HA VAN LAU
Permanent Representative of the
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
to the United Nations

* A/35/70.

ANNEX

REFUGEES UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE KHMERS ROUGES

In Sakeo Camp, in Thailand, where 28,500 Cambodian refugees are crowded together, the Angkar imposes its law and woe to those who do not share the ideology of the men in black

Rosalyn Carter, moved to tears, held one of the camp babies in her arms; the crystal tones of Joan Baez pierced the flimsy straw walls of the huts; Liv Ullman held out her left arm and gave blood. The cameramen filmed, the photographers clicked away, the journalists churned out copy. The whole world knows all - almost - about Sakeo refugee camp in Thailand, where 28,435 Cambodians sit waiting the coming of better days.

Public opinion was shocked; money poured in and the humanitarian organizations swooped down the camp (there are now 13 organizations working there). After being ignored by everyone and after having nothing, these survivors now have one of the highest proportion of doctors per capita in the world (one doctor for 900 patients). So much the better for them.

Sakeo has been used so much as a "showcase camp" it would seem that people have almost forgotten that some of the men and women who have taken refuge there, clad in black pajamas with a checkered krama around their neck and taking advantage of international generosity are none other than the murderers responsible for one of the most hideous genocides of the 20th century: that of the Khmer people. While most of the refugees in the camp are no longer inclined to expect anything from the ravings of Pol Pot there are still at least 3,000, not counting their families, who have not renounced anything and who hope to return to Cambodia to continue cleaning up the country and to execute any "bourgeois deviants", intellectuals and peasants who do not enthusiastically agree to become the servants of the Angkar, the organization made up of the Khmer rouge cadres.

In Sakeo, the cadres continue to terrorize the population, to keep an eye on it and to punish it also. At the end of October 1979 I was in Sakeo when the first few thousand refugees arrived in what was not yet a camp but a huge mud-pit where exhausted skeleton-like figures fell headlong into the mire and excrement and where the only ones who still walked proudly, their cheeks nice and round and watches on their wrists were the Khmer rouge cadres. But the doctors, nurses, volunteers of all kinds and journalists were far too busy dealing with the ruins of the Khmer people who were arriving in waves and to pay much attention to these silent black silhouettes who were everywhere and who walked with their hands behind their backs, stopping to listen whenever a dying patient tried to speak to a foreigner.

The Angkar has in fact, been regulating everything since Sakeo was established. Last week, when I revisited the camp, refugees came to me secretly to testify. I cannot give their names, the risk to them would be too great. Just 10 days after the camp opened, the cadres informed the international organizations on the spot that they were not pleased with the coloured, gay clothing sent from all over the world that was being distributed: "only black pajamas must be distributed." Black, the colour of death, of the austerity imposed on everyone by fanatics.

As soon as the huts were built in the camp, the cadres started weaving their spider's web around them: one leader for every three huts, appointed at the grassroots level; one cadre, the Prathine Lot, chosen by the Angkar, for every 50 families, then, one chief, the Prathine Voreak, for every thousand persons, and finally a neighbourhood chief reigning over 2,400 people. At the top of this pyramid is the kingpin. In Sakeo the kingpin is Lim, a disgusting person.

Obsequious with strangers, he tells lies, faking innocence. Under Pol Pot he was one of the senior Khmer rouge officials in Batambang province. That is in western Cambodia, a sector in which a record number of massacres occurred. Lim, aged 32, speaks a little French and has told me, his face radiant with good faith, that he has never been anything other than a poor peasant. What about the Khmers rouges?

"No, the expression is not appropriate" he says. "One should speak simply of the Khmer people". Genocide? "What genocide? Ah yes. The KGB organized massacres in preparation for the arrival of the Vietnamese".

I press him. I speak of the thousands of eyewitness accounts, each more horrible than the last; finally, he concedes that "some executions were carried out under Pol Pot but the only victims were people who refused to submit to the law of the régime. That is understandable, is it not?"

Lim also categorically denies that, together with the 100 thugs who act as his private police, he has subjected some of the Sakeo refugees to brutal treatment.

And yet there is no lack of proof. The fact that the Angkar has confiscated people's radios so as to prevent the refugees from listening to voices from abroad is not so bad; but adulterous women have been dragged through the alleys of the camps with a sign around their necks proclaiming them adulteresses; men caught speaking of the Sihanouk days have been forced to stand bare-chested and motionless in the sun for six hours straight; other insubordinate inmates have been forced to crawl over gravel on their knees and elbows; one peasant from the south was imprisoned in an empty tank for one hour but was freed before he suffocated. Not to mention the men armed with clubs and iron blackjacks who patrol the camp at night and enter the houses or the constant intimidations ...

The representative of the High Commissioner for Refugees in Sakeo, an American, Jensen, was unable to keep his mouth shut after a while in spite of the fact that employees of this type of international organization are bound to remain silent - remember the Red Cross which intervened in the Nazi concentration camps but did not

breathe a word outside about what was going on in them? Jensen publicly denounced the brutality of Lim's band. As a result he can no longer go inside the camp for the Thai military authorities who control the entrance will not allow him in and, in addition, he has received threatening letters. He will probably have to be replaced.

A Thai military official warned me "I advise you not to investigate this question of brutality inside the camp. You will make life more difficult for the foreigners who are working there."

In short, the Thais cover up Lim's extortionary activities and, on occasion, give him a hand. Political interests compel them to do so: Thailand is playing the Khmers rouges against the Vietnamese threat and allowing China to supply them with weapons through Thailand. Commander Mongkon Henmark, the Thai camp commander at Sakeo, has just sent a letter to all persons working on behalf of humanitarian organizations in Sakeo. In substance he warns them: "Political discussions with the refugees are forbidden". The warning is clear: woe to he who stands in the way of the Khmer rouge.

Every day Khmer rouge soldiers wounded in Cambodia in clashes with the Vietnamese occupying army arrive at the camp hospital. The doctors treat them and when they recover they go back to fight.

The Sakeo refugees who do not share the ideology and the madness of the Khmers rouges but who are put in the same category because they have had the misfortune to live five or even 10 years in zones controlled by the Khmers rouges are afraid that they will be compelled to follow the men in black when the Angkar gives the order to return to Cambodia. The cadres regularly circulate handwritten leaflets which state: "Do not believe the promises of foreigners, no country will agree to take you. Do not forget that you are the true Khmers and that you must remain so".

Song, Ean - let us call them thus - and others we have met in the camp out of sight of prying eyes and informers have told me: "Even if they kill us we will not leave".

It is a pity that the top brass and the stars who came in a spirit of generosity to visit Sakeo were not able also to see all the extortion that is taking place there and all the monstrosities that are being planned.

Hervé Chabalier
(Le matin, 15-16 March 1980)