

**Remarks of H.E. Ouch Borith, First-Vice President of the Senate
of the Kingdom of Cambodia
151st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly: General Debate
Geneva, Switzerland, October 21, 2025**

Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. We stand before this august Assembly—where the moral will of nations finds its collective voice—to address the vital theme of "Upholding Humanitarian Norms and Supporting Humanitarian Action in Times of Crisis." These norms form the invisible constitution of civilization, defining the frontier between combat and cruelty. The true measure of any nation lies not in its military strength or its declarations, but in its respect for the Geneva Conventions and human dignity, especially when its interests collide.
2. We thank the Delegation of Thailand for its contribution to this Assembly and for highlighting this important theme. We wholeheartedly share the commitment to peace, reconciliation, and the faithful observance of international law. However, a constructive path forward requires an honest assessment of the current reality, one where the very humanitarian norms we discuss are being violated.
3. Cambodia is a nation that has suffered greatly in its past. Our people achieved peace and reconciliation only through immense sacrifice, and we cherish that peace as the cornerstone of our national development. We have no desire to be at odds with any country, least of all our close neighbor Thailand, with whom we share history, culture, and the bonds of ASEAN. Yet the truth compels us to respond.
4. The border between our two nations is not undefined; it is clearly anchored in binding international instruments. These include the **1904 Franco-Siamese Convention**, the **1907 Franco-Siamese Treaty**, and the map annexed thereto, which together form the lawful basis for demarcation. The **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**, in its landmark judgments of 1962 and 2013, has reaffirmed these instruments. This legal foundation is reinforced by the **2000 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**, which explicitly prohibits either side from undertaking any action that could alter conditions in the border area and establishes the Joint Boundary Commission (JBC) as the sole technical mechanism for demarcation. Unfortunately, the conflicts that arise stem from the disregard of these internationally recognized legal instruments and from attempts to impose unilateral will over mutually agreed mechanisms. Only through the faithful observance of these instruments and the acceptance of international judicial authority can true peace be secured.

Honorable Chair,

5. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to China, Malaysia, and, in particular, President Trump for their invaluable contributions to the establishment of the ceasefire agreement between the two countries on 28 July, and for their continued support of the negotiation process aimed at promoting lasting peace and stability along our shared border.
6. Despite this important achievement, peace along our shared border remains fragile. Cambodian villagers continue to face displacement, encirclement, and threats of eviction, while eighteen Cambodian soldiers remain unlawfully detained in violation of the Third Geneva Convention. Equally concerning are reports of psychological intimidation—such as the night-time use of ghostly and high-pitched noise—that torment communities already living in fear. Such behaviour constitutes an assault not on fortifications, but on human dignity, contravening Article 33 of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. At the same time, unilateral actions—such as the imposition of domestic law in disputed communities, the laying of barbed wire inside sovereign Cambodian territory, undermine the 2000 Memorandum of Understanding and the very foundation of trust necessary for joint mechanisms to succeed.
7. To question the assertion of Cambodia of “militarising” a World Heritage Site is without foundation. Cambodia has defended the Temple of Preah Vihear not with weapons, but through heritage, law, and restraint. It is, in fact, the use of bombardment that threatens the temple’s stones and spirit. These are not merely relics of the past—they embody the memory, identity, and soul of nations. To harm them is to wound humanity itself. Cambodia’s record speaks through deeds rather than declarations: we have upheld the ceasefire, cooperated closely with the **ICRC**, **UNESCO**, and **ASEAN**, and submitted verified evidence to the **Ottawa Convention’s Committee on Compliance**. Our conduct is guided by principle, not propaganda; by law, not ambition. Cambodia defends not conquest, but conscience—and as history will attest, truth requires no weapon other than itself.
8. To address the allegation of Cambodia of laying new landmines on foreign soil is both unfounded and implausible. Cambodia has destroyed more than three million landmines, opened its territory to international inspection, and continues to serve as a leading advocate of demining under the Ottawa Convention. Should new mines be discovered in border areas, they are more accurately remnants of past conflicts rather than the result of any recent Cambodian action.

9. Cambodia remains unwavering in its belief that disputes must be resolved peacefully—through dialogue, diplomacy, and respect for international law. It also believes that truth and transparency are essential to restoring mutual confidence and understanding. Misunderstanding and misinformation must not be allowed to divide neighbors or distort facts. We must all recommit to dialogue, honesty, and good faith. And let us ask, sincerely: Can a smaller nation such as Cambodia truly harbor ambitions to claim territory from a larger neighbor? The answer is self-evident, reminding us that fairness, perspective, and respect for historical truth must guide our relations.
10. Despite current challenges, Cambodia extends a hand of friendship to Thailand, confident that mutual respect, historical understanding, and cooperation can guide both nations toward a just and lasting peace.
11. Let us leave this Assembly with a clear message: that humanitarian norms are not negotiable; that humanitarian action must never be obstructed; and that truth must prevail over disinformation. In protecting these principles, we safeguard human dignity, uphold justice, and strengthen the cause of peace.
