

WORLD

Thailand-Cambodia border tensions escalate

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An ASEAN Observer Team on Thursday observed the situation on the ground near the latest border skirmish between Thailand and Cambodia, which left one civilian killed and three others injured a day earlier.

The team members inspected the condition of the displaced civilians at the border area with the facilitation of the Cambodian Ministry of National Defence, according to a notice on the ministry's social media platform.

The team also paid homage to the perished Cambodian civilian, according to the Cambodian state news agency Agence Kampuchea Presse or AKP.

Thailand and Cambodia have pointed fingers at each other, while both expressed a willingness to continue implementing previous agreements on border control.

China has expressed hopes for Thailand and Cambodia to prevent the border situation from further escalating.

At the Chinese Foreign Ministry's regular news conference in Beijing on Thursday, the ministry's spokesman Lin Jian said that China has noted some issues that have emerged in the implementation of the joint statement between Thailand and Cambodia.

"As a friend and close neighbor of both countries, China sincerely hopes that Thailand and Cambodia will exercise restraint, move toward each other, adhere to friendly consultations, give full play to the role of existing bilateral mechanisms and find a solution acceptable to both sides as soon as possible to prevent the situation from escalating," he said.

China will continue to play a constructive role in de-escalating the situation in its own way, Lin added.

The latest Thai-Cambodian skirmish in the border area of Thailand's Ban Nong Ya Kaew, Sa Kaeo Province, late on Wednesday after-

noon killed one and injured three civilians, two in serious condition, in Cambodia's Prey Chan Village, Banteay Meanchey Province. There was no report of injuries from the Thai side.

Thai media reported that the gunfire exchange occurred at around 4 pm and lasted about 10 minutes, while Cambodian media noted that it lasted about half an hour.

The Cambodian defense ministry's spokesperson said in a statement on Thursday that the gunfire followed provocative actions over many days by the Thai military, with the intention of instigating a clash.

However, Thai Foreign Ministry spokesman Nikorndej Balankura said on Wednesday evening that Thai forces took cover and, in accordance with the Rules of Engagement, fired warning shots in the direction from which Cambodian fire originated.

While stressing that the actions of the Thai side were taken to safeguard sovereignty and in self-defense, in accordance with international law, he urged a transparent investigation into the incidents.

The ministry reaffirmed Thailand's commitment to implementing the Joint Declaration — a crucial milestone in reducing tensions and paving the way toward peace, which both sides have committed to achieve, according to a statement released on Thursday afternoon.

Maly Socheata, Cambodian foreign ministry spokeswoman, on Thursday called for an independent investigation into the incident and appealed for the participation of qualified international parties to uncover the truth and identify those responsible, the AKP reported.

She also reaffirmed that Cambodia remains committed to resolving disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, existing treaties, conventions, and agreements — seeking solutions that are just, fair, lasting, and consistent with international legal principles.



An ASEAN Observer Team visits on Thursday an area where a civilian was killed a day before along the Cambodia-Thailand border in Banteay Meanchey Province. AGENCY KAMPUCHEA PRESS / AFP

Briefly

IRAQ PM coalition leads in parliamentary poll

Preliminary results announced by Iraq's electoral commission on Wednesday showed that the coalition led by Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani has emerged as the front-runner in the country's parliamentary elections. The results showed that al-Sudani's Reconstruction and Development Coalition came first in eight provinces, namely Baghdad, Qadisiyah, Najaf, Karbala, Muthanna, Maysan, Dhi Qar and Babil. In a speech made late Wednesday, al-Sudani called for "respecting the will of the voters".

UKRAINE Ministers resign over corruption scandals

Ukraine's energy and justice ministers resigned on Wednesday over their alleged involvement in a sweeping corruption scandal in the country's energy sector. Investigators alleged a key ally of President Volodymyr Zelensky orchestrated a \$100 million kick-back program to siphon off funds, triggering public anger at a time of widespread power outages caused by Russian attacks. Ukraine has long been plagued by corruption and cracking down on graft is seen as a key requirement of its bid to join the European Union. Zelensky

earlier called for the resignation of his Justice Minister German Galushchenko, who investigators alleged received "personal benefits" in the program, as well as Energy Minister Svitlana Grynchuk. Neither is known to have been charged and Grynchuk has not been mentioned as having profited from the program.

SOUTH KOREA 2 killed, 18 injured as truck hits sidewalk

Two people were killed and 18 others were injured Thursday after a truck crashed into the sidewalk at a market in South Korea, according to Yonhap news agency. The truck, driven by a man in his 60s, plowed into the sidewalk at the market in Bucheon, west of the capital Seoul, at about 10:55 am. The accident left two women in their 70s dead and 18 others wounded, including three classified as critical patients with impaired consciousness and six as emergency patients. The driver, who was arrested at the scene, told police that the brake had failed when he stepped on it, but the police suspected that the driver had mistakenly activated the accelerator instead of the brake. It was believed that the truck reversed 28 meters before driving straight approximately 150 meters inside the market.

AGENCIES—XINHUA



Fatal plunge

Residents walk toward the remains of a bus that plunged into a ravine about 200 meters deep in Arequipa, Peru, on Wednesday. At least 37 people were killed and 24 others injured in southern Peru on Wednesday when a double-decker bus plunged into a ravine after colliding with a pickup truck, officials said. JUAN SANTY / AFP

Hurdles remain over second phase of Gaza ceasefire deal

Issues such as Hamas' disarmament, Israeli pullout need solution: Analysts

By YANG RAN
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One month after the ceasefire agreement went into effect, relative calm has returned to the Gaza Strip, but experts caution that advancing to the second phase of negotiations faces significant hurdles, while a prolonged deadlock risks reigniting conflict.

Hamas and Israel have maintained a fragile ceasefire in the Gaza Strip since Oct 10 after more than two years of fighting. The implementation of the first phase of the ceasefire agreement, focused on boosting humanitarian aid and the exchange of hostages and prisoners, has yielded tangible results.

Hamas has released 20 living hostages and the remains of 24 others, while Israel has handed over the bodies of approximately 300 Palestinians. Aid delivery has also improved significantly. Between the ceasefire's start and Nov 3, the UN and its partners have transported over 37,000 metric tons of humanitarian supplies into Gaza through reopened crossings.

Niu Xinchun, executive director of the China-Arab Research Institute at Ningxia University, noted that the first phase has been largely effective. "Hamas has released all surviving Israeli hostages. A steady, though limited, flow of humanitarian aid has been restored," he said. "The initial phase has basically achieved its intended goals, easing humanitarian suffering and de-escalating the intensity of the conflict."

Despite these gains, the truce remains precarious. Both sides have accused each other of violations, and sporadic skirmishes have continued.

According to the Gaza health authorities, at least 245 Palestinians have been killed since the ceasefire began.

Shu Meng, an assistant professor at Shanghai International Studies University's Middle East Studies Institute, said that incidents like sporadic attacks are eroding the foundation for future talks and complicating efforts to move into the second phase.

According to the US-proposed 20-point plan to end the conflict in Gaza, the second phase of negotiations, involving key issues like the disarmament of Hamas and full Israeli withdrawal, would begin after the completion of the hostage and remains exchange. Yet, experts pointed out that this is where the real challenge begins.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed on Nov 2 to disarm Hamas and demilitarize the Gaza Strip, saying his government would keep targeting the remaining militant cells despite the ceasefire. He met earlier this week with Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law, to discuss the progress and future of the ceasefire, but no details of the second phase have been worked out.

Shu highlighted a lack of willingness to negotiate, irreconcilable internal divisions, and fundamental disagreements on core issues as key challenges facing the second phase.

"Mutual suspicion is diminishing the willingness of both sides to advance subsequent negotiations, with Israel accusing Hamas of using the truce to rearm, and Hamas doubting Israel's commitment to lasting peace," she explained. "Further-



A boy who lost one leg when the school where he had sought refuge during the conflict was hit, studies in a tent in Nuseirat, Gaza, on Tuesday. BELAL ABU AMER / POLARIS

thermore, both sides face internal pressures. In Israel, right-wing and hard-line factions continue to disrupt consensus-building. Hamas also faces internal rifts, hindering constructive engagement.

"Crucially, neither side is willing to compromise on core demands. Israel sees the next phase as vital to its security, while Hamas views concessions as an existential threat. This presents the biggest hurdle to progress," she said.

Central stumbling block

Niu noted the issue of Hamas disarmament as a central stumbling block. "The second phase requires Hamas' disarmament, establishment of a transitional government in Gaza, and full Israeli withdrawal. But the first step of disarming Hamas is hard to resolve."

He attributed the deadlock to a deeper flaw in the US' 20-point plan,

arguing it fails to outline a credible path toward the two-state solution. "Without that political horizon, and with Palestinians largely excluded from the proposed transitional governance structure, disarming Hamas becomes an intractable problem."

Shu echoed this concern, noting that the 20-point plan, by making Hamas' disarmament and exit from governance a core precondition, "severely overlooks Hamas' demands".

"Armed strength is the foundation of Hamas' existence, and governance rights represent its crucial future interests in Gaza. They must retain at least one of the two. The plan puts Hamas in a lose-lose situation, severely dampening its willingness to negotiate and sowing hidden dangers for future consultations," she said.

Xinhua and agencies contributed to this story.

Turkish official urges permanent truce for conflict

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong
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Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said the Gaza Strip is part of Palestine, must remain so "and be treated as such", and called for building on the momentum of last month's Sharm El-Sheikh peace agreement — the basis of the current Israel-Hamas ceasefire in Gaza — to make the truce permanent.

He made the remarks following a meeting with Egyptian counterpart Badr Abdelatty in Ankara on Wednesday. The two officials met as they co-chaired the first meeting of the Turkiye-Egypt Joint Planning Group in respect to bilateral relations, which also touched on regional cooperation. Egypt and Turkiye are celebrating 100 years of diplomatic relations this year.

Fidan said he hopes Israel will demonstrate commitment to supporting lasting peace. Israel has been accused by its Arab neighbors and peace partners of violating the ceasefire as it carried out flash strikes in Gaza.

Meanwhile, there has been a surge in Israeli settler violence in the West Bank, and a tepid flow of

promised aid into Gaza. Israel, for its part, has accused Hamas of violating the truce and exploiting aid.

In the latest incidents of Israeli aggression, Al Jazeera reported on Thursday that the Israeli military carried out attacks in the eastern part of Khan Younis, as well as in the northern part of Beit Lahiya, areas near the Zikim crossing, which Israel opened on Wednesday. The opening of the Zikim crossing was expected to ease the entry of humanitarian aid. All the areas attacked fall behind the yellow line that is under Israeli control.

In a statement on Wednesday, Caroline Seguin, emergency coordinator in Gaza for Doctors Without Borders, said one month into the ceasefire, the situation in Gaza remains desperate.

Regarding the West Bank, Israeli President Isaac Herzog has condemned the "shocking and serious" settler attacks.

At the G7 foreign ministers' meeting in Canada, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressed worries that the attacks could undermine Gaza peace efforts. Rubio vowed to do everything possible to make sure such attacks do not happen again.

Jawaid Iqbal, vice-chancellor of

Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University in India, told China Daily that it "is a fact that the ceasefire agreement is being repeatedly violated by Israel while the US looks the other way".

However, Washington is taking a keen interest in rolling out the proposed international stabilization force for Gaza and will not permit Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to resume the conflict, he said.

Turkiye's Fidan said on Wednesday that discussions were underway at the United Nations Security Council to define the mandate of the international stabilization force in terms of its legal and political framework for the committee expected to govern Gaza.

Abdelatty said Egypt and Turkiye agreed to work together to secure the ceasefire and advance the peace process and that both support the diplomatic efforts led by Qatar and the US to make the truce permanent. They also reaffirmed their backing for the two-state solution based on the 1967 borders.

Gokhan Batu, an analyst at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies in Turkiye, said the developments in

Gaza and the West Bank are deeply interconnected.

He said the core issue is that the Israeli withdrawal is conditioned on the disarmament of Hamas and other armed groups. Hamas, meanwhile, seeks to transfer the administration of the strip to a national Palestinian body, which is difficult to realize under current circumstances.

He said the yellow line creates an additional obstacle. "We should not dismiss the possibility of Gaza's de facto partition, as the yellow line could emerge as a new boundary, with anti-Hamas groups functioning as a buffer between Israel and Hamas".

"On the other hand, the United States is aware that developments in the West Bank could quickly escalate into a flashpoint, creating additional pressure on Washington and destabilizing the region," said Batu. "These dynamics could further undermine the Palestinian Authority, weaken its remaining legitimacy, and increase support for Gaza-based factions operating in the West Bank. Rubio's remarks are therefore related to this issue, reflecting Washington's intention to act proactively in order to contain the situation," he added.