

The Impact Of Thailand-Cambodia Conflict On Human Insecurity In Ubon Ratchathani-Preah Vihear Province In 2025

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Abstract

The Thailand-Cambodia border conflict reoccurred in Ubon Ratchathani Province and Preah Vihear Province in 2025, beginning with small clashes between Thai and Cambodian soldiers before escalating into full conflict by mid-2025. This research aims to identify the impacts of the conflict using the Human Insecurity framework developed by Werthes, Heaven, and Vollhals, examining six dimensions: economic, environmental, food, health, individual/group, and political insecurity. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method using secondary data and case studies. The results show that economic insecurity is reflected in slowed GDP growth, disrupted cross-border trade, and declining tourism revenue in both provinces. Environmental insecurity is evident in refugees' limited access to clean water and sanitation in evacuation camps. Food insecurity is manifested in the form of disrupted food supply chains at the borders, worsening malnutrition and stunting in children in Thailand, and exacerbating acute malnutrition in children in Cambodia. Health insecurity is marked by outbreaks of infectious diseases, evidenced by the risk of cholera in Ubon Ratchathani and a sharp increase in measles cases in Preah Vihear. Individual/community insecurity is shown through civilian and military casualties, landmine incidents, and mass displacement exceeding hundreds of thousands of people. Political insecurity emerges through press freedom violations, including journalist arrests and treason charges in Cambodia, and military pressure on media in Thailand.

Keywords: *Thailand-Cambodia Conflict, Human Insecurity, Ubon Ratchathani Province, Preah Vihear Province*

INTRODUCTION

The conflict between Thailand and Cambodia centers on the Preah Vihear temple and has been ongoing for a long time. This conflict began with the delimitation of the border, a colonial legacy of the Franco-Siamese Treaties of 1904 and 1907. During World War II, Thailand successfully seized the disputed territory, including the Preah Vihear temple. Then, in 1953, Thailand regained control of the Preah Vihear temple after Cambodia's independence. This resulted in a dispute over the temple's territory, which was brought to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Teekah, 2026). Tensions continued from 2008 to 2011, sparked by Cambodia's application for the registration of Preah Vihear Temple as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Thai government objects to this, as the land surrounding the temple belongs to Thailand. This led to attacks between the two countries, as they disputed the boundary line around the temple (Ciorciari, 2025).

The Thai-Cambodian conflict escalated again in May 2025. It began with a dispute in the Chong Bok area of Ubon Ratchathani Province. Chong Bok is the term for the disputed area used as a route from the lowlands to the highlands, and vice versa. This route is an ancient path still in use today, connecting several points, one of which is Choam Krasan District, Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia (The Nation, 2025). Then, images appeared showing Cambodian soldiers entering the boundary of Hill 745, an area in Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand. Nearly 100 Cambodian soldiers were seen on Hill 745, digging trenches and establishing a military base there. This resulted in a minor clash that resulted in the death of a Cambodian soldier (The Nation, 2025).

The death of a Cambodian soldier has sparked tensions between the two sides. On May 16, a Thai soldier reportedly lost his leg in a landmine explosion in Chong Bok, Ubon Ratchathani Province. Then, on July 23, a landmine explosion injured five Thai soldiers, claiming it was a Cambodian mine (The Nation, 2025). The mine incident triggered the peak of the conflict, which occurred on July 24, with five days of gunfire, airstrikes, and rocket attacks at several border points. The attacks killed dozens and displaced more than 300,000 people (CNN World, 2025). On July 28, 2025, a ceasefire was negotiated to end the war on the Thailand-Cambodia border, led by Malaysia. The negotiations also involved the United States and China. However, another mine explosion occurred in November, causing Thailand to suspend the ceasefire. This sparked renewed fighting on December 7, 2025. A second ceasefire was signed on December 27, but mistrust remained high due to accusations of mutual attacks and the use of heavy weapons (Ma & Xu, 2025).

The Thai-Cambodian conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces has had a significant impact on the communities living around the conflict areas. The impact of the Thai-Cambodian conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces can shift attention from national security to human insecurity, where the escalation of armed conflict on the border between the two countries has created widespread threats to several dimensions of human insecurity such as economic, environmental, and health. Cambodia reported the number of confirmed measles and cholera cases from January 1 to December 11, 2025, reaching 4,540 cases spread across 25 provinces. Meanwhile, Preah Vihear province reported the highest number of measles cases in September. This is due to several factors such as the lack of food supplies, clean water and sanitation in refugee camps, and the large number of children who have not received immunizations and vaccines (World Health Organization, 2025).

Furthermore, related to previous research, there is a study entitled "Evaluation of ASEAN's Role in Handling the Conflict between Thailand and Cambodia in 2025" which uses the conflict resolution theory by Johan Galtung. The results of this study indicate that ASEAN's role is quite important in the Thailand-Cambodia conflict as a mediator and peace facilitator. However, ASEAN's efforts are not easy because they are hampered by the principle of non-intervention which results in the failure to achieve structural peace goals. This study also explains the need to strengthen institutional capacity and create new conflict resolution mechanisms so that ASEAN can create sustainable peace in Southeast Asia (Tokan, Lape, & Subandi, 2026).

According to (Alam, Rahmawati, Balqis, & Subandi, 2026) in his research entitled "Border Militarization and Its Impact on Regional Stability: A Case Study of Thailand - Cambodia," this research uses the Regional Security Complex (RSCT) theory by Barry Buzan Ole Waever to examine how security issues are geographically and interconnected between countries in the region. The results of this study show that border militarization is not only a defensive tool, but also creates a security dilemma and suspicion between countries, thus increasing conflict. This has a negative impact on the security stability of Southeast Asia and hinders ASEAN's role in resolving conflicts peacefully.

In another study titled "The 2025 Thai-Cambodian Conflict Viewed Through Glasl's Nine-Stage Conflict Escalation Model" written by Murray Hunter (2025), this research examines the Thailand-Cambodia border conflict of 2025 through the nine stages of Friedrich Glasl's escalation model. This research analyzes the development of conflict tensions by mapping the conflict timeline through the rational phase, emotional phase, and combat phase up to the peak of the conflict. This research also explains the limitations of the model in dissecting geopolitical and socio-economic factors in the conflict.

Based on the literature review of the two studies above, there is a research gap. Previous studies have not discussed the impact of the Thailand-Cambodia conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces in 2025 on human insecurity. This study will focus on discussing the impacts of the border conflict that occurred in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces

in 2025 using six dimensions of human insecurity: economic insecurity, food insecurity, environmental insecurity, health insecurity, individual or community insecurity, and political insecurity. This research is expected to be an update in understanding the topic studied, as well as providing new contributions to science.

This study uses the concept of human insecurity by Werthes, Heaven, & Vollnhals as a theoretical basis. Human insecurity according to (Werthes, Heaven, & Vollnhals, 2011), is an approach that focuses on threats to life, livelihoods, and human dignity across multiple dimensions. The concept of human insecurity was developed from the UNDP's 1994 human security framework. Human insecurity is considered the opposite of human security, where individuals and communities face threats that disrupt their survival. This concept is also proposed based on a threshold to differentiate levels of human security and insecurity. One way to differentiate these is by creating a human insecurity index that reflects this conceptual idea. This index is built to operationalize specific indicators per dimension and helps identify human insecurity issues with human rights and human development. Within the human insecurity index, modifications to the dimensions and indicators are made. Each dimension can be measured using more structured indicators in its application.

In human insecurity, to measure the six dimensions of insecurity, an indicator index is needed per dimension. The first dimension, economic insecurity, can be measured using two indicators: Gross Domestic Product per Capita and the Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI). The second dimension, environmental insecurity, can be seen from the percentage of the population affected by disasters and the percentage of the population with access to clean water and good sanitation. The third dimension, food insecurity, is measured by the number of malnourished children under five and the percentage of the total population that is malnourished. The fourth dimension, health insecurity, can be measured using the total number of people affected by infectious diseases and the child mortality rate. The fifth dimension, individual/community insecurity, can be seen from two indicators: the total number of people assisted by UNHCR and the scale of political terror. The final dimension, political insecurity, can be seen from two indicators: personal security (CIRI Human Rights project) and press freedom (Werthes, Heaven, & Vollnhals, 2011).

Based on the background of the problem and the literature review above, the formulation of the problem in this study is "What are the impacts of the Thailand-Cambodia conflict on Human Insecurity in Ubon Ratchathani Province and Preah Vihear Province in 2025?". The purpose of this study is to examine the impacts caused by the Thailand-Cambodia conflict in the Ubon Ratchathani Province and Preah Vihear Province in 2025 using the Human Insecurity indicator index.

Explain the background and clarity of the problem to be discussed in the manuscript. Provide a brief overview of the ideas to address the problem & the research objectives to be achieved. Demonstrate the scientific strengths/advantages or novelties of the manuscript (gap analysis) and briefly explain the literature review including the variables and indicators to be discussed in solving the problem (appropriateness of references or sources). At the end of the paragraph, the author must conclude with a comment on the significance of the research conducted according to the problem identification and explain the research objectives.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research method uses qualitative descriptive analysis. Qualitative descriptive analysis is a research approach used to describe or in-depth describe a phenomenon, event, or social condition in its natural form without manipulating variables or seeking causal relationships (Sukmadinata, 2020). This research focuses on explaining a specific phenomenon by clearly

describing a case study. The author uses qualitative descriptive research to explain or describe the case study of the Thailand-Cambodia conflict in the Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces in 2025 using the concept of Human Insecurity.

This research limits its study to a case study of the border conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces in 2025 because that period represents the most recent escalation. While the conflict between 2008 and 2011 provides an important historical background, the escalation in 2025 has dynamics relevant to the concept of human insecurity. By limiting the study to 2025, this research allows for an in-depth, up-to-date, and up-to-date analysis.

The data collection technique in this study uses secondary data collection techniques using case studies. According to (Yin, 2017), a case study is an in-depth research method that examines a phenomenon within a real-life context. The analysis technique involves collecting data from various sources to strengthen the validity of the findings. Secondary data collection using a case study refers to a research method in which researchers analyze pre-existing information to gain insight into a particular phenomenon. In this context, a case study can involve analyzing documents, articles, official websites, reports, or scientific journals. This secondary data is used to provide context, support arguments, or strengthen findings in the research being conducted.

The data analysis technique used is the qualitative analysis method. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), qualitative research is a type of research that focuses on the collection and analysis of non-numerical data to understand concepts, thoughts, or experiences. In qualitative research, the selection of data analysis techniques is crucial to ensure that the research results can provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Qualitative research is a type of research that focuses on the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as interviews, observations, and documents, to understand the concepts, thoughts, or experiences of individuals or community. This method aims to explore the deeper meaning behind social phenomena, provide insight into respondents' subjective perspectives, and uncover patterns that may not be visible through quantitative approaches. Data from various official websites and articles related to the border conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces will be used to examine the impact of the conflict on human insecurity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Impact of the Thailand-Cambodia Conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear Provinces in 2025

Economic

According to (Werthes, Heaven, & Vollnhals, 2011), economic insecurity is a condition where individuals feel unsafe in earning income or accessing resources to survive. In this context of human insecurity, economic security can be measured using two indicators: Gross Domestic Product per Capita, and the BTI (Bertelsmann Transformation Index), combined with social observation networks and equal opportunities. However, in this study, the focus will be on the GDP of Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand, and Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia. This indicator is used to replace unemployment figures because the definition of unemployment varies greatly between countries.

According to a report from the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) in The Nation Thailand (2025), Ubon Ratchathani Province in 2024 ranked among the 10 provinces with the lowest GDP per capita, coming in 10th at 81,555 Baht per year. Based on the 2024 Gross Provincial Product (GPP) data released by the Office of the NESDC, Ubon Ratchathani's GPP per capita in 2024 was recorded at 86,241.88 Baht per person per year, with a total GPP of 148,641.74 million Baht and a population of 1,723,545 people. This figure places

Ubon Ratchathani far below both the national average and the average for the Eastern region and Bangkok, reflecting the province's structural economic vulnerability even before the escalation of the border conflict.

In 2025, there is no official data released by NESDC for the GDP or GPP of Ubon Ratchathani Province for 2025. However, the Economic Forecast Report for Ubon Ratchathani Province from the CGD (Comptroller-General's Department Thailand, 2025), projects the GDP per capita of Ubon Ratchathani Province in 2025 to be 85,121 Baht per year. Overall, there is no significant decline in the total GDP per capita of Ubon Ratchathani Province. But the report mentions a slowdown in the economic growth rate. In 2025, the economic growth rate is only 0.9% compared to 4.4% in 2024. This is influenced by several factors, one of which is the cross-border trade sector, which experienced very slow growth in some months.

In March, June, September, and December, cross-border trade in Ubon Ratchathani Province experienced slow growth, increasing by only 0.5%. This was because from June to December 2025, the escalation of the Thailand-Cambodia conflict in Ubon Ratchathani Province disrupted cross-border trading activities. This CGD report also mentioned that the Thailand-Cambodia conflict is a major risk factor (Chenglib) affecting the export of agricultural products through customs checkpoints, so the movement in and out of these checkpoints impacts the export of agricultural products by farmers and entrepreneurs (Comptroller-General's Department Thailand, 2025).

At the microeconomic level, the impact of the Thailand-Cambodia conflict is felt by business operators in Preah Vihear Province. Mongkol Chulthathat, a Senior President of the Ubon Ratchathani Chamber of Commerce, said that the situation during the conflict made it impossible to stabilize trade in the short term. This was also felt by Prakob Chaisongkram, a retail and wholesale business owner in Yongsanguan, Ubon Ratchathani Province, who said that the conflict caused trade to stall and pushed retail sales to the lowest point in the past three years (The Nation Thailand, 2025).

In addition, the tourism sector has also been affected by the conflict at the border of Ubon Ratchathani Province. Tourism in Ubon Ratchathani Province is famous for its unique natural attractions. One of the natural attractions in Ubon Ratchathani Province is Pha Taem National Park, which has naturally formed over thousands of years. Although Ubon Ratchathani Province is located on the Thailand-Cambodia border and far from the city center, many tourists are willing to travel a long way to enjoy its different natural attractions. Thailand's tourism industry, specifically along the Cambodia border, has experienced financial declines due to the conflict. One impact of the conflict is that there has been a 100% cancellation of tourist accommodation in Ubon Ratchathani Province. On July 30, 2025, the Thai Hotel Association conducted a survey of 24 hotels and revealed that 4,085 rooms had been cancelled. Ubon Ratchathani Province also recorded hundreds of direct hotel cancellations related to the border conflict that occurred (The Nation Thailand, 2025).

Several hotels in Ubon Ratchathani Province have reportedly closed temporarily until August 5, 2025, due to tensions that have been simmering since May. The remaining hotels in Ubon Ratchathani Province are occupied by humanitarian workers and journalists covering the conflict. The Thai government has prepared evacuation plans for more than 40,000 residents if security conditions along the border deteriorate (Khaosod English, 2025). The Thailand-Cambodia conflict has placed Ubon Ratchathani Province under a high-security zone, directly crippling the tourism sector. The then-Thai Minister of Tourism and Sports, Sorawong Thienthong, stated that the border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia was costing Thailand's tourism sector nearly 3 billion baht (USD 92.6 million) per month since the conflict escalated, with more than 5,000 hotel rooms canceled and major tourist attractions closed (Connor, 2025).

Meanwhile, official per capita GDP data for Preah Vihear Province for 2024-2025 has not yet been published by the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) or the Ministry of Economy and Finance. Therefore, this study uses a combination of case study data and proxy indicators to measure the dimension of economic insecurity. The tourism sector and the return of Cambodian migrant workers from Thailand are used to examine economic insecurity in Preah Vihear Province. The tourism sector in Preah Vihear Province, Cambodia has seen a sharp decline. According to a report from NAPV (National Authority for Preah Vihear), Preah Vihear temple received 58,154 visitors in 2025, which is a 36.2% decrease compared to the number of visitors in 2024. Many tourist spots in Preah Vihear Province have been affected by this conflict, such as the Preah Khan Kompong Svay temple, Koh Ker, Phnom Tbeng natural heritage park, Lbak Khaon waterfall, and wildlife sanctuary. In 2025, Koh Ker also saw a 15% drop in tourist visitors compared to 2024. Koh Ker is one of the sites listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2023 and could attract 100,106 domestic tourists in 2025 (Ousa, 2026).

The Thailand-Cambodia border conflict that took place in Ubon Ratchathani Province and Preah Vihear Province has affected the economy of Preah Vihear Province by disrupting the tourism sector. This conflict has impacted more than 345 businesses in Preah Vihear Province, such as small shops, restaurants, hotels, and service providers. These economic activities had to close or stop because they were destroyed or lost income due to the conflict. On top of that, tourist relaxation areas and mountain hiking trails leading to the Preah Vihear temple were also closed, as some of them were already destroyed. The Director of the Department of Urbanization, Land Management, and Community Development of the Preah Vihear National Authority, Kim Samnang, said that tourism operations have been heavily impacted, with tourism activities suspended and all business operations around the mountain near the temple completely closed since July 24, 2025. Kim Samnang also mentioned that the economic loss after the closure is very significant, especially in tourism revenue (Kiripost, 2025).

In addition to the tourism sector, the massive withdrawal of Cambodian migrant workers from Thailand also poses a major threat to the Cambodian economy. Thailand has long been a major destination for Cambodian labor migration. In 2024, of the 1.4 million Cambodian workers working abroad, 1.2 million were employed in Thailand. According to Khmer News, the Cambodian Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training stated that more than 900,000 migrant workers in Thailand have returned to Cambodia through the border since July 24, 2025 (Ravindran, 2025).

Environment

The escalation of the Thai-Cambodian conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces in 2025 has led to environmental insecurity. In human insecurity, environmental insecurity can be seen from indicators of access to clean water and sanitation. The border conflict exacerbates the situation by causing the displacement of conflict-affected populations to refugee camps lacking adequate facilities. This environmental insecurity, in terms of access to clean water and sanitation, is felt by refugees in several border areas that are conflict hotspots, such as Ubon Ratchathani Province in Thailand and Preah Vihear Province in Cambodia. A representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Cambodia stated that refugee families, mostly children, are living in temporary shelters and are facing urgent needs such as food, health services, clean water, and proper sanitation (UCANews, 2025).

On July 24, 2025, a report from the Thai Public Relations Department (PRD) stated that 100,672 refugees had been evacuated by the Thai government and humanitarian volunteers. The PRD also stated that 295 locations had been established for the refugees, with Ubon Ratchathani Province having the most evacuation sites, at 168. As the province with the most evacuation sites, Ubon Ratchathani Province experienced limited access to clean water and sanitation. Most of the refugee camps still rely on bottled water to survive this period of tension. This was due to the damage to public facilities, leaving the refugees to rely on makeshift tools until aid arrived.

Many refugee camps experience a shortage of clean water due to the lack of water sources near the refugee camps. Humanitarian needs during this phase were very urgent, such as the lack of sanitation for the refugees, as aid had not yet reached them (Public Relations Department, 2025).

Meanwhile, access to clean water and sanitation in Cambodia is more intensive, according to a report from UN Cambodia (2026), water availability in refugee camps is uneven. 9.8% of refugees in refugee camps rely on water tankers, and 58% rely on bottled drinking water. Meanwhile, 30% of refugees who have been able to return home rely on rainwater. This is due to the perception that water sources are unsafe for consumption. Access to water, sanitation, and hygiene in refugee camps remains below minimum standards. Another sanitation issue faced by refugees is overflowing and damaged toilets. Many refugees do not have adequate waste disposal facilities, leading some to defecate in the open. A survey conducted by UN Cambodia found that refugees complained about malfunctioning toilet facilities, overcrowding, and the cleanliness of waste disposal sites. Furthermore, the lack of clean containers for water is also a problem in refugee camps. In Preah Vihear Province, many people use makeshift containers to collect and store water. This can limit their activities to meet their daily needs (United Nations Cambodia, 2026).

Food

Food insecurity caused by armed conflict can include disruptions in food access, availability, and utilization. The escalation of the Thai-Cambodian border conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces by 2025 has placed crucial pressure on food security on both sides of the border. A UN report indicates that the Thai-Cambodian conflict could trigger a double whammy, leading not only to mass displacement but also to economic collapse that could threaten years of development growth. The UN also projects a USD 156 million decline in food and agricultural exports, with key commodities such as cassava, corn, and fresh fruit. This impacts communities in border areas' access to food supplies, thereby weakening their food security (Chaeng, 2026).

In the context of human insecurity, food insecurity is seen as an indicator of malnutrition in children under five. Pressure on food in border areas is a complex issue. Disruptions to the food supply chain in border areas result in inadequate nutrition for children. According to WHO (2025) report, Thailand faces a double burden of malnutrition, characterized by persistent malnutrition and increasing overweight or obesity. Approximately 13% of children under 5 are stunted, 7% are underweight, and 9-11% are overweight or obese. Childhood stunting due to malnutrition remains significant, particularly in the southern and northeastern provinces, where the figure approaches 20%. Northeastern Thailand's provinces border Cambodia, including Ubon Ratchathani. The conflict along this border raises concerns about the nutrition of children in refugee camps, where the food supply chain in the border region is disrupted.

Meanwhile, cases of malnutrition in children under five in Cambodia have increased sharply. Data from the World Food Program (WFP) in February 2026 indicated that malnutrition remains a serious challenge for the community, with micronutrient deficiencies increasing during the conflict with Thailand in 2025 (World Food Programme, 2026). UNICEF with the NNP (National Nutrition Program) conducted malnutrition growth monitoring of 1,452 children under five in 13 refugee camps in Preah Vihear, Oddar Meanchey, and Siem Reap Provinces. The results showed that as many as 36% of children were detected with severe acute malnutrition, while as many as 17.5% were detected with moderate acute malnutrition. The increase in malnutrition due to this conflict has led UNICEF to support the NNP to allow the use of RUFT (Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food) based on WHO guidelines for children identified with severe acute malnutrition (Humanitarian Response Forum, 2026).

Health

The ongoing conflict along the Thai-Cambodian border in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces in 2025 has triggered various health threats to the local population. The WHO

has warned that approximately 30,500 refugees from the Thai-Cambodian border conflict face severe health risks, such as measles, cholera, diarrhea, psychological distress, and vector-borne diseases due to crowded shelters, poor sanitation, and limited access to medical care (Carruthers, 2025). This conflict has created numerous health problems, but this research focuses on infectious diseases, namely measles and cholera. The presence of infectious diseases is an indicator of health insecurity within human insecurity.

The closure of health facilities in Ubon Ratchathani Province coincided with the increase in the number of refugees. The lack of health facilities amidst the dense refugee population creates an environment vulnerable to disease outbreaks. Refugees struggle to access vaccines to prevent the spread of measles and cholera. The Director-General of Thailand's Department of Disease Control shared a measles report in Thailand, stating that of the 2,126 reported cases of fever with rash, 486 cases had been laboratory-confirmed. Sixty-three percent of measles cases were found in border provinces, including Ubon Ratchathani. The WHO also stated that uneven vaccine coverage and population mobility in crowded refugee camps are key drivers of the increased risk of measles outbreaks. Without catch-up immunizations and a rapid outbreak response, measles transmission will continue, especially among children (CTN News, 2026).

Meanwhile, amid pressure on healthcare facilities in Preah Vihear Province, residents are facing a new threat a rapidly escalating measles outbreak in refugee camps. According to WHO data, from January 1 to December 11 2025, measles cases in Cambodia increased sharply, with 4,540 confirmed cases. This outbreak has affected 25 provinces, some of which border Thailand. Preah Vihear Province itself reported the highest number of measles cases in September 2025 compared to previous year (World Health Organization, 2026). This increase in measles outbreaks is particularly concerning given the vulnerability of unvaccinated and under-immunized children in refugee camps. The Humanitarian Response Forum has confirmed that measles have reached the camps for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). This is further confirmed by the measles outbreak already recorded in the Wat Po Andet IDPs camp in Preah Vihear Province (Krishnan, 2025).

Individual and Community

The Thai-Cambodian conflict on the border between Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces has caused individual and community insecurity. Individual or community insecurity arises as a direct threat to the safety and security of communities along the border directly affected by the conflict. The Thai-Cambodian conflict in the border area of Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces, which broke out in 2025, involved the use of heavy weapons. The use of heavy weapons in this conflict resulted in numerous casualties among both military personnel and civilians. Furthermore, this conflict also forced hundreds of thousands of residents to flee their homes for safer places (Raymond, et al., 2026).

In Ubon Ratchathani Province, the Thai government recorded that 10,476 people from 67 points were evacuated from the conflict zone to safer places in July 2025 (Borneo Tribun, 2025). On July 26 2025, a Thai soldier lost his leg in a landmine explosion while patrolling in the Chong Bok area of Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand. A week later, a second explosion occurred near Chong An Ma, Ubon Ratchathani Province. This resulted in five Thai soldiers being injured, one seriously and the other fatally (Tempo, 2025). Ubon Ratchathani is the province with the largest number of refugees along the border with Cambodia. In December 2025, a second wave of conflict occurred in Ubon Ratchathani province, with 22,580 people evacuated to safer areas, including 114 identified as vulnerable (The Nation Thailand, 2025).

Report from Amnesty Internasional (2026), Amnesty International said a Cambodian soldier was killed in clashes with Thai troops in the Thai-Cambodian border region. This has sparked tensions between the two countries and an armed conflict that has lasted for months. This conflict has killed at least 40 people and thousands have fled towns and villages and taken refuge in temporary shelters. Amnesty International's Regional Research Director, Montse

Ferrer, said that hostilities around the Thai-Cambodian border are endangering civilians, resulting in the destruction of civilian infrastructure and mass displacement. The Thai and Cambodian governments are taking the necessary steps to protect civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law (Amnesty International, 2025).

Meanwhile, individual and community insecurity in Preah Vihear Province is also marked by casualties and numerous evacuations. At the start of the conflict, 12 civilians, consisting of men, women, and children, remained trapped at Preah Vihear temple after successfully evacuating 54 other residents (Khmer Times, 2025). The Preah Vihear temple was the focal point of the clashes. The Ministry of Home Affairs of the Royal Cambodian Government reported that from December 7 to 17, 2025, Thailand's relentless attacks extended into civilian residential areas. This resulted in the deaths of 18 Cambodian civilians and the evacuation of more than 450,000 people, including 240,000 women and over 130,000 children. Meanwhile, in Preah Vihear Province alone, 34,521 people were displaced and 10,826 families were displaced (Khmer Times, 2025).

This conflict is also featured in Amnesty International's annual report. The report states that clashes have erupted along the Thai-Cambodian border in an escalation of a long-running territorial dispute. Thailand and Cambodia are known to have carried out indiscriminate attacks. This conflict has resulted in dozens of deaths and damage to facilities such as health centers, pagodas, and civilian homes in Cambodia. Despite a ceasefire, families in Cambodia have been unable to return to their homes. The Amnesty International report also states that further concerns have arisen after hundreds of Cambodian migrant workers returned from Thailand, and thousands of internally displaced persons IDPs in camps struggled to access adequate shelter, food, and water (Amnesty International, 2026).

Politic

Conflict is certainly not immune to political interference. The conflict that occurred in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces in 2025 resulted in political insecurity. Political insecurity highlights the threat of state repression against citizens, which can be seen in press freedom during times of conflict. In times of conflict, press freedom is a crucial indicator used to provide vital and accurate information and protect citizens from state repression. According to a report from the OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) on media freedom and democracy, attacks and pressure on media freedom are a strong indication that other state rights and freedoms, as well as human security, are also at risk (Nord, Lundstedt, & Lindb, 2024).

Press freedom in Thailand during the conflict in Ubon Ratchathani Province was actually under pressure from the Thai military. The Thai Navy Spokesperson issued a statement urging the media to refrain from spreading damaging reports and to remain on Thailand's side. This was also done by one of the senior reporters who became the spokesperson for the Thai military, Vassana Na-nuam, who stated that all media outlets must have confidence in the Thai military and must firmly defeat Cambodia in the war. This action was an attempt to suppress dissenting voices by forcing all media outlets to hold and express the same opinion on the management of the Thailand-Cambodia conflict in 2025. One journalist also said that if any media outlets insisted on openly disagreeing with the military, they would risk being labeled as Cambodian sympathizers (Rojanaphruk, 2025).

Meanwhile, press freedom in Cambodia during the conflict in Preah Vihear Province in 2025 was severely repressed. Human rights watchdogs said that at least 16 journalists and critics had been arrested for reporting and expressing opinions on the Thai-Cambodian border conflict. They faced treason charges, which carry a maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. One of those arrested was Phun Yuth, a disabled man, who was charged over a Facebook post about Prime Minister Hun Manet. The Provincial Court said the post amounted to inducement to commit a

serious crime. Human Rights Watch condemned and called on Cambodian authorities to release the 16 journalists and critics, who were accused of violating press freedom (Shenawy, 2025).

The case of press freedom in Cambodia during the conflict in Preah Vihear Province continues with the arrest and imprisonment of two journalists. Pheap Pheara of TSP 68 TV Online and Phorn Sopheap of Battambang Post TV Online were arrested on July 31, 2025, in different locations. The two were arrested for taking two photos in a restricted military zone and posting them on Facebook, one of which showed a landmine. The photo was then reposted by Thailand as an accusation that Cambodia used landmines. For this, they were charged with seven to 15 years in prison in Siem Reap Provincial Court on charges of treason against nationalism during the war (Cheang, 2026).

Analyzing the Impact of the Thailand-Cambodia Conflict on Human Insecurity in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear Provinces

Economis Insecurity

From the economic impact data caused by the Thailand-Cambodia conflict in 2025, it shows that this conflict has created economic insecurity in Ubon Ratchathani Province. Although nominal GDP per capita did not experience a drastic decline, CGD projections indicate a sharp drop in economic growth from 4.4% in 2024 to only 0.9% in 2025. This indicates a slowdown of more than four times, signaling a sudden loss of economic momentum due to the armed conflict occurring at the border. Ubon Ratchathani has always been one of the provinces with the lowest GDP per capita in Thailand, and the escalation of the border conflict with Cambodia from June to December 2025 further slowed its economic growth. Prakob Chaisongkram's testimony about retail sales falling to a three-year low illustrates the loss of predictability in household and business incomes, which is a key characteristic of economic insecurity, where individuals or economic actors can no longer rely on the stability of their livelihoods.

On the Cambodian side, official GDP data for Preah Vihear is not yet available, making the economic impact analysis rely on proxy indicators, namely the tourism sector and the movement of migrant workers. The sharp decline in the number of visitors to historical sites such as Preah Vihear Temple and Koh Ker indicates a direct blow to the regional income that relies on cultural heritage tourism, compounded by the closure of hundreds of small businesses, restaurants, and hotels in the conflict area. What is more concerning on a macro level is the return of more than 900,000 Cambodian migrant workers from Thailand after July 24, 2025. A very large number considering that the majority of the 1.2 million Cambodian workers abroad previously worked in Thailand. This phenomenon has the potential to create dual pressure for Cambodia, namely the loss of remittance flows that have been supporting household economies in Cambodia, and the influx of returning labor that the domestic job market may not be ready to absorb.

Based on the explanation above, the Thailand-Cambodia conflict that occurred along the border of Ubon Ratchathani Province and Preah Vihear Province has caused economic insecurity for both provinces. This economic insecurity in the conflict can be seen from the decline in per capita GDP growth in Ubon Ratchathani Province. Preah Vihear Province has also suffered losses, with the tourism sector being the most affected by the conflict. Economic insecurity in the tourism sector in both provinces includes disruptions in tourist access, damage to heritage sites, and a decrease in both domestic and international visitors, which has led to a drop in revenue and, ultimately, pressure on the per capita GDP of both countries. In addition, the return of Cambodian migrant workers has not only been a major driver of the decline in GDP growth in Cambodia but also has affected GDP in Thailand.

Enviromental Insecurity

In Ubon Ratchathani, environmental insecurity is evident from the damage to public facilities due to conflict, causing most camps to lose permanent access to water, forcing refugees to rely on bottled water and emergency supplies to survive. This condition shows that

environmental insecurity in Ubon Ratchathani is primarily caused by damaged infrastructure and the lack of alternative water sources around the camps. This is further exacerbated by the overcrowded shelters, considering that Ubon Ratchathani Province has the highest number of shelters in Thailand.

Meanwhile, in Preah Vihear Province, environmental insecurity appears more detailed through data released by the UN in Cambodia, which shows disparities in water sources among the refugees. Where some rely on water tank trucks, some on bottled drinking water, and refugees who have returned home rely on rainwater due to the perception that the water sources around them are not safe for consumption. This issue is exacerbated by sanitation conditions that are below minimum standards, such as overflowing and damaged toilets, forcing some refugees to defecate in the open due to the lack of proper waste disposal facilities.

Referring to the discussion above, environmental insecurity emerged during the conflict on the border between Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces in 2025. The conflict damaged public facilities and forced people to seek refuge in refugee camps. The large number of refugees in the border area has created an urgent need for clean water and sanitation. Clean water is a primary and fundamental human need for survival. Furthermore, the need for sanitation has also become an urgent need during this border conflict. In many refugee camps, clean water, sanitation, and housing conditions are below minimum standards, with reports of a lack of clean water for drinking and hygiene.

Food Insecurity

In the northeastern region of Thailand, including Ubon Ratchathani, the rates of stunting and malnutrition among toddlers were already high before the conflict, nearing 20%. However, when the conflict broke out and disrupted food supply routes to the border areas and refugee camps, the existing nutritional problems worsened. The disruption of food distribution due to the conflict has made it increasingly difficult for children in this region to receive adequate nutrition, thereby adding new pressure to the already severe malnutrition conditions and potentially increasing the rate of malnutrition beyond its initial state.

A more concerning situation is seen on the Cambodian side. The rate of acute malnutrition among refugee children in Preah Vihear and its surroundings is very high, with 36% suffering from severe malnutrition and 17.5% from moderate malnutrition. This means that more than half of the children examined are in a serious nutritional condition. Unlike stunting, which usually occurs over years, acute malnutrition like this appears in a short period, indicating that children's access to food has been abruptly cut off due to conflict. This has also led UNICEF to promote the use of RUFT for the treatment of children suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

The above analysis demonstrates that the food insecurity that occurred during the conflict on the border between Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces was a direct impact of the conflict, disrupting access to adequate food, thus triggering malnutrition in children. Food insecurity is not simply about the lack of food supplies, but rather the inability of many people to access, obtain, or afford food. The lack of food supplies in refugee camps due to the conflict on the border between Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces has resulted in inadequate nutritional intake for children. Children are a vulnerable group in this conflict, as they are most in need of high nutrition for growth. The increasing cases of malnutrition in the border area are a sign that individual access to food is in urgent condition.

Health Insecurity

Almost 100 cases of cholera have been reported in the Thai border region, such as Ubon Ratchathani Province. This situation is exacerbated by high measles case data in border provinces like Ubon Ratchathani, indicating that the weakness of the healthcare system due to conflict opens gaps for various infectious diseases to spread, not just one type of outbreak. Meanwhile, in Preah Vihear, the most prominent health threat is the rapidly increasing measles outbreak in refugee camps. A surge of nearly 4,540 measles cases nationwide in Cambodia, with Preah

Vihear recording the highest number of cases in September 2025, indicates that the refugee crisis has created ideal conditions for the spread of this disease, especially among children who have not been vaccinated or are under-vaccinated.

Based on the explanation above, the impact of this conflict has caused insecurity in the health sector, particularly with the spread of contagious diseases. Cholera outbreaks have been detected in refugee sites such as in Ubon Ratchathani Province. Meanwhile, measles outbreaks have been detected in several refugee sites in Cambodia, one of them being in a refugee camp in Preah Vihear Province. Contagious disease issues can no longer be seen as just medical problems, but also as security concerns. The conflict at the border between Ubon Ratchathani Province and Preah Vihear Province has led to an increase in contagious diseases. This is driven by the damaged health systems and facilities, as well as crowded refugee sites without proper disease management strategies.

Individual and Community Insecurity

Political Terror Scale (PTS) assesses the level of insecurity for individuals and groups based on reports such as those from Amnesty International, by examining the extent and systematic nature of political violence targeting civilians. Based on the data above, the conditions in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear strongly indicate a high level on the PTS scale. Amnesty International explicitly notes that the attacks were carried out indiscriminately, killing both civilians and military personnel, and damaging civilian infrastructure such as health centers and places of worship. In Ubon Ratchathani Province, landmine casualties and civilian deaths, all of which indicate that the conflict truly threatens the safety of the community at large. Meanwhile, in Preah Vihear Province, more than 34,000 people have been evacuated to shelters, and more than 10,000 families have been displaced due to the conflict. This is in line with Amnesty International's assessment that the Thailand-Cambodia conflict places civilians at serious risk of violence, a condition that, within the framework of PTS, reflects a high degree of political terror on both sides of the border region.

Based on the description above, individual or community insecurity can be seen from the presence of people directly affected by the conflict, either through waves of displacement or through loss of life. In the context of human insecurity, individual or community insecurity uses a report from Amnesty International as a tool to measure the level of political violence against physical integrity rights violations. The Thailand-Cambodia conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear Provinces involved military forces and heavy weapons such as artillery, rockets, drones, and airstrikes. This directly demonstrates how interstate violence can threaten the personal security of thousands. This conflict demonstrates that threats to personal security do not always originate solely from domestic oppression, but can also arise from interstate conflicts.

Political Insecurity

In Ubon Ratchathani, political insecurity is evident from the Thai military's pressure on media independence during the conflict. The statement by the Navy Spokesperson urging the media to support Thailand, as well as Vassana Na-nuam's demand for uniform media support for the military, indicate an effort to silence differing views. Meanwhile, in Preah Vihear, the pressure on press freedom is much harsher and directly repressive. At least 16 journalists and critics were arrested on charges of treason, which carry a penalty of up to 15 years in prison. The arrest of two other journalists, Pheap Pheara and Phorn Sopheap, for photographing a forbidden zone further underscores that the state is using the law to silence information deemed detrimental to the national image during the war. The combination of arrests, charges of treason, and threats of severe punishment demonstrates a form of political repression that is much more overt than in Thailand, thereby reinforcing the notion that the Thailand-Cambodia conflict not only threatens the physical safety of civilians but also their fundamental rights to speak and access information freely.

Based on the findings above, the Thailand-Cambodia conflict in Ubon Ratchathani and

Preah Vihear provinces has caused political insecurity, as evidenced by the lack of press freedom. One of the main concerns in political insecurity is state repression, which cannot be expressed without press freedom. In the Thailand-Cambodia conflict, state repression was clearly evident in the thousands of people affected by the conflict in both countries. In the context of human insecurity, press freedom can help reduce state repression by increasing information transparency. Therefore, press freedom is needed and its rights must be protected.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the discussion above, it can be concluded that the impact of the conflict between Thailand and Cambodia that occurred on the border of Ubon Ratchathani Province and Preah Vihear Province caused human insecurity. In this conflict, there are six dimensions of human insecurity that have been proven to occur. In the first dimension, namely economic insecurity occurred with the impact on the tourism sector which is one of the main factors driving the decline in GDP growth of both countries in 2025. This is accompanied by a wave of withdrawal of Cambodian migrant workers from Thailand which also contributed to the decline in Cambodia's GDP growth. The second dimension is environmental insecurity, in this conflict is evidenced by the difficulty of access to clean water and sanitation in both provinces. The third dimension is food insecurity, this dimension can be seen in the fact that in both provinces there are cases of malnutrition in children under 5 years old due to a lack of nutritious food supplies.

The fourth dimension, health insecurity in Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces, can be seen in the increase in infectious diseases, where the WHO stated that the increase in infectious diseases mostly occurred during refugee camps. The fifth dimension, individual or community insecurity in this conflict, is seen from the people affected by the conflict, both in the form of waves of refugees and casualties, which is also evidenced by a report from Amnesty International. The final dimension is political insecurity, which is evidenced by the case of the absence of press freedom during the conflict on the border of Ubon Ratchathani and Preah Vihear provinces. Overall, this conflict has impacted six dimensions of human insecurity.

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