

THAILAND

GAS FATALITIES REPORTED ON KAMPUCHEA BORDER

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[Text]. The correspondent in Aranyaprathet reported that at 0930 on 31 October some 130 soldiers of the Son Sann and Chea Chhut Khmer Serei groups attacked a Vietnamese military post at Yaeng Dangkum Village in Kampuchea, about 5 kilometers north of the Nong Chan Kampuchean refugee camp. However, a team of Chea Chhut soldiers came across a Vietnamese patrol unit only 1 kilometer outside the village. The Vietnamese defenders fired 120-mm and 80-mm mortars at them. After 2 hours of fighting, the Vietnamese soldiers fired toxic gas artillery shells to disperse the Khmer Serei troops. Six Khmer Serei soldiers were killed instantly while 50-60 others suffered symptoms such as headache and vomiting blood from inhaling the toxic gas. These soldiers were expected to die within 3 days.

Some 238 Chea Chhut soldiers and 82 from the Moulinaka group are being treated at the Nong Chan field hospital after having inhaled toxic gas. Since 13 October, 112 Chea Chhut soldiers, 64 from Moulinaka and a number of civilians have been killed by toxic gas. However, there has been no official report on the exact number of toxic gas victims.

The correspondent also reported that from 30 October to 1 November, 300-400 Vietnamese soldiers dug bunkers at 5-meter intervals from (Sahon) Village to (Laem Nong Ian). They worked at night from 2000 to 0100 hours the following day. The bunkers were covered with tree leaves to prevent detection by Thai patrol aircraft.

A Thai military source disclosed that as of 30 October security teams, each comprised of 5 soldiers and 10 civilians, have been set up to guard the villages along the border canal at night in two 6-hour shifts.

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