

NEW ZEALAND DEFENCE FORCE: PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

CAMBODIA

WHERE:

The Kingdom of Cambodia (Kampuchea) is in southeast Asia, located between Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos.

WHO:

Cambodia was engaged in a civil war that pitted the Cambodian Monarchy - Republic and its allies, including the United States, against the Cambodian communists, the Khmer Rouge, who received support from neighbouring North Vietnam and China.

WHAT:

Cambodia had been under French colonial rule from 1863 and was occupied by Japan during WWII. Following Japan's surrender at the end of WWII, France reluctantly permitted Cambodia a measure of self-governance under King Norodom Sihanouk, who persuaded France to grant full independence to Cambodia in 1953 to avoid civil war.

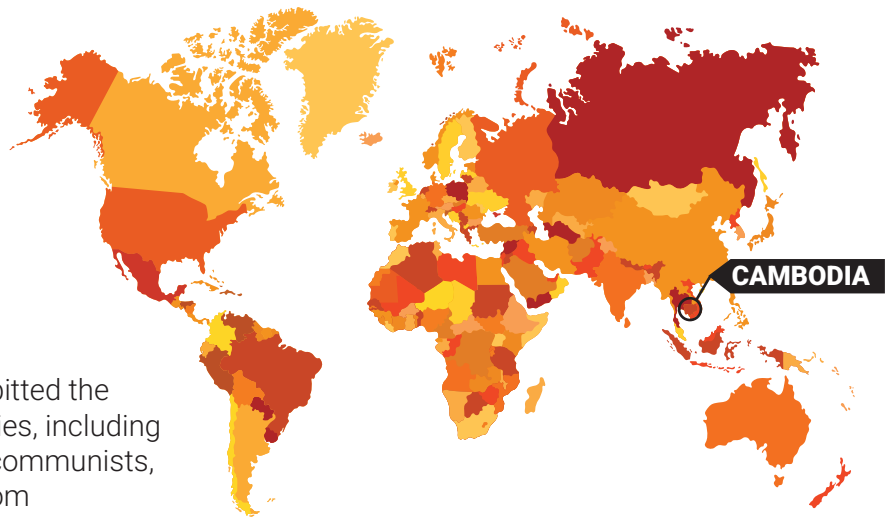
The Khmer Rouge under the leadership of Pol Pot took power in 1975 and began the forced removal of city dwellers, intellectuals (doctors, teachers, lawyers), and minorities (particularly Muslims) into the countryside. This resulted in two million deaths through starvation, disease, and execution. Pol Pot was overthrown in 1979 by an invading Vietnamese army. Pol Pot evaded capture and maintained a political presence in Cambodia for nearly two more decades, including negotiating with the United Nations in 1992 as a necessary partner to bring peace to Cambodia.

WHY:

The newly independent Cambodia of 1953 did not result in improved conditions for most of its citizens. There were vast differences in living standards between Cambodians in urban areas and the impoverished majority in rural areas. Instability arising from gross inequality, the class division between urban elites and rural poor, the legacy of colonialism, and competing power factions supported either by communist China and Vietnam or Western capitalists meant Cambodia was ripe for a revolution.

WHEN:

1975 -1979.



NZDF PEACEKEEPING IN CAMBODIA

UNITED NATIONS TRANSITIONAL AUTHORITY IN CAMBODIA

WHERE:

The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) was established in 1992 to help restore peace and civil government after decades of conflict and genocide.

WHO:

UNTAC was a multidimensional operation. New Zealand sent 100 plus military personnel which was NZ's largest peacekeeping deployment at the time.

WHAT:

NZDF personnel trained mine clearers and helped to clear millions of unexploded landmines. NZDF also patrolled coastal and inland waters, and helped to oversee democratic elections. Its communications unit included the first NZDF women to join a peacekeeping mission.

WHY:

The mandate for UNTAC:

- Ensured a free and fair election.
- Protected human rights.
- Assisted in economic development.
- Supported the reconstruction of essential infrastructure.
- Supervised the withdrawal of hostile foreign forces.
- Helped resettle refugees.

WHEN:

UNTAC was deployed from 1992-1993. Following the withdrawal of UNTAC, several United Nations agencies remained in the country to support reconstruction and development.

New Zealand resettled 4,661 Cambodian refugees between 1979 and 1994.