

# Fleeing Cambodians Are *Slain*

## Aranyaprathet, Thailand

Khmer Rouge authorities have ordered mass evacuations from Cambodian towns near the Thai frontier and shot dozens of Cambodians trying to flee into Thailand, Thai border police and refugees said yesterday.

Refugees who crossed the border Thursday said townspeople in the border town of Poipet and in Mongkul Borei an Sisophon farther inside northwest Cambodia — perhaps 50,000 in all — had fled into the jungle.

Khmer Rouge jeeps mounted with loudspeakers went through the towns before dawn on recent days

and warned the populace to evacuate immediately or risk being killed, the refugees and police reported.

They gave no indication why the Communist leaders of Cambodia wanted the towns empty, but reports from the capital of Phnom Penh told of the same maneuver there last week.

Poipet appeared deserted from the Thai side of the border. Khmer Rouge troops had mounted red flags on bamboo sticks on the bridge that spans a stream at the main crossing point. About ten troops were posted behind barbed wire rolls on the bridge, but no civilians could be seen.

"We ran in panic to cross the border while the Khmer Rouge soldiers chased us," said Hot Thi Chas, a 32-year-old mother of two who escaped Thursday. "I heard a lot of gunshots behind us, but I just kept running."

She was one of about 400 ethnic Cham Cambodian Moslems from Poipet who made it across the border Thursday. Her husband was not as lucky.

"They told me the Khmer Rouge shot him as he tried to take some belongings across the stream at the border," she said.

The refugees said about 30

of their number were killed trying to get to Thailand and about 100 others were cut off by Khmer Rouge soldiers and believed killed.

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