



## **AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

22 April 2022

#### **HIS EXCELLENCY LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN MURRAY SANDERSON, AC AND MRS LORRAINE SANDERSON VISIT CAMBODIA**

Former Force Commander of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) His Excellency Lieutenant General John Murray Sanderson AC and his wife Mrs Lorraine Sanderson will visit Cambodia 23 April to 2 May to mark the 30th anniversary of UNTAC, and as part of the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Australia and Cambodia.

During the visit, Lieutenant General Sanderson and Mrs Sanderson will pay a courtesy call on His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath NORODOM SIHAMONI, King of Cambodia, and Her Majesty Queen Mother NORODOM MONINEATH SIHANOUK of Cambodia.

Lieutenant General Sanderson and Mrs Sanderson will also meet Prime Minister Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen and other senior ministers, provincial governors, key officials and civil society representatives.

These meetings provide an opportunity to reflect on the personal contributions and friendships that have built Australia and Cambodia's strong relationship over the past 70 years, and consider how we can further strengthen our relationship into the future.

Lieutenant General Sanderson will open an exhibition, organised by the Australian Embassy and supported by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies and the Asian Vision Institute, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of UNTAC at the Raffles Hotel Le Royal. The UNTAC exhibition will be open to the public from 7:00am to 9:00pm every day from 29 April to 28 May.

UNTAC was an historic period for Cambodia and a great example of effective international political and security cooperation, with Japan and ASEAN member states also making key contributions. It was established by the United Nations in 1992 to oversee the implementation of the Paris Peace Agreements, the safe repatriation of Cambodians displaced by the civil war, and the 1993 national elections. Australian Lieutenant General Sanderson commanded its large multilateral force consisting of 12 infantry battalions and

support units, military observers, and civilian police, totalling 22,000 personnel from around 40 different countries.

In addition to providing the command of the military component, Australia also contributed over 1,200 personnel to UNTAC. Australia provided the first contingent - the Force Communications Unit (488 personnel) - mainly from the Australian Army 2nd Signals Regiment. The second contingent included Royal Australian Navy, Royal Australian Air Force and New Zealand Army personnel. Australian signallers (communications personnel) were attached to other UNTAC units throughout Cambodia to maintain contact with the force headquarters. LTGEN Sanderson later explained these signallers "were the glue that held the mission together".

Australia is a longstanding friend, partner and neighbour of Cambodia. Our 70th anniversary of bilateral relations this year is an important opportunity to reflect on our long history of cooperation in health, agriculture, infrastructure, education and our people-to-people links, including our significant contribution to UNTAC.

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