



## DID THE BORDER DIVIDE THE LAND, OR ONLY THE SOULS WHO FORGOT THEY WORSHIPPED THE SAME RAIN?

### CHAPTER 1

The first mortar blast tore through the dawn stillness like a scream. In the humid half-light behind her family's stilt house in Siem Reap, sixteen-year-old Sovanara didn't flinch. Her bare feet pressed into the warped wooden planks of the makeshift stage as she arched her spine into the Chourm pose – fingers curled like lotus buds about to bloom, eyes fixed on the northern horizon where Preah Vihear's ancient silhouette bled into pillars of smoke. Another explosion rattled the mango trees, shaking dewdrops from their leaves. Somewhere beyond that crimson-stained sky, her father Lok was carving stone in a warzone. Inside the house, her mother Vy slammed a pot of samlor korko onto the charcoal stove. "Stop dancing, Sovanna!" she shouted, her voice raw as scraped earth. "Can't you hear? The Thais are shelling the temple again!" Vy had buried two brothers in the border clashes of the 90s; to her, Preah Vihear was not a sacred site but a burial ground that kept claiming lives. Yet Sovanara only spun faster, her crimson sampot flaring like a war banner as she transformed into the Apsara – celestial dancer, peace-bearer, her father's living prayer against the thunder of guns. Lok had taught her this; "When weapons roar, dance louder. Remind the gods what beauty they risk destroying."

At the jungle's edge stood Lok's workshop, where the scent of chiselled sandstone clung to the air like temple incense. Sovanara found him hunched over a half-formed Buddha, calloused hands coaxing a beatific smile from the stone. Villagers called him Bong Lok – Brother Stone – but Sovanara always saw the soldier in his posture; the rigid spine from years as a Cambodian Army engineer defusing landmines. War had taken his left eye; art had salvaged his soul. "You felt the blasts?" she signed. Lok had lost his hearing to a Thai mortar in '09. He touched the Buddha's serene lips. "They're hitting the western stairway. Where I found the Devi stone." Unwrapping a cloth bundle, he revealed a palm-sized carving of Menvani, the Mother Goddess – her face distinctly Khmer, yet crowned with Thai Naga serpents, a hybrid masterpiece he'd risked sniper fire to retrieve. "Preah Vihear belongs to both our peoples," his hands whispered. "Her stones remember when Khmer and Siamese hands built together." Suddenly Vy's shadow filled the doorway. "Poetry won't stop bullets! The Thais killed your cousin last week!" She snatched the statue. "This 'goddess' is stolen heritage!" "No!" Sovanara grabbed it back, the cool weight a talisman in her palm. Lok's single eye glistened. "Hatred is a landmine, Vy. Step on it, and it shatters generations."

Midnight bled through bamboo walls when Lok shook Sovanara awake. Moonlight etched his face with silver. "The temple cries for help," his hands confessed. "Thai shells cracked the Naga balustrade. I must save what remains." Vy gripped his arm. "You swore you'd stop crossing the border!" "If I stay, history turns to dust," he signed. Pressing a tiny Buddha statue into Sovanara's palm – Khmer body, Siamese face – he murmured, "Guard this. It's my answer to war." As Sovanara begged to join him, his hands stilled hers. "Your stage is here. Dance for children hiding in bunkers. Make them believe beauty survives." Shouldering his chisels, he vanished into the gunfire-stippled darkness.

Three days passed. No word. No sign. On the fourth dawn, Sovanara danced at Psar Leu market while children huddled beside durian carts. Her feet traced sacred geometry in dust as she embodied Indra's daughter descending to calm a battlefield – until a shattered scream tore the air; "They found Lok! Near the Thai wire!" She ran. Past rice fields scarred by tank tracks. Past saffron-robed monks chanting over body bags. In the Red Cross tent, a nurse drew back a bloodstained sheet. Lok's body was broken, yet his sculptor's hands remained untouched, locked in rigor mortis around a chisel and an unfinished Buddha – its left side Cambodian sandstone, its right Thai marble. "Thai sniper," a soldier muttered. "Shot him carving this on a landmine marker." Rain fell as Sovanara cradled the



statue. Where the Buddha's heart should beat, Lok had carved a hollow void – a silent scream against emptiness.

Half a world away in a Bangkok underpass, seventeen-year-old Chai watched black paint swallow his mural. On the concrete canvas, he'd drawn Preah Vihear floating above flames, cradled by a seven-headed Cambodian Naga. Nationalists had spray-painted "TRAITOR" across it. "Why mourn that temple?" demanded his friend Pong, kicking a discarded can. "It's Khmer land! They shot your brother there!" Chai's throat tightened. Two years earlier, his brother Kiet – a Thai border guard – died in a firefight with Khmer troops. His father, Sersan Thanet, had vowed vengeance. "Art isn't about sides," Chai rasped, repainting the temple with Garuda's golden wings – Thailand's emblem – shielding its stones. "Preah Vihear is ours too. Our kings restored it. Our blood waters its soil." Police sirens wailed. "Destroy that propaganda!" an officer yelled. As white paint devoured his creation, Chai salvaged one fragment; Garuda's eye, weeping gold onto his palm.

Back in Siem Reap, Sovanara washed her father's body with Tonlé Sap water. She placed the half-finished Buddha on his still chest. Vy collapsed, wailing; "Hear that, Lok? Thai mortars salute your corpse!" But Sovanara knelt silent, slipping Lok's chisel into her pocket – its steel cold as vengeance. Then she discovered it; tucked in Lok's waistband, a sketch of her dancing, adorned with Thai script. A monk translated; "To the Cambodian dancer; Your grace defies borders. ; A Thai soldier's son, Chai." Outside, mortars thundered. Sovanara lifted the hollow-hearted Buddha. Into its void, she placed a jasmine bud and a pinch of her father's stone dust. "I'll finish what you began," she vowed. And as the world exploded, she danced – not in prayer now, but in fierce defiance, her tears cutting trails through the dust on her cheeks like rivers erasing borders.

## CHAPTER 2

Rain hammered against the corrugated tin roof of Chai's makeshift studio in Bangkok, each drop echoing like distant gunfire. The cramped space above his father's garage smelled of turpentine and damp concrete, walls adorned with what he called his Gallery of Ghosts; a charcoal sketch of his brother Kiet's grin, frozen in time before Cambodian artillery took him; the golden eye of Garuda salvaged from his defaced Preah Vihear mural; and a newspaper clipping of Sovanara mid-pirouette under siege; "Siem Reap Girl Dances Amid Shelling." Chai dipped his brush into vermillion, the exact shade of Sovanara's sampot in the photo. "Why her?" he whispered to Kiet's spectral likeness. "Why does her grief feel like a mirror?"

Downstairs, Sersan Thanet polished his military medals at the kitchen table, the rasp of cloth against metal cutting through the drumming rain. Chai's mother, Lawan, coughed into an orchid-embroidered handkerchief, each spasm a reminder of the cancer devouring her lungs. "My unit returns to Preah Vihear next week," Thanet announced, slamming his fist on Lok's sketch of Sovanara dancing. "We'll bury those Khmer thieves in the rubble of their stolen temple." Chai stepped into the room, rainwater dripping from his hair. "That dancer's father died protecting Preah Vihear's stones. She's no thief." Thanet's eyes turned to flint. "Lies! They executed Kiet while he prayed!" "He was on patrol, Pa!" Chai shot back. "His journal;" CRACK. Thanet's palm struck Chai's cheek. Lawan's teacup shattered. "Burn that journal," Thanet hissed. "Or I'll report you for treason."

Chai fled to Kiet's old room. In a rusted tin box beneath the bunk, he found his brother's truth; "14 Feb 2009; Command ordered us to fire first. We killed Cambodian woodcutters. Today, a girl danced in the crossfire... I aimed. Couldn't pull the trigger. What monsters are they making us?" The words blurred as rain blurred the world outside.

At dawn, Chai rode his motorbike to Wat Saket, where Golden Mount's stairs vanished into monsoon mist. Under the bodhi tree, Phra Vichit; the monk who'd taught Kiet meditation; stirred rice soup for Cambodian refugees. "Anger is a stone in your pocket, Khun Chai," he said, noting the



bruise on Chai's face. "Set it down." Chai unrolled Sovanara's dance sketch. "I need to send this to her. With an apology." Vichit gazed toward the artillery flashes on the horizon. "The border devours good intentions. But art..." He pulled a crimson krama from his robes. "...art slips through cracks." His plan was simple; Chai would paint his message on silk. Vichit's network would smuggle it through Psar Pruhm market, the "Gray Zone" where enemies bartered during ceasefires. One rule; "No words of hate. Only colors."

Sovanara moved through Psar Pruhm's controlled chaos, her mother's kramas clutched like armor. The air reeked of durian and diesel, undercut by the metallic tang of fear. Thai soldiers haggled for Cambodian prahok; Khmer women sold amulets beside grenade casings sprouting marigolds. At Stall 17, marked by a hidden Garuda-Naga symbol, a toothless crone seized Sovanara's wrist. "For you, srey sa'art," she rasped, pressing a silk scroll into her palm. "From the nak leng." Behind a wall of rice sacks, Sovanara unrolled the silk. Her breath caught. Chai had painted her dancing over a shattered rifle; Kiet offering a chisel to the hollow-hearted Buddha; Preah Vihear's towers braided from their hair. No words; only stone-gray, sampot-red, and medal-gold.

Before dawn, Sovanara returned with indigo dye and Lok's chisel. On the scroll's reverse, she carved the hybrid Buddha's unfinished form and her feet dancing on an undetonated landmine. The vendor cackled; "He comes today. Bring sankya; Thai pumpkin." Chai arrived disguised as a farmer, his basket heavy with pumpkins hiding art supplies. When Sovanara appeared, the market's noise dimmed. He saw her grief mirrored in her posture, the scar on her palm from clutching Lok's chisel during bombings. She placed a pumpkin in his basket, its stem woven with a Garuda feather. "Your brother lowered his gun," she whispered in fractured Thai. "My father saw." Chai's knees buckled. "Then why carve forgiveness?" Sovanara touched her landmine etching. "Because hate is the bomb that always explodes." A whistle shrieked. Thai guards stormed the market. "Ceasefire over! Clear out!" Chai thrust Kiet's journal into Sovanara's hands. As soldiers dragged him away, their fingers brushed; and she left a pumpkin-dye Apsara dancing on his palm.

That night, Thanet found the journal and Sovanara's silk in Chai's room. "You betray Kiet's memory!" he roared, burning them in the yard. Chai stood in the ashes, the orange pumpkin stain on his skin like war paint. "No, Pa. You burn his wish." He opened the journal to Kiet's last entry; "If I die, tell the dancer; Keep dancing. Tell Chai; Paint our peace." Thanet read it silently. For the first time since Kiet's death, his hands shook; not with rage, but the weight of his son's truth. Behind him, Lawan wept into her Khmer scarf. Rain fell, dousing the embers. Thanet picked up his radio; "Prepare artillery. Target; Preah Vihear's west stairway." Outside Sovanara's window in Siem Reap, a rain-soaked Garuda feather tapped the glass like a warning.

### CHAPTER 3

Rain lashed the ancient stones of Preah Vihear, each drop a cold needle against Sovanara's skin as she pressed her bleeding palm against the temple's central lingam. The thunder of Thai artillery flashed orange in the valley below like the eyes of awakening demons. Her father's chisel lay heavy in her grip, its steel colder than the pre-dawn air. "I'm here, Lok," she whispered to the shuddering stones. "Show me how to fight death with beauty."

At the Thai artillery camp, Sersan Thanet stared through rain-fogged binoculars, his jaw clenched like a vise. Target; Preah Vihear's West Stairway; where Cambodian troops were suspected to hide. But his radio operator's voice trembled through the static; "Sir, thermal scans confirm... one civilian. A girl." Thanet's fist crushed the page from Kiet's journal where his son had scribbled "Keep dancing." "Khmer deception," he snarled. "FIRE AT WILL!" "PA, STOP!" Chai burst into the command tent, drenched and gasping. He hurled Sovanara's indigo-carved silk at Thanet's boots; the image of her dancing feet suspended over landmines. "That girl carries Kiet's honor! She dances



where he refused to shoot!" Thanet's gaze flickered to the silk. "Remove him!" he barked. As soldiers seized Chai, he screamed; "Kiet died ASHAMED OF YOU!"

Sovanara climbed the temple's shattered stairway, mortar fragments biting her bare feet. With each step, she scattered jasmine and marigolds; Cambodian flowers for the dead; mixed with Thai bai si leaves for protection. CRUMP! A shell struck the east tower. Stone shrapnel hailed down. In the debris, she glimpsed it; Lok's unfinished Buddha, half-buried where he fell, its hollow heart gaping like a wound. "Now," she breathed. She danced not the graceful Apsara, but the Krabei Koun Kong; the Warrior's Dance. Her heels struck the broken steps like drumbeats, her hands carving defiant shapes from the smoky air. One misstep. One buried mine. One end.

Chai wrenched free, sprinting past stunned soldiers toward the ammunition depot; a concrete tomb stacked with shells destined for the temple. "Seal it!" Thanet roared. But Chai slipped inside, slamming the iron latch. "I'LL BURN IT ALL!" His voice echoed off cold walls. "UNLESS YOU CEASEFIRE!" Thanet froze. Inside, Chai had plastered a collage across the bunker; Sovanara's market sketch of him, Kiet's journal page, and a faded photo of young Thanet smiling beside a Cambodian monk at Preah Vihear in 1978.

Sovanara's feet bled freely now. She pressed the Buddha's sandstone half to the Thai marble shard in her pocket. "Bring them home, Devi," she begged the shattered Menvani statue. Suddenly; silence. The shelling ceased. Peering through binoculars, Sovanara saw why; Chai had jury-rigged a projector to a salvaged generator, its beam cutting through the rain. On the bunker's concrete wall, he projected Sovanara's dance – not live, but the silk scroll image he'd smuggled; her feet etched over landmines, Lok's Buddha wat There she was; blood streaking her ankles as she whirled before Lok's Buddha; magnified tenfold for the artillery crew to see. Thanet's voice cracked over the radio; "...fall back. ALL UNITS, WITHDRAW!"

As dawn bled gold over the Dangrek cliffs, Sovanara knelt before the hybrid Buddha. From her pocket, she drew Chai's Garuda feather, Lok's stone dust, and Kiet's spent bullet casing. She mixed them with her blood and rain, pressing the paste into the statue's hollow heart. "Now you're whole," she whispered. Stone boots crunched behind her. Thanet stood helmetless, Kiet's journal trembling in his hands. He laid a Thai bai si offering at the Buddha's feet. "My son... your brother..." His voice shattered. "...would want you to finish his art." He pointed downhill. Through the smoke, Chai limped toward the temple gate, Sovanara's krama clutched like a white flag in his fist.

#### *CHAPTER 4*

The monsoon rains arrived early, drumming a somber rhythm on the tin roof of Sovanara's stilt house. Inside, the air hung thick with the scent of medicinal herbs and decay. Lawan, Chai's mother, lay emaciated on a bamboo mat, her breath shallow. Cancer had hollowed her cheeks, but her eyes still held a fierce light. She gripped Sovanara's wrist, her Thai-accented Khmer barely a whisper; "Your dance saved my son from hatred. Now... save my husband from his own darkness." Outside, thunder rumbled like distant artillery, a grim reminder of the war that had woven their fates together.

Vy stood in the doorway, rainwater glistening on her shoulders like shattered glass. In her hands, she clutched Lok's charcoal sketch of Sovanara dancing; the one Thanet had slammed onto their kitchen table months before. Her knuckles were bone-white. She didn't look at Sovanara, but at Lawan's sunken face. Silently, she crossed the room and placed the sketch beside the dying woman's mat. Her calloused finger traced the Thai script beneath Sovanara's feet; "Your grace defies borders."

"He saw her," Vy murmured, her voice rough as chiselled stone. Not to Sovanara, but to Lawan. "Your son saw my daughter's soul. Lok... he always did too." A single tear cut a path through the



dust on her cheek. She didn't embrace Sovanara, didn't meet her eyes. But her presence; no longer a wall of anger; hung in the air like a fragile bridge.

Lawan's thin hand shifted weakly, her fingertips brushing Vy's wrist. A silent understanding passed between them; one who had buried a husband, one burying a life. Vy stepped back into the shadows near the door, a silent sentinel.

In Phnom Penh, Sersan Thanet stood shackled in a cavernous courtroom. The War Crimes Tribunal; a mix of Cambodian judges and UN officials; scrutinized him. The charge; Ordering the shelling of Preah Vihear with confirmed civilian presence. Prosecutors displayed grim photographs; Lok's body slumped beside his half-carved Buddha, Sovanara's feet bloodied from dancing on shrapnel-laced stone, Chai barricaded in the ammunition bunker. Thanet remained silent, his gaze fixed not on the judges but on the courtroom's high window, where Chai and Sovanara sat side by side, weaving a krama scarf from threads of discarded Thai and Cambodian uniforms. When the judge demanded, "Why did you halt the attack?" Thanet's eyes dropped to his own scarred hands; hands that had ordered shelling, hands that had struck his son. His voice, when it came, was stripped bare; "On that screen... I saw my wife twenty years ago, dancing at our village temple before the wars stole her joy. I saw my son's shame. I saw emptiness. That Khmer girl... her dance filled the void like Lawan's song used to."

Meanwhile, on the muddy banks of the Tonlé Sap, Chai labored under a tarp stretched between fishing boats. His forge glowed in the monsoon gloom. He melted down Thai artillery shells; 847 casings collected from Preah Vihear's slopes; pouring the molten bronze into bell molds. Sovanara watched, her movements mirroring the rhythm of his hammer strikes. When a spark seared his forearm, she pressed cool river clay to the burn. "Why do this?" she asked. Chai nodded toward the hut where Lawan lay fading. "For every bell cast, the monks chant prayers for her. These bells will ring louder than war's echo."

Back in Siem Reap, Lawan's final hours unfolded like a sacred ritual. She made Thanet swear an oath over her trembling hands; "No vengeance. Only bells." She gifted Sovanara her crimson sabai, the silk breastcloth worn at her wedding; "Dance in this when peace blooms." Lastly, she pressed Chai's palm over Sovanara's; "Your fathers' war dies with you." As rain lashed the walls, Lawan sang a Khmer-Thai lullaby, her voice thinning to a sigh;

"Sleep, child, the guns are dreaming..."

Bells bloom where bullets fell..."

Her last breath fogged the surface of the hybrid Buddha on her chest; its hollow heart now cradling her jasmine hairpin.

On September 11, 2011, they ascended Preah Vihear's scarred stairway beneath a sky heavy with unshed rain. Thanet, paroled for the day, carried Lawan's ashes in a simple urn. Chai followed, rope burns on his palms from hauling 49 bells; each forged from shells fired the day Sovanara defied annihilation. Sovanara led the procession, Lawan's sabai blazing against her charcoal sampot, flanked by fifty Cambodian and fifty Thai dancers moving as one silent river. At the summit, Chai hung the bells on coils of rusted barbed wire. Their clappers were forged from relics of loss; Lok's chisel handles, Kiet's boot buckles, Lawan's empty medicine vials. As Sovanara began the Krabei Koun Kong, her final stomp shook the earth. A single resonant CLAAAAANG erupted, then multiplied as 847 bells answered; a chorus of bronze that shattered buried landmines, cracked propaganda billboards, and finally filled the stone Buddha's hollow heart with sound.



## EPILOGUE

Preah Vihear Museum | 2023

Twelve years later, Sovanara stood before a glass case housing The Bell That Was a Bullet. Tourists crowded as she shared the story, her Khmer softened by time and healing. Beside her, a screen showed Chai in a Bangkok slum, teaching orphans to melt bullet casings into wind chimes. In another clip, Thanet; now a saffron-robed monk; tended marigolds where artillery once scorched earth. A Cambodian child reached toward the bell. "Does it still sing?" she asked. Sovanara nodded. "Strike it. But listen beyond the note."

The girl tapped the bronze. A deep, forgiving vibration swelled, resonating not just in the air, but in the soles of their feet, in the glass of the case; a physical memory of the day sound became stronger than shrapnel. As the note faded into stillness, Sovanara placed her palm flat against the glass, over the bell's cool surface. "Listen," she whispered. The girl leaned closer. In the silence after the ring, beneath the museum's hum, was it just imagination? Or the faint, persistent echo of 846 other bells, still singing on a mountain where borders blurred?

Behind them, Chai's mural spanned the wall; Lok and Thanet carving bells side by side, Lawan and Kiet dancing in dappled sunlight, their own hands painting over the jagged border line on a map. At the mural's edge, Chai had inscribed;

*"We did not stop the war.*

*We became something louder."*

## LEGAL OPINION

(According to The International Law)

### ***1. Prohibition on the Use of Force (UN Charter Art. 2(4))***

The sustained artillery exchanges and cross-border incursions depicted constitute unlawful use of force between states (Cambodia and Thailand), violating the core principle of the UN Charter. Neither side demonstrates a valid claim of self-defense under Art. 51 justifying the scale and persistence of the attacks.

### ***2. Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity (UN Charter Art. 2(1))***

The 1962 ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) definitively recognized Preah Vihear as situated in territory under Cambodian sovereignty. Thai military actions (shelling, incursions like Lok's fatal mission) constitute violations of Cambodian territorial integrity.

### ***3. Protection of Cultural Property (1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict)***

Preah Vihear is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (inscribed 2008, though disputed during the conflict period). Its deliberate shelling ("shelling the western stairway," "cracked the Naga balustrade," "Target; Preah Vihear's West Stairway") constitutes a grave breach of the Convention.

Both Cambodia and Thailand are parties to this Convention, obligating them to refrain from any act of hostility directed against cultural property and to safeguard it.



#### **4. *International Humanitarian Law (IHL) / Law of Armed Conflict***

Principle of Distinction (Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocol I); Attacks must distinguish between combatants/military objectives and civilians/civilian objects. Shelling areas where civilians are confirmed present ("thermal scans confirm... one civilian. A girl.") and targeting a location with immense cultural significance (the temple complex) violates this fundamental rule. The presence of troops near the temple does not negate its protected status or the obligation to avoid disproportionate harm to civilians and cultural property.

Principle of Proportionality (API Art. 51(5)(b)); Even if a military target existed within the temple complex (e.g., suspected troops), the anticipated civilian casualties and damage to the cultural property must not be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. Shelling the temple, knowing civilians (Sovanara) were present, clearly violates proportionality.

Protection of Civilians; Civilians like Sovanara, Lok (initially), and the villagers near the border are entitled to protection from attack. Deliberate attacks on civilians or indiscriminate attacks affecting them are war crimes.

Landmines; While not explicitly detailed as laid in the text, the constant presence and threat of landmines (Lok's history defusing them, Sovanara dancing over an undetonated mine in the silk image, Lok killed near "Thai wire") pose an indiscriminate and ongoing threat to civilians long after active fighting, violating the spirit of IHL and specific treaties like the Ottawa Treaty (though Thailand and Cambodia are not signatories, the principle of protecting civilians remains).

#### **5. *Human Rights Law***

Right to Life (ICCPR Art. 6); The conflict directly causes unlawful deprivation of life (Lok, Kiet, Lok's cousin, woodcutters, civilians caught in shelling).

Prohibition of Torture and Inhuman Treatment (ICCPR Art. 7); The pervasive fear, trauma, displacement, and destruction inflicted on the civilian populations on both sides of the border amount to inhuman treatment.

Rights of the Child (CRC); Sovanara, at 16, is a child under the CRC. Exposing her to active conflict zones, shelling, and the trauma of loss violates her rights to protection and development.

### ***Specific Legal Grounds for Ending the War***

**1. *Illegality of Ongoing Hostilities***; The conflict, as depicted, is founded on violations of fundamental international law (sovereignty, prohibition on force). Its continuation inherently perpetuates these violations. There is no legal justification for its persistence.

**2. *Ongoing War Crimes***; The deliberate attacks on a protected cultural site (Preah Vihear) and the attacks carried out with reckless disregard for civilian life constitute war crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Continuing the conflict risks further commission of such crimes, for which individuals (like Sersan Thanet, as depicted) could be held criminally responsible.

**3. *Humanitarian Imperative***; The suffering inflicted on civilians on both sides (death, injury, displacement, psychological trauma, destruction of homes and livelihoods) creates an overwhelming humanitarian imperative to cease hostilities. International law prioritizes the protection of human life and dignity.

**4. *Duty to Protect Cultural Heritage***; Both states have an obligation under international law, particularly the 1954 Hague Convention, to cease all acts damaging Preah Vihear and to cooperate in its safeguarding. Continued fighting makes this impossible.

**5. *Peaceful Dispute Resolution Obligation (UN Charter Art. 2(3), Art. 33)***; The UN Charter obligates states to settle their disputes peacefully. The border dispute must be resolved through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, or judicial settlement (e.g., returning to the ICJ for clarification), not armed conflict.