



# ພັນທະມິດເພື່ອປະຊາທິປະໄຕໃນລາວ

## ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY IN LAOS

### Alliance pour la Démocratie au Laos

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To the honorable António Guterres  
UN General Secretary  
UN Headquarter  
405 E 42nd St ·  
10017 New York  
USA

Germany, September 18, 2019

### International law break in Laos

Dear Secretary General,

We have had the pleasure of telling you and your staff in the past several times about the people's law matter in Laos. Unfortunately, after reporting to you on several occasions and despite our close cooperation with the United Nations human rights bodies, we must conclude that the situation in Laos is drastically worsening. So far no one has been able to stop the land grab and the loss of sovereignty of the Lao nation.

Since 1975 Laos has been ruled by the Lao communist party known as Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) which in turn answers and reports to the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). Under this iron chain, the Lao-Vietnamese Treaty of Friendship was created on July 18, 1977 stipulating cooperation in 'all areas.' The envisaged as a friendship treaty between the countries agreement has led in practice to the fact that Vietnam has taken over the political and military control of Laos. More recently, Vietnam has now also begun to take on the cultural and economic control.

In recent years, the government of Laos has allowed hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese to settle in Laos, this means that the Lao people lose their own settlement in their own country. Furthermore Laotian businessmen are replaced by Vietnamese. In more and more places the Lao Language is replaced by the Vietnamese. Lao officials has to finish their work, Vietnamese officials got their place. More worse: Massive illegal logging for Vietnamese companies result in the loss of livelihood of the remaining population.

That on June 27, 2015 concluded economic agreements on bilateral trade between Laos and Vietnam currently leads to a flood of Laos with Vietnamese goods and investments. The Laotian investments in Vietnam in the amount of \$ 2.5 million are investments of Vietnam in Laos compared to using \$ 5 billion. The Lao economy is ruined, and the profit goes almost exclusively to Vietnam.

On September 1st, 2015 Radio Free Asia reported a further invasion of Vietnam. In the province Savanakheth in the village near the town of Xeboun Feuang, the border was simply pushed around 15

Km towards Laos. The border was in the town of Nong 8 Km from the border also shifted to the detriment of Laos. This is a clear breach of international law.

The population is all of these measures to minority in their own country. Even now, Vietnam is still trying to take over Laos in many ways and forms. At every important level of the government of the Lao PDR there are Vietnamese technical advisors who are closely monitoring and tightly directing the activities of Lao officials. Vietnamese troops in and out of uniforms are stationed at the provinces and localities to intimidate Lao people from speaking up and from governing themselves. Vietnam has blatantly lifted our valuable natural resources for destination in Vietnam. Massive amounts of timber have been cut and transported from southern Laos to Vietnam for commerce under the supervision of the Vietnamese military while Lao citizens are forbidden from cutting timber just to build a home. The same thing is happening with the valuable minerals that are being taken freely to Vietnam day and night.

At the same time, Vietnam is looking for ways to destroy Lao culture and education. The leaders of the Lao PDR have been forced to allow the building of Ho Chi Minh monuments in many cities. Lao children are forced to learn Vietnamese in Lao schools all over the country. Historical Lao names of historical places are changed to Vietnamese names. Vietnam steals many Buddha- statues all over Laos, so the Lao people will lose their symbols of belief. At last it takes place on January 9 2015 at the old Ongtue temple of Vientiane.

The developments outlined above highlight the one-sided relationship between the two countries with all the benefits going to Vietnam at the detriment of Laos. But nothing causes more alarm than the establishment of the special zones on many Lao provinces bordering Vietnam where Vietnamese nationals are allowed to settle and occupy permanently 15 km inside of Laos. Ostensibly, this is for the security of Laos and to control the drug trade, human trafficking and other undesirable social activities. But in actual fact, these activities increased considerably following the Vietnamese settlements.

Vietnamese traffickers have spread the drug problem among young Laotians. The police personnel are appointed under the direction Vietnam so they would not arrest the traffickers. The aim of Vietnam is to keep Laotians from gaining the knowledge and ability for building a bright future. Those Laotians who are knowledgeable and smart are arrested, tortured and executed openly or secretly through disappearance like the vanishings of Mr. Sombath Somphone and others. Then, Vietnamese people are brought into Laos as professionals and experts. Numerous others are flooding into Laos by buying identity papers from the Lao authorities who are appointed by Vietnam.

A very disturbing problem is the confiscation of Lao lands in many areas along the Lao border with Vietnam. At the Xiang Khouang border, the takeover of Lao lands stretches as deep as 30 kilometers into Laos. Many villages in the southern provinces have been expropriated and the villagers forced to speak Vietnamese. This is too tormenting for the hearts and souls of Laotians.

Over the years this 'Treaty' has provided legalistic cover for Vietnam before the world community. It is in fact a cloak for Vietnam's stealth gradual control of Laos starting with the military and political apparatus. It legitimized the stationing of Vietnamese army troops in Laos to 'protect it' against hostile or counter revolutionary neighbors. The situation remains the same today despite four decades of stability. The only difference is that the Vietnamese soldiers are now out of uniform and act as advisers.

As of now, the Vietnamization of Laos is on a new level. Now Vietnamese becomes the most important foreign language in the Lao schools. Pupils who study Vietnamese instead of English or other language are absolutely preferred in some schools. National symbols are replaced by

Vietnamese symbol. For instance, the Lao Champa at the top of the That Luang is now replaced by a Vietnamese Lotus. Ho Chi Minh statues are erected in a big numbers of villages and cities.

Land grabs are spreading to every province in the country. More than 30% of Laos now is in the hands of foreign investors, mainly from Vietnam and China. The expansion of land grabbing has led to protests and land conflicts as it increasingly tramples on Laotians' rights to habitat, traditional way of life, and ancestral places of worship. When farmers become farm less, the rural and indigenous poor are made even poorer.

Deforestation is occurring at an alarming pace, caused by non-stop illegal logging to feed the 24/7 trafficking of timber to Vietnam. It is driven and covered by corrupt officials. It is already showing damages to the ecological system including depletion of wildlife, soil erosion, vulnerability to floods, and loss of soil nutrients for agriculture. The ugly scarring of the pristine beauty of the Laos landscape cannot be repaired.

Coinciding with the creeping Vietnamization of the country, the People's Republic of China is also gaining more and more influence in Laos. China has been leased land through several major projects, rail concessions and loans. These areas were converted into so-called special economic zones.

These zones have been leased to China for up to 99 years. Since Lao nationals are not allowed to enter the country, let alone use it, and even Chinese security forces are replacing the Lao police, it is clear that this country is no longer part of Laos. The population of Laos is no match for this flood of Chinese and Vietnamese investors and security forces. In fact, the Laotian nation ceases to exist. Even today, people in Laos are no longer masters of their own country.

We therefore appeal to you to handle this case in the UN Security Council. The balance of power in the region is in grave danger. Laos will thus become a springboard for the expansion plans of its neighboring countries.

We ask you wholeheartedly, to help the people in Laos.

We ask you to use your influence for this development to come to an end.

Thank you for your attention

Yours sincerely



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President of the ADL

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