



# ພັນທະມິດເພື່ອປະຊາທິປະໄຕໃນລາວ

## ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY IN LAOS

### Alliance pour la Démocratie au Laos

Letmather Str.71, 58119 Hagen, Germany. Tel & Fax: 0049( 2334) 44 44 668, [E-Mail: alliance-lao@alice.de](mailto:alliance-lao@alice.de)  
[www.laoalliance.org](http://www.laoalliance.org)

The Government of Australia  
Government House  
Dunrossil Dr  
Canberra ACT 2600

#### Human Rights Report for Laos, latest update

Hagen, Germany, Mac.15.2018

With reference to our latest report, we will give an overview about the main human rights violations that happened last time in Laos.

According to the news broadcasted by the Radio Free Asia (RFA) on February 9, 2018 as saying that 14 villagers of Ban Yip, District of Thataeng, Province of Sekong, were arrested due to the conflict of farmland in the past year of 2017, at the time being, all of them are being locked up behind bar and one person among them named Mr. Somsavanh committed suicide by referring that the dead has had bruise on his chest. The official who arranged his farewell ceremony did not let know of the date of the funeral at all. In the moment, thirteen people are being kept behind bar, and among them two persons are under 18 years of age.

The rubber farmlands originally used to belong to the villagers of Barn Yip, District of Thataeng, Province of Sekong and they were seized by the Vietnamese Company called "Cong Ty Cao Su Nghi Lao-Viet" (LVF) in 2006. The company concerned developed the surface of land and covered the land of 55 villagers measured 121 hectares while the administrative bodies of the district of Thataeng and province of Sekong agreed to lease only 42 hectares. Therefore, the villagers affected put up the signs to get their farmlands back because the administrative officials of such province did not pay them any compensation. Two villagers were arrested beforehand sometimes in 2012, they were Mr. Souvanh and Mr. Vikham and on July 25, 2017, fourteen villagers were arrested again by the administrative officials of the province of Sekong. they were: Mr. Vikham, Mr. Bounleang, Mr. Bounpok, Mr. Nark (15 years old) and Mr. Boun Tia. Five of them have been kept in an iron cell of the province of Sekong. Another group are being kept in the cell of the district of Lanarm, they are Mr. Souvanh, Mr. Bounthaen, Mr. Po, Mr. Nai, Mr. Viharn, Mr. Somsavanh, Mr. Sonh, Mr. Bounsoth and Miss. Mee (15 years old)

Some of the arrested were severely punished and were electrocuted, besides their relatives said that Mr. Souvanh and Mr. Bounlaeng were bleeding and fainted by the severity of the police in using the handle of the rifle to break their hands on September 19, 2017, in the same day Mr. Nark was electrocuted in the front yard of the school until fainted before putting him in the cell. Inside the cell Mr. Vikham was pressured severely which he thought of committing suicide but another inmates were able to rescue him. Nowadays none of the villagers dared to talk about the lands as they were threatened as saying whoever dared that person would be arrested.

The press and media continues to be restricted although the Lao constitution contains statements that are contradistinctive. On Sept. 16 2014, the Lao government issued decree 327 prohibiting online criticism of the government and the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), setting out stiff penalties for netizens and internet service providers who violate government controls. The decree also requires netizens to use their real names when setting up social media and other accounts online. This decree is only to suppress people and their opinion. Real violations like defamations or fallacious news are not persecuted.

One of the latest cases: On May 16, one of the workers' relatives said that three Lao workers arrested last year for criticizing their government on Facebook while working in Thailand have been sentenced to lengthy prison terms. Many rights groups from around the world continue to condemn the decisions made by the Lao government and calls for their immediate release. Somphone Phimmason, 29, his girlfriend Lod Thammavong, 30, and Soukane Chaithad, 32, disappeared in March 2016 after returning to Laos to renew their passports. While working in Thailand, the three had strongly criticized the Lao government online, accusing it of human

rights abuses. They were later shown on Lao television making what appeared to be public confessions for what they called the mistake of protesting the country's policies. Lod Thammavong, Soukane Chaitad, and Somphone Phimmasone had been sentenced to 12 years, 18 years, and 20 years in prison, respectively.

In spite of new laws for better land use, the land screw is continuing with the population. The new rules regulates only new cases. Old cases of land grabs will be unpunished. Unlawful land concessions in Laos are increasingly forcing villagers to abandon their livelihoods and move far away from their homes to find alternative employment. This is a sign that government officials are not enforcing regulations meant to mitigate the adverse impact of involuntary land acquisitions, a legal expert on land issues. More than 30% of the areas in Laos have been leased by soft conditions to foreign investors for up to 99 years.

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/sentences-05162017165950.html>

One of the latest examples: Residents of three villages in southern Laos are facing forced removal from their homes by the end of March 2017 if they fail to move from the sites of planned dams to an area they are calling unsuitable for farming, sources in the Southeast Asian country say. Over 100 families in Champasak province's Xe-Namnoy, Houaysoy, and Namleng villages have been told to leave to make way for construction of two dams—the Xe-Pian and Xe-Namnoy—being built along the Mekong River. Only about 20 families have moved to an assigned relocation site at Rasasinh, about 10 km. (6.2 miles) away. Over 80 others are now building houses without permission in an area closer to their original homes. Villagers are also unhappy with the rates of compensation offered by the government for their land. <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/eviction-03292017143705.html>

High levels of government corruption and graft fuel public discontent and cause leaks in revenue collection and the degradation of public services. Several anti-corruption laws have been passed, but their enforcement remains weak, and no high-profile cases have been brought to trial. The inefficient Laotian judicial system is corrupt and controlled by the ruling party. Protections for property rights are weak. Many aspects of the Laotian economy are in critical need of deep institutional reforms to spur broad-based long-term development. The economy's overall legal framework is inefficient and lacks transparency. Political interference undermines the rule of law, and systemic corruption hinders the emergence of a more active entrepreneurial class. Laos is rated 123 out of 178 countries on Transparency International's corruption perception index. Generally, the government tends to deal with serious corruption problems by forcing corrupt officials to retire or move to a new position. Bribes to low-level officials for the purpose of expediting time-sensitive applications, such as business licenses, importation of perishable items, customs, etc., anecdotal evidence of more pervasive corruption continue to rise. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/laos/corruption.htm>  
<https://www.transparency.org/country/LAO#>

The destruction of the environment is still ongoing. All dam projects will carry forward. Xayaburi, Don Sahong, Pak Beng, Luang Phrabang and others threatened the live hood of all people at the Mekong region. There is no indication that the Laos government is changing its course. <https://www.stratfor.com/image/planned-mekong-river-dam-projects-laos-and-cambodia>

As of now, the Vietnamization of Laos is on a new level. Since Laos and Vietnam made the friendship treaty in 1977 Vietnam took over the control of Laos. 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. 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. Significantly, the borderline has effectively been pushed back into Laos by 15 km and the once Lao towns and villages are now Vietnamese as reported by Radio Free Asia.

## **We appeal to the Australian Government**

**That Lao PDR to Respect and practice human rights according to the principles, treaties and conventions to which the Lao PDR is a signatory including the freedom of information and the press without restrictions from the party, the freedom to form political parties and organizations like NGO's, freedom of assembly, freedom to make criticism of the party's errors and mistakes. Stop decree no 327!**

1. **The Australian Government is one of the most important partners for development aid for Laos. This aid can be used for the development of justice and human rights. Suppress corruption urgently without exception and ensure that international aid truly benefit the people the development aid has to be for the poor people in Laos and not for the privileged people. The money and the projects have to be directly for people. Laos needs a comprehensive improvement of the health, school and infrastructure system.**
2. **That the Australian Government will do everything for the immediately release of Somphone Phimmason, Lothkham Thammavong , Soukanh Chaithat and Bounthanh Thammavong including all other political prisoners in Laos**
3. **The Australian Government shall help the disappeared human right defenders in Laos. We demand the publication of the truth about Mr. Sombath Somphone and all the other disappeared people in Laos who advocates for freedom, human rights and democracy.**
4. **That the Australian Government will use their influence to reform Laos. Effect changes towards a genuine democratic system of government with multiple political parties and legitimate free elections under the supervision of the United Nations.**
5. **The Australian Government to take attention on the exploitation problems in that region. Cease the expropriation of people's lands for the benefits of foreigners, the sale of Lao natural resources and urgently stop the flood of Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants into Laos. Stop the destruction of the environment, natural resources and wild life of Laos, and cease the unchecked construction of dams and polluting factories and end the massive land grabs all over the country!**
6. **The Australian Government can be able to help the young people in Laos. Stop the neglect of youth and safeguard them from drug addiction and prostitution, create equal educational opportunities for Lao youth without any discrimination and eliminate corruption in the education system.**



Dr. Bounthone Chanthavong- Wiese

President of the Alliance for Democracy in Laos

---

**Office in Germany:** Dr. Bounthone Chanthavong- Wiese, President, Letmather Str.71, 58119 Hagen, Germany  
Tel.& Fax: +49-2334-44 44 668, Email: [chanthalavong@aol.com](mailto:chanthalavong@aol.com)

**USA:** Mr. Vanlang Khamsouk, Vice-President 16443 SE Garrett Court Damascus, OR 97089 USA  
Tel:+1-503-307 0835 Email: [khamphitham@yahoo.com](mailto:khamphitham@yahoo.com)

**Australia:** Mr. Kat Dithavong, Vice-President, 16 Candlewood Street, Bossley Park, NSW 2176, Australia  
Tel:+61-2-96 10 81 73, Email: [kdseri40@gmail.com](mailto:kdseri40@gmail.com)

**Canada:** Mr. Kambane Anonthisen, Vice-President, 84 Highgatz Rord Kichener ,ONT, Tel. Hom: 84-514-744 5190, Cell: 514-588-0502, email: [khambane@hotmail.com](mailto:khambane@hotmail.com) , Secretary Mr. Kongsay Bounnapha, 7 Birchfield, Avenue Canada, Ontario, K2M 2 N4, Tel.+1-613-271-8027,email: [kxbounnapha@gmail.com](mailto:kxbounnapha@gmail.com)

**France:** Mr. Sovath Thongsavat Vice-President , ADL Fr. , 1 chemin du bief 01230 Tenay, France, Tel.+33-4-74 36 56 44, or +33- 6-33 375 170, Email: [thinan.t@laposte.net](mailto:thinan.t@laposte.net)

**New Zealand:** Mr. Touy Manikham Vice-President, 1 The Anchorage Whitby ,Wellington 5024, NZ, Tel.: +64-4-234 1535, Email: [touy.manikham@gmail.com](mailto:touy.manikham@gmail.com)