



Lao Human Rights Council

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Immediate Press Release on Forced Repatriation and Genocide of Hmong Returnees in Laos

1. There are about 50,000 Hmong refugees in the camps in Thailand who will be forced by government officials to return to Laos by the end of 1995.
2. The UNHCR and Thai government announced they would close down all the refugee camps in Thailand in 1995. The Napho Camp, Thailand, will be closed by the end of 1994.
3. The policies of voluntary repatriation and screening-out of the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA) and the Tripartite Agreements on Hmong Refugees have continued to be altered into forced repatriation.
4. Those refugees who refuse to return to unsafe havens in Laos are arrested and imprisoned in the camps in Thailand.
5. Since September 8, 1992, government officials have continued to use food as a political weapon to punish Hmong refugees in the Napho Camp and to force them to register for return to Laos. Those refugees who refuse to comply with the inhumane acts do not receive food and basic needs.
6. About 35,000 refugees escaped from the camps in Thailand to displaced areas because of the use of food as a political tool to punish the refugees and force them to return to Laos through forced repatriation.
7. Eyewitnesses and victims in Laos confirmed that the communist Pathet Lao government killed and massacred approximately 800 - 2,000 Hmong returnees between 1989 and 1991.
8. Since January 1990, the communist Pathet Lao government has forced more than 60,000 Hmong people to move out of their homes, territories and farming areas to many desert areas in order to kill them step-by-step in the lowland areas.
9. Approximately 10,000-15,000 Hmong people inside Laos have been arrested, imprisoned and killed since January 1990.
10. There is no freedom of residence and freedom of movement for the Hmong people inside Laos, or for Hmong returnees from Thailand to Laos. The communist government and the UNHCR put the Hmong returnees in Phou Keng and Vien Kham camps in the Plain of Jars, Xieng Khouang Province, and camps near Vientiane Province. The returnees have no right to choose freedom of residence.
11. The refugees in the camps in Thailand confirmed that the officials of the "Thai government, UNHCR, U.S. Department of State and communist Pathet Lao government are the actors and conspirators of the forced repatriation of Hmong refugees from Thailand to Laos."
12. Since 1975, the communist Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese troops have killed more than 300,000 people in Laos. The Hmong are the largest number of victims.
13. On May 7, 1993, the former Prime Minister of the Royal Thai Government, Mr. Khrukrit Pramoj, published an article in the Bangkok Siam Rat in the Thai language and in FBIS-EAS of May 25, 1993, which was signed by Souphesai Souphanouvong, a son of the President, Prince Souphanouvong, leader of the communist Pathet Lao government. The article accurately reported that the communist Pathet Lao government has "secret plans" for the liquidation and extermination of the Hmong people, including the Hmong returnees in Laos.
14. The FBIS-EAS of June 28, 1994, reported that the Thai "National Security Council (NSC) announced earlier this year (1994) that it would close Ban Napho at the end of this year. Of those remaining (12,000 Hmong refugees), only about 2,000 have expressed willingness to repatriate. The rest, mostly Hmong hill tribe people, have reportedly refused to return, wanting instead to resettle in a third country."

15. The Bangkok Post of June 29, 1994, reported that the Thai National Security Council will use "forced repatriation" to repatriate the Hmong refugees in Thailand to return to Laos as government authorities and officials have forced the Vietnamese boat people to return from Hong Kong to Vietnam.
16. The Bangkok Post of June 30, 1994, accurately reported that in "Ban Napho, Nakhon Phanom (Thailand)—About 300 Hmong made a tearful departure yesterday (June 29, 1994) at the start of a journey back to Laos supported by the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees (UNHCR)." This means that the Thai government and the UNHCR are cooperating to force the Hmong refugees to return from Thailand to Laos, because the refugees were making a "tearful departure."
17. Refugee Reports of the U.S. Committee for Refugees in Washington, D.C., of October 29, 1994, confirmed that Mr. Vue Mai, a former Chairman of the Ban Vinai Camp, Thailand, and a returnee, "disappeared" on September 11, 1994. The U.S. Committee for Refugees continued to say that "Informed sources report that the Laotian security forces, which had been tracking Vue Mai's movements for several months, arrested him." Four days after Vue Mai disappeared, on September 15, 1993, Mr. Chong Moua Thao, a former Vice Chairman of the Chiang Kham Camp, Thailand, died of food poisoning after he ate a meal with officials of the communist Pathet Lao government.
18. On May 22, 1994, at 2:00 p.m., the communist Pathet Lao government arrested, tortured, and imprisoned Mr. Xia Fong Xiong and Yang Chao Xiong, Hmong returnees in Laos in Phongsavang, Xieng Khouang Province, Laos. From 1989 till now, in 1994, there have been more than 2,000 cases like the cases of Vue Mai, Chong Moua Thao, Xia Fong Xiong and Yang Chao Xiong in Laos.
19. The Philadelphia Inquirer of February 27, 1994, accurately reported that Mr. Vang Thai Xiong and 400 non-volunteer refugees in the Napho Camp, Thailand, were forced to return to Laos on April 27, 1993. Indeed, from 1991 to 1994, more than 4,500 cases like the case of Vang Thai Xiong of April 27, 1993, have occurred.
20. On April 26, 1994, an official of the UNHCR in Washington, D.C., admitted that Mr. Cha Seng Vang (CSE 557) and Chong Neng Vang (CSC 593) were forced to return from the Nong Saeng Camp, Thailand to Laos on April 9, 1992. This was because the UNHCR concluded the "investigations" that "They (Cha Seng Vang and Chong Neng Vang) wanted to go to USA. Not understand screened out. Thai MOI used physical force to threaten them to return" to Laos. However, the UNHCR has ignored the forced repatriation of Hmong refugees from Thailand to Laos.
21. Many refugees in Thailand and victims of forced repatriation complained and reported that some officials of the UNHCR have repatriated the Lao/Hmong refugees from Thailand to Laos according to political and economic objectives of the Thai government, communist government in Laos and the U.S. government. If this is the case, the UNHCR has departed from its Statute and principles.
22. The Lao Human Rights Council and Hmong returnees in Laos and refugees in Thailand oppose forced repatriation. We appeal and call upon the United Nations and international human rights organizations and parties concerned to condemn the forced repatriation and persecution and murder of returnees in Laos.
23. Forced repatriation and murders of Hmong refugees and returnees are international crimes against peace and crimes against humanity.
24. The United Nations and international community must bring peace, stability and human rights to Laos as was done in Cambodia before forcing all Hmong refugees from Thailand to return to Laos.

Thank you for your interest and concern over the forgotten tragedies of Hmong people in Laos and refugees in the camps in Thailand.



Press Release by
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