

**Alternative Report submitted to the
UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
at the 80th Session during the consideration of the 16th – 18th Periodic
Reports of Laos**



Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization

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Section A: Introduction to the Report

This alternative report is submitted by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) on the occasion of the 80th Session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (henceforth, “the Committee”) during which the sixteenth through the eighteenth Periodic Reports of Laos will be considered.

This alternative report will focus on the situation of the indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities in Laos, looking specifically at the experiences of the Hmong, and the compliance of the Government of Laos (GoL) with and implementation of the provisions in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (henceforth, “the Convention” or “ICERD”) as it affects this particular group. This report will refer to the Hmong as a distinct indigenous people which confirms their right to specific protection as such.

The body of this report will comment upon the articles of the Convention that are of specific significance for the Hmong community in Laos. The final section of the report raises questions that should be posed and recommendations that should be made to the delegation from Laos at the 80th Session.

The Concluding Observations of the Committee following the sixth to fifteenth Periodic Reports of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic express concern regarding, among other issues, the low level of economic, social and cultural development of ethnic groups as compared with the rest of the population, the State policy of resettlement of members of ethnic groups, the level of education of persons belonging to ethnic groups, and reports that acts of violence are committed against members of the Hmong minority. This alternative report aims to provide an update on these issues as they are currently affecting the Hmong community.

The Hague, January 2012



Section B: Introduction to the Hmong

The indigenous Hmong ChaoFa people traditionally live in the ChaoFa region of Northern Laos and have a distinctive culture, language and religion. The Hmong are subject to racial discrimination and negative stereotypes which lead to them disproportionately experience forced repatriation and targeted violence. Due to Hmong opposition of Pathet Lao during the Viet Nam war, their participation in the ‘Secret War’ and collaboration with American forces, there remain wide misconceptions that all Hmong actively participate in anti-government rebel groups and are inherently destructive of the environment. Such stereotypes have influenced the living conditions for the Hmong community in Laos, where many live in fear of arbitrary arrest and torture while experiencing abject poverty.

Many have fled Laos’ repressive policies towards them, resulting in large concentrations of Hmong communities in Viet Nam, China and the United States of America. However, Hmong who seek refuge or have successfully established legal residency in neighboring countries continue to face persecution. Governments such as Viet Nam, Thailand, and Cambodia have standing collaboration efforts with the Laotian government to detain and aid in the forceful repatriation of Hmong. Such collaborations also extend to military campaigns within Laos’ borders to violently target Hmong communities hiding in jungles.

The government of Laos continues to insist that allegations of human rights violations are “groundless and appear to be merely fabrications intended to harm the image of the Laos People’s Army”¹ while refusing to allow international and independent reporters unhindered access to Laos and conflict zones

¹ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (2011) *Reports submitted by State parties under Article 9 of the Convention: Sixteenth to eighteenth periodic reports of State parties due in 2009, Laos People’s Democratic Republic* (CERD/C/LAO/16-18). para. 38



Section C: Compliance with ICERD

Article 2.2 – Ensuring Development of Indigenous Peoples

Article 2.2 states that “States Parties shall, when the circumstances so warrant, take, in the social, economic, cultural and other fields, special and concrete measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain racial groups or individuals belonging to them, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the full and equal enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms. These measures shall in no case entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate rights for different racial groups after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved.”

The State Report notes that “there exist socio-economic disparities among ethnic groups caused by the hardships and difficulties.”² While the State Report focuses attention on the living standards of ethnic groups living in remote rural areas, it fails to provide a detailed description of what these socio-economic disparities entail, nor does it provide the statistics broken down by ethnic group on political participation and the standard of living, as requested by the Committee in the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of 2005.³ The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs released reports highlighting that indigenous peoples, such as the Hmong, disproportionately experience poverty in Laos, representing 93% of the country’s poor.⁴

The government of Laos does not recognize the Hmong as an indigenous people and has no specific legislation in that regard. Explicit indigenous recognition would provide additional mechanisms to address uncompensated land confiscation, natural resource exploitation, and abuses to their cultural and religious rights.

Recommendation: The Government of Laos should provide the Committee with statistics broken down by ethnic group on political participation, level of education and the standard of living in the population as well as provide a detailed description of the socio-economic disparities that exist among ethnic groups.

Recommendation: Formally recognize the Hmong as an indigenous people Laos and respect the distinct rights afforded to them by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Recommendation: Formally endorse and ratify the International Labor Organization Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal peoples.

² CERD/C/LAO/16-18, par. 26.

³ CERD/C/LAO/CO/15 (2005), par. 16.

⁴ International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2011) The Indigenous World: East and South East Asia: Laos, Retrieved from http://www.iwgia.org/images/stories/sections/regions/asia/documents/IW2011/laos_2011.pdf



Article 5 (b) – Security of Person

Article 5 (b) stipulates “[t]he right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution.”

In its Concluding Observations following the 66th Session review of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic in 2005, the Committee stated that it “remains concerned at persistent allegations of conflict between the Government and members of the Hmong minority who have taken refuge in the jungle of mountainous areas of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic since 1975. According to various corroborating reports, this group is living in difficult humanitarian conditions.”⁵

Independent reports of massacres of Hmong groups hidden in jungles have been frequent since Laos’ last review. According to a 2006 report by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a Hmong massacre occurred on 6 April 2006, near the Laotian town of Vang Vieng. Dozens of women and children, including 12 children under 10 years old, were targeted for violent killings by soldiers. Four additional individuals were wounded and five infants starved to death after their mothers died. The unarmed Hmong were massacred while they were searching for food away from their hiding place.⁶ A similar incident was reported in July 2006; three groups of Hmong were discovered in the forest and were surrounded. A member of one of the groups made contact with a representative of the Society for Threatened Peoples over a satellite telephone, informing her that 66 people in the group had been killed in the offensive.⁷

In 2007, Amnesty International reported on the desperate conditions in which these groups of Hmong live, noting that the groups are reported to frequently move camp in order to avoid the Lao military, which has

“attacked them with AK-47s and grenades both inside their camps and outside when they search for food. Large numbers of Hmong, including children, have scars and wounds from bullets and shrapnel. Fighting starvation, the groups spend 12-18 hours a day foraging for roots and husks. Children display the distended bellies and bleached hair of malnutrition. They have no access to healthcare, leaving the people open to diseases and infection from untreated wounds.”⁸

Despite credible reports of serious abuses, the Hmong living in the jungles of Laos continue to be deliberately isolated from international monitors, human rights activists and humanitarian agencies. The Government of Laos has declared the area where most of the Hmong are hiding a prohibited

⁵ CERD/C/LAO/CO/15 (2005), par. 21.

⁶ Society for Threatened Peoples (2006) ‘They Hunt Us Down Like Animals: Massacres and grave human rights violations against the Hmong in Laos,’ p.4.

⁷ Society for Threatened Peoples (2006) ‘They Hunt Us Down Like Animals: Massacres and grave human rights violations against the Hmong in Laos,’ p.4.

⁸ Amnesty International (2007) ‘Destitute jungle-dwellers living on run from military.’ Retrieved from: <http://www.amnesty.nl/nieuwsportaal/pers/destitute-jungle-dwellers-living-run-military>.



area for foreigners.⁹ As a result, reports of the conditions facing the Hmong are rare. There is, as such, no reason to diminish the concerns voiced by the Committee in the Concluding Observations of the review of Laos in 2005 regarding “reports that serious acts of violence have been perpetrated against members of the Hmong minority.”¹⁰

Hmong in custody of Laotian officials fare no better. A 2011 report from Human Rights Watch revealed widespread abuses taking place within the Lao Somsanga drug detention center. This report also noted the Laotian government’s use of the center as a “dumping ground for populations that are deemed ‘undesirable’ by police or the village militia,” including people with mental disabilities, the homeless, and the Hmong.¹¹ It remains unclear why the Hmong individuals were detained in the facility, but the report makes reference to the 2011 U.S. State Department Human Rights Report on Laos which notes “credible reports from international organizations that authorities treated ethnic minority prisoners particularly harshly.”¹²

Recommendation: End all military actions against the Hmong people.

Recommendation: Allow full access to regions inhabited by the Hmong to international organizations, independent rapporteurs, representatives of international bodies such as the United Nations and representatives of international non-governmental organizations to assess, investigate, and monitor the current situation.

Article 5 (d)(i), (ii) – Principle of Non-refoulement and Non-expulsion of Refugees

Article 5 (d)(i) states the “[r]ight to freedom of movement and residence within the border of the state.” Article 5 (d)(ii) explicitly protects the “[r]ight to leave any country, including one’s own, and to return to one’s country.”

a) Illegal Forced Returns

A number of international organizations have raised concerns regarding the forcible return of Hmong refugees to Laos. Between 2005 and 2008, 1,580 Hmong asylum-seekers and refugees were forcibly repatriated to Laos from Thailand, likely at the direct request of the Lao government. According to a July 1, 2008 statement by the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the group was made up of economic migrants who voluntarily returned. However, Human Rights Watch noted that “Thai authorities have prevented the international community from conducting a legitimate screening of Hmong asylum-

⁹ Society for Threatened Peoples (2006) ‘They Hunt Us Down Like Animals: Massacres and grave human rights violations against the Hmong in Laos,’ p.4.

¹⁰ CERD/C/LAO/CO/15 (2005), par. 22.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch (2011). “Somsanga’s Secrets: Arbitrary Detention, Physical Abuse, and Suicide inside a Lao Drug Detention Center” Retrieved from http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/laos1011webwcover_0.pdf

¹² United States State Department (2011) “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices–2010: Laos,” Retrieved from: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/eap/154390.htm>



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seekers, some of whom show scars from bullet wounds suffered during Lao military operations,” and that while Thai authorities have conducted screenings of the Hmong asylum-seekers, “they deport even those who would typically qualify as refugees in violation of international refugee law.”¹³ During these deportations, reports have also indicated that Thai soldiers have employed unnecessarily violent tactics, in one instance unleashing police dogs to force 12 Lao Hmong from a camp in Petchabun province onto trucks for repatriation to Laos.¹⁴

On December 28, 2009, a group of 4,689 Lao Hmong asylum-seekers, including 158 individuals that had already been granted the status of ‘person of concern’ by UNHCR, were forcibly returned to Laos by Thailand despite fierce protests by the State Department of the United States¹⁵, UNHCR¹⁶, Amnesty International and the Secretary-General of the United Nations.¹⁷ Thailand maintained that the Hmong asylum-seekers were illegal (economic) migrants. The Hmong continue to experience persecution after illegal repatriation while the Laos continues military operations against Hmong communities that it accuses of “anti-government activity and insurgency.”¹⁸

The Government of Laos maintains that the refugees voluntarily returned to Laos, but this account has been called into question by the international community, which pressed Laos for access to the returned refugees, who had been hidden away in “resettlement” villages. One report notes that,

“In March [2009] visitors were flown by helicopter to one village for a carefully staged visit. Handpicked Hmong told diplomats that they preferred to stay in Laos and had been “misled” into seeking refugee status. But when others went off script, pleading for help in getting to the West, the visitors were bundled away. Some of these Hmong have since fled from the village, presumably for the border. In response, a curfew has been imposed.”¹⁹

b) Conditions faced by returnees

There have been several accounts of difficulties faced by Hmong returnees and of the Lao PDR’s refusal to grant access to UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations to all returnees to ensure that the treatment of the returnees is in accordance to international standards. As stated in a letter to the President of Lao PDR by Human Rights Watch,

¹³ Human Rights Watch (2008) ‘Laos: Cease Arbitrary Detention of Deported Hmong.’ Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2008/10/28/laos-cease-arbitrary-detention-deported-hmong>

¹⁴ Radio Free Asia (2008) ‘Thai Soldiers Forced Lao Hmong Back to Laos.’ Retrieved from http://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/lao_hmong-20080228.html?searchterm=None

¹⁵ Nine US Senators sent a letter to Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva to express concern about the repatriation and criticize the process to determine refugee status.

¹⁶ UNHCR (2009) ‘Deportation of Lao Hmong must stop: UN High Commissioner for Refugees.’ Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/4b38d1049.html>

¹⁷ UN Secretary-General (2009) ‘Secretary-General Deeply Concerned by Thailand’s Deportation of Lao Hmong Refugees’ SG/SM/12689. Retrieved from <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sgsm12689.doc.htm>

¹⁸ Human Rights Watch (2009) ‘Letter to Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva Regarding the Deportation of Lao Hmong Asylum Seekers and Refugees.’ Retrieved from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/12/24/letter-prime-minister-abhisit-vejjajiva-regarding-deportation-lao-hmong-asylum-seeke>

¹⁹ The Economist (2010) ‘Old Wars Never Die: The unhappy fate of the Hmong’ Jul. 15, 2010 (print). Retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/node/16592276>



“No media or outside observers have been allowed to monitor the treatment or location of the Hmong. Recent international media accounts found a group of returned Hmong held in a camp near Paksan, surrounded by razor wire and armed guards, and unable to leave the area. When reporters approached the camp, Lao security officials detained and interrogated them, searched their car, and forced them to depart the area.”²⁰

Reports have additionally noted returned Hmong asylum seekers and refugees are prohibited from returning to their homes. Instead, they are forced to stay in relocation sites or with pro-government villages. At worst, Hmong deportees face “arbitrary incarceration, sexual abuse, torture, and disappearance.”²¹ Laos’ imprisonment and treatment of the returned Hmong serves only to “confirm the fear many Hmong asylum seekers and refugees have expressed of being persecuted if returned to their native country.”²² An article published in 2011 by Radio Free Asia, titled ‘Resettled Hmong Still Restricted’ paints a similar picture where thousands of Hmong residents continue to face severe restrictions even more than a year after being forcibly repatriated to Laos from Thailand. Hmong forcibly resettled in camps have their movements restricted and are subject to further abuse.²³

Recommendation: In concurrence with Human Rights Watch’s observations, UNPO stresses that the Lao government must live up to its international obligations and ensure the Hmong’s right to freedom of movement and residence within the border of the state (Art.5.d.i), the right to leave their country (Art.5.d.ii) and ensure their adequate development and protection (Art 2.2).

Recommendation: Allow resettlement to third countries of the returned Hmong with a well-founded fear of persecution, including the 158 asylum-seekers that were designated ‘persons of concern’ by UNHCR but forcibly returned to Laos from Nong Khai, Thailand.

Article 5 (d)(v), (vi) and Article 5 (e)(i) – Right to Property and Economic Rights

Article 5 (d)(v) protects “[t]he right to own property alone as well as in association with others.”

Article 5 (e)(i) enshrines “[t]he rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favorable remuneration.”

²⁰ Human Rights Watch (2010): ‘Letter to the President of Lao PDR regarding the Treatment of Repatriated Lao Hmong.’ Retrieved from: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/01/30/letter-president-lao-pdr-regarding-treatment-repatriated-lao-hmong>

²¹ Human Rights Watch (2009): ‘Thailand: End Detention of Lao Hmong Refugees.’ Retrieved from: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2009/11/20/thailand-end-detention-lao-hmong-refugees>

²² Human Rights Watch (2008): ‘Laos: Cease Arbitrary Detention of Deported Hmong.’ Retrieved from: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2008/10/28/laos-cease-arbitrary-detention-deported-hmong>

²³ Radio Free Asia (2011) ‘Resettled Hmong Still Restricted,’ 7 March 2011. Retrieved from: <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/restricted-03072011144747.html?searchterm=None>



The Laotian government has prioritized the expansion of rubber plantations at major costs to the indigenous Hmong. Large land concessions for rubber trees essentially taken from indigenous communities for inadequate to no compensation leave Hmong communities with fewer livelihood options.²⁴ Lands traditionally inhabited by the Hmong are rich in natural resources, including timber, precious metals, and minerals. However, Hmong receive no profit or compensation from resources exploited from their resource-rich land.

Illegal logging conducted by the Laotian government and in coordination with the Vietnamese government may be a key reason behind the violent targeting of Hmong communities and civilians living in the jungles. Hmong National Development, a non-profit organization based in Washington, D.C., has reported on the direct link between illegal timber cutting conducted by both Vietnamese and Laotian military-owned companies and the persecution of Hmong hiding in jungles. This relationship is made clear when noting massive scale illegal logging taking place alongside the mobilization of significant numbers of coalition troops.²⁵ This has occurred in Xieng Khouang Province, Xaisamboune Closed Military Zone, Vang Veng, Vientiane Province, and in other key areas for the purpose of “killing or capturing some 15,000 Hmong unarmed civilians in Laos.”²⁶

Recommendation: Recognize the indigenous land rights of the Hmong as enshrined in Article 28 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which states their right to fair and equal redress for the lands, territories and resources which they traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior, and informed consent.

Article 5 (d)(vii) – Religious Freedom

Article 5 (d)(vii) guarantees “[t]he right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”

According to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF),

“Laos restricts religious practice through its legal code and continues to tolerate religious freedom abuses in some rural areas. [...] Religious freedom conditions have improved somewhat [since 2005], though the level of free religious practice varies by region and religious group. Laos continues to watch the growth of Christianity with suspicion.”²⁷

USCIRF removed Laos from their Watch List of countries that “require close monitoring due to the nature and extent of violations of religious freedom engaged in or tolerated by the governments” in 2005 but placed it on the list again from 2009 onwards. This is due to the negative treatment of

²⁴ International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2011) *The Indigenous World: East and South East Asia: Laos*, Retrieved from http://www.iwgia.org/images/stories/sections/regions/asia/documents/IW2011/laos_2011.pdf

²⁵ Center for Public Policy Analysis (2008) *Vietnam: Corruption, Illegal Logging in Laos Linked to Killing of Hmong*, Retrieved from <http://www.cppa-dc.org/id14.html>

²⁶ Hmong National Development Inc. (2008) *Hmong National Development Appeals for End to Illegal Logging, Military Attacks in Laos*, Retrieved from http://www.illegal-logging.info/item_single.php?it_id=2846&it=news

²⁷ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, *USCIRF Annual Report 2011 - The Commission's Watch List: Laos*, 28 April 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dbe90b9c.html>



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religious minority groups in urban areas which include several known cases of individuals remaining incarcerated for reasons related to religion.²⁸

According to the 2011 USCIRF report,

“Provincial officials continue to severely violate freedom of religion or belief, particularly of ethnic minority Protestants, through detentions, surveillance, harassment, property confiscation, forced relocations, and forced renunciations of faith. [...] Although the government does not generally interfere with animist group activities, there are reports that local authorities actively encourage groups to adopt Buddhism and abandon beliefs and practices the authorities consider ‘backward’.”²⁹

These observations are corroborated by a 2010 report from Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Asma Jahangir, which states that while the situation of religious freedom in Laos has been improving, concerns remain with individual cases as well as with certain practices and policies that violate the freedom of religion under the Constitution.³⁰ Ms. Jahangir noted that religion is regarded as a controversial issue, particularly when, as with Christianity, the religion in question is seen as being linked to foreign or “divisive” influences.³¹ Of particular concern are the numerous serious allegations received by the Special Rapporteur that members of the Christian community were forced to renounce their faith and in some cases were evicted from their native homes and villages by local authorities. Not only were Christians asked to renounce their faith, they were also forced to choose between leaving their villages and signing a letter stating that they would burn the Bible. Those who refused to sign such documents were allegedly arrested by the local authorities.³²

It is recommended that the situation regarding religious discrimination and persecution be critically assessed at both the provincial and local level given that restrictions, measures, and laws vary from province to province and among religious groups.³³ Christians are significantly affected in a negative manner by the discriminatory implementation of domestic laws, the denial of due process and bias by law enforcement organs against religious minorities.

Recommendation: Critically assess and report on the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion on a local level while paying specific attention to the hardships and discrimination of the Christian community and implement clear policy directions on the provincial and district level.

Recommendation: In concurrence with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, it is recommended that the Government of Laos recognizes the dominant and prominent role that is given

²⁸ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, *USCIRF Annual Report 2011 - The Commission's Watch List: Laos*, 28 April 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dbe90b9c.html>

²⁹ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, *USCIRF Annual Report 2011 - The Commission's Watch List: Laos*, 28 April 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dbe90b9c.html>

³⁰ A/HRC/13/40/Add.4

³¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief A/HRC/13/40/Add.4, par. 62.

³² Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief A/HRC/13/40/Add.4, par. 40.

³³ Report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief A/HRC/13/40/Add.4, par. 47.



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to Buddhism and is careful not to marginalize members of religious minorities or discriminate against them.

Recommendation: In concurrence with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, it is recommended that legislative texts avoid imposing vaguely worded obligations on religious communities, including with regard to registration procedures, and should discontinue the oversight powers that are given in this regard to various government entities.



Section D: List of Recommendations

Article 2.2 – Ensuring Development of Indigenous Peoples

Recommendation: The Government of Laos should provide the Committee with statistics broken down by ethnic group on political participation, level of education and the standard of living in the population as well as provide a detailed description of the socio-economic disparities that exist among ethnic groups.

Recommendation: Formally recognize the Hmong as an indigenous people Laos and respect the distinct rights afforded to them by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Recommendation: Formally endorse and ratify the International Labor Organization Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal peoples.

Article 5 (b) – Security of Person

Recommendation: End all military actions against the Hmong people.

Recommendation: Allow full access to regions inhabited by the Hmong to international organizations, independent rapporteurs, representatives of international bodies such as the United Nations and representatives of international non-governmental organizations to assess, investigate, and monitor the current situation.

Article 5 (d)(i), (ii) – Principle of non-refoulement and non-expulsion of refugees

Recommendation: In concurrence with Human Rights Watch's observations, UNPO stresses that the Lao government must live up to its international obligations and ensure the Hmong's right to freedom of movement and residence within the border of the state (Art.5.d.i), the right to leave their country (Art.5.d.ii) and ensure their adequate development and protection (Art 2.2).

Recommendation: Allow resettlement to third countries of the returned Hmong with a well-founded fear of persecution, including the 158 asylum-seekers that were designated 'persons of concern' by UNHCR but forcibly returned to Laos from Nong Khai, Thailand.

Article 5 (d)(v), (vi) and Article 5 (e)(i) – Right to Property and Economic Rights

Recommendation: Recognize the indigenous land rights of the Hmong as enshrined in Article 28 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which states their right to fair and equal redress for the lands, territories and resources which they traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used, and which have been confiscated, taken, occupied, used or damaged without their free, prior, and informed consent.



Article 5 (d)(vii) – Religious Freedom

Recommendation: Critically assess and report on the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion on a local level while paying specific attention to the hardships and discrimination of the Christian community and implement clear policy directions on the provincial and district level.

Recommendation: In concurrence with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, it is recommended that the Government of Laos recognizes the dominant and prominent role that is given to Buddhism and is careful not to marginalize members of religious minorities or discriminate against them.

Recommendation: In concurrence with the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, it is recommended that legislative texts avoid imposing vaguely worded obligations on religious communities, including with regard to registration procedures, and should discontinue the oversight powers that are given in this regard to various government entities.