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UPR Pre- Session on Lao PDR

UNPO

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Issues

1. Persecution and Targeted Human Rights Abuses Against the Hmong
 2. Land Grabbing of Forced Relocations of Indigenous Peoples
 3. Forceful Isolation of the Hmong in the Xaisomboun Province
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1. Persecution and Targeted Human Rights Abuses Against the Hmong

Recommendations from UPR Cycle 3



(115.81) To prevent and combat arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, in particular against members of the Hmong community; to initiate impartial and independent investigations of such acts; and ratify the ICPPED.



Supported

Follow-Up

The Hmong remain persecuted and denied indigenous status by the Lao Government, despite meeting international criteria. This denial excludes them from legal protections and enables ongoing rights violations.

Additionally, **Laos has failed to implement its ratification of the Enforced Disappearances Convention**, allowing continued targeting of the Hmong with impunity.



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1.

Persecution and Targeted Human Rights Abuses Against the Hmong

Denial of Indigenous Status

The **Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights (Nov 2024)** noted **severe restrictions on civic space** in Lao and the denial of self-identification of indigenous communities, including the Hmong, despite meeting international criteria.

Enforced Disappearances of the Hmong

- **Four ChaoFa Hmong individuals** (two girls, a young woman, and an 80-year-old man) disappeared on **March 12, 2020**, after being stopped at the **Paksan checkpoint** while fleeing military persecution.
- A video on **March 28, 2020**, showed their transport vehicle **with two tortured bodies inside**. The **three girls and elderly man remain missing**.
- The UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances and Special Rapporteurs raised concerns (AL LAO 3/2020), but **the Lao government has not responded**.



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Persecution and Targeted Human Rights Abuses Against the Hmong

Enforced Disappearances of the Hmong

- As an act of reprisal and intimidation by Lao government agents, in **2021**, a **photo of a decapitated relative** of two missing girls was circulated in Hmong community channels.
 - The **UN raised concerns** in a second Joint Allegation Letter (UA LAO 3/2021), citing a **pattern of escalating reprisals** against Hmong individuals engaging with UN human rights mechanisms.
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1.

Persecution and Targeted Human Rights Abuses Against the Hmong

Recommendations

- Put an immediate end to the military violence against the Hmong ChaoFa communities who have been forced into hiding in the jungle of Northern Laos;
- Recognize the indigenous status of the Hmong in Lao and develop the necessary legal frameworks to protect indigenous peoples in Lao PDR, using the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a guiding framework;
- Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- Halt the widespread abuses of the Laotian military against Hmong women in the Phou Bia region.



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2. Land Grabbing and Forced Relocations

Recommendations from UPR Cycle 3



(115.51-53) To improve the planning of development and investment projects to avoid forced displacements and comply with international human rights standards.



Supported

Follow-Up

While these recommendations were supported by the Lao Government, they **have not been implemented for the Hmong population since.**

Land grabbing and forced displacement with the purpose of evicting Hmong population from their lands to facilitate economic development projects remains one of the greatest concerns of indigenous peoples, including the Hmong, in Lao PDR.



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2. Land Grabbing and Forced Relocations

Forced Relocation

Among communities are displaced from their lands due to resource exploitation and infrastructure projects.

Displacement and Hiding

To escape military attacks and capture, many are forced into a constant state of hiding and relocation, worsening food insecurity, poverty, health conditions, and security. Reports of extrajudicial killings have been received concerning those that “surrender” to the authorities.

Military-controlled villages

Those forcefully relocated to military-controlled villages and camps face severe deprivation, with limited access to basic necessities, live in dire housing conditions under constant military surveillance, leading to health conditions and psychological distress.



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2. Land Grabbing and Forced Relocations

Recommendations

- Protect indigenous communities from land grabbing practices and forced relocations;
 - Provide compensation to relocated communities;
 - Re-evaluate policies on natural resource industries and assess their environmental, socio-economic, and human rights impacts, considering indigenous communities' dependency on land and resources.
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3. **Forceful Isolation of the Hmong in the Xaisomboun Province**

Recommendations from UPR Cycle 3

No recommendations or mentions made on the issue.

Follow-Up

Concerns about this issue were raised by the **UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances and UN Special Rapporteurs in August 2020 (AL LAO 3/2020)**. The enforced isolation of Hmong individuals in the Phou Bia region, reinforced by a government decree in 2021, was highlighted in a **second allegation letter in April 2021 (UA LAO 3/2021)**. To date, the Lao government has failed to respond.



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3. **Forceful Isolation of the Hmong in the Xaisomboun Province**

Denial of access

Despite repeated requests by the UN, Special Rapporteurs and NGOs, the Lao Government continues to deny access to international observers and Special Rapporteurs, and continues to block access of humanitarian aid, enabling continued gross human rights abuses.

Forced Isolation and Deterioration

The Hmong face extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture and a severe worsening of living conditions.

Starvation and Denial of Basic Necessities

Denial of access to food, healthcare and clean water has led to high child malnutrition and mortality rates.

Women and Children at Risk

Forced to search for food in the jungle, women and children are exposed to violence, persecution and danger.



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3. Forceful Isolation of the Hmong in the Xaisomboun Province

Recommendations

- To allow internal observers to freely access international access to the Xaisomboun Province, the area to conduct investigation on the severe allegations of ongoing human rights violations;
 - Allow the delivery of humanitarian aid to the region to provide the necessary basic services including access to food, water, and healthcare for the Hmong population that has been forcefully isolated, particularly to women and children.
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