



Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Thirty-fifth session
20–31 January 2020

Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on the Lao People's Democratic Republic*

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review. It is a summary of 16 stakeholders' submissions¹ to the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints.

II. Information provided by stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations² and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies³

2. Amnesty International⁴ (AI) and JS8⁵ recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ratify the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which it signed in 2008.

3. AI⁶ and JS8⁷ recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and establish an independent and well-resourced National Preventive Mechanism with powers to conduct unimpeded visits to all places of detention and access all persons deprived of their liberty.

4. AI⁸ and JS7⁹ recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

5. JS8 recommended ratifying the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.¹⁰

6. JS6 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic withdraw all reservations to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention

* The present document was not edited before being sent to United Nations translation services.



against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and accede to all relevant human rights, refugee and statelessness instruments, in particular the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.¹¹

7. Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic remove its reservation to Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and ensure that the protective measures enshrined in Article 18 are applied to all citizens.¹²

8. Global Unions (ITF) recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ratify and effectively implement the ILO Optional Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention (P029); as well as ratify and effectively implement ILO Convention 188 Work in Fishing Convention, and implement and enforce laws for the protection of fishers and fishing vessels under its jurisdiction.¹³

9. ITF recommended ratifying and implementing other core fundamental conventions of the ILO, in particular Conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association (including the right to freely form and join trade unions of choice), free collective bargaining and the right to strike.¹⁴

10. ITF recommended that, as a major source country of migrant labour in Southeast Asia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families,¹⁵ as well as ILO Convention 97 on Migration for Employment, ILO Convention 143 on Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) and ILO Convention 181 on Private Employment Agencies.¹⁶

11. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) noted that the Lao People's Democratic Republic signed the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. ICAN recommended ratifying the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.¹⁷

12. JS2 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic accede to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.¹⁸

13. JS1 noted that peaceful protests in the Lao People's Democratic Republic were denied in policy and practice.¹⁹ JS1 recommended that the Government create and maintain, in law and in practice, an enabling environment for civil society, by, inter alia, initiating a process of repeal or amendment of legislation and decrees which restricted the legitimate work of human rights defenders, in accordance with the rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.²⁰ JS1 also recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic reform criminal defamation legislation in conformity with Article 19 of the Covenant.²¹

B. National human rights framework²²

14. AI recommended amending the 2016 Constitution to ensure that it is consistent with the Lao People's Democratic Republic international human rights obligations and, in particular, to ensure the protection of human rights of both citizens and non-citizens without discrimination, and to specifically provide for fair trials and freedom from torture, arbitrary detention, and slavery.²³

15. JUBILEE recommended that the Government introduce, by the next reporting period, a means for individuals to appeal local authority decisions to ensure they conform to human rights standards and to the Lao Constitution.²⁴

16. JS3 recommended establishing an independent national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles through international cooperation.²⁵

17. JS1 recommended including civil society organizations and community groups in the UPR process before finalizing and submitting the national report, as well as consulting with them on the implementation of UPR recommendations.²⁶

C. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

1. Cross-cutting issues

*Equality and non-discrimination*²⁷

18. JS3 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic increase spending on health, education and other social services targeted at rural and indigenous ethnic communities and take special measures to overcome language obstacles in delivery of services. JS3 further recommended undertaking an independent study on the impacts of relocation policies, as well as programs on livelihoods and cultures of ethnic groups and undertaking measure to preserve cultural heritage of ethnic groups, including their languages.²⁸

*Development, the environment, and business and human rights*²⁹

19. Alliance for Democracy (ADL) claimed that the Government hindered independent journalists from covering an incident related to the collapse of a dam causing the death of several thousands of persons, and that a large part of the ensuing international and national aid did not reach the victims of that incident.³⁰

20. AI recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic legally require companies to conduct human rights due diligence to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for their impacts on human rights, and to report publicly on their policies and practices.³¹ JS3 made a similar recommendation.³²

21. Just Atonement recommended that the Government require foreign investment projects to conduct studies on their potential environmental and human rights impact before construction be allowed to begin, guaranteeing the right to an adequate standard of living, health and well-being.³³

22. JS8 recommended creating a body responsible for resolving land-related grievances in an impartial and effective way, and ensuring that all decision-making processes related to the design and implementation of infrastructure and investment projects involve the free, active, and meaningful participation of affected individuals and communities.³⁴

23. JS3 noted that hydropower dams constructed in the Nam Ou watershed had resulted in a decline in forests and rivers. As a result, several communities who relied mainly on natural resources for their livelihoods had been affected as they had lost their main sources of income and nutrition, which had disproportionately affected the elderly, pregnant women, and children.³⁵

24. JS3 stated that relocation and internal displacement were significant consequences of development and investments, especially in the case of hydropower dams.³⁶ The few communities fighting for their rights against development projects or investments have been subjected to unjust suppression.³⁷

25. JS3 recommended providing full disclosure of existing tax and tariff exemptions for investors, full disclosure of public debt and transparency of information.³⁸ JS3 further recommended enforcing a moratorium on new land concessions until a review of the existing concessions through a public and transparent process, with meaningful participation of the concerned communities, was undertaken, as well as ceasing works on ongoing and new large-scale hydropower projects until a comprehensive review of those projects was undertaken.³⁹

26. JS2 regretted the negative impacts of the Government's economic strategy, without regard for existing land use, resulting in the mass displacement of rural communities.⁴⁰

27. JS2 noted that overloading the Mekong River with dams was likely to severely damage its entire ecosystem. As millions of people are dependent on the Mekong basin and its natural resources, this will have a destructive social impact on adjacent communities.⁴¹

28. AI recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ensure that communities whose land has been taken, were provided with timely, accessible and full information on

resettlement and compensation plans, as well as with avenues for their participation in planning and implementation, and policies and complaint mechanisms.⁴²

29. JS2 recommended re-evaluating policies with regards to natural resource-related and other large industries, as well as hydroelectric dams; conducting assessments into their environmental, socio-economic and human rights impact, taking into specific consideration the dependency of ethnic minorities to land and other natural resources.⁴³ JS3 made a similar recommendation.⁴⁴

2. Civil and political rights

*Right to life, liberty and security of person*⁴⁵

30. AI⁴⁶ and JS7⁴⁷ noted that while the Lao People's Democratic Republic has not carried out any executions since 1989, it continues to hand down death sentences for a range of non-lethal crimes, including trading in and possession of narcotics. JS7 further noted that the overwhelming majority of individuals sentenced to death were convicted for the production, trade, distribution, possession, import, export, and transport of specified amount of listed substances.⁴⁸ AI recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic enact legislation abolishing the death penalty for all crimes and in all circumstances.⁴⁹ JS7 recommended adopting an official moratorium on executions with a view to amending the Penal Code, as a first step towards the definitive abolition of the death penalty.⁵⁰ JS7 also recommended that the Government make available updated and reliable information on death sentences and individuals in death row, executions and/or commutation of death sentences.⁵¹

31. ADL commented that civil rights activists in the Lao People's Democratic Republic disappeared or were imprisoned when they stood up for their rights.⁵² AI stated that the Lao authorities held individuals in incommunicado detention for months, without disclosing their fate or whereabouts to their families or lawyers.⁵³ Just Atonement recommended that the Government initiate open investigations into the deaths and disappearances of civil society members.⁵⁴

32. JS2⁵⁵, JS8⁵⁶ and CSW⁵⁷ noted that there had been no progress in investigating or prosecuting past cases of enforced disappearance, and that the Government has failed to establish the fate and whereabouts of individuals alleged to have been forcibly disappeared.⁵⁸ AI⁵⁹ and CSW⁶⁰ recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic initiate full, impartial, independent and efficient investigations into all allegations of enforced disappearance, torture and ill-treatment. JS1⁶¹ and JS8⁶² recommended establishing a new commission tasked with carrying out a prompt and impartial investigation aimed at determining the fates of human rights activists.

33. JS2 noted that government critics, human rights activists and ethnic and religious minorities were often detained without valid legal justifications.⁶³ AI recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic repeal legislation allowing for detention without charge or trial, and grant national and international human rights groups access to all places of detention.⁶⁴

34. JS1 noted that human rights defenders and activists in the Lao People's Democratic Republic faced threats, intimidation and criminalization especially those working on land issues and sustainable development.⁶⁵

35. JS1⁶⁶, JS8⁶⁷ and Just Atonement⁶⁸ indicated that in March 2017, three human rights activists were detained for publishing a post on social media, drawing attention to the lack of democracy in the country. JS8 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic immediately and unconditionally release the three activists, and all other individuals who had been detained for the exercise of their right to freedom of opinion and expression.⁶⁹

*Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law*⁷⁰

36. AI noted that the Lao police had extensive latitude to detain individuals peacefully exercising their rights – from peaceful criticism of the Government, to seeking remedies to land appropriation – on the claim that these acts represented a threat to security.⁷¹

37. AI recommended reviewing relevant criminal cases that were awaiting prosecution, were still being prosecuted or had already been concluded, dropping charges and expunging convictions, and ensuring the immediate and unconditional release of individuals who had been deprived of liberty solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights.⁷²

38. JS8 noted that the Lao People's Democratic Republic legal system did not contain a definition of torture in accordance with the Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, to which the Republic was a state party.⁷³

39. JS8 recommended taking measures to improve prison conditions in line with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners ('Nelson Mandela Rules') and the Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders ('Bangkok Rules').⁷⁴ JS8 recommended allowing external independent monitoring of conditions in prisons across the country; conducting impartial investigations into all allegations of torture, ill-treatment and deaths in custody, holding those responsible accountable, and providing adequate compensation for the victims.⁷⁵

*Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life*⁷⁶

40. ADL stated that recent legislation forced all internet users to register with the authorities under the Ministry of Media, Culture and Tourism. ADL claimed that policemen and so-called village observers were instructed to monitor and track users of cell phones and frequent callers, especially those suspected of being activists against the Government.⁷⁷

41. JS1 stated that the Ministry of Post, Telecommunication and Communication was responsible for online surveillance to sanitize political criticism or malicious comments against the Government.⁷⁸

42. CSW recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ensure that the right to freedom of religion or belief was protected in all relevant laws and regulations in accordance with international standards, and where necessary revise legislation in consultation with religion or belief community leaders and representatives, legal experts and civil society.⁷⁹

43. JS4⁸⁰ and Just Atonement⁸¹ noted that under Decree 315, local government officials have complete discretion in controlling religious groups. JS4⁸², JS8⁸³, JUBILEE⁸⁴ and Just Atonement⁸⁵ recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic amend Decree 315 to ensure that administrative procedures for religious groups were not arbitrary, vague, and discriminatory, and to eliminate the wide latitude local officials have to discriminate against and persecute religious minorities. JS4 recommended allowing all religious communities to meet and conduct activities freely, regardless of whether they are incorporated or registered.⁸⁶

44. ADL claimed that there was discrimination against and arrests of Christians in the country.⁸⁷ JS4 recommended introducing a mechanism to monitor and regulate local officials and appeal their decisions, especially in rural areas, to ensure they conform to human rights standards and did not arbitrarily target Christians and other religious minorities; and holding accountable authorities who contravene national laws and international human rights standards.⁸⁸

45. CSW recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic immediately release all prisoners of conscience detained in connection with the peaceful practice and observance of their religion or belief; and immediately investigate cases of wrongful imprisonment, torture and ill-treatment in police custody, and ensure that persons found to be responsible for these crimes are held to account.⁸⁹

46. JS4⁹⁰, JUBILEE⁹¹, JS8⁹² and Just Atonement⁹³ recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic repeal the Decree on Associations No. 238 immediately, in order to allow associations to incorporate upon basic, non-arbitrary, non-discriminatory requirements, meet freely without advance approval, and eliminate the discretion of local authorities to approve the formation of an association and to require its dissolution.

47. JS4 recommended conducting a public advocacy campaign highlighting religious freedom rights, educating and encouraging local individuals and communities to report acts of violence or discrimination against religious minorities, without fear of reprisal.⁹⁴

48. AI⁹⁵, JS1⁹⁶, JUBILEE⁹⁷ and Just Atonement⁹⁸ informed that the Decree 238 on Associations granted the Government the power to prohibit the formation of associations and to monitor an association's activities. AI further claimed that the decree included measures to criminalized unregistered associations and prosecute their members. Just Atonement further noted that the law discouraged political association.⁹⁹

49. AI¹⁰⁰ and Just Atonement¹⁰¹ stated that Decree 327 on Internet Based Information Control/Management barred internet users from posting, commenting in support of, or sharing certain material online, via imprecisely worded provisions that were inconsistent with the right to freedom of expression. AI further noted that the decree required registration of all internet users with their full names and addresses.¹⁰²

50. AI commented that Article 65 of the Criminal Code contains broad provisions infringing on the peaceful exercise of right to the freedom of expression, prohibiting "slandering the Lao People's Democratic Republic, or distorting the guidelines of the party and policies of the Government, or circulating false rumours causing disorder".¹⁰³

51. AI¹⁰⁴, JS8¹⁰⁵ and JS1¹⁰⁶ recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic repeal or amend laws and orders that restricted or criminalised the peaceful exercise of human rights or allowed for arbitrary detention, including Articles 65 and 66 of the Criminal Code, Decree 327 on Internet Information Management, and the Decree on Associations.

52. Just Atonement recommended that the Government overturn Decree No. 327 and 377 and cease censoring both domestic and foreign media and internet users.¹⁰⁷

53. JS1 noted that Articles 65 ('propaganda against the state') as well as articles 94 and 95 (criminal defamation, libel and insult) of the Lao People's Democratic Republic penal code curbed freedom of expression through vague and broadly formulated offences.¹⁰⁸

54. JS1¹⁰⁹ and JS8¹¹⁰ recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic adopt a law on access to information, in order to promote the exercise of the right to freedom of expression and freedom of opinion, and review all regulations, in particular Decree No. 377 of November 2015 on the Press Activities of Foreign Media Agencies, Diplomatic Missions, and International Organizations, which restricted foreign journalists and media outlets from accessing and reporting on issues in the country.

55. JS1¹¹¹ and JS8¹¹² recommended revising Article 72 of the Penal Code that criminalized "gatherings aimed at causing social disorder", in order to guarantee the right to freedom of assembly.

56. Just Atonement noted that the Government censored both domestic and foreign news agencies, as well as the internet, wherein all media publication by domestic new outlets must be approved by the Ministry of Information, Culture, and Tourism and news articles were only allowed to cover specific topics.¹¹³

57. JS8 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic take measures to ensure competitive general elections that allow the registration and participation of other political parties and independent candidates.¹¹⁴

58. ITF recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ease restrictions on civil society non-governmental organizations and encourage independent trade unions.¹¹⁵ JS1 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic remove all undue restrictions on the ability of civil society organizations to receive international and national funding.¹¹⁶

Prohibition of all forms of slavery¹¹⁷

59. ADL stated that many adolescents were lured abroad to work as prostitutes, often under duress. ADL further claimed that slave labourers were also inside the Lao People's Democratic Republic, working for instance in government-run agricultural units.¹¹⁸

60. JS5 stated that trafficking of children for sexual purposes was prevalent and aggravated by low per capita income in comparison to other countries in the region, thereby making the Lao People's Democratic Republic a source country for trafficking.¹¹⁹ ITF recommended formalizing national birth registration procedures to decrease vulnerability to trafficking.¹²⁰

61. JS5 recommended that the Government set up a comprehensive data collection system on sexual exploitation of children, disaggregated by, inter alia, age, sex, disability, geographic location, ethnic origin and socioeconomic background.¹²¹

3. Economic, social and cultural rights

*Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work*¹²²

62. ITF noted that the 2007 Lao Trade Unions Act set out the rules and measures relating to the functions of the one national trade union, the Lao Federation of Trade Unions, which was directly linked to the ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party. As such, the national workers' unions were not independent bodies for workers as required by international law.¹²³

63. ITF recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic reflect the ILO general principles for fair recruitment in national legislation and regulations for employers and recruiters, including the elimination of any recruitment fees and associated costs. ITF further recommended developing strong pre-departure training for Lao migrant workers, in collaboration with ILO.¹²⁴

*Right to an adequate standard of living*¹²⁵

64. AI recommended ensuring that land acquisition, resettlement and compensation measures comply with international human rights obligations, particularly with respect to the right to adequate housing, prohibition of forced evictions, and the right to an adequate standard of living.¹²⁶

*Right to health*¹²⁷

65. JS7 indicated that since 2011 human rights bodies and non-governmental organisations reported violations and abuses suffered by individuals in government-run drug "rehabilitation" centres.¹²⁸

66. JS7 stated that in 2015, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and other Southeast Asian countries officially committed to moving from compulsory detention treatment towards voluntary community-based treatment services, with regards to which the Republic had not yet made much progress.¹²⁹ JS7 expressed concerns regarding the failure of the Government to provide updated and reliable information on drug detention centres, a lack of transparency and accountability, failure to ensure justice and other violations of human rights in detention centres.¹³⁰ JS7 recommended ending the arbitrary arrest, compulsory detention and treatment of people who use drugs, and working towards the provision of voluntary community-based treatment services.¹³¹

67. JS7 recommended ensuring that all allegations of human rights violations in drug detention centres were promptly and thoroughly investigated by an independent mechanism; that perpetrators were prosecuted and punished accordingly, and that victims were provided with full reparation.¹³²

68. JS3 noted that, although the Government had reportedly accorded priority to disadvantaged districts in its Strategy Plan in Public Health Sector by 2020, access to health services in rural areas was still very limited, due, inter alia, to poor infrastructure and far distances.¹³³

*Right to education*¹³⁴

69. JS3 noted that, although the Government had accorded priority to disadvantaged districts in its Education Strategy by 2020 and Education for All programmes, access to education in rural areas was still very limited.¹³⁵

4. Rights of specific persons or groups

*Women*¹³⁶

70. JS3 noted that women in the Lao People's Democratic Republic experience discrimination resulting from existing gender stereotypes and power structures, and from the low representation of women in Parliament and at community levels.¹³⁷

71. JS3 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic set targets for minimum of 30% representation of women in all levels of decision-making, and adopt temporary special measures, mainly at local levels, in areas of education, employment and political participation of women, especially rural and indigenous women.¹³⁸ JS2 made a similar recommendation.¹³⁹

72. JS3 noted that women in rural areas or belonging to ethnic groups face multiple forms and layers of discrimination and marginalization, which were exacerbated in the contexts of negative impacts of development or business projects. The absence of economic opportunities in rural areas exposed many women and girls to high risks of trafficking for sex work or other exploitative labour and gender-based violence.¹⁴⁰

73. JS2 noted that while many women were victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence, ChaoFa Hmong women faced the additional risk of human trafficking and sexual enslavement.¹⁴¹

74. JS3 recommended ensuring that the revised land law protect customary land tenure, including for those relying on communal lands, and providing for greater ownership of rural women.¹⁴²

75. JS3 recommended implementing measures to ensure effective access to justice for women including free legal aid and interpretation services.¹⁴³

*Children*¹⁴⁴

76. JS5 stated that there were gaps in the Lao legislation with regards to counteracting child sexual abuse materials and online child sexual exploitation,¹⁴⁵ and recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic adopt legal provisions to criminalize all forms of sexual exploitation of children in compliance with international legal standards, specifically on sexual exploitation of children in prostitution, online child sexual exploitation, as well as duly implement existing legal provisions, in order to afford substantive protection to all children including those working in hazardous conditions and those belonging to ethnic minorities.¹⁴⁶

77. JS5 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic strengthen coordination and cooperation between child protection stakeholders to address sexual exploitation of children in all its manifestations, as well as intensify cooperation with neighbouring countries to tackle all forms of child sexual exploitation with a cross-border element.¹⁴⁷

78. JS5 further recommended promoting awareness-raising campaigns on sexual exploitation of children targeting all population and using different languages, and training law enforcement personnel and tourism professionals to all manifestation of sexual exploitation of children.¹⁴⁸

79. JS5 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic create a specific mechanism for monitoring children's rights; ensure that enough shelters for children victims of sexual exploitation were properly funded, staffed by well-trained personnel and able to offer integrated services.¹⁴⁹

80. The Global Initiative to End All Corporate Punishment of Children (GIEACPC) noted that corporal punishment was lawful in the home (and in alternative care settings), as the law does not outlaw all corporal punishment, however light, in childrearing.¹⁵⁰ GIEACPC noted that, while corporal punishment against children was considered unlawful in day care, schools and penal institution, it was not explicitly prohibited by the Penal Code.¹⁵¹ GIEACPC recommended enacting an explicit prohibition of all forms of corporal punishment to ensure children's equal protection.¹⁵²

81. ITF recommended combatting child labour by revising the 2013 Labour Law and raising the minimum age to 18, or in any case to 15 years following the end of compulsory schooling.¹⁵³

*Minorities and indigenous peoples*¹⁵⁴

82. JS2 noted that although estimates put the number of ethnic groups in the Republic at more than 200, the Government officially recognized only 49 ethnic groups, but did not recognize them as indigenous peoples.¹⁵⁵

83. JS2 stated that the Hmong people's marginalized position was compounded by the fact that the Lao People's Democratic Republic refused to accord indigenous status to them, preventing them from any form of legal protection under international law.¹⁵⁶ JS2 recommended recognising the indigenous status of the Hmong ChaoFa, and developing the necessary legal frameworks to protect indigenous peoples in the country.¹⁵⁷

84. JS2 indicated that although the country had seen economic growth over the past years, religious and ethnic minorities had largely been excluded from its benefits.¹⁵⁸ JS3 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic eliminate, in law and practice, all forms of discrimination, persecution and other human rights violations against persons belonging to ethnic, religious or other minority groups.¹⁵⁹

85. JS2 further noted that Lao was the only official language of instruction in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, which put children from ethnic minorities at an early disadvantage in society.¹⁶⁰

86. JS2 noted that improvements in the health care system to tackle dramatically high levels of maternal and child mortality had been inaccessible to women from minority groups.¹⁶¹

87. JS2 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic address the significant disparities in health and living standards between ethnic minority and majority groups; provide the necessary assistance to remote geographical areas with high rates of child and maternal mortality, and expand the education system to include education in minority languages.¹⁶²

88. JS3 noted that the Government did not recognize the cultural ties of indigenous groups to their lands, making them disproportionately affected by negative impacts of development projects and investment.¹⁶³ JS2 recommended developing a legal framework to protect ethnic minorities from land grabbing practices and forced relocations, and providing already relocated communities with fair compensation for their losses.¹⁶⁴

89. JS2 noted that the situation for the Hmong people had increasingly worsened over the past years, as many were suffering from widespread discrimination and persecution, and many were living in abject poverty.¹⁶⁵ JS2 also indicated that the religious activities of the Hmong people, who were mainly traditional animist believers, but had also partly taken up Christianity, were severely restricted.¹⁶⁶

90. Just Atonement¹⁶⁷ and JS2¹⁶⁸ noted that the Republic continued to persecute the Hmong ethnic minority, as violent military attacks on Hmong peoples living in the jungle had increased in recent times.

91. JS2 recommended halting the widespread abuses by the Lao military of ChaoFa Hmong women in the Phou Bia region; and taking legal action by prosecuting the individuals who committed these crimes.¹⁶⁹

92. JS2 stated that in the north of the country, where most Hmong lived, areas had been selected by the Government for the development of large-scale industrial projects.¹⁷⁰ As a result, many Hmong communities had been forcibly relocated from their lands and faced extensive environmental problems.¹⁷¹ Due to intensive military campaigns by the military, the food security and health standards of the ChaoFa Hmong communities in Northern Lao People's Democratic Republic had dramatically worsened.¹⁷² JS2 recommended putting an immediate end to the military violence against the Hmong ChaoFa communities who have been forced into hiding in the jungle of the north, and in particular ceasing the use of heavy

artillery and chemical weapons, and allowing humanitarian aid to be delivered in the region.¹⁷³ JS4 made a similar recommendation.¹⁷⁴

*Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons*¹⁷⁵

93. JS4 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ensure that all refugees and asylum seekers, and particularly Hmong and Montagnard Christians leaving persecution in third countries, were given the protections guaranteed to them under international law, including the respect for the principle of non-refoulement.¹⁷⁶

94. AI recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic ensure prompt and independent investigations into the disappearance, abduction and killing of asylum-seekers, ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers were protected, and that the perpetrators were brought to justice in civilian courts.¹⁷⁷

95. JUBILEE remained concerned over reports about Lao Police not recognizing Hmong Christian refugees from third countries, forcing them to living in the jungle.¹⁷⁸ JUBILEE recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic respect the international conventions, the principle of non-refoulement, and recognize Hmong Christian refugees.¹⁷⁹

96. JS3 recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic enhance planning for development and investment projects in order to refrain from forced displacement, and improve resettlement and compensation plans for land expropriation by providing effective access to information to the concerned communities, and adopting transparent and equitable approach to determine resettlement and compensation in a fair manner with involvement of neutral third parties.¹⁸⁰ Just Atonement made a similar recommendation.¹⁸¹

*Stateless persons*¹⁸²

97. JS6 noted that statistics from the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic showed that only 73% of all children under five years of age were registered, leaving a significant proportion of children unregistered and thus more susceptible to statelessness.¹⁸³

98. JS6 recommended identifying and closing possible gaps in the Nationality Law Framework to ensure no person was rendered stateless, no child born stateless and that the criteria for a stateless person to apply for Lao citizenship were reasonable.¹⁸⁴ JS6 also recommended ensuring free universal birth registration, as a tool for protecting the right to a nationality and preventing statelessness, including the implementation of mobile or postal birth registration services to assist those populations in remote or regional areas.¹⁸⁵

99. JS6 further recommended that the Lao People's Democratic Republic continue its efforts in raising awareness of statelessness issues to promote participation by the population in birth registration procedures.¹⁸⁶

Notes

- ¹ The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org.

*Civil society**Individual submissions:*

ADL	Alliance for Democracy in Laos (Berlin, Germany);
AI	Amnesty International (London, UK);
CSW	Christian Solidarity Worldwide (Manchester, UK);
GIEACPC	Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (London, UK);
Global Unions	ITF (London, UK);
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (Geneva, Switzerland);
JAI	Just Atonement Inc. (Washington, USA);
JUBILEE	JUBILEE CAMPAIGN (Little Rock, USA).

Joint submissions:

JS1	Joint submission 1 submitted by: Civicus: World Alliance for Citizen Participation, Manushya Foundation, The Asian forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) (South Africa);
JS2	Joint submission 2 submitted by: Underrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, The Congress of World Hmong People (Netherlands);
JS3	Joint submission 3 submitted by: Manushya Foundation, The Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) (Thailand);
JS4	Joint submission 4 submitted by: ADF International, Jubilee Campaign, Boat People SOS (BPSOS), Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (Switzerland);
JS5	Joint submission 5 submitted by: ECPAT International, Alliance Anti-Traffic (AAT) (Thailand);
JS6	Joint submission 6 submitted by: Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, Statelessness network Asia Pacific (Netherlands);
JS7	Joint submission 7 submitted by: Harm Reduction International, The International Drug Policy Consortium, The Asian Network of People who Use Drugs (UK);
JS8	Joint submission 8 submitted by: International federation for Human Rights, Lao Movement for Human Rights (LMHR) (France).

- ² The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:

ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
OP-ICESCR	Optional Protocol to ICESCR;
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
ICCPR-OP 1	Optional Protocol to ICCPR;
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to CEDAW;
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT;
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child;
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict;
OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography;
OP-CRC-IC	Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure;
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All

CRPD
OP-CRPD
ICPPED

Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
Optional Protocol to CRPD;
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons
from Enforced Disappearance.

- ³ For relevant recommendations see see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.1–121.40, 121.42, 121.43, 121.48, 121.62, 121.64, 121.66–121.78 121.105 and 121.186.
- ⁴ AI, p. 2.
- ⁵ JS8, para. 27.
- ⁶ AI, p. 2.
- ⁷ JS8, para. 36.
- ⁸ AI, p. 6.
- ⁹ JS7, para. 14(b).
- ¹⁰ JS8, para. 50.
- ¹¹ JS6, para. 37(i).
- ¹² CSW, para. 8.
- ¹³ ITF, p. 6.
- ¹⁴ ITF, p. 6.
- ¹⁵ ITF; p. 6.
- ¹⁶ ITF, p. 6.
- ¹⁷ ICAN, p. 1.
- ¹⁸ JS2, p. 10.
- ¹⁹ JS1, p. 11.
- ²⁰ JS1, p. 12 and 13.
- ²¹ JS1, p. 13.
- ²² For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.124–121.126, 121.41, 121.44–121.47, 121.49–121.61, 121.65 and 121.109.
- ²³ AI, p. 5.
- ²⁴ JUBILEE, para. 14.
- ²⁵ JS3, para. 9.7d.
- ²⁶ JS1, p. 15.
- ²⁷ For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.183 and 121.184.
- ²⁸ JS3, para. 9.3.
- ²⁹ For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.162–121.165 and 121.167–121.169.
- ³⁰ ADL, p. 1.
- ³¹ AI, p. 6.
- ³² JS3, para. 9.4d.
- ³³ Just Atonement, para. 34.
- ³⁴ JS8, para. 50.
- ³⁵ JS3, para. 2.3.
- ³⁶ JS3, para. 7.2.
- ³⁷ JS3, para. 8.4.
- ³⁸ JS3, para. 9.2.
- ³⁹ JS3, para. 9.5b/c.
- ⁴⁰ JS2, para. 21.
- ⁴¹ JS2, para. 25.
- ⁴² AI, p. 6.
- ⁴³ JS2, p. 10.
- ⁴⁴ JS3, para. 9.1a/b).
- ⁴⁵ For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.103, 121.104, 121.106, 121.107 and 121.156.
- ⁴⁶ AI, p. 5.
- ⁴⁷ JS7, para. 4.
- ⁴⁸ JS7, para. 4.
- ⁴⁹ AI, p. 6.
- ⁵⁰ JS7, para 14c).
- ⁵¹ JS7, para. 14f).
- ⁵² ADL, p. 3.
- ⁵³ AI, p. 4.
- ⁵⁴ Just Atonement, para. 24.
- ⁵⁵ JS2, para. 17.
- ⁵⁶ JS8, para. 22/23.
- ⁵⁷ CSW, para. 35/36.
- ⁵⁸ AI, p. 3.

- 59 AI, p. 6.
60 CSW, para. 37-39.
61 JS1, p. 13.
62 8 para. 27.
63 JS2, para. 16.
64 AI, p. 6.
65 JS1, p. 5.
66 JS1, p. 7.
67 JS8, para. 7.
68 Just Atonement, para. 22.
69 JS8, para. 12.
70 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.63, 121.85–121.102, 121.113, 121.108 and 121.127.
71 AI, p. 3.
72 AI, p. 5.
73 JS8, para. 29.
74 JS8, para. 36.
75 JS8, para. 36.
76 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.129–121.155, 121.157, 121.187 and 121.188.
77 ADL, p. 3.
78 JS1, p. 10.
79 CSW, para. 15.
80 JS4, para. 11.
81 Just Atonement, para. 1.
82 JS4, p. 9.
83 JS8, para. 43.
84 JUBILEE, para. 15.
85 Just Atonement, para. 7.
86 JS4, para. 11.
87 ADL, p. 5.
88 JS4, p. 9.
89 CSW, para. 31/32.
90 JS4, p. 9.
91 JUBILEE, para. 16.
92 JS8, para. 19.
93 Just Atonement, para. 17.
94 JS4, p. 10.
95 AI, p. 3.
96 JS1, p. 4.
97 JUBILEE, para. 8.
98 Just Atonement, para. 13.
99 Just Atonement, para. 14.
100 AI, p. 3.
101 Just Atonement, para. 12.
102 AI, p. 3.
103 AI, p. 3.
104 AI, p. 5.
105 JS8, para. 12.
106 JS1, p. 13.
107 Just Atonement, para. 18.
108 JS1, p. 8.
109 JS1, p. 14.
110 JS8, para. 6.
111 JS1, p. 14.
112 JS8, para. 16.
113 Just Atonement, para. 10.
114 JS8, para. 54.
115 ITF, p. 6.
116 JS1, p. 12/13.
117 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.110, 121.112 and 121.114–121.123.
118 ADL, p. 4.
119 JS6, para. 6.
120 ITF, p. 7.

- 121 JS6, para. 6.
122 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.158–121.159.
123 ITF, para. 15.
124 ITF, p. 6.
125 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.160, 121.161, 121.166, 121.170–121.173 and 121.176.
126 AI, p. 6.
127 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.174, 121.175.
128 JS7, para. 9.
129 JS7, para. 11.
130 JS7, para. 12/13.
131 JS7, para. 14d).
132 JS7, para. 14e).
133 JS3, para. 4.2.
134 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.177–121.185.
135 JS3, para. 4.2.
136 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.79–121.82.
137 JS3, para. 5.2.
138 JS3, para. 9.4a.
139 JS2, p. 10.
140 JS3, para. 5.3.
141 JS2, para. 42.
142 JS3, para. 9.5a.
143 JS3, para. 9.4b.
144 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.93-121.95, and 121.111.
145 JS5, para. 17.
146 JS5, p. 6.
147 JS5, p. 8.
148 JS5, p. 9.
149 JS5, p. 10.
150 GIEACPC, p. 2.
151 GIEACPC, p. 3.
152 GIEACPC, p. 3.
153 ITF, p. 5.
154 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.190.
155 JS2, para. 30.
156 JS2, para. 32.
157 JS2, p. 10.
158 JS2, para. 20.
159 JS3, p. 10.
160 JS2, para. 33.
161 JS2, para. 44.
162 JS2, p. 10.
163 JS3, para. 4.3.
164 JS2, p. 10.
165 JS2, para. 6.
166 JS2, para. 39.
167 Just Atonement, para. 3.
168 JS2, para. 8.
169 JS2, p. 11.
170 JS2, para. 23.
171 JS2, para. 6.
172 JS2, para. 26 and 27.
173 JS2, p. 10.
174 JS4, p. 10.
175 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7, paras. 121.192 and 121.196.
176 JS4, p. 10.
177 AI, p. 5.
178 JUBILEE; para. 19.
179 JUBILEE, para. 20.
180 JS3, para. 9.6.
181 Just Atonement, para. 35.
182 For relevant recommendations see A/HRC/29/7.
183 JS6, para. 34.

¹⁸⁴ JS6, para. 37(ii).

¹⁸⁵ JS6, para. 37(iv).

¹⁸⁶ JS6, para. 37(v).
