

LAO HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

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STATEMENTS OF THE HMONG PEOPLE

By Dr. Vang Pobzeb

Conference of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the
United Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, July 19 - 31, 1993

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor for the delegation of the Lao Human Rights Council to participate in the conference of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations. I am here to defend the rights of Hmong people and minorities in Laos.

The delegation of the Lao Human Rights Council are here to report to the Chairperson and members of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, chairpersons of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights and Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the High Commissioner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the entire members of the United Nations that the legacies of the Vietnam war and racial discrimination in Laos caused factors for about 500,000 people of Laos to become international refugees since 1975. Since 1975 until 1993, the communist pathet Lao government and 70,000 North Vietnamese soldiers in Laos have killed more than 300,000 people in Laos. The Hmong people are the largest number of victims. As a result, the Hmong refugees in the camps in Thailand are political refugees.

In 1993, there are about 64,000 Hmong refugees living in the camps in Thailand. The refugees are victimized by forced repatriation by government officials from Thailand to return to Laos. The Hmong people and returnees in Laos are victimized by racial, social, cultural, economic, commercial and political discriminations and oppressions. These criminal actions are committed by the communist pathet Lao government in Laos. The officials of the UNHCR, U.S. Government, Thai

Government, the communist pathet Lao Government and the global community are silent on the tragedies of Hmong people. The Hmong people and refugees are human beings. Therefore, we love peace. We desire equality, freedom, democracy, liberty, justice, integrity, human rights and freedom of movement, freedom of residence, family reunification and survival.

The Thai Government and the UNHCR announced that they will close all the refugee camps in Thailand by the end of 1993 and early in 1994. As a result about 50,000 Hmong refugees shall be forced to return from Thailand to Laos. Many thousands of returnees will be persecuted and killed. From January 1991 to April 1993, about 4,016 Hmong were forced by government officials to return from Thailand to Laos. Victims and reliable sources among eyewitnesses and returnees reported that the communist pathet Lao Government had killed about 2,000 Hmong returnees in Laos between 1989 and 1991. The officials of the UNHCR have failed to monitor on the tragedies of the Hmong returnees in Laos.

The refugees in the camps in Thailand reported that "the officials of the Thai Government, UNHCR, U.S. Department of State and the communist pathet Lao government are the actors and conspirators of the forced repatriation of Hmong refugees from Thailand to Laos." If the reports of the victims of forced repatriation are true and correct, these government officials are the violators of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; international refugee law and policies and the Charter of United Nations.

Forced repatriation and massacres and murders of Hmong returnees in Laos are international crimes against peace and crimes against humanity on Hmong people.

The officials of the UNHCR, Thai Government, communist pathet Lao Government and the U.S. Government have been cooperating to deny, discredit and discount all the evidences, information and reports of the victims of forced repatriation and persecution and massacres of the returnees in Laos. These government officials are not only denying the rights of Hmong people and refugees, but they also deny the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international law. They are the makers of international law. They are also the violators of international law.

Thailand, United States and Laos have exchanged the Hmong refugees for the purpose of their diplomatic, political, economic, commercial and trade relations. The officials of the UNHCR in Thailand do not perform their duties according to the purposes of the principles of international refugee law. They are acting according to power policies and political security and the interests of the governments of Thailand, United States and Laos.

Madam Chairperson and members of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights and the High Commissioner of the UNHCR, I have the honor to appeal to you to save the lives of Hmong people and refugees as follows.

1. To stop forced repatriation
2. To allow and to send a task force of committee members of the Lao Human Rights Council to visit the refugee camps in Thailand and returnees camps in Laos for fact-finding missions regarding forced repatriation and troubles of Hmong returnees in Laos.
3. To establish a permanent Human Rights Commission whose members are to monitor and to guarantee the safety, peace, freedom, survival and human rights for Hmong returnees in Laos before forcing all 64,000 refugees from Thailand to return to Laos.
4. To demand the communist pathet Lao Government to release all Hmong and other prisoners who are in prisons in Laos.
5. To appeal to the United Nations to force all the North Vietnamese communist troops to get out of Laos unconditionally before all Hmong refugees in Thailand return to Laos.

Now, I therefore submit and include the white paper on evidences of forced repatriation of Hmong refugees and murders of returnees to Laos and other documents to you for your records and as public documents of the United Nations. I urge you to appeal to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights and the High Commissioner of the UNHCR to concern and to investigate on the forced repatriation of Hmong refugees from Thailand to Laos and persecutions of returnees in Laos without delays.

Evidences on the forced repatriation and persecutions and murder of returnees are available. The government officials of the contracting states and members of the United Nations must no longer continue to ignore on the appeals and calls of refugees and peace.

I hope that your early consideration and attention to these matters would be honored and appreciated by the victims of forced repatriation and the entire members of the Lao Human Rights Council. The Hmong people and refugees need your support now.

Thank you very much.

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