

## Thailand Visit to Laos: Samak Blasted Over Killing of Hmong

**March 1, 2008** - *PRLog* -- Washington, D.C.--A coalition of Lao and Hmong organizations in Washington, D.C. have denounced the visit of Thai Premier Samak Sundaravej to Laos following his government's brutal forced repatriation of Lao-Hmong refugees and asylum seekers in recent days back to Laos as well as the Lao military's new offensive against unarmed Lao and Hmong orces are continuing to use food as a weapon and have starved to death hundreds of Lao and Hmong civilians in recent weeks as well as engaging in summary executions, large-scale atrocities and war crimes in their indiscriminate attacks," Smith continued.

Amnesty International has issued a number of recent reports regarding the Lao governments brutal attacks and use of food as a weapon against unarmed Hmong people in Laos.

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA26/003/2007>

<http://www.thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Asia-Pacific/Laos>

"We urge the Lao military regime to cease using food as a weapon against the Hmong people and halt its attacks on innocent Lao and Hmong civilians and dissident opposition groups; the LPDR regime should immediately comply with the demands of the U.S. Congress on these matters, including H. Resolution 402, which passed the U.S. Congress in 2004 unanimously," stated Colonel Wangyee Vang, National President of the Lao Veterans of America.

On January 31, 2008, Dr. Jane Hamilton-Merritt was again invited by Members of the U.S. House of Representatives to testify in the U.S. Congress along with Amnesty International's Advocacy Director T. Kumar about the current crisis in Laos at a special session of the U.S. Congressional Forum on Laos held in the Cannon House Office Building. Dr. Merritt provided evidence and testimony about the Lao government's increased attacks on Laotian and Hmong civilians in Laos. She is an award winning Southeast Asian Scholar, journalist and author of *Tragic Mountains: the Hmong, The Americans and the Secret Wars for Laos* (Indiana University Press). <http://www.tragicmountains.org> Dr. Merritt has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for her human rights and humanitarian work on behalf of the Laotian and Hmong people and has sought to raise awareness about the current ethnic cleansing campaign in Laos by the Lao regime's military forces.

"It is important to note that U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf and a bipartisan delegation of Members of Congress have written a detailed letter appealing to the King of Thailand about the killing and starvation of the Hmong in Laos and appealing to His Majesty to grant sanctuary to Hmong refugees in Thailand until they can be resettled in third countries," Dr. Hamilton-Merritt stated.

According to a recent article entitled "The Two Faces of Communist Laos" in Front Page Magazine <http://www.frontpagemagazine.com> by Michael Bengé, on February 28,2008, the Lao government is intent on annihilating the Hmong in Laos. <http://www.frontpagemagazine.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=...>

"While Thai Premier Samak is in Vientiane, Laos, drinking tea with the Lao Communist generals, apparently showing off the Hmong refugees that were attacked by dogs and forced back to Laos prior to his visit, thousands of unarmed Hmong villagers and civilians are now under bloody attack by SRV Vietnamese and Lao military forces that have been recently deployed to starve and kill these innocent people at Phou Bia Mountain, Phou Da Phao and elsewhere in Laos," stated Vaughn Vang, Director of the Lao Human Rights Council. "We want Thai Premier Samak to press the Lao government and the Vietnamese military to

stop its attacks on the peace-loving Lao and Hmong civilians and to halt the repatriation of Lao-Hmong refugees and asylum seekers from Thailand to Laos."

Mr. Nao Kong Vue, a representative for the Hmong groups in-hiding in Phoa Bia, Phou lang, Pha Phai, Xiengkhouang province, Laos recently recently made the following appeal while his people were under heavy LPDR and PASV military attack :

"We are appealing to the United Nation, United Nation Security Council, Amnesty International, U.S. Congress, and the President of the United States, all human rights organizations, the European Union, and the world community to immediately demand President Chommaly Syasone to withdraw all his military ground and air forces out of all the areas Hmong groups are in-hiding. We are only civilians, women, and children; we are unarmed. We will all be run over and killed by these military troops in the next few weeks."

Mr. Nao Kong Vue continued his statement from inside Laos where his people are surrounded: "The Lao government gave an official order for three battalions combined with the Vietnamese military to exterminate all Hmong groups in-hiding by the end 2008. Currently, The Lao government military troops are launching heavy military attacks, using artillery, helicopter gun ships and have surrounded all Hmong groups in-hiding in Phou Da Phao, XiengKhouang Prvince, Phou Bia, XiengKhouang Province, Vanveing."

On February 8, 2008, Radio Free Asian (RFA) reported that the Lao Government has announced a special order to kill Hmong groups in hiding with a reward of six million kip (U.S. \$600) per head for killing a Hmong fighter.

<http://www.newsblaze.com/story/20080208201534nnnn.nb/newsblaze/TOPSTORY/Top-Stories.html>

"The Lao regime, while ruthlessly pursuing unarmed Hmong villagers and civilians in the jungles and mountains with fully equipped military forces, is also currently engaged in a campaign of mass starvation against the Hmong and others who wish to live independent from the repression of the Lao government," stated Schuyler Merritt, Research Director for the Center for Public Policy Analysis.

"Lao opposition pro-democracy groups, including those who support the peaceful Lao Students Movement for Democracy of October 1999, oppose the visit of Premier Samak to Laos and the appeasement of the brutal and bloody communist Pathet Lao regime," stated Bounthanh Rathigna, President of the United League for Democracy in Laos, Inc. "We want Premier Samak to raise the issue of the imprisoned leaders of the Lao Students Movement for Democracy and urge the Lao government to release this peaceful prisoners of conscience as Amnesty International and others have called for; Moreover, it is in Thailand's interest to call for the immediate withdrawal of all Vietnamese forces in Laos, including the new battalions of forces recently deployed by Hanoi to attack the peace-loving Lao and Hmong people who wish to live only in freedom and to avoid repression and exploitation from Communist Vietnam and the LPDR regime" Mr. Rathigna concluded.

Independent news and pro-democracy opposition to the Lao regime continues despite the LPDR's Press Predator status designation by Paris-based Journalists Without Borders.

[http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=11715](http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=11715)

Important information and alternative perspectives to the LPDR regime are offered by the Laos Institute for Democracy and Lao Seritham News in California and well as numerous independent, privately run Lao and Hmong radio stations operating in the United States and internationally in addition to Radio Free Asia and

Voice of America. <http://www.laosdemocracy.com>

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The Center for Public Policy Analysis  
2020 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.  
Suite No.#212  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Tele. (202) 543-1444  
Fax (202) 207-9871

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The Center for Public Policy Analysis (CPPA) is a Washington,DC-based think-tank and public policy research organization focused on national security and foreign policy issues.

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