



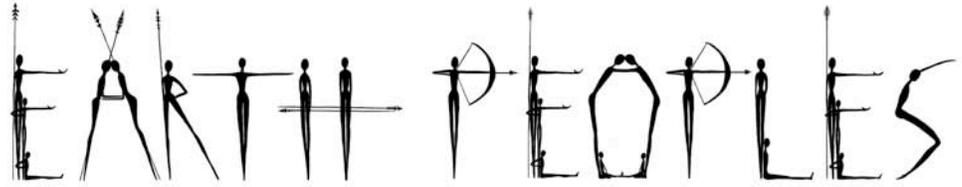
REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN THE XAYSOMBOUN SPECIAL ZONE AND 1100 HMONG-LAO REFUGEES WHO ESCAPED TO PETCHABUN, THAILAND 2004-2005

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May 2006

Report submitted by

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REPORT ON THE SITUATION IN THE XAYSOMBOUN SPECIAL ZONE AND 1100 HMONG-LAO REFUGEES WHO ESCAPED TO PETCHABUN, THAILAND 2004-2005

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rebecca Sommer, an independent documentary filmmaker and human rights advocate, spent three months in the fall of 2005 in Southeast Asia, in a self-employed capacity, researching and recording video for awareness-raising documentaries on human rights violations affecting various indigenous peoples from Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Ms. Sommer represents the Society for Threatened Peoples International, a non-governmental organization (NGO) in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and in participatory status with the Council of Europe. Ms Sommer, who was born and raised in Germany, now lives in New York City.

In her work with indigenous peoples, she has traveled extensively, especially in the Americas. This particular project was undertaken based on support from and cooperation with Earth Peoples, a "global circle of indigenous peoples working collectively to produce an information-sharing film, made by, for and about indigenous peoples". Members of Earth Peoples originally from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, now living in the USA, provided a portion of the funding for Ms. Sommer's trip in addition to information and translations.





BASIS OF REPORT

The Report is about ethnic minority Hmong groups currently hiding in the mountain-top jungles of Laos and some 1100 refugees that escaped to Thailand during the two-year period of 2004 and 2005. At the present time, they are living in White Water, a temporary settlement in Petchabun, Thailand. The Hmong groups hiding in the jungle are descended from groups originally established by ex-CIA Secret Army soldiers and their families beginning in 1975, when the Pathet Lao took over the Lao government.

The Report is based on personally observed findings and a variety of source materials, including the testimonies of the Hmong Lao refugees themselves, who claim that in Laos they were continually attacked, without warning, by the Lao PDR Government and Vietnamese military forces.

Copies of these source materials can be provided on request:

- Original video recordings of refugees making their claims or testimonies.
- Texts of video-recordings translated into English by native speakers of Hmong.
- Original claims (individual and collective) written by refugees in Hmong,
- The same claims (individual and collective) translated into English by native speakers of Hmong.
- Testimonies of Hmong leaders who are still living in the conflict area in Laos, recorded via satellite telephone, transcribed and then translated into English by native speakers of Hmong.

The Report has also been prepared in partnership with various United States-based Hmong organizations and individuals without whose contributions it could not have been completed. Most essential have been those Hmong organizations or individuals who continue to maintain constant and direct contact with the refugees and the Hmong Lao in the conflict area via satellite telephone. They remain the most qualified experts on the subject. For these reasons, the Report must be viewed as the product of a collaborative effort.



BACKGROUND OF HMONG LAO/LAO PDR CONFLICT

In its struggle against communism in Southeast Asia in the early 1960s, the United States Government was in need of allies. The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) recruited many members of the Laotian Hmong indigenous ethnic group into what eventually became known as its "Secret Army"— and which is a secret no more. More than half of the adult Hmong Lao population at that time became de facto CIA-recruited allies. Fighting and dying as infantry on front lines, they performed crucial services in Laos in support of the US, which was prohibited from fighting in Laos. Under the leadership of General Vang Pao they held the Vietnamese forces back, disrupted supply lines to the Vietcong along the Ho Chi Minh Trail and rescued a great many downed American flyers.

In 1973 the Paris Peace Accords were signed, and the United States pulled out of Laos as part of an overall peace and disengagement plan. In 1975, in breach of the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Indochina and the 1962 Geneva Accords, the Pathet Lao (Lao People's Revolutionary Party) forcibly took over the government of Laos and established the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). Those Hmong who had once fought in the CIA's Secret Army unexpectedly found themselves at the mercy of their sworn enemies, who were suddenly in complete control of the government.

It is believed that as many as a third of the Hmong population fled to Thailand at that time. While a great many stayed in Thailand, others were resettled elsewhere — such as the United States, Canada, France and Australia. During what had been a massive attempt to escape to Thailand, thousands of Hmong Lao were killed by Lao PDR government troops using conventional and chemical weapons; countless mothers, fathers, and children drowned in the Mekong River; and hundreds of others died from starvation and disease.

Tens of thousands of Hmong and Lao officials were captured and sent to "re-education camps", which were widely understood at the time to be much more like prisons and torture facilities. Many thousands died in those camps. They were tortured and starved to death, given food with sand mixed in and dirty, contaminated water to drink.

In spite of the danger, hundreds of thousands of Hmong Lao stayed behind. Many believed they had nothing to fear, as they had not ever worked for the CIA.

The Hmong have always been a highland people, and many of the families of former CIA soldiers lived in isolated villages in remote mountainous areas, and were unable to flee in time. Some families stayed because they believed the Lao PDR would respect international agreements and their human rights . No matter what the reason, the families that did stay or were left behind — even those who had never cooperated in any way with the American CIA — eventually faced immeasurable hardship and merciless retribution from the Lao PDR and Vietnam governments.

In May 1975, thousands of Hmong civilians, including families of former Secret Army soldiers, marched down Road 13 hoping to find shelter in Vientiane. Instead, at Hin Heup, a northern province area in Vientiane, they encountered Pathet Lao military and secret police forces. In the massacre that ensued many thousands were killed or injured. The survivors fled back to their villages and towns. Some reluctantly took up their old CIA-issued service rifles and the little ammunition they had left and fled to the jungles with their families, hoping to avoid persecution and extermination by the new regime. This moment marks the initial defensive uprising of the Hmong Lao against the Pathet Lao/Lao PDR regime.



THIRTY YEARS LATER

The Vietnam conflict officially ended in 1973. Thirty years later, reports persist of an ongoing, unresolved conflict between the Hmong Lao groups hiding in the mountainous jungle areas and the Lao PDR Government.

Among the groups of Hmong Lao still in the jungle, very few survivors of the original Secret Army remain. Over the past three decades, events and government policies have resulted in a much more layered and complex situation. Second, third and fourth generation descendants of the original Secret Army families have multiplied to outnumber by far the few survivors of the original fugitives.

These groups have evolved, and today they comprise mostly people who were not yet born at the time of the Vietnam conflict, and can hardly be accused of fighting for the USA. Basically, they were born in the jungle, on the run and being shot at, and have never had any choice in the matter.

At the same time, according to Hmong Lao refugees from that area, the Lao PDR has, over the decades, engaged in policies — which will be clarified in the Summary of Claims — that continue to cause a stream of Hmong villagers to abandon their homes and flee into the jungle in order to save their lives. The newer groups may or may not join up with groups already established there.



DEFENSIVE ACTIVITIES — ACTIVE RESISTANCE

It is often alleged that various groups who have long been in hiding continue to participate in "active resistance". That may be true regarding a very small portion of the groups. But to this observer, it seems unmerited to label them as rebels because they are actively resisting being killed. Many of the small groups have absolutely no weapons whatsoever. Many of the larger groups that do have weapons have very few of them, and no supply of ammunition. They literally "defend" the group with seven or eight bullets. It is not wrong for any human being who is being hunted down like an animal to try to stay alive. They are not the aggressors. Even the few groups that might actually be "active resisters", for them to undertake an aggressive act, it is against a well armed military that is there for one reason -- to destroy them. Military that follows them wherever they go, that will not let them get away. For the great majority of the people, most of the human beings hiding in the jungle groups, it is the height of absurdity to say that they are rebels who are actively resisting.

There is evidence that some of the Hmong-in-hiding continue to nurture hopes or expectations that relatives based in the United States are advocating on their behalf and working with the US Government, raising awareness internationally, doing whatever they can, to rescue them -- including to realign the political structure. It is most unfortunate that there is evidence that there are those outside of Laos with political aspirations of their own, who do what they can to encourage utterly unrealistic aspirations. There are some Hmong -- not many, but a few -- that promote the idea of establishing a separate country for the Hmong. It seems as if, across the decades, some Hmong groups-in-hiding have been encouraged to sustain such false hopes.



On the other hand, it does appear that most of the Hmong-in-hiding continue to nurture hopes or expectations that their relatives based in the United States are going to work and advocate on their behalf, so that they would be rescued and could still remain the right to self-determination as a people with their own political, religious, cultural and

social structures, language and way of life. Nevertheless, the testimonies and claims upon which this Report is based make it clear that, for the great majority of the Hmong groups-in-hiding, they are staying in the depths of the mountainous jungle today for far simpler reasons: they do not trust the Lao PDR government and are too afraid to come out.



courtesy Philip Blenkinsop

For most of the subjects of the Report, the trauma they have suffered has affected multiple generations. Collectively, they identify themselves as a people, and, also collectively, they share the memory of what they have endured. But in

reality, it is only a very few of them that continue to nurture the goal of attaining their land rights and collective rights as a people. This is not to say they would not all be very happy to have such rights granted to them, but over 30 years of very real persecution, those goals have come to seem more and more unattainable. Survival has long been the main, if not only, issue of real importance. In fact, the circumstances seem to indicate that quite the opposite outcome is much more likely. Most have suffered extraordinary human rights violations at the hands of the Lao PDR Government, seemingly in clear violation of international law.

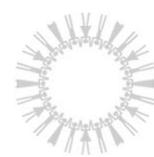


courtesy Philip Blenkinsop

TO SURRENDER NOT CONSIDERED AN OPTION

Although the vast majority of the Hmong hiding in the jungle highlands surrendered prior to the 1990s, their exodus continues today, and is in fact accelerating. Just as they continue to surrender, so also do reports persist of those who surrender being met with mistreatment: they may be threatened, taken into custody, forcefully relocated, tortured, or even killed. Sometimes Hmong who surrender, survive to flee to Thailand or retreat back into the jungle, where they are certain to tell the other members of their group the details of what has just happened to them and to their erstwhile companions who were not so lucky.

As can easily be seen in the Summary of Claims the refugees in this Report describe unrelenting and aggressive hounding by Laotian and Vietnamese armed forces, who unrelenting pursuit has had a predictable result. No matter how unbearable the conditions under which they have lived for as long as three decades, most Hmong-in-hiding in the mountainous jungle in Laos are too afraid to come out. From their point of view, created by their very hard experience, they believe they have no choice. It may very well be that the majority of Hmong still in the jungle would be very relieved to be integrated into mainstream Laotian society, provided they be well treated, but because of what they know happens to Hmong who do surrender, they do not consider it an option. Even so, desperation does eventually lead some to attempt to “surrender”.





When Hmong, out of utter desperation, choose to surrender, they go to an uncertain fate. In 2004, hundreds of Hmong surrendered to the Laotian authorities, and in June 2005, another group, mostly women and children, emerged from the jungle in Xieng Khouang Province. Although the United Nations had negotiated safe passage out of the rainforest for them and was prepared to provide food, medicine, shelter and long-term transitional assistance, the Hmong were nonetheless taken into custody by the Lao military. Again, in October 2005, over 200 Hmong surrendered in Bolikhamxay Province, but they, too, were met with capture. The UN agencies, foreign organizations and journalists were denied access to them. Their fate remains unknown. Many families that reportedly surrendered remain

unaccounted for.

Over a two-month period this spring (2006), several small groups of women and children appeared in Hmong villages in the valley around Mountain Phou Bia. Because of the tremendous military build-up in the area, and the near-certainty of death for all of them if they remained, they had finally overcome their fear and walked down the mountain — a trip of more than a week.

The villagers had already been threatened and intimidated by the Vietnamese soldiers, 3,000 of whom had recently moved into nearby military camps. They were warned that they would be severely punished, probably killed, if any Hmong from the hiding places came to the village and the villagers did not report them to the military. So the villagers alerted the authorities, who reported, that the authorities came and took all the women and children back to a military camp with Vietnamese soldiers. There, all but the oldest were forced to become sex slaves. The grandmothers were killed outright.

According to a witness, one of three survivors that escaped back to the jungle, all the females were gang-raped repeatedly. But the young girls, ages 10 to 13, suffered the most, because the soldiers liked them the best. They were raped countless times each day. Sometimes they were tortured. One of the girls was her daughter. After several weeks of such abuse, the traumatized girls withdrew and stopped speaking and eating. Eventually, they all simply died. According to the survivor — one of three who escaped back into the jungle — all the other prisoners were eventually killed.

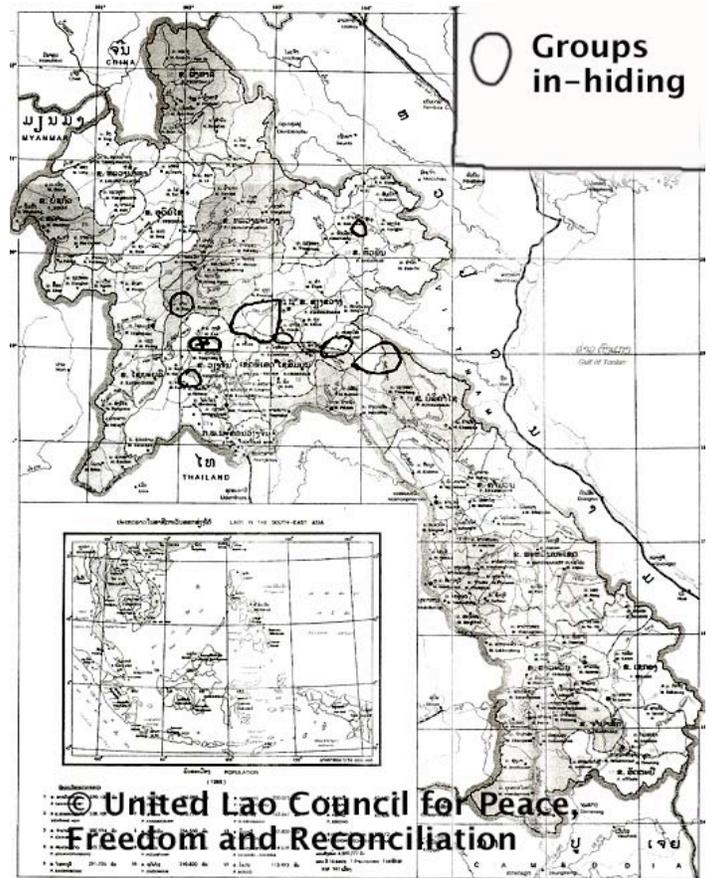
FORCED RELOCATION

There are also reports of families or groups being forcibly relocated away from the highlands, to lowland areas with little or no access to arable land. To make matters worse, the Hmong are usually resettled in artificial villages, with other resettled ethnic minority groups or with other Hmong with whom, because of their traditional clan system, they do not get along. This is certain to result in internal conflict and the erosion of their traditional way of life. It also appears that the Hmong at such “focal sites” are kept under tight surveillance and are subjected to regular intimidation and harassment by the Lao authorities. Finally, there are reports that a number of relocated Hmong leaders have been executed. It is no surprise that such relocation is not viewed as very appealing.



THE XAYSOMBOUN SPECIAL ZONE

The Xaysomboun Special Zone, where most of the Hmong-in-hiding live, has been designated by the Lao PDR as a “lawless and dangerous zone”, off-limits to foreigners. The Hmong-in-hiding who live there are considered to be “bandits”. The Special Zone itself, which has not been officially defined, encompasses three large provinces: Xieng Khouang, Bolikhamxay and Vientiane. Although the Lao PDR Government steadfastly denies any armed conflict with Hmong minorities, reports persist of military troops in the area attacking Hmong Lao groups in hiding with a full range of armaments, including automatic weapons, heavy artillery, grenades, and even chemical weapons deployed by air. Eyewitnesses traveling adjacent to these military training areas report hearing automatic gunfire and heavy artillery in the distance, coming from the mountaintops.



INCREASED MILITARY AGGRESSION: “THE CRACKDOWN”

According to the refugees, their flight came about as the direct result of the recent and extraordinary escalation of the violence – the crackdown on the Hmong-in-hiding. In areas that were quite inaccessible 30 years ago, the authorities have now established an intricate and ever-expanding network of roads or military outposts. The military, with the use of air surveillance, has become very adept at locating and eliminating Hmong hiding places, again and again and again — forcing the survivors to live perpetually on the run.

At the same time the military has been increasing its presence, the groups in the conflict area have been improving their communication capabilities — through the use of solar panel satellite telephones smuggled in to some of the larger groups. The information reaching the outside which once was scanty and hardy to be trusted, today has become quite immediate and dependable. Additionally, the satellite phone reports essentially verify the testimonies of the Reports subjects, the 1100 refugees in White Water Camp in Thailand — and vice versa.

Similar stories are being told today by many Hmong groups-in-hiding and villagers living in the three provinces of the Special Zone. Beginning in March of this year (2006), alarmingly large military units, some as large as 3,000 troops, have been moving into the area. Activities at military staging locations, such as the small town Muang Cha in Province Xieng Khouang, have increased drastically. Trucks and helicopters appear to delivering a great deal of supplies — food, ammunition and weapons.



It seems that everywhere in the Special Zone, new military units are arriving and bases are materializing.

By solar-panel powered satellite telephone, Hmong groups-in-hiding are reporting that, since March 2006, many new military units have entered the higher areas of the mountains to approach, surround and attack the Hmong groups. Gunfire can be heard in the background during some of the telephone calls. At the time of this report, the death toll, both from starvation and as a result of the increased attacks, is uncertain.

Since early June this year, three large groups who previously reported that they were surrounded and being attacked with bombs and machine guns have gone silent.

The fate of these groups and many others remains unknown. On the mountain Phou Ban, for example, the military has become so omnipresent that no one knows how many people are there, whether in groups or sub-groups. Only one group is in direct contact (via satellite telephone) with the outside world. This group has separated into three sub-groups of 80 to 110 people each, each with its sub-leader. At this time, they are cut off from one another because of the increased military presence.

Whatever the location in the Special Zone, it has become clear that the extermination of the Hmong Lao-in-hiding is entering a new stage.

LATEST ATTACKS

As recently as 6 April 2006, 17 Hmong children accompanied by four adult women and one un-armed adult man were reportedly shot to death by military forces in Bolikhamxay Province. They had been digging roots in the jungle.

Also on 6 April, but north of Vang Viang, a group on the mountain Phou Ban was attacked, and 26 people were killed. Ten days later, another group, also on Phou Ban, lost 24 people — 22 children and teenagers accompanied by two adults. None of them had been carrying weapons.

On 2 June 2006, Yang Thoua Thao, leader of another group of approximately 300 people in the area Phoudapho in Xieng Khouang Province, reported via satellite telephone that the Lao PDR military had been setting up new military camps and was stepping up their attacks on his group. He also said they could clearly see soldiers wearing Vietnamese hats.



On 8 June 2006, in the area Houa Phan near Sam Noi, just outside the Special Zone, group leader Nhia Vue Xiong reported that 31 people in his group had died of starvation. On the same day, inside the Special Zone, 120 km northwest of Vientiane Province and west of Vang Viang, Youa Pao Xiong's group of approximately 500 people reported that they, as well as three other groups, had been brutally attacked.

In the great confusion caused by the attack, they discovered that at least 100 people, mostly women and children, were missing. No one knows what has become of them.



VIETNAMESE SOLDIERS ATTACKING HMONG-IN-HIDING INSIDE LAOS

In May 2006, at the 5th session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Vietnam denied persistent allegations that Vietnamese forces have been in Laos for a number of years, in the Xaysomboun Special Zone. Their denial does nothing to refute the hundreds or thousands of accusations leveled by refugees outside of Laos as well as by Hmong-in-hiding, and by respected journalists and NGO' Fact Finding Commission who have taken the trouble to visit the Special Zone themselves.

Citizens of Laos living in the Special Zone report that there are many soldiers in their towns and villages who speak a language other than Laotian, a language they do not understand. Their descriptions of the uniforms these soldiers wear are consistent with their being Vietnamese. Some report seeing the Vietnamese flag, or the Vietnamese symbol on the hats of the soldiers, or they describe the hats as being "shaped like a mushroom."

As a general observation, Hmong living in villages and towns and the Hmong-in-hiding all are in possession of fairly detailed knowledge about the military units and smaller base camps, including names and locations. They have no trouble distinguishing between Vietnamese and Lao soldiers and can easily provide details, such as names of commanders and ID numbers of units.

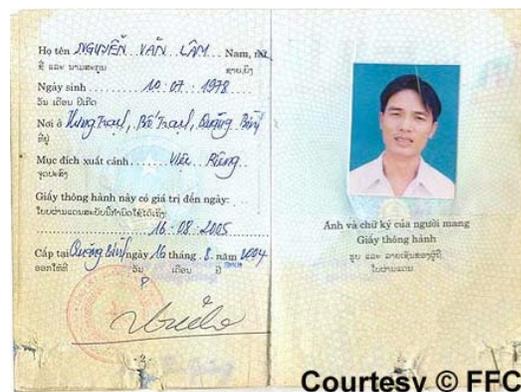
Increasingly, there are rumors that the Hmong-in-hiding are not being attacked and eliminated out of 31-year-old vengeance, but that they are being used as training targets for Lao and Vietnamese special military units, in real life "war games".

Until now, the only evidence that Vietnamese soldiers have been attacking and eliminating Hmong-in-hiding has been the testimonies of those in the jungle, who say they can distinguish between the Vietnamese and the LPDR soldiers by their footwear and uniforms, and because they speak a language the Hmong do not understand.

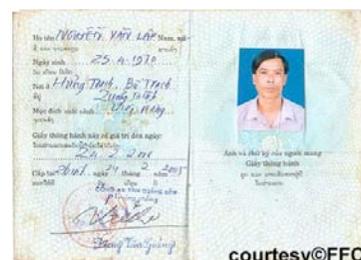
In June 2005, a large military unit in Bolikhamxay Province attacked a large Hmong group-in-hiding known as the group of Wa Leng Lee (which also contains members of the Khmu ethnic minority). The leader reported that the group was forced to flee to the highest mountaintop, where they stopped to defend themselves, and returned fire. On 26 June 2005, members of the group returned to the location of the incident to recover corpses and search for survivors. Among the corpses, they found four dead soldiers. As usual, they searched their uniforms for anything useful, and discovered that the soldiers were carrying Vietnamese passports, which they confiscated. And on the last page of the passports they recorded the date: 26/6/2005.



Courtesy of © FFC



Courtesy © FFC



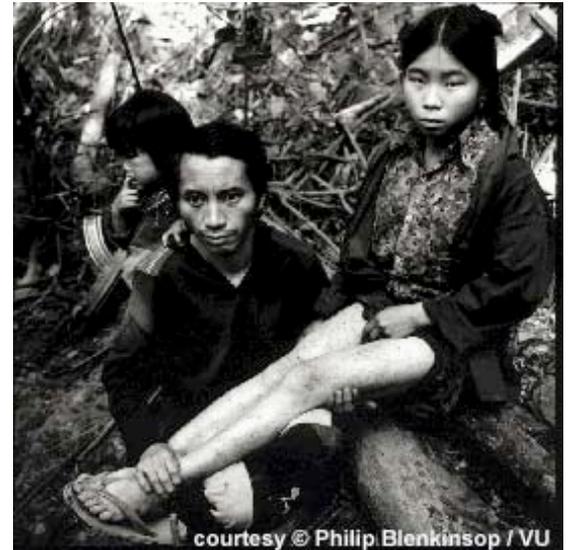
courtesy©FFC



In 2000, a young Hmong woman, a refugee now based in the United States, arranged for her parents to escape, successfully, from the jungle where they had been in hiding since 1975. On 3 July of this year, the elderly married couple, in spite of their very well founded fears of endangering their relatives who currently live in Lao villages, agreed to submit their testimony for inclusion in this report.

Their firsthand information is credible, valuable and detailed. They describe in careful detail the evidence gathered by their group-in-hiding, while they were still with their group that to an objective observer might prove that in many cases the soldiers that had attacked them were Vietnamese.

This particular group-in-hiding had no weapons whatsoever. None of the group members wore old military uniforms. For defense, the best they could do was to place booby-traps, usually made of sharpened bamboo, around the perimeter of their camps. When they occasionally found unexploded munitions, they used these as well, also on the perimeter of their hiding-places. There were many occasions when soldiers were wounded by these booby traps, incapacitated but not killed, and they found the soldiers while they were still alive. Very often, the wounded soldiers spoke a language that was not Laotian, a language they could not understand. As far as these refugees are concerned, the language must have been Vietnamese. There isn't any other reasonable explanation. There were also occasions when the wounded soldiers did speak Laotian, but in Laotian admitted that they were Vietnamese.



In addition, there are still living veterans of the Vietnam conflict, former CIA Secret Army soldiers in the groups-in-hiding. They can easily identify Vietnamese soldiers, and often do so. And there were also many occasions when they found the passports that the soldiers were carrying were Vietnamese passports.

The couple also carefully explained why Vietnamese soldiers are feared so much more than Laotian soldiers.

- Vietnamese soldiers are much more sophisticated in their strategies. They can approach a group's hiding place or set up an ambush invisibly, so that the Hmong-in-hiding don't realize what is happening until it is too late.
- The Lao soldiers are easier to detect and are generally much less dangerous.
- The Vietnamese are much better at finding group hiding places, and when they attack, they do so much more effectively.
- The Vietnamese are also much more cruel than the Lao in the ways they torture and mutilate Hmong men, women and children, but particularly so in the way they gang rape Hmong women and girls, girls as young as 10 years old.



RELUCTANCE BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO REACT

To this day there appears to be great reluctance in the international community, particularly in the US State Department and the United Nations, to accept the fact that Vietnamese soldiers are indeed inside Laos and hunting the Hmong -- like animals. The author of this Report believes that it is well past time that the UN system insist on access to the Laotian conflict area, the Xaysomboun Special Zone, to conduct a credible, high-level investigation.

For years Hmong organizations and individuals have been providing testimony -- incident descriptions, eyewitness testimony and satellite telephone reports, from both Hmong-in-hiding and Hmong Lao villagers, about the serious situation of their family members, who are trapped in the jungle and growing more desperate every day, to no avail. The author has been to Thailand and has herself spoken to many refugees who escaped from Laos only very recently; she has testimony from journalists who visited the Special Zone themselves and were immediately converted into sleepless advocates by the horrors they saw; and she has video footage from inside the Special Zone that tells a very clear story.

It appears that there has been a pre-determination that any information coming out of the conflict area is to be discredited, labeled "nonsense" or "politically motivated", by the relevant authorities. Hmong organizations currently in direct contact with Hmong-in-hiding and with Hmong Lao villages by satellite telephone are blithely dismissed as "not credible" by decision-makers at the UN and the US State Department, because, they say, these groups must be assumed to have "political interests". Why must it be a political interest for people to want to save the lives of their family members? How can institutions seriously make the accusation, or even the implication, that all the testimony and evidence and stories and telephone calls are false and politically motivated? How could all the Hmong Lao share the same political motivation?

There may or may not be Hmong organizations based in the US that have interests beyond those of human rights. But in the author's personal experience, face to face, it has been blatantly obvious that most of the Hmong advocates are motivated by very real, legitimate and profound concern for their people, their relatives -- uncles, parents, brothers and sisters -- who are trapped in a situation growing ever more deadly. Who among us could stand idly by while our family members were hunted down like animals? It is false reasoning to suggest that because a government says these people are politically motivated to accept that it is true that they are politically motivated, without any investigation whatsoever -- especially when those who have actually personally investigated the situation contradict these conclusions wholeheartedly.

This author does not find it problematic that there may have been discrepancies in numbers of dead or lists of names or dates of attacks or events provided by different sources, whether to the UN or to the US State Department. It is hardly surprising in the least, as the information is being provided via satellite telephone from the most desperate people on earth, people who do not possess televisions or newspapers. It should also be kept in mind that those receiving and recording the information are not trained rapporteurs, but are rather distraught relatives, desperately seeking help from the international community and authorities -- with absolutely no results to this day.

It has, indeed, been the author's personal experience that getting information clearly and consistently has been extraordinarily difficult, for many reasons. The Hmong in the jungle seem to perceive the passage of time differently than people working at regular jobs in the developed world day. And this is not surprising or unreasonable. The Hmong who make up the advocacy organizations often have very limited capacities themselves, primarily from lack of finances, exposure, education and experience. Most cannot write acceptable English; they know very little about funding; they know almost nothing about how to approach governmental and inter-governmental



organizations. They do not have the appropriate tools. They do not know how to do many things on a computer that we take completely for granted.

None of this, however, means that all these people have been telling stories that are not true. It is not acceptable to this author to merely wave the hand and dismiss thousands of testimonies, phone calls and eyewitness accounts, some from very experienced journalists, as all “not-credible” and “politically motivated”. Surely, someone would tell the truth.

It is the opinion of the author, who has at least visited the White Water camp and spoken with many eyewitnesses, that Hmong organizations outside Laos are without a doubt the most knowledgeable experts on the subject, whose information must be taken into account. It seems only reasonable to ask, or expect, or demand, that large institutions, before they conclude that hundreds or thousands of reports are false, should initiate some kind of serious effort to determine the validity of said reports -- because there is a very great human cost associated with the institutions being mistaken, one that history may not judge very kindly.

The Hmong trapped in the jungle, including women, babies and children and adults who were not born during the Vietnam years – are begging to be rescued, and they have no time left.



WORK GOALS

Rebecca Sommer visited White Water, the temporary settlement in Petchabun, Thailand, from 5 to 28 October 2005. From 16 December 2005 to June 2006, additional research was carried out and information and materials were collated and compiled.

WORK WAS INITIATED WITH THE FOLLOWING GOALS IN MIND:

- To make video-recordings for the production of an awareness raising documentary on the claims of human rights violations of those Hmong Lao refugees who, fleeing persecution by the Lao PDR and Vietnamese armed forces, arrived in Thailand sometime in 2004 or 2005.
- To determine which claims of persecution are credible, and focus on these.
- To verify the relevant facts of claims through confirmation with secondary sources not related to the original claimant.
- To provide to the UNHCR a summary of the claims made by the Hmong Lao who appear to qualify for the protection of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.
- To submit an additional report to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, also at a later date, to be channeled to the relevant staff and appropriate UN agencies.



METHOD OF WORK

Collection of Information from UN and Relevant Governmental Officials

UNHCR TEAM FOR THAILAND, CAMBODIA, LAOS AND VIET NAM

On 5, 6, 19, and 27 October and 6 November 2005, meetings were held with the East Asian UNHCR team. The UN officials were open, frank and candid about the restrictions and difficulties they encounter when attempting to address the situation of the Hmong Lao in Petchabun. The UNHCR team included Mr. Hasim Utkan, UNHCR Regional Representative; Mr. Bhairaja Panday, UNHCR Deputy Regional Representative; Mr. Giuseppe de Vincentis, UNHCR Senior Policy Officer; and Mr. Songsit Charuparn, from the UNHCR Regional Office.

They reported that the Thai Authorities will not allow them to enter the settlement to assist and pre-screen the migrants and to determine if they are "persons of concern". The UNHCR team expressed their serious concerns about the obstacles they encounter, and the resulting lack of any feasible or acceptable solution. They also reiterated that the Lao PDR officially denies that any armed conflict with the Hmong Lao exists, and that they decline to acknowledge that any of the Hmong Lao now living in the temporary settlement in Petchabun are originally from Laos.

They pointed out that, without access to the camp, a fair evaluation of the reasons why various Hmong Lao are in Petchabun will be difficult, if not impossible, to make.

UNDP TEAM FOR THAILAND, CAMBODIA, LAOS AND VIET NAM

On 5 and 6 October 2005, meetings were held with Mr. Hakan Bjorkman, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative; Mrs. Helen Leake, Programme Specialist for UNDP's Regional Indigenous Peoples Programme; and several other officials who, it must be said, seemed to be equally powerless in the face of the Thai government's refusal to allow them entry into the refugee camp.

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

On 19 October 2005, a meeting was held with Mr. Michael Honnold, the Refugee Coordinator for Southeast Asia, at the Embassy of the United States of America.

He confirmed that there will be no additional resettlement program for the Hmong.



GOVERNOR OF PETCHABUN

A meeting with the Governor of Petchabun Province took place on 21 October 2005. Unfortunately, interpretation from Thai to English was difficult for the translator and communication was therefore limited. The Governor explained that he will allow NGOs such as Doctors without Borders and Christian missionary groups such as Relief Logistics International and Vision for Missions to continue to work at the White Water camp.

OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, BANGKOK, THAILAND

On 27 October, the UNHCR team graciously facilitated an unofficial meeting with Mr. Sing Visespochanakit, of Thailand's Office of the National Security Council, in Bangkok. At that meeting it became apparent that doubts remain regarding the reasons the majority of Hmong Lao now residing in the refugee camp are there. Factors such as economic reasons and misinformation about a US resettlement program were mentioned, among others. Thailand fears that accommodating the illegal migrants in Petchabun will encourage additional migration and population growth in Petchabun and elsewhere in Thailand — an outcome they wish to avoid.

EMBASSY OF THE LAO PDR

On 27 October 2005, a meeting with Lao Ambassador Soi Sahakarnpramoon took place at the Lao PDR Embassy in Bangkok. He was informed of the claims of severe human rights violations being made at the time by the refugees, and that those claims were to be incorporated into a video documentary. Ambassador Soi Sahakarnpramoon professed astonishment at claims that Lao and Vietnamese soldiers are attacking Hmong people in the jungle regions. He denied categorically that any antagonism whatsoever exists in his country toward the Hmong or that any Lao military could be engaged, in those regions already named, in any such activities against Hmong people or any other ethnic minorities. In addition, he denied the existence of the Special Zone, that any of the refugees are Laotian, and that the Hmong said to be hiding in the mountainous jungle areas even exist. He also denied a request to visit Laos as well as a request for a written permit to enter the Special Zone, which the refugees describe as areas of one-sided armed conflict to the author.



FACT-FINDING IN “WHITE WATER” – PETCHABUN, THAILAND REFUGEE CAMP

MEETINGS WITH THAI AUTHORITIES, WHO ARE HMONG THAI

On 7 October, an initial meeting was held with Thai authorities in the Hmong-Thai village Khek Noi, which is a ten-minute drive from the White Water refugee camp. According to Wichian Yatravi, Provincial Representative for Petchabun, and Kanan Plachoua Lee, Governor of the Khek Noi Sub-district, Hmong Thai villagers have been arrested and imprisoned by Thai authorities because they have allowed Hmong Lao refugees to stay on their land or have given or sold food to the refugees. They described the stress and conflict this causes for the Hmong Thai, to be forced by Thai pressure to neglect the Hmong Lao, who are their relatives by blood or clan system. They also raised concerns that such large numbers of refugees need urgent food assistance from the UN or Thailand, and that the invasion of refugees into the surrounding area to collect firewood and food has already had a negative impact on the environment and the fields of the Hmong Thai.

Finally, they said they would welcome a solution whereby the refugees might be allowed to merge into the larger area of Hmong Thai villages, if only the government of Thailand could be persuaded to support such a solution. Hmong Thai villagers made many similar statements throughout the visit, and said that before Thai officials had made such actions illegal and criminal, many had collected food and given it to the refugees.

LOCATING RECENT HMONG LAO ARRIVALS FROM LAOS CONFLICT ZONE IN WHITE WATER, PETCHABUN

The Hmong Thai villagers and Hmong Lao refugees are the same people, the same ethnic group. They speak the same language. As stated previously, most are related by blood or clan system. They actually know each other and understand quite well who belongs to which group and who comes from what area. Three Hmong Thai residents from the village Khek Noi — Wichian Yatravi, Provincial Representative for Petchabun, and villagers Da and Bee Yang — helped to locate the Hmong Lao groups who had most recently fled the Lao conflict area Special Zone.

COLLECTION OF ORAL CLAIMS

Throughout the month of October 2005, a great many oral claims and testimonies of members of the six subgroups of Hmong Lao residing in the refugee camp but originally from the armed conflict area were videotaped.

Based on regional distinctions, six focus groups were established:

Phou Bia:	42 families	203 individuals
Phou Ban:	3 families	14 individuals
Pha Let - Pha Dai:	32 families	161 individuals
Phalai:	103 families	539 individuals
Phou Kongkhao:	3 families	20 individuals
Bolikhamxay:	21 families	96 individuals



ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY OF ORAL CLAIMS

In spite of belonging to different groups and coming from different regions, most individuals interviewed conveyed stories of similar life experiences and persecution. A brief Summary of the Claims is included in the Report.

Ms. Sommer personally interviewed and videotaped individuals, in private and group settings, in carefully separated, discrete interviews. Children consistently confirmed incidents and attacks as described by adult members of their group in interviews they could not have overheard. As the subjects related their stories of living always on the run, afraid, hungry, desperate, and almost always grieving for lost family and friends, they all seemed to relive their experiences, with all the attendant stress and emotional pain.

Every one of the teenagers and all the adults said they had lost relatives, friends, children, a husband or a wife as the result of attacks of Laotian or Vietnamese military. Specific information, such as name, age, date, and a description of each such incident, was recorded. In some cases, the interviewees displayed as evidence relevant photographs or documents; in others, they indicated physical scars or missing body parts or infirmities, such as blindness, to provide confirmation of their stories. Most stories were also confirmed by other members of the group.



Thinking that the reaction of listeners who were unaware that they were being watched might expose untruthful testimony, Ms. Sommer took great care to observe the body language and facial expressions of those witnessing an interview. Contrary to her expectations, the onlookers clearly identified with the person who was testifying to the camera, and frequently broke down emotionally themselves.





DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WITH ORAL CLAIMS

During the process of taping oral testimonies, it became apparent that the Hmong Lao from the jungle conflict region were not organizing their testimonies according to any sequential timeline, as if they were not differentiating their experiences by time, dates or years. Attacks that had taken place any time from 1975 to 2005 were experienced as interwoven, rather than distinct, discrete events. It also became apparent that they assumed Ms Sommer was already familiar with all the details, including the reality that exists in the conflict region today. Essential information was often omitted, and supplementary questioning was needed before the events became comprehensible.

In addition, most of the focus group individuals who only recently had come from the conflict region have never had any access to education, and have very little facility for communicating complex events clearly and understandably, especially to an outsider who has limited knowledge of the background of the situation.

For example, most of these refugees never offered to explain how they knew it had been military soldiers who had attacked their group or killed group members. They assumed that everyone just knew, as they did, that it had, indeed, been soldiers behind the attacks. It was only when specifically asked, "How did you know it was soldiers?" that they provided information such as how they had seen the soldiers, how many they had seen, where they had been situated to be able to see them, or how the soldiers had been dressed.



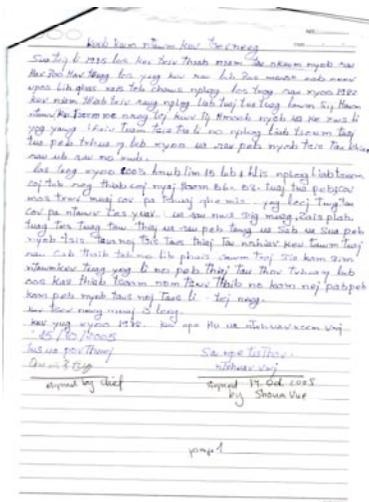
ADDRESSING DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WITH CLAIMS

In an effort to improve the quality of the claims, a four-day capacity training was held to encourage the refugees to submit their claims in writing. The training focused on how best to structure statements, by time, date and year. Participants were encouraged to keep the claims concise, but to explain and describe incidents and attacks in detail. Representatives of all refugees in the camp were invited to participate. Training materials in the Hmong language were circulated, including to the Christian missionary NGOs working on the ground, and the mailing address of UNHCR was provided.



RESULTS

As a result of the capacity training, many of the Hmong refugees provided written claims of persecution that also included the reasons for their flight from Laos. Eleven individuals in the refugee groups who could read and write came forward and agreed to take on the responsibility of writing down claims as dictated by and for individuals and collective groups, and to read them back for final approval from the appropriate individual or group. Written claims were submitted until the last day of the visit. In each case, the writer/scribe confirmed that the claim had been read back to and approved by the individual or group that had originally dictated it. To confirm this, the claimant was asked to sign the claim — by thumbprint or circle. Sometimes, the writer/scribe cosigned the claim.



NGO ROUNDTABLE

On 21 October 2006, a roundtable was held with individuals from the NGOs that are working inside the refugee camp. Copies of a draft evaluation of the situation of White Water were circulated, and the NGOs were asked to assist and advise.

They clarified that, because they do not speak Hmong, their knowledge regarding the Hmong Lao from the conflict zone is somewhat limited. With the many long-term refugees, they are able to communicate in Thai. The missionaries explained that their contact is limited primarily to Hmong who have or are expected to convert to Christianity. Since the Hmong who come from the conflict area continue to practice their ancestral religion, the missionaries do not have direct contact with them. On another subject, they did confirm that they are the only source of rice for the refugees and that their budget is running out.

Doctors Without Borders (MSF) described their work and voiced their deep concern with the food situation, most notably the lack of food assistance. They also are very concerned that children are living next to a busy street. With automobiles passing so nearby, accidents have already taken place.

VERIFYING AND EVALUATING INFORMATION

This Report has also been supported by partnerships with many Hmong individuals, Hmong organizations, and other NGOs who have been essential in cooperative information gathering. For that reason, the Report must be seen as a collective work. From December 2005 to the present, verbal and written information, photographs, films, and recordings from numerous sources have been carefully evaluated and summarized. Great care has been taken to have all translations and facts provided and checked by sources unrelated to one another.

THESE INFORMATION SOURCES INCLUDE

- Hmong individuals and organizations based in the USA who have maintained direct contact, via satellite telephone, with Hmong still remaining in the armed conflict areas.
- Via satellite telephone, Hmong individuals currently hiding in the Laotian jungle.
- Hmong individuals and organizations who have visited Hmong Lao refugees in White Water camp, or who continue to be in contact with them via satellite telephone,
- Hmong individuals based in the USA who have at some time visited Laos and met with and interviewed Hmong who had previously surrendered.
- NGOs with extensive experience working on the issue of Hmong refugees and Hmong-in-hiding.
- Hmong individuals who maintain contact with Hmong Lao relatives now living in an integrated fashion in mainstream Laotian society.
- Journalists and Hmong individuals who have previously entered the armed conflict area and made contact with a Hmong group still in hiding.
- A variety of other sources such as internet discussion groups, books, news reports, publications, photographs and documentary films.



SPECIFIC INFORMATION SOURCES

Many Information sources wish to remain anonymous. Two individuals, out of very many, who have made a significant contribution are a Hmong Lao married couple, refugees now in the United States, who lived with a group in hiding from 1975 until their escape in 2001.

A number of Hmong organizations based in the United States provided a great deal of assistance and support: the Hmong Mutual Assistance Association of Minneapolis and Minnesota; the Lao Human Rights Council; the Fqct-Finding_Commission; the Wisconsin Lao Veterans; the Lao Family Community; the United Lao Movement for Democracy; and the United Lao Council for Peace, Freedom and Reconciliation.

Many individuals who have been absolutely essential for the finalization of this Report are individual Hmong who volunteered both their knowledge and time: Vaughn Vang; Zong L. Vang; Kenton Kue Xiong; Chue Chou Tchang; Ed Szendrey; Tzianeng Vang; Kevin C. Xiong; Chue Hue Vang; Xang Vang; Jey Vang; Boua Xang; Maxwell Lee Yang; Bee Lor and Seng Thao. Information about the forced internal resettlement in Laos was taken from the Probe International case study. Filmmakers and journalists Ruhi Hamid and Misha Maltsev provided a variety of written and oral information, including a written report previously submitted to the European Commission, a written summary of claims, and, through documentary footage shot inside the conflict zone, information about a specific group of Hmong Lao who remain in hiding today.

DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WITH USA-BASED HMONG COMMUNITY

The Hmong community based in the United States today is multi-faceted and complex, with intricate divisions and distinctions created by clan relationships intersecting with other factors, such as political, religious and even humanitarian objectives and/or agendas, which may be overt or hidden. On many occasions, hostilities encountered among and between various Hmong organizations and individuals made an already challenging project even more difficult. Unfortunately, in the Hmong community it also seems that unsubstantiated rumors, with no supporting evidence whatsoever, may be endorsed fervently and accepted as fact.

Finally, it appears that some Hmong organizations and individuals have been and may continue to be involved in using and manipulating the refugee issue — and the refugees themselves, including the Hmong Lao conflict area with its Hmong inhabitants — to further their personal political agendas.

While working on the Report, the author inadvertently discovered that some translations of written and videotaped claims that were being provided by a Hmong work-partner (who had also accompanied the author to the White Water camp) were being falsified, apparently deliberately. In order to avoid additional manipulation and disinformation, the relationship was immediately severed.

There were other sources with whom the author experienced similar, but less drastic, attempts at distortion. Some Hmong groups claim to be engaged in resistance movements with obviously unrealistic goals, such as establishing a Hmong kingdom in Laos. Hmong sources based in the USA, Australia, France, Thailand and Laos allegedly



continue to feed misinformation, ideological encouragement and financial support to Hmong Lao still in the conflict area in an effort to persuade them to remain in hiding. Such politically motivated Hmong based in the USA played a key role in the original settlement situation in Petchabun and in earlier refugee camps. In many cases, it seems that while one particular position is publicly professed a very different political agenda is carefully kept hidden.

Another difficulty frequently encountered may be the result of working with people from a traditional culture based in oral traditions. Some Hmong seem reluctant to put information in writing or to provide documentation. This can make it difficult for an organization to respond in a timely, regular fashion and create impediments when written follow-up is needed. Language can also be a limiting factor. Many Hmong elders are not fluent in, or speak only very limited, English. Some have technical limitations when working with electronic media such as e-mail and the internet. And there are times when accurate interpretation and translation become essential, resulting in communication that is very limited or slow moving.

HOW DIFFICULTIES WERE ADDRESSED

In order to ensure that information be confirmed by independent, unrelated sources, a Hmong advisory board was established. Each organization and individual on the board was obliged to agree to refrain from asking questions of the other sources on the board.

Several additional meetings with Hmong clan leaders, experts and organizations were convened in 2006: on 5 and from 20 to 28 March in New York; on 12 March in Wisconsin; from 20 to 26 May in New York, during the 5th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues at the United Nations, 30 June to 4 July in Minnesota, 9 to 19 July in New York.

Working groups comprising various Hmong experts, traditional leaders, and representatives of Hmong organizations worked on the translations and approved three texts: the *Summary of Claims*, the *Voices of the Hmong-in-Hiding* and the *Background Information*. Interpretation was provided for those who needed it.





PRECIPITATING FACTORS FOR MIGRATION TO AND EXPECTATIONS OF HMONG REFUGEES IN PETCHABUN, THAILAND

PRECIPITATING FACTORS

Laotian refugees in Thailand today left Laos, they say, because they feared different kinds of persecution:

- Throughout Laos, some people feared political persecution.
- In the conflict areas of Laos, Hmong people feared ethnic persecution.
- Many Hmong in Laos and in Viet Nam feared religious persecution.

EXPECTATIONS

- Many Hmong Lao refugees continue to believe misinformation about a non-existent Hmong resettlement program to America.
- Many Hmong Lao refugees who have been based in Thailand for years continue to hope for official refugee status, citizenship, or any other form of legal acceptance by Thailand.



HMONG-GROUPS IN WHITE WATER SETTLEMENT

The residents of the temporary settlement in Petchabun can be classified in four different sets, based on their background.

RELIGIOUS REFUGEES (1)

Many Hmong fled religious persecution in Viet Nam and Laos. They can speak Hmong and Lao or Vietnamese, and are able to read and write.

POLITICAL AND/OR CULTURAL REFUGEES (2)

Some Hmong fled from legal problems with the Lao PDR government across a range of years. They might have been facing allegations such as supporting or being part of separatist groups, or being involved in political or cultural activities not approved of by the Lao authorities. These refugees can speak Hmong and Lao, and some can speak Thai. Most of them can read and write.

LONG-TERM REFUGEES — NOT RESETTLED, NOT THAI CITIZENS — LIVING IN LIMBO (3)

Many of the refugees living in the White Water camp fled Laos 30 years ago; others fled sometime later. Many others were born in the refugee camps. They have all been living in the camps in northern Thailand for a very long period of time.



To present their typical journey briefly:

When Thailand announced its intention to close all Hmong refugee camps from 1990 to 1992, many residents of the camps, terrified of repatriation to Laos, fled to local Thai Hmong villages — mostly in the north of Thailand, and anywhere that they could find refuge. Of those that stayed in the camps, some were, indeed, deported back to Laos, but the majority moved in quite large numbers to the Wat Tham Krabok Temple, where they created a new settlement. After years of negotiations and uncertainty, over ten thousand of the Wat Tham Krabok refugees were registered and eventually granted refugee status. Finally, in 2004, they were resettled in the United States of America. But many refugees had been wary of the process of "registration", which could in actuality lead to deportation as well as to resettlement. In the end, without any way of knowing what was about to happen, some had been too reluctant to sign up. They were also quite unaware that this was to be their last chance.



As news of the resettlement spread, other Hmong Lao refugees — those that had dispersed across the Thai countryside when they heard that all the camps were to be closed, began to migrate back toward Wat Tham Krabok Temple. They, too, hoped to be registered and resettled to the United States, or to be granted legal resident status in Thailand. But they arrived after the event, and were refused. When the settlement at Wat Tham Krabok Temple eventually came to be closed, those remaining Hmong refugees migrated yet again, this time to the area around Petchabun, where they settled near and within local Hmong Thai villages. The result of this most recent migration was the sudden establishment of the current settlement in Petchabun, Thailand known as “White Water”. Many White Water residents sustain the hope that, now that they have made the trip to Petchabun, their dream of being resettled in the United States or being given resident status in Thailand will be viewed positively and granted. Most of these refugees, having already spent some time in Thailand, speak some Thai in addition to Hmong, and the older generation also speak Lao. Many are literate.

RECENT HMONG LAO ARRIVALS FROM CONFLICT AREA XAYSOMBOUN SPECIAL ZONE (4)

Some 1000-plus Hmong arrived in Thailand in 2004 and 2005, having only recently fled the Xaysomboun Special Zone, the armed conflict area in Laos that is closed to foreigners. They come from areas such as Phou Bia, Phou Ba, Pha Let (Choua Hlau)-Pha Dai (Choua Dai), Phalai, Bolikhamxay and Phou Kongkhao, in provinces Xieng Khouang, Bolikhamxay and Vientiane.

Most of the recent arrivals from the conflict area (who, at the time of this writing, continue to appear in Thailand) are direct descendants of Hmong who worked with the CIA during the Viet Nam conflict. They had either been hiding in the mountainous jungle regions from the time the Pathet Lao took over in 1975, or they were born in the jungle and spent their entire lives hiding there. Others fled their villages after being attacked by the military and merged into the already existing Hmong groups-in-hiding.

Now in Thailand, they claim they suffered extreme persecution at the hands of military forces, while, at the same time, they deny they were engaged in any political or violent activities against the regime in Laos (after 1975). They also say that the Lao PDR government has never made any attempt at conflict resolution but continues to expose and eliminate Hmong hiding places, compelling the survivors to live permanently as fugitives. Because of their long isolation in the depths of the Laotian jungles, most of the recent arrivals from the conflict area are illiterate and speak only Hmong.



SUMMARY OF CLAIMS

White Water, Temporary Hmong Lao Settlement in Petchabun, Thailand

SUBJECTS OF REPORT

This "Summary of Claims" is based on videotaped oral testimonies and written claims made by displaced Hmong-Lao who arrived in the White Water settlement in Petchabun, Thailand in 2004 and 2005, having fled the Xaysomboun Special Zone, the conflict area in the mountainous jungle regions of Laos. All claimants allege that they are survivors of repeated unprovoked and brutal attacks by armed forces of the Lao PDR and Vietnamese governments — and that these attacks continue to this day.

For the purposes of this Report, these individuals, numbering over 1100, have been categorized into six focus groups, based on the six geographically distinct areas where they were hiding. These areas — Phou Bia; Phou Ban; Pha Let (Choua Hlau)-Pha Dai (Choua Dai); Phalai; Phou Kongkhao; and Bolikhamsay — lie within the three provinces Xieng Khouang, Bolikhamsay and Vientiane. All are part of the Xaysomboun Special Zone, which is off limits to foreigners.

CHANGING COMPOSITION OF GROUPS

The refugees explain that the makeup of their groups-in-hiding has always been in flux. Sometimes people live in smaller groups; at other times, they join with or merge into larger groups, until such time as they are once again dispersed by a military attack. For that reason, in this Report all the individuals from a specific area are considered members of one "group", but it should be kept in mind that within one group there are many sub-groups that are constantly shifting, changing, dividing, merging and reforming.

CHAO FA

One of the subgroups considers itself to be Chao Fa — a name, originally disparaging, given to the Hmong-in-hiding by the Lao PDR based on the manner in which they continue to practice their ancestral religion — by praying to the earth and sky. It has come to be accepted as representing the Hmong-in-hiding, or the descendants of the families of the Secret Army, but it is also associated with "active resistance". All the other groups resent the label and reject it, because of the political connotations it has acquired. They are adamant that they are not, and never were, active insurgents. They just want to stay alive.



OLDER GENERATION

Of the relatively few members of the older generation living among the refugees, most confirm that the CIA recruited them back in the 1960s and that they did engage in various military operations during the Viet Nam conflict in support of the United States. Other elders say they have always been civilians and farmers, but some went into hiding as early as 1975 because they feared persecution. Others abandoned their villagers later, after they were attacked without warning, which may have been as recently as 2003.



YOUNGER GENERATIONS

The six focus groups are made up primarily of children and teenagers, most of whom were born in the jungle and are the direct descendants of Secret Army CIA recruits from the Viet Nam conflict. Most of them say their parents and relatives were killed in retaliation by the Lao PDR, often long after the war ended, as the Lao PDR and Vietnamese militaries continued the “crackdown” on their jungle hiding places. Other teenagers and children from the focus groups lived in villages close to Hmong groups-in-hiding until the military threatened or attacked their villages, when they fled with their relatives or parents to live and hide in the jungle. Except for the very smallest children, all the youngest refugees describe the terror of living through repeated attacks, watching as, week after week, their circle of loved ones and familiar faces grew ever smaller. Regardless



of whether they were born in villages or in the depths of the jungle, far too many children describe losing their parents, losing their siblings, losing their families — losing those that they loved most. Orphans are usually taken in by blood or clan relatives to live in small groups. This is done for security purposes, they say, and because it is almost impossible nowadays to find sufficient food for large groups.

Throughout the interviews, the young people consistently present their experiences as very traumatic and saddening, describing how much they miss their sisters and brothers, how they yearn for them. It is especially traumatizing for the orphans who may have witnessed the violent deaths of their parents, and then to be separated from their siblings for “practical reasons”.

VILLAGES ATTACKED

According to several testimonies, a number of members of the six focus groups were living in their traditional villages as recently as 2003, and had never participated in or supported any “rebel” activities. But one day they began to be, variously, kept under surveillance, intimidated or pursued — perhaps to be injured, arbitrarily arrested, or even tortured. Eventually, they were forced to abandon their homes.

A consistent storyline emerges that is repeated over and over, with little variation. Villagers are accused of being in contact with Hmong-in-hiding in the area. Then the military or Lao authorities intimidate them, threaten them with imprisonment, or physically abuse them to force them to guide them to the Hmong groups-in-hiding. If this does not succeed, whether because the villagers do not know the whereabouts of any groups, or because they do not want to endanger any human lives, whatever violence and intimidation the military is engaging in at this point escalates, to extremely violent and destructive acts that are in clear violation of international law.



In some instances, soldiers may begin to kill villagers at random. Other times, they may begin by executing the village leaders. Terrified and in fear for their very lives, villagers — or the inhabitants of the entire village — suddenly flee into the jungle, abandoning their homes, fields, livestock and all their belongings. In some cases they may eventually join an already existing group-in-hiding. In other cases, they may live together in a small independent group.



In one incident, approximately fifty Lao soldiers suddenly entered a small village and ordered all adult males to go inside their houses and to stay there. The authorities said they were establishing a curfew for the men for “security purposes”, because “dangerous rebels” were nearby. The soldiers would “protect” the village.

The soldiers stayed for one week, sleeping in shelters and eating food they demanded the village provide for them. When they finally left, they ordered the adults to stay in their houses for one more day. As soon as the soldiers disappeared into the surrounding forest, they turned and began to fire on the village, killing everyone in the houses as well as all the women and children who were outside. One young woman survived by escaping to the jungle. She took refuge with a group of Hmong-in-hiding and told them her story. About a year later, she was killed in a military attack on the group.

The following story, told by a refugee, is quite typical. One day, a group of soldiers came to his village with two Hmong prisoners they had captured from a group-in-hiding. To prove that the village did not sympathize with the Hmong-in-hiding, the soldiers demanded that he and his brother shoot and kill the two prisoners. Neither of the brothers was willing to kill the prisoners, but they both managed to escape into the jungle.

Not only the refugees from the villages speak about the surprise attacks. Many who had always lived in hiding know about them. They say that the Lao PDR military, sometimes working with Vietnamese, mount terrifying attacks on defenseless villages, using automatic weapons and heavy artillery. Sometimes they completely eradicate a village, in which case they kill the livestock and burn all the crops as well. At other times, when they want to establish a military base camp — which is becoming more and more common — they simply take possession of the village.



The survivors have no place to go but to the jungle mountaintops, where the Hmong groups are. Once there, they often, but not always, merge into established groups. According to many reports, such devastating surprise attacks, on groups of individuals or on villages, may be based on as little as the perception of clan ties to relatives in hiding, or the mere proximity of a village to groups the Lao authorities consider to be “rebel forces”.



THIRTY YEARS OF ATTACKS AND MISERY

All the refugees tell strikingly similar stories. 1) They had been hiding in the jungle from the time the Pathet Lao took over in 1975; 2) they had been born in the jungle and had lived there ever since, always in hiding; or 3) they had more recently been forced to abandon their villages and farmlands by repeated military harassment and surprise attacks.

No matter the cause, once hiding in the jungle, the stories all become the same. Fugitives from well-equipped military forces, they gather together in jungle hiding places, sometimes in small groups, sometimes large. All Hmong members of the six focus groups say they suffered repeated brutal attacks by armed military forces, beginning in 1975 for many of them, and that the Lao PDR continues today to seek out and uncover Hmong hiding places in a manner perhaps best described as steady, dogged and relentless.



According to reports made through 2005, all individuals from the six focus groups had been displaced countless times from their hiding places by military attacks with firearms, artillery fire, and even chemical weapons. In numerous cases, claimants say, a number of the troops appeared to be Vietnamese.

The refugees explain that over the past few years more and more military units have been moving into the areas where the Hmong groups are hiding, and that they are ever-more aggressive in their efforts to find and eliminate Hmong hiding places. The air surveillance has increased at such an alarming rate that groups are no longer able to build stable shelters, or clear underbrush from around their huts, or build fires — for fear that the smoke will be spotted from the air. If they are seen from the air, it will not be very long before ground troops move in and surround their hiding place, to attack them from all sides without warning. In many instances, airplanes circle overhead spewing poisonous chemicals over their hiding place as well as the larger area that surrounds them.



All adult persons without exception, and the great majority of young children, say they witnessed similar surprise attacks by Lao military forces. Ground troops, without warning, surrounded their group or their hiding place and opened fire. Group or family members are usually killed in these attacks, most often either inside their huts, which are made of leaves, or out digging roots. After an attack, the military typically either burns and destroys their huts and belongings or takes possession of the “hiding place” and converts it into a military camp.

Every member of the focus groups relates in great detail the trauma and stress of sudden attacks — running, desperately trying to find their children, husband or wife, when they are already trying to escape the gunfire; struggling to reach babies and infants, who cannot run, so that they can carry them to safety; then, running for their very survival, often losing all contact with loved ones. It is often weeks before family members find one another again. Many children are later found dead, as they cannot survive on their own, without adults to feed and care for them.





According to the witnesses for this Summary of Claims, no genuine effort toward conflict resolution was ever made by the Lao authorities, and whenever a group is found, the attacks are conducted without any communication or chance for the Hmong to surrender.

The Hmong refugees tried to explain how living this way had affected them. They found it truly unbearable, but to put that in writing on a piece of paper seems more than an understatement. It is not possible to convey the reality in words on a page to someone who has not experienced it.

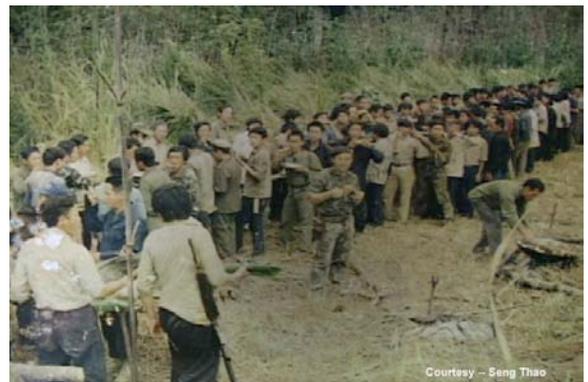
They were always on the run, always in hiding, always hungry and always losing friends and loved ones. For as long as 30 years they were hunted down, like vermin, by well-equipped soldiers who wanted nothing more than to destroy them, no matter who they were, no matter how innocent or how guilty. The soldiers shot at them, raped them, maimed and tortured them, mutilated them and sometimes murdered their children when they tried to find something to eat.

Having suffered all that, the Hmong refugees who did finally make it out say that those they left behind are still too afraid to come out, because to do so means almost certain death or imprisonment. The Hmong in the Special Zone are certainly caught between the rock and the hard place. It is as if they have no choice but to choose which way to die.

All reports confirm that the barest survival in the mountainous conflict areas in Xaysomboun Special Zone is extremely difficult. Increasing numbers of roads built through what were once remote areas; increasing numbers of permanent military base camps established in their regions and villages; incessant unprovoked attacks and killings; the permanent lack of a secure land base for planting and harvesting, with the resulting life-threatening lack of food, taken together with the unforgiving burden of constant fear and anguish, does indeed take a very heavy toll.

DEFENSE

To be clear, the testimony by these refugees is relevant to the groups in hiding today, not to the groups in hiding 30 years ago. All members of the focus groups maintain that they never desired armed conflict with the regime in Laos. Only one group, the one originating in Bolikhamxay, openly admits to having carried out “pre-emptive defensive attacks”, which were undertaken only when military units established base camps in threatening proximity (less than approximately 1 km away) to their hiding place. Bolikhamxay refugees also believe that any members of their group still living in Laos must be actively defending themselves out of necessity. Such “pre-emptive attacks” were intended to discourage the military from establishing their camps too close to where the group was hiding, and in that regard they were often successful.



Members of other groups readily acknowledge that whenever they were attacked they defended themselves to the best of their ability, but say they had very few, if any, functioning weapons and little or no ammunition. Usually, within each group, there are a few members who are assigned the role of "defender", who dress in antique uniforms and carry whatever weapons the group possesses. When the group is attacked, they fire their few bullets and try to buy time while everyone else tries to get away.

In a typical situation, the defenders may have six or seven bullets among them, which they very carefully shoot at the soldiers, often with deadly accuracy, in an attempt to hold them off for as long as possible. They are not equipped to engage in any real combat.

These appointed "defenders" are the ones who are usually seen proudly standing up and posing as "soldiers", wearing antique uniforms and carrying whatever weapons they may have. Their photographs are also pointed to as evidence that this is, indeed, a "rebel" group, engaged in "active resistance." And they are the ones who are usually found dead.

Some groups have not had weapons of any kind for many, many years. Those groups are forced to find more creative ways to defend themselves, such as by planting booby traps. Occasionally, when they find unexploded ordnance, they bury the explosives around the perimeter of their hiding place, as if they were setting mines. When the ordnance explodes it warns the group that soldiers are coming and gives them a chance to escape. More often, they make booby traps with vines and sharpened bamboo, which are very difficult to spot and also very effective. When some soldiers are killed, smaller military units may be discouraged from approaching any further.



CONVENTIONAL AND CHEMICAL WEAPONS USED

The chemicals sprayed or bombed from the air by the military are described variously as yellowish or grayish to dark colored. Clearly striking terror into whoever has witnessed their effects, the chemicals are said to cause, at a minimum, tooth loss, stomachache and blindness. More serious effects include varying degrees of paralysis. Some victims swell grotesquely and die very slow, very painful deaths — lingering for as long as a month. Occasionally, according to reports, the skin becomes "soft and darkish" and peels off very easily.

Once deployed, these chemicals remain, invisible, on plants and in the water for some time. Anyone who ingests these invisibly contaminated plants or water becomes seriously ill. Sometimes they die. Sick or dead animals can often be found in areas that have been sprayed and provide the best warning that an area has been contaminated.



STARVATION

The Hmong refugees describe a life of perpetual fear, desperation and despair, always hungry, constantly on the run. Terrified of discovery by Lao PDR air surveillance, farming and building fires became impossible. There was a time, early on, when groups were able to do some limited planting. The roots they survived on for so long require cooking. All members of the six focus groups survived entirely by gathering wild roots and plants, but when they cannot cook, they have only leaves to eat.

A group of refugees demonstrated their method for collecting the wild roots. These particular roots are very, very slow-growing and are only available in particular spots. The roots grow straight down into the ground, like taproots, and can be as long as 10 meters (11 yards) and as thick as 10-15 centimeters (4-6 inches). A 1-meter root will not be thicker than 1.5 centimeters (0.5 inch) thick, including the bark, which is inedible. In order to remove a 10-meter root, it is necessary to dig a large hole around the root straight down into the ground, large enough to accommodate the person who is digging the hole, until the person is no longer visible.



Any large stones encountered must be removed and lifted out of the hole, to allow the digger to keep digging deeper and deeper alongside the root. The author of this particular claim observed that it took three men four hours without a break to remove a 4-meter root, which was approximately 7-8 centimeters (3 inches) thick. That root fed six adults and four children for one day.

The refugees explained that, finding such a large root — which is a rare occurrence — indicates that other large roots are growing nearby. The military has come to understand this, and wherever they see that a deep root has been dug, they set up a stakeout nearby, and wait for anyone who might come back for more. This is the main reason why so many refugees speak of Hmong-in-hiding being killed while digging for food. It is also why so many refugees are suffering from malnutrition — because the best food sources often have soldiers hiding nearby. It has become a very effective strategy, and many children in the refugee camp have hair with light-colored ends, which is an indicator of long-term malnutrition. Most of the refugees in the focus groups had never eaten or even seen rice until they arrived in Thailand.

Once the area surrounding a hiding place has been depleted of good roots, which grow so very slowly, the group must either move its hiding place to a new area, or the women and children must walk longer and longer distances, often into unfamiliar areas, to find food. Whenever they enter an unfamiliar area, they risk running into military units.

Finally, the roots must be cooked, and with the multiplying military camps and increased air surveillance that has become increasingly difficult to do. Whenever a group-in-hiding is aware that the military is in an area, they stop building fires and must survive eating nothing but raw leaves.



WOMEN ARE THE MOST DISADVANTAGED

When the women are in unfamiliar areas, they are terrified of being found and killed by soldiers, but they are even more terrified of being gang-raped. They say that many women and children captured by the soldiers are eventually found dead, and appear to have been gang-raped and tortured.

All the women describe how difficult it is to carry their infants and youngest children through thick, thorny jungle underbrush while traveling long distances searching for food, which was rarely even sufficient when they did find it. Many also describe how much more difficult it is to escape a military attack while pregnant or carrying a small child, or both.

This may explain why the mortality rates are so much higher for women and children — because the women cannot run as fast as the men in the first place, but even more so when they are pregnant or carrying children, or both.



Another sad story often told is about newborn babies dying because their half-starved mothers could not produce enough milk to keep them alive. Many of the refugee women often weep and mourn for babies and children that died from hunger. And many of the men mourn for wives, who, physically weakened by hunger, died in childbirth, taking their babies with them.

MUTILATION

There are also reports by Hmong refugees of death caused by torture and mutilation. According to these reports, mutilated corpses, male and female, are sometimes found in the jungle. Girls and women usually show signs of rape, and many victims have broken arms, legs, fingers and faces — clear indications that they had been tortured until they died, or until they were, mercifully, executed. In some cases individuals report finding female relatives or members of their groups with bamboo stakes driven into their genitals. Sometimes sexual organs have been severed and the bodies placed in demeaning poses.



This practice in particular has spread real terror throughout the six focus groups and the Hmong communities-in-hiding. Those who say they have seen these bodies also report finding evidence at the scene that implicates the military, such as cigarette butts, military food ration packages or imprints of combat boots, which, when followed, lead to military camps.

In an even more horrifying practice, soldiers slit the bellies of children open just enough so that the children can go home, with their intestines hanging out, and die very slowly in front of his/her parents.



LAO TREACHERY AND BETRAYAL

Some older refugees recall firsthand experiences in incidents from the 1980s and '90s, when the Lao PDR Government seemed to be "reaching out" to establish a dialogue with the Hmong-in-hiding. They also point out that these events, which have never been forgotten, have caused extreme reluctance among those who remain in hiding to surrender, because anyone who witnessed or has heard about these events finds it impossible to trust the Lao PDR.

These events were initiated when the Lao Authorities dropped flyers or sent messengers professing only good intentions and promising a ceasefire, urging the Hmong to come out and meet with them for a "secure discussion." When the Hmong leaders, in good faith, did come out of the jungle to meet with the Lao PDR, instead of the "secure discussion" they had been promised, they would be met with immediate arrest and imprisonment, if not outright execution on the spot.

The following account comes from a witness who says he personally participated in such a meeting:

The witness, a survivor, claims he was tortured severely and beaten to unconsciousness, nearly to death. When he awoke, he found his companion dead beside him. Then he was tied down and exposed to the hot sun for three days, without food or water. After that, he was imprisoned for eight years. He testifies that he witnessed the execution of other individuals — both at the meeting and later, in prison. Many individuals remain missing and are presumed dead by their respective groups.

Attempts are regularly made to intimidate individuals into betraying other Hmong-in-hiding. Various individuals confirm that, when they are being released from years in prison, the Lao authorities demand to be taken to their group's hiding place, or that they somehow lure their group out of the jungle. Those who do not cooperate are threatened with re-imprisonment.

TRAUMATIZED

All the refugees are psychologically wounded. They have all seen loved ones die and they have all lived through extreme, long-term violence, with the threat of extermination ever-present. Children in particular have trouble sleeping. They may be afraid to fall asleep, or they may wake up constantly from recurring nightmares that take them back into the jungle and what they once lived through. Some children clearly exhibit stress or display disturbed behavior. Many refugees appear to be depressed and can often be seen weeping, demonstrating emotional suffering and pain that remain unresolved.



HUNGER, FEAR, MISERY, ANGUISH AND DESPERATION: NEVER-ENDING AND UNRELIEVED

Homesick, desperate and agonized, the members of the Hmong focus groups in the White Water camp long to return to the forest regions that they have always called home, but they believe if they were to do so they would surely be killed or, at the very least, severely punished by the LPDR government. They are also very concerned about the chances of survival for their relatives who are still in the Xaysomboun Special Zone. Many of those filmed and interviewed, including children, carry scars from injuries made by firearms, artillery or grenades, or are in some way physically impaired. Most lamentably of all, the refugees in White Water today continue to go hungry, and food assistance is urgently needed.



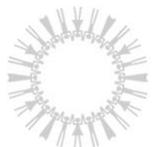


FROM THE AREAS OF ARMED CONFLICT, VOICES OF THE HMONG LAO

The Hmong Lao who come from Xaysomboun Special Zone want nothing more urgently than for the situation to be normalized.

HOPES AND WISHES OF SIX FOCUS GROUP HMONG LAO REFUGEES

- “We beg the UNHCR to visit us here in the refugee camp, to hear our voices and to help us.”
- “We urge the UNHCR to come and make a decision about our pleas for refugee status.”
- “We ask the United Nations to address and help us resolve our serious problems.”
- “We remind the world that our relatives need to be rescued, who are still hiding, attacked and starving in the jungles in Laos.”
- “We send our plea to the Thai governmental officials to not deport us back to Laos, and allow the UNHCR to visit us.”
- “We hope to be allowed to stay with our people, the Hmong Thai, in their villages, and to integrate with them and live a normal life.”
- “We ask the world, the UN and Thailand to please help us with food assistance in the camp. We have no food, we are hungry.”





COMMONLY HEARD QUOTES

- “We need the military to stop following and attacking us.”
- “We want the LPDR to acknowledge that they employ military forces against the Hmong people in hiding.
- “Without a third party, such as the UN system involved, we fear contact with the Lao Authorities.”
- “We wish to have a mediator, and we need protection during any process of negotiations.”
- “We need ongoing assistance by a third party such as the United Nations to ensure our security and prosperity in establishing a normal life as Hmong-Lao citizens.”
- “We request the establishment of a set of agreements between the LPDR and the Hmong in the conflict area.”
- “We beg the world and the UN to rescue us as an emergency.”

HOPES AND WISHES OF HMONG LAO IN THE CONFLICT ZONE

- “We want peace and to continue to live in the area where we have lived for generations, and which is part of our identity.”
- “We want to have the right to maintain our culture, language, and traditional social structures within our communities.”
- “We do not wish to be forcefully relocated out of our region.”
- “We hope for assistance for our people's sustainable development.”
- “We dream of bilingual educational facilities and health care; we want to learn to write and read.”
- “We believe we would need ongoing assistance from a third party to ensure our security and fair treatment. That would enable us to build trust in the LPDR government.”
- “We want to survive.”



COLLECTIVE STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF MY GROUP FROM PHOU BIA:



I, Bli Pao Yangxu, 45 years old, born in, and former resident of Phou Bia mountain, Laos, from the Hmong peoples, civilian and former farmer by occupation, testify for myself, my family and for my people (*list of names in the original*) and on behalf of traditional leader Chuelong Her (*list of names in the original*).

I wish to clarify the following problems and the reason why we are here, seeking refuge in Thailand.

We have been discriminated against and persecuted while hiding and living in the jungle. After the war in 1975, students, citizens and the Lao Government were handing out pamphlets proclaiming that former CIA soldiers should be found and investigated. The Hmong population, who were most often former CIA soldiers, were deeply concerned for their safety.

Due to the hostile environment to former resisters against the communists (the Lao government), many Hmong tried to leave the country to seek refuge in Thailand. This resulted in a mass migration by the Hmong across the Hin Houng Bridge to Thailand. Hundreds of Hmong were killed or injured at the bridge, trying to cross the border, by the Lao government, preventing many from escaping to Thailand.

That followed a mass investigation and discrimination against the Hmong. Our houses were burned down, women and girls were raped... Violence occurred everywhere against us, even though most of us were civilians, farmers; but the Lao government would show brutality with no mercy or trust in us, regardless of whether we lived in the city or villages, or were already hiding in the jungles.

In November 1975, the Lao government started to openly attack the first villages with military forces: the Hmong villages Phampha and Phamkheileng, among many others in the area surrounding our mountain Phou Bia in Xieng Khouang province. It caused thousands of casualties among my people. We estimated about 260 adults and 3400 children and youths that died, while many other thousands got injured.

We held meetings among our traditional leaders to discuss how to address and react to the troublesome situation and decided that the best we could do would be to seek refuge in the safety of the jungles.

In December 1975, the communist Lao government gained full control over the country and got organized and structured to pinpoint, search out and arrest former resisters to the communist party. Those who had opposed the communist party got persecuted, monitored, followed, arrested, and/or tortured. Anyone who had a past of openly opposing the communists, such as U.S. CIA soldiers, leaders, teachers, policemen, intellectuals, including the former king and queen of Laos, was in serious danger.

The Lao government created reeducation camps to switch opinions and minds into their favor. Thousands and thousands of Lao and Hmong got arrested and forced to attend the reeducation camp. Many thousands escaped and found refuge in Thailand, but many did not make it to Thailand.

It was at this time that many Hmong remaining in Laos started to hide in the jungles, where we got constantly attacked.



On March 4, July 26, and October 18, 1977, helicopters circled above us and pamphlets fell from the sky. The pamphlets invited us to a meeting for peaceful resolution, promising good intentions and respect to our rights and freedoms.

After mutual agreement was reached among us, we had to realize that the government did not mean the agreement truthfully.

On March 3, 1978, even though an agreement between the government and Hmong was signed, 3000 military soldiers invaded our area, investigated and searched our settlements in the jungle, and began massacres that continued until 1986 with the use of the following weapons and under the following three military generals' command: (list in original). Of the most concern to us was the usage of chemical weapons with a yellow color, which rained down on us and our food and plants, causing, in our estimation, hundreds of thousands of deaths. We counted at least 4,000 men, 4,800 women and over 100,000 children.

Therefore, many Hmong started to again seek refuge in Thailand, in Chiengkham or other camps.

The Lao government then made announcements: the Hmong were like trees and our roots must be removed and eliminated. The Hmong hiding in the jungle were considered as extensions of the U.S. government and resisters to the Lao government. We were called Hmong CIA and enemies, and considered affiliates to the USA.

In January 1990, the Lao Government started to increase their military attack efforts in the jungles. (List of military generals is provided and weapons used described). Until 1995, we counted and estimated about 50,000 deaths. Over half of them were our children.

From 1996 to 2003, the Lao government put more concentration on chemical weapons, which cause sickness and slow death. Our people get yellow skin, lose teeth, go blind, lose voices, get swollen bellies, and most die a slow and painful death. Landmines and missiles were used as before, but military ground troops also stationed base camps in our areas. In that time period, 4000 men, 160 elderly men, 1000 women, and 2840 children were killed. We experienced constant torture, persecution, massacre and pursuit.

The Hmong population in the jungles is poor. We usually do not have weapons. If we had weapons, we had no ammunition. We had no chance to protect our lives.

Our lives felt dark and hopeless. We did not look forward to any future. We felt that we had no access to any justice or solution. The reason why: we not only fear for our very survival, but also know that we will not be able to survive in this situation.

That's why we left, seeking refuge in Thailand. I myself decided to guide my family and my people. We went for 7-9 months until we arrived and crossed the border of Thailand, and now we are here in Petchabun.

We are very afraid to be sent back to Laos and request that the UN will make an assessment about our situation and the reasons for our actions, and start to officially address our plight.

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Shongma, and his 12 years old sister, shot when 4 years old by military soldiers.

CLAIM: SHONGMA VANG

I, Shongma Vang, 27 years old, from the Hmong peoples, born in and former resident of Choua Dai in Laos, a civilian and farmer by occupation, state hereby and witness on my behalf and for the following of my relatives and following families:

(list of names in the original)

On March 30, 1997, the Lao Soldiers attacked my village. I witnessed my mother and sister being killed by the gunfire. I was injured by bullets, and my 4-year-old sister Khang was severely injured by various bullet wounds. We escaped into the nearby jungle, and the soldiers came into the village and shot again at my little sister, who was lying half dead on the ground.

Once the soldiers were gone, we nursed my little 4-year-old sister, who did survive the many gunshots. My uncle and father went to bury the dead bodies of my mother and my older sister.

After that attack, our community decided to disperse into small groups, to abandon our village, farmlands and animals, and to hide in the depths of the jungle.

In the jungle, we met over time various families hiding like us. Each one had a story to tell, but all had experienced sudden violence and killings by the Lao soldiers, and everyone was hiding in fear for their lives.

About a year later, in 1998, the Lao soldiers found our hiding place of 15 families and surrounded our settlement. They were so many that we could not pinpoint exactly how many. The military soldiers shot at the adult males. Everyone was able to escape and no one was killed or injured.

We abandoned our hiding settlement again and walked for one day to settle at a new location, while the Lao soldiers established a military base in our former hiding settlement.

We stayed for about two years in the new hiding location, but did not dare to build a fire or houses, or to create fields, or to plant, and had no sustainable life out of fear of being more easily spotted by the military helicopters. We lived very cautiously, in constant stress and fear, and survived by gathering food and digging roots, as we had no way to plant or hunt. We had no guns and we had no tools.

In 2001, the 15 families hiding and I saw two helicopters circling above us twice. The first helicopter descended and shot at us, while the other one continued high above us, observing the area. Once the first helicopter had no more ammunition, the second helicopter descended and shot at us. No one got hurt, as we all escaped into the trees.



We decided that we were not safe at that place anymore and walked for one day to a new location in the Tong Peng area.

During that time we heard artillery gun shots from the direction of Nam Kumah and assumed that the families hiding there got attacked by the Lao military. (We had communication with some surrounding hiding settlements, such as Nam Kumah with about 30 families.)

In May 2001 (more or less), the Nam Kumah area was attacked again by a large group of Lao soldiers. Chamoua Lee came and informed us that three people were killed, and he estimated that there were approximately 100 soldiers, or even more.

We moved again to another place in the area, Black Mountain.

We heard that the Nam Kumah area, with various groups of Hmong families hiding, was continuously attacked by the military.

From June 2001 to about March 2003, we were not found by the Lao soldiers, but were literally starving as we only lived by gathering wild food.

In 2003, we therefore moved to the hiding settlement of three Hmong families, a more fertile valley area better for gathering food, in the Pam Tukong area.

During 2003–2004 our now 18 families started to feel more safe, because for four years nothing bad had happened to us.

We started, therefore, to be less cautious and to build solid houses, clearing parts around our houses to create fields and starting to establish normal lives as Hmong peoples, because we are farmers.

One day in 2004, we saw military helicopters over our clearings and village, but they did not attack us.

Three days later, a large group of army ground soldiers appeared and started to shoot immediately, without warning or dialogue, at the houses next to the forest.

The house of my family was located next to the jungle. My father and uncle, inside the house, were killed by the gunfire.

We again fled, and decided to abandon our village. All 18 families went to hide in the jungle again. The military army settled in our abandoned village and created a military base camp.

On the same day, a search helicopter spotted us walking, and shot 12.7 rifles at us.

I came back three times to the military base in our former settlement, hoping to get hold of the dead bodies of my uncle and my father, and that's the reason why I was able to observe that more and more soldiers and ammunition arrived in the camp, including two more helicopters.

Our 18 families consulted among each other, and compared the many incidents that had happened not only to us, but to everyone we spoke with in the Hmong population hiding in the jungle area nearby.

We realized that wherever we go, the Lao soldiers will try to find us and kill us; that wherever they find us they will build new military base camps in order to find us again. We decided that we will never be able to live a normal life, secure and in peace.

We have no access to any justice system, or any remedy to this life-threatening situation. Our very survival is constantly threatened and our way of life, to farm and harvest food, is made impossible.



Therefore, we decided to separate our 18 families into smaller groups, in order to have a better chance to escape from Laos, and to seek refuge in Thailand. I, my smallest sister now 12 years old, my wife and two brothers took about one month to cross the Mekong River to Thailand, where we reside now in the refugee camp in Petchabun, in constant threat of being deported back to Laos and in urgent need of UN Refugee Status.

I state that I am a civilian, have never held a gun to kill or shoot at any human, that I have told the full truth, and sign hereby: *(signed in original)*

CLAIM: CHAMAO LEE



I, Chamao Lee, 36 years old, born in and former resident of Village Thaxoua, Vientiane, Laos, a civilian and farmer by occupation, testify on behalf of myself and the following listed individuals: *(see original document for names)*

After the war in 1975, the Lao Government soldiers attacked our village of Thaxoua. We abandoned our former village and moved to the Pha Dai (Choua Dai) area, hiding there for more or less one year. As we had no fields to farm, we survived by digging roots and gathering food, and endured hunger. Once, we were spotted by the military in our hiding place and were attacked again, which resulted in the death of our leader Nhia Fong Lee. We were forced to move again to another place to hide. This time we went to Phou Xamlia. There we were spotted and attacked again by the Lao military, resulting in our displacement from the area where we were hiding. We moved to the area of Phamtukong. But in Phamtukong we were followed and found again, and attacked by the Lao military. We moved to Namtaoxamxeng. *(In another interview he stated that in Namtaoxamxeng, for 9–10 years they did not experience any attacks — until spotted via helicopters and attacked again)*

In 1990, the Lao military started to use helicopters in their search for Hmong groups hiding in the jungle, resulting in our situation in Namtaoxamxeng — ten of my people were shot dead. After that attack, we abandoned our hiding place in Namtoaxamxeng. The military created a military ground base in our former hiding place, and we could not get hold of the dead bodies for their burial. The military soldiers from the base camp continuously attacked us. We were not able to sustain ourselves in our traditional lifestyle as farmers, because we had to be cautious and avoid any large clearings in the forest so that the helicopters would not see us from the air. We were half starved from hunger. We observed that the military had no intention of removing themselves from our area, therefore we moved again to hide further away in the Nam Nheun area, near Xaythong, where we continued hiding without farming, surviving by gathering wild food.

Again we saw helicopters searching the air, until they finally found us and made a new attempt to kill us. Again we moved away, to the Phamkhoun area, Pham Phek. Again we were found, resulting this time in many deaths of my people. Again the military settled in our former hiding settlement and established another military base camp. Again we were not able to bury our dead bodies.

The military were coming from the Xaysomboun Special Zone, which forced us to move backward to Phamtukong. The military followed us, attacked our hiding place again, and shot dead our leader Lee Ying at this incident. His body was also not buried by us.

In 2003–2004, the Lao military built two major strategic roads and made us much more vulnerable. Now the military had much easier access to the areas where we were hiding.

The first road came from Salaphukun, connecting Muang Xang, Thopaka, Phou Houa, Thaxouan, and Namxeeneng. The second major road connected Phata to Reunaphong,



including that a connection to airport 363. Now we experienced shootings on a daily basis. With the roads, the military established various new base camps.

All hiding places and villages were under constant stress and were severely violated by the Lao soldiers. Traditional village Thongter, villages Thaxoua and Trongshoua, and the village near airport 363 were also shot at, forcing these villagers to flee and go into hiding too.

We felt desperate and hungry, with no alternatives.

We gathered together with various hiding groups and families, and summarized our situation: we are civilians who have never held weapons in order to fight, or kill, or resist. We have been and are a peaceful people, but being threatened by the Lao government, we fear for our lives. Therefore, we realized that we must seek refuge and safety.

I state that I wrote this summary of our situation, for all mentioned individuals, as a collective Summary of Claims for all of us. It is our Claim, and the full truth; we witnessed our own situation and the force of creation is our witness, too. I therefore apply my signature in truth: *(signed in original)*

CLAIM: VANGZE HER

I, Vangze Her, testify on behalf of the following people *(names in original)* that are part of the testimony of this document:

On November 20, 1975, at around 5 AM in the morning, we heard gunfire coming from the village of Pha Nau, a distance of four kilometers from where we lived. It was about six hours after the sound of gunfire ceased that a woman by the name of May Shoua Yang and her son, Tza Yang, came to our village of Phalai. They witnessed the incident but did not understand why it happened.

I, Vang Ge (Vangze) Her and five other men — Chay Tho, Lorfong Her, Pacheng Thao, Zongkau Her, and Kongmeng Her — decided to go and observe the situation. When we arrived at the village of Pha Nau, there was not one single house left. The whole village had been burned down. We looked around and found two dead bodies, Nzong Lee and Mee Yang, on the ground. We saw another five dead bodies on the ground near the house. The dead peoples' names were Vang Cheng Yang, Chia Yang, Mao Yang, Pao Yang, and Yer Yang.

We moved further down toward the pond, and found another three dead corpses: Pa Her, Yer Her, and Blia Her. We looked around the village and saw slaughtered domestic animals everywhere. We found empty shells, ammunition boxes and missiles on the ground. We tracked them to a trail leading west from the village, which we followed for a while before we returned to bury the dead bodies.

Based on our observations, we feared that the Lao PDR would attack our village in the same way as they did our neighboring villages. Therefore, our Hmong community of Phalai and my community of Choua Lia decided to abandon our villages and to hide in the depths of the jungle, on the top of the mountain Phou Xam Leng. We stayed there for approximately five months. Due to lack of food supplies, we then decided to return to our villages in Phalai and Pha Let (Choua Hlau).

It was not long after everyone returned to the villages that airplanes came and circled above our villages. Approximately four days later, the military attacked our villages.

On April 4, 1976, after sunrise, our village was suddenly hit by guns, artillery weapons, even missiles, exploding everywhere from the mountainside down to the valley, where the villagers were hiding. In addition to the ground military troops, there were two airplanes circling above the villages, shooting at us from the air.



Everyone got out of their houses and ran to the nearby jungle for safety. Family members lost each other for days. Once my own family reunited, we realized that four people were missing. Our whole village got displaced again; we were forced to abandon our village and went again into hiding at the top of Phou Xaleng mountain. Every one of us was, from that moment onwards, hungry and weak.

On April 5, 1976, I, Vangze Her, along with seven others — Lorfong Her, Zong Ker, Xiongchay Thao, Nzongyaum Her, Chiaza Thao, Chuekhousa Her, and Fatou Her — returned to check on our village. We found it completely destroyed and burned down, our domestic animals and livestock killed and lying around everywhere.

We walked into our former village and found numerous dead bodies on the ground. Artillery guns and missiles had damaged the whole area surrounding Phalai. We found evidence of military presence: many new holes in the ground around the mountain area, empty bags of dried rice, empty shells and ammunition boxes everywhere, and a trail heading west of the village toward Vang Viang, which was known to us as a military base.

Because of this evidence, we are sure that the attack was done by the Lao PDR military and possibly Vietnamese military troops. After following the trail and searching the surroundings, we came back to bury the dead bodies of our people. We returned to our hiding place at the top of Phou Xam Leng mountain. We informed everyone that we found sufficient evidence that the Lao PDR military troops had attacked us.

Because of this atrocity that had happened, the Hmong villagers in Phalai, Pha Let (Choua Hlau), Pha Dai (Choua Dai), Longphu, Pham Tongkong, Taiboun, Phou Ban, Phou Do, and every other village lived in constant fear. We believed that the Lao PDR Government would not leave us alone if hid in larger groups. We, from the different villages, decided to live separately, in various locations throughout in the jungle, dispersed without homes, as we do still today. The Lao PDR military troops continue to attack us from time to time.

In 2002, the Lao PDR government heightened its search for us at an alarming rate. Military camps were established everywhere, and artillery gun shootings occurred at every corner of the mountains and valleys where they believed we Hmong people were hiding. Helicopters dropped bombs and missiles, metal nails were dropped too, and a yellow chemical was sprayed down on us, everywhere. They even set up landmines and grenades through out the region and prevented us from searching for food.

During this whole period, the Hmong peoples from our area suffered major casualties due to starvation, injuries from military weapons and/or chemical poison. We had disputes among ourselves — we were in constant stress. Children wanted to live without parents and husbands wanted to live without their families in order to have a better chance to survive; it was more secure to stay alone than to live in a bigger group. Children became orphans and parents become childless. It was the most difficult time for us Hmong, hiding in the jungle.

Because of the unbearable situation, the whole Hmong community in our area decided to hold a large collective meeting. We discussed and evaluated our situation. Most felt that if we continued to stay, the situation would continue, there would be no change for us. Therefore, we concluded that it would be better for us to flee the jungle region — to seek a safer place. We agreed that the only place where we could find justice, freedom, peace and security was in Thailand.

But even though we are here in Thailand, we still continue to live with constant fear — of being deported back to Laos.

We hope that the UN grants us refugee status.

I confirm that that this testimony is given freely and not by force, that it is based on our experiences. We are civilians and farmers by occupation, we never held weapons against another person during the time frames outlined in this statement. *(signed in original)*



CLAIM: BLIAPAO XANGXU

I, Bliapao Yangxu, 45 years old, Hmong, born in and former resident of Phoubia, Laos, a civilian and former farmer, testify on behalf of myself, and the following individuals:
(See names in the original)

On May 29, 1975, right after the war, approximately 4,500 Hmong fled Long Cheng and tried to escape towards Hin Houp. At around 9–10 am there were about 100 Lao military soldiers blocking our way and they started shooting at us. Within minutes hundreds of Hmong were killed or injured. I witnessed the massacre from a distance. I was one of the fortunate to survive because I was one of the few about one hundred yards back.

After realizing that the bridge was blocked, I (we) went from town to town, and eventually arrived at Nam Dang on August 8, 1975. During our stay there, my uncle Chia Tou Yang and his two daughters went to gather some vegetation to feed his livestock, and did not return home. Some days later, we searched for them... finding all three dead bodies in the area of Ja-Ge village. Surrounding the dead bodies we saw combat boot prints, in the ground and cigarettes buds and empty cigarettes boxes.

We were afraid for our safety and decided to abandon our village to move to a village of 260 families, Pham Nha.

In November 18, 1975, early in the morning, about 200 Lao soldiers surrounded our village Pham Nha, and shot at us with heavy artillery weapons, and afterwards burned the houses. They murdered people and domestic animals. About 200 Hmong people got killed. My father, grandfathers, grandmother and nine cousins got murdered on that day. As my house was close to the jungle, four families were able to escape that massacre. We reached the jungle at the river Namxoua, and stayed there for a day.

We sent four men back to the village and found all the houses burned, people and animals killed. Empty ammunition shells were everywhere. While we were searching the village, the military soldiers that were hiding in the jungle waiting for us to return shot at us, which forced us to run.

Therefore, we abandoned our destroyed village and moved to Nam Cha where we lived in hiding for approximately three years.

On March 3, 1978 we were spotted by military troops and we experienced another shocking massacre, which was even more severe for us than the first one in 1975, after the war had just ended.

In September 1978, Lao military soldiers surrounded and entered the village Chexue Xhuong, and settled within the village, to stay without shooting.

Approximately 50 Lao soldiers confined about 40 Hmong adults inside their houses. The soldiers told the 40 Hmong adults that "they surrounded and monitored the village — and confined the adults to their houses — because they were concerned for the Hmong villagers' safety due to the danger of the Hmong 'bandits from the jungle.'"

The 40 Hmong adults imprisoned inside their houses believed that the soldiers would not harm them, or the other villagers, and would just stay in the village to seek the Hmong who were hiding in the jungle.

On September 20, the same 50 soldiers left the village, but commanded the adults to continue to stay inside the houses. The 40 adults and their families obeyed. Once outside of Chexue Xhuong, the soldiers surrounded the village and opened fire, killing all villagers except for one girl, who told us the story. She was also severely injured.



After hearing that story from that surviving girl, we abandoned our own village, fearing for our safety, and went to hide at Nam Kha until December 1986.

In that month, December 1986, we (12 families) were attacked at Nam Kha, with many explosions. My mother and brothers, among others, got killed.

In October 1990, around noon, a helicopter circled three times above our hiding settlement and left. We saw yellowish rain falling down on us, falling on the ground, earth, water, plants, the top of the trees, on everything. My 60-year-old grandmother, after collecting wild plants and eating them, got a swollen belly. Her skin got dark spots, it became another texture, the skin got very soft and was easy to peel off.

It took a very painful month for her to finally die.

Three years later, in 1993, approximately 200 military ground troops shot at our 12 families' hiding place and killed three people who were inside their huts. The soldiers shot from the distance.

The soldiers remained for days in our huts while we hid in the forest. Then they finally left, and we went back to bury our dead.

I now led six families to hide in the area of Mamthong.

In September 1999, my wife's cousin was deep inside the jungle cutting trees to build a house and did not return to our hiding place. After searching for him, we found his corpse hanging high up on a tree with his arms tied behind his back. He was severely beaten, his head was crushed, and he had numerous knife wounds on his chest. We buried him.

In January 2000, we were again found and surrounded and shot at by the Lao military ground troops. My grandfather by clan system and my grandmother by blood were shot dead. We again ran away and moved to another hiding location, joining other hiding Hmong families in the Phoua Seng area.

The military troops established a military base camp at our previous hiding place, so we could not bury my grandparents.

In October 2001, Cha Lor, Lor Fong Yang, Chou and myself, not aware that military troops were nearby inside the area, were cutting trees when all at the sudden we were shot at. My brothers and myself had to be carried back, severely injured, to our 30 families' hiding place.

In November 2002, my wife's brother and his spouse did not return after gathering wild food and digging roots. We searched for them until we found them dead about 10 meters away from a hole where they had removed wild roots. The Lao military soldiers had positioned them in the following scenario: both lay on the ground, without clothes, on their backs with their faces up. The hand of the dead husband was on his dead wife's breast, the penis of the dead husband was cut off and inserted into his dead wife's mouth.

We were deeply shocked, terrified, hurt and afraid; after burying the two dead, we rushed back to our hiding settlement, Phou Seng.

In July 2003, around 10 pm while we were sleeping, a very loud explosion occurred near our hiding place, bullets flew around us everywhere. Gunfire was so loud that we could not hear anything else. Everyone escaped, and later heard that the gunshot stopped, then started again very loudly. The next day I searched for my people. Most of our houses were burned, and we found one of our grandfathers and his wife dead at their usual sleeping place. We left again to hide at another location and abandoned our previous one.

24 families gathered, and we discussed and evaluated our situation. After living in danger for 28 years, hiding in the jungle, we felt that if we continued living like that, we would continue to suffer, we would have no life, no freedom or safety, and no future in this world. We decided to split our 24 families up into smaller groups to seek refuge in Thailand. My wife



and three children and our relatives took approximately a month to reach the Mekong River, and are now residing in the Refugee Camp in Petchabun in great fear of being forced back to Laos. Therefore, we request the UNHCR to grant us refugee status.

I hereby attest and certify that I have always been a civilian, have never held a gun to kill a person, that I am telling the full truth on my behalf and the behalf of the following people and apply hereby my/our signatures: *(Signed in original)*

CLAIM: NHIAVUE HER

I am Nhiavue Her, 25 years old, born in the village of Phalet (Thong Hlau), Laos. I testify that my family and I, along with the following families, have suffered from the following threats. *(Names in original)*

In January 1990, at around 6 AM, a group of soldiers opened fire on our village of Phou Kong Khao. All of the sudden, we heard gunshots and artillery gunfire everywhere towards the village. The villagers escaped to the jungle, while the Lao PDR military troops set fire to our houses and burned down the village. After that, they established a base camp.

On the same day, just about 9 AM, there came three helicopters circling and bombing the jungle region where we were hiding. After the bombing, the helicopters landed at the village where the military camp was established. The helicopters dropped off weapon supplies for the military troops in the regions to attack the villagers.

During this attack, six died from bullets and two others were killed by the bombs: Giama Her; Joulor Lee; Cherying Lee; Chao Xiong; Vang Neng Xiong; Trumeng Thao; Yia Xiong; Chongvang Her.

After the strike, we separated into two groups. One group moved to Kia Ka Sanapeh. The other group of 10 families moved to Phou Ban.

In January 1999, a helicopter circled above the village of Phou Ban. Seven days later, a group of Lao PDR military troops assaulted our village. Two days later, we found two of our people killed and dead inside their houses. We found empty shells all over the hiding place. After we had buried the two corpses, we migrated to Phou Yai, where we had no fields and lived from wild potatoes.

In February 2002, a group of Lao PDR soldiers attacked our hideout in Phou Yai. The strike occurred at around 5 PM, when everyone had just returned from hunting and gathering food. All of the sudden, we heard gunshots and artillery gunfire in our direction. The group dispersed into the jungle to find safety. When we reunited in the jungle, we realized that two members of the group were missing; Pheng Vang and Tzoua Yang. Another member of the group, Paoze Lee, was severely injured. Since we had been again attacked we moved the women and children to another hideout in the valley nearby. Two days later, we came back to search for the two missing group members and found their dead bodies on the ground. There were pamphlets and pictures posted everywhere in the area. We buried the dead bodies and brought the pamphlets with us.

The content of the pamphlets said that if we did not want to see more lost lives then we had to surrender. They promised not to impose any retaliation against us. Otherwise, the pamphlets said, the Lao PDR military would continue to chase us until we vanished from the face of the earth.

Because of this strong message, we decided on the more promising option and surrendered in May 2002. Our traditional chief Hue Pao Xiong led us to come out and live in Nong Pao, Vientiane. The Lao PDR government ordered us to move to the village Pha Xong, NongHai.

In February 2003, the Lao PDR Government sent three high-ranking government officials, Seexavai, Chief Police Officer Boun Kiau, and Mayor Boun Souk. They tried to force us to



lead the military troops to the jungle and to search and find our relatives still remaining in the jungle in hiding. My brother, Hue Pao, Pao Ze Lee and I refused to follow their order because we are simple people and were very afraid.

On April 7, 2004, the Lao PDR Government sent Boun Kio, Seexavai, and Mayor Boun Souk, Vanee, Hongtou, and Bound Long to Pha Xa at around 12 PM. This time they forced my brother, Hue Pao, me and other men to bring them to the group in the jungle. We refused to take the order, fearing to be killed by them. We were so afraid that they would kill us. However, there were too many people around us and they could not force us in public. Because we refused to take their order, the governmental officials politely asked my brother Hue Pao to show them where to find lumber nearby. My brother could not refuse that request without being disrespectful to the governmental officials. He went with them. When they were about 5 km away from the village, my brother was murdered and his head was smashed and broken.

Mrs. Neng Xiong and her son, Keng Xiong, witnessed that the governmental officials killed my brother and she saw that they pulled his dead body away from the road. Mrs. Xiong and her son, hiding and observing the situation, rushed home after the governmental officials left. They did not know exactly which official actually killed my brother.

We waited until the next morning for my brother's return. We started to question neighbors and friends all around the village. Then we were informed that Mrs. Xiong and her son witnessed the incident. Mrs. Xiong and her son led us to that place, where we found my brother Hue Pao's dead body drowned in the fishpond.

Witnesses are; Paoze Lee; May Doua Her and myself.

Seven days later, Mayor Boun Souk and Seexavai along with Boun Kio heard that we had found the body. They understood that we knew what had happened to my brother. They ordered the local police to arrest me, Paoze Lee, May Doua Her and Yej Yang. Fortunately, a relative who works closely with the police notified us of their plan to arrest us. He suggested that we must escape immediately. We went into hiding and observed that at around 8 PM that night, eight police officers came to the village and surrounded our houses. Because we were not inside the house, they wrote down our names and announced that if we were to be seen, we must be reported for our arrest.

Therefore, we decided to take our families and flee to Thailand for the safety of our lives from persecution and torture by the Lao PDR Government. We must attest that no one forced us to speak or write this letter. We are telling the truth as it truly happened to us. We would like to request that the UNHCR grant refugee status to us. *(Signed in original)*

CLAIM: CHA VANG HER

I am Cha Vang Her, born in Long Cheng in the province of Long Cheng in the province of Xieng Khouang. I was born on February 8th, 1975 and am 30 years of age. My wife Chong Lo is 25 years old. There are only seven of us in my family. *(See names on the refugee list)*

In regards to my struggle, here is my story:

In 2003, I lived in the village in Phou Bia. I was 28 years old then. My wife was 23 years old. We had five children.

On February 16, 2003, around six in the morning, my wife was on her way to get some water when all of the sudden, the Lao soldiers came. Right away we ran from them. I grabbed my daughter Pang, I told my family to run. My daughter Pand and son Toua Koua ran and the Lao Soldiers shot at them. They hit my son Toua Koua and he fell down right where he was shot.

I ran toward the water and gave the children to my wife. I told my wife that they should follow the river ahead. Afterwards, I ran back to get my two other children. In a rush, I ran



through the bamboo trees back to my wife, and together we ran towards the lower valley where we lived. There we met Uncle Kaj Hao and Uncle Chong Laug and my older brother Loong and Uncle Zong Chue and stayed with the family for one night.

The next day, I took uncle Chong Laug and my older brother Loob and Her Pao and Chue Vang to search for my son Tou Koua, who was seven years old. We found him where he died — right by the house. I went around and saw around a lot of bullet shells where he died. I left, but had the intent to give my two sons a proper burial.

Uncle Chong Laug and Li said: "Your sons died tragic deaths and were not blessed, you should wrap them with cloths and bury them right away." So, I wrapped them in cloths and buried them. After that we returned to my wife and my other children.

In 2005 we lived together with five families; Long Her, Chue Her, Pao Her, Zong Vang, and my family. We lived near the river.

In May 2005, the Lao Soldiers found and attacked us around 5 PM at night. My family and I, we fled the area.

We met a young Hmong woman by the name of Mai Lo Her and we talked. She asked how my dad was and how we were. The next day I went to see her village and met no one at all. I only saw abandoned houses with lots of bullet holes. I came back to my wife and children and announced to my wife, that we had to leave this country.

On the 19th day of May in the year of 2005, I made a heartfelt decision to take my family and escape. We crossed the river into Thailand to seek refuge.

This is the truth that I speak. *(Signed in original)*

CLAIM: BEE HER

My name is Bee Her. I am 27 years old and divorced. I am a farmer from Phou Xai village, Houa Phan, Laos. My testimony is what I have personally witnessed and experienced, which is as follows: the Red Lao government accused our village of supporting the resistance with food and weapons.

On 8/23/03, the Red Lao soldiers surrounded and arrested the people in our village. Many were arrested and killed. My brother and I escaped into the jungle. There were many innocent villagers who had gone away but returned to the village; they were arrested and killed along the way.

On 8/28/03, my father, who had been away on a family visit, was arrested upon his return.

After hiding for seven months in the jungle, my brother went home to visit his wife and children. On 3/1/04, he was arrested and accused of collaborating with the rebels who would terrorize the country. He was released after one month and was ordered to find me and persuade me to return home. He told me not to be afraid.

But, many people ended up being captured upon their return to their home. It appeared to be a plan to trap us and kill us. There was no truth to what they said about being safe once we returned home. We finally decided to escape to Thailand.

We reached Thailand on 6/14/04. My father did not leave Laos. *(Signed in original)*



EXCERPT: CLAIM, TZENG LOR

I was born while my family was hiding in the jungle. When I was still very small, the Pathet Laos killed my father. My relatives were not able to retrieve his body for a proper burial. When I was five years old, my mother starved of hunger, leaving me an orphan. I lived with my uncle Yia Vue in the jungle. In 1973, the Pathet Lao sent Nhia Yang to encourage my uncle Yia Vue to come out of hiding, making him believe that they had peaceful intentions. My uncle believed him but instead was met with about 30 Pathet Lao soldiers and was captured. That was November 24, 1993.

He was brutally beaten until his skull cracked. They killed eight other people, who joined him in good faith at the meeting: Gia Bu Ma (from the Mien); Shong Chai Cha ; Kue Vue; Khue Vang; Vang Lee Lee; Da Yang; Khue Vang and Da Seng Her.

My uncle Yia Vue was taken as a prisoner to Vientiane until October 10, 1998. Released, he was able to escape and went back into hiding in the jungle.

They bulldozed through the jungle creating roads. On February 8, 2003, they came towards the area where our group of 205 families lived. They had already established military base camps. In addition, they brought airplanes that sprayed chemicals where we lived. Many of our group were killed, our plants destroyed. From 2003–2005, the Pathet Lao warned all of us in hiding to come out of the jungle, otherwise, those who remained would be eliminated. We were attacked heavily so I decided to leave the jungle and found my way to Thailand. I left November 18, 2004 and arrived in Thailand December 28, 2004.

EXCERPT: CLAIM, GE LOR

In the year 2003, Lao Soldiers used their airplanes B6–B8 to shoot at us and made it very difficult for us to find a safe place to live. In the year 2004, the Lao Soldiers, their army and airplanes shot at us. And the Lao Soldiers used again chemicals on us. Our wives, children, young and old had no safety, there was chaos; we were dying everywhere.

EXCERPT: CLAIM, VAUGHN THAI XIONG

Therefore we went to hide in the forest where we joined others who went there to hide too. We could see the Lao Soldiers searching for us, to kill us. Until January 10, 2003, we lived in situations such as the Lao soldiers searching for us persistently, using our walkways and blocking the roads to find us. They used chemical weapons and big guns to kill us. There are a lot of us. It was unbearable for us to live like that, in constant fear; we could not survive. So I made the difficult decision to flee to Thailand because Thailand is a land of peace. I fled Laos with my family, seven of us. We are here in White Water, in Thailand, ever since.

EXCERPT: CLAIM, SHOUA VUE

In 1975, my father and mother went into hiding in the jungles. I was born in the jungle, near a village of Muang Xa in Bolikhamxay Province, Laos. In 1982, the Pathet Lao killed my parents. I was very young when they died. I was adopted by Fai Toua and other families of my group that were also in hiding. The Pathet Lao attacked us all through the years. We had to move from location to location and had to escape a lot. In January 2003, the Pathet Lao military and their aircrafts, B5 and B6, attacked us. The bombs they threw down on us from the air had chemicals, causing blindness, swelling of the stomach, or that all of the sudden one cannot move any legs or arms. We separated and dispersed throughout the jungle.



EXCERPT: CLAIM, MENG XIONG

As long as I can remember, we lived in the jungle of Laos.

On January 11, 2003, early in the morning (I was 22 years old at the time), my older brother and I went to search for wild potatoes for breakfast. Crossing the top of the hill and heading down the other side, we heard people making noise from the valley below. At the time, we thought that they were our Hmong people also searching for food. We found wild potatoes, which we began to remove.

Later in the morning, around 10 AM, my older brother asked me to carry the harvested potatoes home. He said he would look for some more and would come follow me later. While I climbed back to the top of the hill, I heard two gunshots from the valley. I dropped the potatoes and ran back as fast as I could down the hill to the location where I left my brother. When I was close to the location where we found the potatoes, I heard some strange languages. I hid and watched carefully, and saw some Lao soldiers with striped uniforms. At the same time that I saw the soldiers, I also saw my dead brother on the ground.

Early in the morning of May 2004, my mom, my dad, my younger sister and I were suddenly attacked with bombs, which exploded around us ... the bombs were dropped on us from a distance away, by big guns. The bombs killed my father, Chao Xiong, age 50. This was at River Nam Teng. My brother-in-law, Kee Yand, and I witnessed the death of my father, who died in front of our eyes. Because of these horrible terrifying experiences, we decided to follow our brother-in-law to Thailand.

EXCERPT: CLAIM, MAYING LEE

Mai Pang Yang was three years old. Mai's mother Song Leng Yang and my mother Blia Lo took Mia with them, to dig wild roots and to search for food, when they ran into a group of about 50 Lao soldiers. They shot at Mai's mother and killed her at the river. Those who buried her body can testify that the soldiers shot her. The witnesses that she was shot dead are: Xiong Vua Vue. Yang Lue Yang and Seng Lee.

In July 2002, I was inside my hut with two children, 2-year-old Lee Pao Yang and 5-year-old Mai Ge Yang, when all of the sudden about 30 soldiers from area Ban Na attacked and shot at us. It was a massive gunfire. They shot through the huts. The two small children who were with me got hit by the bullets and died on the spot, inside the house.

I was spared by the bullets, and survived, and was able to escape. Later, I went back to bury the children, who did not belong to my clan, but belonged to the Lee clan.

In May 2004, my 60-year-old husband, Nao Tou Yang, went to dig roots with others in the area of Ban Hong. About 50 to 60 Lao soldiers coming from Mung Oum shot and killed my husband.

EXCERPT: CLAIM, (MAI) YIA YANG

I want to tell you about my life, since I was born. I am 18 years old.

I was born in my village in Muang Xang, District 6, and Bolikomsay Province. One day, on July 15, 2003, before noon, Vietnamese and Lao soldiers bulldozed their way towards our village to construct a road. While they were bulldozing the road, another group of soldiers attacked our village, early in the morning, forcing us to flee into the jungles where we stayed for about 8-9 months.



The Lao and Vietnamese soldiers searched for our families and the Hmong people everywhere. We had no means of farming in order to survive. I followed other people and went back to my village to collect food and look for my mother, father and siblings, and realized that they also had abandoned the village. After we arrived in the village and I did not find my family, not knowing where to find them, I followed my relatives back into the jungle, and together we managed to find our way to come to this country. To this day I have no idea if my parents are in the jungle of Laos.

While we were getting lost and unable to find our way, we passed through many different Hmong villages with no destination in mind. Subsequently, I decided to follow the others to come to this country on July 20, 2004.

The people that I came to this country with are Yia Her, Tong Chia, Fai Toua and Tong Pao.

The leaders of our people who were left behind in Laos are Xai Phia, See Nou and Va Tong Lor. My name is May Yia Yang. I hope that the United Nations will save us. Please save my life.

EXCERPT: CLAIM, ZONGKUE HER

On February 8, 2003, the communist Lao blocked off the roads from Muang Cha to Phou Bia. They came up to Phou Bia and used guns to shoot at us, but also used B-6 and B-8 planes to attack us and to drop chemicals on us. For this reason, we were not able to live or survive there any longer. This is why we fled to Thailand. We left April 2004 and we arrived in White Water, Thailand, in August 27, 2004.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: PA XIONG



I came from Laos, my village is Nam Cha which is in the area of Phou Bia....

It breaks my heart that my relatives are all killed. We have been persecuted and tortured. What a confusing world. All my relatives from Phou Bia area have been murdered. The Lao PDR Military killed my parents, my uncles and my brother. They were slaughtered like animals; they did not die like humans. Here I am seeking refuge in this new country, but my heart is broken — I lost all my people. The Lao authorities continue to hunt us down were we are hiding, in the depths of the jungle.

It was difficult to live in such hardship, without support, as my relatives have all been killed. Fleeing all the time, walking long distances without shoes in the deep jungle full of thorns, searching vast areas to find food for our children, barely surviving from sparse wild roots and plants...

We would eat anything that we could find: wild potatoes, wild roots and plants. How is it possible that we became such a target?

I was born in the jungle and don't understand the modern life in the city. I never went to school. In this country everyone has education, life in this society seems to be wonderful. The first time I saw people driving a car, I did not know what it was until someone explained it. It is all so confusing to me. I was born in the jungle and grew up eating roots. Thanks to the NGOs who provided rice for us, saving our lives from starvation in this camp, I experienced the taste of rice for the first time in my life.



I will not return to Laos under any circumstances. If Laos would be a good country, then we would not be here. If we are forced to return, we will be killed ... we will not go back.

The Lao PDR military is hunting and killing our people just like animals. We are terrified. We will not go back. My mother and father have not done anything wrong. They simply farmed and raised their children. My parents never went to school; they worked hard and lived simple farmers' lives. Then the Lao government came and shot them, just like that. When the military shot at our village, we all fled in all directions into the jungle. I did not see how my parents died.

The Lao PDR military killed three of my family members. The Lao PDR military cut my brother Kou into pieces like a dog before they buried him. My parents were killed much earlier, also buried like dogs, without any proper ceremony. As I said, we all fled and when we found them, they were killed and under the ground.

In Laos, we lived half starved, hiding in the depths of the jungle. We searched for food in every corner of the valleys and barely survived on the wild roots and plants. Always in fear and on the run from the soldiers searching for us, to hunt and kill us. That's the reason why we left Laos, we are afraid, we are seeking refuge for our very survival. Whenever the Lao PDR military finds us, they shoot at us right away.

We find our women, raped and killed, their sexual parts cut in pieces, and inserted into their mouth. These horrific practices of torture terrify us and force us to leave the country of Laos. We escaped to Thailand because we are terrified of being tortured in the same terrible manner. The Lao PDR military even cuts off the penis of our men, and inserts it into the women's mouth. I found my dead brother, without clothes, his penis cut off and inserted into my sister-in-law's mouth. The soldiers put my brother's hand on his dead and naked wife's breast... and I saw all of that.

We are human beings, why do they make us suffer, why are we killed and tortured? Please inform the decision makers, that we are suffering from hunger here in the refugee camp. It is very difficult to survive here. We are starving everyday. We ask the local farmers here for their cassava leaves for food ... but no one helps us with food.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: WIFE OF ZONG HER

The Lao soldiers came into our villages, saying that we have not to worry and will live peacefully. We were forced to butcher our animals and to feed the soldiers. After we served them, they ordered a curfew, and did not allow us to go out of our houses. We obeyed, and we stayed inside the house. At that time, we had Khmu people living nearby in another village. From the Khmu village the soldiers opened fire with B40 weapons straight at my brother's house. That massacred 9 people on the spot. The

rest of us ran away, and the soldiers burned our houses and fields. Two of my sons children got severely injured, one at the thigh, the other on the leg. My son, his wife and the rest of their children got all killed on the spot.



That was the day when we fled and started our life in hiding, inside the jungle.

Later the soldiers send message that they want us to come back into our villages -- and we did.

We were back in our village only for 5 day's, when soldiers suddenly surrounded us. They attacked us again, unprovoked, and this time they killed my mother. My son was injured, mom was dead. That attack killed four others of us.



Again we fled in fear and terror.

Since then, we are chased, hunted and under constant attacks, traumatized - we barely survived. We had no cloths, when other groups-in-hiding saw us we women were so ashamed to be nearly necked.

We starved from hunger, our hair got thin and weak. We ate anything eatable, anything we could find, just to keep us alive.

We came to Thailand hoping, that leaders will be willing to save our lives.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: WIFE OF WAMENG

How horrible, they chopped my husband's head, and pushed a stake through his mutilated body. He was innocent. I loved him so much. I have suffered enough,
I will not go back to Laos; I will rather be killed here in Thailand.



INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: WIFE OF XONGMA



I am the wife from Xongma, we are from Phalai.

The Vietnamese soldiers surrounded our village, and killed my husband.

They shot his entire tooth out; they cut his ear off, than they chopped his head of his body. They pushed a sharp stake through his body, and hanged him like that in the air. No pity. . They where so cruel to my husband, All my family got killed. Including my husband's brothers and sisters, only my grandmother and I survived. I adopted many orphans, and I brought them with me – to find safety for them too, when I escaped to Thailand.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: MOUAXEE VUE

My name is Mouaxee Vue and my father is Toulong Vue. My uncle is Wa Chue Kim. My father's oldest brother is Wa Cher Vue. Right now, they are still living in the jungle. We have suffered and in our daily life, to survive was a daily struggle. The Lao PDR military continued to attack us; we were constantly forced to disperse into all directions.

I escaped to this country. I want to talk about recent cases, the years 2004 and 2005. The war ended in Laos...

In the Xaysomboun Special Zone where I lived, at Mountain Phou Bia, the Lao PDR Government denies that war is still going on. In fact, the Lao PDR government set up two military groups to kill us in Phou Bia. The first group and the largest one is located near Phaphai Airport. The second group is located in Nanmou at the River Namkha near Phakhao, Padong. Currently, before I left, there were two military troops stationed in my area. They shot artillery guns and missiles to every corner of the mountain, preventing us from living normal lives as farmers. If the Lao PDR government denies that there is a war in Laos, then we would be willing to take the high officials there.

If nobody believes that there is still war going on in Laos, then let me take you there. All you need to do is talk to the Lao PDR government to allow us to go there without being killed. The war is going on and military troops are stationed in the region. My parents are still struggling because they cannot farm due to the insecurity of being spotted if they create fields.



They survive by digging wild roots and eating wild plants. In order to dry and cook the roots, they have to make a fire. When the Lao PDR military sees smoke, they shoot missiles at the spot from the air. Please inform the UN, the US government and all other organizations that have the authority over our situation. Please help to rescue the Hmong people. We have not done anything wrong to the Lao PDR government. The problem is that the Lao PDR government is very aggressive to the Hmong people. They clearly try to eliminate us.

This hatred is forcing the Hmong people to stay and hide in the jungle. We escaped to the jungle to hide, but they still follow and kill us. They set up military camps to monitor us, and we are unable to cultivate food. Therefore, we decided to escape. Please inform the UN and all other international communities that we need help. We have struggled in the jungle for so long. When our leader during the Vietnam war, General Vang Pao left the country, I was only a newborn baby. Therefore, I had no idea on what was going on between 1975 and 1990. I only remember from 1990 to 2005.

I have always lived in the jungle, since I was born in 1990. I have never seen a normal life. The Lao PDR government claims that there is no war in Laos, and if anyone believes them, then please come and take us with you to see for yourself.

If you come and can promise protection, and the Lao PDR military will not open fire, then we will take you to Phou Bia. If there are no military camps set up in the region, then they are right. But if you find military camps everywhere with artillery guns and missiles, holes from explosions everywhere, and airplanes circling in the air all the time, then please believe us, and call for the world to help rescue the Hmong people from the jungle. My parents are still in hiding, in the jungle. They are suffering. Look — I have major injuries. The bullets are still remaining inside my arm, and here, another injury on my chest.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: THAI THAO

I am Thai Thao Long Kang Lo, 25 years old and a Hmong born in Napone, Laos. I am a farmer.

I would like to tell you why my wife, Be Vue, 23 years old, and my children, Hlau Thao, 5 years old, and Yi Thao, who is 2 years old, and I left to Thailand.

On January 9, 2004, friends of mine; Nao Yeeng, Chong Vue Tong and I left to find wood in the forest. When we got there, we heard gunshots toward our direction. My two friends and I started to run. My two friends were shot and killed. Two days later I went back to the area to bury them and observed numerous bullet shells and footprints belonging to Lao soldiers.

On March 9, 2004, my aunt and uncle Nkaj Ma and my friends, a group of 6 to 7 people, including myself, were in the woods and experienced gunfire. The gunfire killed my aunt and uncle. After two days we daringly went back and buried them; once again, we found numerous bullet shells and footprints. We even found a hat that belonged to a Lao soldier's uniform. Sometime around September 2nd, 2004 there were about 13 officials who came to my house looking for me. They questioned my wife Be Vue, asking her where her husband was. They told her, she better go and find (him) me to go and talk to them. My wife found me and we then fled that very night for Thailand. That is why I write this, for you of UNHCR to help me live.

What I have written and said is true. I will remember you UNHCR and all those who will help my life. In the end I beg you, UNHCR, let us have relief. I am a person who has never harmed anyone and deserves protection. What I tell you is true.



INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: XENKENG HER

My name is Xengkeng Her. There are five people in my family. My wife's name is Tou Vang. My father was Chuekoua. Her and my mother's name was Lia Vang.



I am 22 years old, and never imagined that I would ever live outside of the jungle.

My parents gave birth to me in 1983, in the jungle of Laos, at Pha Dai (Choua Dai)-Pha Let (Choua Hlau). Since I was born, my parents carried me from one hiding place to another. I never thought of seeing houses and buildings such as I see today.

In 1992, shortly before my father's death, he brought me to another hiding place. We moved from our hiding place to a valley. We were 10 families hiding and living near to each other. In November 1992, the Lao PDR military found and attacked us; the soldiers killed my mother, father, uncles and brother. They all died together. My father was shot through the chest by guns, and died instantly.

The soldiers killed my uncle and mother with artillery guns. Their heads were blown off and their bodies smashed into pieces. Look ... I was injured by bullet wounds right here. My little 4-year-old sister was injured. I lost my parents and one of my brothers. Now there are five left of my family. Three brothers, one sister and one aunt survived.

When my father died, my younger brother was only one year old and just started to learn how to walk. After my parents died, we lived in the jungle with relatives and friends. I was about nine years old back then. The most difficult and saddening part for us children was that we, the orphaned brothers and sisters, had to live separately. Each of us had to live with different relatives.

Currently, I still have two brothers living with relatives in the Laotian jungle. I was terrified that something might happen to me if I continued to live in the jungle, that's the reason why I am here today. Please tell the governments and the people who created weapons to kill us that even though we live in the jungle, we are civilians and not soldiers or resisters. Most of us are just children, Hmong children. Why is the Lao government killing us?

Please inform the government authorities to help save the Hmong children. I have lived all my life, my whole childhood, in the jungle, until 2003.



INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: WAMENG THAO

My name is Wameng Thao, My parents ... my father is Pangcheng Thao, they are still living in the jungle as well as my cousin too, he is Yang Toua Thao. When I left, my parents lived in Namkama, Phoudapho. I was born in Phalai.

I did not come here for economic reasons. The Lao PDR government sent a message to invite us, if we did not want to live in the jungle, to come out to live a normal life in the open society.

But when we came out of the jungle, we were instead sent to Muang Nmba prison by the Lao government authorities.

I left my parents in the jungle at Mountain Phoudapho, Nakuma, Tongpheng. My father and mother are over 60



years of age; they are very old. It is sad that my younger brother and I got punished because we surrendered, for that we were coming out of the jungle. I am a simple, uneducated person.

Other people here said that I am a normal Lao citizen. I want you to know that I do not speak the Lao language; I do not understand a word of Lao. I, Wameng Thao cannot communicate with the Lao people even when I am starving. I was born and raised inside the deep jungle. My brothers Leexeng, Nhialue, along with Hao and Nhao, were killed by the Lao PDR military. It is saddening to be born into this moment of lifetime so that I do not speak any other language. I cannot read or write. I do not even know how to read the calendar and cannot count properly from one to ten... I feel very sad and miserable.

Currently, my parents are still living in Phoudapho, the mountain of many trees. I do not know whether or not they are still alive because by the time we fled the area, we heard artillery guns, (B-130 and B120), along with shotguns, helicopters, and jet fighters shoot at the area where my parents were hiding. I do not know whether they are still alive or dead. My instinct tells me that my parents are still alive because I have not met them dead in my dreams... as of yet. To everyone out there, please forgive me. Please help me, Wameng Thao, so that I may have another chance to see my parents, my cousin Yang Thoua again. With due respect to you all, if you have doubt about my story, please come and I, Wameng Thao, will take you there. If there is no one to be found in there, you can curse me so that I will not reincarnate into the Hmong peoples' next three generations.

Talking about the chemical weapons and the victims of the chemicals sprayed on us, most often affected of the chemicals are the children in the jungle. Two of those children were my own. Both of my children died. Pheng died in this refugee camp on the chemicals after effects, and witnesses are available. My first child died in the jungle of Laos.

I lived in Laos, but do not know the name of the places and villages of Laos. When we arrived in this country and refugee camp, the Thai government called us illegal immigrants from Laos. They did not come to talk to us. All they did was talk to the refugee camp leaders, who do not know anything about us from the jungle, or our situation. The refugee camp leaders do not know where and what the jungle people are.

My parents are still living in the jungle. If you don't believe me, please come and I will take you to see them for yourself. If there are no people living in hiding in the jungle, then you may cut off my head. With due respect to you all. Please address our issues and help save our lives. So that my parents, who are still living in the jungle, and I have the chance to be reunited again.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: BAO MOUA

We lived in Pha Dai (Choua Dai)- Pha Let (Choua Hlau).

The Lao PDR military attacked us regularly. They called to us that if we did not come out of the jungle, they would eliminate us all. My husband's first wife was killed and her baby son was injured. The Lao government continued to invite us to come out, and my husband decided to bring us out of the jungle to the village. We came out less than a year before the Lao government murdered my husband.

When we first came out of the jungle, the Lao government authorities reassured us that we would be fine, that we should relax and start a new life.

Due to the trust we had in such words, we planned to start our new life as farmers. Tragically, late one day, the Lao soldiers came to murder my husband at the field. They shot at my husband from the outside of our house. When my husband was killed, all my children were sitting next to each other with him. They shot at my husband and his body fell on top of the children. All of us were about to die as well. Everyone was crying. Our hearts were broken; we were so sad and terrified. Because of my husband's tragic death, caused by the Lao PDR government, how could we trust them? So we decided to escape to



Thailand. The soldiers compare us to animals that belong to an owner. The owner has the right to choose to slaughter the animal and no one has the right to stop them. That's what they said to me.

I would like to point out again that we are not here for economic reasons. We decided to escape to this country because of the way we were treated. They called out to and encouraged us to surrender in peace. We trusted them, and decided to come out and hope for the best, but they broke their promise and killed my husband.

This horrific matter terrified everyone so much that we decided to leave to Thailand. Please help us. We are truly the Hmong people from the Jungle. We lived in Pha Let (Choua Hlau)-Pha Dai (Choua Dai), Nam Kia, Longkhu and then Phahong, Saisomboun. The killing of my husband alerted my people and that is the reason why we decided to flee for Thailand. The local authorities in our village admitted that they killed my husband. My name is Bao Moua. Please help us to save our lives.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: CHUE HUE HER

Shortly after we arrived at our new hideout in the valley, we started to cut a small trail to dig roots in the nearby area. The Lao PDR military was above us on the mountain and looked down at the valley where we were hiding. They must have heard our children's noise from the valley or the cutting of the trail during that night. Early in the morning, the soldiers came down to look for us. When the children were getting water, they saw the soldiers coming and ran back to alert the parents. Every one of us ran in all directions to hide in the thick forest, while the soldiers opened fire on us. The soldiers shot at everyone.

My brother, two others and I ran as fast as we could into the thickest spots in the jungle to hide together. We decided to stay nearby, to camouflage ourselves and to protect our escaping women and children. The shooting soldiers approached us and then we shot back at two soldiers right there. We concentrated on the soldiers who moved toward us and did not realize that others had already passed us. Then artillery gunshots exploded right next to me. I was injured, lost my hand and lost one eye. It happened in November 1997.

These are my injuries. It is still an A-K bullet inside my elbow. Here it is. It is still a bullet in here. I have been hit by bullets in two different attacks. The bullet in here is the result of the first attack. I'll be killed if I go back. We will be killed for sure.

I fought back for my life and freedom to survive in the jungle where the Lao government hunted us all the time. I am a real victim hiding and moving from place to place and finally, I managed to escape the area — in Laos. Look at these, the injuries caused by bullet wounds. Please believe me and consider my situation, I am one of the people who suffered from the attacks. Please inform the authorities and the UN that I am a civilian who lived in the jungle of Laos. The Lao military continues to hunt us in the deep jungles for all these years. My injuries are the result of Lao military bullets shot at me while I was hiding in the jungle. It was very difficult to survive in the jungle, we fled to Thailand to save our lives. Please listen and understand that I am a civilian, I lived in Laos, and the Lao PDR military is hunting us everywhere. If we are deported back to Laos, the chances that we will be killed are high.



INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: VAUGHN THAI XIONG

So we went to hide in the forest and gathered there with others who went into hiding too. We could see the Lao soldiers searching for us ... to kill us. We lived like this until 2003. Lao soldiers blocked and searched for us everywhere, at all the roads ... very persistently. So we Hmong had to stay in the forest for all our lives. There are a lot of us. It made it unbearable for us to live like this, in fear that we would not survive.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: XAI YANG

We came from the village of Longpou, Hiuiheing. It was about April 2004 when my husband and I fled. Before that they tortured my brother and in-law until his jaw and face was smashed into pieces ... yes, I saw it happen. They beat him to death at the edge of the river. They beat him to death; broke his jaw, face, and the whole skull broke into pieces. Then they pulled his dead body into the middle of the road. We were very terrified. They had already beaten our village chief to death. That was very scary — that forced us to leave.

I have been in jail once, that's one of the reasons I escaped. The problem was that I still have relatives living and hiding in the jungle. My parents and two brothers lived in the jungle. One of my brother is here now in the camp with us. My nephew came to the village and was very hungry. He asked me to bring him some food. I had just had a baby and was very weak. I gave him a chunk of rice about this big. And a pair of shoes to him. They heard that and accused me of supporting and providing food to the jungle people. The police official came and asked if it was I. Then I said it was I. They told me to pack and go with them for a short interrogation at the office. When I arrived at the office, then they put me in jail.

The investigator who ordered me to get on the car was Governor Ngateng Yang.

They said that I support the jungle peoples. Even a small grain of salt or a handful of rice to the jungle people is a violation of the laws and should go to jail. Then they sent me to jail for just that. My nephew was very hungry so I brought him rice; he is my brother's son, still hiding in the jungle.

They came from the jungle because they were very hungry.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: CHONG LENG LOR

Our conflict with the red Lao military in Louang Phrabang began when Fai Xee Yang and Fong Lee among many others were captured, they are Hmong from the jungle. The red Lao then ordered us to kill the two Hmong brothers. If we don't kill them then we're the enemy of the red Lao regime. We did not wanted to murder anyone, and did not kill them, so we were very worried that the Lao military would be angry with us, as they ordered us to kill them. We decided to flee and consequently were chased by the red Lao soldiers, which eventually led us to seek refuge in the jungle.



INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: CHUEKONG VANG

I lived in the jungle, Phalai. It was such a terrifying and stressful life, because the Lao PDR military was constantly attacking the Hmong living in the jungle. My wife had passed away while our child was still a baby. I remarried and continued to suffer with hunger and starvation. We ate wild roots and plants. Because of the unbearable conditions, we were forced to leave the area and flee to Thailand.

I arrived in the camp on May 19, 2005, When I arrived I found and reunited with relatives who had arrived here before me.

Too many of our peoples have been killed; parents, relatives, cousins, brothers and sisters; that's why we left Laos and came to Thailand. My wife died of chemical poisoning. She had that stomach ache that caused her death. She was poisoned by these black chemicals. She died in November ... October ... 1998. We lived in the jungle, the airplanes circled above us in the air — every other day ... they sprayed these black poisons on us. My wife was poisoned, had stomach ache and died. As far as I know, there are many people that get poisoned. During that particular chemical attack, only my wife died. Two other people from us got sick too, but they survived.



We lived in the jungle with lots of difficulties. As the Lao government is hunting us, we cannot plant food. All we ate was wild roots to survive until we decided to flee for Thailand.

Yes, I myself have been chased, and attacked.

While living in hiding deep in the jungle, without any warning, we would all of the sudden be attacked by soldiers with artillery guns (B-41), explosions all around us, then we run in different directions and try to escape. Most often we don't even have time to find our children, and have to run and escape without them. Sometimes parents are searching for food and left the children back home at the hiding place.

Sometimes we shoot at them with our guns — to scare the soldiers away — sometimes it saves our lives and the soldiers do not move closer towards where we live, and that can save many lives. The groups open fire to scare the soldiers away, so that they do not come nearer in their search for the groups in hiding (to the place where we live), which is saving many lives. We had very few, very old shotguns, which we used to scare the soldiers away from us, and they did move back further away from us.

All I can say is that we see them suddenly, and that they shoot at us.

We don't know whether the government sent them or if the soldiers came all by themselves. We — who are living and hiding in the jungle — we do not know.

It's true. We had guns, but we do not have sufficient ammunition. We used the guns and shot very few bullets, we have to make the soldiers afraid, a few shots to scare the soldiers away from our family, no more.

We lived in the jungle up to 2005, until we could not endure it any longer, the continuous attacks from the air. They build military camps everywhere and monitor the area to find us. When they spot fire, see smoke, then they report to the authorities. Usually after being spotted, we are attacked. That was very scary and a very difficult situation. After the shooting, they usually send ground troops to check and to destroy and burn down the houses of our hiding places.



There are too many, but as far as I can remember, the most brutal attack took place in 2001 and 2000, which killed three people of my group. We were small, only 6-7 families, hiding together.

We were about 10 families hiding together when we were first attacked. Everyone fled and came out. Some of us were able to arrive here and we are now reunited — in this camp. We don't know why they attack, all I know is they are attacking us. We don't know the reason why.

I know only what I experienced. I do not know anything about other groups, because we lived in separate hiding places over long distances. We constantly moved to new locations to hide. They always followed us, again and again.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: SUE THAO

My name is Sue Thao. I came from the jungle. My maiden name was Thao and I married to the Yang Clan. My husband's name is Chaiyee Yang.

We lived in the jungle and the Lao PDR military came and killed my father-in-law.

We were very terrified so we had to escape. So was our young brother. The Lao PDR Military also killed him. My father-in-law's name, which one, the first or last name? My father-in-law's name was Xaichia Yang. My younger brother-in-law's name was Kai Yang.

The Lao PDR military also killed my oldest son, Chord Yang and my middle son, Bee Yang...

We lived in the jungle and the Lao PDR military came to attack us all the time, we had to move from place to place, suffering. The Lao PDR military chased us around in every corner of the mountain where we could only live under trees, covered with banana leaves. We moved from one corner of the mountain to the next one surviving from eating wild roots. We have been through great suffering that forced us to leave our hideouts to go back and live in the village, but the Lao PDR government continues to persecute us. We were so terrified that we decided to leave Laos to Thailand. We came here, aware that the Lao PDR military would continue to arrest and kill us.

The Lao PDR military came to monitor us for several nights and attempted to kill us, and we were terrified of being killed. That's why we escaped. If the Lao PDR government did not intimidate us, then we would not be here.

We are very afraid and wish to remain in Thailand. Even though they want to deport us back to Laos, we don't want to go.

Whatever it takes, we will die here rather than go back to Laos. If they deport us back to Laos, then it mean they prepare for our death.

We rather die in this country than returning to Laos. The Lao PDR government has done so much to hurt us that we refuse to go back to them. We had suffered so much and need your help to save our lives. If they want to deport us back to Laos, we won't go. Laos is not good, if it was good, then we wouldn't be here. It was not good at all.

The Lao PDR treat us very badly; that's the reason why we have to leave.

Every time we go to the farm, we always are accused and blamed for colluding with the Hmong hiding in the jungle. They monitor and threaten to kill us. They expect us to return home from the farm every day or two. They threaten us that if we do not come home as ordered, they will come to kill us at the farm. They would not allow us to stay overnight at the farm. The farms are too far away; we had to walk a long distance to reach the farm. We are old and unable to walk fast. By the time we arrived at the farm, it was already about time to return. So we cannot tolerate this kind of treatment.



We have not done anything wrong. They don't like us and they purposely do that to us.

We have not done anything to them, but we came from the jungle, that's why they don't want us. They just want to kill us. They assumed that while we lived in the jungle, we would have attacked them.

They just hate us because we came from the jungle. They hate us, so they have to kill us."

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: CHUELONG HER

Since 1975 the Lao government takes over Laos, it continues to persecute the Hmong Peoples in the jungles. On October 25, we were asked to return all weapons, such as our shotguns, to the authorities. Therefore, we agreed to return approximately 85 shotguns, and seven telegrams to them. On October 26, the authorities called for our chief, Kongsue Yang, and the chief of village, Nengshai.Yang, to have a negotiation with Mayor Thi Tong and Mayor Boun Thong. In Meaung Kasi. The mayors had advised that the Hmong should not follow General Vang Pao. The new government regime would treat everyone equally. The new government would treat the Hmong equally as everyone else. If for any reason the Hmong started created problems for the Lao people, the Lao government would send military troops to kill all the Hmong peoples.

On November 14, the Lao government violated this agreement. They sent military troops to attack the villages of Nam Noi and Meaung Met. During this attack, the Hmong people lost 27 lives in the village. The entire village burned down to the ground. The casualty included 27 deaths and several injuries. Five men and 22 women died including children. After attacking Muang Met and Nam Noi, the Lao PDR sent 35 soldiers to attack the village of Pha Nau-Phalai on November 20, 1975. This time eleven residents were killed including four men and seven women and children.

All houses were burned down, which brought great fear to the Hmong people. The Lao government showed that it had no intentions to create a peaceful environment for us.

On December 4, 1975, the Lao PDR government sent military troops to attack us everywhere in Phalai, Teng Bong, Tia Khi, up to Nam Tao, Phagnou and everywhere else.

It caused major casualties, many thousand lives. This violence destroyed the Hmong's trust to the Lao PDR Government.

Therefore, everyone decided to stay in the jungle even though we had no weapons and food. All we could find to eat was roots and plants. We also get tortured by chemical poisoning.

The Lao PDR government used ground military troops to hunt us down and used airplanes to shoot, throw nails, and bombs at us.

They dropped bombs 250 to destroy the life of civilians with nobody out there to help and rescue us.

From 1985 until the 1990s, the Lao PDR government engaged in genocide, killing the Hmong peoples everywhere they could be found. We found our people executed and beheaded. The heads were sitting on sharp sticks looking upwards. Women were raped, tortured and killed. Sharp bamboo stakes were pushed through their sexual parts and through their whole bodies, left on that stake to die and dry under the sun.

The Hmong people have been tortured and suffered without anyone to come to our rescue.

In 2002 to 2003, we realized that we cannot tolerate such violent systems against us. We decided to flee from the jungle to Thailand. Currently we are in Hoy Nam Khao,



Petchabun. We request the UN and human rights organizations to come help us. The people here, who came to this camp, have had relatives killed, everyone in the region. In my district only, 1118 people died. Currently, there are 27 widows, 47 injured by bullets wounds, 5 victims from chemical poisoning, and 147 orphans, in my group in this camp. We are the poorest and suffered the most.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: CHAVANG YANG

In many occasions, we have been informed of the Lao PDR military coming, so we were able to hide and run prior to the attacks.

The Lao PDR military attacked us in the villages three times. Usually our house was not a target due to the location. Most of the time, they fired at the first few houses at their entrance, but the owners were not home.

We were very afraid, so we stayed in different locations. We are not soldiers so we are always left behind. There were three incidents that had happened to us. The first attack happened in Choua-Hlau, Phou Xaleng, and Phalai in which the entire village was completely burned to the ground.

All of the domestic animals were slaughtered. We continued to hide in the jungle where there was no military base set up in the area. It was little farther away from them. We found it was safer for us, and roots were more plentiful in that area. We even planted some rice fields.

The Lao PDR military came to attack us again, burning our rice fields, leaving nothing left for us to eat. We stopped farming and moved to another hideout in Phou Let. We have been starving for the entire year.

We were digging roots here and there to have something to eat.

Then the Lao PDR Government began to use jet plane fighters to attack us from the air. We could not survive in the area, so we escaped to hide on the mountain Phou Xaleng. We still managed to maintain one village, at the base of the mountain where the Lao PDR military continued to shoot artillery guns towards the village.

We observed that the other side of the mountain had been severely damaged. There were two missiles shot into our old hideout. It had dropped to the ground, creating two big holes the size of trashcans. These two missiles did not explode. We looked, but we stayed far away while some of the people used sticks to touch the missiles to inspect them. There was a massive mark in the ground uphill.

We talked among ourselves deciding to move to another location, even though we could not farm at all.

All we could do was continue to hide, and search for roots until they became scarce. We moved again to live a bit lower of Phalai Mountain. We stayed there for a year without proper nutrition. Then we moved again to another location near the villages of Phalai. We continue to hide in that area until today.

We were always in hiding, and when the Lao PDR military comes near, we move to another location. Usually, we were informed before they approached us, and then we left before any major casualty happened. When they found our hideout, they would burn everything down leaving nothing behind. Our hideout was made of banana leaves only.



There was one time when they attacked us inside the village, but concerning the attacks that happened to us in the jungle, those were countless. They attacked us every year. No attacks happened during the rainy season, but countless attacks happened each summer. That was the reason we decided to escape from the jungle. We could not see the soldiers at all. When we realized they were coming we took the women and children and fled.

If we did not see them, then we could be all dead. When the fighting breaks out, everyone tends to flee for his or her life and nobody ever sees the soldiers. After the shooting is over, we see the entire area totally damaged. We didn't know how many soldiers either because we could not see them. The last three times that we were attacked, we only went to move to another hiding place nearby.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: CHAO YANG

We lived in Choua-Dai, Phatoukong while the Lao PDR military continued to hunt us.

We did not have a place to live and continued to move and search for new safe places to hide. We searched for while plants and roots to survive. While the edible plants become scarce, we had to move to a new location. We moved to so many locations until we could not find any other place to survive and we decided to try to live in the open society. We came to live with Lao PDR Government for about a year and then they killed my brother, which terrified us. They even said that all the men will be arrested and sent to prison, so our husbands escaped to Thailand. We women were also afraid of being persecuted after our husbands left, so we decided to follow them to this country.

The children lived in the jungle, they never tasted the good rice. When I was in child labor, there was no food to sustain my health and no suitable bed to place myself on. All we did was moving from place to place with a lot of suffering.

Is it okay to talk about how I know other people get killed?

When we lived in Choua-Dai, it was a village. The village included many houses, but the Lao PDR military came to attack us. During that time, our governor was Nkiafong. The Lao PDR military came to attack our village and killed our governor, Nkiafong Lee in Choua-Dai. They burned down our houses, butchered our domestic animals, burned down our rice fields, we were terrified. Then we started to move away from the village of Choua-Dai. We moved to live and hide in Phatoukong, where my brother Paouchoua Yang was killed by the Lao PDR military.

He was killed while carrying a bag of rice to us. The Lao PDR military killed him and continued to shoot at his dead body until it was smashed on the ground. We were unable to retrieve his whole dead body for burial. The Lao PDR military even set off a grenade on his dead body. We just let his decomposed body sink to the ground and allowed the wildlife to carry his bones all over the place.

This was now the second time the Lao PDR military attacked us. The third time was at the new location nearby Phatoukong. We were hiding in the jungle using banana leaves to make shelters. While hiding in this new hideout, the Lao PDR military continued to search for us. They found my father and killed him while he was getting water for the family. We do not know how many soldiers were there each time, but all we knew was that every time they came, they made a large, wide and deep trail where all grasses were pushed down into the ground.

When we were in Nam Hong with my in-laws, the Lao PDR military came to attack us for the fourth time. They came very early in the morning when my father-in-law was still



in bed and my mother-in-law woke up to cook breakfast. The attack broke out, which hit my mother-in-law's abdomen. My father-in-law was still in bed but he was killed. One of my younger brother-in-laws was injured, but he died later.

When they killed my father, there was no one who shot back at the soldiers. There were too many soldiers; they have artillery guns and all other kinds of weapons. The Hmong people do not have any guns. There are a few from General Vang Pao's time: used, old and rusty guns that are hardly working.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: CHUE THAO

We came from Choua-Lia and Phou Xaleng. The Lao PDR soldiers killed my parents and then we moved to Choua-Lia, Phou Xaleng. I was too young to understand. We just arrived here in Thailand about half a month ago. We came directly to this camp, but without my father, he was killed by the Lao PDR soldiers. My father died, but I have his picture with me.

I am twelve years old.

I learned that wildlife ate my father's dead body. There are too many wild pigs and they ate all my father's dead body. My mother was very depressed and did not want to leave but our relatives encouraged her to try, and she decided to escape. We never had any food to eat. We survived by eating only wild roots. When searching or removing roots, and the Lao PDR soldiers came, we carried our big baskets and ran away as fast as we could.

We were not too many people.

I came to Thailand when the rice fields started to bloom. The river was very big and someone with a canoe carried us across.

I don't know where my mother is.

INTERVIEW ON VIDEO: NHIA VANG

I am from Phalai. While we were hiding in the jungle, the Lao PDR military killed my father and all of my uncles. We had a very difficult life. I lost my parents, which was horrible for me. We had nothing to eat. All we ate was roots. When we were in the jungle, the Lao PDR military attacked us all the time. It was very, very, very difficult for us to survive.

We knew that if we continued to remain in the jungle, we would be dead sooner or later. The Lao PDR military continuously attacked us. We had no choice and had to come out of the jungle. The Lao PDR government mistreated us very badly — the reason why we decided to escape to Thailand. We have suffered so much...

My parents got killed quite a while ago.

The Lao PDR military killed my uncle while digging roots in the jungle near Phatoukong. There were three of them who were digging roots. While they were washing the roots, the Lao PDR military killed them all. We were starving and uncle went to search food for us, but the Lao PDR military killed him.

It was such a terrifying life in the jungle because the Lao PDR military would wait and hunt us wherever we went to find food. We were starving and barely survived from roots, but while searching for them we get killed.



TRANSCRIBED RECORDINGS OF SOLAR PANEL SATELLITE TELEPHONE CALLS FROM THE CONFLICT AREAS

U.S.-based Hmong individuals and organizations frequently have direct contact via satellite telephones with Hmong groups-in-hiding.

SATELLITE TELEPHONE CALL

(Compare videotaped interview with refugee Wameng Thao, page 63 to 64)

From: Yang Thoua Thao,
Location: Phoudaphao, Xieng Khouang Province, Laos.
To: Seng Thao, USA
Date: January 21, 2006
Time: 6:54 AM — 7.18 AM, US time

Excerpts of satellite phone call:

"We do not even have any weapons to defend ourselves. The LPDR is using chemicals to kill our people including our women and children."

"The LPDR military troops are together with Vietnamese troops, chasing and hunting down the Hmong and Khmu people. They use modern weapons, chemicals to eliminate the Hmong day after day and year of after year."

"We need you to rescue us "

"We need food, medicine, shelter as any other human from the outside world."

"We Hmong have no military or political influence or weapons to defend ourselves making war against the LPDR. We give no reason to the LPDR that they send military troops and make war, to eliminate us since 30 years."

"The Hmong women and children know nothing, they are innocent and did not created any problem to the government. However, no live can survive if captured by the LPDR soldiers. Not only that our Hmong and Khmu people do not survive, also our crops, our domestic animals and our property are destroyed by the LPDR."

"Hundreds of our people are severely injured by the LPDR rocket mortars, bombs, and bullets wounds, we are suffering here, without medicine, no cure, and no food. We carry old weapons from the Vietnam war just to protect ourselves but we never go to hunt the LPDR for resistance purposes. The outside world must reach out to help us, to protect our life. We cry out for your help to rescue us as soon as possible."

Currently, we have no land to farm, we have no place to live, we have no food to eat, and we have no medicine to cure the wounded and sick people. We are dying day by day from the military attacks, we are hungry, and we are sick. The LPDR military with Vietnam troops surrounded us and watch us from everywhere, they wait for us at all the places where we can find wild potatoes and leaves to eat."

"The Lao soldiers together with the Vietnamese deployed two divisions - troops here-located at TG 6833 and TG-7833, they launch bombs and rockets throughout the area, where they believe we are hiding."



"June 4, 2005, Mr. Moua Toua Her and I decided to send 173 of our people to surrender at Chong Thoua village of Phou Kout district, Xieng Khouang province. Witnesses are Mr. Ed Szendrey and Mrs. Georgie which filmed and took pictures of the 173 Hmong people so that the outside world can see. However, the LPDR government did not allow the UN to meet them, and to provide security and food to the group.

The LPDR authority intimidated and pressured those 173 surrenders:

- Who want to die — must report to the outside world that you are the resistance people.
- If you do not want to die — you must say 'we are wrong thinking and want to freely join the governmental development program.'

"What are the reasons that the LPDR is using military to push down civilians with women and children, the outside world is well aware of the behavior of LPDR, please use your authority and power, to stop and rescue our lives as soon as possible. We are human beings and we need a normal life as anyone else on this earth. We want you to protect those 173 people to make sure they are safe."

"The Lao-Vietnamese military troop battalions must withdrew from the area completely and stop immediately to chase and kill the jungle people, these are the military battalions here in our area:"

a. TG-6833	b. TG-7833	c. TG-7823	d. TG-4626	e. TG-4835
h. TG-3817	i. TG-3818	j. TG-3819	k. TG-3821	l. TG-3923
m. TG-4226	n. TG-3637	o. TG- 4635	p. TG- 5947	q. TG-6114

SATELLITE TELEPHONE CALL

From: Tong Pao Yang
Location: Phou Ban, north of Vang Viang, Laos
To: Boua Xang Yang, USA
Date: March 2004

Excerpts of satellite phone call:

"Understand that they surrounded all the places where we usually find tree roots and other foods, all the fertile food areas are controlled by the troops. They try to starve us to death. There are ground troops here, and helicopters are shooting right where we live. They bomb every day and night, including areas nearby. They are using helicopter B8, they call now B17 bombing us. Very heavy bombs, maybe 100 pounds or more. Our Grandfather Kia Pao was killed, and one other. Please tell his daughter and son-law in the US that he must be buried the other way. He cannot be buried as we do (meaning in the Hmong culture-note by translator), too many troops are around here. They wanted me to tell you."



SATELLITE TELEPHONE CALL

From: Tong Pao Yang
Location: Phou Ban, north of Vang Viang, Laos
To: Boua Xang Yang, USA
Date: 14 April 2006
Time: 5:00 AM

Excerpts of satellite phone call:

"It was more or less a whole company, Lao and Vietnamese, who attacked us April 6, about 9 AM... . they used modern artillery weapons.

It was a heavy attack, which killed 26 people — four of us are wounded, "Away from that, five babies died from hunger, because their moms were killed.

This brutal attack caused them to die. Please note their names:"

1. Wang Chai Her	male	40 yrs
2. Lou Her (Kong Meng Yang)	female	30 yrs
3. Doua Thao (Chao Her Thao)	female	30 yrs
4. Choua Thao	female	40 yrs
5. Bao Thao	female	32 yrs
6. Za Thao	female	34 yrs
7. Voua Thao	female	30 yrs
8. Ma Her	female	13 yrs
9. Ger Her	female	12 yrs
10. Chue Her	female	7 yrs
11. Bao Her	female	30 yrs
12. Bee Yang	female	9 yrs
13. Lou Her	female	6 yrs
14. Zang Tha	female	8 yrs
15. Blong Tha	male	12 yrs
16. Cheng Her	male	6 yrs
17. Mai Zoua Her	female	30 yrs
18. Ying Thao	male	16 yrs
19. Mao Her	female	8 yrs
20. Cha Bee Thao	male	7 yrs
21. Kai Thao	male	4 yrs
22. Vue Thao	male	3 yrs
23. Lee Thao	female	2 yrs
24. Koua Yang	male	15 yrs
25. Cher Yang	male	7 yrs
26. Phia Lee	male	1 yrs

The wounded are:

Cha Pha Yang	male
Lang Her	female
Lou Her	female
Ker Thao	male

The babies who died (lack of milk) as their mothers got killed;

Baohar	female	4 month
Thaothao	male	1 month 2 days
Chuefang	female	1 month 4 days
Thaocha	male	1 month
Kaher	female	1 month 5 days



SATELLITE TELEPHONE CALL — A SUMMARY

Our organization, Lao Human Rights Council, received on the 16th of April shocking information via satellite telephone directly from the conflict area of Bolikhamxai and Vang Viang, which lies in the special zone in Laos, closed to foreigners:

Mr. Tong Pao Yang confirmed to the Lao Human Rights Council, Inc in the U.S.A on April 16, 2006, that the LDPR and Vietnamese military forces shot 24 members of his group.

He forwarded credible information on the names of the people that were killed and injured. These people were not a part of the older generation once recruited by the CIA to fight on behalf of the American Forces during the Vietnam war.

Twenty-two (22) innocent, unarmed teenagers and Hmong children were killed, along with two (2) 30 years old adults, who held no weapons in their hands, or had engaged in any armed resistance.

Additionally, we have received, in the last weeks, the alarming information that military forces are increasingly moving in to the regions where Hmong groups live in hiding. The Hmong community based in the US is afraid that it is only a matter of time before the starving groups-in-hiding and in fear will be eliminated and the genocide will be completed.

The remaining groups in the jungle are urging in numerous satellite phone calls to Hmong organizations and relatives based in the US, to help and rescue them. To the best of our knowledge, there are no Hmong groups that live in hiding in armed resistance. Each group which we have direct contact with via satellite telephone are in great fear and stress, struggling to survive and to escape the growing numbers of Lao PDR and Vietnamese military forces.

The groups report that the aggressions by the military are to systematically eliminate them.

SATELLITE TELEPHONE CALL

From: Yang Thoua Thao,
Location: Phoudaphao, Xieng Khouang Province, Laos.
To: Seng Thao, USA
Date: June 02, 2006
Time: 3:21 am U.S time

Excerpts of satellite phone call:

"Since end of April 2006, the military increased their numbers of soldiers, we saw them arriving over a period of 2 month."We sent our Saibkev Tsuagtseg (guardians/watchmen/defenders) to check the movement at the camps; coming back they reported to have seen many Nceb Laug Qain." (Military hats worn by Vietnamese soldiers)

Yang Toua Thao provided the names of the military units:

1. Pham Phes
2. Pha gus
3. Naj xeem
4. Moos peej
5. Nam Taub
6. Pas qav
7. Noom oo
8. Xam Xeem



SATELLITE TELEPHONE CALL

From: Nhia Vue Xiong

Location: Houa Phan, near Sam Noi (Outside the Special Zone)

DATE: June 8,2006

To: Seng Thao, USA

Summary of the Satellite Telephone Call:

Nhia Vue Xiong, Hmong leader of a group-in-hiding in the Houa Phan area in Province Sam Noi, called Seng Thao by satellite phone and reported that 31 members of his group had died from starvation.

Below are the names of the deceased:

Name	Gender	Age
Xiong, Shoua	Male	6
Xiong, Pao Ge	Male	5
Yang, Ge	Female	1
Moua, Pao	Male	2
Lee, Yia	Female	5
Xiong, Chue	Male	10
Moua, Cha	Male	9
Yang, Lee	Male	7
Lor, Ka	Female	1
Lor, Mai Lee	Female	28
Lee, Neeng Fa	Male	60
Lee, Ao	Male	5
Lee, Xao	Female	6
Lee, Moua	Male	50
Lee, Nao Lee	Male	53
Lee, Yong Ying	Male	60
Lee, Shoua	Male	16
Lee, Xia	Female	4
Thao, Tong	Female	6
Vang, Kao	Male	7
Vang, Mee	Female	4
Lee, Pao Ge	Male	50
Lee, Kao	Male	5
Lee, Chong Ge	Male	12
Lee, Koua	Male	25
Lee, Cha	Male	4
Her, Chue	Male	30
Her, Shoua	Male	7
Moua, Xai Her	Male	12
Her, Kia	Female	7
Moua Thoua Lee	Male	3



TWO SATELLITE TELEPHONE CALLS:

From: Youa Pao Xiong
District: Special Zone, 120 km N/W of Vientiane Province,
West of Vang Viang, Rd #13, 20km, at area Phouyeuy, Laos
To: Chue Chou Tchang, USA
Date: June 8, 2006
Time: 7.10 PM US time

Youa Pao Xiong is the Leader of a Hmong group in hiding, of approximately 500 people, known as Pounglak, which is itself one of four subgroups of a much larger Hmong of approximately 2000 people, in the area Phouyeuy, Province Vientiane, Laos. Youa Pao Xiong received two years ago a satellite telephone - which was smuggled into the conflict area.

Excerpts of satellite phone call:

"Our Saibkev Tsuagtseg (guardians watchmen) went during the night and came back to tell us that many soldiers were approaching from direction Vang Viang. They are at this moment (8th June 2006 7 A.10AM Lao time) attacking my group and I can hear that they attack the other groups too."

*"They started to attack us from far away with machine guns 60mm, 82mm, 155mm"
'When they got closer of my people, around 500 yards, they use machines guns B41 or B40 and Hand Grenades."*

"I was able to escape, the reason why I call you now. I can hear them still shooting, they are still shooting my group. Please help us."

From: Youa Pao Xiong
District: Special Zone, 120 km N/W of Vientiane Province,
West of Vang Viang, Rd #13, 20km, at area Phouyeuy, Laos
To: Chue Chou Tchang, USA
Date: June 8, 2006
Time: 10.30 PM, US time

At the same day, the survivors of two groups of the four subgroups merged, and together they called Mr. Chue Chou Tchang again.

Noumang Chang, leader of "Phounhai"(one of the other four sub groups) of estimated 400 people, which had also been attacked during the time of the first call from Youa Pao Xiong, called Mr. Chue Chou Tchang based in the US.

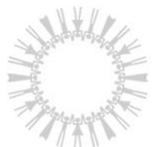
Noumang Chang informed that the survivors of his group had joined the other group of Youa Pao Xiong.

Excerpts of satellite phone call:

"We are now in another place, we are now together with Youa Pao Xiong's group. We can still hear that the other two groups are attacked."

"We saw the soldiers approaching from the direction Bang Don and one other battalion came from Bang Nayao. Many of the soldiers are Vietnamese who attacked my group (Noumang Chang)"

"We are missing at least over 100 people, but we do not know if they are injured or dead at this moment. They are still attacking everywhere. Please help us."



TELEPHONE CALL:

From: Lao governmental official
Location: Laos
To: Vaughn Vang, USA
Date: June 12th 2006

Summary of the telephone call:

I, Vaughn Vang, personally received an important telephone call from a Lao official, who is Hmong.

Our organization is willing to reveal his telephone number and name if the anonymity of this Lao official, one of our most important information sources, will remain secured.

The Lao official explained that he is calling us, being a Hmong himself, as he is morally and ethically highly concerned about the current military operations which are taking place to his knowledge, starting the following week, until the "mission" is completed.

He informed that three military officials, who are friends of his, participated at a military-governmental informal meeting. They told him, that the military authorities outlined their current military training activities and strategies in area Xieng Khouang.

He explained, that the military officials confirmed during that meeting, that the Lao government would continue to give the 'green light' for the military to eliminate the Hmong groups. That during the meeting detailed military operations were discussed with a geographical map, on how to locate, reach, and eliminate the Hmong groups.

He mentioned, that certain Lao military officials had raised concerns about the order of genocide during that meeting, but that they were cut short, and were told to follow the given command, as these groups would be seen as 'rebels' and unfit to remain in the Lao civil society.

He further described one of the military operations; that the soldiers are to be divided into groups of 6 soldiers, and to enter shoulder by shoulder the area, to find, surround and eliminate the groups which are hiding in the jungle.

In conclusion, I remind that Hmong organizations receive numerous telephone calls, confirming that military presence is increasing on an alarming rate throughout the Special Zone. Numerous Hmong individuals and organizations receive calls from groups-in-hiding, they report of increased brutal attacks, killings and starvation.



SUMMARY OF CLAIMS

BY FILMMAKER AND JOURNALIST RUHI HAMID AND MISHA MALTSEV

London, 15th March 2006

This "Summary of Claims" is written by us and is the full truth to the best of our knowledge. We testify on behalf of the group led by WA-LENG LEE group from the area of BOLIKHAMXAY, and on behalf of the representatives of the group led by WA-MENG LEE.

Conduct of Work:

We, Ruhi Hamid, Misha Maltsev, and a Hmong translator based in the United States; who due to safety reasons will remain anonymous, went to film and interview two subgroups of Hmong living in the jungles of Laos. We visited them during the period of 17th—27th of March 2004. The documentary was commissioned by the BBC, to record the situation of the Hmong who were the secret war veterans of the American covert operation during the Viet Nam war and are still hunted and hiding in the jungle to this day. *(See attached DVD, to be included and understood as an official oral and visual "Summary of Claims" document).*

The Laos government impedes all journalist access to these groups in the jungle, so it was essential for us to enter the country and the jungle under cover. This was based on research and knowledge gathered from journalists who had previously visited these groups, of which the French journalists were arrested upon their exit and immediately jailed.

Once in the jungle camp we met about 220 people, mostly women and children, with approximately 25-30 adult men.

They were traumatized and in constant fear of being tracked and found by the Laos soldiers who patrol the area. Evidence shows that the Laos government is using hunger as a weapon. The food supplies are scarce and we witnessed burnt plantations of banana trees, villages abandoned by the Hmong fleeing troops were also burnt down. The children appeared to be malnourished, and they complained of constant hunger. There is also video footage of the Hmong moving camps on a regular basis, avoiding being found and attacked by the LPDR ground troops. There were clear signs of ambushes, and wounded people in the camps including children with gun shot wounds. Overall we witnessed dire conditions in these camps, it is a humanitarian crisis that demands immediate response.

The Hmong are armed albeit with antiquated weapons left over from the Viet Nam war, some AK47 collected after the skirmishes with the Lao soldiers. They have limited ammunition used for self-defense and protection of their women and children.

Their demands are simply to be allowed to live peacefully and to leave the jungle and be integrated into Laos society under international supervision and to have access to medical and humanitarian aid.

In May 2004, we gave a witness account to a special framework team at the United Nations in New York. This was facilitated by Amnesty International. The Framework team chaired by Assistant Secretary General Ms Julia Taft comprised of various UN bodies including, department of political Affairs, OCHA, WFP, UNICEF, and others. Furthermore, we presented a written and verbal report specially commissioned by the European Union Human Rights Commission in Brussels in September 2005.



Summary of Claims

By Ger Vang, Georgie Szendrey, and Ed Szendrey
Members of the Fact Finding Commission

California, July 12, 2006

For nearly six years the Fact Finding Commission has documented the plight of the veterans of the U.S. Secret War and their families that are in hiding in the jungles of Laos. FFC's research has been through interviews with those in the jungle, those living in villages in Laos, refugees in other countries, Lao officials, international diplomatic sources, and others. Communication with those in the jungle has been in person, by radio, and by satellite telephone. Satellite telephones and video cameras have been smuggled into the jungle to facilitate communication and fact gathering. FFC has conducted five missions to facilitate independent journalistic excursions into the jungles of Laos to document the conditions of these people. FFC has produced six documentaries on the issue and released numerous reports as received from the groups in the jungle.

In 1975, after Laos fell to the communists, thousands fled to neighboring Thailand to escape persecution for assisting the United States in the Vietnam War. For a number of reasons, some were unable to get out of the country and fled to the remote jungles. These groups, mostly ethnic Hmong (some Lowland Lao, Khmu, and Mein) were pursued by the Pathet Lao who vowed to "exterminate to the root" those that had supported America in the war. According to the communists these soldiers had an "American Nail" in their head and this loyalty to the U.S. is in their genes, therefore the soldiers, their spouses, children and grandchildren needed to be eliminated. From 1975 to 1979 more than 45,000 were killed and nearly half a million persons escaped Laos.

Aided by Vietnamese military personnel the Lao Peoples Democratic Republic and their army has pursued the groups that remained in the jungles to this day. Today there are only about 17,000 of the nearly 200,000 people who fled to the jungles still alive. These groups report they are continuously chased by the military, therefore must move every few days. They are unable to grow food and are prevented from entering areas where natural food sources exist. Amnesty International has condemned the Lao government for its use of starvation as a weapon of war against these people. These groups report shooting and bombing of their encampments; the use of landmines (of Chinese manufacture) to prevent them from reaching food sources; and the use of lethal chemical agents against them. They report that when captured women have been raped and their bodies mutilated. Children have been killed by having their throats slit or their heads bashed against trees.

These atrocities continue to this day. On April 6, 2006 some 26 men, women and children were killed by Lao military forces north of the resort city of Vang Vieng. This group was unarmed and simply foraging for food. While the international community has demanded an investigation into the matter, the Lao government refuses to cooperate and categorically denies the allegations.

Numbers of these groups have expressed a willingness to surrender to the Lao authorities. However, 30 years of persecution and genocide at the hands of the LPDR give cause to doubt the offer of "immunity" to those that surrender. They have asked for the international community to monitor their surrender. In June of 2005 FFC monitored the surrender of 173 women, children, and elderly that came out of the jungle in Xieng Khoang Province. Despite the offer of assistance by the United Nations and the international community to assist Laos by providing aid to these people the LPDR refused access to this group. To date these and others that have recently surrendered or been captured have not been given access to the aid available by from the U.N., Red Cross, or other NGO's. While the average person on the street in Laos is well aware of these groups in the jungle, the official policy of the Lao government is they do not exist.

The independent journalist that have gone into Laos to visit these groups have confirmed that unlike other so called "insurgents" these are not angry militant people. They are a people who are begging for help from the international community with the simple desire to live in peace.

It is the hope of the Fact Finding Commission that the international community can help them be free of these military assaults and be free to simply live off the land they love.

Ger Vang – Commission Member
Georgie Szendrey – Commission Member
Ed Szendrey – Commission Member



SUMMARY OF CLAIMS

By X.X. XIONG

This Summary is written by me to testify what I witnessed, to be submitted to the UN system. I want to make it clear that I do not associate with any political groups, any governmental or non-governmental organizations, and I have no interest of changing the government of Laos for any reasons. My testimony is about what I saw, I found out, and I heard from relatives, and friends who are still in Laos.

During December 2005, I traveled through route 30 from Vientiane to Phone Savanh, Xieng Khouang, Laos, to visit my fiancée, XXXXX. While driving up Northeast from Vientiane to Phone Savanh, I saw many Vietnamese and Lao armies patrolling up and down the highway between Muang Kasi to Phone Savanh.

In Phone Savanh, I met XXXXXX family who told me that he was falsely accused of being associated with the Hmong rebels because the Lao PDR found two pairs of wild animal horns in his house. They (Lao PDR policemen) said the type of wild animals he hunted live in the rebels' areas. XXXX was arrested early 2005 and was not formally charged. Finally, Lao policemen poisoned XXX to death in November of 2005 in the City of Phone Savanh, Xieng Khouang, Laos, after his sister informed the Lao PDR that she is doing a fundraising to get him out. Mr. XXXX left his wife, ex-wife, some children, and his 70 years old mom with hard lives. I met the family and they were extremely upset with the Government Officials of Laos. After his death, his relatives went to retreat his body for Hmong funeral services, but Lao PDR securities refused and they even threatened to shoot them by firing into the air during the argument. Mr. XXXX was buried without a Hmong traditional funeral services.

While in Phone Savanh, I went to the local police and asked for a permission to travel to the Muang Mok Village, East of Phou Xao, the second highest mountain of Laos, I was told by the police that I would not get permission to travel to the dangerous area because the rebels are nearby. I have relatives who came for a visit and want to bring me with them to visit their village in Muang Mok. I was not granted permission for the trip for fear of my safety.

I met a few former rebels who have just surrendered a year ago. Two of them are my relatives from my mother's side of family. When asked about peace and freedom, they said that most of them are fine and are being left alone, but those who were leaders have been missing or executed when leaving their houses alone. They gave me one example of one of their leaders who left his house to do shopping in downtown Phone Savanh and was shot and killed by sniper while walking through the alley to the store. This happened sometimes in November 2005 prior to my visit. He was one of those rebel leaders who came from the Samthong area.

While returning to Vientiane, we stopped in a village name Nam Chak, near Phou Khoun. I asked the local people why there are security forces along the highway, they told me that they often come to face with the Hmong rebels who come from the mountainous area to buy necessary needs; clothes, salt, medicine, and other food needs. The patrol was to cut off food and medical supplies to the rebels.

When we were in Vang Viang, I decided that I want to visit a few relatives who live in Xaisomboun Special Zone, the zone now is being disbanded for political reason, and Lao policemen mistreated me. When I arrived in Muang Xaisomboun, formerly known as Muang Cha, it was 5:30PM.

I went directly to the provincial police headquarter and I was told that the office was closed. One person who was still there told me that he would not be able to help me and would call the people who may be responsible for foreign visitors to come to see me at my hotel. I then went to the city police and I was able to register there even though the office was closed, but the person in charge was still in. Two hours later, the provincial policemen came to my hotel and asked to see my passport. When I gave to them, they simply took it away from me by saying that they have to have it because I didn't register with them and didn't come early. I told them that I went there but the office was closed and I also told someone that I have just arrived there to report my visit to the province.



The two policemen confiscated my passport and told me not to leave the hotel after dark. By noon the next day no policemen would bring me back my passport, I was upset and went to the police headquarter to complain about the mishandling of my passport. They refused to give it back to me until I took out my celler phone and threatened to call the US Embassy in Vientiane. I told them that my passport is US Government Property and I am only the US Citizen who carries it. If the Lao PDR Government does not wish to have a good relationship with the US Government then I will call the US Ambassador In Laos to report that my passport has been confiscated illegally and forcibly. When I left Muang Xaisomboun, they (Lao policemen) told me not to stop by any where along the way to Vientiane.

Two farming villages that were being executed in January of 2005 were Nam Nhoua Noeu, a village on the road to Long Cheng, and a farming village Northeast of Tha Vieng, near the road to City of Xieng Khouang. In Nam Nhoua Noeu, the victims were Hmong who moved there for farming from Muang Ao, Muang Xaisomboun, and Houi Kham Tai. While driving back to Vientiane from Muang Xaisomboun, or Muang Cha, we met a woman who was in the road to collect firewood. She told us that she is a widow and that her husband and some children were the victims of the brutal execution in Nam Nhoua Noeu. The victims of the Northeast Tha Vieng came from the City of Xieng Khouang and Phone Savanh. I didn't get to talk to any family victims, but a few of my relatives in Xaisomboun told me of the story when I visited them. People In these two villages were not rebels, but people who were under Lao PDR control. The killing must have something to do with ethnic cleansing or hatred.

One day after I arrived In Vientiane from Muang Xaysomboun and Phone Savanh, I went to Nam Nhao Village for a Hmong New Year Celebration. While visiting the area, I was told by several relatives that Lao PDR executed two Hmong leaders who have just surrendered more than a year ago. Both of them openly told the Lao PDR military that they were military leaders under General Vang Pao during the Vietnam War and were leaders while with the Chao Fah, leading the Hmong rebels. One was a captain and one was a major. The major was named a general while with the Chao Fah. The captain was a major during the same time. My relatives who now refused to discuss the matter by phone when I called a couple days ago for fear that the Lao PDR may tape the conversation said that several Hmong farmers who have farms nearby told them that they saw Lao soldiers ran away from the victim's farm and ran through their farms back to the village after several shots were fired. The next day, the same Lao PDR military unit just came back and without any investigation just claimed that the Hmong rebels came to kill him for betraying his friends who are still in the jungle. They told me that no one believe so because there are no rebels nearby who can do such killing.

The other former Hmong leader (the Captain) was killed by a single shot to his head when he went out to collect firewood. The family discovers it after he failed to return home. No one claims for his killing as it usually happens In Laos. These two Hmong leaders were killed in Nam Nhao Village, In Vientiane Province.

Because I heard so many bad news about the Hmong In Laos, I then was concerned about the 270 people who surrendered in June 2005 and the 28 children who have been kidnapped and returned to Laos from Thailand. I then started to ask people if anyone knew what happened to them or where they are about and no one knew or heard of them. I am afraid that the Lao PDR may have executed all the 270 Hmong who surrendered back In June 2005. I went to Paksan, Borikhamxai Province to meet with a Lowland Lao friend of XXXX. I asked him to questions his relatives who serve both the military and police In the area If they know what happened to the 28 children repatriated from Thailand, he told me a few days later by phone that no one knew and he is afraid the worst.

However, in a village along Highway 30 passing Muang Kasi toward Phone Savanh, I saw a Lao military helicopter landed just off the highway. I saw about ten 100-kilogram rice bags were being pushed down to the ground then the helicopter took off. The local residents rushed in to retreat them. We stopped and observed what was going on there. I saw the local people went and retreat the rice bags were mostly women and children. I saw a gentleman, age about 30 years old, and I asked him about what was going on there and why the helicopter brought them rice. He told me that his group have just surrendered to the Lao PDR last year and they received some assistance, especially rice from the Lao PDR. They built their houses along the road, only a mile away from the military post there. I had a chance to talk to ask about their safety and he said they



are fine, but his tears dropping to the ground when I told him that I am a Hmong American. He couldn't say anything bad maybe someone nearby was watching or listening us talking. I decided to leave him alone for fear of his and my own safety. We then continued our trip to Vientiane.

In the Capital of Vientiane, the Lao PDR tries to sell their images by:

01. Hanging pictures of three ethnic girls; Laolum (Lowland Lao), Laosoung (Hmong), and one Laotheung (Khmu). These pictures demonstrate equality and non-discriminatory policy of the government; especially toward the Hmong and the Khmu. However, I was told that in the rural areas, the Hmong and Khmu are being chased and killed like animals. Two Hmong villages in Xaisomboun Special Zones were surrounded and executed. No one could say anything about them. Whoever says anything will be found missing or dead. Hmong leaders only whisper, but keep their mouths shut.
02. Most Lao police officers do not openly carry weapons. This is to show the world that there is so peaceful life that police do not have to carry weapons. In reality, they not only have handguns, but military weapons, like rocket launchers (B-40), and AKA 47 rifles. I know this because I went to a Laoloum police house and found it out. He is a good friend of my relative.

Remember that most areas I went were in the open areas to tourists. It was peaceful life even though I heard artilleries from a far distance while I was in Phone Savanh.

I swear that what I wrote in this testimony is the truth, nothing, but the truth as what I saw, heard and found while visiting Lao PDR. I submit this testimony to UN for only the purpose of peace, freedom, and human rights.





Main Office:

778 University Avenue • St. Paul, Minnesota 55104 • 651/292-9701 • Fax: 651/292-0208

July 26, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

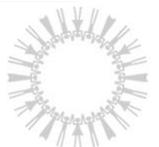
We at ITS, a licensed interpretation company had carefully examined the translation of these documents and found it to be accurate. We fully endorse the work and acknowledge it as an exact duplication of the original documents.

If you have any question, please contact us. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Yee T. Lee
President

Interpretation • Translation • Transportation • Voice Mail



The Fact Finding Commission

**1566 Huntoon Street
Oroville, CA 95965
(530) 342-5571**

July 12, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

We consider the report of Rebecca Sommer on the issues of Hmong/Lao refugees and its summary of claims as one of the most important recent studies published on the plight of the ethnic Hmong/Lao in Laos and the humanitarian crisis they face at the hands of the LPDR government.

For nearly six years the Fact Finding Commission has researched the issues faced by those who, having been loyal to the United States during the war in Southeast Asia, fled the post-war persecution of the Pathet Lao. Many refugees were fortunate to escape out of Laos. Others fled to the interior jungles of Laos where they have been the subject of continuous persecution and genocide at the hands of the Lao government.

Rebecca Sommers' carefully documented report independently corroborates the findings of this commission and brings further evidence of the atrocities committed against the Hmong/Lao who fought against the communists in Laos during the Secret War.

Therefore, the Fact Finding Commission recommends Rebecca Sommers' report to the international community in hopes it will bring awareness of the plight of these people.



Ed Szendrey
Commission Member



LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT



We herewith confirm that the Society for Threatened Peoples International supports the initiative of Earth Peoples to compile a Summary of Claims made by the Hmong Lao refugees in Petchabun/ Thailand.

We hope that this document helps the international community to take better notice of the unresolved conflict between the Hmong Lao groups and the Lao PDR government, as well as of the extremely difficult situation of Hmong refugees in Thailand.

We want to add our voice to the important voice of EARTH PEOPLES, and appeal to the international community – as we have done in our written statement to the 62nd UN-Human Rights Commission (see attachment) – to urge the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to immediately stop relocation programmes which threaten the livelihood and cultural traditions of the Hmong peoples in Lao, and assure them all minority rights as enshrined in international human rights standards.

Respectfully

Tilman Zülch
President of the Society for Threatened Peoples International

Gesellschaft
für bedrohte Völker

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Economic and
Social Council
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and in participatory
status with the
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APPEAL
5 April 2006

The Elders' Council of the Centre for Organisation Research & Education endorses the Summary of Claims documents regarding the Hmong Lao in the forest, and the Hmong Lao refugees in Thailand.

We urge the UN system, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and all relevant UN agencies, to take necessary immediate steps to assist the Hmong Lao refugees, who are currently residing as illegal migrants in the temporary settlement "White Water", in Petchaboun, Thailand. We have also received news from reliable sources about severe human rights violations of 28 Hmong children in Ban Huay Khao, Khao Kho, and Petchaboun in Thailand that occurred on 28 November 2005. The children reportedly were part of the Hmong civilian families that were recently displaced into Thailand. The children were led by an adult to attend Sunday school and service. After the service, on the way home they were stopped by Thai authority, and were deported to Laos.

According to our source, till now, both Thai and Lao authority deny the existence of the incidence or wish to acknowledge the deportation of these children. However, anonymous source confirmed that in fact four of the children were in Laos. Details of their well being or health status are unknown. The source further stated that four minor are confirm are in two locations (2 girls in one location and 1 girl and a boys in another location). No external agencies were allowed access the children and the rest of the children are still missing. Unconfirmed information stated that the adult guardian was beaten to death by Lao authority in Borikhamsay, Laos.

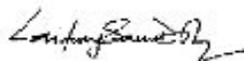
The Hmong refugees endure hunger, and urgent food assistance by the UN system is needed. The UN should intervene with the Royal Thai Government, to ensure that all restrictions, which prohibit Thai citizens to sell or donate food to the refugees, are lifted. This would be a positive gesture of good will at the time when the Government of Thailand is submitting a candidate for the position of UN Secretary-General.

The UNHCR must take action to conduct a due pre-screening process for the refugees, in order to determine which Hmong persons are meeting the criteria of the UNHCR Statute, qualifying for the protection of the UN provided by the High Commissioner, regardless of whether or not Thailand is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol or whether or not Thailand is recognizing refugee status.

Those with well founded claims to fear persecution by the Laotian government must receive assistance and a solution must be found, to ensure that they are considered "mandate" refugees.

Additionally, we strongly urge you to consider the submitted testimonies of the refugees as the voice for those, who are still in hiding in the Laotian jungle. The Hmong Lao refugees made the plight of the remaining groups in the jungle clear. They remaining groups are in urgent need of the UN systems assistance, to ensure that they will survive and that they get a chance to surrender without possible persecution by the Laotian authorities.

CORE considers the situation a serious humanitarian crisis, which we wish to see resolved immediately. Therefore, we urge you to actively engage in a mediation process between the Lao PDR and the Hmong Lao groups.



Director

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LAND IS LIFE



Steering Council

Vickie Downie
Tewa Women United
(New Mexico)

Ariel Araujo
Copirecha
(Argentina)

Viktor Kaisiepo
Papua Customary Council
(West Papua)

Marcelino Diaz de Jesus
Consejo de Pueblos Nahuas
(Mexico)

Onel Masandule
Kuna
(Kuna Yala)

Sinafasi Makelo
Mbuti
(Congo)

Ana Pinnu
CORE
(India)

Joseph Ole Simel
Loodaariak Community
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Hawaii Institute for Human Rights

Anh Crutcher
Filmmaker

Antonio Gonzales
International Indian Treaty Council

Joseph Kulin
Publisher, Parabola Magazine

Rev. James Parks Morton
Interfaith Center of New York

Tom Potter
Kanatrioshareke

April 17, 2006

Land is Life, along with its partner organizations around the world is submitting this letter as an endorsement of the Summary of Claims documents regarding the Hmong Lao population now living in the jungle of Laos and those residing as illegal migrants in the temporary settlement "White Water" in Petchabun, Thailand.

The jungle Hmongs have undergone severe human rights violations and persecution by the Lao PDR Government for generations, including cases of mistreatment, threats, arrests, tortures, mutilation and killings. It has been claimed that Lao PDR military forces have used guns, artillery weapons, chemicals and grenades against the jungle Hmong.

The displaced Hmong, now residing in White Water, carry scars from severe injuries, including bullet holes, grenade splinters, missing body parts, blindness and other disfigurements, both physical and psychological. These refugees wish to return to their home, but fear death or punishment by the LPDR government; they urgently need the assistance of the UN systems, to ensure that they will survive and get a chance to surrender without possible persecution by the Laotian authorities.

We ask that the UN system, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and all relevant UN agencies, take immediate steps to assist the jungle Hmong and Hmong Lao refugees. The UNHCR must enforce a pre-screening process for the refugees, in order to determine which Hmong persons are meeting the criteria of the UNHCR Statute, qualifying for the protection of the UN provided by the High Commissioner, regardless of whether or not Thailand is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol or whether or not Thailand is recognizing refugee status. We also urge the UN to conduct dialogues with the Royal Thai Government in order to lift any restrictions currently in place that prohibit Thai citizens to sell or donate food to the Hmong refugees.

The UN's active and immediate participation in mediating between the Lao PDR and the Hmong Lao groups is imperative.

We thank you for your immediate attention to this grave situation.

Sincerely,

Kristina Kulin
Coordinator

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Tel: 212-477-1144 • Fax: 212-477-0004 • E-mail: lil@igc.org • www.landislife.org

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North West Provincial executive committee
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ASSOCIATION POUR LE DEVELOPPEMENT SOCIAL
ET CULTUREL DES MBORORO DU CAMEROUN
COMITE EXECUTIF DE LA PROVINCE
DU NORD OUEST
B.P: 221 BAMENDA CAMEROUN
Fax: 00237 336 1570



"Organisation in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations"

WE, The Mbororo Social and Cultural development Association (MBOSCUDA) NGO/ECOSOC, endorse the Summary of Claims documents regarding the Hmong Lao in the jungle, and the Hmong Lao refugees in Thailand,

We urge the UN system, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and all relevant UN agencies, to take necessary immediate steps to assist the Hmong Lao refugees, who are currently residing as illegal migrants in the temporary settlement "White Water", in Petchabun, Thailand.

The Hmong refugees endure hunger, and urgent food assistance by the UN system is needed.

The UN should enter into dialogue with the Royal Thai Government, to ensure that all restrictions, which prohibit Thai citizens to sell or donate food to the refugees, are lifted. This would be a positive gesture of good will at the time when the Government of Thailand is submitting a candidate for the position of UN Secretary-General.

The UNHCR must take action to conduct a due pre screening process for the refugees, in order to determine which Hmong persons are meeting the criteria of the UNHCR Statute, qualifying for the protection of the UN provided by the High Commissioner, regardless of whether or not Thailand is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol or whether or not Thailand is recognizing refugee status.

Those with well founded claims to fear persecution by the Laotian government must receive assistance and a solution must be found, to ensure that they are considered "mandate" refugees.

Additionally, we strongly urge you to consider the submitted testimonies of the refugees as the voice for those, who are still in hiding in the Laotian jungle.

The Hmong Lao refugees made the plight of the remaining groups in the jungle clear. They remaining groups are in urgent need of the UN systems assistance, to ensure that they will survive and that they get a chance to surrender without possible persecution by the Laotian authorities.

Therefore, we urge you to actively engage in a mediation process between the Lao PDR and the Hmong Lao groups.

This is a humanitarian crisis, which we wish to see addressed immediately.





Yachay Wasi

(Quechua: House of Learning)

Luis Delgado Hurtado, President
Marie-Danielle Samuel, Vice President
Eliane Lacroix-Hopson, Treasurer

24 March 2006

WE, Yachay Wasi, NGO/ECOSOC, endorse the Summary of Claims documents regarding the Hmong Lao in the jungle, and the Hmong Lao refugees in Thailand,

We urge the UN system, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and all relevant UN agencies, to take necessary immediate steps to assist the Hmong Lao refugees, who are currently residing as illegal migrants in the temporary settlement "White Water", in Petchabun, Thailand.

The Hmong refugees endure hunger, and urgent food assistance by the UN system is needed. The UN should enter into dialogue with the Royal Thai Government, to ensure that all restrictions, which prohibit Thai citizens to sell or donate food to the refugees, are lifted. This would be a positive gesture of good will at the time when the Government of Thailand is submitting a candidate for the position of UN Secretary-General.

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Therefore, we urge you to actively engage in a mediation process between the Lao PDR and the Hmong Lao groups.

This is a humanitarian crisis, which we wish to see addressed immediately.

On behalf of Yachay Wasi,

Marie-Danielle Samuel, Vice-President & Main Rep. to UN

YACHAY WASI is an Indigenous NGO, in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and associated with the UN Department of Public Information, based in NYC and in Cuzco, Peru.

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សហព័ន្ធខ្មែរកម្ពុជាក្រោម
KHMERS KAMPUCHEA-KROM FEDERATION
Asia – Australia – Europe – North America
A member of UNPO - IDBF - UN PFII - TRP

Office of The President: P.O. Box 39084 • London • ON • N5Y-5L1 • CANADA • Tel/Fax: (519) 569-3920
<http://www.khmekrom.org> • Email: thach.thach@khmerkrom.org

3/25/2006

WE, The Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation, NGO/IPO, endorse the Summary of Claims documents regarding the Hmong Lao in the jungle, and the Hmong Lao refugees in Thailand,

We urge the UN system, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and all relevant UN agencies, to take necessary immediate steps to assist the Hmong Lao refugees, who are currently residing as illegal migrants in the temporary settlement "White Water", in Petchabun, Thailand.

The Hmong refugees endure hunger, and urgent food assistance by the UN system is needed. The UN should enter into dialogue with the Royal Thai Government, to ensure that all restrictions, who prohibit Thai citizens to sell or donate food to the refugees, are lifted.

The UNHCR must take action to conduct a due pre screening process for the refugees, in order to determine which Hmong persons are meeting the criteria of the UNHCR Statute, qualifying for the protection of the UN provided by the High Commissioner, regardless of whether or not Thailand is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol or whether or not Thailand is recognizing refugee status.

Those with well founded claims to fear persecution by the Laotian government must receive assistance and a solution must be found, to ensure that they are considered "mandate" refugees.

Additionally, we strongly urge you to consider the submitted testimonies of the refugees as the voice for those, who are still in hiding in the Laotian jungle.

The Hmong Lao refugees made the plight of the remaining groups in the jungle clear. They remaining groups are in urgent need of the UN systems assistance, to ensure that they will survive and that they get a chance to surrender without possible persecution by the Laotian authorities.

Therefore, we urge you to actively engage in a mediation process, between the Lao PDR and the Hmong Lao groups.

This is a humanitarian crisis, which we wish to see addressed immediately.

Sincerely,


Thach N. Thach
KKF President





Copenhagen, March 29, 2006

WE, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), endorse the Summary of the "Summary of Claims" regarding the Hmong Lao in the jungle, and the Hmong Lao refugees in Thailand,

We urge the UN system, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and all relevant UN agencies, to take necessary immediate steps to assist the Hmong Lao refugees, who are currently residing as illegal migrants in the temporary settlement "White Water", in Petchabun, Thailand.

The Hmong refugees endure hunger, and urgent food assistance by the UN system is essential. The UN should enter into dialogue with the Royal Thai Government, to ensure that all restrictions, which prohibit Thai citizens to sell or donate food to the refugees, are lifted. This would be a positive gesture of good will at the time when the Government of Thailand is submitting a candidate for the position of UN Secretary-General.

The UNHCR must take action to conduct a due pre screening process for the refugees, in order to determine which Hmong persons are meeting the criteria of the UNHCR Statute, qualifying for the protection of the UN provided by the High Commissioner, regardless of whether or not Thailand is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol or whether or not Thailand is recognizing refugee status.

Those with well founded claims to fear persecution by the Laotian government must receive assistance and a solution must be found, to ensure that they are considered "mandate" refugees.

Additionally, we strongly urge you to consider the submitted testimonies, the "Summary of Claims" made by the refugees, as the voice for those, who are still in hiding in the Laotian conflict zones.

The Hmong Lao refugees made the plight of the remaining groups in the jungle clear. They remaining groups are in urgent need of the UN systems assistance, to ensure that they will survive and that they get a chance to surrender without possible persecution by the Laotian authorities.

Therefore, we urge you to actively engage in a mediation process between the Lao PDR and the Hmong Lao groups.

This is a humanitarian crisis, which we wish to see addressed immediately.

Yours sincerely,


Jens Dahl
Director

INDIAN CONFEDERATION OF INDIGENOUS AND TRIBAL PEOPLES
NORTH-EAST ZONE (ICITP-NEZ)

भारतीय आदिवासी संगमम

(Affiliated to : WORLD COUNCIL OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES)
Registered Under Societies Registration Act, XXI 1860 No. S/26999/1994
Zonal Office : ICITP-NEZ, BANPHOOL NAGAR, NAMGHAR PATH, P.O. ASSAM SACHIVALAYA,
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TEL : 0361-2233298, TELE-FAX : +91-361-2227578
E-mail : icitp-nez@rediffmail.com

Ref: NEZ G 7/2006-2007. TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Date: 10-05-2007

WE, the Indian Confederation of Indigenous and Tribal Peoples North East Zone (ICITP-NEZ), Guwahati, Assam, India, here by do endorse the Summary of Claims documents regarding the Hmong Lao in the jungle, and the Hmong Lao refugees in Thailand,

We urge the UN system, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and all relevant UN agencies, to take necessary immediate steps to assist the Hmong Lao refugees, who are currently residing as illegal migrants in the temporary settlement "White Water", in Petchabun, Thailand.

The Hmong refugees endure hunger, and urgent food assistance by the UN system is needed.

The UN should enter into dialogue with the Royal Thai Government, to ensure that all restrictions, who prohibit Thai citizens to sell or donate food to the refugees, are lifted.

The UNHRR must take action to conduct a due pre screening process for the refugees, in order to determine which Hmong persons are meeting the criteria of the UNHCR Statute, qualifying for the protection of the UN provided by the High Commissioner, regardless of whether or not Thailand is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol or whether or not Thailand is recognizing refugee status.

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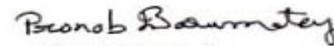
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The Hmong Lao refugees made the plight of the remaining groups in the jungle clear. They remaining groups are in urgent need of the UN systems assistance, to ensure that they will survive and that they get a chance to surrender without possible persecution by the Laotian authorities.

Therefore, we urge you to actively engage in a mediation process, between the Lao PDR and the Hmong Lao groups.

This is a humanitarian crisis, which we wish to see addressed immediately.


(Jebra Ram Muchahary)
President
ICITP-NEZ


(Pronob Basumatary)
Coordinator
ICITP-NEZ


Mr. Jebra Ram Muchahary
President

Mr. Sabda Ram Rabha
Gen. Secretary

Mr. Raphael Kujur
Treasurer





Hmong American

Mutual Assistance Association, Inc.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chue Chou TCHANG
President

The Summary of Claims, and the Background information, compiled and submitted by Rebecca Sommer from Earth Peoples on the situation is fully endorsed by myself and my organization.

Linda YANG
Vice-President

The summary of the claims made by the Hmong Lao refugees to Mrs. Sommer, and her further research on the accuracy of the claims has been made in partnership with Hmong people and Organizations, including us.

MaiCho Xiong
Secretary

Her report is based on the truth, the reason why we endorse her good work.

Shoua Khang
Assistant Secretary

We receive countless information from our Hmong Lao relatives, and other sources about the severe oppression, marginalization and human rights violations in Laos against our people.

Yee Yang
Treasurer

Especially the Hmong Lao in the Special Zone are endangered to loose their lives on a daily bases. Just recently another 26 Hmong people got killed, all children, except of 2 young adults.

Chong Moua Xiong
Assistant Treasurer

The military forces of Laos are trying to eliminate all the Hmong in hiding and fear, and we do not understand why this situation is going on for so long, without the intervention of the global community and the UN.

Blong MOUA

David N. VUE

Yee Lee

Song A. Vang

Zavier Chang

Pang VANG
Youth Council

Xang Vang
Executive Director

We Hmong organizations based in the US have been trying for many years to raise awareness in the public, and the UN system. We bring evidence, we travel to speak to the decision makers, and we do not see even a small result of our affords.

BOARD OF ADVISORS

Marty YANG
Teng VANG
Dr. Timothy DUNNIGAN, PhD
Theresa O'BRIEN, CSJ
Ya VANG, JD
Dr. Tou Xang LEE, DC
Kubmuaslaaj "Ku" KHANG
Chai Fue XIONG

Our people in the armed conflict areas are dying. They are starved, and in desperation. The military gets more successful in eliminating the dispersed groups, the reason why you find today over 1000 refugees in Thailand, who fled the special zone in Laos.

It is not easy to escape the Special Zone, and many people are still remaining. We urge you to act on Mrs. Sommers report, and to use the tools you have, to bring an end to the killing of our people, and to finally address the needs of the refugees.

The Hmong Lao who fled Laos in the last 2 years are not in Thailand because they have no reason, their very reason is that they got severely persecuted.

The UN must not neglect this humanitarian crisis for diplomatic reasons, or because the groups might not enter with their numbers into the millions. Each life should be considered valuable, many which are to be eliminated in the next future if nothing is done.

Chue Chou Tchang
President



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TEL: 612.374.2694 FAX: 612.374.5205 EMAIL: Hamaa@hamaa.org

HAMAA partners with Minnesota Empowerment Zone and





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27th March, 2006

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have carefully read the 'Summary of Claims' documents regarding the Hmong Lao refugees.

I believe that the matters contained in the depositions and statements by the Jungle Hmongs of Laos are deserving of close scrutiny by the appropriate UN bodies.

I am acquainted with Ms. Rebecca Sommer who is a filmmaker and human rights advocate.

She has not left a stone unturned in endeavoring to ensure that the information that she has gathered is factual and accurate.

I am persuaded that the claims contained in the documentation are deserving a thorough investigation as they appear to contain serious violations of the human rights of these people.

I recommend the report and its contents to the attention and action of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and to any other appropriate UN bodies for addressing the complaints outlined here.

Kevin Dance, CP

REPRESENTING THE PASSIONIST FAMILY AT THE UNITED NATIONS
Promoting Justice, Reconciliation and Care of the Earth





UNITED LAO COUNCIL FOR PEACE, FREEDOM
AND RECONSTRUCTION
"A FOREIGN REGISTRANT"

ສະພາໂຮມລາວ ເພື່ອ ສັນຕິພາບ, ເສຣີພາບ ແລະ ພັ້ນຜູ້ຊາດ

4944 E. Clinton Way, Suite 113, Fresno, CA 93727

Phone (559) 252-9335, Fax (559) 252-9342



May 9, 2006

"To Whom It May Concern"

The United Lao Council for Peace, Freedom and Reconstruction is an International organization which represents the ethnic Hmong, Mien, Khmu, Lue, and Thai-dam in Laos and abroad.

We are in full support of the report, which was written by Rebecca Sommer, with the advice and partnership with our Hmong organizations.

The report is reflecting truthful the reasons why the Hmong fled the Special Zone Saysomboun and other restricted areas in Laos. The claims of the refugees should be understood as a testimony for all those who still live inside the areas, where violence and killings, fear and starvation are the heartbreaking reality.

We have no doubts that the military soldiers from Laos and Vietnam are conducting genocide. We do know for a fact that this is happening at this very moment when you read our endorsement letter.

Our organization has numerous contacts and sources, including the people from the areas where the military soldiers are stationed and hunting our people. We received for so many years alarming reports of massacred Hmong, either from the surrounding, who find decomposed bodies, or from the groups themselves.

The report written by Mrs. Sommer is the brief summary of the countless stories which would fill as many pages as people have died to write them all down.

We hope, that this neutral eyewitness report by Mrs. Sommer will encourage you to assist the refugees in White Water, by granting them refugee status, and food assistance. We will do our best to support in lobbying for a permanent solution.

We further hope that you will engage in the urgent conflict mediation with Laos, and Vietnam, for the Hmong remaining in hiding.

Respectfully,

Hue Vang
Executive Director of ULCPFR



WISCONSIN LAO VETERANS OF AMERICA, INC.

ອົງການນັກຮົບເກົ່າລາວແຫ່ງສະຫະຣັດອາເມຣິກາ

ສາຂາຮັຖວິສາກອນຊິມ



April 24, 2006

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the Lao Veteran Of Wisconsin is a Hmong organization, would like to endorse the Summary of Claims documents regarding the Hmong Lao in the jungle, and the Hmong Lao refugees in Thailand,

We urge the UN system, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and all relevant UN agencies, to take necessary immediate steps to assist the Hmong Lao refugees, who are currently residing as illegal migrants in the temporary settlement "White Water", in Petchabun, Thailand.

The UNHCR must take action to conduct a due pre-screening process for the refugees, in order to determine which Hmong persons are meeting the criteria of the UNHCR Statute, qualifying for the protection of the UN provided by the High Commissioner, regardless of whether or not Thailand is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol or whether or not Thailand is recognizing refugee status.

The Hmong refugees endure hunger, and urgent food assistance by the UN system is needed.

The UN should enter into dialogue with the Royal Thai Government, to ensure that all restrictions, which prohibit Thai citizens to sell or donate food to the refugees, are lifted. This would be a positive gesture of good will at the time when the Government of Thailand is submitting a candidate for the position of UN Secretary-General.

Those with well founded claims to fear persecution by the Laotian government must receive assistance and a solution must be found, to ensure that they are considered "mandate" refugees.

Additionally, we strongly urge you to consider the submitted testimonies of the refugees as the voice for those, who are still in hiding in the jungle of Laos.

The Hmong Lao refugees made the plight of the remaining groups in the jungle clear. They remaining groups are in urgent need of the UN systems assistance, to ensure that they will survive and that they get a chance to surrender without possible persecution by the Laotian authorities.

Therefore, we urge you to actively engage in a mediation process between the Lao PDR and the Hmong Lao groups.

This is a humanitarian crisis, which we wish to see addressed immediately.

Sincerely Yours

Nao Tou Lor

Enclosure



A Non-profit Organization



LAO HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, INC

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GREEN BAY, WI 54305-1844
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laohumrights@yahoo.com
www.laohumrights.org

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TREASURER
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DIRECTOR
VAUGHN VANG

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
DR. NAO CHER VANG

June 28, 2006

My organization, the Lao Human Rights Council, Inc., and I, fully endorse and support Rebecca Sommer's Report regarding the Hmong Lao refugees in Phechabun, Thailand and the Hmong Lao-in-hiding.

We are the oldest US based Hmong human rights organization, and serve the Hmong people, who suffer from human rights abuses in Laos and Thailand, since 30 years.

We are highly concerned about the ongoing systematic genocide against our people back home in Laos, conducted by the Lao PDR and Vietnamese governments.

Those who are left behind in the jungle are isolated, starved, they are chased, and killed every day.

Once the Hmong-in-hiding used to be in the hundreds of thousands --today, no more than a few thousands have survived the aggressive continuous military attacks .

We worked for the past month, from January to June 2006 very closely with Rebecca Sommer.

We advised her on the complicated multi layered issue of the Hmong-in-hiding, our culture, our history, we facilitated translations, contacts to numerous informants, we facilitated meetings with Hmong leaders, provided additional evidence, documents, film materials, photographs and recordings of satellite telephone calls from the Hmong-in-hiding.

Rebecca Sommer verified and double-checked in this way the accuracy of the claims of the Refugees, who recently fled the conflict zone in Laos, and are currently in Thailand.

The claims of the refugees, and Rebecca Sommers Report must be seen as the direct voice of those, who are still hiding in Laos. The refugees just recently fled the conflict zones, and belong to the same groups, they testify what they have endured – and what the Hmong still remaining in Laos do endure at this very moment.

The Hmong-in hiding must be rescued by the International Community.

The UN must give them a chance to survive with in the Lao society or elsewhere in the world.

A screening process by the UNHCR for the refugees who suffered so much , is urgently needed, The refugee issue in Phechabun, Thailand must be addressed, and a permanent solution must be found by the UN.

Our people in the refugee camp endure hunger, and we do request that Thailand and the UN help with food assistance.

Sincerely;
Vaughn Vang

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vaughn Vang".

Executive, Director Lao Human Rights Council, Inc