

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**UA 405/92 Fear of Torture/Legal Concern**

**21 December 1992**

**LAOS: Khamzone Vongnarath**

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Khamzone Vongnarath, aged 31, a Lao student in Ukraine was forcibly flown back to Laos on 21 December 1992 by officials of the Lao embassy in Moscow, apparently because he was suspected of opposing Lao Government policies. Amnesty International is concerned that Khamzone Vongnarath will be detained as a prisoner of conscience in Laos and that he may be subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

According to other Lao students, Khamzone Vongnarath had been studying International Relations at university in Kiev, Ukraine. In early December he travelled to Moscow to visit friends; he appears to have been detained on 12 December by Lao officials within the compound of the Lao embassy in Moscow. On 21 December it was reported that Khamzone Vongnarath was being flown to Bangkok under official escort in order to be returned to Vientiane, the capital of Laos.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Lao sources have told Amnesty International that Khamzone Vongnarath may be suspected of having opposed policies of Laos' ruling Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP). An unknown number of Lao students in Central Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States appear to have been sent back to Laos against their will in the past two years because they were suspected by the Lao authorities of opposing LPRP policies.

Prisoners of conscience in Laos have been detained without charge or trial and without access to lawyers and relatives for very long periods. Amnesty International is concerned that Khamzone Vongnarath is at grave risk of being detained in this manner and of being subjected to torture and ill-treatment during interrogation.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters either in French, English or in your own language:**

- expressing concern that Khamzone Vongnarath appears to have been sent back to Laos against his will by Lao officials;

- stressing that if Khamzone Vongnarath was detained in Laos for his suspected opposition to policies of the LPRP, Amnesty International would consider him to be a prisoner of conscience and demand his immediate and unconditional

release;

- urging the President and Prime Minister of Laos to ensure that Khamsoné Vongnarath is protected from any form of torture and ill-treatment.

Page 2 of UA 405/92

**APPEALS TO**

1. President

Nouhak Phoumsavanh  
Office of the President  
Vientiane  
LAOS

**Telegrams: President Nouhak Phoumsavanh, Vientiane, Laos**

**Telexes: 4317 MINAE LS or 4320 MINAE LS**

**Salutation: Dear President**

2. Prime Minister

General Khamtai Siphandone  
Office of the Council of Ministers  
Vientiane  
LAOS

**Telegrams: Generak Khamtai Siphandone, Vientiane, Laos**

**Telexes: 4317 MINAE LS or 4320 MINAE LS**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Newspaper:

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80 rue Sethathirath

BP 110

Vientiane

Laos

and to diplomatic representatives of Laos accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 February 1993.