

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 26/05/98

10 March 1998

Further information on UA 404/97 (ASA 26/03/97, 22 December 1997) - Health Concern / Prisoners of conscience

LAOS Thongsouk Saysangkhi  
Latsami Khamphoui  
Feng Sakchittaphong

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Amnesty International has learned of the sad news of the death, in prison, of Thongsouk Saysangkhi in mid-February 1998. He had suffered months of ill-health. His death heightens concerns regarding the chances of survival of Latsami Khamphoui and Feng Sakchittaphong, both of whom are seriously ill.

Although many appeals and expressions of concern regarding the ill-health of Thongsouk Saysangkhi were made by Amnesty International and others to the Laos authorities, he was apparently not provided with the medical care he urgently needed.

Latsami Khamphoui and Feng Sakchittaphong are detained in extremely harsh conditions in a remote prison camp with no medical facilities. Latsami Khamphoui has angina and Feng Sakchittaphong suffers from a variety of illnesses including kidney problems and intestinal problems.

The three men, detained since October 1990, were adopted by Amnesty International as prisoners of conscience after they were sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment following a grossly unfair trial in 1992 on charges including making "preparations for a rebellion", "propaganda against the Lao People's Democratic Republic" and "libel and slander". The men, former government officials, had advocated peaceful political and economic change in Laos.

Long-term efforts to obtain information concerning the condition of the men has been ongoing. No useful response from the Lao authorities, however, has been forthcoming.

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

- expressing dismay that Thongsouk Saysangkhi was not provided with urgent medical care that he needed, and that he died in custody in February 1998;
- urging that prisoners of conscience Latsami Khamphoui and Feng Sakchittaphong be immediately and unconditionally released;
- urging that, pending their release, the Lao Government ensures they urgently receive the medical treatment they require, including transfer to hospital;
- urging that the Lao authorities immediately lift all restrictions on access to families of the prisoners.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Khamtay Siphandone  
President  
Office of the President  
Vientiane  
Laos

**Telegrams: President Khamtay Siphandone, Vientiane, Laos**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency Sisavath Keobounphanh  
Prime Minister  
Prime Minister's Office  
Vientiane  
Laos

**Telegrams: Prime Minister, Vientiane, Laos**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Major General Asang Laoli  
Minister of Interior  
Ministry of Interior  
Vientiane  
Laos

**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Vientiane, Laos**  
**Salutation: Dear Major General**

**COPIES 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 21 April 1998.