

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 26/02/98

16 February 1998

Further information on UA 38/98 (ASA 26/01/98, 6 February 1998) - Fear for safety / Possible prisoners of conscience

LAOSKhun Sy  
Bounlerth  
Chan  
Duangmanee, 18 (f)  
Khonmanee  
                  Khet  
Khamawang  
Phengsy  
Khammieng  
Kaljaruengsuk  
Phakhamphim (f)  
Vienkham  
Phakhamporn (f)

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Twenty of the 33 men and women held in incommunicado detention since their arrest at a Bible study meeting on 31 January were reportedly released on 13 February 1998. They had been held at Wattay prison in Vientiane. The remaining 13 are still detained at Thatdam prison, Vientiane. It is not known if they have been charged with any offence.

The 13 include Khun Sy, the owner of the property where the Bible study meeting was being held, and his two sons, Bounlerth and Chan, and 18-year-old daughter Duangmanee. Bounlerth is Health Coordinator for *Partners in Progress* and has a pregnant wife. Khonmanee and Khet, both married with children, were working on a well drilling team for *Partners in Progress*, and Phengsy is a Health Trainer. Khammieng and Kaljaruengsuk are both farmers. Phakhamphim, Vienkham and Phakhamporn are reported to have led midweek Bible study classes.

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

- welcoming the release of 20 men and women detained since their arrest at a Bible study meeting on 31 January;
- urging the authorities to guarantee the safety of the 13 who remain in detention at Thatdam prison, Vientiane, and ensure that they are treated in accordance with international minimum standards;
- urging that the 13 be allowed immediate access to their families, lawyers and doctors;
- expressing concern that the 13 are prisoners of conscience detained solely for exercising their rights to freedom of belief and worship, and calling for their immediate and unconditional release

**APPEALS TO:**

Sisavat Keobounphan  
Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Vientiane  
Laos

**Telegrams: Prime Minister, Vientiane, Laos**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

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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 30 March 1998.