

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 26/01/00

5 January 2000

Further information on UA 289/99 (ASA 26/02/99, 5 November 1999) and follow-up (ASA 26/04/99, 23 November 1999) - Possible prisoners of conscience / Fear of ill-treatment

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC Khamnoy Khamphilavong (aged 70) - released

Thongpaseuth Keuakoun

Seng-Aloun Phengphanh

Kamphouvieng Sisaath

Bouavanh Chanhmanivong

Keochay, up to 100 others

Amnesty International has learned that Khamnoy Khamphilavong, who was arrested on 9 November 1999, was released from detention on or around 20 December 1999. Khamnoy Khamphilavong, who is the father of one of the leaders of the "Lao Students Movement for Democracy of 26 October 1999", was apparently arrested because the authorities were unable to locate the leader of the student group.

Amnesty International believes that those listed above, and possibly dozens of others still in detention following an attempted pro-democracy demonstration in Vientiane on 26 October, organized by the group, are prisoners of conscience and may be at risk of ill-treatment in detention.

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

- welcoming the release of Khamnoy Khamphilavong and asking for assurances that his release is unconditional;
- expressing concern at the ongoing detention of Thongpaseuth Keuakoun, Kamphouvieng Sisaath, Seng-Aloun Phengphanh, Bouavanh Chanhmanivong, Keochay and possibly dozens of others;
- urging that they be treated in accordance with international standards and in particular are allowed immediate access to their families, lawyers and medical treatment;
- expressing concern that they may be prisoners of conscience detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and association, and that they should be released immediately and unconditionally if they are not charged with a recognisably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

Sisavath Keobounphanh
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
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:

Somsavat Lengsavat
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Vientiane
Laos

and to diplomatic representatives of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 February 2000.