

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Please send up to ten appeals per section

UA 447/91

Medical Concern/Prisoner of Conscience

18 December 1991

LAOS:

Khamphan PRADITH, 57

Amnesty International is concerned that Khamphan Pradith, a prisoner of conscience detained in Sop Pan "re-education" camp in Houa Phan province, Laos, is in poor health and is not receiving proper medical treatment.

Khamphan Pradith is reportedly suffering from oedema of the face and limbs of unknown cause. Oedema is a condition of swelling of the tissues. He also reportedly suffers from a heart condition. He is in the hospital in Sop Pan, but is reportedly receiving inadequate medical care.

The former Deputy Governor of Luang Prabang Province under the previous administration of Laos, Khamphan Pradith has been detained since 1975 without charge or trial. He is among a group of eight remaining political prisoners held in "re-education" in Sop Pan camp; 24 detainees also held there were released in May 1991.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Khamphan Pradith was a civil servant under the Provisional Government of National Union of Laos, which had been formed in 1973 to end the civil war in the country. It disintegrated during 1975, and by the end of the year a new state, the Democratic People's Republic of Laos, was proclaimed.

Khamphan Pradith was one of 10,000 to 15,000 civil servants and military personnel detained by the new authorities. Like many of them, he presented himself peacefully and voluntarily when the authorities requested people associated with the previous regime to participate in what they said would be brief "re-education" seminars to prepare for serving the new administration.

Instead, he and many others were held for years without charge or trial. However, the vast majority of these prisoners have now been released. Khamphan Pradith and other detainees in Sop Pan camp were reportedly told by local authorities that they were still being held because they were "counter-revolutionaries" and "backward socialists".

During Khamphan Pradith's 16 years of detention, he has been assigned to heavy labour with road construction gangs, despite deteriorating health which sometimes required hospitalization. Khamphan Pradith is a Christian and a poet.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/express and airmail letters in FRENCH if possible:

- asking for the immediate and unconditional release of Khamphan Pradith;
- seeking information on his present state of health and asking for assurances that he is receiving proper medical treatment while in detention.

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APPEALS TO

1) General Khamtai Siphandon, Prime Minister
Office of the Council of Ministers
Vientiane
LAOS

Telegrams: Prime Minister Khamtai Siphandon, Vientiane, Laos

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

2) A-Sang Laoli, Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Vientiane
LAOS

Telegrams: Interior Minister A-Sang Laoli, Vientiane, Laos

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of LAOS in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 January 1992.