

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 26/11/98

29 September 1998

Further information on UA 404/97 (ASA 26/05/98, 22 December 1997) and follow-up (ASA 26/05/98, 10 March 1998) - Health Concern/Prisoners of conscience

LAOS Latsami Khamphoui  
Feng Sakchittaphong

Bounlu Nammathao (reportedly died June/July 1998)

Thongsouk Saysangkhi (died February 1998)

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Amnesty International is dismayed to learn that Latsami Khamphoui and Feng Sakchittaphong are both still suffering from serious health problems for which it appears they have not been provided with adequate medical care. Feng Sakchittaphong is reported to be unable to move without assistance and stays lying down. Latsami Khamphoui is reported to be very weak and pale and has lost a lot of weight.

The two men are detained in extremely harsh conditions at Prison Camp 7 in a remote area of Houa Phan Province. There are no medical facilities at the camp and they have suffered from a range of illnesses since their detention. Amnesty International fears that unless both men are urgently provided with medical treatment in hospital they will not survive.

Amnesty International has also received unconfirmed information about the death in June or July 1998 of another political prisoner detained at Prison Camp 7. Bounlu Nammathao had already been held for "re-education" without charge or trial for 17 years when he was tried in 1992 and sentenced to life imprisonment for alleged crimes committed prior to 1975. Amnesty International is seeking confirmation of his death and causes.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Latsami Khamphoui and Feng Sakchittaphong were detained with their friend Thongsouk Saysangkhi in October 1990. They were adopted as prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International after they were sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment after 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". All three are former government officials who had advocated peaceful political and economic change in Laos. Appeals that all three should be provided with appropriate medical care for their deteriorating health have been ignored by the authorities; Thongsouk Saysangkhi died in mid-February 1998 reportedly from complications relating to diabetes.

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

- expressing grave concern that prisoners of conscience Latsami Khamphoui and Feng Sakchittaphong continue to suffer from serious health problems;
- urging that they should be immediately and unconditionally released, pending which they should be provided with the medical treatment they need, including transfer to hospital;
- requesting confirmation of reports of the death of political prisoner Bounlu Nammathao in June or July 1998, and if true, the causes of death.

**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**

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 10 November 1998.

***"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression."***

*Article*

*19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

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