

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1273

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the human rights crisis of Laotian and Hmong people in Laos and Thailand.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 12, 2008

Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. WOLF, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. ROHR-ABACHER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the human rights crisis of Laotian and Hmong people in Laos and Thailand.

Whereas tens of thousands of Laotian and ethnic Hmong forces served honorably and courageously in defense of the national security interests of Laos, Thailand, and the United States;

Whereas special ethnic Hmong military and paramilitary air and ground forces, along with United States Armed Forces and clandestine forces, conducted many heroic and successful large-scale air and ground operations against North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao guerrilla forces, including the rescue of United States Air Force,

Navy, and Army pilots shot down in Laos and Vietnam during the Vietnam War;

Whereas Laos and the Royal Lao Government fell to the Communist Pathet Lao and invading North Vietnamese forces in 1975;

Whereas Pathet Lao guerilla forces, in cooperation with invading military forces from North Vietnam, established the authoritarian, one-party communist regime that continues to rule Laos and maintains a strict monopoly on political power;

Whereas tens of thousands of Lao and Hmong people, including the Royal Lao family, many in the Royal Lao Government, and the Royal Lao Army as well as those individuals who served with the United States Armed Forces and clandestine forces were persecuted, imprisoned, or killed by the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR) regime;

Whereas tens of thousands of Laotians, including ethnic Hmong who served with United States Armed Forces and clandestine forces during the Vietnam War, fled the communist regime and were given political asylum and refugee status in Thailand and eventually resettled in third countries such as Australia, Canada, France, and the United States;

Whereas His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand and the Royal Thai Government have historically provided political asylum and compassionate humanitarian assistance to Lao and Hmong refugees who have fled the brutal LPDR regime;

Whereas tens of thousands of Laotians and ethnic Hmong have been granted political asylum in the United States

and resettled to become productive, positive, prosperous, and good citizens and members of their communities;

Whereas the LPDR, a one-party state, has a serious and repeated record of human rights violations, religious persecution, and military and security force attacks against its own citizens, especially against the minority ethnic Hmong people;

Whereas the LPDR regime refuses to allow human rights organizations unfettered access to areas of concern in Laos where, according to Amnesty International and other independent human rights organizations, intensified military attacks against unarmed Lao and Hmong civilians continued in 2007 and 2008, including in Bolikamsai, Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Xieng Khouang Province;

Whereas the Department of State reported in its 2007 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Laos that Laos restricts its citizens from enjoying the freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion, and from undertaking activities to change their government;

Whereas the LPDR regime in Laos continues to deny independent human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch access to, or monitoring of, Lao and Hmong returnees from Thailand or those individuals who are captured or surrender in Laos;

Whereas as a result of ongoing political violence and military attacks in Laos directed against thousands of Laotian and Hmong people, asylum seekers continue to seek refuge in Thailand;

Whereas over 7,000 Lao and Hmong political refugees and asylum seekers have fled Laos and sought refuge from

the Lao Government at a make shift camp at Ban Huay Nam Khao, Phetchabun Province, Thailand;

Whereas in January 2007, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) issued a statement of concern regarding Thailand's decision to deport 16 Lao and Hmong from Nong Khai, Thailand, to Laos without screening them to see if they needed international protection, and repeated its offer to help Thai authorities put in place a screening system; and

Whereas the United States has a vital national security interest in and moral obligation to assist its former allies and those Laotians and Hmong seeking political asylum at Ban Huay Nam Khao, Nong Khai, and elsewhere in Laos and Thailand: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives strongly
2 supports and urges that—

3 (1) the Lao Government should—

4 (A) end the ongoing humanitarian tragedy
5 in Laos by immediately ceasing all military and
6 security force attacks and actions against Lao
7 and Hmong civilians and dissident Laotian po-
8 litical and minority religious groups;

9 (B) provide immediate, unfettered inter-
10 national access by independent human rights,
11 humanitarian, and United Nations organiza-
12 tions, including the United Nations High Com-
13 missioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to closed
14 areas and military zones in Laos where Lao-

1 tians and Hmong are being killed, starved to
2 death, persecuted, or have been internally dis-
3 placed or fled;

4 (C) comply with the provisions of H. Res.
5 402 from the 108th Congress which urges the
6 Lao Government to move toward an open,
7 prodemocratic society that respects the human
8 rights of its people and to cease its military at-
9 tacks and its persecution of Laotian and
10 Hmong citizens including student activists; and

11 (D) release the leaders of the Lao Stu-
12 dents Movement for Democracy of October
13 1999 and other Lao political and religious op-
14 position leaders and prisoners of conscience;
15 and

16 (2) His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of
17 Thailand, the Royal Thai Government, and com-
18 manders of the Thai Army and military, including
19 the Thai Third Army, should—

20 (A) allow UNHCR access to the over
21 7,000 Lao and Hmong political refugees and
22 asylum seekers at Ban Huay Nam Khao and
23 elsewhere in Thailand;

24 (B) continue to allow the over 7,000 Lao
25 and Hmong political refugees and asylum seek-

1 ers at Ban Huay Nam Khao to be given hu-
2 manitarian assistance and sanctuary and to re-
3 main in Thailand until such time as they can
4 be resettled in third countries by UNHCR and
5 nongovernmental organizations;

6 (C) allow transparency and access for jour-
7 nalists, humanitarian aid groups, and human
8 rights monitors seeking to help the Laotian and
9 Hmong refugees at Ban Huay Nam Khao to
10 assist by providing humanitarian and resettle-
11 ment assistance;

12 (D) refrain from any further repatriation
13 of Lao and Hmong refugees and asylum seekers
14 in Thailand who have fled from the LPDR re-
15 gime in Laos; and

16 (E) continue to allow Lao and Hmong ref-
17 ugees and asylum seekers from Laos fleeing the
18 LPDR regime's intensified military attacks as
19 well as Lao political, religious, and opposition
20 dissidents to have sanctuary in Thailand until
21 they can be assisted by the UNHCR and the
22 international community.

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