

**ASEAN WATCH
THAILAND**

Work and
Act
Together for the
Community of
Human Security

AWT 01/2013

March 25, 2013

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Subject: Requesting Thai Government to join the effort to protect the rights of the citizens of Lao PDR – the case of the enforced disappearance of Sombath Somphone

Attention: Her Excellency Miss Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand

Yours Excellency,

On December 15, 2012 Sombath Somphone, the senior social development advocate of Lao PDR was forced to disappear. The evidence found by his colleagues and family members revealed that he was abducted by a group of men after he was stopped by traffic police on Tha Dueda Road of the Vientiane, Laos' capital city.

This day (March 25, 2013) marks the 100th day of his disappearance. Various civil society organizations and several governments have continued to express their grave concern over the case and encourage Lao authority to act more actively to search Sombath but to no avail. To date, Thai authority has not yet joined the international community to take a position on this matter.

Sombath Somphone, winner of the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 2005 for his community service, is a senior member of Lao civil society. Over 30 years, Sombath dedicated himself to community development and social service while creating and promoting youth development and education. He was confident in the development in which people can participate hence voices of the people must be heard, the development that use the 'Gross National Happiness' as an index instead of economic growth figures alone; which, he believed, would lead to a genuine and sustainable development of Lao PDR. His concept and approach is widely recognized and supported by global community. Most recently, he was a Co-Chairperson of the Asia Europe People Forum prior to the ASEM Summit in Lao PDR in November 2012 in which Yours Excellency also participated.

Thus, the enforced disappearance of Sombath Somphone has severely affected the Lao civil society as well as the international community that advocates just and sustainable development where the people are at the center. This silence from the Lao authority in response to

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Sombath's enforced disappearance indicates the invisible violence in Lao society, the issue that has for long not been discussed.

In view of the above, we, the people and civil society in Thailand, would like to submit once again this letter to urge the government of Thailand – one of Laos' close neighbors and one of the supporters for Laos to join the global market and leave the 'least developed country' list – to take a clear position and collaborate with international community to support human rights in Lao PDR. We urge the government under the leadership of Yours Excellency to recognize the role of civil society that works towards more respect for human rights and thus gives Sombath Somphone's disappearance case equal importance to the bilateral development cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

Alternative Agriculture Network
Alternative Agriculture Network, Southern Thailand
Love Chiangkhan Group
ASEAN WATCH –Thailand
ASEAN Youth Movement
Mekong Peace Journey
Cambodian-Thai Exchange Program
Assembly of the poor
Assembly of the Poor, Pak Mun Dam
Assembly of the Poor, Rasisalai
Biothai
Campaign Committee for Human Rights, Thailand
Center for Human Right Promotion in the Northeast Region
Community Organization Council of Bantong
Community Organization Council of Bungkarn
Community Organization Council of Bungkla
Community Organization Council of Bungkonglong
Community Organization Council of Chaiyaporn
Community Organization Council of Dongbung
Community Organization Council of Horkam
Community Organization Council of Kaisi
Community Organization Council of Kogkong
Community Organization Council of Kogkwang
Community Organization Council of Nakung
Community Organization Council of Namjun
Community Organization Council of Nongduen
Community Organization Council of Nonsomboon
Community Organization Council of Pomakkaeng
Community Organization Council of Ponghai
Community Organization Council of Porncharoen

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Community Organization Council of Sabang
Community Organization Council of Sang
Community Organization Council of Seka
Community Organization Council of Sokkam
Community Organization Council of Srichompoo
Community Organization Council of Srisamran
Community Organization Council of Thadokkham
Community Organization Council of Thakokdaeng
Community Organization Council of Thasa-ad
Community Sector Development Foundation
Cross Cultural Foundation Thailand
Drug Study Group
Ecological Alert and Recovery Thailand
EnLAW Foundation
Esan Community Foundation
ESAN Women's Network
Federation of North Farmer
Federation of Northern Farmers, Thailand
Foundation for Ecological Recovery
Foundation for Labour and Employment Promotion (HOMENET Thailand)
Foundation for Women
Four Regions Slum Network
Friend of Nature, Kalasin
FTA Watch
Human Settlement Foundation
Institute for Nurturing Mind and Social Transformation
Institute for Nurturing Minds and Social Transformation : INMiST
International Network of Engaged Buddhists
Internet Law Reform Dialogue (iLaw)
ISAN Voice
Isan Voice Group, Ubonrachathani
Justice for Peace Foundation
Lanna Local Wisdom School
Living River Siam
Local Wisdom Network, Ubon Ratchathani
Mekong Energy and Ecology Network (MEE-Net)
Mekong Lover Community Network
Mun River Wetland Recovery Project
NET Foundation
NGO Coordinating Committee on Development, Northern Thailand
Northeast Thai Development Foundation
Northern Development Foundation
Northern Network for Land Reform
Northern Thai NGO Coordinating Committee
NorthNet Foundation

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Palang Thai
Peace and Culture Foundation
Peace and Dharma Institution
Peace and Human Rights Resource Center
Peace and Human Rights Resource Center, Thailand
Peace and Human Rights Resource Center, Thailand
People's Network against Nuclear Power Plant, Surin
People's Network for Social and Political Reform
People's Network on Biomass Power Plant Impacts, Ubon Ratchathani
Pichai Srisai, Songkhla
P-Move
Prachatham News Network
Puwua Forest Conservation Network
Rak Khao Chamao Group
Rattawit Ruangprakon, Burirum
Reclaiming Rural Agriculture and Food Sovereignty Action
Research and Advocacy Network for Women
Sathirakoses-Nagapradipa Foundation
School for Wellbeing Studies and Research
Slum Community Network
Social Human Rights Law Center
Social Management Institute
Stateless Persons Empowerment Project, Ubonrachathani
Alternative Agriculture Network
Study Group for Energy Justice and Sustainability
Sustainable Agriculture Foundation (Thailand)
Sustainable Alternative Development Association (SADA)
Sustainable Development Foundation
Sustainable Development Foundation
Sustainable Development Foundation - SDF
Sustainable Energy Network
Thai Baan Association, Mahasarakham
Thai Development Support Center
Thai NGO Coordinating Committee on Development
Thai People's Network Against Nuclear, Ubonrachathani
Thai Volunteer Service
Thai Volunteer Service Foundation
Alternative Agriculture Network, Northeast Thailand
Eco Cultural and Restoration Study Center, Petchaboon Mountain Range Community
Thai Working Group for Climate Justice
ThaiDhhra
Thailand Alternative Education Council
Thai-Water Partnership
The Campaign Committee for Human Rights
The Centre for Local Wisdom Recovery, Phetchaboon Range, Phetchaboon Province

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The Collaboration for the Young Generation in Mekong Region
The Creative Youth Group
The Network of Community Organization Council in Seven Northeastern Provinces
The Relative Committee of May 1992
Social-Democracy Think Tank
Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA)
Union for Civil Liberty (UCL)
Women Network on land Protection, Phetchaboon Province
Women's Network for Land Rights Protection, Petchaboon Province
Workers Hub for Change (WH4C)

Achichaya Otwong, Bangkok
Angkana Neelapaijit, Bangkok
Anucha Wintachai
Boontan Tansuthep-veravong, Bangkok
Bundit Homket, Chaiyaphum
Butsara Singhabut, Lampang
Chalerm Sri Prasertsri, Narathiwat
Chanida Janyapase Bamford
Charn Roobsom, Bangkok
Chepadorn Junhom, Trang
Chuenchom Sangarasri Greacen
Chutchawan Tongdeelerd, Bangkok
Dararai Raksasiripong
Eakkachai Itsarata, Songkla
Jakkrit Poonsawatkitikul, Nontaburi
Jaruan Supolrai, Ubonrachathani
Jatuporn Cheewasrirungruang, Songkhla
Jeeranuch Premchaiporn, Bangkok
Jingjung Na-sae, Songkhla
Jittima Polsawek, Bangkok
Kittikarn Harnkul, Ubonrachathani
Klaew Montreesri, Nongbualumphu
Klaueyuang Daoroung, Bangkok
Kritsada Boonchai, Bangkok
Kritsada Khunnarong, Pattalung
Kritsakorn Silarak, Ubonrachathani
Kritsakorn Silaraksa
Kriya Notananda, Chiangmai
Lerdsak Kamkongsak, Pathumthani
Manunya Poonsiri, Lopburi
Masakorn Saraprunng, Kalasin
Matha Thipsuna, Nongkhai

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Montana Duangprapa, Payao
Natcha Chaiphet, Pathumthani
Nattaporn Chaiphet, Pathumthani
Nijnirun Awabhark, Songkhla
Nitikorn Khamchoo, Chaiyaphum
Nitirat Sapsomboon
Ormbun Thipsuna, Nongkhai
Ormjai Noodaeng, Suratthani
Pannee Thowakulpanich
Panom Butakieaw, Chaiyaphum
Parunda Pankaew, Bangkok
Pathamayanin Liamcharoen, Sukhothai
Pawinee Chumsri, Surin
Poonsuk Poonsukcharoen, Nakornsawan
Pornpen Khongkachonkiet
Pornsiri Cheewapattananuwong, Faculty of Humanities, Mahasarakham University
Prajakporn Sophon, Bangkok
Prasit Chaiphet, Pathumthani
Pratupjit Neelapaijit, Bangkok
Prayong Dorklamyai
Ruangtong Junda, Khon Kaen
Rungthiwa Pawaree, Chonburi
Sakdina Chatrakul
Sangchan Chaiphet, Pathumthani
Sasinun Thammanitinun, Kanchanaburi
Siriporn Chaiphet, Pathumthani
Sodsai Srangsok, Ubonrachathani
Somlak Hutuanuwat
Sompong Wiengjantara
Somsak Phonphakdee, Surin
Songkrant Pongboonjun, Udonthani
Sophon Noorat, Songkhla
Sumitchai Huttasarn, Chiangmai
Sunida Piyakulpanit, Tak
Suntaree H. Saeng-ging, Khon Kaen
Supaporn Malailoy, Chachoengsao
Surachai Trongngam, Bangkok
Sutilla Luankham
Suttikiat Kachaso, Kalasin
Suttikiat Thammadul, Nan
Tam Mun Project, Surin
Tanwan Topoklang, Nakornrachasrima
Tawan Wisetsin, Songkhla
Thanthorn Karnmungmee, Chiangmai
Wanee Bangprapa Thitiprasert, Bangkok

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Wanun Permpibul
Wasana Lamdee
Weerapong Kungwanwanakul, Chaingrai
Wipaphan Korkeatkachorn
Witoowat Tongbu, Mahasarakham