



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

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**Embassy of the Lao PDR**

**Canberra**

No. 45 /LEC.14  
Canberra, 21 May 2014

The Honourable John Hogg  
President of the Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra

Your Honourable,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 27 March 2014 regarding the text of a resolution agreed to by the Senate on 26 March 2014, related to the disappearance of Mr. Sombath Somphone.

We take note with regret of the great concerns expressed by the Senate about the disappearance, safety and wellbeing of Mr. Somphone, which should have been addressed or dealt with within the existing bilateral Human Rights Dialogue. Aware as you may be, the Dialogue has been highly valued by both sides as an effective mechanism in addressing all human right issues. With regard to the terms of the above resolution, I would like to clarify as follows:

1. As a citizen of Laos, Sombath missing has been of graver concern and worry to the Lao PDR Government. After receiving the report of Mr. Sombath Somphone's missing, the authorities concerned notified all police headquarters across the country, on 17 December 2012 by telephone and on 18 January 2013 in writing, to search for him. Those police headquarters then reported back that they had not found the missing person. The CCTV footage obtained from the police and widely posted on the internet by Mr. Sombath's wife, as a matter of fact, did not give any clear picture of who is who or what is what

therein. Consequently, no one could confirm what really happened for all the persons and vehicles seen in the footage were unclear at all. Particularly Mr. Sombath himself could not be precisely identified. Therefore, many people can not but keep wondering if Mr. Sombath did actually disappear in the place captured by the CCTV.

2. On the investigation into the incident, since the incident unfolded the authorities concerned have conducted a series of thorough investigation and collected some information that may be relevant to the missing Mr. Sombath Somphone. In this connection, a number of briefings have been held by the authorities on the results of the investigations for the media and all interested parties. At present, the authorities concerned are continuing to seriously carry on the investigation.
3. On the prosecution of perpetrators, at present the authorities concerned are striving by all means to go ahead with the investigation into the missing case. If perpetrators found they will be brought to justice in accordance with the law.
4. As regards Lao PDR's willingness to cooperate with the international community, please be kindly informed that the Lao PDR Government is now in the process of working toward the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in the near future.

You can rest assured of the Lao PDR Government paying continued close attention at and remaining seized on this matter.

With warmest regards,

Yours Sincerely,



Phomma Khammanichanh  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary