

ECHOES OF INJUSTICE:

Civil and Political Freedom under Siege in LAOS





Joint Civil Society Submission to be considered by the UN Human Rights Council during the Universal Periodic Review (Fourth Cycle), 49th session (April–May 2025), Lao PDR.

Submission by

Manushya Foundation x Power By Keyboard



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A. INTRODUCTION

We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this Joint Civil Society UPR Shadow Report, which will be reviewed by the United Nations during the 4th cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2025. This report, focusing on the situation in Laos, represents our collective efforts to bring attention to critical human rights issues and advocate for meaningful change.

Manushya Foundation (Manushya) was founded in 2017 as an Intersectional Feminist organisation dedicated to strengthening local communities and advocating for human rights in Laos. We work to ensure that these communities are at the forefront of decision-making processes that affect their lives and to amplify their voices in speaking truth to power. Manushya defends local communities and seeks justice with them at the United Nations, focusing on a broad spectrum of human rights issues, including women’s rights, gender equality, digital rights, and climate and environmental justice.

Power by Keyboard (ຂັບເຄື່ອນດ້ວຍຄືບອັດ) was created by pro-democracy youth in March 2022 and advocates for true democracy while criticising Lao PDR's growing dependency on China. It focuses on human rights, including China's dominant influence on investments in Lao PDR and education rights for Lao youth. The page also addresses environmental concerns and fiercely supports LGBTQI+ rights in Laos.

The comprehensive analysis and data presented in this report are a result of on-the-ground data collection, diligent monitoring, and the substantial efforts of Manushya Foundation and Power by Keyboard, who are deeply committed to advancing human rights and achieving genuine progress for the people of Laos.

B. KEY CONCERNS

Civil and Political Rights in Laos

Political Context

1. Laos is a one-party state, meaning only one political party, the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (LPRP), has all the power. The LPRP likes to think of itself as a Marxist-Leninist group aiming to create a society where everyone is equal. But, as you might have suspected, the reality is different. Instead of promoting equality, power and wealth are doing a fantastic job of staying cosy with the party elites, while the rest of us are left with no more than a spectator's role in government decisions. The promised social justice is surprisingly blocked by restrictions on free speech, assembly, and association.ⁱ The Report of the Human Rights Council from its 45th session already pointed out that critics face threats and harsh punishments, deemed a menace to “national unity”.ⁱⁱ It’s telling that the government has additionally ignored most of the UPR’s recommendations about civil and political rights, showing a clear lack of interest in basic freedoms and human rights.ⁱⁱⁱ So, while the LPRP pretends to care about equality, it’s hard to trust them, especially when PM Phankham Viphavanh is busy dodging rumours about his alleged connection to a Lao-Chinese businesswoman whose corpse was found floating in the Mekong.^{iv}

Freedom of Association - No Civic Space for Independent CSOs

2. The government has a tight control over civil society organisations (CSOs) through various laws. **Decree No. 238**, for example, gives them the power to monitor, control, and even dissolve non-profit associations (NPAs), making sure there are no independent CSOs. For example, **Women’s rights groups** must operate through the Lao Women’s Union, which is run by the government, giving women activists no real way to speak out. **Decree No. 13** also restricts international CSOs, forcing them to align with government goals.^v Among the recommendations, only 115.100 has been accepted, which guarantees freedom of expression in line with the ICCPR. Meanwhile, six others have been rejected. Notably 115.114, which demands amending Decree No. 238, remains ignored.^{vi} As you can see, the Lao government is genuinely thrilled to hear independent voices, inspired by its close friend China, widely recognised for its robust democratic framework.

Freedom of Assembly

3. **Articles 110 (related to ‘Treason to the Nation’) and 124 (related to Gatherings Aimed at Causing Social Disorder) of the Penal Code** are often invoked to limit freedom of assembly and justify actions against human rights defenders—once again, in the name of "maintaining social order".^{vii} Out of nine recommendations on this topic, the government claims to support three: 115.99, which ensures restrictions on freedom of assembly comply with the ICCPR; 115.100, which guarantees freedom of assembly; and 115.108, which calls for the release of those detained for exercising this right.^{viii} It appears that Laos has yet to fully embrace the concept of implementation, which remains an entirely foreign concept to the Lao government.
4. **Phouvong Sayaseng** serves as an example of how the authorities handle freedom of assembly. He was a national representative of the Alliance for Democracy (ADL), organising peaceful protests in Vientiane. The protests were abruptly cancelled due to a heavy police crackdown and just days later he mysteriously vanished, with his death reported on July 18, 2020. The circumstances surrounding his death remain unclear and suspicious, with the lack of transparency from the police regarding the investigation raising further concerns.^{ix} Maybe they’re diligently working behind the scenes—thorough investigations can't be rushed, after all...

Freedom of Expression

5. The situation in Laos illustrates a complete absence of freedom of expression. While the country is still trying to figure out how to use a computer and struggling with basic internet access, the government has somehow mastered the art of censoring online speech. **Decree No. 327** and **the 2015 Cyber Crime Law** criminalise "false information"—or, more accurately, anything critical of the regime. Vague defamation and insult laws further restrict free speech. Notably, **Article 117 of the Penal Code related to ‘anti-state propaganda’** is frequently used to prosecute activists for questioning the government on social media. It is important to highlight **Articles 205 and 206 of the Penal Code**, which classify defamation, libel, and insults as punishable offences. It’s clear how these laws are used to oppress people, creating a climate of fear and self-censorship. The LPRP further exercises absolute control over the media, including TV, radio, and printed publications, through the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of the Government of Lao PDR. Legal restrictions aimed at ensuring strict adherence to and promotion of government policies were introduced by the **2016 amendments to the Media Act of 2008** and by **Decree No. 377** on Press Activities of Foreign Media Agencies, Diplomatic Missions, and International



Organizations, which requires the submission of materials for governmental approval before publication. The government's broad control over the internet, media, and civil society has only gotten worse with its cooperation with China to "modernise" the media industry, further limiting independent journalism and diverse opinions.^x

6. Regarding the UPR recommendations, 21 were related to freedom of expression. Of these, only 9 were formally supported by the government. However, while the government expressed nominal support, there has been little evidence of genuine efforts to implement these recommendations. The lack of tangible progress indicates that the commitment to addressing freedom of expression remains largely superficial.^{xi} On June 25, 2024, the Lao government apparently decided that its iron grip on the internet wasn't crushing enough, so they ordered their Department of Technology and Communications to step it up by monitoring every whisper of dissent online. Anyone who dares question the regime or bruises its fragile egos with a critical comment is now on their radar for "immediate investigation". Naturally, they'll also be hunting for the usual cyber threats like call centre scams and, of course, state document leaks.^{xii} Because, let's face it, nothing screams "commitment to democracy" like turning your country into a digital panopticon where every click is under scrutiny.

7. There are countless examples to choose from, but let's keep it light for now. After all, you'll have plenty of heavy material to digest later in the access to justice chapter. **James Famor** is a content creator who has over 300,000 followers on social media, and he's known for his funny videos about the terrible roads in Laos. With AI, he turns pictures of pothole-filled streets into shiny highways—a digital makeover that his fans love. But the Lao authorities didn't find it funny at all. They arrested him on August 28, 2024, warning his family that he could be charged under Article 117 for criticising the government. His friend and co-editor, **Dai James**, was also taken into custody but released on August 30, 2024, at 6.00 PM. After a week in jail, James Famor's arrest sparked a big debate online, with many people wondering why the government was so sensitive about it. When he was released on September 2, 2024, James posted a video thanking the police for their "re-education" and promising to avoid trouble.^{xiii} **Houayheung Xayabouly also known as 'Muay'**, a prominent citizen journalist, played a critical role in exposing the government's inadequate response to crises and the misappropriation of aid meant for affected communities. Through her Facebook videos, she shed light on the harsh realities faced by survivors—information that was otherwise suppressed by government censorship. In September 2019, Muay was arrested and subsequently sentenced to five years in prison for anti-state propaganda



under Article 117 of the Penal Code. Her case exemplifies the state's ongoing crackdown on freedom of expression.^{xiv} A more detailed analysis of her arbitrary detention will be provided in the section on arbitrary detention.

Access to Justice & Effective Remedies in Laos

No People's Representation, No Accountability, No Access to Justice

8. Not only the law doesn't allow free speech, peaceful protests or demonstrations; political competition is also non-existent. The LPRP controls everything: the government, military, and institutions. Even though elections happen, the candidates are chosen by the Party, so there's no real choice. For example, in the 2021 National Assembly elections, the LPRP won 158/164 seats, with the rest going to handpicked independents. This makes Laos an authoritarian one-party "democracy" where the public has no real political voice. Freedom House has classified Laos as "not free," with a freedom score of 13/100 and a political rights score of 2/40.^{xv}

9. In this context, let's be real: there is no access to justice at all in Laos. The most frustrating part? The government refuses to set up a National Human Rights Institution that meets the Paris Principles.^{xvi} Michelle Bachelet called them out on this in her follow-up letter from the OHCHR on the 3rd Cycle of implementation.^{xvii} Their excuse? "Incompatible with current realities".^{xviii} Just last week, on October 8, 2024, during the Laos' CEDAW review, the CEDAW Committee members were fierce in demanding to know what the current obstacles were. When the representative couldn't give a clear answer, they pressed him again for specifics. But all he managed to say—clearly shocked at being aggressively challenged by women—was that Laos wants to focus on its existing institutions and mechanisms.^{xix} You know, those *oh-so-independent* institutions! The Lao government is shamelessly laughing at the UN, acting like they're untouchable. They think they can sit through the session, tighten their butts for a few hours, and then head to Geneva to gorge themselves like pigs—all on the backs of the very people they pretend to represent. Additionally, Laos has still to ratify international treaties, such as the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OP-CAT).^{xx}

10. That being said, we are considering several recommendations that Laos has supported but has not implemented. These include: incorporating international human rights norms into national legislation (115.36); improving investigations into cases of enforced disappearances (115.72); strengthening the independence of the judiciary and ensuring full access to judicial remedies for vulnerable people and minorities (115.85); safeguarding the independence and impartiality of the judiciary (115.86) and strengthening justice sector organisations and building the capacity of professionals (115.88).^{xxi} The failure to implement recommendations from UN human rights mechanisms is evident in Laos, particularly regarding transparency and accountability. This critical issue is compounded by the government's reliance on violent tactics to silence dissent.

Enforced Disappearances, Arbitrary Detentions, Killings, Attempted Murder, and Transnational Repression

11. **Enforced disappearances** is a key tactic the Lao government uses to silence those who oppose it. People, especially human rights defenders and political activists are taken away, and their families and the public are left in the dark about what happened to them. This year, on February 2, 2024, **Chilikham**, Alliance for Democracy (ADL) Member, disappeared after picking up his new passport in Southern Laos, to attend the 11th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development taking place in February 2024. More recently, in July 2024, **Thao Bua Sawan Prommachan** held a sign declaring his opposition to corruption and dictatorship. He made this statement in the heart of Vientiane, right in front of the UN centre in Laos. Unfortunately, he was arrested by the police and has since vanished without a trace. No one knows where he was taken, which prison he may be in, or what has happened to him. The truth remains a mystery.^{xxii} Another prominent case, **Sombath Somphone**, a highly respected figure in Lao civil society, has been missing for over a decade. On December 15, 2012, he was abducted at a police checkpoint in Vientiane, a moment that was even captured by CCTV footage. After being stopped by the police, Sombath was taken away in a truck, and since that day, no one has seen or heard from him. Sombath was a development worker and activist dedicated to empowering rural communities in Laos. He founded the Participatory Development Training Centre (PADETC), focusing on youth education, sustainable agriculture, and environmental sustainability.^{xxiii} We wish to highlight that Laos has supported recommendations 115.6, 115.8, and 115.9 concerning enforced disappearances. Notably, during its third Universal Periodic Review cycle in 2020, Laos received five UPR recommendations specific to Sombath Somphone's case from various countries: Germany (115.10 - noted), New Zealand

(115.74), United Kingdom (115.75 - noted), Australia (115.76 - noted), Canada (115.77 - noted).^{xxiv} The Lao government noted all five recommendations asserting that it had addressed the case through various channels and considered it resolved. This dismissal is deeply troubling, as dissidents often seem to disappear without explanation, raising serious concerns about their safety and well-being. Furthermore, families of the disappeared are left without justice, as there are no proper investigations into these cases.

12. In addition to enforced disappearances, the **arbitrary detention** of activists represents another layer of the repressive tactics employed by the Lao government. **Muay** is an ordinary woman who made one big mistake in Laos. The mistake of putting people's lives ahead of the government's fragile ego. On July 23, 2018, the Xe-Pan-Xe-Namnoy dam collapsed in Attapeu Province, causing floods and deaths. While the government was trying to hide what happened, Muay spoke up. She exposed their corruption, negligence, and how they stole aid meant for the victims. In August 2019, heavy floods hit Southern Laos displacing thousands of villagers. Muay travelled to provide aid to displaced villagers and spoke up questioning the Lao government's inaction, using FB Live as an advocacy tool. In return, she was **arbitrarily arrested and detained in September 2019**, sentenced to **5 years in prison** and fined 20 million Kip, after a speedy trial violating due process. Muay was charged with **criminal defamation** and **anti-state propaganda**, accused of violating **article 117 of the Penal Code** for her courageous truth-telling. **Manushya** denounced Muay's arbitrary arrest and detention and petitioned the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) in December 2020. Following this, the UNWGAD ruled Muay detention to be arbitrary in May 2021 and urged the Lao government to release her immediately. But the Lao government ignored this opinion and kept Muay in jail, blocking her from raising her young daughter and caring for her parents, as she was the breadwinner.^{xxv} But it's not the end of it. In prison, Muay was not only locked away. She was mistreated, tortured and monitored closely by the authorities. They wanted to make sure she wouldn't speak out again. Muay was released on September 12, 2024, and she's now being extremely monitored, and is censoring herself for her own safety. On October 13, 2024, she posted a forced apology video on Facebook.^{xxvi}
13. In Laos, the **imprisonment** of activists is definitely a significant aspect of the government's repressive tactics against dissent, as illustrated by the notable cases of **Lodkham, Soukan, and Somphone**, three Lao activists who were sentenced to 20 years in prison during a rushed trial in 2017. They were punished for participating in a

protest outside the Lao Embassy in Bangkok in December 2015. This demonstration was organised to demand justice for Sombath Somphone who had disappeared three years earlier. The authorities viewed their protest as a direct challenge to the government, leading to a swift crackdown. The trial was marked by a lack of transparency and fairness, raising concerns about the judicial process in Laos. Despite international calls for their release and fair treatment, the government maintained its stance.^{xxvii} Let's not forget that Laos graciously accepted recommendations to align its laws with international human rights standards—ensuring fair trials, freedom from torture, and no arbitrary detention (115.82). They even promised to improve detention conditions to meet the Nelson Mandela Rules (115.84).^{xxviii} Unfortunately, while making promises is straightforward, fulfilling them proves much more challenging. Regrettably, without concrete action, these commitments risk being forgotten.

14. The **deaths/killings** of activists often follow enforced disappearances, marking a tragic conclusion to the government's campaign of repression. We are sharing some illustrative cases:
- **Maythong Sanbounkhounxay**, a member of the Alliance for Democracy (ADL), who attended the 10th APFSD Forum in March 2023, was found dead in Laos alongside his motorcycle under circumstances that suggested a violent struggle in September 2023. According to police reports, he had been killed by a blow to the head with a stone, but beyond that, little was done to investigate his death. Authorities quickly shut down public discussion of his case, fuelling suspicions of an orchestrated cover-up.^{xxix}
 - **Bounleut**, a courageous woman activist from ADL, risked everything to expose the Lao government's abuses, attending the 11th APFSD Forum in February 2024. Unfortunately, the regime targeted her for her efforts, just as it did with other ADL members.^{xxx} After initially staying in Thailand to escape the government's threats, Bounleut made the perilous decision to return to Laos. Tragically, she was later found dead in what was reported as a motorcycle accident on June 23, 2024, raising serious questions about the circumstances of her death.^{xxxi}
 - The Lao government's attempts to silence dissenters sometimes result in failed assassination attempts rather than murders. This was the case with **Anousa 'Jack' Luangsuphom**, a 25-year-old democracy and LGBTIQ+ activist. On April 29, 2023,



while enjoying a coffee at a Vientiane café, he was shot twice by an unknown assailant—a cowardly act captured on the café’s security cameras. Despite this clear evidence, Lao authorities have remained conspicuously silent, choosing inaction over accountability. Following the attack, Jack was taken to a Lao hospital, where he faced neglect at the hands of the authorities. Medical staff abruptly ceased his care, leaving him unattended with outdated air tubes and bullets still lodged in his body. In May 2023, the Manushya Foundation evacuated Jack from Laos to save his life, as he was left to die in the Mittaphab public hospital. As of today, there has been no proper investigation into the incident or the perpetrator. In a grotesque attempt to deflect responsibility, police claimed the shooter was motivated by 'business issues' or a 'romantic dispute.' This assertion is utterly absurd; Jack had neither personal business interests nor a girlfriend, identifying instead as gay.^{xxxii} After eliminating so many dissenters, one might expect the Lao government to have at least refined its dissembling skills.

15. Asian countries are like one big, dysfunctional family—they love to lend a hand, especially when it comes to **transnational repression**. Whether it's silencing foreign dissidents on Lao soil or tracking down Lao dissidents abroad, they're always there to support each other's oppressive tactics.

Transnational Repression against Lao dissidents abroad:

- Since August 26, 2019, **Od Sayavong**, a Lao democracy activist founder of the 'Free Laos' group and ADL member, and refugee in Bangkok, has gone missing. Known for his activism, Od actively exposed human rights violations and corruption in Laos. A few months before his disappearance, Od met with the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights in Bangkok in March 2019, ahead of the Rapporteur's mission to Laos. Od was also planning to stage a protest during the ASEAN People's Forum (APF) held in September 2019 in Thailand.^{xxxiii}
- **Khoukham Keomanivong**, a Lao democracy activist, U.N.-recognised refugee living in Thailand and co-founder of the 'Free Laos' group faced arrest in January 2022 for overstaying his visa. Although he had ceased his political activities years ago after obtaining refugee status, he was detained and faced potential deportation to Laos, where he risked persecution for his past advocacy work. He was released on bail, thanks to the international community pressure, and was resettled to Canada in March 2022.^{xxxiv}



- Lao blogger **Joseph Akaravong** faced transnational repression while he was hiding in Thailand and more recently in France. Joseph became a target of government reprisal due to his online activism, which included denouncing corruption related to the failed Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam construction that collapsed on July 23, 2018. He fled Laos in August 2018 and hid in Thailand, until he could be relocated in France in March 2022. Joseph primarily uses Facebook to advocate for human rights and expose violations by Lao authorities. On August 9, 2022, after intensifying his activism regarding leaks from the Nam Theun 1 dam, his account was restricted for 29 days for alleged violations of Facebook Community Standards. In September 2022, the Lao government (through a report from Public Relations Department under the Prime Minister’s Office) publicly acknowledged monitoring his account and attempting to disable it. The Department of Cybersecurity even requested the Lao Embassy in France and the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs to track Akaravong down and "educate" him. In October 2022, Joseph revealed a controversial connection between a murdered Lao businesswoman and the Lao Prime Minister at that time, leading to significant online debate and the creation of fake accounts by the authorities impersonating him. His authentic Facebook account was deactivated on October 25, 2022, without notice, while fake accounts spread false narratives about him. Following appeals from the Manushya Foundation, Meta reinstated Akaravong’s account on November 12, 2022, recognizing it as a human rights defender account. Joseph’s case is extensively explained in the Laos country report authored by the Manushya Foundation, as part of the ASEAN Regional Coalition to #StopDigitalDictatorship.^{xxxv}
- **Bounsuan Kitiyano**: On May 17, 2023, the Lao activist was found dead on the side of the road in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand. As part of the ‘Free Laos’ group, and ADL member, his advocacy in favour of democracy and human rights in Laos made him a prime target for the Lao government. As he feared for his life, he was exiled in Thailand, recognised as an UNHCR refugee. He was days away from fleeing to Australia to ensure his freedom and safety.^{xxxvi}

Transnational Repression against Foreign dissidents on Lao soil:

- **17 Burmese activists**: The Lao government's collaboration in transnational repression is further exemplified by the recent handover of 17 Myanmar nationals

to the illegal junta at the Golden Triangle border in May 2024. While the junta claimed these individuals were linked to a People’s Defense Force, locals report they were simply raising funds for displaced families by the fighting in Laos’ Ton Pheung and were arrested by Lao police on April 13, 2024. This alarming act reflects a broader trend in the Mekong region, where authorities have unlawfully deported Myanmar refugees without proper protection assessments.^{xxxvii}

- **Lu Siwei** is a Chinese human rights lawyer who lost his license for handling sensitive cases. He was arrested in Laos on July 28, 2023, while trying to reunite with his wife and daughter in the United States. Laotian police detained him as he attempted to board a train to Bangkok. Following his deportation to China in September 2023, he was held at the Xindu Detention Center in Chengdu, Sichuan province. His wife, Zhang Chunxiao, shared these details on X.^{xxxviii} Although Lu was released on bail, he was formally arrested on October 10, 2024, by Chinese Public Security Bureau officials and charged with “illegal border crossing.” He was then transferred to the Chengdu City Detention Center, where the Chenghua District Procuratorate filed a criminal complaint against him with the Chenghua District Court on October 14. This recent arrest stems from Lu’s previous attempt to reunite with his family. After being intercepted in Laos, he spent two months in detention before being returned to China, where he faced an additional month of confinement prior to his bail release, which lasted nearly a year.^{xxxix}
- **Qiao Xinxin**: The Chinese journalist went missing in Vientiane in May 2023 after launching an online campaign against internet censorship in China. Detained by Chinese police in Laos, Qiao was later found to be held in a juvenile detention centre in Hunan, China, marking another instance of cross-border law enforcement.^{xi}

16. Let’s take a moment to admire Laos's talent for ignoring urgent calls about the safety of human rights defenders and activists. They’ve conveniently brushed aside demands for independent investigations into the disappearances and deaths of those who dare to speak out (115.79).^{xi} It’s completely outrageous that they can stroll freely into the UN and talk about human rights.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LAO GOVERNMENT

- a. **Ratify and Implement Key International Human Rights Treaties:** Commit to ratifying crucial international human rights instruments, including the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OP-CAT). Ensure that national legislation is harmonized with these international standards.
- b. **Revise Legislation for Civil Society Organizations:** Reform laws governing civil society organizations to create a conducive environment for national and international actors to operate independently and address human rights issues without fear of persecution or obstruction.
- c. **Guarantee Freedom of Information and Expression:** Ensure unrestricted access to information and uphold freedom of expression while actively promoting independent media and the necessary infrastructure to support a vibrant civil society.
- d. **Decriminalize Online Speech:** Amend existing legislation to decriminalize online expression and foster a digital environment that supports free speech and open dialogue.
- e. **Release Detained Activists:** Immediately release all activists unjustly detained for exercising their rights to peaceful assembly and free speech, ensuring accountability for unlawful actions against them.
- f. **Establish a National Human Rights Institution:** Expedite the establishment of a national human rights institution that complies with the Paris Principles, demonstrating a commitment to human rights and accountability.
- g. **Conduct Thorough Investigations:** Initiate independent and impartial investigations into enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and attempted murders, ensuring accountability for perpetrators and justice for victims and their families.
- h. **End Transnational Repression:** Cease all forms of transnational repression (TNR), both within Laos and in other countries, such as Thailand. The Lao government must safeguard Human Rights Defenders, activists, dissidents, and refugees, ensuring their physical and psychological safety both domestically and abroad.

Annex 1: Assessment of implementation of UPR recommendations received during the 3rd UPR Cycle of Laos, particularly in relation to Civil and Political Rights, Access to Justice and Effective Remedies.

Theme: Ratification of & accession to international instruments			
<p>115.6 Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, signed in 2008 (France); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ratification of & accession to international instruments - Enforced disappearances SDGs: - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS Affected persons: - Disappeared persons 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraph 11</p>
<p>115.8 Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and ensure its implementation (Switzerland); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ratification of & accession to international instruments - Enforced disappearances SDGs: - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS Affected persons: - Disappeared persons 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraph 11</p>
<p>115.9 Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and ensure its effective implementation (Belgium); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ratification of & accession to international instruments - Enforced disappearances SDGs: - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS Affected persons: - Disappeared persons 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraph 11</p>

Theme: Constitutional & legislative framework			
<p>115.82 Amend national legislation to ensure that it is fully consistent with the international human rights obligations of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and, in particular, to provide for fair trials and freedom from torture and arbitrary detention (Ukraine); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1</p>	Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitutional & legislative framework - Arbitrary arrest & detention - Administration of justice & fair trial - Prohibition of torture & ill-treatment (including cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment) <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persons deprived of their liberty & detainees 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraph 12</p>
<p>115.93 Ensure freedom of expression and media freedom by bringing national legislation into line with international standards (Latvia); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitutional & legislative framework - Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Media 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraphs 5-7</p>
<p>115.98 Repeal all legislation inhibiting freedom of opinion and expression that is not compatible with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	Supported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitutional & legislative framework - Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraphs 5-7</p>

<p>115.99 Ensure that any restrictions on the exercise of the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly comply with the requirements of articles 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Belgium); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitutional & legislative framework - Right to peaceful assembly - Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraphs 5-7</p>
<p>115.101 Reform criminal defamation legislation in conformity with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Estonia); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitutional & legislative framework - Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraphs 5-7</p>
<p>Theme: Legal & institutional reform</p>			
<p>115.36 Continue incorporating the international norms on human rights in to the national legislation (Uzbekistan); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal & institutional reform <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraph 10</p>
<p>Theme: Conditions of detention</p>			
<p>115.83 Continue to implement measures and programmes to improve conditions of detention and guarantee the rights of persons deprived of liberty (Dominican Republic); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conditions of detention - Research & other measures of implementation <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persons deprived of their liberty & detainees 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraph 12</p>

<p>115.84 Redouble efforts to improve conditions of detention centres in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) (Zambia); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conditions of detention - Scope of international obligations <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persons deprived of their liberty & detainees 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraph 12</p>
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Theme: Administration of justice & fair trial

<p>115.72 Continue taking measures to improve investigations into cases of enforced disappearance (Malta); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration of justice & fair trial - Enforced disappearances <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disappeared persons 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraph 11</p>
<p>115.85 Strengthen the independence of the judiciary, and ensure full and effective access to judicial remedies to vulnerable people and minorities (Italy); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration of justice & fair trial - Human rights education, trainings & awareness raising - Access to justice & remedy <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vulnerable persons/groups - Judges, lawyers and prosecutors 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: Chapter “Enforced disappearances, imprisonment, killings and transnational repression”</p>

		- Minorities/ racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious or descent-based groups	
115.88 Strengthen justice sector organizations and build the capacity of law students and legal professionals (Syrian Arab Republic); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1	Supported	- Administration of justice & fair trial SDGs: - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS Affected persons: - Judges, lawyers and prosecutors	Status: Not implemented Source: Chapter “Enforced disappearances, imprisonment, killings and transnational repression”
115.79 Undertake domestic independent investigations into the disappearances and deaths of democracy and human rights activists (United States of America); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.6	Noted	- Administration of justice & fair trial - Enforced disappearances SDGs: - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS Affected persons: - Human rights defenders & activists - Disappeared persons	Status: Not implemented Source: Chapter “Enforced disappearances, imprisonment, killings and transnational repression”
Theme: Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information			
115.90 Ensure the right to freedom of expression (Cyprus); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1	Supported	- Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information SDGs: - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	Status: Not implemented Source: paragraph 11

<p>115.92 Ensure that freedom of expression is safeguarded in all its forms (Norway); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>- Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information SDGs: - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS Affected persons: - Media</p>	<p>Status: Not implemented Source: paragraphs 5-7</p>
<p>115.102 Fully fulfil the obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to respect and guarantee the right to freedom of expression (Canada); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>- Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information - Scope of international obligations SDGs: - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS</p>	<p>Status: Not implemented Source: paragraphs 5-7</p>
<p>115.103 Guarantee unhindered and private access to domestic and foreign media information for all, both offline and online (Estonia); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<p>- Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information SDGs: - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS Affected persons: - Media</p>	<p>Status: Not implemented Source: paragraphs 5-7</p>

Theme: Scope of international obligations			
<p>115.100 Guarantee freedom of expression of the press, assembly and association as well as freedom of religion and belief, in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Uruguay); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scope of international obligations - Freedom of thought, conscience & religion - Right to peaceful assembly - Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil society - Media 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraphs 5-7</p>
Theme: Arbitrary arrest & detention			
<p>115.108 Guarantee the freedom of peaceful assembly, opinion and expression, and freedom of the press by releasing all those detained solely because they exercised or defended the exercise of these rights (France); Source of Position: A/HRC/44/6/Add.1 - Para.5</p>	<p>Supported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arbitrary arrest & detention - Right to peaceful assembly - Freedom of opinion and expression & access to information <p>SDGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 16 - PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS <p>Affected persons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil society - Media 	<p>Status: Not implemented</p> <p>Source: paragraphs 2-12</p>

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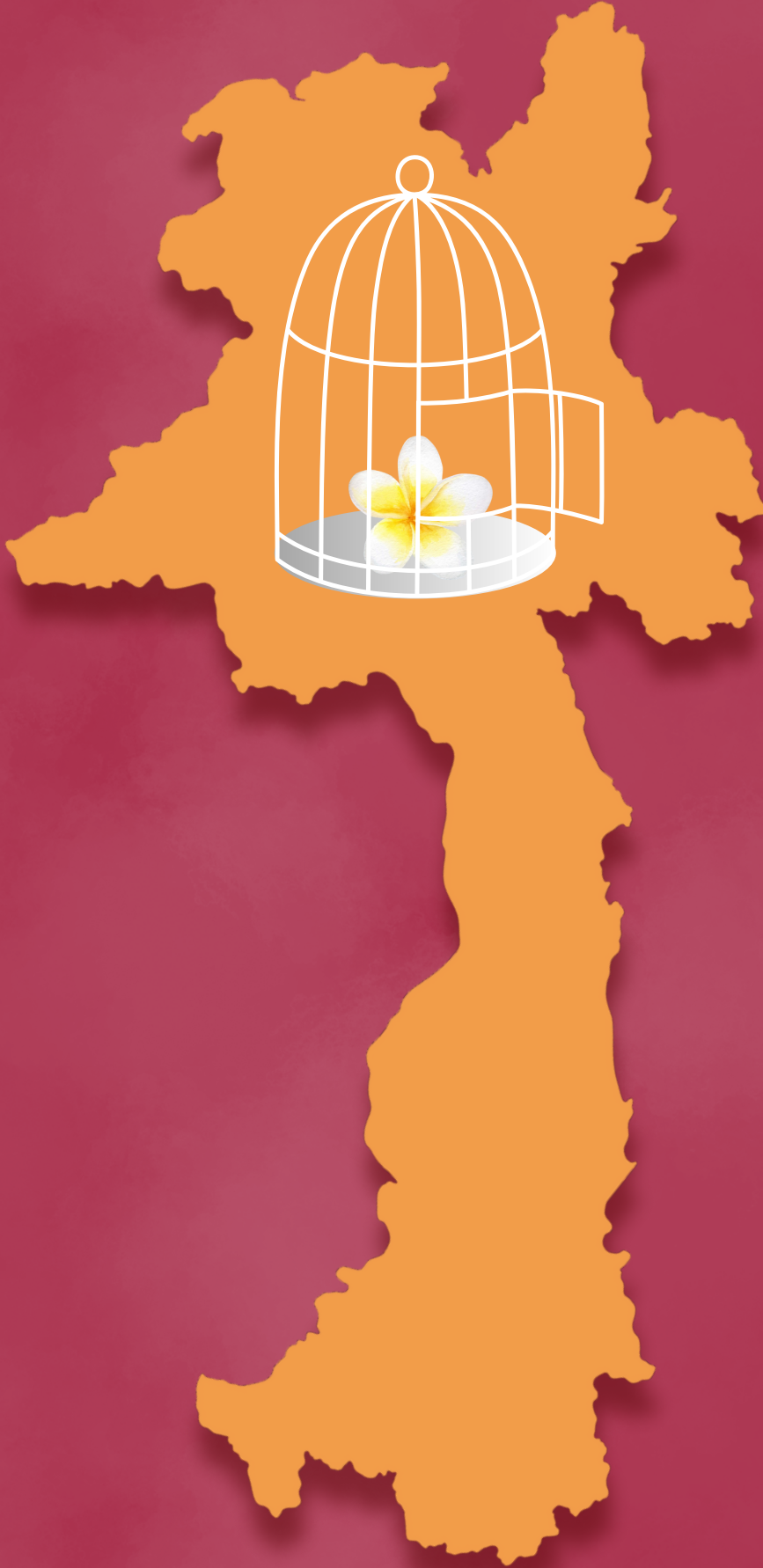
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- xxx There has been an evident crackdown on ADL members in the recent years. In addition to **Bounleut**, who is tragically the most recent death in June 2024, another ADL member, **Chilikham**, disappeared on February 2, 2024, after picking up his new passport in Southern Laos, to attend the 11th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) with Bounleut, taking place in February 2024. **Bounsuan Kitiyano**, attended the 10th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) in March 2023 in Bangkok but was found dead in Ubon, Thailand, on May 17, 2023, under suspicious circumstances that remain unexplained. **Maythong Sanbounkhounxay**, who led the ADL's mango-coconut development project, attended the 10th APFSD with **Bounsuan Kitiyano** as part of ADL delegation and was discovered dead near his motorcycle on September 15, 2023, in Laos. Shortly after his death, authorities banned any further discussion of the case. **Phouvong Sayaseng**, another member of the ADL, vanished after organising protests in Vientiane and was found dead on July 18, 2020.
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