



United Nations Headquarters, New York
United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Sixth Session
14-26 May 2007

HUMAN RIGHTS

I am Vaughn Vang, and before Cathy Thao will read our collective statement, I want to announce an issue of concern on behalf of the Lao Human Rights Council and Earth Peoples. We want to express our disbelief that the Vietnamese government requested to the secretariat of the Permanent Forum to cancel our special event on May 22, which is a film screening of "Hunted Like Animals" showing Hmong Lao human rights abuse victims and their testimonies.

JOINT STATEMENT: HUMAN RIGHTS

Hmong Lao Human Rights Council, United Nations Associates-USA, Society for Threatened Peoples International, Yachai Wasi, Earth Peoples.

Madam Chair Person and distinguished representatives:

I am Cathy Thao, the granddaughter of the main Clan leader of the Council of Hmong Lao Clan leaders - in accordance with our traditional governance system as Hmong Lao people.

We understand that the PFII is not a complaint channel – but our people continue to be forced to hide in the mountains of Laos due to military aggressions. Lao and Vietnamese soldiers are hunting our people, and brutally killing them by the hundreds and thousands.

We want to use this opportunity to strongly object against a US based radical fraction here today - which categorizes our people in hiding as if they are insurgents. The sad reality of our people on the ground today is very different. They are internally displaced people - running for their lives!

We hold large archives of evidences, oral or written testimonies from our people who live in hiding, and reports from NGOs and credible journalists such as BBC who have eye-witnessed the killings and attacks of the Hmong in the jungle of Laos.

Our people in the mountains are not staging attacks against the Lao regime. They are avoiding contact, live in forced isolation, and starving like animals because of the military aggressions