



February 7, 2020

Southeast Asian American and Asian American Organizations Across the Country Denounce Trump Administration's Move to Increase Deportations to Laos Hmong/Lao Americans with Removal Orders Should Seek Legal Assistance

WASHINGTON, DC - We learned that in 2019 the U.S. State Department (DOS), Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Government of Laos made a verbal agreement to deport a significant number of individuals annually with final removal orders to Laos. While there is currently **no formal deportation memorandum of understanding** between the United States and Laos, this verbal agreement makes those with final orders for deportation potentially more vulnerable to removal by the Trump Administration.

Moreover, the U.S. DOS recently confirmed that the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is funding a reintegration program in Laos for deported individuals who do not speak Lao or have family connections -- an indication that even former refugees with no ties to Laos will be included in this annual deportation goal. Since 1998, the United States has deported 219 individuals to Laos, and in 2019, five individuals were deported. Currently, about 4,500 Hmong/Lao individuals living in the U.S. have a final order of removal.

Below is a statement from the **Southeast Asian Deportation Defense Network**:

“We reject the continued deportations of immigrants and refugees without regard for human rights and due process. We condemn efforts by the United States government to continue deporting Southeast Asian Americans, many of whom are former refugees. We fundamentally believe that regardless of past mistakes, everyone must be given the opportunity, resources, and support networks to turn their lives around and become productive citizens. We believe in transformation and know that many individuals are pivotal members in their local communities. They must be afforded the same due process rights as every other American.

Those who are targeted now have served their time and should not face a lifetime sentence by being deported. We have learned from decades of work with our Cambodian and Vietnamese communities that we must not give up and can stop deportation cases through partnership with

advocacy and legal organizations. We urge impacted families to seek legal assistance with experienced and trusted immigration and criminal defense attorneys. We also ask that individuals and organizations who want to effectively organize and advocate on this issue join us.”

Below are organizations with experience serving and advocating on this issue. The services provided by these groups are especially focused on assistance to gain relief from detention and deportations; while advocacy work focuses on stopping the deportation of this group of people through policy changes. Individuals facing deportation to Cambodia, Laos, or Vietnam can also access the [Southeast Asian Raids](#) website for additional resources, or call (415) 952-0413 for free legal advice.

For those in our community who are impacted, we urge you to take the following steps to protect you and your families:

1. All individuals who currently live in the U.S. with deportation orders to Laos should contact organizations in your state or the regions closest to you for assistance.
2. All individuals who are green card holders who are facing criminal convictions should talk to their lawyer about deportation consequences.
3. Those seeking advocacy support for detentions and deportations can also access this [resistance toolkit](#).

Please reach out to these organizations for more support:

California:

- [Asian Americans Advancing Justice - ALC](#), Anoop Prasad, anoopp@advancingjustice-alc.org
- [Asian Prisoner Support Committee](#), Nate Tan, nate@asianprisonersupport.org
- [Fresno Interdenominational Refugee Ministries](#), Lucky Siphongsay, lucky@firminc.org
- [Hmong Innovating Politics](#), Nkauj lab Yang, nkaujiab.yang@hipcalifornia.com

Georgia

- [Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta](#), Phi Nguyen, pnguyen@advancingjustice-atlanta.org

Massachusetts

- [Asian American Resource Workshop](#), Kevin Lam, kevin@aarw.org
- [Greater Boston Legal Services - Asian Outreach Unit](#), Bethany Li, bli@gbls.org

Minnesota:

- [Coalition of Asian American Leaders](#), KaYing Yang, kaying@caalmn.org
- [Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota](#), Sunny Chanthanouvong, sunny@laocenter.org
- [Release MN8](#), Montha Chum, montha@releasemn8.org

New York

- [Mekong NYC](#), Chhaya Chhoum, chhaya@mekongnyc.org
- [Southeast Asian Defense Project](#), Socheatta Meng, smeng@seadefense.org

North Carolina:

- [Southeast Asian Coalition](#), Ong Vang, ong@seacvillage.org

Pennsylvania:

- [Laos in the House](#), Catzie V., catzie@laosinthehouse.com
- [VietLead](#), Nancy Nguyen, nancy.nguyen@vietlead.org

Washington:

- [Khmer Anti-Deportation Advocacy Group](#), Sina Sam, khaagwa@gmail.com

Wisconsin:

- [Freedom, Inc.](#), Kabzuag Vaj, kabvaj@freedom-inc.org

National:

- [Laotian American National Alliance](#), Jonathan Vorasane, jonathan@lana-usa.org
- [Southeast Asia Resource Action Center](#), Kham S. Moua, kham@searac.org
- [Southeast Asian Freedom Network](#), June Kuoch, june@seafn.net

About the Southeast Asian Deportation Defense Network

The Southeast Asian Deportation Defense Network is a national collective of Asian American organizations focused on preventing the detention and deportation of Southeast Asian refugees, and reuniting deported loved ones with their families in the United States. Member organizations include advocacy, grassroots, and legal organizations with over two decades of experience in deportation defense work.

For more information, please contact:

KaYing Yang, CAAL, kaying@caalmn.org / 651-756-7210

Kabzuag Vaj, Freedom, Inc., kabvaj@freedom-inc.org / 608-217-7754

Vimala Phongsavanh, LANA, vimala@lana-usa.org / 401-378-1949

Kham S. Moua, SEARAC, kham@searac.org / 612-465-9539