



# ພັນທະມິດເພື່ອປະຊາທິປະໄຕໃນລາວ

## ALLIANCE FOR DEMOCRACY IN LAOS

### Alliance pour la Démocratie au Laos

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## **ADL statement on the UN experts' demand for justice, two years after the dam catastrophes**

On April 29, 2020, a working group of UN experts from the UN Human Rights Council called on both governments (Lao PDR, Thailand, South Korea) and the companies concerned to do something about the ongoing human rights violations against the victims of the dam disasters in 2018. The breakage of an auxiliary dam of the Xe Pian-Xe Namnoy hydropower project in July 2018 led to devastating floods that killed at least 71 people and left thousands of people homeless.

They also demanded that local community members, including indigenous peoples, still receive adequate compensation, which is still in low-quality makeshift shelters with little privacy and inadequate access to food, water, medical care, sanitation, and land. According to the report of the UN experts, the government of Laos and the companies has not fulfilled their promise to remedy the damage. The Laos government is still blocking, and in many cases prohibiting, the relocation of those affected. There is also no timetable for any relocation by the authorities. The compensations provided are also completely inadequate. The experts confirm that the government's promises have not been kept.

Even the allocations of rice have now been cut, we the ADL suspect that persistent corruption is responsible. Any criticism of the existing conditions is prohibited. There have been repeated arrests and disappearances of critical bloggers and other people in Laos. Again and again we have to experience how big profits end up in the private coffers, but the population has to pay for the damage caused with money, suffering and death. We can only agree with the outrage from the UN experts.

We, the ADL, have drawn attention to these grievances both in the context of the UN complaint procedure in March 2019 as well as at the UN UPR cycle for Laos in 2020 and on other occasions. We expressly welcome the fact that these submissions were accepted by the experts from the UN Human Rights Council and led to this action. Once again, independent experts have confirmed ADL's assessments and findings that the government and investors are only interested in profit, not in the well-being of the population.

We the Alliance for Democracy in Laos and the people of Laos appeal:

- 1. That the United Nations should put pressure on the government of Laos as well as Thailand, South Korea and the companies so that the demands of the UN experts are implemented as quickly as possible.**

2. **The government of Laos should finally give people the freedom to finally resettle outside of the emergency shelters.**
3. **That the distribution of aid is no longer provided through the detour of the Laos authorities but directly to those affected under the supervision of the UN.**
4. **In the event that the government continues to abuse aid, it is necessary that the United Nations and donor countries stop making aid payments to the government and look for other ways of providing aid.**
5. **The government of Laos must finally end press censorship and allow unification and freedom of assembly. It is more urgent than ever to bring transparency and openness into the situation.**

Hagen Germany, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020

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