

108TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. RES. 475

To condemn human rights abuses in Laos.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 19, 2004

Mr. COLEMAN (for himself, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. KOHL, and Mr. DAYTON)  
submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

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## RESOLUTION

To condemn human rights abuses in Laos.

Whereas the Lao People's Democratic Republic is an authoritarian, Communist, one-party state;

Whereas the Government of Laos has a poor human rights record, particularly with regard to its treatment of minorities;

Whereas the United States Central Intelligence Agency trained and armed tens of thousands of Hmong guerrillas to disrupt Viet Cong supply lines and rescue downed pilots during the Vietnam war;

Whereas in 1975, the Kingdom of Laos was overthrown by the Communist Pathet Lao regime, and tens of thousands of Laotians, including the Hmong, were killed or died at the hands of Communist forces while attempting

to flee the Lao Communist regime, and many others perished in reeducation and labor camps;

Whereas tens of thousands of Hmong became refugees, eventually resettling in the United States, where they now reside as American citizens and lead constructive lives as members of our communities;

Whereas remnants of former Hmong insurgent groups and their families who once fought with the United States and the Royal Lao Government still remain in remote areas of Laos, including Xaisomboun Special Zone and the Luang Prabang Province;

Whereas in August 2003 the United Nations Committee to Eliminate Racial Discrimination strongly criticized the Lao People's Democratic Republic for failing to honor its obligations, expressed its grave concerns regarding reports of human rights violations, including brutalities inflicted on the Hmong, and deplored the measures taken by the Lao authorities to prevent any reporting of the situation of the Hmong;

Whereas in October 2003, Amnesty International issued a statement detailing its concern about the use of starvation by the Lao Government as a "weapon of war against civilians" in Laos and the deteriorating situation facing thousands of family members of ethnic minority groups;

Whereas the Department of State reported in its most recent Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Laos that the "Government's human rights record remained poor," and highlighted press reports that one group of Hmong in Xaisomboun Special Zone, mostly women and children, was being systematically hunted down and at-

tacked by government air and ground forces and that it was at the point of starvation;

Whereas international organizations, the Department of State, and Members of Congress have received reports of mistreatment over the past 6 months of Hmong in Laos emerging from remote areas of Laos, including the Xaisomboun Special Zone, the Luang Prabang-Xieng Khouang border area;

Whereas the Lao Government has not allowed independent organizations to monitor the treatment of the Hmong emerging from remote areas of Laos;

Whereas in September 2004, Amnesty International issued a statement condemning recent reports that Lao soldiers murdered 5 Hmong children, raping 4 girls, who were foraging for food close to their camp, and called it a war crime; and

Whereas the Lao People's Democratic Republic has failed to substantially improve the status of human rights for its citizens: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2               (1) condemns the consistent pattern of serious  
3       human rights abuses in the Lao People's Democratic  
4       Republic;

5               (2) urges the Government of Laos to increase  
6       international access to vulnerable populations and to  
7       respect the basic human rights of all Laotians, in-  
8       cluding ethnic and religious minorities; and

9               (3) hopes that the Lao government intensifies  
10      its efforts to make its economy and society more

- 1 open and transparent in light of the congressional
- 2 grant of normal trade relations to the Lao People's
- 3 Democratic Republic.

