



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Genocide Watch Country Report: Laos March 2025 By Finia Hilmes

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Laos), a communist state in Southeast Asia, has been under one-party rule since 1975, following a [16-year civil war](#). The government controls political, judicial, and civil institutions, suppresses dissent, and restricts press freedom. Ethnic minorities like the Hmong, Khmu, and indigenous hill tribes, and religious minorities, particularly Christians, face systematic discrimination, forced displacement, and state-sponsored violence.

The Hmong, branded as "[hostile dissenters](#)" for their U.S. alliance during the Vietnam War, are [denied indigenous status, stripping them of legal protections](#). Since the late 1970s, military offensives have [killed thousands](#) and displaced around [300,000](#). [Those remaining](#), particularly in Phou Bia and Xaisomboun, endure attacks, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and military blockades.

Driven by development and Chinese-funded projects, the government has [seized Hmong ancestral lands](#). [Reports](#) indicate the use of heavy artillery, chemical weapons and starvation tactics to displace the Hmong. [Villages and resources are destroyed](#), and civilians are subjected to [\(gender-based\) violence](#) and [forced labour](#). [Hmong families](#) have been forcibly relocated to military-controlled villages, stripped of land rights, and impoverished.

In 2021, [Hmong leader Chue Youa Vang](#) was executed, with his picture circulated as an alleged deterrent. In 2020, [Vacher Her and Zoua Her](#) disappeared, with no investigations. Despite [UN concerns](#), Laos refused international inquiries and aid, isolating affected communities. [Reports](#) raise concerns regarding a deliberate effort to remove the remaining Hmong in Phou Bia, [increasing genocide risk](#).

[Christian minorities](#), especially [Hmong Christians](#), face harassment, violence, forced renunciations, arrests, village expulsions, and church destruction. Christians are often denied [education and government jobs](#). The government bans [unregistered religious activities](#), framing Christianity as a [foreign threat to communist national ideology](#). In its 2024 reporting period, [Open Doors International](#) reported at least four Christians killed, 159 expelled from their communities, 60 arrested, and 25 churches attacked. Christians also face economic retaliation, with [homes and farmland targeted](#).

The government [suppresses civil society](#), criminalizing unregistered civil society organizations, dissolving dissenting organizations and restricting foreign funding. [Protests](#) are suppressed, [media censored](#), and [critics](#) face violence, detention, and enforced disappearances. Notable cases include the [2012 disappearance of Sombath Somphone](#), and the [2023 assassination attempt on Anousa Luangsuphom](#).

Genocide Watch categorizes Laos at **Stage 4: Dehumanization**, as ethnic and religious minorities are branded as state enemies. **Stage 6: Polarization** is evident as propaganda fuels divisions, intensifying hostility. **Stage 8: Persecution** is ongoing, with forced displacements, arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances and military attacks targeting minorities.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- The UN Human Rights Council should mandate independent experts to investigate human rights abuses.
- The Lao government must end persecution against minorities and activists and protect their rights.
- The Lao government must grant human rights NGOs and humanitarian organizations access to all regions.
- The Lao government must recognize the Hmong as an indigenous group of Laos and protect their land and rights.
- The Lao government must repeal repressive laws, free political prisoners, investigate human rights violations, and hold perpetrators accountable.
- The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Human Rights Council should pressure Laos to end persecution and forced displacement of Hmong and other minority groups.
- Human Rights NGOs and humanitarian organizations should have access to Hmong and other minority regions.