

## Who We Are and Where We Stand With the Hmong People

**We are** the U. S. State Department of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration under the Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs. To date this department has not voiced any support of the plight of the Hmong Vietnam veterans and their families who are still in Thailand and Laos. According to the website, PRM administers and monitors U. S. contributions to international and non-governmental organizations to assist and protect refugees abroad. In overseeing admissions of refugees to the United States for permanent resettlement, the Bureau works closely with U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Department of Health and Human Services, and various state and private voluntary agencies.

**We are** the thirteen (13) members of the House of Representatives who composed and signed a letter to the King of Thailand on August 3, 2007. We asked His Majesty Bhumibol Adulyadej to allow the 8,000 Lao-Hmong political refugees and asylum seekers at the Huay Nam Khao camp, in Phetchabun, Thailand to remain there until they could be resettled in third countries. A copy of this letter is enclosed.

**I am** Ron Kind, representing Wisconsin's Third Congressional District. The Honorable Kind, in 2002, met with then U. S. Ambassador to Laos, Douglas Hartwick, to discuss the human rights situation in Laos. The Honorable Kind continues to introduce legislation that will bring attention to the repressive Lao political environment that currently exists.

**We are** the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) who in January of 2008 called for the release of 150 Lao Hmong refugees who are being held in Thailand's Nong Khai Immigration Detention Center for over a year with more than half being children. The UNHCR continues to advocate on behalf of the Hmong people.

**We are** Amnesty International who in March of 2007 called for an immediate end to armed attacks on thousands of ethnic Hmong women, men, and children who are living in scattered groups in the Lao jungles hiding from the authorities, particularly the military. Amnesty International has also asked the Lao authorities to permit access for United Nation bodies and others to monitor these people's well-being. Amnesty International has repeatedly called on the Thai authorities not to forcibly return any Lao Hmong who would be at risk of serious human rights violations.

**We are** the Lao Human Rights Council, Inc. of Wisconsin and Minnesota who issued an appeal to the current U. S. Ambassador to Laos, Ravic Huso, seeking to stop the killing and mass starvation of thousands of innocent, unarmed Laotian, and Hmong people. In March of 2008, we along with a coalition of Lao and Hmong organizations helped to organize rallies in Madison and La Crosse, Wisconsin and St. Paul, Minnesota, to protest the Lao regime's killing and persecution of the Lao and Hmong people.

**We are** the eight members of the U. S. Senate who on May 16, 2008, wrote a letter appealing to Prime Minister Samak and U. S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, to work toward granting asylum to some 8,000 Lao Hmong refugees and not force them back to Laos.

**I am** Deacon Richard Sage, Executive Director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin who wrote a letter of support on July 10, 2007 to Representative Ron Kind on behalf of the thirty-eight extended family members of Victor and Sandy Yang who currently are in the Huay Nam Khao camp in Phetchabun Province of Thailand. I reaffirmed Catholic Charities' commitment to assist and support the efforts of Victor and Sandy Yang's family along with Roncalli Newman Parish and other organizations to make the resettlement of this family successful. A copy of the letter is enclosed.

**We are** the Roncalli Newman Parish in La Crosse, Wisconsin along with 165 parishes in the Diocese of La Crosse, who supported a letter writing campaign to President George W. Bush, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and members of Congress in the fall/winter of 2007. This campaign was conducted on behalf of the thirty-eight extended family members of Victor and Sandy Yang who live in the Huay Nam Khao camp in Phetchabun Province of Thailand and the other 8,000 refugees living in this camp. A copy of the letter is enclosed.

**I am** Bishop Jerome ListECKI, presiding bishop of the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin, who wrote a letter of support on November 1, 2007 urging all members of the diocese to join with members of the Roncalli Newman Parish in their efforts to come to the aid of the thirty-eight extended family members of Victor and Sandy Yang and the Hmong Vietnam veterans and their families currently in Thailand and Laos. A copy of the letter is enclosed.

**We are** the Social Concerns subcommittee of the Social Justice Committee of the Whole from Roncalli Newman Parish who continue to advocate on behalf of Victor and Sandy Yang's extended family members and the other Hmong Vietnam veterans and their families currently living in Thailand and Laos. We most recently sent letters to President George W. Bush, Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, and numerous members of Congress, on May 6, 2008, asking that a delegation be allowed to visit the families who currently live in the Huay Nam Khao camp in Phetchabun Province of Thailand. A copy of the letter is enclosed.