



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

FEB 14 2020

The Honorable
Betty McCollum
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ms. McCollum:

Thank you for your February 3 letter regarding Lao nationals with final orders of removal from the United States.

The U.S. government's position remains that every country has an international legal obligation to accept all its nationals that another country seeks to legally remove, expel, or deport. The essence of this legal position has been consistent across multiple administrations.

The U.S. and Lao governments are discussing our respective positions regarding Lao nationals who are subject to final orders of removal. Before receiving their final orders of removal, these Lao nationals had the opportunity to seek protection from return if they feared persecution or torture in Laos, consistent with the United States' non-refoulement obligations under international law. For more information about that process, we would refer you to the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice.

This Administration takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that U.S. laws are respected within our borders. Consequently, the U.S. government regularly urges foreign governments, including partners like Laos, to abide by their international obligation to accept the return of their nationals that are subject to a final order of removal.

We hope this information is useful. Please let us know if we may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Taylor
Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Legislative Affairs