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**Background:** The Trump Administration recently announced visa sanctions against Laos. This aggressive move comes as an effort to fulfill President Trump’s campaign promise to punish countries that do not cooperate with U.S. deportation policy. It comes after US sanctions against Cambodia last year, which led to the biggest mass roundup of Cambodians ever for detention.

To date, more than 200 people have been deported to Laos since 1998. However, 4,436 community members remain in the United States with deportation orders and are at risk of potential removal if this policy effectively pressures Laos into accepting more deportees.[[1]](#footnote-1)

*The Southeast Asian American community condemns the Trump Administration for using bullying tactics to threaten Laotian families and destabilize communities. We call on Members of Congress to issue statements denouncing this ill-conceived directive and to stand in solidarity with the Southeast Asian American community because this policy:*

**Ignores the humanitarian implications for deporting refugees**

* Most Laotians impacted by deportation are refugees of decades-long war, bombings, and one of the worst genocides of the 20th century.
* Many encountered challenges during their initial resettlement, including high rates of poverty, post-traumatic stress disorder, and poor educational outcomes.
* [Unjust and overly broad enforcement policies](http://www.searac.org/sites/default/files/Southeast%20Asian%20Americans%20and%20Deportation%20Policy_8.8.2013.pdf) passed in 1996 have also made these individuals increasingly vulnerable to over-criminalization, police brutality, racial profiling, incarceration and deportation.
* A majority have lived in the country for years as lawful permanent residents, served time for their crimes, and have moved on to become productive citizens, loving family members, and business owners.

**Hurts families and does not address community safety**

* Proponents of the policy claim that these sanctions are necessary to keep the public safe from “criminal aliens,” highlighting a few incidents of immigrants who have reoffended.
* But for every isolated incident of recidivism, thousands of other fathers and mothers moved on with their lives and are quietly raising their U.S. citizen children, supporting their elderly parents, starting businesses, and supporting youth in the community who might otherwise lack mentors.
* Deporting these individuals for crimes that they have already served their time for, tears at the fabric of our communities.
* It makes communities even less secure by breaking up families and disrupting the economic contributions of these individuals.

**False, Misguided Policy that Does Nothing But Stoke Fear**

* This signifies the Trump Administration’s ongoing attempt to scapegoat immigrants and refugees and to pander to its anti-immigrant base. This must be stopped.
* In order to address community safety, we must invest our resources in finding real, long-lasting solutions through progressive reform of our sorely outdated immigration system.

**Contact Information:**

To share statements issued or for follow-up questions, please email Katrina Dizon Mariategue, immigration policy manager at the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) at [Katrina@searac.org](mailto:Katrina@searac.org).

1. Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, "US Deportation Outcomes by Charge, Completed Cases in Immigration

   Courts": http://trac.syr.edu/phptools/immigration/court\_backlog/deport\_outcome\_charge.php [↑](#footnote-ref-1)