

## CAN THE HMONG LEADERSHIP BE BLAMED

On April 26, 2008, in Huay Nam Khao, Phetchabun, Thailand, it was reported that five Hmong girls, suspected to be minors, were lured out of the camp by Hmong Americans along with Hmong security officials in the camp and a couple Thai officials. Later it was reported that this was for pornographic film. The Thai Military authority is aware of this incident.

Based on the information I received, two Hmong American sponsors, a Hmong Thai, eleven Hmong Lao (in Huay Nam Khao) and two Thai Military officials are involved. The Hmong Americans worked with a Hmong Thai, who contacted the Hmong Lao security in charge in the camp. It was further reported that the Hmong security paid 200 baht each to the Thai military officials in order for the participants to leave the camp. It is unclear whether the girls were forced to do the pornographic film (The girls told their parents that Cher Thai Chang lied to them that he found a ginger plantation that required more labor). When the girls returned to their parents, they had been sexually abused. One girl was reported as hardly able to walk due to the sexual abuse.

On April 27, 28, and 29, 2008, the Hmong leaders in Huay Nam khao held meetings concerning the incident. Everyone agreed to send the girls to see Doctors without Borders for medical examination, but the camp President, Chongtou Vang, also known as Chuhu Vang, disagreed. He prohibited everyone from reporting the incident to Doctors Without Border or any other NGO.

The Hmong community in Huay Nam Khao reported to HIHRW that after the result of this, the Thai Military officials called for a meeting with the Hmong Leaders on April 30, 2008. Thai military officials were agitated and scolded the leaders and labeled everyone in Huay Nam Khao as economic migrants. I do not believe the Hmong leaders in Huay NamKhao are involved in this incident; it is a manipulation by Hmong Americans with the help of a few Thai military officials. This could not have happened without them.

Furthermore, it was reported that the Thai Authorities arrested Chia Lee, the Hmong security, and Cher Thai Chang, the Hmong actor. Thai military authorities reported that the Hmong actor has escaped from prison, and the Hmong Americans who sponsored the pornographic film are still at large. The five Hmong girls have now been returned to live with their parents.

According to my reliable sources, the Thai Authorities are in possession of the pornographic film.

My concern is that without Thai military involvement in the investigation of this case, it could affect the Hmong refugees in

Huay Nam Khao. The Hmong leadership in Huay Nam Khao should not be blamed. The Royal Thai Government should not use this kind of incident as an excuse for forced repatriation. To prevent it from happening again for security reasons, the Royal Thai Government should take this case seriously and scrutinize the incident. An independent investigation team should be assigned. Anyone engaging in such criminal acts should be brought up for trial so justice can be served.