

FAQ - DHS Visa Sanctions on Laos

What does the recent Department of Homeland Security visa sanction on Laos mean? These are the most frequently asked questions from community members below. The FAQ is information gathered from partnering sources and our immigration policy and legal experts.

Cov nqe lus uas nquag raug nug txog ntawm daim Vis Zas txwv txiav nyob rau haud nplog teb

Txoj cai txwv txiav ntawm daim Vis Zas los ntawm Department of Homeland Security los ntawm teb chaws nplog txhais tau li cas? Cov nqe haud qab no yog cov nqe uas raug nug ntau tshaj plaws los ntawm lub zej zog. Cov lus teb yog muab thiab tshawb fawb los ntawm qhov tuav ntawb ntawv txog cov neeg thoj nam thiab cov kws paub zoo txog cov cai.

[Link to full DHS announcement](#)

- **What does this announcement mean?**

On the July 10th, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sanctioned the first level of visas from Laos. This prohibits specific high ranking individuals from Laos from traveling to the U.S.

- **Qhov tshaj tawm no txhais tau li cas?**

Nyob rau lub 7 hli ntuj tim 10, lub Department of Homeland Security (DHS) tau qib txam thawj kauj ruam txog cov vis zas nyob rau haud teb chaws Nplog. Qhov no txwv tsis pub cov neeg muaj meej mom tuaj haud teb chaws Nplog mus rau teb chaws As mes lis kas.

- **What are the specific visa sanctions?**

Right now, the visa restriction is just on B-1 visas (for short term Business visitors), B-2 visas (for short term Tourists visitors), B-1/B-2 visas (combination visa for Business & Tourist visitors) for **current Lao government officials** at Director General level and above from the Lao Ministry of Public Security as well as their immediate families; and all A-3 (attendants, servants, & personal employees of Diplomats) and G-5 (personal employees, attendants, servants of & employees of international organizations). However, this may change.

- **Dab tsi yog yam ua raug txwv txiav los ntawm daim Vis Zas?**

Rau lub sij hawm tam sim no, daim vis zas raug txwv nyob rau ntawm B-1 vis za xwb (txhais tau hais tias txwv los yog ncu a me ntsis rau cov tuaj txawv teb chaws tuaj ua lag luam), B-2 vis za (yog tsis pub rau cov tuaj ncig teb ncig chaw rau ib ncu a no xwb) B-1/ B-2 vis za (tag nrho rau cov ua vis za rau sab lag luam thiab tuaj ncig teb ncig chaw) rau cov tsoom fwv rau lub caij nyoog tam sim no nrog rau cov dhia dej num qib siab thiab siab tshaj los ntawm Lao Ministry of Public Security nrog rau lawd tsev neeg; thiab tag nrho A-3 (cov nyob haud, cov tub txib, cov neeg ua hauj lwm) thiab G-5 (cov neeg ua hauj lwm ntawm feem tug, tub txib & los yog cov neeg ua huaj lwm nyob rau cov laug luam txawv teb chaws). Nws kuj yuav muaj kev hloov pauv mus rau yav tom nej thiab.

- **Who does it impact?**

While the visa sanction are against Lao government officials, it is meant to pressure Laos to take back nationals of Laos (including those born in refugee camps in other countries) who have orders of removal. The administration has discontinued the issuance of all B1, B2, and B1/B2 nonimmigrant visas for current officials at the Director

General level and above from the Lao Ministry of Public Security (MPS) as well as their immediate families; and all A3 and G5 nonimmigrant visas to individuals employed by Lao government officials, with limited exceptions.

- **Nws yuav hloov paub thiab nyuab khuab rau leej twg?**

Daim vis za txwv no yog txhob txwm ua rau cov nom tswv nplog xwb, nws yog ua kom nom tswv nplog tso cai rau cov nyob neeg ib txwm yug rau teb chaws nplog kom lawv pom zoo txais lawv cov neeg rov qab mus rau lawd lub teb chaws (suav txog xws li cov neeg khiav yeej thoj nam tawg rog mus rau txawv teb chaws) los yog cov neeg uas raug ncaws tawm teb chaws. Tsoom fwv tsis txais tag nrho cov B1,B2, thiab B1/B2 tsis yog neeg thoj nam cov vis za rau cov nom tswv rau lub sij hawm tam sim no nyob rau txheej siab thiab siab tshaj los ntawm Lao Ministry of Public Security (MPS) thiab nws tsev neeg kiag. Tag nrho cov A3 thiab G5 tsis yog neeg thoj nam cov vis za mus rau cov ua dej num ntawm ib leeg kheej ntiav los ntawm tsoom fwv nplog nrog rau qee yam thiaj tau xwb.

- **Who does it not impact?**

This specific announcement does NOT affect Lao and Hmong US Citizens or valid green card holders who do not have or not at risk of a order of removal. Be mindful that green card holders with criminal histories who may not currently have an order of removal may still get flagged if they try to become citizens, as we have seen in previous cases.

- **Nws yuav tsis hloov paub thiab nyuab khuab rau leej twg?**

Nws yuav tsis nyuab khuab los muaj feem rau Hmoob los yog Nplog uas twb yog haiv neeg mes kas raws kev raws cai (xeem xaj) los yog muaj daim npav ntsuab uas yog raws kev raws cai los yog tsis tau ua tej yam txhaum ua yuav raug tshem tawm teb chaws Mes Kas. Nco ntsoov tias txawm koj muaj daim npav ntsuab lawm los yog koj ua txhaum los yog keeb kwm tau ua tej yam tsis zoo, koj kuj tseem muaj feem raug txav tawm teb chaws yog thaum koj xav mus seem ua neeg mes kas (xeem xaj), raws li peb tau pom los ntawm ib co neeg.

- **Why are there visa sanctions on Laos?**

These visa sanctions may pressure the Lao government to give in and accept Lao nationals with an outstanding order of removal.

- **Vim li cas thiaj li muaj qhov txwv txog daim vis za nyob rau teb chaws nplog?**

Daim vis za rau txwv no yog los ua kom nom tswv Nplog tsum thiab tso cai rau cov tau ntawv pov thawj hais tais yog neeg nplog kom rov qab mus rau teb chaws Nplog.

- **What's the current situation with Laos and the deportation issue?**

As the only Southeast Asian American country with no repatriation agreement with the United States in place, Laos has been able to keep its deportation numbers relatively low, compared to Vietnam and Cambodia. If a "repatriation agreement" is signed, it would allow the U.S. to deport Lao nationals (anyone who is not a U.S. citizen) back to Laos, because Lao government has agreed to accept the deportees from the U.S.

- **Qhov teeb meem tam sim no nyob rau haud teb chaws Nplog thiab qhov teeb meem hais txog qhov xa neeg rov mus rau teb chaws Nplog?**

Lub teb chaws Nplog yog tib lub teb chaws nyob rau haud cheeb tsam es xias ua tsis tso cai rau Mes Kas xa neeg rov qab, Nplog Teb yog ib lub teb chaws uas neeg raug xa rov qab tsawg tshaj plaw muab piv rau teb chaws Nyab Laj thiab teb chaws Qhab Meem. Yog daim ntawv tso cai xa neeg rov qab raug xyeem npe lawm, nws yuav tso cai

rau Mes Kas xa neeg Nplog (neeg Nplog uas tsis yog xeem xaj Mas Kas) rov qab rau teb chaws Nplog, vim rau qhov tsoom fwv Nplog tau tso cau rau txais tos cov neeg Nplog uas raug xa rov rab los ntawm teb chaws Mes Kas.

- **As a Lao and Hmong permanent resident/green card holder, am I able to travel?**

This current visa sanction does not apply to Lao & Hmong US citizens. Lao & Hmong US citizens don't need any visa to travel back into the US. US citizens will still use their US passports to reenter the US. Lao & Hmong green card holders usually can travel back to the US using their current and unexpired Lao passport and their green card. In the future, if the Lao government decides to cancel some or all visas for US citizens traveling to Laos as a retaliation, then traveling between countries may become difficult. If you are a permanent resident or green card holder and believe that your documents may be or is expired, **it is not recommended** that you travel outside the US, especially those who have criminal convictions.

- **Yog ib tug Hmoob log yog Nplog uas yog neeg mes kas lawm (xeem xaj) los yog muaj daim npav ntsuab kuv yuav mus ncig teb ncig chaw puas tau?**

Daim vis za txwv no tsis muaj feem txog cov uas twb yog neeg mes kas lawm (xeem xaj). Hmoob thiab Nplog ua yog neeg mes kas (xeem xyaj) yuav tsis tim tsum ib daim vis za twg rov qab nkag los rau haud teb chaws Mes Kas no. Cov neeg uas yog mes kas (xeem xyaj) tsuas yog siv lawd daim US passport (ntawv hla teb chaws) rov qab nkag rau teb chaws Mes Kas. Hmoob thiab Nplog ua yog muaj daim npav ntsuab rau lub sij hawm tam sim no xav mus ncig thiab rov qab los rau haud teb chaws Mes Kas no tsuas yog siv lawd daim ntawv hla teb chaws uas tsis tau dhau caij thiab diam npav ntsuab xwb. Rau yav pem suab, yog tsoom fwv nplog pauv thiab txiav txim siab tsis puab ib co neeg los yog txuas vis za rau neeg mes kas (xeem xaj) mus ncig rau teb chaws Nplog, ces tej zaum nws yuav pib nyuab khuab txog kev mus mus los los rau ntawm ob lub teb chaws no. Yog koj muaj daim npav ntsuab thiab koj cov ntaub ntawv yuav dhau sij hawm, nws yuav zoo tshaj yog koj tsis txhob mus ncig teb ncig chaw txawv teb chaws, tshwj xeeb tshaj yog cov ua muaj keeb kwm hais tias tau ua txhawm tus cai neb teb chaws no.

- **As a Lao or Hmong US citizen, am I able to travel?**

This sanction does not affect US citizens.

- **Yog kuv yog ib tug Hmoob los si Nplog uas yog neeg Mes Kas (xeem xaj) lawm, kuv puas yuav mus ncig teb ncig chaw tau?**

Qhov twv txiav no yuav tsis muaj feem cuam tshuam txog koj yog koj yog ib tug neeg Mes Kas Lawm (xeem xaj).

- **What should I be aware of when it comes to my rights as a US permanent resident (aka Green Card holder)?**

First, always consult with a legal counsel. You always have the right to remain silent, right to an attorney, and right to not open the door for ICE or police officers unless they show you a warrant. If they do not have a warrant, you may refuse to let them in. Ask for an interpreter if you can't understand them. Different rules apply when you are in public spaces, at work, or at the airport. For more information, know your right trainings, and resources, refer to the list down below.

- **Kuv yuav tsum paub txog dab tsis thaum hais los txog ntawm qhov hais tias kuv yog ib tug pej xeem mes Kas (los yog cov ntawv npav ntsuab)?**

Thawj yam, yuav tsum yog ib tug neeg paub txog txoj kev cai lij choj zoo tham. Koj muaj txoj cai nyob ntsiag to, nriav kws lij coj, thiab tsis pub ICE los yog tub ceev xwm nkag los rau haud koj lub vaj lub tsev yog lawd tsis tau kev tso cai los tshawb haud koj lub vaj lub tsev. Yog lawd tsis tau daim ntawv tso cai, koj tsis pub lawd nkag los haud tsev los yeej tsis ua li cas. Nug txog ib tug neeg txhais lus yog koj tsis nkag siab thiab txuas tsis tau lus nrog lawd. Yog koj nyob rau haud lub zej lub zog nraum tshav puam, nram hauj lwmm, los yog tshav dav hlau lawm nws txoj cai ib nyuag txawv zog. Yog koj xav paub tau zog thiab cob ceem hais tias koj yog ib tug pej xeem koj muaj cai li cas yog cog nrhiav kev kawm, thov saib rau cov nqe tso haud qab no.

- **What should we expect in the near future following this announcement?**

The Department of State may change the covered visa applicants or visa categories at any time. An expansion to other visa categories is likely. Laos could reciprocate and ban visas for US citizens.

- **Tej yam ua peb yuav npaj hnov rau yav pem suab no yog dab tsi?**

Lub Department of State muaj cai hlov txog tus cai ntawm cov vis za los yog feem txog ntawm daim vis za txhua lub caij. Nws kuj yuav tej zaum yuav hloob raus xeem los kuj muaj. Nplog yuav tsis tso neeg mes kas (xeem xaj) mus rau teb chaws Nplog lawm los kuj muaj.

- **How many individuals have final orders of removal to Laos?**

Since 1998, 4,568 individuals have been issued deportation orders to Laos. Of that number, there have been a total of 206 deportations, with 4,362 still waiting in limbo (SEARAC).

- **Muaj peb tsawg leej uas yuav raug xa rov**

Txij li thaum 1998, nws muaj 4,568 tus neeg uas rau tso npe kom xa mus rau teb chaws Nplog. Ntawm cov neeg ntawv, 206 tug neeg raug xa lawm, txeeem tshuav 4,362 tus neeg tseem tos nyob rau limbo (SEARAC).

- **What can we learn from previous sanctions on Southeast Asian countries (Cambodia, Vietnam, etc)?**

These visa sanctions are a foreign policy move to pressure the Lao government to sign a repatriation agreement with the U.S. If an agreement is signed, this could begin a slope of large-scale deportations of Lao nationals. Last year, the United States sanctioned Cambodia, which led to the biggest mass roundup of Cambodians for detention and deportation. Deportations to Cambodia are rumored to double this year.

- **Peb kawm tau dab tsi txog cov cai txwv vis za no nyob rau cov teb chaws nyob haud qab Suav Teb (Nyab Laj Teb, Qhab Meem, etc) ?**

Cov vis za txwv no yog tsoom fww nyob txawv teb chaws txoj hau kev yuav ua rau kom tsoom fww Nplog xyeem npe thiab tso cai rau cov neeg Nplog cov qab mus rau lawd lub teb lub chaw daws li teb chaws Mes Kas xav tau. Yog ob tog sib pom zoo, nov yuav yog thawj kauj ruam loj ntawm kev xa cov neeg Nplog rov mus rau Nplog Teb. Tsaib no, Mes Kas twb ua rau teb chaws Qhab Meem, coob tus Neeg Qhab Meem raug ceev thiab xa mus rau lawd teb lawv chaw. Raws li hnov, xyoo no nws tseem yuav coob tshaj li ntawm 2 npaug tsaib no.

- **What should Lao and Hmong communities be most concerned about?**

If possible, all Lao/Hmong Americans should apply for U.S. citizenship. This will eliminate the possibility of any deportation, you will have the right to vote, and won't have any travel restrictions. Anyone who is not a U.S. citizen without proper valid paperwork about their legal status and individuals who have been convicted of a crime may be at risk for deportation.

- **Lub zej lub zog Hmoob thiab Nplog yuav tsum txhawj txog dab tsi tshaj plaws?**

Yog ua tau, tag nrho txhua txhua tus Hmoob/ Nplog Mes Kas yuav tsum mus xeem ua neeg Mes Kas (xeem xaj). Nws yuav pab tau kom koj yog raug xa rov qab, kom yuav muaj cai mus pov ntawv, thiab mus ncig teb ncig chaw yam tsis nyuab khuab. Txhua tus uas tsis yog neeg Mes Kas (xeem xaj) thiab tsis muaj daim raws kev raws cai thiab tus uas tau ua txhaum Mes Kas txoj cai mauj feem yuav raug xa rov qab.

What can I do?

- Immigration policies are complicated and confusing. Make sure you are getting and sharing accurate information (such as the list of trusted resources below).
- If you have questions or concerns about your legal status, get legal counsel right away.
- [Know your rights if you're detained](#).
- [Know Your Rights](#) during an ICE encounter.
- Contact non-profit immigration groups that can provide educational resources and/or legal services ([SEARAC](#), [National Immigration Law Center](#) (NILC), [Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota](#), [Immigration National Network](#) or [UMN Center for New Americans](#))
- Read SEARAC's [Resource Guide for Southeast Asian Americans Facing Criminal Deportation](#).
- For more pro-bono legal options, check out SEARAC's [directory](#) of individuals and organizations with expertise in criminal deportation of Southeast Asian Americans.

For more updates on this announcement, contact Tigana Van Le at tigana@theseadproject.org.

Yam kuv ua tau yog dab tsi?

- Cov cai txog kev tsiv teb tsaws chaws nws tsis yog ib yam yooj yim nkag siab txog. Yuav tsum saib kom meej thiab qhia rau txhua tus kom raug raug li txoj cai.
- Yog koj muaj lus nug los yog kev txhawj xeeb txog koj cov ntaub ntawv nyob teb chaws no, mus nrhiav kuv pab sai sai tom ntej no.
- [Know your rights if you're detained](#). Paub koj txoj cai yog koj raug ceev.
- [Know Your Rights](#) Paub koj txoj cai thaum koj ntsib ICE encounter
- Nrog rau cov koom haum kiav txog cov neeg tsiv teb tsaws chaw tham kom koj paub meej xws li nram no. ([SEARAC](#), [National Immigration Law Center](#) (NILC), [Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota](#), [Immigration National Network](#) or [UMN Center for New Americans](#))
- Nyeem ntxiv SEARAC's [Resource Guide for Southeast Asian Americans Facing Criminal Deportation](#).
- Yog xav paub ntxiv saib SEARAC's [directory](#) los yog rau cov koom haum me uas muaj kev qhia txog cov neeg ua txhaum txoj cai uas yuav raug xa mus rau qub teb qub chaws.

Yog xav paub ntau zog los yog seb kev hloov paud txog ntawm tsab cai no, koj xau ntawv tau rau Tigana Van Le at tigana@theseadproject.org.