

particular, the case of human rights defender Sombath Somphone who disappeared in 2012 was raised.

Sombath Somphone's **disappearance** was chillingly captured on CCTV which shows that Sombath was taken away in the presence of police officers. In the video, he is last seen stopped at a police checkpoint, and asked to step out of his car by traffic police. Moments later, a motorcyclist arrives at the scene, abandons his motorcycle and drives away in Sombath's car. A few minutes later, another man emerges from the police post, and waits by the side of the road. Soon, a pick-up truck arrives, with its lights flashing. Sombath was then forced into the truck by unknown individuals. The truck then leaves, with armed people riding a motorcycle leading the way.

His whereabouts remain unknown and there has been no credible investigation into his enforced disappearance.

According to Radio Free Asia (RFA), Laos government delegate Bounkeut Sangsomsak refused to answer detailed questions during the review on the authorities' efforts to find Sombath. Instead, he tried to change the subject, making an **allegation** about Sombath having 1 to 2 million USD in unreported assets. He also attacked Sombath's wife **Ng Shui Meng**, claiming no legal documents have been found to confirm their marriage.

At the end of the **review**, the Human Rights Committee said it "regrets the paucity of relevant information provided by (Laos) regarding the measures taken, and the progress achieved, in investigating the enforced disappearance of civil society leader Sombath Somphone".

## Peaceful assembly

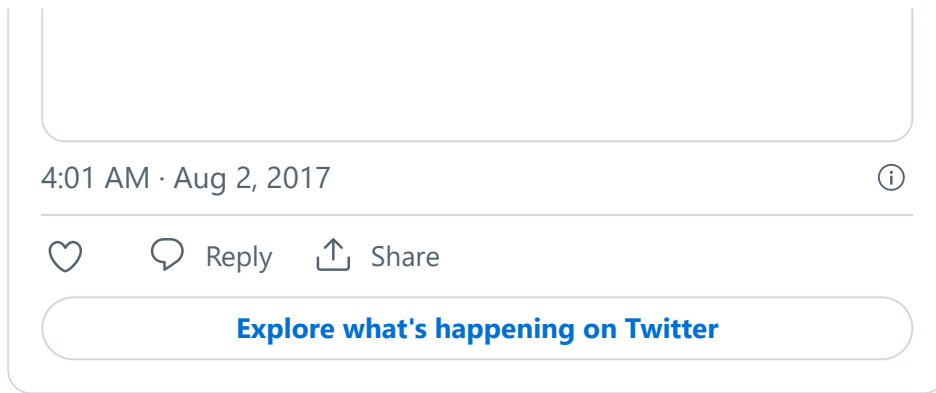
### Two children involved in land protests released

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Lao Villagers Arrested in 11-Year-Old Land Dispute in Sekong Province  
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Two children - Ny, a girl, and Nak, a boy - were released in June 2018. The two were detained by police in July 2017 together with 12 other villagers from Yeub village who were taken into custody for obstructing workers and cutting down trees on land granted by the government to a Vietnamese rubber company. The residents of Yeub village in Sekong's Thateng district have been in a dispute with the government over land rights since 2006.

According to Radio Free Asia (RFA), several of the **detainees** were beaten or subjected to electric shocks in the days following their arrest, while many are now malnourished and in failing health. In January 2018, one of the 14 villagers, Somsavanh, **died** under mysterious circumstance in police custody. The relatives challenged the government claims that the man had killed himself. Speaking to RFA, an anonymous source said, "I believe that he must have been tortured to death, because I once saw bruises on his chest". The funeral were arranged by authorities, and no family members were allowed to participate or perform religious rites.

An anonymous source told RFA that the two children have been released but forbidden to tell other people about their time in detention.

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