



From Thai youths to Laos

We, the youths of Mekong, has come together for Sombath Somphone and Beyond Project since 2013 after the tragedy that occurred to our uncle Sombath Somphone on the fifteenth of December 2013 in Vientiane, Laos. From what we have heard, seen, and witnessed, we come to realize that the lifetime commitment and dedication either in the fields of education or development uncle Sombath has been doing is for nothing but peace in this region.

We, too, believe in peace. This is why we have come together and organized various activities in the past three years from Concert for Peace, Tea Talks, Finding Sombath Around the World, Peace Talks under the title "Liberty, Freedom, Same Same but Different", a peace journey "Two Years, I remember" from Bangkok all the way to Mekong in Nhong - Khai province, with academic forums to raise awareness for every activity that we held. We have a dream to make peace come true. Peace that allows freedom of expression. Peace that protects one another person. Peace that permits the state and law to fairly govern us. As small action as this might seem to be, we hope this rock we cast will create many ripples across the water.

We hope that our efforts will remind the society that there are people who have been forced to disappear. We are still trying

to call for transparent investigation for truths, and legal proceedings for cases of enforced disappearance whether they be uncle Sombath Somphone, Billy Pohlachí Rakjongcharoen, lawyer Somchai Neelapaijit and any other similar cases happen in our society.

It has been three years. We have realized that political situation in our society and neighbor countries is not something easy that we can stand up by ourselves and voice the truths out loud for a sense of fear our friends start to have. Our friends might be fearful for their security. We, too, are afraid. We, too, have fear. However, we ask you to try stop and stare around ourselves. Ask yourself and answer yourself sincerely whether what happens nowadays is not the violation of human rights. Are we not being violated and threatened?

How many people have been disappeared? How many souls have been threatened to stop working for justice for others? Is it right for the authority to use their power taking lives of people without having to clarify anything about it? What kind of society are we living in? Is this the ASEAN community we look forward to be a part of? Peace that we want to see is the state of security with protection from the authority. Is not that our right we are entitled to have as citizens of a nation state we belong to?

Dear our friends in Laos, as we are moving towards ASEAN community and as we are the daughters and sons of Mekong river, we can no longer live separately. Therefore, we urge for your support from Laos to come together in order to overcome this fear and strongly stand for what is right. We cannot walk alone. We need you.

Last but not least, we are sending you strength and support for our friends in Laos and other countries in Greater Mekong Sub-Region, ASEAN countries and all around the world to believe in what you are doing. We, together, will drive this society towards achievable peace.

The Youths of Mekong

Sombath Somphone and Beyond Project

