

Statement

Sombath Initiative Created - Two years after the enforced disappearance of Sombath Somphone in Laos

Thursday 11 December 2014, by [Sombath Initiative](#) (Date first published: 11 December 2014).

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Bangkok, 11 December 2014 — While driving home on the evening of December 15th 2012, Sombath Somphone was stopped by traffic police at a police post in Vientiane and taken away by persons in a pickup truck while the police watched.

While Lao government authorities have expressed concern over Sombath's disappearance, their investigation has been cursory at best and calls into question their commitment to really discovering what has happened to Sombath.

While voices of individuals, organisations and governments from around the world have swelled in concern, those living in the Lao PDR have fallen silent in fear, as the message has been informally passed down from the authorities to not raise Sombath's case.

While the exact reasons for the enforced disappearance of Sombath Somphone are not known, it is clear those responsible want the issue of his abduction to also disappear, along with his vision and voice for a more equitable, inclusive and sustainable future for his country. The Sombath Initiative will not permit this to happen.

The objectives of the Sombath Initiative are two-fold:

- To seek resolution to the case of Sombath Somphone's disappearance
- To carry forward Sombath's ideas and ideals

An advisory board has been formed, whose members are:

Walden Bello, Member of the Philippine House of Representatives, Akbayan Party

Paul-Emile Dupret, Political Advisor, European United Left-Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)

Murray Hiebert, Chair of Southeast Asia Studies, Center for Strategic & International Studies

Angkhana Neelapaijit, Founder, Justice for Peace Foundation

Lee Rhiannon, Senator for New South Wales, Australian Greens Party

Charles Santiago, Member of Parliament, Democratic Action Party, Malaysia; Chairperson, ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights

Ng Shui Meng, spouse of Sombath Somphone

Note: Members of the Advisory Board serve in a personal capacity. Professional affiliations are listed for identification purposes only.

Immediate efforts will focus on further defining program strategies, gathering resources, and building networks of organisational affiliates, supporters and friends of the Sombath Initiative.

For background on Sombath's work, his disappearance and ongoing updates please see [\[1\]](#):

Sombath.org

Twitter.com/TheSBInitiative

Facebook.com/TheSombathInitiative

Plus.google.com/109463621574366688707

For further information, contact: TheSombathInitiative gmail.com

P.S.

* <http://focusweb.org/content/statement-sombath-initiative-created>

Footnotes

[1] On ESSF, see: [SOMPHONE Sombath](#),
http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?page=mot&id_mot=8798&lang=fr