



ACCESS TO JUSTICE & EFFECTIVE REMEDIES IN LAO PDR



OVERALL CONTEXT

Efforts to improve the human rights situation in any country must ensure that the promotion of new law and policy frameworks and development projects, is accompanied with effective remedies, along with implementation and oversight mechanisms. In the context of Lao PDR, the standard of government accountability and oversight is extremely poor, leading to failures in human rights protection even when some positive steps are put in place. The failure to ratify legal treaties by the government of Lao PDR (such as the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OP-CAT), and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of their Families (ICMW)) creates a legal vacuum that maintains the status quo of human rights violations. Without these legally binding treaties there is no assurance that actions like torture or enforced disappearance will be penalised and treated like the crimes they should be in the country. Meanwhile, national legislations like the recently passed Law on Resettlement and Vocation (2018) continues to systematise human rights violations and fails to meet its purpose of providing effective remedies in relocation programmes. Evidence of human rights violations linked to the lack of effective remedies and oversight mechanisms – ranging from financial, judicial and non-judicial remedies at the national, regional and international level – especially in controversial development projects, coupled with a shrinking civic space and weak judicial system, illustrate that the country still has a long way to go in the field of human rights.

BRIEF ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2nd CYCLE UPR RECOMMENDATIONS

During the 2nd UPR cycle, the Government of Lao PDR received 49 recommendations related to effective remedy, such as the need to strengthen the law and policy framework, enforcement mechanisms and institutional oversight; government accountability; access to justice; and protection of civic space. Ten recommendations highlighted the need to establish an effective National Human rights institution in line with the Paris Principles, with a separate recommendation specifically addressing the right to fair compensation and remedy in the context of the national land policy (UPR recommendation No. 121.170 made by Germany). In general, the government fails to promote effective remedy at the national, regional and international levels, and to protect the human rights situation of the local population on different grounds. To protect human rights of the population and respect international treaties and standards, the government must work to resolve key challenges that currently obstruct effective remedy in Lao PDR.



REALITIES ON THE GROUND

Challenges

Challenge 1: No access to justice, due to the legal vacuum created by the failure to ratify international human rights treaties: Lack of ratification of international treaties, such as the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OP-CAT), and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of their Families (ICMW), results in a legal vacuum creating an environment of impunity, with accountability of the perpetrators of rights violations being ignored. This also allows the government of Lao PDR to ignore their accountability to provide effective remedy in the case of rights violations. Thus, access to justice is denied.

Challenge 2: A shrinking civic space, restrictions on freedom of expression and poor access to information undermine efforts to denounce rights violations and seek remedy. Civil society and human rights defenders who have mobilised to expose the rights violations resulting from development projects or investments have been subjected to unjust suppression. Restricting the media and obstructing access to information from them also contributes to this problem. For more information refer to the Civic Space factsheet.

Challenge 3: National justice mechanisms and institutions fail to align with international standards.

This includes the failure of national institutions and mechanisms to protect the right to freedom from arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances, the right to a fair trial, and the right to a fair conviction. Instead both the police and the judiciary have become another means for the government to limit criticism and legitimise their actions that violate peoples' rights. An abusive judiciary also undermines trust in an independent system and denies access to justice and an effective remedy.

Cases, Facts, Comments

The government has been criticised for the lack of accountability and transparency in the investigation of enforced disappearance cases, which as a result never lead to prosecution of a perpetrator. Signing, but not ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED) despite committing to do so allows this abusive approach. For instance, seven years after the 2012 disappearance of land rights advocate Sombath Somphone no information has been provided on the investigation at all.

The extreme level of poverty in Lao PDR increasingly pushes the local population to find economic opportunities abroad to support their families. In 2019, about 278,485 Lao workers were registered in Thailand alone, with the number of illegal workers being unknown (estimated at about 30,000). However, poor legal protection for migrant workers, such as the failure to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of their families (ICMW), increases their vulnerability to human trafficking, threat to life, exploitation, unsafe working conditions, and poor living conditions. To illustrate the damage that could result, on 18 August 2018, nine Lao illegal migrant workers died in a car accident while travelling to renew their tourist visa, which they rely on to work in Thailand. The body of only two of the Lao workers have been claimed so far.

Following an arrest on 12 September 2019, Houayheuang Xayabouly, also known as Mouay was sentenced to five years in prison and a fine of 20 million Kip (about \$2000) under Article 117 for criticizing the government. This was due to her post on Facebook complaining about the slow government response to the floods in the Southern provinces.

Legal restrictions on non-profit associations' (NPAs) activities under Decree No. 238 on Associations of 2017 also creates barriers on the activities of NPAs that would otherwise hold the government accountable by highlighting human rights violations and promoting efforts to access effective remedy, especially in cases of rural communities against development projects and investments.

As a positive step, the judicial system has been working to resolve a larger number of cases brought before it. To illustrate, as of November 2018, about 86 percent of the 5,291 criminal cases and almost 60 percent of the 4,168 civil or other cases submitted have also been resolved by the Peoples' Court. Additionally, the appeal courts have solved 74 percent of the 335 cases before them. However, while resolving cases, opinions have been expressed that the judicial and other institutions are not independent and can be manipulated to favour the government or businesses.

Arbitrary arrest, detention and custodial torture for protest against the unfair confiscation of land: In 2017, villagers from Yeup in Thateng district of Sekong province who cut down trees of a Vietnamese rubber company against the unfair confiscation of their lands, were arrested. All the fourteen activists were detained, with several beaten or subjected to electric shocks. In January 2018, one of the activists died in the police custody with two others falling seriously ill. In June 2019, nine of the villagers were sentenced to prison terms of two to six years, after about two years of being detained without a trial.

Arbitrary arrest for refusing to hand over land to the government: In September 2019, a 69-year old man was arrested for refusing to sign papers to vacate a land that was in his family for more than 50 years in order to fit into the government's plan to build a health centre on it. After being detained arbitrarily for three months, he was released on bail.

Intimidation and enforced disappearance of Lao activists, across the border: Members of "Free Lao", a network of Lao migrant workers and activists living in exile in Thailand who peacefully advocate for human rights in Lao PDR, have been repeatedly intimidated. Additionally, Od Sayavong, a Lao worker, activist, and a member of Free Lao disappeared



from Bangkok on 26 August 2019 for his public criticism of the Lao government. At present, authorities have not provided information as to his whereabouts, even after a joint statement by the UN Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, and the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, expressing their concern about the case.

Challenge 4: National non-judicial mechanisms and institutions to protect human rights are found to be inefficient, with weak powers of implementation and oversight: Failure relates to the significant lack of an independent human rights institution.

In accordance with the Constitution and the 2003 amended law on the National Assembly, the National Assembly is tasked as an institution having both legislative and oversight functions, to ensure accountability and good governance. For this purpose, a hotline has been established to improve access to remedy. However, the hotline does not offer a robust independent remedy, as it works only for eight weeks per year and resembles more a complaint clearinghouse rather than a body to investigate and resolve grievances.

The right to file complaints and petitions is also undermined, despite being protected under Article 41 of the Constitution. The National Steering Committee on Human Rights, which is responsible for filing complaints and petitions, fails to address issues due to long procedural delays, but also due to corruption and bias against any opposition to or critique of the government.

In this context, the government has made no effort to promote an independent human rights mechanism or institution to assess and protect the right of the population, in accordance with the Paris Principles to which the country is a signatory.

Challenge 5: Ethnic minorities, the poor and those living in rural areas face significant barriers to access judicial remedy, despite positive government efforts: Barriers such as geographical distance, lack of finances, absence of procedures in ethnic languages, illiteracy and stigmatization obstruct access to these groups, that are most in need of remedy particularly in the context of forced evictions, unfair treatment and criminalisation. Over the last few years, the government has shown positive efforts to improve their access to legal aid and dispute settlement mechanisms, including in remote areas, but all in vain.

The government has made efforts to introduce formal legal aid and institutional support to people living in remote areas and villages, as part of the 'Master Plan on Development of the Rule of Law in Lao PDR toward Year 2020'. In 2016, village mediation services were formalised through the establishment of Village Dispute Resolution Committees. Also, since 2018, after the approval of the Legal Aid Decree, legal aid offices have been expanded across the country.

As an example of the successful use of the legal aid clinics, in 2017, 124 factory workers turned to a legal aid clinic after their factory closed and relocated without prior notice or pay to their employees. The case was won and the workers received LAK 800 million (about \$92,000) in compensation from the factory owners.

Despite these positive steps, there are still problems that the government has to manage and overcome to ensure sustainable legal access for people in remote areas, including the provision of financial support, lawyers and legal officers to make the system work.

Challenge 6: Inadequate and inconsistent compensation for forced relocation and livelihood disruption in the context of infrastructure and development projects, as well as national land policies: The lack of adequate compensation and remedy in the form of financial support, poor geographical resettlement, assistance in protecting traditional livelihoods, and failure to provide compensation and remedy in a timely manner, jeopardises potential benefits of government projects focusing on development, leaving the people involved even more vulnerable.

Extreme delay in providing compensation to families affected by a dam collapse: Two years after the Nam Ao dam collapse in Xaysomboun province in September 2017, 60 families affected are still awaiting the compensation solely due to a claim by the dam developer that the compensation claimed was inflated.

Continuing impunity and failure to effectively compensate victims of a dam collapse due to poor provision of information and weak support from authorities: In July 2018, in the aftermath of the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam collapse, the government announced a living allowances of \$12 per month for each survivor. The major insurance companies also hold \$50 million in liability insurance for the project. However, real-life evidence shows that financial compensation to the victims are delayed or missing altogether, with some victims reportedly only receiving rice or fishing nets. Many of those affected are unaware of the compensation or their right to claim it, due to lack of public disclosure. A year after the event, about 4,400 individuals live in poor conditions in relocations camps and 10,000 others have returned to their villages but continue to suffer hardship as they try to restore their livelihood with weak support from the authorities. So far, nobody has been held liable or prosecuted for the catastrophic collapse.

Often individuals or whole community groups affected by infrastructure development projects are relocated into poor living conditions without any adequate or any means of a livelihood or the financial means to survive, putting them further into poverty.



Failure to provide any water to families in a resettlement village: In the Luang Namtha province, the construction of Nam Thai 1 hydropower project saw the resettlement of more than 100 families. However, these families have no means to obtain water, due to a drought drying up the Nam Tha river located 10 km from the resettlement village. With limited commitment to assist the villagers, the Sengphet company, a Lao subcontractor of a Chinese Corporation involved in supporting them does not do so anymore as their commitment ended in 2018. Further, with the dam commencing operations in November 2019, the flow of water in the river has reduced further, worsening the condition of the people living there.

Resettlement village with no potable water for more than 3 months: In 2018, a similar situation arose in the resettlement village for the Xekaman I hydropower plant in Sanxay district of Attapeu province, where the already marginalised ethnic Katu villagers were without potable water for more than 3 months, due to a broken pump that was put in place to supply this water. They are also unable to use their wet paddy lands to earn a living and thus survive.

Failure to compensate or poor payment for those displaced by the Laos-China railway: The Laos-China railway under construction until 2021 has been described as a significant benefit to boost the socioeconomic development of the country. However, it has caused many Lao villagers to relocate, with most of them not having received any compensation or lower payments than expected.

Human rights violations in the Law on Resettlement and Vocation: In 2018, the Law on Resettlement and Vocation was passed to address the issue of relocation further. Instead, several provisions perpetuate the systematic violation of rights, including the lack of adequate compensation for certain categories, strict rights and prohibitions for resettled families, and selection of resettled areas that discriminate against traditional economic, social and cultural lifestyles of the affected people. For further information refer to the Law on Resettlement and Vocation Factsheet.

According to the 2018 financial audit presented by the State Audit Organization to the National Assembly, an estimated amount of 433 billion kip has not been handed over by central and local state agencies to the national treasury, as required by law. Financial misconduct was found to be higher during natural disasters or infrastructure development because local authorities often need to address the situation as soon as possible using public money, with very general orders from the government creating the opportunity to misuse funds. The National Assembly has repeatedly urged the government to address financial violations by strengthening oversight and implementation measures.

Absence to hold States accountable for failure to comply with procedure: Although there was no consensus following the Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNCPA) between Lao PDR and the other States on the Xayaburi and Don Sahong hydropower projects because of their call for further reassessment of the social and environmental projects, the projects still continued unilaterally. This action could continue due to the absence of a legal mechanism inside the MRC to punish states that do not respect MRC procedure and decisions.

Transboundary impact and failed MRC consultations: The prior consultation by the MRC on the Pak Beng hydropower project, between 2016 and 2017 failed to provide adequate information and solutions on the transboundary impacts. The impact assessment studies conducted during the consultation were unclear and imprecise, as to assess social impact communities only within a 5-kilometre radius of the dam were involved, and to assess environmental impacts only 6 locations were analysed.

The World Bank has been a significant investor in hydropower projects related to economic development since the 1990s. However, its involvement in infrastructure development projects should be reassessed after the World Bank ignored the adverse environmental and human rights impact on communities resulting from the controversial Nam Theun 2 Dam, and instead continued to advise the Government on and fund the project. For further information refer to Business & Human Rights factsheet.

Challenge 7: Financial misconduct, with lack of effective remedy often being linked to corruption or incorrect disbursement of funds.

Challenge 8: The Mekong River Commission is a weak regional mechanism not able to legally hold member states accountable for rights violations & damages to the environment: The Mekong River Commission (MRC), born to strengthen regional cooperation in the best interests of ecological and human sustainability, has been criticised for failing to be a platform for unanimous decisions, lacking authority over its member states and providing inadequate impact assessments which lead to unilateral decisions on development projects with a serious impact on sustainability in the region. This lack of accountability increases the creation of loopholes in the regulation of development projects that allow authorities and investors to evade their responsibility.

Challenge 9: Weak oversight, evaluation and monitoring on the involvement of international financial institutions: The poor evaluation and oversight of international donors and investors engaging in development projects results in their inadequate accountability for impact assessments and poor compensation to affected communities. These are additional barriers to respecting human rights standards and the right to an effective remedy.



RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF LAO PDR

- 1. No access to justice, due to the legal vacuum created by the failure to ratify international human rights treaties.**
 - 1.1.** In line with Human Rights Committee Concluding Observations no. 6, 18, and 20 (2018), ensure the ratification of the remaining human rights treaties, such as the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPPED), the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OP-CAT), and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrants Workers and Members of their Families (ICMW); in order to respect international human rights standards and harmonise national legislations accordingly.
- 2. A shrinking civic space, restrictions on freedom of expression and poor access to information undermine efforts to denounce rights violations and seek remedy.**
 - 2.1.** In line with paragraph 90 (g) in the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2019) and with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), immediately end restrictions on civic space, end retaliation on peaceful speech and enable the registration of associations in less than a month.
- 3. National justice mechanisms fail to act in line with international and national human rights standards, including the right to fair trials, freedom from arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearance, and fair convictions.**
 - 3.1.** In line with Concluding Observation No. 29 of the Human Rights Committee (HRC) (2018), take all measures necessary to eradicate all forms of undue interference with the judiciary by the legislative and executive branches and safeguard, in law and in practice, the full independence and impartiality of the judiciary. Freedom from arbitrary arrests and abusive treatments, fair trial and legal support must be guaranteed to all Lao citizens, especially to those that face the most significant barriers, such as to ethnic minorities, the poor and people living in remote areas.
- 4. National non-judicial mechanisms and institutions to protect human rights are found to be inefficient, inconclusive, with weak powers of implementation and oversight.**
 - 4.1.** In line with paragraph 90 (e) in the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2019), and to respect the Paris Principles, establish an independent human rights body for oversight and evaluation of the environmental, social and human rights impact of development and infrastructure projects. This includes the creation of a confidential complaint mechanism for individuals and communities to access, without the need to exhaust alternative remedies. The mechanism should operate all year-round, be empowered to investigate allegations and prescribe appropriate remedies.
- 5. Ethnic minorities, the poor and those living in rural areas face significant barriers to access judicial remedy, despite positive government efforts.**
 - 5.1.** In line with paragraph 90 (d) in the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2019), strengthen legal access to people in remote areas so that they can effectively access judicial remedy. This includes reforming village mediation to promote procedural fairness and the feasibility of appeals, as well as the development of a structural system with sustainable funds, legal officers and lawyers that can be accessible without barrier.
- 6. Inadequate and inconsistent compensation for forced relocation and livelihood disruption in the context of infrastructure and development projects, as well as national land policies.**
 - 6.1.** In line with paragraph 86 in the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2019), companies investing in Lao hydropower and development sectors should ensure an ongoing human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent and mitigate their impact on human rights, as well as to provide effective remedy and compensation where needed.
 - 6.2.** Adequate and consistent compensation must be immediately provided for the communities affected by hydropower projects, especially for those of the Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy dam collapse. As suggested in the report by the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic (2019), monthly allowances must be increased and paid on time, with fertile land provided, in addition to basic services and counselling.
- 7. Financial misconduct, with lack of effective remedy often being linked to corruption or incorrect disbursement of funds.**
 - 7.1.** Strengthen oversight and implementation measures, to monitor financial movements and prevent misconduct.
 - 7.2.** Improve the delivery of timely responses and effective compensation during natural disasters. This includes the creation of agencies that can monitor situations on the ground and pre-determine where money would be needed, along with the creation of a public fund specific to times of emergency in order to allow local authorities to deliver timely funds without affecting the public budget.



8. The Mekong River Commission is a weak regional mechanism not able to legally hold member states accountable for rights violations & damages to the environment.

8.1. In line with Concluding observation 57 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (2018), promote regional cooperation and mechanisms. In particular, MRC should establish a legal mechanism that obliges member states to respect unanimous decisions and regulations, regarding development and infrastructure projects. Within this framework, the institution should strengthen its methodology of impact assessment, to provide valid results that emphasise and protect the human, environmental and social vulnerabilities on the ground.

9. Weak oversight, evaluation and monitoring on the involvement of international financial institutions.

9.1. Establish greater scrutiny on development projects with foreign investments and partnerships, as carried out by the Government and private investors, to ensure that projects bring greater and sustainable benefit to Lao people, as recommended in paragraph 95 in the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his visit to the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (2019).

UPR 2nd CYCLE RECOMMENDATIONS

#	Recommendations	Country	SDGs	Response	Level of Implementation
Theme: Ratification of International Treaties					
121.13	Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.	Paraguay	16.3	Noted	Not Implemented
121.15	Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.	Algeria, Honduras, Uruguay	16.3	Noted	Not Implemented
121.20	Implement its commitment made during the 2010 UPR to ratify and implement the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.	Netherlands	16.3	Supported	Not Implemented
121.21	Ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.	Canada, Spain	16.3	Supported	Not Implemented
121.28	Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.	Spain	16.3	Noted	Not Implemented
121.36	Continue implementing the obligations under the international human rights treaties ratified by the Lao People’s Democratic Republic.	Kuwait	16.3	Supported	Partially Implemented
121.3	Ratify the remaining international human rights conventions and continue without delay to harmonize its national legislation with the international obligations of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic’s under the respective human rights conventions, and implement them in policy and practice and strengthen its legal complaints system to ensure that most vulnerable groups have effective access to justice.	Finland	16.3	Supported	Not Implemented
121.23	Consider ratifying the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and establish an independent commission to carry out impartial investigations in a prompt, impartial and effective manner into the alleged cases of enforced disappearances reported in the country.	Italy	16.3	Noted	Not Implemented
121.24	Ratify the ICPPED and adopt implementing legislation, as well as mechanisms to independently investigate and identify perpetrators of those crimes.	Brazil	16.3	Noted	Not Implemented
Theme: Compliance of National legislation with International Human Rights Obligations of Lao PDR					



#	Recommendations	Country	SDGs	Response	Level of Implementation
121.39	Fully incorporate the major human rights treaties that the Lao People's Democratic Republic has ratified into its domestic laws and allocate adequate human and financial resources to implement the laws.	Republic of Korea	16.3 & 16.a	Supported	Not Implemented
121.43	Enhance the implementation of the international human rights treaties, to which the Lao People's Democratic Republic is a party and the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration to benefit the entire Lao population.	Cambodia	16.3	Supported	Partially Implemented
121.37	Revise the Penal Code to make all new laws conform with international human rights standards, and repeal provisions of the law on media and the new decree on the Internet that criminalize basic human rights and subordinate individual rights to the interests of the state.	Sweden	16.3	Supported	Not Implemented
121.170	Ensure in the elaboration and implementation of the national land policy that economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political rights of all affected persons are fully respected, including by applying international standards such as the guidelines on land tenure and on responsible investment in agriculture of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in particular by providing full, adequate and effective compensation for expropriations and by recognizing and protecting customary land rights.	Germany	1.4 & 2.3	Supported	Not Implemented
Theme: Co-operation with the international community for promotion and protection of human rights					
121.68	Cooperate more systematically with the treaty bodies and permit the visits by special procedures.	Luxembourg	16.a & 17.9	Supported	Implemented
121.69	Strengthen the national capacities through cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms, particularly the special procedures.	Morocco	16.a & 17.9	Supported	Implemented
121.76	Extend an open invitation to the special procedures and follow the recommendations they have provided as well as those of the treaty bodies.	Uruguay	16.a & 17.9	Noted	Partially Implemented
121.64	Strengthen international and regional cooperation in the protection and promotion of human rights.	Vietnam	16.a & 17.9	Supported	Partially Implemented
121.77	Request technical assistance and cooperation as deemed appropriate from the international community, including relevant United Nation and specialized agencies in respect of capacity development for human rights implementation.	Mongolia	16.a & 17.9	Supported	Implemented
121.51	Continue the realization of all national efforts and international cooperation for the establishment of a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles	Chile	16.a & 17.9	Noted	Not Implemented
Theme: National Human Rights Institution					
121.52	Give continuity to strengthening of national human rights institutions and mechanisms.	Nepal	16.6 & 16.a	Noted	Not Implemented
121.113	Implement the national action plan to combat corruption, including strengthening of laws and enforcement, and provide greater resources to independent anti-corruption bodies.	New Zealand	16.6	Supported	Not Implemented
121.47	Further develop its sound and successful social policies to support the population, especially those most in need.	Venezuela	16.6	Supported	Partially Implemented
121.26	Continue to strengthen the rule of law and improve governance.	Singapore	16.a & 17.9	Supported	Partially Implemented



#	Recommendations	Country	SDGs	Response	Level of Implementation
Theme: Investigation into unresolved cases of disappearance					
121.94	Carry out without further delay an independent, credible investigation into the unexplained disappearance of a human rights defender, Sombath Somphone, which occurred on 15 December 2012 in Vientiane.	Luxembourg	16.3 & 16.6	Noted	Not Implemented
121.156	Take all necessary steps to protect human rights defenders from intimidation, ill-treatment or violence, including enforced disappearances, and to ensure prompt, impartial and thorough investigation of all allegations, including those of enforced disappearances.	Ireland	16.3 & 16.6	Noted	Not Implemented
121.102	Conduct a thorough and credible investigation into all and any unresolved cases of disappearances of civil society workers in the Lao People's Democratic Republic.	New Zealand	16.3 & 16.6	Noted	Not Implemented
Theme: Freedom from torture and adequate treatment of detained persons					
121.106	Ensure that detained persons are treated humanely and given access to legal counsel and all allegations of torture in detention are properly investigated.	Ghana	16.3	Supported	Partially Implemented
121.127	Endeavour to implement the obligations under article 14 of ICCPR, which comprehensively guarantees the right to a fair trial and the rights of the accused.	Namibia	16.3	Supported	Partially Implemented
Theme: Freedom of expression and protection of human rights defenders					
121.141	Ensure freedom of expression and media freedom, including Internet freedom by bringing its national legislation fully in line with international standards, including by decriminalizing defamation, misinformation and related offences in relevant national laws.	Estonia	16.3 & 16.10	Noted	Not Implemented
121.146	Guarantee the effective exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association by reforming its legislation particularly in order not to undermine the legitimate work of NGOs and human rights defenders.	Luxembourg	16.10	Noted	Not Implemented



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