Laos: Social activist Sombath Somphone is missing

Sombath Somphone, a respected social activist winner of the international Ramon Magsaysay award in 2005 for community leadership and founder and former director of the Participatory Development Training Centre has disappeared since December 15 of this year. Family members said he had not returned home and they had no information on his whereabouts.

On December 18, a group of Thai civil-society organizations sent an urgent letter to several local agencies, including the PM's Office, the National Assembly, the Foreign Ministry and Public Security Ministry, requesting an investigation into his disappearance.

Human-rights activists in Thailand who know Sombath believe he might have some conflict with the Lao state authorities, as he has opposed many government development projects with a serious social or environmental impact.http://www.nationmultimedia.com/politics/Concern-grows-as-Laos-denies-knowledge-of-missing--30196412.html