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Statement regarding the detention of three American Christian volunteers in Laos.

Background: On Monday, April 8, three American volunteers, Wayne, Autumn, and Joseph, with the U.S. non-profit Vision Beyond Borders were detained by police in Laos as they visited villages north of Muang Sing in the Louang Namtha province. They remain in detention.

Vision Beyond Borders exists to serve the persecuted church in closed nations around the world. It directly supports Children's Homes for orphaned and impoverished children, Safe Houses for women against sex trafficking, provides refugee relief supplies for the Middle East, provides Bibles to impoverished and oppressed Christians, and supports pastors and mission work in closed countries.

At the time of their detention, Wayne, Autumn and Joseph were sharing Gospel literature and the good news of Jesus Christ with villagers in communist Laos. They were not in any legitimate sense a threat to the people or government of Laos; rather theirs was a mission of love and concern for people who might otherwise never hear of God's love for them.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹ states:

Article 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19 Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.





The government of Laos is acting in direct contradiction to the Universal Declaration. This is part of a larger pattern of serious oppression against Christians and other minorities in Laos as documented by the 2017 International Religious Freedom Report².

We call upon the government of Laos to release Wayne, Autumn and Joseph from their detention and allow them to return home to their families. We call upon the government of Laos to improve their policies to allow for real and lasting religious freedom for all citizens of Laos, and to uphold rather than undermine or deny the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration.

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Vision Beyond Borders

1. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/220700.pdf>
2. <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/281078.pdf>

