



Cornell Law School
Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide



**Lao People's Democratic Republic's Compliance with the Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
Suggested List of Issues Relating to the Death Penalty**

Submitted by
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The Advocates for Human Rights (The Advocates) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. Established in 1983, The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publications. In 1991, The Advocates adopted a formal commitment to oppose the death penalty worldwide and organized a Death Penalty Project to provide pro bono assistance on postconviction appeals, as well as education and advocacy to end capital punishment. The Advocates currently holds a seat on the Steering Committee of the World Coalition against the Death Penalty.

The Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide is a US-based research, advocacy, and training center focused on capital punishment and international law. It publishes reports and manuals on death penalty issues, provides transparent data on death penalty laws and practices around the world, trains capital lawyers in best practices, and engages in targeted advocacy and litigation. Its staff and faculty advisors have collectively spent more than eight decades representing hundreds of prisoners facing the death penalty. In 2019 it was awarded the World Justice Challenge Award in recognition for its work on behalf of death-sentenced prisoners in Malawi.

The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP), an alliance of more than 150 NGOs, bar associations, local authorities, and unions, was created in Rome on 13 May 2002. The aim of the World Coalition is to strengthen the international dimension of the fight against the death penalty. Its ultimate objective is to obtain the universal abolition of the death penalty. To achieve its goal, the World Coalition advocates for a definitive end to death sentences and executions in those countries where the death penalty is in force. In some countries, it is seeking to obtain a reduction in the use of capital punishment as a first step towards abolition.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Laos) has not carried out any executions since 1989, but courts are still handing down death sentences and more than 300 persons are currently on death row. Despite having a de facto moratorium on executions since 1989, Laos has yet to institute a formal moratorium on the use of the death penalty. There is currently at least one woman on death row in Laos.
2. Defendants who face potential death penalties have limited access to counsel, and legal professionals in Laos do not have adequate training on criminal procedures and proceedings. The judicial system does not appear to be impartial or independent from political influence, and judicial actors are susceptible to bribes. Finally, the conditions in prisons and detention centers are harsh.
3. Even though Laos has a de facto moratorium on executions, Laos has yet to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.¹ Laos has also abstained from multiple votes on the UN General Assembly resolutions calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty, most recently in 2022.²

Laos fails to uphold its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

I. Failure to address discriminatory gender stereotypes and gender-based violence against women exposes women to discrimination in capital cases and leaves women at risk of being sentenced to death (Concluding Observations paragraphs 24 and 25).

5. In its 2018 Concluding Observations, the Committee recommended that Laos implement strategies to combat stereotypes and harmful practices against women³ and improve efforts to address gender-based violence against women.⁴

¹ *Status of Ratification*, UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER (last accessed July 31, 2023), <https://indicators.ohchr.org/>.

² Amnesty International, *Laos: Human Rights Denied 2020*, p. 8, January 2020 (First Published July 2019). Available online at

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ASA2610242019ENGLISH.pdf>. See also *Abolitionist in Practice*, WORLD COALITION AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY, May 23, 2023, <https://worldcoalition.org/pays/lao-peoples-democratic-republic/>; *9th Resolution for a moratorium on the death penalty: the trend is growing*, World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, Dec. 20, 2022, <https://worldcoalition.org/2022/12/20/9th-resolution-for-a-moratorium-on-the-death-penalty-the-trend-is-growing/>.

³ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the Lao People's Democratic Republic*, (Nov. 12, 2018), U.N. Document CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9 ¶24.

⁴ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the Lao People's Democratic Republic*, (Nov. 12, 2018), U.N. Document CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9 ¶25.

6. According to the World Coalition against Death Penalty, there are approximately 315 people under sentence of death in Laos,⁵ 311 of whom were convicted for drug-related crimes.⁶ Amnesty International recently observed that partial government disclosures regarding death sentences imposed in Laos suggest that the country “resorted to the death penalty extensively [in 2022], but it was impossible on the basis of this incomplete information to determine estimates for the year.”⁷ The last known execution took place in 1989,⁸ but courts continue to hand down death sentences.⁹ Because the Government of Laos does not publish complete and transparent information, the coauthors have been unable to verify the gender composition of the people under sentence of death.¹⁰ Data on people who are currently under sentence of death are not disaggregated by gender or sex, thereby impeding civil society efforts to document and analyze how gender can play a role in Laos’ practices in capital cases.¹¹
7. Even though information on the number of women under sentence of death is not accessible, Laos’ continued reliance on the death penalty continues to place women at risk of being sentenced to death.
8. Women in Laos are eligible for the death penalty with the exception women who were pregnant at the time of the offense, women nursing a child up to three years of age, and juvenile offenders.¹² Individuals with intellectual and psycho-social disabilities and persons over the age of sixty are also exempt from the death penalty.¹³
9. Women who are not eligible for the death penalty due to one or more of the exceptions listed above may still face a life sentence in prison.¹⁴
10. In a 2021 study, the Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide found that, in the global context, women are more vulnerable and most likely to be sentenced to death for criminal offenses committed within the context of gender-based violence and manipulative or coercive

⁵ *Abolitionist in Practice*, WORLD COALITION AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY, May 23, 2023, <https://worldcoalition.org/pays/lao-peoples-democratic-republic/>.

⁶ *Lao People’s Democratic Republic*, CORNELL CENTER ON THE DEATH PENALTY WORLDWIDE, April 1, 2011, <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/database/#/results/country?id=40>.

⁷ Amnesty International. (2022). *Death Sentences and Executions 2021* (Report), 24. Available online at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/5418/2022/en/>.

⁸ *Abolitionist in Practice*, WORLD COALITION AGAINST THE DEATH PENALTY, May 23, 2023, <https://worldcoalition.org/pays/lao-peoples-democratic-republic/>.

⁹ Amnesty International, Laos: Human Rights Denied 2020, p. 8, January 2020 (First Published July 2019). Available online at

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ASA2610242019ENGLISH.pdf>. See also Duc Hung, *Laotian drug mule who was paid mere \$42 gets death sentence*, VN EXPRESS INTERNATIONAL, February 17, 2023, <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/laotian-drug-mule-who-was-paid-mere-42-gets-death-sentence-4572117.html>.

¹⁰ See Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, *Concluding Observations on the Combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Report of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic*, (Nov. 14, 2018), U.N. Doc. CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9, ¶ 16(c).

¹¹ Amnesty International. (2022). *Death Sentences and Executions 2021* (Report), 13. Available online at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/5418/2022/en/>.

¹² Lao People’s Democratic Republic on the Promulgation of the Penal code, (Jun. 26, 2017), art. 51, Available at: https://laoofficialgazette.gov.la/kcfinder/upload/files/1Oct2020_Lao%20Penal%20Code_English%20version.pdf.

¹³ Lao People’s Democratic Republic on the Promulgation of the Penal code, (Jun. 26, 2017), art. 51, Available at: https://laoofficialgazette.gov.la/kcfinder/upload/files/1Oct2020_Lao%20Penal%20Code_English%20version.pdf.

¹⁴ Lao People’s Democratic Republic on the Promulgation of the Penal code, (Jun. 26, 2017), art. 51, Available at: https://laoofficialgazette.gov.la/kcfinder/upload/files/1Oct2020_Lao%20Penal%20Code_English%20version.pdf.

relationships with male co-defendants.¹⁵ Cornell’s data indicate that most women under sentence of death have been sentenced to death for the crime of murder.¹⁶ These women have overwhelmingly experienced prolonged domestic violence at the hands of a partner, spouse, or another family member.¹⁷

11. Many women under sentence of death are survivors of gender-based violence and come from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.¹⁸ At a global level, sentencing courts typically fail to take into account a defendant’s experience as a survivor of gender-based violence or a victim of a manipulative or coercive relationship (for example in cases where women are pressured or tricked into transporting drugs) as mitigating factors during sentencing.¹⁹ Research indicates that courts also fail to account for power dynamics and tactics of coercive control that may affect a woman’s involvement in and culpability for a crime.
12. Cases documented by the Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide have shown violations of women’s right to a fair trial in capital cases. A follow-up study conducted in 2021 demonstrated that “fair trial principles dictate that courts should consider all relevant mitigating circumstances before imposing a sentence. In practice, however, many courts neglect gender-specific mitigation, and in states that impose a mandatory death penalty,” such as Laos with respect to certain drug-related offenses and terrorism-related offenses,²⁰ “courts may not consider any mitigating circumstances at all.”²¹ Women are at an elevated risk of being sentenced to death without consideration of gender-based violence as a mitigating factor.
13. Moreover, according to a 2018 study by the Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, women are more likely to receive a death sentence when the adjudicating authority perceives that they are violating entrenched gender norms, being cast as the “female fatale” or the “witch.”

¹⁵ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *“No One Believed Me”: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses* (Sept. 6, 2021), 6. Available online at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/No-One-Believed-Me-A-Global-Overview-of-Women-Facing-the-Death-Penalty-for-Drug-Offenses.pdf>.

¹⁶ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *“No One Believed Me”: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses* (Sept. 6, 2021), 11. Available online at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/No-One-Believed-Me-A-Global-Overview-of-Women-Facing-the-Death-Penalty-for-Drug-Offenses.pdf>.

¹⁷ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (Sept. 4, 2018), 4. Available online at <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

¹⁸ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (Sept. 4, 2018), 4. Available online at <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

¹⁹ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *“No One Believed Me”: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses* (Sept. 6, 2021), 6. Available online at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/publication/no-one-believed-me-a-global-overview-of-women-facing-the-death-penalty-for-drug-offenses/>.

²⁰ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, Database: Laos, <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/database/#/results/country?id=40> (last visited Sept. 6, 2023).

²¹ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *“No One Believed Me”: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses* (Sept. 6, 2021), 6. Available online at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/publication/no-one-believed-me-a-global-overview-of-women-facing-the-death-penalty-for-drug-offenses/>.

Women are often put on trial not only for acts they performed but also for allegedly being “a bad wife, a bad mother, and a bad woman.”²²

14. Global trends show that women sentenced to death face intersectional discrimination. According to Cornell’s 2018 report, most women on death row come from backgrounds of severe socio-economic disadvantage and many are not literate, disadvantages that can reinforce unequal access to effective legal representation.²³ These women are more likely to be unaware of their legal rights.²⁴ Illiteracy and lack of formal education among women from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds leave them more vulnerable to discrimination, coercion, and exploitation.²⁵ This intersectional discrimination exacerbates the risk that a woman charged with a capital crime will be subjected to an unfair trial.
15. Because Laos authorizes and under some circumstances mandates the death penalty for drug-related offenses, women are at heightened risk of human rights violations. The Executive Director of Harm Reduction International has observed that “[p]eople on death row for drug offences tend to be involved at the lowest level of the drug trade, and are generally marginalized in society. Gender, socio-economic position, ethnicity and foreign status in a country add intersectional vulnerability to this context.”²⁶ She explains that although “some women engage in the drug trade through their own volition, for others, a narrower range of choices, along with poverty, coercion, violence, manipulation, and the survival needs of a family play a significant factor in their involvement.”²⁷ Research from the Cornell Center illustrates “the alarming extent to which women sentenced to death for drug offences experienced gender bias in criminal proceedings and violations of their right to a fair trial.”²⁸

²² Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (Sept. 4, 2018), 4. Available online at <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

²³ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (Sept. 4, 2018), 3. Available online at <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

²⁴ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (Sept. 4, 2018), 18. Available online at <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

²⁵ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, *Judged for More Than Her Crime: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty* (Sept. 4, 2018), 18. Available at <https://www.deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Judged-More-Than-Her-Crime.pdf>.

²⁶ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, “*No One Believed Me*”: *A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses* (Sept. 2021), 5. Available online at: <http://filesserver.idpc.net/library/No-One-Believed-Me.pdf>.

²⁷ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, “*No One Believed Me*”: *A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses* (Sept. 2021), 5. Available online at: <http://filesserver.idpc.net/library/No-One-Believed-Me.pdf>.

²⁸ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, “*No One Believed Me*”: *A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses* (Sept. 2021), 5. Available online at: <http://filesserver.idpc.net/library/No-One-Believed-Me.pdf>.

16. Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand constitute the “Golden Triangle,” producing most of the world’s heroin.²⁹ Laos’ lack of transparency regarding its death penalty practices in general is further complicated by the (often mandatory) imposition of the death penalty drug-related offenses.³⁰
17. There is little documentation regarding women receiving the death penalty in Laos. The press has illustrated two cases of women subject to the death penalty in the country, and both cases involve drug-related offenses.
18. In August 2008, authorities arrested a British woman, Samantha Orobator, at Wattay International Airport and charged her with possession of heroin.³¹ A court sentenced Orobator to death, but authorities ultimately converted her sentence to life imprisonment because she became pregnant while awaiting trial.³² Orobator was transferred to the United Kingdom to serve out her sentence there.³³
19. In 2020, authorities sentenced eight people, including three women, to death in connection with a drug trafficking ring.³⁴ A report identified the individuals only with first names, noting that the people sentenced included five men and three women.³⁵ Two of the women are wives of two of the men implicated and sentenced in connection with the drug trafficking ring.³⁶
20. Research from the Cornell Center suggests that these women under sentence of death in Laos may have experienced gender-based discrimination in their legal proceedings. Moreover, due to the often mandatory nature of the death penalty for drug-related offenses, courts likely did not consider whether and to what extent the women’s relationships with codefendants would make a case for mitigation at sentencing due to, for example, coercive control or gender-based violence.

²⁹ Cornell Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, “No One Believed Me”: A Global Overview of Women Facing the Death Penalty for Drug Offenses (Sept. 6, 2021), 52. Available online at <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/No-One-Believed-Me-A-Global-Overview-of-Women-Facing-the-Death-Penalty-for-Drug-Offenses.pdf>.

³⁰ Lao People’s Democratic Republic on the Promulgation of the Penal code, (Jun. 26, 2017), art. 314, 315, 316 Available at:

https://laoofficialgazette.gov.la/kcfinder/upload/files/1Oct2020_Lao%20Penal%20Code_English%20version.pdf.

³¹ Reuters, Lao court jails pregnant Briton for life, accessed on August 8th, 2023, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-laos-drugs/lao-court-jails-pregnant-briton-for-life-idUKTRE55227E20090603>.

³² Reuters, Lao court jails pregnant Briton for life, accessed on August 8th, 2023, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-laos-drugs/lao-court-jails-pregnant-briton-for-life-idUKTRE55227E20090603>.

³³ CNN, British woman could face Laos death penalty, accessed on August 8th, 2023, available at: <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/asiapcf/05/04/laos.british.woman.drugs.trial/>.

³⁴ Radio Free Asia, Laos Sentences Eight Members of Mr. X Drug Ring to Death, accessed on Jun. 1st, 2023, available at: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/laos-mr-x-drug-ring-8-death-penalty-01272020154027.html>.

³⁵ Radio Free Asia, Laos Sentences Eight Members of Mr. X Drug Ring to Death, accessed on Jun. 1st, 2023, available at: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/laos-mr-x-drug-ring-8-death-penalty-01272020154027.html>.

³⁶ Radio Free Asia, Laos Sentences Eight Members of Mr. X Drug Ring to Death, accessed on Jun. 1st, 2023, available at: <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/laos/laos-mr-x-drug-ring-8-death-penalty-01272020154027.html>.

II. People under sentence of death in Laos experience violations of the right to fair trial and face inhumane prison conditions (List of Issues paragraph 14).

21. In its 2018 Concluding Observations, the Committee recommended that Laos improve capacity-building for the judiciary and ensure access to free legal aid.³⁷
22. All judges in Laos are members of the ruling Lao People’s Revolutionary Party—a party with no opposition. The ruling party exerts systemic influence over judges, and the country’s justice system is not independent from political influence. The judiciary often fails to provide procedural protections for persons potentially facing the death penalty.³⁸ People charged with capital offenses often experience violations of their right to due process, and delays are common across all stages of court proceedings, including trials and appeals.³⁹ As a result, parties often resolve disputes outside of the judicial system, resulting in unfair outcomes.⁴⁰ The people therefore have little confidence in the judicial system and often choose not to have attorneys represent them in judicial proceedings due to the “general perception that attorneys cannot influence court decisions.”⁴¹
23. Although the law states that people charged with capital offenses shall be entitled to legal representation, people so charged often face barriers to accessing legal representation.⁴² First, Laos has an insufficient supply of qualified attorneys to provide such legal services.⁴³ Further, procedural hurdles make it difficult for defendants to contact their lawyers and constrain the amount of time they have together to develop legal strategies and to plan to gather evidence.⁴⁴ The quality of legal services is often low and underdeveloped, and stakeholders in the justice system, including police and judges, often have a limited understanding of the role of lawyers within the system.⁴⁵

³⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, (Nov. 12, 2018), U.N. Document CEDAW/C/LAO/CO/8-9 ¶ 14.

³⁸ *Laos: Freedom in the World 2022 Country Report*, Sec. F1-2, FREEDOM HOUSE, 2023, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/laos/freedom-world/2022>.

³⁹ *Laos: Freedom in the World 2022 Country Report*, Sec. F1-2, FREEDOM HOUSE, 2023, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/laos/freedom-world/2022>; Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Laos*, Sec. 1(E), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (last accessed July 31, 2023), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/laos>.

⁴⁰ *Laos: Freedom in the World 2022 Country Report*, FREEDOM HOUSE, 2023, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/laos/freedom-world/2022>.

⁴¹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Laos*, Sec. 1(E), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (last accessed July 31, 2023), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/laos>.

⁴² *Lao People’s Democratic Republic*, CORNELL CENTER ON THE DEATH PENALTY WORLDWIDE, April 1, 2011, <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/database/#/results/country?id=40>.

⁴³ *Lao People’s Democratic Republic*, Sec. 5.2, CORNELL CENTER ON THE DEATH PENALTY WORLDWIDE, April 1, 2011, <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/database/#/results/country?id=40>.

⁴⁴ *Lao People’s Democratic Republic*, Sec. 5.2, CORNELL CENTER ON THE DEATH PENALTY WORLDWIDE, April 1, 2011, <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/database/#/results/country?id=40>.

⁴⁵ See *Lao People’s Democratic Republic*, Sec. 5.3, CORNELL CENTER ON THE DEATH PENALTY WORLDWIDE, April 1, 2011, <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/database/#/results/country?id=40>.

24. Conditions in prisons and detention facilities can be harsh or even life-threatening due to the inadequate supply of food, space, and medical care.⁴⁶ According to some reports, people in detention sometimes have to rely on families and friends for basic necessities such as food.⁴⁷ Overcrowding may lead to the spreading of disease, and most prisons are short on medical staff and supplies.⁴⁸ The exact gender composition of the prison population is currently unknown.⁴⁹ Additionally, there is little insight into the availability of prison accommodations tailored to women's specific needs, such as privacy and safety.

III. Suggested questions for the Government of Laos:

25. The coauthors suggest the following questions for the Government of Laos:

- What steps, if any, has the State Party taken to abolish the death penalty or to limit its scope to align with international human rights standards? Has the State Party taken any actions to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights?
- Please describe the steps taken, if any, to fulfill the right to a fair trial and to enhance due process for women who are potentially facing the death penalty, including provision of effective legal representation, timely resolution of cases within the judicial system, and promotion of judges' impartiality and independence from political influence.
- What measures has the State Party implemented to train and educate judges responsible for hearing criminal cases for capital offenses? What measures have been taken, if any, to ensure a consistent judicial outcome for cases with analogous facts and circumstances? What other measures has the State Party implemented to train and organize legal professionals, including lawyers and paralegals, to improve the quality of the legal services provided to women defendants, particularly women facing a possible death penalty?
- What training do judicial officers hearing criminal cases receive regarding gender-based violence and relationships characterized by coercive control that may contribute to a woman being in conflict of the law?
- What training do court-appointed or legal aid attorneys receive to prepare them for providing gender-sensitive legal services to women in conflict with the law, particularly regarding gender-specific mitigation arguments?
- What measures has the State Party implemented to ensure that all women charged with capital offences are provided with qualified legal counsel? What measures has the State

⁴⁶ See Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Laos*, Sec.1(C), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (last accessed July 31, 2023), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/laos>; see also *Lao People's Democratic Republic*, CORNELL CENTER ON THE DEATH PENALTY WORLDWIDE, April 1, 2011, <https://deathpenaltyworldwide.org/database/#/results/country?id=40>.

⁴⁷ See Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Laos*, Sec.1(C), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (last accessed July 31, 2023), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/laos>.

⁴⁸ See Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Laos*, Sec.1(C), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (last accessed July 31, 2023), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/laos>.

⁴⁹ See Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Laos*, Sec.1(C), U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE (last accessed July 31, 2023), <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/laos>.

Party taken to ensure that women facing a potential death penalty have access to counsel across all stages of prosecution, from arrest to appeal, including any critical stages where evidence might be obtained and used against them in court (*e.g.*, interrogation and witness identification)?

- What steps, if any, has the State Party taken to improve the conditions of detention in prisons and detention centers where women under sentence of death or facing a potential death penalty are held, to bring those conditions into compliance with the Bangkok Rules and the Nelson Mandela Rules? In particular, does the prison system accommodate the specific needs of women, including their needs for privacy and safety?
- In order to facilitate the study and analysis of human rights issues particular to women in conflict with the law in Laos, please provide and publish, on at least an annual basis, updated information on women's prison and detention conditions, including, but not limited to, the number of women currently in prison or other detention facilities, disaggregated by age, race/ethnicity, nationality, whether they have minor children, crime of conviction, court of conviction, date of conviction, relationship to any codefendants or victims, sentence being served, and status of any appeals or requests for clemency or pardon.
- Please provide and publish transparent and updated information on the number of women currently under sentence of death, disaggregated by age, race/ethnicity, nationality, whether they have minor children, crimes of conviction, date of conviction, court of conviction, relationship to any victims or codefendants, and status of any appeals or requests for clemency or pardon, in order to facilitate analysis of the demographics of women on death row.
- Please provide information on the State Party's strategies for increasing the representation of women in politics and in community organizations.
- What access do women in detention have to reproductive health services?
- What is the gender composition of the security and detention forces in detention facilities where women are imprisoned? Are there any limitations on who may guard imprisoned women or steps taken to eliminate potential human rights violations perpetrated against women in detention?
- Please describe any measures taken to eliminate intersecting forms of discrimination in the criminal legal system against women with disabilities, migrant and refugee women, women from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, and women belonging to minority groups.