



TV

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U.N. IN ACTION

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Programme No. 1012

Duration: 5'27"

LAOS' WAR ON DRUGS

VIDEO

W/S SCENICS OF LAOS
MOUNTAINS

W/S KWAR THOR MOUNTAINS
DRUG ADDICTION WORKERS
APPROACHING HUT

M/S KHAM NOAN HSAM
ENTERING HUT

KHAM NOAN HSAM ON CAMERA

KHAM NOAN HSAM INSIDE HUT
WITH FAMILY

AUDIO

NARRATION

High in the most remote mountains of northern Laos, in a region known as the "Golden Triangle" there's a war raging – a war to rid Laos of opium and treat its country's addicts. (10.5)

On the frontline – 23 year-old opium addict Kwar Thor is about to cross paths with some of the soldiers in the battle against opium addiction. (8.5)

Kham Noan Hsam is with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. (4)

KHAM NOAN HSAM: (In English)

"This is the house of the addict we're going to visit." (3)

NARRATION

Drug counselors go from village to village, searching for addicts. (4)

KHAM NOAN HSAM ON CAMERA

KHAM NOAN HSAM: (In English)

“This a poor little baby here. She just gave birth to a small baby and now she’s tired and she’s just resting. She’s not an addict, her husband is an addict...only a week old the baby is.” (9.5)

KWAR THOR PREPARING AND
SMOKING OPIUM

NARRATION

Today, they find Kwar and witness a ritual he performs 45 times a day....preparing his opium pipe...and smoking it. (8.5)

KWAR THOR AND FAMILY

All in front of the watchful eyes of his 4 year old son.....his wife and one week old baby. Also watching, off in the corner, his 3 year-old daughter, who sits to the side...alone....left to fend for herself. (16.5)

KWAR THOR, OPIUM ADDICT ON
CAMERA

KWAR THOR: (In Hmong)

“As soon as I wake up I have to take my opium first. After I’ve taken my opium I will do a little housework and then go off to the fields. When I come back I take it again. I have to smoke opium three times a day. Before I do anything, I have to smoke first.” (25)

FOOTAGE FROM LAO TV OF
OPIUM POPPIES, FIELDS

NARRATION

Laos was until 2004, the third highest producer of opium in the world...producing up to 20 tons of heroin. But what sets Laos apart is that more than half of all its opium never makes it out of the country – it’s consumed by local villagers, like Kwar.

KWAR THOR INSIDE HUT
SMOKING OPIUM

NARRATION

The result – more than 60,000 addicts and the second highest opium abuse rate in the world. (25)

B-ROLL LEIK BOONWAAT
GETTING OUT OF UNODC CAR

Leik Boonwaat of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes. (4)

LEIK BOONWAAT ON CAMERA

LEIK BOONWAAT: (In English)

“The difference with other countries and Laos is the high number of addicts; out of the 72,000 households producing opium, we have 63,000 addicts. Which would mean nearly every household would have an addict.” (13)

FOOTAGE FROM LAO TV OF
VILLAGERS ELIMINATING
OPIUM FIELDS

NARRATION

To crack down, the Lao Government began in 1999, a countrywide ‘Opium Elimination Campaign’ - more than 60,000 acres were destroyed in a campaign that authorities say has eliminated more than 93% of the country’s poppy fields. (16)

But with the success came a challenge. How to treat the tens of thousands of addicts that remained? (5.5)

LEIK BOONWAAT ON CAMERA

LEIK BOONWAAT: (English)

“We are now in the situation where we have the opium addicts demanding treatment for their addiction because they are suffering as a result of not having access to opium.” (11)

UNODC CARS DRIVING
THROUGH LAOS COUNTRYSIDE

NARRATION

Enter the Drug Demand Reduction Program – a partnership – launched in 2003 – between the Lao and US governments and the United Nation’s Office on Drugs and Crime. Workers travel to remote areas...setting up detoxification centers and on-going community based treatment. (17)

KHAM NOAN HSAM ON CAMERA

KHAM NOAN HSAM: (In English)

“This is the medicine that we use for the detox, to relieve the withdrawal symptoms, it’s a pinch of opium.” (6.5)

W/S OF EX-OPIUM ADDICT
TAKING PILLS

NARRATION

The cost of treatment? Just \$15 US dollars per addict. (4)

KHAM NOAN HSAM ON CAMERA

KHAM NOAN HSAM: (In English)

“From the 2nd or 3rd day normally they have some withdrawal symptoms and by day 7 these withdrawal symptoms will be worn off.” (8.5)

EX-ADDICT AT TREATMENT
FACILITY

NARRATION

Addicts, like this farmer who’s been addicted to opium for more than 3 decades, stay in 14-day detox centers. (7)

KHAM NOAN HSAM ON CAMERA

KHAM NOAM HSAM: (In English)

“We have 2 counseling sessions in the morning and in the afternoon, during the counseling sessions we do a kind of group counseling.” (9)

GROUP THERAPY AT DETOX
CENTRE

NARRATION

So just how successful is the country's program? Well, experts say that the number of addicts in the country has been reduced by more than 68 percent with only 20 percent relapsing. An enormous achievement they say compared with conventional relapse rates of 80 percent. But the experts know their work is far from over. (19)

KHAM NOAN HSAM ON CAMERA

KHAM NOAN HSAM: (English)

"Now we still have 20,000 addicts and it seems like most of them, or many of them are hardcore addicts. So it will be difficult, compared with before." (10.5)

KWAR THOR AND HIS WIFE AND
BABY

NARRATION

Perhaps no one knows this better than Kwar Thor and his wife. (3.5)

LU MOUR ON-CAMERA

LU MOUR: (Hmong)

"I hate opium. I don't want to become an addict, I would rather commit suicide than become an addict." (5.5)

KWAR THOR AND FAMILY
INSIDE HUT, SMOKING

NARRATION

But until Kwar enters treatment, his family...his children...all remain vulnerable, at risk, and will continue to pay the price for his addiction. (11)

UN LOGO

This report was prepared by United Nations Television. (3)