

PRESS RELEASE

HMONG NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, INC. (HND) SOUTHEAST ASIA RESOURCE ACTION CENTER (SEARAC)

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NATIONAL SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN GROUPS CALL FOR HEALING AND UNITY AFTER SHOOTINGS IN WISCONSIN

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National organizations representing Hmong and other Southeast Asian Americans are calling for unity among communities following the deaths of six hunters and the wounding of two others in Wisconsin on November 21, 2004. Chai Soua Vang, the alleged assailant in the case, is a Hmong American who arrived in the U.S. from Laos in 1980.

Doua Thor, a Hmong American and the Deputy Director of the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) of Washington, DC, is working with communities in Wisconsin and Minnesota to ease tensions following the shooting. “We learned earlier this week that one store in Minnesota sold bumper stickers saying ‘Save a Hunter Shoot a Mung.’ Most people know that kind of language has no place in America. Singling out everyone in an ethnic group for punishment – even as a joke – is against what this country stands for – against really basic principles like equality and respect. The vast majority of people, no matter what their background, realize that Mr. Vang is just one person, and whether he is guilty or not, he does not define Hmong Americans,” according to Ms. Thor.

Tong Lee, the Interim Executive Director of Hmong National Development, a Washington, DC-based Hmong American organization, voices similar concerns: “Hmong and other Asian Americans are appalled at these tragic deaths and grieve for the victims and their families. Sadly, some are choosing to respond to this tragedy by attacking Hmong Americans. The shooting should not overshadow the many contributions made by the Hmong. We continue to enliven neighborhoods that were once run-down and to enrich the communities where we live. All communities should be united in grief and concern, not separated by anger. We stand united with all Americans who oppose any form of racial intolerance.”

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