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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

September 23, 2003

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The Honorable Colin Powell
Secretary of State
U.S. Department Of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, D.C. 20520-0099

Dear Secretary Powell:

We are writing to express concern regarding the situation of the Hmong refugees in Thailand at Wat Thamkrabok.

As you know, Hmong refugees have been living at Wat Thamkrabok and other camps in Thailand for the past 12 years. Recently, the Thai government built a fence surrounding Wat Thamkrabok and forces its residents to stay confined to its borders at all times, except to go to work or school. These refugees are unable to own property or become citizens, which has severely hampered their ability to seek employment. Additionally, it is uncertain whether these men, women, and children have access to adequate health care, clothing, and other basic necessities.

We are seeking clarification of the State Department's position on these refugees and the conditions at Wat Thamkrabok. Reports are circulating that the Thai government has indicated there are plans to relocate some or all of them within the United States. Other rumors suggest that the Thai government has already begun processing Hmong to be moved to other camps within Thailand where living conditions are unknown.

Thank you for your attention to our request. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


JERRY KLECZKA
Member of Congress


BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress