



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

President's Office

No. 69/PO

DECREE
of the
PRESIDENT
of the
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

On the Promulgation of the Law on Leaders of the Lao People's Defence Force

Pursuant to Chapter 5, Article 67, point 1 of the Constitution of the Lao People's Democratic Republic which provides for the promulgation of the Constitution and of laws adopted by the National Assembly;

Pursuant to Resolution No. 07/NA, dated 22 October 2004, of the National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic regarding the adoption of the Law on Leaders of the Lao People's Defence Force; and

Pursuant to Proposal No. 23/NASC, dated 10 November 2004, of the National Assembly Standing Committee.

**The President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
Decrees That:**

Article 1. The Law on Leaders of the Lao People's Defence Force is hereby promulgated.

Article 2. This decree shall enter into force on the date it is signed.

Vientiane, 15 November 2004
The President of the Lao People's
Democratic Republic

[Seal and Signature]

Khamtai SIPHANDON



LAO PEOPLE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

National Assembly

No. 07/NA
22 October 2004

**LAW ON LEADERS
OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEFENCE FORCE**

**Chapter 1
General Provisions**

Article 1. Objectives

The Law on Leaders of the Lao People's Defence Force defines the status, roles, rights, duties, responsibilities, obligations, international cooperation, measures, levels, ranks and positions of military leaders; it defines the State's management, policies, prohibitions, rewards and discipline relating to the military leaders in the Lao People's Defence Force to ensure that military leaders have strong political and ideological beliefs, strong organisation, strict discipline, modern plans and fulfil their honourable task.

Article 2. Leaders of the Lao People's Defence Force

Leaders of the Lao People's Defence Force are officials of the Party and the State of the Lao People's Democratic Republic who have ranks from second lieutenant to general, and bear the insignia of their ranks, levels, [respective] arms of the forces and specific uniforms that are determined by the government.

Article 3. Status and Roles of Military Leaders

Military leaders are the main force of the Lao People's Defence Force.

Military leaders have the roles to direct, lead, command, and build up the forces, and to educate, train, prepare for battle, fight [with], manage and provision the armed forces and to perform other duties to protect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of, and to build and develop, the nation.

Article 4. Rights and Duties of Military Leaders

Rights and duties of military leaders are as follows:

1. To be battle-ready and to bravely fight to protect the nation in order to ensure the stability and security of the people's democratic regime; [and] to protect State property, and the legitimate rights of collectives and the people;
2. To actively improve and build up the forces to have strong political and ideological beliefs, have strong organisation, be loyal to the nation, have real revolutionary spirit, have strict discipline, and modern plans, have scientific, technical, and martial arts and methods, and have the capacity to implement their duties completely;
3. To implement the directions and policies of the Party, laws of the State, and rules and regulations of the defence force[;] to absolutely keep secrets of the State or of the armed forces[;] and to strictly implement the orders of the leaders, commanders and higher organisations;
4. To develop political ground support, to participate in economic, cultural, and social development, and to assist the people;
5. To manage the physical and spiritual living conditions of military leaders and officers on the basis of self-reliance and self-sufficiency and to endeavour to produce supplies where they are located to ensure that they can implement their duties;
6. To implement the principle of democratic centralism, to maintain internal solidarity and unity in the armed forces, to constructively criticise and assist each other in the armed forces departments, from the lowest to the highest levels, and to ensure that all can progress.

Article 5. Responsibilities of Military Leaders

Military leaders have responsibilities to instruct, lead, command, and manage their departments, to strictly implement Party policies and directions, State laws and regulations, and resolutions and orders of higher authorities, and to be responsible for their own orders.

[Military leaders also have the responsibility] to absolutely and strictly implement the orders of their commanders during battle.

Article 6. Obligations of Military Leaders

Military leaders have the following obligations:

1. To be battle-ready, to bravely fight, and to be prepared to sacrifice their lives for the benefit of the nation and multi-ethnic people;
2. To protect the Lao Revolutionary Party, and the State of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and to participate in the building and development of the nation;

3. To train and forge revolutionary ethics, to be models in all activities, to study, train and upgrade knowledge and capacity in political, military, economic, socio-cultural [fields], and in other professions, and to fully implement their assigned duties;
4. To be mindful of the organisation, to have discipline, and to absolutely and strictly implement the orders of the commanders;
5. To respect the fine customs and traditions of the multi-ethnic people.

In addition, military leaders have the same obligations as Lao citizens, as provided in the Constitution and laws.

Article 7. International Relations and Cooperation

Military leaders in the Lao People's Defence Force have relations and cooperate with the armed forces of friendship countries and other countries based on principles of peace, respect for each others' independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit.

**Chapter 2
Types, Sources, Qualifications, Leadership,
Command and Development of Military Leaders**

Article 8. Types of Military Leaders

Military leaders in the Lao People's Defence Force consist of:

1. General staff military leaders who undertake duties to command, fight, and build up the armed forces;
2. Political military leaders who undertake political and ideological activities in the areas of Party, personnel and policy affairs and in the activities of mass organisations;
3. Logistics military leaders who undertake duties in the areas of logistics and care for the armed forces;
4. Military leaders in technical, professional and other areas of specialisation who undertake duties in specific sectors or professions.

Article 9. Sources of Military Leaders

Military leaders come from the following sources:

1. Corporals who complete education from military or non-military middle schools within the country and overseas;
2. Corporals from different departments who have outstanding achievement in brave fighting, and actively implement their duties;
3. Employees, civil servants and students from outside the armed forces who undertake work in the armed forces, and who have to

undertake training and development in armed-forces specialisations.

Article 10. Qualifications of Military Leaders

Military leaders shall meet the following qualifications:

1. Be Lao citizens with Lao nationality of 21 years of age or older, have a good background, and have not been sentenced to imprisonment by any court;
2. Have strong political beliefs, be able to clearly distinguish between friends and enemies, be committed to socialism, have real revolutionary spirit, be loyal to the nation, love the people's democratic system, be truthful to the Party and the people, have a brave fighting spirit, and have a high level of sacrifice and endurance;
3. Have basic Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and strongly understand and implement the Party's directions, policies and strategic plans and the laws and regulations of the State;
4. Have systematic knowledge in the armed forces specialisations, a technical profession, and practical experience;
5. Be mindful of the organisation, and strictly implement the laws and regulations of the State and the regulations of the armed forces;
6. Be strong and have good health.

Military leaders who are commanders at each level shall meet the following additional requirements:

- At platoon level¹, company level² and their equivalent, [military leaders] shall have completed study at land forces schools for military leaders or their equivalent;
- At battalion level³, brigade level⁴ or their equivalent, [military officers] shall have completed study at military academies in martial arts, politics and general staff [command] or their equivalent;

¹ The Lao word is “muat”, literally, a “team”. It is a group of between 20 to 30 soldiers formed from three “mu”, literally “small team”, of about 9 soldiers each. The smallest group of soldiers is the “chu”, literally “sub-team”, which has 3 soldiers.

² The Lao word is “kong hoi”, literally a “100 force”. Each kong hoi is typically formed from 3 muat.

³ The Lao word is “kong pan noi”, literally a “small 1,000 force”. Each kong pan noi is typically formed from 3 kong hoi.

⁴ The Lao word is “kong pan ngai”, literally a “large 1,000 force”. Each kong pan ngai is typically formed from 3 kong pan noi.

- At regional armed force level, corps level⁵ or their equivalent, [military leaders] shall have completed study at the Kaysone PHOMVIHAN National Defence Academy.

Article 11. Leadership and Command over Military Leaders

Military leaders of the Lao People’s Defence Force are under the direct, centralised, uniform and comprehensive leadership of the Lao Revolutionary Party.

The President of the State is the supreme commander of the military leaders of the Lao People’s Defence Force.

The Prime Minister is to organise and monitor activities of the military leaders of the Lao People’s Defence Force.

The Minister of National Defence is to directly direct, lead, command and manage military leaders of the Lao People’s Defence Force.

Article 12. Development of Military Leaders

The development of military leaders is the responsibility of the following sectors⁶:

- The Party committee and commanders’ committees within the armed forces are responsible for developing military leaders who are under their supervision to ensure that they can grow, gain in strength, have modern plans and methodology, and develop gradually;
- Party and State organisations, the Lao Front for National Construction, mass organisations, social organisations, and all Lao citizens have obligations to develop, train, and educate military leaders of the Lao People’s Defence Force.

**Chapter 3
System of Levels and Ranks
of Military Leaders of the Lao People’s Defence Force**

Article 13. Levels and Ranks of the Military Leaders of the Lao People’s Defence Force

The military leaders of the Lao People’s Defence Force consist of three levels and ten ranks as follows: lieutenant, colonel and general levels.

⁵ The Lao word is “kong pone”, literally a “10,000 force”. Each kong pone is typically formed from 3 kong pan ngai.

⁶ The term “sector” is used in many Lao laws to refer to the cluster of government ministries or agencies engaged in a particular activity.

The lieutenant level has three ranks⁷:

- Sub-lieutenant or second lieutenant;
- Lieutenant;
- Captain.

The colonel level has three ranks⁸:

- Major;
- Lieutenant colonel;
- Colonel.

The general level has four ranks⁹:

- Brigadier general;
- Major general;
- Lieutenant general;
- General.

Article 14. Ages of Military Leaders in Each Level

Ages for the appointment and promotion of permanent and retired military leaders of the Lao People's Defence Force are:

1. The ages for appointment and promotion:
 - At lieutenant level shall not exceed 40 years;
 - At colonel level shall not exceed 50 years;
 - At general level shall not exceed 60 years;
2. The ages of military leaders of the Lao People's Defence Force in fighting departments shall not exceed 55 years; for military leaders of the Lao People's Defence Force having positions in offices and agencies, ages shall not exceed 60 years and, if special circumstances demand, shall not exceed 65 years[;] for females, ages shall not exceed 55 years, and, if specific circumstances demand, shall not exceed 60 years. Persons who continuously work for 15 years with hazardous and chemical substances or who work in difficult and dangerous areas shall have the right to early retirement.

⁷ These are commanders of the "100 forces" (i.e., of companies).

⁸ These are commanders of the "1,000 forces" (i.e., of battalions and brigades).

⁹ These are commanders of the "10,000 forces" and up, (i.e., corps level or higher).

Article 15. Appointment of Military Leaders to Ranks

Conditions for the appointment of military leaders to their ranks are as follows:

1. Corporals who have completed study at a military or non-military middle school within the country or overseas will be appointed as sub-lieutenants;
2. Corporals who have completed study at higher education level or who have obtained a bachelor's degree from within or outside the armed forces, and from within the country or overseas, will be appointed as lieutenants;
3. Corporals who have outstanding performance in fighting or other activities will be appointed as sub-lieutenants or lieutenants as appropriate;
4. Employees, civil servants, and students from outside the armed forces who are professionals and have completed at least middle school within the country or overseas and who undertake work to serve the armed forces will be appointed to ranks from sub-lieutenant upwards, but such persons shall complete military technical training and development.

Article 16. Right to Decide Matters Relating to Military Leaders

The right to decide matters relating to appointment, promotion, commissioning and dismissal of military leaders from their ranks is [assigned] as follows:

1. The President of the State is the person to appoint, promote, commission¹⁰, and dismiss military leaders at the level of general, based on the recommendations of the Prime Minister;
2. The Prime Minister is the person to appoint, promote, commission, and dismiss military leaders at the rank of colonel, based on the recommendations of the Minister of National Defence;
3. The Minister of National Defence is the person to appoint, promote, commission, and dismiss military leaders at the ranks of captain, major, and lieutenant colonel, based on the recommendations of the Director General of the General Armed Forces Department¹¹ of Politics;
4. The Director General of the General Armed Forces Department of Politics is the person to appoint, promote, commission, and dismiss military leaders at the ranks of sub-lieutenant and

¹⁰ The literal translation is "right to decide who receives the insignia".

¹¹ In the armed forces, unlike other ministries, the top-level work group is the "general armed forces department". In most ministries, it is simply the department. In the armed forces, under the general department are then the departments.

lieutenant based on the recommendations of concerned departments¹².

Article 17. Conditions for the Promotion of Military Leaders

Military leaders to be promoted shall meet the following conditions:

1. Have reached the time for promotion as stipulated in Article 18 of this law;
2. Have success in the implementation of assigned duties or when the implementation of duties requires [such promotion];
3. Have the required qualifications, as provided in Articles 5, 10, 14 and 20 of this law.

Article 18. [Minimum Terms of Service]¹³ for the Promotion of Military Leaders

For military leaders to be considered for promotion, the following terms [already served at the current rank] shall apply:

- From sub-lieutenant to lieutenant, the term is three years;
- From lieutenant to captain, the term is three years;
- From captain to major, the term is four years;
- From major to lieutenant colonel, the term is four years;
- From lieutenant colonel to colonel, the term is four years.

For the promotion of a colonel to a general, or a general to a higher position, there shall not be any specified term and [promotion] shall be based on the demands of the political direction of duties.

The time period when the military leaders undertake their education in different schools shall be included in calculating the term [already served] for promotion.

Military leaders who have outstanding performance in battle, in the implementation of duties in difficult and dangerous areas, or in specific tasks shall be promoted by skipping over ranks or before [completing] the specified terms.

When the [minimum] term to be considered for promotion has been served but [the concerned person] cannot meet the standards and qualifications, as provided in Article 17 of this law, [such person] shall not be promoted in that year but shall be considered in the following years, but the number of such following years shall not exceed the term specified for promotion in his rank. If such person cannot be promoted, that person shall

¹² Here, “concerned departments” refers to departments in the armed forces, the next level down, under the general departments.

¹³ In the original Lao text of this article, the word “term” is used (without qualification) to indicate the required or minimum term of service at a particular rank.

receive a higher salary by one rank or that person should be removed to undertake other duties that are appropriate to his capacity or be retired or retrenched in accordance with regulations. Military leaders who are removed to undertake positions in the civil service when returning to the army shall be considered for a promotion that skips over one rank, as appropriate, but such person should meet the qualifications and standards provided in Article 17 of this law.

Chapter 4

Positions of Military Leaders within the Lao People's Defence Force

Article 19. Positions of Military Leaders

The positions of military leaders within the Lao People's Defence Force are as follows:

1. The Minister of National Defence;
2. Director-General of the Armed Forces General Staff Department; Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Politics; Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Logistics; and Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Technical Services;
3. Leaders of regional forces;
4. Directors, leaders of corps, leaders of commanders in Vientiane Capital City, cities, and provinces;
5. Leaders of brigades, leaders of commanders in the districts;
6. Leaders of battalions;
7. Leaders of companies;
8. Leaders of platoons.

The abovementioned positions have equivalent positions¹⁴ and deputy positions.

Article 20. Determination of Rank of Military Leaders at each Position

Military leaders at each position are set specific ranks as follows:

1. Minister of National Defence: at the rank of lieutenant general or general;
2. Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Politics and Director-General of the Armed Forces General Staff Department; at the rank of major general or lieutenant general;
3. Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Logistics, and Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Technical Services: at the rank of brigadier general or major general;

¹⁴ This term has the connotation of "acting positions", i.e., a person temporarily fulfilling the duties of a position.

4. Head of cabinet of the Ministry of Defence, leaders of regional armed forces, the director of the Kaysone PHOMVIHAN National Defence Academy, directors of other academies for martial arts, politics, and logistics, and heads of equivalent¹⁵ military agencies, departments and forces: at the rank of brigadier general or major general;
5. Directors-general of departments in the Ministry of Defence, directors of land forces schools, leaders of corps, heads of commanders in Vientiane Capital City, and cities, and heads of equivalent military agencies, departments and forces: at the rank of colonel or brigadier general;
6. Heads of commanders at provincial level: at the rank of colonel;
7. Military attachés: at the rank of colonel;
8. Leaders of brigades: at the rank of lieutenant-colonel or colonel;
9. Heads of divisions of military agencies at different levels, and heads of commanders at district armed forces: at the rank of major or lieutenant colonel;
10. Leaders of battalions or the equivalent: at the rank of captain or major;
11. Leaders of companies or the equivalent: at the rank of sub-lieutenant or lieutenant.

The position of a deputy to a leader described in this article may be equal to the rank of the leader.

The rank of military leaders who are undertaking special tasks in difficult and dangerous areas, in independent departments, and in battles may be higher than the positions provided in this article, but by not more than one rank.

Article 21. Appointment, Transfer and Removal of Military Leaders

The persons who have the authority to appoint, transfer and dismiss military leaders are as follows:

1. The President of the State is the person to appoint, transfer, and dismiss the Minister of National Defence, based on the recommendation of the Prime Minister after the approval of the National Assembly;
2. The Prime Minister is the person to appoint, transfer, and dismiss deputy ministers of the Ministry of National Defence, directors-general, and deputy directors-general of general departments, the chief of cabinet of the Ministry, heads and deputy heads of regional armed forces, the director of the Kaysone PHOMVIHAN National Defence Academy, leaders of corps, heads of commanders in Vientiane Capital City, cities and provinces, and

¹⁵ I.e., military agencies, departments or forces that are equivalent to the preceding entities in this clause.

- heads of equivalent military departments and forces, based on the recommendations of the Minister of National Defence;
3. The Minister of National Defence is the person to appoint, transfer and dismiss directors and deputy directors of departments, military attachés, deputy chiefs of cabinet of the Ministry, deputy director(s) of the Kaysone PHOMVIHAN National Defence Academy, directors and deputy directors of other academies for martial arts, politics, and logistics, directors and deputy directors of land forces schools, deputy leaders of corps, deputy heads of commanders in Vientiane Capital City, cities, and provinces, leaders of brigades, heads of commanders in districts, and heads and deputy heads of equivalent military departments and forces, based on the recommendations of the Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Politics;
 4. The Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Politics is the person to appoint, transfer, and dismiss heads and deputy heads of divisions of departments at different levels, leaders and deputy leaders of battalions, heads and deputy heads of division of independent brigades, and heads and deputy heads of equivalent military departments and forces, based on the recommendations of concerned departments and forces;
 5. The Director-General of the Armed Forces General Staff Department, the Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Logistics, the Director-General of the General Armed Forces Department of Technical Services, the chief of cabinet of the Ministry, and heads of equivalent departments and forces are the persons to appoint, transfer, and dismiss military leaders at the level of companies and at levels that are subordinate to such persons, based on the recommendations of concerned departments and forces;
 6. The leaders of regional armed forces, the director of the Kaysone PHOMVIHAN National Defence Academy, directors and deputy directors of other academies for martial arts, politics, and logistics, directors and deputy directors of land forces schools, deputy leaders of corps, deputy heads of commanders in Vientiane Capital City, cities and provinces, and heads of equivalent departments and forces are the persons to appoint, transfer, and dismiss [military leaders] at the levels of divisions, platoons, and squads that are under their supervision, based on the recommendations of concerned departments and forces;
 7. Leaders of independent brigades are the persons to appoint, transfer, and dismiss [military leaders] at company, platoon and squad levels that are under their supervision, based on the recommendations of concerned divisions or forces.

Article 22. Dismissal and Appointment of Military Leaders to Temporary Posts

In cases of emergency, military leaders from [the levels of] head of independent company, head of independent battalion and head of brigade or

higher have the authority to dismiss military leaders under their supervision who do not comply with orders, or who may cause damage to departments, forces and the interests of the nation, and after that to appoint new leaders to their posts, to report to the higher authorities and to request such higher authorities to make such appointments official immediately.

Article 23. Suspension and Demotion of Military Leaders

Suspension of a military leader may take place in the following cases:

1. When there is a restructuring of organisation and such [military leader's] position is no longer required;
2. When the military leader cannot meet the qualifications that are necessary for such position;
3. When the military leader reaches retirement age.

Military leaders may be demoted in the following cases:

1. When there is a consolidation¹⁶ of the method of command for the implementation of specific tasks;
2. When there is a restructuring of departments or forces;
3. When there is a re-deployment of military leaders to more appropriate positions according to their capacity or health.

Chapter 5 State Management Towards Military Leaders

Article 24. Government Management Towards Military Leaders

The government manages military leaders as follows:

1. Implements central and uniform principles in the building up and management of military leaders;
2. Proposes drafts laws and issues other legislation on military leaders;
3. Directs and monitors the implementation of laws and other legislation on military leaders;
4. Provides the budget, and technical equipment, tools and vehicles;
5. Studies and uses policies¹⁷ towards military leaders.

Article 25. Responsibilities of Ministry of National Defence

The Ministry of National Defence has responsibilities towards the government on the management and command of military leaders as follows:

¹⁶ Literally a "strengthening".

¹⁷ The term "policies" in this context takes the meaning of "privileges".

1. To directly and comprehensively manage military leaders, and to be the core body in undertaking coordination and cooperation with ministries, ministry-equivalent agencies, the Lao Front for National Construction, mass organisations, social organisations, Vientiane Capital City, cities, provinces, districts and municipalities in the management of military leaders according to its role;
2. To define and implement development and training programmes for military leaders to ensure the completeness, quantity and quality of such programmes;
3. To direct, monitor, inspect and support the implementation of activities and legislation on military leaders;
4. To organise, use, manage and implement policies and rewards and to impose discipline on military leaders;
5. To develop the budget plan and to use the budget, and technical materials, equipment, and vehicles for the military;
6. To direct, lead and command military leaders in all three forces: national force; local forces; and militia or self-defence forces;
7. To consider and deal with requests, petitions, and claims¹⁸ of military leaders;
8. To exercise such other rights and perform such other duties as provided in the laws and regulations.

Article 26. Obligations of Other Ministries and Agencies

Ministries, ministry-equivalent organisations, the Lao Front for National Construction, mass organisations, social organisations and educational institutes at different levels have the obligation to contribute as follows:

1. To provide education, building up and training, and to provide technical officers to the armed forces; to create favourable conditions for military leaders to implement their duties;
2. To consider and make placements of military leaders who are removed from the armed forces to implement duties in the civil service, as appropriate;
3. To assist and look after military leaders and their families, in both spiritual and material aspects and in respect of their livelihoods, especially the families of military leaders who lose their lives or become invalids, retired military leaders, national heroes, exemplary military leaders,¹⁹ and families of military leaders who undertake duties in special, difficult and remote areas.

¹⁸ Readers may wish to note that, because of the military context, these terms are not used in the same way as they are used in the Law on the Handling of Petitions.

¹⁹ The two Lao words translated as “national heroes” and “exemplary military leaders” have the same root meaning of hero. The first word denotes heroes at a national level who have committed extremely heroic acts, such as sacrificing their lives for the nation. The second word denotes heroes who have performed very well, but not at the same level.

Article 27. Obligations of Local Administrative Authorities

Local administrative authorities have obligations to contribute as follows:

1. To provide building up and training, in order to improve educational and technical levels, and to create favourable conditions for military leaders to implement their duties;
2. To consider and make placements of military leaders who are removed from the armed forces to implement duties in the civil service, as appropriate;
3. To assist and look after military leaders and their families, in both spiritual and material aspects and in respect of their livelihoods, especially the families of military leaders who lose their lives, or become invalid, retired military leaders, national heroes, exemplary military leaders, and families of military leaders that undertake duties in special, difficult and remote areas;
4. Local administrative authorities at all levels, together with the multi-ethnic people [have obligations to] educate, provide comments, criticise and assist military leaders who are implementing duties in their locations.

Chapter 6 Implementation of Policies, Prohibitions, Rewards and Discipline towards Military Leaders

Article 28. Implementation of Policies

The implementation of policies towards military leaders is as follows:

1. Military leaders in permanent positions will receive salaries, allowances, and food and clothing²⁰, as determined by the State. As for retired military leaders, they will receive pensions or retrenchment payments. Except in the cases provided in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 31 of this law²¹;
2. Military leaders who are holding many positions will receive policies under the highest position;
3. Military leaders who are removed to work in other departments or forces will receive policies in accordance with the new position;
4. Military leaders in permanent positions will have annual leave of fifteen days in accordance with the laws and regulations, except when there is an emergency or war. Military leaders who are on leave when there is an emergency or war must return to their department or force immediately;

²⁰ This is a translation of a single Lao word with the connotation of both food and clothing.

²¹ The translators are aware that the punctuation and sentence structures in this item 1 are awkward. The intention appears to be for the exception to qualify both the sentences preceding it but this is not entirely clear.

5. Military leaders in permanent positions, retired officers, national heroes, exemplary military leaders, and invalid military leaders will receive health care and, when they are sick, will receive treatment according to defined Party and State policies. Military leaders who are sick, injured or become invalids during the implementation of their duties at the front or in difficult or dangerous areas will receive free treatment;
6. Military leaders who are at the front and serve at the front bravely or sacrifice their lives will receive promotion from one rank to the next rank or by skipping one rank, as appropriate. If such persons lose their lives when they serve at the front, they will receive promotion of one rank;²²
7. Military leaders from the level of colonel and lower who retire will not receive further promotion but will receive pensions at the salary level of the next higher rank;
8. Retired military leaders, national heroes and exemplary military leaders will be invited to [celebrations of] important national days, and have the same right to use their armed forces uniforms and insignia as military leaders in permanent positions;
9. Military leaders will receive policies to go for further education within the country and overseas.

The detailed policies towards military leaders in permanent positions, retired military leaders, persons who sacrifice their lives, lose their lives or become invalids, national heroes, and exemplary military leaders [will be defined by the government]; the families and parents of such leaders who sacrifice their lives or lose their lives will also receive other policies that are defined by the government.

Article 29. Prohibitions on Military Leaders

Prohibitions on military leaders are as follows:

1. It is prohibited [for military leaders] to violate the laws and regulations of the State, the regulations of the armed forces and the fine customs and traditions of the multi-ethnic people;
2. It is prohibited [for military leaders] to issue orders, regulations, and policies that are in conflict with the laws, or orders or regulations issued by higher authorities;
3. It is prohibited [for military leaders] to desert, or to fail to implement resolutions or orders of higher authorities;
4. It is prohibited [for military leaders] to abuse their power, duty or authority;
5. It is prohibited [for military leaders] to abuse their power, duty, or authority for personal interests;

²² Item 6 refers to two categories of soldiers who die at the front (ie. at the site of battle or fighting). The category in the first sentence of this item 6 refers to persons who sacrifice their lives during fighting. The category in this second sentence refers to those who die at the front but not necessarily in the course of battle.

6. It is prohibited [for military leaders] to take away weapons, ammunition, military uniforms and official military documents for other people to lease or use without authorisation from the concerned organisations.

In addition, military leaders shall implement other prohibitions as defined by the Party and the State.

Article 30. Rewards Towards Military Leaders

Military leaders who are outstanding in battle, or in the implementation of their duties, will be rewarded as follows: be conferred the title of national hero or exemplary military leader, and receive medals-of-honour, medals²³, reward certificates at different levels, promotion and other policies as appropriate.

Article 31. Discipline Towards Military Leaders

Military leaders who violate the regulations or code of conduct²⁴ of the Lao People's Defence Force shall be subject to administrative discipline depending on the severity of the case, such as: to be criticised, warned, suspended from promotion, transferred, or demoted, and to be retrenched and receive policies according to the last rank²⁵ or to be dismissed from the armed forces without receiving any policies.

Military leaders who commit offences under the Penal Law causing damage to other persons will be subject to legal proceedings in accordance with the laws.

Military leaders who intentionally commit an offence and who are sentenced by a final decision of a court to deprivation of liberty of eighteen months or more will lose the right to be military leaders. In the case where the offence is committed negligently, the rank of such military leaders will be reconsidered, as appropriate.

Chapter 7 Final Provisions

Article 32. Implementation

The government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic is to implement this law.

²³ The terms "medal-of-honour" and "medal" are translations of two Lao words for medals. The first recognises the highest level of achievement (e.g., national heroes) and the second recognises exemplary performance.

²⁴ The literal translation of this term is "the discipline of the Lao National Defence Force".

²⁵ The literal translation of this term is "the remaining rank".

Article 33. Effectiveness

This law is effective from the date of the promulgating decree of the President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

All regulations or provisions which contradict this law are repealed.

Vientiane, 22 October 2004
President of the National Assembly

[Seal and Signature]

Samane VIGNAKET