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By Toni Randolph, Minnesota Public Radio

Hmong residents testify before UN Rapporteur

St. Paul, Minn. — A United Nations human rights expert heard testimony from Hmong families Wednesday about the desecration of graves in Thailand.

Families described the emotional and psychological distress they've suffered since learning that hundreds of graves had been unearthed.

The graves are near a Buddhist temple in Thailand where many Hmong refugees once lived.

U.S. Special Rapporteur James Anaya said the testimony was moving, enlightening and disturbing.

"Disturbing, while at the same time, encouraging to see the courage and the determination by people to have their rights respected and the violation of their rights vindicated. It's inspiring, really," Anaya said.

Anaya said he will present the concerns to the Thai government in hopes of coming up with a way to resolve the situation.

Many families members say they want that Thai government to apologize for digging up the graves They also want assurances that it won't happen again.