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# Vietnamese BULLETIN vietnamien

Vietnamese Canadian Federation

Fédération vietnamienne du Canada

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## FEDERATION NEWS

### **Vietnamese Refugees in the Philippines – The Forgotten Victims of the Vietnam War**

After the refugee camps in Southeast Asia were closed in the late Eighties, a number of Vietnamese refugees decided that they'd rather stay in the Philippines than going back to the Communist regime which they fled before. With very slim prospect for resettlement in third countries, about 2,000 of them remain stranded in the country as "stateless asylum seekers". Without any legal status, they live in constant fear of being caught and sent back to Vietnam.

Thanks to the relentless efforts of a young, energetic Vietnamese Australian lawyer, Trinh Hoi, 361 refugees have been resettled, mostly in the U.S., Australia, and the U.K.

Among the refugees who remain, there are 88 people who were rescued at sea by the Canadian Navy ship *Provider* and a number of people who have relatives in Canada who want to sponsor them for resettlement in this country. The Vietnamese Canadian Federation is currently urging the Canadian government to allow these people to be sponsored as refugees by "Groups of Five" or by charitable organizations in Canada.

Following is a letter that the Federation sent

to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada on this issue.

May 26, 2002

The Honourable Denis Coderre, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Immigration  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON

Re. Vietnamese Refugees in the Philippines

Dear Sir:

Please find attached a list of 165 Vietnamese refugees in the Philippines who would like to be sponsored by their relatives for resettlement in Canada. This list includes 88 people who were rescued at sea by the Canadian naval ship *Provider* in 1991.

Since the refugee camps in the Philippines were closed in 1996, these refugees have been in a limbo since the Filipino government could not grant them permanent residency. Thanks to the efforts made by the overseas Vietnamese community; the governments of the U.S., the U.K., and Australia have accepted, under their family re-unification programs, 310 refugees out of a total of 2,000 refugees stranded in the Philippines. I hope that, given Canada's compassionate policy on family re-unification, you will be able to grant ministerial permits to the 165 refugees on this list for resettlement in Canada.

For your information, I also included some background documents as well as the letters from Mr. Franklin M. Drillon, President of the Filipino Senate, Senator Gregorio B. Honasan, and a petition from 14 Filipino Congressmen and Congresswomen in support of this request.

Trusting that we will receive a positive response from you, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

Danh T. Nguyen, President

### **Declaration Regarding the Vietnam - China Treaties on Land Borders and Territorial Waters**

In the last two years, the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has secretly signed two treaties with the People's Republic of China: one on land borders on December 30, 1999 and the other on the division of territorial waters in the Gulf of Tonkin on December 25, 2000.

Although Vietnamese authorities have purposely kept all important information regarding these treaties from the Vietnamese people and the international community, they proceeded with the first official border demarcations officially at the border towns of Dongxing (in China) and Mong Cai (Vietnam) on December 27, 2001. The new dividing lines in the Gulf of Tonkin show an area of 22,000 square miles of Vietnamese territorial waters conceded to China. These border and territorial water "readjustments" will mean untold sufferings to the Vietnamese people living in or off the land and the waters thus conceded to China. The Nam Quan Pass, which has been, for thousands of years, the traditional marker dividing Vietnam from China and a proud symbol of Vietnamese independence, is now deep inside China.

We therefore solemnly declare:

1. Since the above treaties have been signed without the consent of the Vietnamese people, they are invalid, and therefore

should not be recognized by the United Nations and /or by any nation of the world.

2. Besides being unfair to Vietnam, these treaties are the clearest and latest proofs of Chinese hegemony in Southeast Asia which threatens the stability of the whole region and international trade in the South China Sea.

3. All Vietnamese of the present and future generations are duty-bound to reclaim the conceded territories, protect the sanctity of the fatherland, and preserve the integrity of the Vietnamese territory.

## MEDIA REVIEW

### **Vietnam's government defends border agreement with China**

Hanoi (AP, 3/4/02) - Vietnam's government has defended a border agreement with China, describing it as fair and in the country's long-term interests, state-controlled media reported Wednesday.

Several critics of the agreement have reportedly been detained or placed under house arrest for alleging that Vietnam conceded too much to China.

The agreement, signed in 1999, has never been released by the government.

Foreign Minister Nguyen Dy Nien said the agreement was fair to both sides and "meets our country's fundamental long-term interests," the Tuoi Tre newspaper reported.

Nien told a National Assembly session Tuesday that Vietnam will resolve any problems arising from the treaty's implementation "in the spirit of defending independence and national territorial

integrity," the newspaper said.

Communist neighbours Vietnam and China signed the agreement delineating their 1,350-km (839-mile) land border after years of tough negotiations. The first border marker was erected late last year, and the demarcation is expected to be completed in three years.

Last month, police reportedly searched the house of dissident writer Tran Khue of Ho Chi Minh City and confiscated his computer and several documents related to an open letter he wrote to Chinese President Jiang Zemin protesting the treaty as unfair.

Writer Bui Minh Quoc, of Dalat, was placed under house arrest January 14 after reportedly traveling near the Chinese border to investigate the border treaty.

Another writer, Le Chi Quang, was reportedly arrested and imprisoned February 21 outside Hanoi. He had written an essay critical of the border agreement that was circulated on the Internet.

In 2000, Vietnam and China signed agreements on the demarcation of their ocean border in the Gulf of Tonkin and on fishery cooperation.

The Quan Doi Nhan Dan newspaper said Wednesday that the signing of the agreements was "welcomed by domestic opinion, but recently, there has been distorted information affecting the perceptions of some people."

"The government's report made clear the correct and unified perception of the signed agreements, opposing the distorted allegations of 'hostile forces' attempting to undermine national unity, our foreign

relations and oppose the party and state," it said.

Vietnam's government and Communist Party use the term "hostile forces" to refer to anti-communist overseas groups who seek political reforms in Vietnam.

### **Letter from Australia**

*(by Doan Trung, President of the Vietnamese Community in Australia, published in the Herald Sun, Sydney)*

At last weekend's international aid conference, U.S. President Bush urged governments of developing nations to reform to support their peoples' economic and political freedoms. In return, he pledged more aid and asked other donors to do the same.

Predictably, Cuban President Castro denounced this as the rich dictating to the poor. Dictators such as Castro and Vietnam's Manh know that the rule of law is bad for their rule, democracy can mean demonstrations against them, and a free press is bad press for their corrupt officials.

Australia's \$1.8 billion a year aid program currently has no human rights preconditions, and only one purpose - namely, poverty reduction.

Aid officials would argue that Australia's aid does have a human rights component. They mean such things as buying human rights books for Vietnam's Communist Party officials. Lately, Hanoi officials have used such books to counterattack those who criticise their worsening records.

Last July, Community Aid Abroad and several other non-government organisations

called for the delivery of Australian aid to support political and economic rights of peoples in recipient countries. My organisation went further, submitting to the parliamentary inquiry into the link between aid and human rights, that such support be made an equally important formal purpose of aid.

Specifically, we recommended that aid should be preconditioned on some accountability requirements, that the government should report to the Parliament on how its aid is helping to improve peoples' rights, or that at international forums, Australia should do what America has just done.

Australian aid officials resolutely defended their policy, arguing that one single purpose is simpler and, if you make people less poor and hungry, their rights will improve.

This superficially attractive argument may make aid officials' jobs simpler because recipient governments have no quarrels with them, but it does not work.

Singapore is an example of a rich place where dissidents are punished by government-influenced courts. China and Vietnam are examples where any rights improvements can be, and have been, reversed at will. Tiananmen and Vietnam's population of political prisoners are evidence of that.

On the other hand, nations that respect their citizens' rights are either rich or on the way out of hunger. Prosperity accompanies freedom, not necessarily the other way round. Taxpayers' \$1.8 billion is a huge national asset which should be used to serve the national interest, by helping peoples in recipient countries to move towards

democracy and fight corruption. Democracies are good for our national security because they tend to repel terrorism. Less corruption is good for our economy because our exporters have a fairer go.

Focusing on human rights, as well as reducing poverty, is best for the people were trying to help and best for Australia in the long run.

### **Ho's ideas shunned in Vietnam**

By Richard S. Ehrlich  
The Washington Times, 17/5/02

HANOI -The embalmed body of Vietnamese Communist leader Ho Chi Minh, who died in 1969, remains on public display, but as Vietnam prepares to celebrate the 112th anniversary of his birth Sunday, many of the revered revolutionary's sayings are ignored. (Nong) Duc Manh, instead seeks to mix capitalism with political control to govern this country and increase its ability to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Mr. Manh, a minority ethnic Tay, completed his first year as Vietnamese Communist Party leader last month. One of his priorities was to get a grip on the flow of information, not only over Vietnam's controlled media and fledgling Internet connection, but also the truth about his own origins. Over the years, widespread gossip suggested he was the illegitimate son of "Uncle Ho" and a Tay servant. Mr. Manh had always refused to confirm or deny the link. "It is not true," Mr. Manh told the international edition of Time magazine this year. "I don't know why the rumor persisted for so long." Ho Chi Minh was "surely not my natural father."

Born in the mountainous north on Sept. 11, 1940, Mr. Manh may have allowed the

rumor to spread because it appeared to help his fast political ascent. He is the first member of an ethnic minority to reach the political pinnacle in Vietnam.

After his parents died when he was still young, Mr. Manh joined the Communist Party at age 22. Instead of enlisting in North Vietnam's war of reunification, he studied Russian in Hanoi. Sent to the Soviet Union, he studied forestry before returning home for training as a potential leader at an elite political school. He entered the National Assembly in 1989.

Foreign businessmen expressed hope that his emphasis on boosting the economy and tackling corruption will ease the pain of investing in Vietnam.

Mr. Manh's efforts to open the economy, however, do not extend to politics. Scattered protests by political dissidents, religious leaders and minority ethnic groups have been met by long prison sentences and other crackdowns during the past year. Opposition parties remain banned. In National Assembly elections this Sunday coinciding with Ho's birthday, 634 Communist Party candidates and 125 nonparty candidates will compete for five-year terms in the 500-seat assembly.

"Although he is the youngest member of the Communist Party leadership at 61, Nong Duc Manh is no reformist," contends Paris-based Reporters Without Frontiers, which monitors human rights. "During his eight years as speaker of parliament, he had a law passed that was particularly restrictive of press freedom."

Mr. Manh has also said goodbye to the Russians, departing from their naval and air base at Cam Ranh Bay. The base closure

began this month at the U.S.-built, deep-water facility that once housed thousands of Russian troops, more than a dozen ships and 30 aircraft.

Hanoi wanted more money than Moscow was willing to pay to extend the 1979 lease.

Mr. Manh will now have to figure out how to make the harbor and facilities commercially attractive. It could be convenient for cargo ships plying the seas between Japan and Southeast Asia.

As Communist Party secretary-general, Mr. Manh's work includes improving relations with the United States and other foreign countries - especially to lure their investors. Relations between Washington and Hanoi have come a long way since President Richard M. Nixon contemplated nuking North Vietnam to end America's long effort to maintain a noncommunist regime in the south.

"I'd rather use the nuclear bomb we want to decimate the place. North Vietnam is going to get reordered," Mr. Nixon said in secret tapes he recorded in the White House in 1972. The tapes were released by the U.S. National Archives this year.

Mr. Manh's predecessor, Gen. Le Kha Phieu, was unceremoniously removed in April 2001 by the Communist Party's Central Committee. It was displeased with Gen. Le's old-style approach, which had tied down the economy and allowed bribery, red tape and official indifference to dominate.

Under Mr. Manh, the government wants a "private, capitalist economy" to develop. That means continuing to privatize some enterprises while loosening restrictions on domestic and international business.

Problems are expected to persist, however, because the government wants to hold onto key sectors of the economy. Foreign and local investors are waiting, meanwhile, for private companies to enjoy the same access to bank credit as government-run enterprises.

But after a year in power, Mr. Manh is perceived by some analysts as a weak, pliant leader who relies too much on compromise and consensus when making major decisions. However, Mr. Manh does not share Ho's opposition to individualism.

"The worst and most dangerous vestige of the old society is individualism," Ho declared in a 1958 speech, "On Revolutionary Morality."

Ho had predicted that "collectivism and socialism will certainly prevail, while individualism will surely disappear. Individualism is something very deceitful and perfidious. It skillfully induces one to backslide."

In another speech, he said: "U.S. imperialists disseminate a depraved culture to poison the youth in areas [of Southeast Asia] under their temporary control."

Today, individualism and American culture is considered cool by many urban youths and also inspire rural Vietnamese who are cynical of past collectivization - and the hunger and corruption it spawned.

Ho's corpse - and the life he led - are still considered sacred, protected by armed guards at his tomb and by repressive media laws.

## **Election in Vietnam**

HANOI, Vietnam (AP, 25/5/02)

Vietnam's Communist Party tightened its control in last weekend's National Assembly election, with a drop in the number of seats held by non-party members, the government announced Saturday.

In Vietnam's single-party system, candidates can come from outside the Communist Party, but they must be approved by the Fatherland Front, a party-controlled umbrella organization. Like all candidates, they must also demonstrate their loyalty to the government and party.

A total of 759 candidates vied for 498 seats in the May 19 election. Non-Communist Party members won 51 seats, or 10.2 percent of all seats, down from 14.7 percent in the previous assembly. All other seats went to party members.

Election officials said 99.73 percent of the country's nearly 50 million eligible voters cast ballots. Voting is mandatory for all citizens age 18 or older. The turnout was the highest in Vietnam's history and reflected "raised awareness of the benefits and obligations of the people," National Assembly Deputy Chairman Mai Thuc Lan said.

All top government leaders won re-election to the National Assembly. Party chief Nong Duc Manh received 94.8 percent of the vote in his district, while Prime Minister Phan Van Khai received 91.2 percent and President Tran Duc Luong 98.2 percent.

The assembly, once merely a rubber stamp for the Communist Party, has achieved some independence in recent years, although its actions are still closely guided by the party.

## **Communists hail Vietnam poll outcome**

BBC, 25/5/02

The results of last week's national elections in Vietnam have been announced, with the ruling Communist Party continuing to dominate the national parliament.

The election campaign did not have any opposition parties, which are banned in Vietnam, although 13 independent candidates ran.

Out of almost 500 deputies elected to the 11th National Assembly, only 51 are not Party members. With an average of less than two candidates for each seat, and no policy debate, 19 May was not an election about alternatives.

### *Great success*

But for Vietnam's communist authorities, who took victory in 90% of the seats, the election for the National Assembly was a winner. The deputy chair of the Assembly, Mai Thuc Lan, said that voter turnout was more than 99%, and almost 50 million people cast a ballot.

Mr. Lan says the election was conducted in a lawful, democratic, safe and orderly manner. In short, he says, it was a great success.

Thirteen independents got through a selection process overseen by the party. Only two - both in the capital Hanoi - were elected, and Mr. Lan says many were either too old or too young to win the confidence of voters.

### *Diversity*

The new parliament has more than 300 first-

time members - reflecting moves to make them younger and better educated. Eleven per cent are under 40 and 93% have a university education.

Under a quota system, more than a quarter are women, just under 100 represent more than 50 ethnic minority groups, and 14 are religious leaders. And 25 are business people, reflecting the party's acceptance of entrepreneurs in modernising Vietnam.

The new assembly will have an important role in government plans to reform Vietnam's legal system, and to enter the World Trade Organisation.

#### *Corruption issues*

But there were two significant hiccups in the election. The campaign was dominated by corruption issues, and the disqualification of three candidates - including a senior party official who continues to run the national radio broadcaster, Voice of Vietnam. He has been linked to jailed crime boss Nam Cam. And more than 1,000 voters in a small constituency near Hanoi had a second poll on Friday after election officials failed to stamp their registration cards.

The officials will have to self-criticise and face disciplinary action. The new parliament must meet by 19 July.

#### **Gap grows between Vietnam's haves and have-nots**

By Tran Dinh Thanh Lam, Asia Times, 10/4/02

HO CHI MINH CITY - Up until recently, economists saw no great difference in individual incomes in Vietnam - as could be expected in a socialist country. But now a report released by the National Center for

Social Sciences and Humanities (NCSSH), in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), says there is a fast-growing gap between haves and have-nots in this country of 78 million people.

"This trend presents a potential future social challenge for policy makers in Vietnam," says Robert Glofcheski, a senior economist with UNDP Vietnam. New UNDP resident representative Gordon Ryan also says that the emerging challenge for Vietnam today is to maintain equality.

"The rising gap between rich and poor should not be considered a necessary evil to help enhance economic growth because the ultimate goal of development is people's overall well-being," he says.

Before the report's findings were made public recently, the country's officials had been confident that if Vietnam's so-called "inequality rate" was growing at all, it was doing so slowly. After all, surveys conducted by the General Statistics Office in 1993 and 1998, using expenditure data, showed that during this period, the Gini coefficient increased slowly and modestly from 0.330 to 0.357. (In using the Gini coefficient, zero represents perfect equality and 1 perfect inequality.) But the new report says that Vietnam's Gini coefficient has risen from 0.350 in 1995 to 0.410 today, just above the level of China, which has a Gini coefficient of 0.404.

Economists here note that these numbers not only prove that income and development disparities have jumped significantly in Vietnam, but also that this country appears to be reaching such inequality much more quickly than China. This has taken place even as Vietnam was posting strong

economic growth in the past decade. Indeed, from a country that found it hard to feed its growing population some 10 years ago, this Indochinese nation has developed into the world's second-largest rice exporter. Living standards have also improved tremendously.

But economists remark that the growth could be better if the gains had been shared more evenly across different groups in the population and geographical regions of the country. According to these experts, while the growth has benefited rich and poor alike, those who were well off to begin with ended up with more gains. In 1999 alone, the richest 20 percent of the population earned 7.3 times as much as the poorest 20 percent.

Between 1995 and 1999, 31 of Vietnam's 62 provinces have also seen income inequality increase by 10 percent. In the meantime, there were only nine provinces with inequality narrowed slightly over this period. The wealth gap is more noticeable between urban and rural areas, as well as between major cities and remote towns. In truth, while the urban population has enjoyed consistent economic growth since 1998, farmers' incomes have been greatly affected by continuous natural calamities and price fluctuations.

"Each year, we must buy fertilizers and chemicals at higher prices and sell our rice cheaper and cheaper," grumbles Le Van Nam, a 48-year-old farmer in Dong Nai province. "People become richer in Ho Chi Minh City while us farmers become poorer and poorer."

The gains enjoyed by the urban population, however, are not limited to such things as increased income per capita. Other development indicators such as school enrolment, life expectancy, the

unemployment rate and access to basic social services show that in many urban areas, residents are doing better in other areas than their compatriots in the countryside. Economists further point out that places with better human development indicators can only benefit more from economic growth. In other words, things can only get better for the people in these areas.

Says NCSSH deputy director Do Hoai Nam: "High human development tends to lessen inequality. The higher human development is, the less severe is inequality."

Economists, though, say economic gains do not automatically translate into improved human development. In the Mekong Delta provinces, for instance, a majority of the population have seen an increase in their incomes in the past several years, while keeping the gap between rich and poor there at a minimum. But all of the residents in these places still suffer from inadequate provision of clean water and basic sanitation and remain highly vulnerable to natural disasters and market fluctuations.

Still, they are better off than those living in less developed provinces such as highland provinces of Kon Tum in the center, and Lai Chau and Lao Cai in the north. Both economic development and human development are low in these areas and their rich and poor share the burden of dismal basic education and sanitation, primary health care and infrastructure, as well as obsolete means of production.

### **Vietnam repression**

By Richard S. Ehrlich  
The WashingtonTimes (June 2002)

HANOI-- International human rights groups

and U.S. politicians are trying to convince Vietnam to address reports of torture and other abuses of political dissidents, as well as of religious and ethnic-minority groups.

"It is necessary to say there are no political prisoners and nobody is detained for their thought, only criminals who are detained for violating the law," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Phan Thuy Thanh said.

Illegal protests are orchestrated by anti-communists who were allied with America during the Vietnam War, according to the government.

Government-run media blames FULRO, the French acronym for the United Front for the Liberation of Oppressed Races, which fought alongside U.S. forces.

But trouble has erupted in scattered regions, for a variety of reasons, according to human rights groups and Vietnamese dissidents.

"Major violations" by Vietnamese officials included "police torture of people in detention or during interrogation, including beating, kicking and shocking with electric batons," said New York-based Human Rights Watch in a recent report.

"Violations of the right to freedom of religion, include destruction and closure of ethnic-minority Protestant churches, and official pressure on Christians to abandon their religion under threat of legal action or imprisonment," the group said.

Titled "Repression of Montagnards," the 194-page report released in April focused on Vietnam's Central Highlands in and around Pleiku, including the provinces of Kon Tum, Dak Lak, Gia Lai and Lam Dong.

Vietnam is bursting with 80 million people who are crammed into the S-shaped nation along the South China Sea.

Highland tribes are struggling against the relentless arrival of Vietnamese lowlanders -- majority ethnic Kinh and other groups -- who want to farm the prized coffee-growing zone.

Hanoi fears Highlanders, many of whom are Protestant Christians, are protecting their region because they want to create an autonomous Degar homeland.

Degar people are indigenous inhabitants -- numbering a few hundred thousand -- in the Central Highlands plateaus.

These 40 or so tribes are known collectively as Montagnards -- French for "mountaineers."

"We have suffered a fate similar to the Native Americans, Australian Aboriginals, African bushmen and other original inhabitants subjected to invasion and exploitation by outsiders," according to the Spartanburg, S.C.-based Montagnard Foundation.

Hanoi avoids international censure "by playing on the guilt of the Vietnam War" and hobbling domestic and international media investigating human rights, the foundation said.

The New York-based Fund for Reconciliation and Development (FRD), however, recently issued a watch list titled, "Home Grown Terrorism?" naming U.S.-based "immigrant groups" that "support insurgencies in Indochina."

"Reminiscent of the darkest days of the Cold

War the most colorful and dangerous" groups include the Montagnard Foundation, it warned.

"The foundation's activities are supported by a group of U.S. Special Forces veterans," the FRD said.

In recent months, amid protests and crackdowns, about 1,000 Montagnards fled west across the border into Cambodia. Many were eventually allowed to resettle in the United States.

Vietnam's Montagnards include thousands of people who converted from their tribal animist beliefs to become Protestants after being recruited by the United States during the Vietnam War.

Today, Protestant churches hidden in villagers' homes have increased their flock by preaching in minority languages, drawing the wrath of Vietnamese authorities, who consider the churches illegal.

*Catholics also face problems*

Catholic priest Tadeus Nguyen Van Ly was blocked from travelling to Washington last year to speak to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

He was later arrested by Vietnamese officials for providing purportedly false written evidence to the United States about human rights violations.

The cleric's action violated Article 13 of the Vietnamese Constitution, which forbids any activity perceived as opposing the independence, sovereignty, reunification or territorial integrity of Vietnam, officials said.

In 1995, the priest, based in Hue, was

released after 10 years in jail for his dissident behavior.

His current demands include the return of church land, which the communists seized in 1975 when the war ended.

"Despite a marked increase in religious practice among the Vietnamese people in the last 10 years, the Vietnamese government continues to suppress organized religious activities forcefully and to monitor and control religious communities," the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom said in a report last year.

"This repression is mirrored by the recent crackdown on important political dissidents," it said.

The strongest anti-communist challenge comes from the illegal Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV).

The UBCV's leader, dissident Buddhist monk Thich Quang Do, spent more than 18 years in prison or house arrest before being released in 1998.

Vietnam's "one-party totalitarianism" and "cruel dictatorship" has resulted in "our people being enslaved spiritually and materially, our morality degraded, and our country weakened and paralyzed," he said last year.

Thich Quang Do's defiant declaration, now posted on various Web sites, also requests U.N.-supervised elections for "political parties of all inclination, except the Communist Party."

London-based Amnesty International meanwhile condemned "the continuing repression of non-official religious groups in

Vietnam in flagrant contradiction to the Vietnamese government's assertion of freedom of religion."

Hanoi denies all accusations of human rights abuses and insists its actions are within the law.

Any crackdowns were merely the authorities enforcing the law to prevent the sort of anarchy that has swept other impoverished nations, officials said.

Some foreign analysts warn a harsh U.S. response -- such as trade sanctions -- may alienate Vietnam and push it closer to China, without helping dissident groups.

Official corruption and a stagnant economy, however, fuels unrest among many Vietnamese.

Villagers' traditional animist beliefs are also frowned upon by communist officials, who worry that "superstition" and other supernatural concepts make people irrational, wasteful and subject to exploitation.

But Vietnamese officials forced some detainees to perform animist-style rituals to demonstrate they are not Christians, according to Human Rights Watch.

"Beginning in June [2001], provincial authorities conducted dozens of ceremonies in the Central Highlands in which Montagnards who had participated in the February demonstrations were forced to read confessions about their alleged wrongdoings and renounce Christianity in front of entire villages, sealing their pledges by mandatory drinking of rice wine mixed with goat's blood," the human rights group said.

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The **Vietnamese Bulletin *vietnamien*** is a quarterly newsletter published by the Vietnamese Canadian Federation.

The Federation welcomes contributions to this publication from its member associations and from the public, as well as suggestions or comments that may help improve its format or enrich its content.

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