



**Vietnamese Canadian Federation
Fédération vietnamienne du Canada**

2011 Annual Report

Violations of Human Rights in Vietnam

**Khue-Tu Nguyen
Commissioner for Human Rights
Vietnamese Canadian Federation
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Preface

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation is pleased to release its first annual report on human rights violations in Vietnam. In releasing this report, the Federation hopes to increase public awareness of the continuing violations of the fundamental human rights by the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. These sacred rights were stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by in 1948 by the United Nations, of which Vietnam is one of the signatories.

The Federation looks forward to working with governments, non-government organizations, as well as concerned individuals to promote democracy, freedom, and respect for human rights around the world.

Vietnamese Canadian Federation
December 2011

Executive Summary

Despite the opposition and urgings of many international organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Reporters Without Borders, etc. and political leaders to stop the abuses of the freedom of its people, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam continues to use whatever means necessary to oppress its citizens.

On the media front, in addition to using two vaguely defined articles, Articles 79 and 88 in the penal code, the government adopted or revised various decrees in 2011 to increasingly stifle freedom of expression. These decrees with broad and obscure provisions can be used by authorities to arbitrarily restrict legitimate speech of journalists and bloggers, and detain those that advocate for rights through the usage of the internet, newspapers, radio, etc. The arrest of IPA Freedom to Publish Prize-winning publisher Bui Chat and the prison sentences of broadcasters Le Van Thanh and Vu Duc Trung, all of whom are pro-democracy advocates, are examples of how the government seeks to eradicate any voices of dissent and prevent them from being heard.

The Communist Party of Vietnam also continues to target internet users, or bloggers, that oppose the party's regime. Among those arrested and/or harassed in 2011 are: Nguyen Van Hai (who lost an arm whilst in prison), Paulus Le Van Son, Pham Minh Hoang, Ta Phong Tan, Huynh Ngoc Tuan, Huynh Thuc Vy, and Huynh Trong Hieu. Brutal force were used in many, if not all, of these arrests. Those that advocated by other peaceful means (which include, but are not limited to, protesting or distributing pro-democracy documents) were also imprisoned and charged with undermining national unity, inciting terrorism, plotting to overthrow the people's government, etc.: Cu Huy Ha Vu, Pham Thi Phuong, Dang Xuan Dieu, Ho Duc Hoa, Lu Van Bay, Vi Duc Hoi, Nguyen Ngoc Cuong, Nguyen Ngoc Tuong Thi, Vu Quang Thuan, Ho Thi Bich Khuong, Nguyen Trung Ton, and Bui Thi Minh Hang.

Vietnam also employed another method of suppressing dissidents, targeting a lawyer that provided legal representation to clients persecuted for being critical of the government, Huynh Van Dong. He was disbarred.

Religious oppression is an on-going issue of concern in Vietnam. 2011 witnessed horrific events such as the murder of dozens of Hmong Christians, the attacks on and plots to seize land of Thai Ha Parish, the attacks on Falon Gong practitioners, the conviction of the Mennonite Church pastors, the torture of Montagnard Christians, and imprisonment of unsanctioned religious groups. Nguyen Van Ly, Nguyen Van Lia, Tran Hoai An, Nguyen Cong Chinh, Nguyen Van Hoai, Peter Tran Huu, Dau Van Duong, Francis Dang Xuan Tuong, Nguyen Van Duyet, Ho Van Oanh, Tran Vu Anh Binh, and Nguyen Van Phuong were among the those that advocated for religious freedom and were detained. The aforementioned names do not include those who were harassed or physically injured, kidnapped for a short time.

Those that advocated peacefully for land rights were also arrested: Pastor Duong Kim Khai, Tran Thi Thuy, Nguyen Thanh Tam, Phan Van Thong, Nguyen Chi Thanh, Cao Van Tinh, and Pham Ngoc Hoa.

2011 also witnessed the tragic deaths of political prisoners in prison. Nguyen Van Trai, a cancer sufferer who had been jailed for over 15 years and had been refused the right to die at home,

passed away five months before the end of his jail term. Truong Van Suong, who had spent more than 30 years in detention, also passed away.

2011 Annual Report

Violations of Human Rights in Vietnam

January 14 **Government Adopts New Decree “Regulating” Journalists and Bloggers**

Vietnam issued a new decree regulating the activities of journalists and bloggers that includes provision for fines of up to 40 million dong (2,000 dollars) in a country in which the average salary is 126 dollars.

“The government is demonstrating its determination to tighten its grip on news and information just as the ruling Communist Party is holding its congress,” Reporters Without Borders said. “The protection of the confidentiality of sources is seriously threatened by this decree. The government is going after online anonymity by trying to prevent bloggers from using pseudonyms. This could make it easier for the authorities both to harass them and to arrest and jail them.”^[1]

January 26 **Vietnam Sentences Dissident to 8 Years**

Vietnam sentenced a dissident former Communist Party official to eight years in prison for posting online calls for democracy. Vi Duc Hoi was convicted of “spreading anti-government propaganda” by a court in northern Lang Son province, said Amnesty International, which condemned the punishment. He faces an extra five years of house arrest after prison.

Hoi, arrested in October 2010, is a member of the Bloc 8406 group of human rights activists and exposed corruption and injustice in Vietnam.^[2]

February 2 **Member of Pro-Democracy Movement Arrested**

Vu Quang Thuan, 44, head of the Progressive Democratic Movement, was arrested at Ho Chi Minh City Airport.^[3]

February 9 **Vietnam Charges Activists With Anti-Government Acts**

Vietnamese authorities charged Vu Quang Thuan, 44, a member of a banned pro-democracy movement, with activities opposing the government. Thuan, head of the Vietnam Progressive Democratic Movement, had been arrested February 2 at Ho Chi Minh City Airport. Thuan and other activists had set up their movement in 2007 to campaign for democracy, humanity, peace, justice, and prosperity. ^[4]

**February
25**

Press Decree Part of Crackdown on Freedom of Expression

Vietnam's Decree No. 2 of 2011 on Administrative Responsibility for Press and Publication Activities contains an overly broad scope and obscure provisions which are liable for abuse by the authorities for state intervention and restriction on legitimate expressions. For example, the rules restricting the selling, circulation, renting and posting on the internet of materials "that encourage superstition, bad tradition and social evils" can be used to arbitrarily and unnecessarily restrict legitimate speech. The Decree also overburdens media workers with a regime of unnecessary registration, sanctions, bans and censorship. ^[5]

**February
26**

Mideast-inspired Dissident Held in Vietnam

Nguyen Dan Que, a veteran Vietnamese dissident, was arrested after he called for a Middle East-style uprising in the one-party state. Que, who was born in 1942, was arrested at his Ho Chi Minh City home, the Vietnam News reported. During a raid on his house, police allegedly seized many documents related to anti-government activities, including an "appeal to all people" which called on the public to rise up against the government. ^[6]

**March
18**

Vietnam Slams Blogger's Nomination for Free Press Award

State media reported that Vietnam criticized the nomination of a prominent blogger for a prize for online freedom of expression. Pham Minh Hoang, a former maths professor in Ho Chi Minh City, was one of the six nominees for the Netizen Prize. The state-run Cong An Nhan Dan newspaper said it was hard to understand why a prize should be given to people who "incite terrorism, and overthrow the people's government, undermining national unity." The Netizen Prize, given by Paris-based Reporters Without Borders and sponsored by internet search engine Google, goes to a blogger, online journalist or cyber-dissident who has helped to promote freedom of expression on the internet. ^[7]

**April
4**

Vietnamese Dissident Gets 7-Year Jail Sentence

Cu Huy Ha Vu, 53, who had been arrested in November 2010, was sentenced to seven years in prison and three years of house arrest for spreading anti-government propaganda. Through his writing and interviews given to foreign media, Cu Huy Ha Va, a legal expert, advocated a multi-party system and called for democratic reforms in Vietnam. He had also tried to sue the Vietnamese prime minister twice over a mining project he said would harm the environment. ^[8]

**April
14**

Laos, Vietnam Troops Kill Four Hmong Christians

Laotian and Vietnamese troops killed four Hmong Christian women after confiscating their Bible. The government troops confiscated the group's only Bible, brutally and repeatedly raped at least two of the younger women before shooting them at point blank range with automatic weapons in the head and torso. Their husbands and 26 children were forced to witness the killings and have since disappeared after being beaten and tied up. ^[9]

**April
24**

Hoa Hao Buddhist Activist Arrested

Nguyen Van Lia, 71, is a long-time adherent of Hoa Hao Buddhism, a religious group often suppressed by the government and the co-author of several Hoa Hao Buddhist religious instruction texts and books. He is charged with violating article 258 of the penal code for "abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the state," an opaque crime that could result in a sentence of up to seven years (he was sentenced to five years. See December 13).

"All signs point to religious persecution in this case," said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch. "Nguyen Van Lia is mainly known for his advocacy of the Hoa Hao faith, and raising the oppression of this group with foreign diplomats. These are activities fully protected under Vietnam's international human rights and constitutional obligations." ^[10]

**April
24**

Another Hoa Hao Buddhist Activist Arrested

Tran Hoai An was arrested, like Nguyen Van Lia, after authorities found documents accusing the government of violating human rights and suppressing religious freedom. ^[11]

**April
28**

Vietnam Arrests Pastor of Banned Mennonite Church

Vietnamese authorities arrested Nguyen Cong Chinh, 42, for allegedly sowing division between the government and citizens of this communist nation, reported state media. He was accused of undermining the government policy of unity, and faces up to 15 years in jail if convicted.
[12]

**May
2**

Vietnam Arrests Award-Winning Publisher

Vietnamese authorities arrested a local underground publisher on his return home after he received an international award for courageously upholding the freedom to publish. The award and prize certificate were confiscated.

Bui Chat is the founder of Giay Vun Publishing House, which is devoted to printing and publishing of the works of Vietnam's "pavement poets" beyond the reach of censorship authorities.

Under Bui Chat's leadership, Giay Vun has directly assisted in the establishment in Vietnam of other publishing houses that operate independently and freely, publishing the works of banned authors and historians, IPA said in a statement.^[13]

**May
6-17**

Vietnam Forces Kill 72 Hmong

The Vietnamese People's Army killed at least 72 Hmong Christian and animist religious believers, many of them mainstream Catholic and orthodox Protestant Christians, according to the Center for Public Policy Analysis and Hmong and Laotian non-governmental organizations with sources inside the region that borders on Laos. The beatification of Pope John Paul II, in Rome on May 1st was a factor in sparking the mass gatherings and peaceful, non-violent demonstrations by thousands of Viet-Hmong Catholics, Protestant and Animist.

At least nine more Vietnamese-Hmong Catholic believers, who were part of a mass demonstration for religious freedom, land reform and an end to illegal logging by Vietnam People's Army owned military companies, were confirmed killed by army soldiers, and police for taking part in the peaceful rallies that occurred earlier in the month. Many Hmong Catholics had helped form the core of demonstrations in Dien Bien to mark ceremonies in honor of Pope John Paul II in Rome on May 1st.

Vietnam security forces, including over 15,000 soldiers from various Vietnam People's Army units, backed by allied armed forces from Laos, sealed off much of Dien Bien province in Vietnam and arrested over 2,400 ethnic Hmong citizens from Vietnam. ^[14]

**May
10**

Health Fears for Detained Blogger

As of May 2011, the lawyer and family of popular Vietnamese blogger Nguyen Hoang Hai, also known as Dieu Cay, had not been allowed to visit him in prison for six months. There are concerns for his health, as they have also been prevented from sending him food and medicine. Despite completing a 30-month prison sentence in October 2010, he was detained for further investigation on charges of "conducting propaganda" against the state.

Nguyen Hoang Hai, who is around 60 years old, was last seen by his son at Xuan Loc prison, Dong Nai province in southeast Viet Nam on 19 October 2010. He had almost completed a two and a half year prison sentence for tax fraud, a charge believed to be politically motivated. However, instead, the authorities continued to detain him and the police informed his family that he was being investigated under Article 88 of the 1999 Penal Code for "conducting propaganda" against the state.

The lawyer and family of Nguyen Hoang Hai have made 13 requests to visit him since October. They have also attempted to deliver extra provisions for him, including food, medicines and a small amount of money. The police have rejected all the requests. It is not known where he is now being held, how he is being treated or his state of health. His family and friends fear for his safety. ^[15]

**May
20**

Vietnamese Government Proposes Further Legal Restrictions On Religion

The Vietnamese government proposed to introduce amendments to existing laws which would further restrict freedom of worship and all other church-related activities in the country. These laws already include vague and indeterminate phrases such as 'misuse of beliefs and religions', which are susceptible to many interpretations. Ordinary religious functions, such as the Catholic engagement in social justice and advocacy for human rights, have had every chance to be regarded as a 'misuse of beliefs and religions'. ^[16]

May

Vietnam Court Sentences Farmers to total 32

Years in Jail, Convicted of Subversion

A court in southern Vietnam sentenced seven farmers to a total of 32 years in jail for subversion in one of the largest political trials in Vietnam's recent history. The seven farmers were convicted of 'attempting to overthrow the people's administration' under Article 79 of the penal code.

The indictment said land reform activist Tran Thi Thuy 'and accomplices' (Pastor Duong Kim Khai, 52, Nguyen Thanh Tam, 58, Pham Van Thong, 49, Nguyen Chi Thanh, 38, Cao Van Tinh, 37, and Pham Ngoc Hoa)^[17] were affiliated with banned opposition group Viet Tan, an overseas-based democracy party that calls for peaceful political reform. They were also accused of involvement with an unsanctioned Christian house church, the Cattleshed Congregation.^[18]

Tran Thi Thuy received eight years, Pastor Duong Kim Khai six years and Nguyen Thanh Tam a two-year sentence. The seven were denied access to legal representation at the trial, which took place under heavy security, and the outcome of which is thought to have been pre-determined.

The three Christians are members of the unrecognized branch of the Mennonite church and attended the "Cow Shed Church" in Ho Chi Minh City. Inspired by their Christian faith, they worked assisting fellow Vietnamese citizens who lost farmland when it was forcibly sold by local government to large corporations, helping them to file complaint letters asking for adequate compensation.^[19]

**June
11**

Broadcasters Detained for Beaming Radio News Programs Covering Human Rights Abuses

Le Van Thanh, 36, and his brother-in-law Vu Duc Trung, 31, were detained for broadcasting Sound of Hope news programs covering human rights abuses, corruption, and the repression of religious groups in China.^[20]

They were ultimately sentenced to two and three years in prison respectively (see November 10).

**July
11**

Political Prisoner Dies in Prison After Vietnam Refuses Plea to Die at Home

The request of a Vietnamese political prisoner, jailed since 1996 and suffering from liver cancer, to be allowed to die at home was rejected. Nguyen Van Trai, 74, died five months before his term was up. As a

member of anti-communist group the People's Action Party, Trai was imprisoned under law against 'fleeing abroad to oppose the people's administration.' He was arrested in Thailand, deported to Cambodia and then Vietnam. The authorities refused several appeals for clemency after he was diagnosed with cancer. ^{[21], [22]}

**July
22**

Judicial Harassment, Police Surveillance, and Intimidation of Human Rights Defender

In a letter received by Mr. Huynh Van Dong, the Daklak Bar Association accuses him of violating the Vietnamese Lawyers' Code of Conduct because he provided legal representation to clients persecuted for being critical of the government. He was also informally told by an official at the Daklak Bar Association that the Association wanted to terminate his membership and advised him to find another job. He has been under police surveillance since 2009. ^[23]

**July
22**

Buddhist Activist Arrested Again

Dong Thap province police arrested Hoa Hao Buddhist activist Tran Hoai An as he returned from visiting Hao Hao Buddhist prisoners. ^[24]

**July
25**

Father Nguyen Van Ly Arrested Again

Father Nguyen Van Ly, the priest among the founding members of "Bloc 8406", a movement that demands the end of the single party in Vietnam was arrested again. He had been released in March 2010 because of his serious health condition, after being imprisoned in 2007 with a sentence of eight years. ^[25]

**July
27**

Jailed Blogger Loses Arm

Imprisoned blogger Nguyen Hoang Hai, known as Dieu Cay, "lost his arm," according to a security official at the prison investigation office. No further information has been given and requests to meet with Hai continue to be denied. He has not been seen by his family or lawyer since October 2010. ^[26]

**July
30**

Vietnam Cracks Down on Social Activists

Dang Xuan Dieu, 32, and Ho Duc Hoa, 37, both social activists and contributors to the Vietnam Redemptorist News, were detained at Tan Son Nhat airport in Ho Chi Minh City. ^[27] Dan Xuan Dieu and Ho Duc Hoa are actively involved in mobilizing access to education for the poor, as

well as providing assistance to victims of typhoons and persons with physical disabilities. Nguyen Van Hoai, a member of Yen Hoa parish and is actively involved in human rights work in the parish, was also arrested at the airport. ^[28]

**August
2**

Human Rights Defender Cu Huy Ha Vu's Sentence Upheld in Appeal

The Supreme People's Court upheld the sentence against Mr. **Cu Huy Ha Vu**, a prominent human rights legal expert, to seven years of imprisonment and three years of house arrest for "propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam", under Article 88 of Viet Nam's Criminal Code, saying there was no basis for dismissing the case. The trial only lasted half a day. The proceedings were closed to foreign media and were held under tight security with uniformed and plainclothes security officers surrounding the court house.

Mr. Cu Huy Ha Vu was arrested on November 5, 2010 and sentenced in first hearing by Hanoi People's Court on April 4, 2011, following a trial during which he was denied his right to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal.

Mr. Ha Vu is a peaceful defender of cultural, environmental and civil and political rights and has consistently used the courts to seek justice for those whose rights have been violated by the Government and private actors. ^[29]

**August
2**

Arrest of Students and Religious Activists

Peter Tran Huu and Dau Van Duong, both students, were arrested at their homes in Vinh City. Peter Tran Huu had been involved in protests held outside the police station in Nghe An against police harassment of students. ^{[30], [31]}

**August
3**

Activist for Religious Freedom Arrested

Francis Dang Xuan Tuong, younger brother of Dang Xuan Dieu, was arrested at 25 Dinh Le street, Vinh city. ^[32]

**August
3**

Blogger Paulus Le Son Arrested Again Amid Mounting Tension

Paulus Le Van Son, a blogger, HIV activist, and journalist who writes on social justice issues in Vietnam was arrested.^[33] The police arrested him outside his home at around 11:30 am. They blocked the road as he returned home on his motorcycle, deliberately causing him to fall. Four police officers then lifted him by his hands and feet and tossed him into a police car.

On the eve of his abduction, Son tried to attend the hearing of the well-known cyber-dissident **Cu Huy Ha Vu**'s appeal against his seven-year jail sentence. Son was previously arrested in April while on his way to attend the trial at which Vu received the sentence.

Everything suggests that his arrest was linked to his coverage of the proceedings against Vu, whose sentence was upheld. Son's blog deals with social and political events in Vietnam. He recently covered anti-Chinese demonstrations and the increase in police violence. He also covers religious issues.^[34]

**August
7**

President of the Association of Catholic Workers Arrested

Nguyen Van Duyet, President of the Association of Catholic Workers, was arrested in Nghe An.^[35]

**August
8**

Reimprisonment of Catholic Priest

The 65-year old Catholic priest Nguyen Van Ly was re-imprisoned. His eight-year prison sentence from 2007 was suspended for a year in March last year, after his health had seriously deteriorated. Father Ly has spent over 16 years in prison as a result of his active engagement for democracy and human rights in Vietnam.^[36]

**August
9**

Eight Catholics Arrested After Taking Part in Protests

Eight Catholics from central Vietnam were arrested after protesting for land rights and circulating a petition to free prominent legal rights activist Cu Huy Ha Vu. Those arrested had 'taken part in activities such as asking authorities to return land in Thai Ha province, or against a government-run Bauxite mining project,' lawyer Le Quoc Quan said.^[37]

**August
10**

Vietnam Sentences French-Vietnamese Pro-democracy Blogger

Professor Pham Minh Hoang, a maths lecturer who holds dual nationality, was accused of writing articles that “blackened the image of the country” by the judge at the trial in Ho Chi Minh City.

He told the court his writings were not aimed at overthrowing anyone, and that Vietnam needs to be more democratic, reports said.

Professor Pham Minh Hoang, who is a member of the banned US-based opposition group Viet Tan, joined other activists in criticizing a Chinese-backed bauxite mine in Viet Nam’s Central Highlands, which they believe risks causing environmental degradation in the area.^[38]

**August
12**

Rights Lawyer Disbarred

One of Vietnam’s most prominent human rights lawyers was expelled from his local bar association in what an opposition group claims was retribution for arguing several high-profile political cases.

The Bar Association of Dac Lac (Daklak) province made the decision to remove Huynh Van Dong, 33, in response to a June request by a provincial court to disbar the lawyer for “disrespecting the law,” according to court documents.

In May, Dong had represented democracy activists Tran Thi Thuy and Pham Van Thong in their preliminary trial in southern Ben Tre province. Thuy, Thong, and five other men were later convicted of “attempting to overthrow the people’s administration” for having allegedly left the country to receive training and funding from Viet Tan before returning home to “operate.”

The U.S.-based Viet Tan is banned in Vietnam and is considered by the ruling communist party as a terrorist group.^[39]

Front Line believes that the disbarment of Huynh Van Dong is directly linked to his human rights work in defending Thai Ha Catholic village in Hanoi and Con Dau Catholic village in Danang who were forcefully evicted from their lands by the authorities in 2009-2010. It is believed that this decision was also made to prevent him from representing clients in human rights cases in the future.^[40]

**August
16**

Member of Yen Hoa Parish Arrested and Detained

Ho Van Oanh, a member of Yen Hoa Parish, was arrested and detained. He had been involved in the promotion of human rights through his parish in April 2011. He was detained temporarily whilst attempting to attend the trial of Cu Huy Ha Vu, a prominent human rights defender who was imprisoned for seven years in April 2011 after he campaigned for multi-party democracy in Vietnam. ^[41]

**August
18**

Court Upholds Activist Sentences

Four Vietnamese land activists will stay in prison following a court appeal. Judges from the Ho Chi Minh City-based People's Supreme Court of Appeals, after a five-hour trial, decided to maintain the eight-year jail term for Than Thi Thuy and seven-year term for Pham Van Thong. ^[42]

**August
23**

Vietnam Jails Democracy Activist

A pro-democracy activist in Vietnam, Lu Van Bay, 59, was sentenced to four years in prison for calling for an end to the Communist monopoly on power. He was convicted of "spreading propaganda against the state" at a half-day trial in southern Kien Giang province, said Presiding Judge Do Minh Hung. He was also given three years of house arrest after serving out his sentence. Bay was accused of posting more than 10 articles on several overseas Vietnamese websites between 2007 until his arrest in March, the judge said. The writings called for a multiparty system and the end to Vietnam's one-party rule. ^[43]

**September
5**

Police arrest religious activist and blogger

Ta Phong Tan was arrested six days after she posted an analysis of the illegality and arbitrary nature of Le Van Son's arrest on her blog, dated August 30. Ta Phong Tan was awarded the prestigious Hellman Hammett prize on September 14 for her writings in the face of ongoing persecution. ^[44]

**September
13**

Vietnamese Political Prisoner Truong Van Suong Dies in Detention

Human rights campaigners have condemned the Vietnamese authorities over the death of a political prisoner who spent more than three decades in detention. US-based Human Rights Watch said Truong Van Suong died in Ha Nam province outside Hanoi. ^[45]

September

Police detain religious activist

19 Ho Chi Minh City police detained Tran Vu Anh Binh as he returned home from a funeral at the Mother’s Savior Church in the city. ^[46]

September 21 **Populist Party Member Pham Thi Phuong Sentenced to 11 Years In Prison**

Pham Thi Phuong, a pro-democracy activist, was sentenced to 11 years in prison, charged with “activities aimed at overthrowing the government.” ^[47]

October 9 **Vietnamese Police Continue to Harass Falun Gong Practitioners**

With seven arrests and the breakup of a group activity, police in Ho Chi Minh City continued a campaign of harassment of Falun Gong practitioners instigated by the Chinese regime. ^[48]

October 21 **Vietnam Jails Lands Rights Activists for ‘Propaganda’**

A court in Vietnam sentenced three land rights activists from the same family to up to seven years in jail for spreading anti-government propaganda, according to state media.

Nguyen Ngoc Cuong, 55, received a seven-year prison term while his 25-year-old son, Nguyen Ngoc Tuong Thi, got two years and his daughter-in-law, Pham Thi Bich Chi, received a suspended sentence. The three were known to campaign on behalf of farmers embroiled in land disputes with local authorities, an increasingly contentious issue in Vietnam. ^[49]

November 3 **Attacks continue against Thai Ha Parish**

600 police and local government officials surrounded the Redemptorist parish church, seizing its land. Redemptorist priests and religious were mistreated and threatened.

Communist Party officials broke the cross in Dong Chiem. They poured dirty oil on the statue of Our Mother of Perpetual Help in Thai Ha parish, broke into a church courtyard and desecrated the Eucharist in Hanoi Cathedral. In Thai Ha church, more than a hundred hooligans attacked the Redemptorists and threatened to kill them.

For many members of Thai Ha parish, the authorities “are engaged in dialogue with Redemptorist priests in Thai Ha, whilst using hooligans to

devastate and destroy the parish. They use plainclothes police to break the law. They rely on hooligans to attack the faithful and the clergy so as to avoid criticism from Human Rights Watch and other human rights groups.”^[50]

November 8 Falun Gong Practitioners Detained Over Meditation Protest

At least 30 peaceful Falun Gong demonstrators were beaten and arrested outside the Chinese embassy in Hanoi.

The demonstrators were protesting the trial and mistreatment of two local Falun Gong broadcasters, Vu Duc Trung and Le Van Thanh, who had worked for the movement’s radio station The Sound of Hope.

Vu and Le have been in custody for 17 months and are accused of broadcasting illegally into China. Falun Gong spokespeople allege that the Chinese authorities are pressuring Viet Nam to crack down on the group. Falun Gong is a banned movement in China, where practitioners have been arbitrarily detained, held in psychiatric hospitals and in ‘re-education through labour’ facilities, and sentenced to long prison terms.

Dozens of peaceful political critics and activists have been sentenced to long prison terms since Viet Nam began a crackdown on freedom of expression in October 2009. Critics of a Chinese-backed bauxite mine project have been among the targets.^[51]

November 10 Supreme Court of Vietnam Sentences Two Broadcasters

Vietnam drew scathing criticism from international rights groups for imprisoning two Falun Gong activists who beamed radio broadcasts into China. Le Van Thanh, 36, and his brother-in-law Vu Duc Trung, 31, were sentenced by the Supreme People’s Court of Vietnam to two and three years in prison respectively for “the illegal transmission of information on a telecommunications network” into China, according to Hanoi’s criminal code.

The two men had broadcast Sound of Hope news programs covering human rights abuses, corruption, and the repression of religious groups in China via short-wave from a farm outside of Hanoi since April 2009. They were detained on June 11, 2010 and have remained in custody since, with few family visits.^[52]

**November
11**

Vietnamese Public Security Forces Raided Home, Terrorized Writer and Daughter

Members of the local Public Security Forces (PSF) swarmed the home of writer Huynh Ngoc Tuan. They served him with a search warrant and confiscated computer equipment and accessories, and assorted household goods. According to eyewitnesses, close to 40 members of the PSF and cadres of the Quang Nam Province's Information Office rushed into the house of writer Huynh Ngoc Tuan, delivered the search warrant, and accused him and his two children, Huynh Thuc Vy and Huynh Trong Hieu of violating the "law regulating the transfer of information."

Blogger Huynh Thuc Vi said that "her family considers the raid an act of "terrorism" perpetrated by the PSF. They are doing this because members of my family have written articles on what really happened in Vietnam and criticized the dictatorship. I am now very concerned about the safety of my family."^[53]

**November
13**

Christians Injured in Attack Denied Medical Care

Three Christians seriously injured during a savage attack near Hanoi were evacuated to an undisclosed hospital in Ho Chi Minh City after several hospitals in the region refused to examine and treat them. The attack on a church leaders' worship service of an Agape Baptist Church (ABC) house church left one woman, evangelist Nguyen Thi Lan, which her pelvis broken in two places and with badly damaged internal organs, according to doctors who recommended emergency surgery. Yet previously doctors at three area hospitals had told her and two other seriously injured Christians that they were fine and dismissed them, said Pastor Nguyen Cong Thanh, head of ABC.^[54]

**November
15**

Woman Writer and Activist Pastor Arrested

Writer Ho Thi Bich Khuong, 44, and activist pastor Nguyen Trung Ton, 40, were arrested for "collecting documents and writing articles which tarnished the reputation of the Communist Party and the Socialist regime," according to a report by Nhan Dan, the Communist Party newspaper. They were ultimately sentenced in December (see December 30 for details).^[55]

**November
27**

Bui Thi Minh Hang Sent to 'Education Center' for 2 Years

Police arrested Bui Thi Minh Hang, 47, again outside Notre Dame Cathedral in Ho Chi Minh City for allegedly “causing public disorder.” She was conducting a silent protest against the arrests of peaceful protesters in Hanoi earlier that morning. The next day the police ordered her detained without trial at the “education center.”

Bui Thi Minh Hang is a lands rights activist who recently emerged as a prominent critic of the Chinese government. She participated in Sunday protests against Chinese territorial claims on the Spratly and Paracel islands that took place in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City between June and August. ^[56]

December Catholics Arrested During Land Rally

2

Police in Vietnam’s capital arrested some 20 Catholics and their parish priest as they marched to demand the return of what they say is land belonging to their church. A parishioner who joined the protest said worshippers gathered in the morning and marched around Hoan Kiem lake to the capital’s municipal office.

The group requested that authorities return all of the six-hectare (15-acre) property they say was illegally acquired by the government several years after taking power from the French in 1954. A parishioner stated that they took to the street peacefully, but the government sent police and security guards. He also said that the group of at least 150 parishioners submitted a petition to officials detailing their claims to the government but were confronted by the authorities on their return. Father Nguyen Van Phuong was arrested as well as a number of other parishioners, put in a bus, and sent off. ^[57]

December Vietnamese Blogger Family Harassed

4

Police in Central Vietnam stormed the home of a family of three activist writers and bloggers, Huynh Ngoc Tuan, 48, daughter Huynh Thuc Vy, 26, and son Huynh Trong Hieu, in a case of government intimidation of bloggers and crackdown on online dissent. Huynh Ngoc Tuan previously served 10 years in jail for his calls for freedom and democracy. His children have also expressed criticism of the government online.

A hundred policemen came, fifty of them storming the house, and fifty blocking the road. When Huynh Thuc Vy took out her camera to take a video for evidence, two officers twisted her arms behind her back and two male officers took the camera. They hit her on the arms and legs. The police also arrested her cousin, Huynh Ngoc Le, for trying to stop the police from hitting her. ^[58]

**December
13**

Court Sentences Buddhist Sect Members

Nguyen Van Lia, 71, and Tran Hoai An, two Vietnamese religious activists, were handed prison terms for ‘jeopardizing the state.’ A Vietnamese court sentenced the two activists from a Buddhist sect to prison for distributing “anti-government” materials, according to relatives and state media. They were convicted by the People’s Court of Cho Moi District in An Giang province of “abusing democratic freedoms and jeopardizing the security of the state,” the official Vietnam News Agency reported. Lia will serve five years and An will serve three.

The two are members of the Hoa Hao Buddhist church and were arrested in April after police found books, CDs and DVDs, and documents criticizing the communist Vietnamese government of violating religious freedom, state media said. ^[59]

**December
30**

Vietnam Jails Two Rights Activists for ‘Propaganda’

A woman righter was sentenced to five years in prison in Vietnam for spreading anti-government propaganda, said state media, with an activist pastor also jailed for two years. Ho Thi Bich Khuong, 44, received three years house arrest on top of her five year term, and Nguyen Trung Ton, 40, was given a similar extra penalty of two years, the Communist Party newspaper Nhan Dan reported.

Both had been arrested on November 15 for “collecting documents and writing articles which tarnished the reputation of the Communist Party and the Socialist regime”, according to the report.

Khuong was also accused of giving interviews to foreign radio stations against the state, posting them on the Internet and of belonging to several human rights groups involving “reactionary” people. ^[60]

**Ongoing
2011**

Drug Detention Akin to ‘Labor Camps’

Human Rights Watch urges the Vietnamese government to immediately close all drug detention centres to allow for a thorough investigation into allegations of forced labour and other abuses. They state in a report that the detention centres, which are mandated to treat and rehabilitate inmates, amount to “little more than forced labour camps” where drug users work six days a week manufacturing goods. People detained by the police in Vietnam for using drugs are held without due process for years, forced to work for little or no pay, and are subjected to physical violence

in captivity. The report states that detainees who refused to work, or violated centre rules, were subjected to punishment that sometimes included torture. ^[61]

Ongoing 2011

Repressed Montagnard Christians

The Vietnamese government increased its harassment of peaceful ethnic minority Christians in the Central Highlands, targeting members of unregistered house churches. They are targets of arrests, beatings, and intimidation. ^[62]

Puih Hbat, a Montagnard Christian and mother of four, was taken away screaming by security police and has not been heard from since April 11, 2008. Her “crime” was hosting a prayer service in her home. ^[63]

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Vietnamese Canadian Federation

Suite 1 – 885 Somerset St. West

Ottawa, ON K1R 6R6 Canada

Tel. (613) 230-8282

Fax (613) 230-8281

Email: VCFottawa@gmail.com

Website: www.vietfederation.ca