

TESTIMONY OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN ANH "JOSEPH" CAO

DATE: APRIL 11, 2013

TOPIC: HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM

COMMITTEE/SUBCOMMITTEE: SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HEALTH, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. Chairman,

Basic, universal human rights have served as the basis and foundation of modern societies for over six decades. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights succinctly and rightly states:

All human beings are born equal in dignity and rights. . . .¹

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person²

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.³

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law⁴

Pope John Paul II called this Declaration "one of the highest expressions of the human conscience of our time." Marcello Spatafora, on behalf of the European Union, adamantly stated: "it placed human rights at the [center] of the framework of principles and obligations shaping relations within the international community." Yet, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has for decades defiantly trampled these important principles under its feet proclaiming to the world arrogantly that it is above what is right and decent.

¹ Article 1 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

² Article 3 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

³ Article 5 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁴ Article 7 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Since 2007, Vietnam has been backsliding on human rights and is now the proud possessor of the title “The Worst Violator of Human Rights in Southeast Asia.” Political opposition is outlawed; repression of dissidents intensified; severe restrictions on freedom of expression are imposed; bloggers and peaceful activists are arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. In most cases, national security has been cited as a pretext for the illegal arrests and criminal investigations.

One of the main groups of people who have suffered greatly under Vietnam’s oppression has been the religious faithful and leaders. Vietnam does not hide its strict adherence to the Communist assertion that “religion is the opium of the people,” and they therefore will take any measure, no matter how despicable, to suppress this basic freedom. To defend itself, Vietnam points to its Constitution that explicitly recognizes religious freedom. But like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Vietnam’s government officials and cronies trample on the country’s Constitution replacing it with a policy of intimidation, repression, and torture.

The case of Con Dau Parish succinctly displays Vietnam’s contempt for the rule of law. In May of 2010, the Da Nang City People’s Committee ordered all households of the all-Catholic Con Dau Parish to sell their residential housing to a private developer (Sun Group) for a price that is much lower than market value. As the parishioners rejected the deal both because of the low price and because they want to preserve their 135-year old way of life, the government used force, causing multiple injuries and several deaths. Scores of parishioners were arrested, detained and tortured. The case of Con Dau clearly illustrates Vietnam’s intention of wiping out a religious community through the expropriation of farmland, cemetery plots, and residential homes of all parishioners. On

May 4, 2010, the authorities even prohibited the burial of a 93-year old parishioner in the parish's cemetery. As parishioners proceeded with the funeral, the police attacked them brutally, causing injuries to over a hundred parishioners including the elderly and children. The police arrested 62 parishioners and tortured them for days during detention. The communist militia caught one parishioner who attempted to escape and tortured him to death. Seven of the parishioners identified by the government as taking the lead in opposition to the blanket expropriation of the entire Con Dau Parish were tried and sentenced to prison terms. Other cases of recent arrests and torture are compiled under Exhibit A, which I would like to submit with this testimony for the Subcommittee's review and consideration. I would also like to submit the statement of Rev. Nguyen Van Khai under Exhibit B which succinctly explains Vietnam's position on religious freedom.

The drafters of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights sufficiently appreciates the danger within a society when the basic freedoms of individuals and not recognized and defended. In the Preamble the drafters state: "[D]isregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind" This disregard and contempt for human rights have led to the Holocaust under the Nazi Regime, the Cultural Revolution under Stalin and Mao, and the Killing Fields under Pol Pot when countless millions were tortured and killed for their beliefs. Are we willing to let history repeat itself, or are we willing to do something about it? I ask this Congress to do something about it by passing the Vietnam Human Rights Act and the Vietnam Sanctions Act. We are America, and we understand that these rights and freedoms are of the greatest importance for human flourishing in the modern world.

EXHIBIT A

Recent Incidents of Torture

Compiled by BPSOS

July 28, 2011

(1) Tran Thanh Tien, subjected to torture at Cam Le District Police Station, Da Nang

On May 4, 2010 as the police cracked down on the mourners attending a parishioner's funeral in Con Dau Parish, Tien fled to his uncle's home. The police crashed the fences and broke down the entrance door and captured Tien as well as others who were in hiding in the house. As he was led to the police truck some 500 meters away, every 10 -15 meters Tien was kicked and beaten at his legs by two police officers standing on each side. People dressed in civilian clothes and with their faces covered attacked and beat Tien up. Tien was then handcuffed behind his back and pushed onto the police truck. He was made to lie face down to the truck's floor bed. At the District Police Station, other parishioners and Tien were lined up face against the wall. The police officers took turn to beat the detainees in the chest, sides and legs. Tien was then brought into the investigating room for further torture. He was beaten until unconscious; his interrogators threw water over his face to wake him up. A police officer then beat him in the back with a stack of chairs and broke the chairs. As he refused to admit to false allegations, he was repeatedly called in for interrogation and forced to write a self-incriminating report. A police lieutenant named Thanh handcuffed one of his hands to the upper rim of the interrogation room's window, causing him to stand on his toes. This interrogator used batons, electric rods to beat him. The interrogator said: "I will break you. Look at me well and remember my face in case you want revenge." On another day, a police officer with civilian clothes ordered Tien to undress. Pointing to the bruises on his body, this officer asked what happened. When Tien answered that he was beaten by the police, this officer beat him up badly and screamed: "Which police that beats you? I am a civilian, you bastard. I'll beat you to death!" On the seventh day he succumbed and signed the statement prepared by the police. He was released but ordered to not leave home or seek medical care.

Tien is currently in Bangkok, Thailand.

(2) Nguyen Lieu, subjected to torture at Cam Le District Police Station, Da Nang

On May 4, 2010, for participating in the funeral of a fellow Con Dau parishioner, he was beaten with an electric baton and then taken to the district police station. He was pulled off the truck and ordered to stand face to the wall. A police officer kicked him and punched him on the head. During interrogation he was beaten until he fell unconscious. Each time he passed out, his interrogator poured water over his face and interrogated him again. He was physically assaulted

until he signed a statement admitting to the police's allegation of causing public disturbance and interference with officers on duty. He was released the next day at 10pm. He suffered multiple injuries and could not walk for days but was ordered not to seek medical care.

Lieu is currently in Bangkok, Thailand.

(3) Tran Thanh Lam, subjected to torture at Cam Le District Police Station, Da Nang

On May 4, 2010 he was arrested for participating in the funeral of a Con Dau resident. He was beaten severely on the head and then transported to the county police station. There he was tortured by police officers during the interrogations. They beat him with batons and kicked him in his back, belly and hips. Interrogation sessions sometimes lasted from morning to evening. The interrogators told him to admit guilt and beat him when he did not. They told him to lie down and beat him on his back. He threw up blood and his body was all covered with bruises. He was not allowed a family visit until three months later when he was transferred to a larger prison in Hoa Khanh. During a visit by his wife, he asked her to hire a lawyer. The police did not allow him to hire a lawyer and he was sentenced to 12 months of suspended sentence and 12 months of probation.

(4) Tran Thanh Viet, subjected to torture at District Police Station, Da Nang

On May 4, 2010 he was arrested for participating in the funeral of a Con Dau parishioner. Police officers beat him and dragged him to the transport truck. He was beaten badly along the way and his body was battered. At the police station, he was subjected to further beatings during interrogation sessions. Two police officers stood on each side and one in front of him, recording his statement. They used batons to beat him on the head and body, and kicked his sides and back until he became unconscious. When he regained consciousness, they forced him to sign in a prepared statement to admit guilt that he did not commit such as assaulting the police. As punishment for his refusal to admit guilt, he was placed in solitary confinement in a cell with no light and with poor ventilation for 3 months and 9 days. He was beaten every 2 or 3 days. He was not allowed to hire a lawyer. He was sentenced to 12 months of suspended sentence and 12 months of probation.

(5) Over 60 Con Dau parishioners subjected to torture at Cam Le District Police Station, Da Nang

According to the above eye-witnesses, most of these detainees were subjected to brutal forms of torture including beatings, electric shocks, humiliation (stripped naked and photographed), death threats, among others.

(6) Krajan Phuil, subjected to torture at the local police station in Lang Biang Village, Lam Dong Province

On August 23, 2008, the local police broke into her home and arrested her because she helped fellow parishioners in the Lang Biang Catholic parish to draft petitions against the government confiscation of their land. She was handcuffed and taken to the police station. Accusing her of treason, the police beat her on the head and in her stomach with a baton. She was slapped repeatedly at the face. She was then locked up. For five days she was given only one small bowl of rice per day and was kept incommunicado with her family. On the fifth day, a police officer entered her cell and physically assaulted her. Before she was released, he told her that her life depended on her keeping quiet on what happened during interrogation.

(7) Nguyen Thi Huan, subjected to torture at the detention center of Tay Ho District, Ha Noi

A member of the Dân Oan (*Victims of Social Injustice*) movement, she participated in sit-ins since 2003. In April 2009 she was arrested and on May 17, 2010 sentenced to one year of imprisonment for creating “public disturbance.” On June 9, 2009, the interrogator named Vu The Anh, around 30, hanged Huan to the ceiling and used a slipper to beat her at the face and on the head and body. As he beat her, Anh said: “You want justice? Here is justice.” After several hours, Huan coughed out blood and suffered a broken facial bone. She continues to experience pain in her head and chest.

(8) Do Van Hoang subjected to torture at the Tran Phu Detention Center, Hai Phong

During his ten months of detention (Aug 2007 – Jun 2008) Hoang was repeatedly tortured and forced to admit to being involved in the death of a police officer. As he maintained his innocence, the interrogator crushed his testicles and burnt his genital. Hoang eventually had to sign the declaration of guilt.

(9) Ho Thi Bich Khuong subjected to torture at the K2 Detention Center, Camp 6, Thanh Chuong, Nghe An

A member of the *Victims of Social Injustice* movement, Khuong was arrested and incarcerated on Sep 12, 2008. Three male police officers used batons to beat her on her back, legs, and knees. As she fell down, they stepped on her face with their cleated shoes. She passed out, urinated and suffered internal bleeding, which lasted for ten days. Her legs became so swollen that she could not wear pants. She was denied medical care and medication. She was held in solitary confinement for 8 months.

After her release from prison, Khuong continued to pursue social justice. The evening of June 14, 2010 she was again arrested by the police. At the police station she was beaten on the head and kicked at the face repeatedly throughout the night and was then dumped at a public park the following day. She suffered many bruises and injuries.

(10) K' Theo subjected to torture at police station in Moc Bai, Tay Ninh

A Montagnard in Lam Dong, he signed up to go to Malaysia as a migrant worker. There he suffered severe exploitation. Upon return to his home village in Lam Dong, Vietnam he spoke out about his experience. The public security police took him into custody and beat him up. He later managed to escape to Thailand, where he joined the Vietnam Forum for Democracy. Late last year, the UNHCR rejected both his claims and appeal, and took away his asylum seeker certificate (UNCHR Asylum Seeker Certificate NI – 23249). A UNCHR official told him that since he knew how to come to Thailand from Vietnam, he should be able to find his way home in safety.

As he could not survive and faced the constant risk of being caught by the Thai police, he decided to return to Vietnam in late 2010. He called home to Lam Dong and asked his sister to pick him up at the bus station in HCM City. On December 10, 2010 he left for Vietnam. His sister showed up at the bus station but could not find him. His father contacted the police in Lam Dong but was not given any information of his whereabouts. Later on his family learned from a news article in a government publication that he had been arrested and taken into custody by the police.

It turned out that he was captured by the Vietnamese public security police at Moc Bai, Tay Ninh, along with another Montagnard, K' Khiep. The police accused him of escaping Vietnam to join the reactionaries in opposing the government. He was interrogated almost every day and was tortured during interrogation. His interrogators beat him in the face, on his head, and all over

his body, using with whatever available in the room, including furniture. He suffered many bleeding injuries.

They forced him to admit to all of those accusations. He was injured both inside and on his body due to the beatings but was not given access to medical treatment. During the 6 months in detention, he was held incommunicado from his family; they did not know his whereabouts.

On June 14, 2011 he was released without any given reason. The police warned him against any attempt to escape again or involvement in activities to oppose the government. They ordered him to pay the police 3.5 million Vietnamese dong for the expenses of detaining him. As he had no money, the police put that down as a debt that he had to pay later.

He now has to report to the local police station every day. He cannot find work to earn a living. He has to depend on his family to survive. He is in poor health and still suffers from the injuries inflicted while in detention.

He reported that K' Khiep was similarly tortured while in detention.

(11) Krajan K' Khiep subjected to torture at police station in Moc Bai, Tay Ninh

UNHCR Asylum Seeker Certificate NI – 23250

A Montagnard, he also worked in Malaysia. Back at his home village in Lam Dong, Viet Nam he was apprehended by the police after he had shared his experience of being exploited in Malaysia with other villagers. He was reportedly beaten by the police during interrogation. He managed to escape to Thailand, where he joined the Vietnam Forum for Democracy. His claims for refugee protection were denied by the UNHCR. He returned to Vietnam on December 15, 2010 and has reportedly been held in detention by the public security police. He was reportedly tortured almost on a daily basis during interrogation.

Address in Vietnam: Thôn Păng Tiêng , Xã Lat, Huyện Lạc Dương, Tỉnh Lâm Đồng
His wife's phone has been confiscated by the public security police.

Nguyen Thi The, subjected to torture at police station in Cam Le, Da Nang

PA Date and Place of Birth: 1960. Con Dau Village, Hoa Xuan Ward, Cam Le District, Da Nang City, Vietnam

She is a member of the Catholic Parish of Con Dau, Da Nang. She was very active in the parish, being a member of the church's choir and volunteering for many other activities, especially with the parish's women organization.

When the government of Da Nang announced its plan to practically disperse the Con Dau parish, which has had 135 years of history, she was vocal against the government's policy and kept the parishioners unified in the defense of their parish's integrity.

She attended the funeral of Mrs. Dang Thi Tan on May 4, 2010 and was one of the women who protected the coffin from being taken away by the police. She was beaten and arrested along with more than 60 other parishioners from Con Dau during the police crackdown. The police dragged her to the police truck about 500 meters away, handcuffed her and started beating her mercilessly with batons and electric rods before throwing her on the truck bed and drove her and other parishioners to the Cam Le Police Station.

At the police station, she was hung to the ceiling beam of the investigating room. The police stripped her naked and took turn to beat her on her chest and stomach. They applied electric shocks to her vagina until she went unconscious.

They ordered her to admit to motivating people to oppose the government's policy and to attack the police during the funeral. She was forced to sign a self-incriminating statement while she was in great pain and only half conscious.

After more than 6 months of detention, on October 27, 2010 at the county court of Cam Le, she was sentenced to 12 months of house arrest followed by 12 months of probation.

She filed an appeal to the City of Da Nang Court of Appeal pleading for her innocence and was called to the Court January 26, 2011. She pleaded not guilty for all of the charges against her, but the court still kept the same sentence as the lower court.

She was released in May 2011 and is now living under house arrest. She may not travel outside of the village without police permission. She has heart problem and becomes fearful every time the police visits her house.

The police constantly monitor her movement and her contacts. They instructed her not to speak to anyone about the police beatings and torture. The police threatened to throw her in jail again if she fails to cooperate with the police and report suspicious activities at the church or by other members of the parish.

SUMMARY OF TORTURE ACCOUNTS (ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THAILAND/MALAYSIA)

(Any publication or public use of the accounts summarized below require the consent of the asylum seekers. Please inform BPSOS if there is any intention of such use.)

1. Le Thanh Lam, Con Dau Parishioner

He was among the hundreds of mourners at the funeral of Mrs. Maria Dang Thi Tan on May 4, 2010. The police assaulted the mourners and he was among those beaten up. He suffered injuries to his head. The police handcuffed him and took him to the police van. On the way the police kicked him on his thighs. He could no longer walk and fell to the ground. The police dragged him to the van, which was about 500 m away, and threw him on the floor bed. He was taken to the police station of Cam Le District.

At the police station, another round of beatings would soon start. Unable to walk, he was dragged up the stairs to the interrogation room. The police started interrogating him, beating him savagely. He was ordered to write a report on those who had incited him to attend the funeral. The police accused him of opposing the government. He explained that no one incited him; he attended the funeral out of a sense of duty among parishioners. There were three interrogators. One of them pulled his belt out and flogged me on the face. Another kicked him all over the body and used a stick to beat him from the head down. He bled all over his body, which became swollen. When he passed out, they poured cold water on his face to wake him up and then proceeded to beat him again till 9pm. They then took him downstairs and locked him up in a cell by himself. They did not feed him.

The following morning, another three interrogators resumed the interrogation. They asked him questions while beating him repeatedly. For every question that he did not answer as they wanted, they punched him in the face and chest. They forced him to denounce the inciters. In reality there was none; he only acted according to his religious faith and the bond among neighbors. They did not accept that as truth. They told him: "We will beat you up so that you'd live for only 5 years at most." The police tortured him for 9 straight days from 8 am to 8 pm. There were days they suddenly pulled him out of his cell at 9pm for interrogation and beating. That happened three times.

His interrogators did not wear uniform. They insisted that he signed a pre-written document that he was not allowed to read. As he refused to sign it, his interrogators threatened that they would arrest his sister and other siblings and torture them similarly. On the 10th day, he signed the document although he knew that he had not committed any crime. After he signed it, the interrogators told him: "Now that you admitted to your crimes, you should not expect to see the sun again. We will lock you up till you die rotten."

The police then transferred him to the detention center of Cam Le District. It was around 9pm. As soon as he arrived, the wardens there stripped him naked and started to flog him using their belts. He was then put in solitary confinement in a small cell that was pitch dark and filthy. He was given only one bowl of rice with boiled vegetables and salt water. After 9 days, he was transferred to a cell for prisoners with AIDS. After another 9 days, he had to sign a document accepting his temporary detention for two months and 21 days. Every few days he was taken out by the wardens for severe beating for no reason, 3-4 times per week.

There were days he coughed out blood because of the beating. His body was all black and blue. He was not allowed prison visit by loved ones. On August 13, 2010, the authorities transferred him to the detention center in Hoa Son, which is a big detention center in Da Nang City. There was no more beating. He was allowed family visit once every two weeks.

2. Tran Thanh Viet, Con Dau Parishioner

Around 5 a.m. on May 4, 2010, he attended the funeral service of Mrs. Maria Dang Thi Tan in Con Dau. At around 6 a.m., the funeral service finished and the procession to the cemetery began. When he and the other parishioners arrived at the junction of the cemetery, the police force blocked them. They tried to seize the coffin. They used clubs, batons, and electric rods to ruthlessly beat the parishioners. Along with others, he tried to protect the coffin as best they could, to keep the police force from seizing the coffin. The two sides pulled the coffin back and forth, fighting for the coffin for about an hour before they let down. Then, the parishioners continued to pray until about 11 a.m. After they finished praying, he went back home to his parents' house where he and his wife also lived. At around 1 p.m., the police force had gathered in large number, fired shots and beaten people ruthlessly. During this time, they had seized the coffin of Mrs. Maria Dang Thi Tan and taken it away. They forcefully entered his parents' home and destroyed things in the house, destroyed their altar. At the time, there were over 50 people in his parents' home, and they were all arrested. The police beat them and accused he and his family of inciting the parishioners to protest the government and engage in anti-government activities. They used electric rods and batons to beat him from his head down to the rest of his body. They kicked him in the stomach and hip/side with their hard-soled shoes. He became unconscious. They handcuffed him, and four policemen dragged him on the floor while still beating him. They dragged him about 500 meters to the police car that was already waiting there. They carried him off the ground and threw him into the car. They took him back to the police station of Cam Le district around 3 a.m.

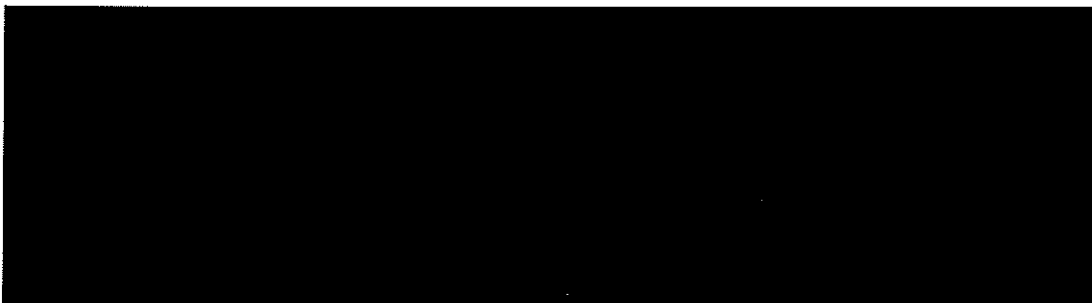
The police led him up to the second floor of the station. By now, he did not have the strength to walk on his own, but they continued to drag him along and beat him as they pulled him along. They stepped on his two feet which made him fall down on my knees. They told him that he had to walk even if he could not. During his interrogation, there were three policemen. One sat across from him writing down what he was saying. The other two people stood on each side and continuously beat him with clubs and batons from his head down to the rest of his body. They kicked his hip/side and stomach with hard-soled shoes, knocking him unconscious for 10 to 15

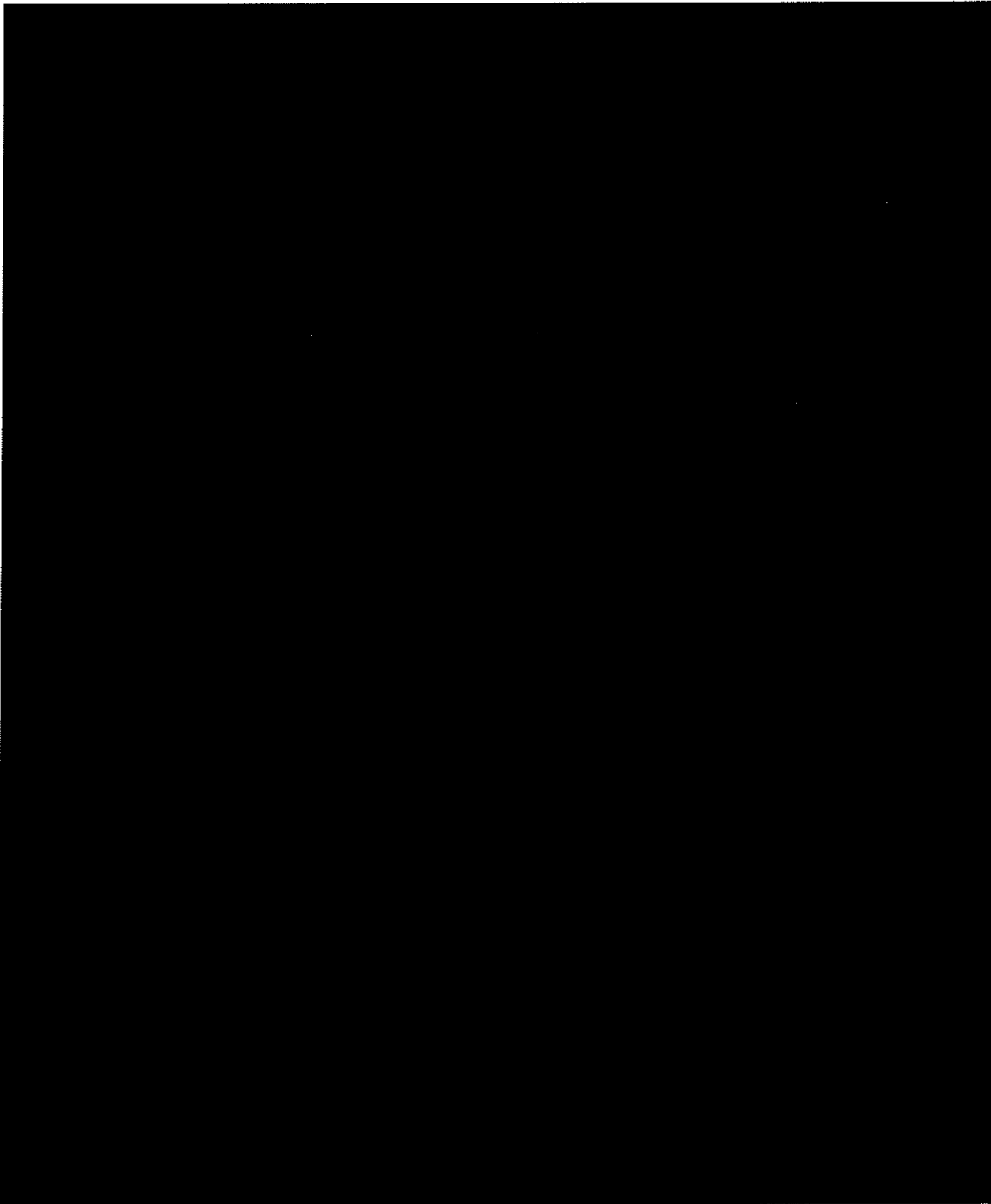
minutes. When he came around, they continued to beat him and punched him in the face with their fists so hard, his nose started bleeding and there was a puddle of blood in front of them. However, they still continued to beat him. They forced him to admit the charge of working with people outside the country to organize and incite protest against the government. They accused him of accepting all this money overseas to organize and incite protest inside the country. They told him that "if you do not admit to these charges, we will beat you to death." They said that they will also arrest his father because his family has supported and incited the parishioners to protest the government. At 7 p.m. that evening, they took him to the police post and detained him there until the next morning.

On the morning of May 5, 2010, the police continued to interrogate him. This time, there were two policemen. One policeman was writing down what he was saying and the other was standing beside him while his hands were handcuffed to the chair. They used an electric rod on his neck, and a club and baton to beat the rest of his body. They continued to use their boots to kick him in the hip/side and stomach. They just continued to beat him and took turns beating him. When the two policemen were tired from beating him, there would be two other policemen to take their place and continue to beat him.

Around 8 p.m. on May 5, 2010, they transferred him to a prison cell. The room was no bigger than 10 square meters and unbearably hot. There was no sunlight or fresh air. It was suffocating. It smelled of rotten things. He was locked up in this room for 3 months, 9 days. During the first week he was imprisoned, they continued to take him into the interrogation room for 5 to 10 hours a day. There were times the police pulled him out and took him to the interrogation room at 9 p.m. During the first week, they tortured him and ruthlessly beat him until he was bloody, black and blue. During the 3 months and 9 days he was detained at the prison in Cam Lo District, they only gave him one bowl of rice with 2 to 3 drops of salt. Every two to three days, the police would come in and beat him. They used clubs and batons to beat him, and they would use their boots to kick him in the hip/side and stomach. During the 3 months and 9 days, his mental state was destroyed, and he kept thinking that he was going to die in jail.

After 3 months and 9 days, they transferred him to the prison in Hoa Son where he was detained until he went to trial.





4. K'Theo, Vietnamese Montagnard from Lam Dong, member of pro-democracy group

After being rejected by UNHCR and told that he would be okay if he returned to Vietnam, he decided to return to Vietnam. The first time in or around August or September 2010 he tried to return, he went with four other people, and was arrested in Cambodia. They searched his bag and found some documents. He said he was Thai so they deported me back to Thailand.

The second time (around December 2010), he went back to Viet Nam by myself. He was at the border by Tay Ninh and was arrested there because he believes they knew he was a member of a reactionary organization. He was on a tour bus, but at the Cambodian-VN border, he was asked to get down. The border police remembered him from before and searched his bag. Also, present were Vietnamese police. The arrest had been a joint operation between the Vietnamese and Cambodian police. He found out about this after the second arrest when the Vietnamese police showed him evidence of his first arrest by the Cambodian police.

After his arrest at the VN border, the VN police asked him why he was bringing leaflets from his reactionary organization and recruitment papers. He was locked up in a cell at Moc Bai near the border for nine days and interrogated. They asked him if he wanted to overthrow the government, if he intentionally went against the government? He said he didn't do anything wrong, and they started to beat him. They tied him to the bars on a window by his arms so his feet did not touch the ground. They used their fists at first, and then they tied some cloth around their hands and then they hit him. They used electric shocks and shocked his penis. They wanted him to cooperate with them to arrest the others in his organization. But he refused. This all occurred during the first day of his arrest.

On the tenth day, he taken to B4, Tay Ninh Prison and detained there for about six months. He was held in a cell that was three cubic meters with two other individuals. They beatings continued for about six months. Once, they used a pen and put it between my fingers and crushed the two fingers and turned the pen while his fingers were tightly pushed together. If he didn't answer when they asked him questions, they would beat him. They used a small knife to cut his finger. Sometimes they used a wooden stick to hit his ankles, sometimes they used their feet to kick his ankles. This occurred while he was still being hung on the bars of the window. Every time, there would be a "working session," they would hang him up. This occurred about three to four times a week.

In the daytime they hurt him so badly, he screamed loudly so others could hear. They decided to interrogate him in the evening, so they would transport him to the police station every evening. The evening working sessions were a lot worse. At the police station, they would have him stand in water and then shock him. They shocked him about twice a day, especially when he refused to cooperate.

During the sixth months, they also drew blood from him with a big syringe. Each time, the big syringe was filled with blood. He doesn't know why. This happened three times. The nurse

was a female police officer. When he went home, he was nearly drained of blood and had to go to the doctor.

His food ration was rice and salt and vegetables that had caterpillars in there.

In the sixth month they told him, you either confess or we'll kill you - you have to help yourself. He managed to make a deal with them to help them arrest two individuals as a condition to his release. He was released after six months (June 2011) even though they sentenced him to eight months. (He never went to trial, but there's a document that says he had a term of temporary detention for eight months.)

5. Duong Hong Tham, Former Boat Person Returnee and Member of Pro-Democracy Group

Upon being forcibly repatriated to Vietnam, he was under house arrest and under constant surveillance by the Vietnamese police and required to report regularly. Thereafter, he was called in for interrogations on several occasions. Two of the most gruesome experiences took place in 2006 and 2007 when he was interrogated by the Ho Chi Minh City police at 237 Nguyen Van Cu Street, District 1.

September 2006

On September 17, 2006, he received a phone call from the Ho Chi Minh City police requesting him to report to 237 Nguyen Van Cu Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City for something that involved him. On the morning of September 17, 2006, he came to 237 Nguyen Van Cu Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City. It was around 9 a.m. when I went to the office. Initially, one uniformed policeman brought me in where there was another uniformed officer waiting for me. A few minutes later 3 uniformed officers arrived and some time later 5 individuals in civilian clothing also came in. They started talking to each other about him: "Is this guy part of the reactionary group?" and the person standing next to him nodded his head. They pointed to a chair and asked him to sit down. An officer sitting across from him asked: "Do you know why we asked you to come here?" He said no.

The officer continued: "You are pretending; how do you not know?" He responded: "You asked me to come here and I came. I do not know anything." The policeman said: "I will let you know." An older policeman said, "Stop. Let's work." At this time, the office only had 3 policemen. The officer sitting across from him took out some paperwork and told him, "From this moment, if you need to leave the office you must ask. And now we are going to ask you questions and you must answer truthfully, who are part of your group? Who is the head of the reactionary group _____? What is his name? Where does he live? How many people are there? Where do you meet? You work together to oppose the government and distort the

party's policy. If you do not answer truthfully you will be imprisoned indefinitely; therefore, you must answer truthfully in order to receive clemency from the Party and the government. "

They asked him about his friends from the refugee camp in Thailand and what they were doing. He said he didn't know. Suddenly from behind him there were several punches to his neck, his chest, and his stomach. He fell out of his chair and someone in a white polo shirt pulled him up and sat him in the chair.

Police: "You must truthfully confess, who did you collude with to oppose the government? If you do not answer clearly then you must face severe consequences." "Where did you meet them the last time? When? What are your responsibilities? Who is the head of the group?"

He answered: "After my repatriation my focus was on working and I did not meet them." He was pulled out of the chair; the individual in civilian clothing repeatedly kicked him. They said, "You are hard-headed, trying to shelter your associates, you must tell the truth in order to stop this investigation." Then, there was a loud voice coming outside of the door that said: "If he doesn't want to confess, then take him away."

He followed the plainclothes policemen. He walked down the hallway with someone walking behind him the whole time. They turned on the light, and he saw a metal door. The person in front unlocked the door and motioned for him to enter. Once he was inside, they began to beat him - they used their hands, their feet and rubber sticks. He was beaten until he became unconscious. When he regained consciousness, he was parched. His feet were chained to a metal stick. It was completely dark, and he had no idea what time it was.

A few hours later, the light was turned on. He heard the door being opened and 2 individuals holding batons in their hands shouted: "Are you willing to inform us about your co-conspirators? What were you being stubborn? You dared to do it but are not willing to admit it! I will let you rot here." He was frightened. "Please release me. I do not dare to go against anything." They said "Fuck you. You continue to deny it? There's evidence and you still persist." They uncuffed him and brought me outside. He asked to use the toilet and they waited outside while he was using the toilet. They then brought him back to the room where there was someone there waiting. The policeman asked: "Are you ready to answer now? We do not want to bother you, we only need you to give us information and confess. Then you will receive amnesty from the Party and from the government." He was silent. He said he was thirsty and hungry and had a headache. He was also dizzy because of high blood pressure.

The police said: "If you answer truthfully then we will give you what you need. Of all the people that we asked you about, you do not know a single person?" He said he only know them when they were in a refugee camp in Thailand.

The questioning continued . Then, he was brought to the old room, and they did not give him food. He could not walk so he sat on the floor and rested his feet on the metal bar. Sometime later, they brought him a box of food and bottled water. They said: "Eat and then tell us all that you know and you will receive amnesty. You are suffering because you oppose us, and this implicates your family too." He said: "I do not oppose to anything. If you feel that I have committed a crime, then please take me to court."

Police: "Do not challenge us. We have enough evidence to convict you." He was silent.

The police left and did not say anything else. The room was quiet. Then, the door to a nearby room was opened. He heard punching, kicking and falling noises. There was also crying. He imagined being tortured, and his heart began racing. He was shaking.

The police took me out at random times, during the day and night. They intentionally made him stressed and panicky in order for him to confess.

In the morning of September 26, 2006, I was called to the office "to work."

The police said: "Due to the humanity of the Party and the country, we are letting you go home to think about who your friends are. What are they doing? Where do they live? Especially those who belong to _____ Group and the former refugees from Thailand. Before you leave, you must write an affidavit stating that we have not worked with the police in the past few days, you were not investigated or detained by the police. Do not disclose this with anyone, including your wife and children. Once you are done with the affidavit then we will temporarily release you to return home to think carefully. When we call you for you then you must report to the station immediately. You cannot miss showing up for any reason."

He went home and his wife took me to Ba Ria Hospital because of the multiple injuries inflicted by the beatings, in addition to his heart problems and high blood pressure. He was discharged after more than 2 weeks.

March 2007

On March 7, 2007, he received a phone call from the city police to report at 237 Nguyen Van Cu Street. As soon as he set foot into the old room, he noticed there were several officers there, some with and some without their uniforms. From behind, a hand pushed him inside the room. He heard a shout: "It's you again. This time you cannot deny anything!"

They again interrogated him about his associations and the people he knew from the refugee camp in Thailand. He again denied everything.

The plainclothes policeman took him to the cell. They handcuffed him in the back, and his feet were cuffed to a long metal bar. At first he was in pain, then his body was stiff, and afterwards, he did not feel anything. When a policeman uncuffed his hands, they felt like pieces of wood. He

did not feel his hands or his body. They gave him water. When he became conscious, his feet were still bound. Periodically, they would give him some rice in a plastic bag and a small bottle of water.

On March 16, 2007, the police took him "to work." He was sitting across from the police investigator and suddenly fell out of his chair. He sat on the floor to regroup and awhile later 2 plainclothes policemen brought in a stack of paperwork. The police gave him a pen and paper and told him to write an affidavit not to disclose the fact that he was detained by the police, including the interrogation. After he finished writing and handed the affidavit to the officer, they let him go home but warned him that he would have to cooperate with them.

When he got home he had difficulty breathing, and his family had to buy medication for him. This time, the beatings were worse than the other times. When his family inquired about his injuries, he had to lie to them and tell them he was in a car accident.

April 2007

On April 23, 2007, the Ba Ria-Vung Tau Police summoned him. On the morning of the 23rd, he did not make it to the station yet before 2 police from the Phuoc Hoi Village Police came to his house to take him. They took him to Dat Do District. He was taken to the 1st floor. There were many policemen seated at the table measuring about 2 meters. He was seated. About 6 policemen interrogated him. There were also plainclothes individuals walking around the table, sometimes injecting questions. They again asked him about the reactionary group, the people in the refugee camp in Thailand and certain individuals he worked with as well as members and leaders of other reactionary groups. They tried to lure him to confess by telling him that other members of his group already revealed his work to them.

They took out a stack of hand-written documents, and together with the list, they set everything in front of him. The two policemen behind him kicked and punched him. He fell into a corner. An older officer from the North said to put him in a cell. They handcuffed him and took him to the cell. His feet were chained tightly to a metal stick, his hands were cuffed in front of him, blood poured from his mouth soaking his shirt. In the dark, he could smell the stench, and he laid on his back. Awhile later, the door opened and two people uncuffed him. They told him to go out. The starless sky was black. His body felt like being cut by knives. He followed the police and in front of them, there was a plainclothes individual walking towards them with a flashlight.

The plainclothes policeman said: "Ask if he's willing to talk and if he's stubborn then initiate the paperwork to put him in jail."

They took him into a lighted room and told him to sit down. The police sitting across from him slammed on the table and said: "Who are your co-conspirators? What do they do? Where do they live? Who is in charge? When did you begin to conspire against the government? Who is the instigator? Which overseas reactionary group support and recruit you all? Report everything truthfully." They gave him a pen and paper and told him to write.

He said "I don't know anything. If you have proof then just put me in jail and don't hit me anymore." The police said: "The government is very stern when it comes to the reactionary individuals like you and your cronies. You must answer truthfully in order to receive amnesty from the Party and the government."

Before they left they told him to think and then inform them about "What do the people in your group do? Their titles? Who's the person in charge? Where did you receive the reactionary materials from? You must report everything in details." The two policemen left the room. He was in the room by himself, hungry and thirsty. His body ached but he did not dare to get up because he was afraid that they would frame and charge him with another crime.

Two hours later nearing dawn, an officer came to the room and asked if he was done. He said "I do not know anything. How can you ask me to report?"

The policeman said: "You continue to be stubborn? Go." They brought him to the cell located across from the old cell. They pushed him inside. This time they only chained his feet. He asked for water and they said "you can drink after you answer truthfully."

In a dreamlike state, he heard the door open and an officer brought in a bag of food and a bottle of water. The policeman said: "Eat and then answer truthfully. Confess your crimes and promise not to commit a crime again then you will receive amnesty. Why be in the opposition to suffer." Then he locked the door and left.

Twice in the daytime, and once in nighttime, the police brought him out to write an affidavit and at each time he said he didn't know anything. They handcuffed him in the back, chained his feet to a metal bar, did not feed him, and he released himself on the spot. His entire body was numbed, and he wanted to die but did not know how.

On July 14, 2007, the police called him in to their office, and they gave him a shirt to wear.

The police said: "You are receiving amnesty from the Party and the Government. This is your first incident. We are temporarily releasing you to think. When you receive a summon you must report at the station. When you go home, if you leave the area then you must inform the government. If there's someone new coming to your house or if your friends urge you to go incite destruction then you must report to us for amnesty. Now write an affidavit stating that you will not divulge to anyone, including your wife and children, about this temporary detention."

After writing the affidavit, he was allowed to go home.

October 2009

In October 2009, the Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province Police issued a summon for him to report at the station. After he arrived, they took him to an empty room, it was not a cell, and they pushed him inside. They said: "Stay in there and think long and hard about the time when you met up with _____, _____ when they were just released from jail. You all continued to work against the revolutionary government; you must must inform us of all of your activities and confess your crimes in order to receive clemency from the party and the government. This country is being governed by the Communist Party and when you oppose the management and policy of the Party then you violate the law and we will arrest all of you."

He replied: "I do not oppose you. I have told you numerous times, they are my friends from refugee camp in Thailand."

Police: "If you intentionally conceal information from us then do not blame why the government is harsh. Are you willing to provide information now?" I responded that I can not report anything to them because I do not have any information to give.

They then took him to a cell. Two plainclothes individuals kicked him with hard-soled shoes. They chained his feet to a metal stick, cuffed my hands in the back, and closed the door.

The next they uncuffed him and took me out of the room. They let him use the toilet and brought him back up to the room and continued the investigation. They produced paper and pen and told him to write an affidavit about who him conspired with to go against the government. He stayed at the interrogation room the entire morning and did not write anything. After several hours, they finally released him and made him write an affidavit that he would not disclose the working session to anyone.

6. Cil Dung, Vietnamese Montagnard from Lam Dong

His son was a victim of labor trafficking. Upon his son's return to Vietnam from Malaysia, his son become vocal in protesting the government and joined a pro-democracy group. His son was beat and detained by the government several times so he went into hiding in Saigon. After a close colleague was arrested, his son had to escape Vietnam to seek asylum in Thailand in 2008.

After his son left in 2008, the government did not leave his family alone. They continually monitored and interrogated his family and him about his son and accused him of working with his son to "create public disorder" with the intention to subvert the Vietnamese government.

Many times, the police came to his house to interrogate and arrest me. Those times, he refused to go with them, they caused physical damage to his home.

On February 5, 2011, the Ward police came to his home and arrested him arbitrarily. He was locked up in a dark, cold cell and was barely fed. They pulled him out of his cell to be interrogated sometimes twice a week and sometimes 5 or six times a month. He was often beat while in detention especially when he did not answer their questions even though he truthfully did not know the answers. While detained, they tortured used a Taser gun and electric baton to torture him; as a result, his left hand is disabled and he now experiences blurriness of vision. They detained him for four months without ever formally charging him or allowing him to go to trial.

On June 1, 2011, they made him write a confession statement admitting the charges they made against him. But he continued to deny the charges and also told them that he was illiterate and can only speak Vietnamese. They then read him a confession statement that they wrote, and he was forced to sign it admitting to the charges against him. At that point, he was so exhausted so he just signed the statement. Then, he was finally released on June 2, 2011.

On June 14, 2011, the Ward police came to his house. He was not at home at the time. His youngest son, Krajan Bloan, was sleeping in the house. The police started making a lot of noise and hitting the house. Bloan woke up and open the door. They immediately started beating him. Then, they handcuffed Bloan and asked him where his father went. Bloan said he didn't know. They dragged him over to their car, and Bloan refused to get in. So, they kicked him making him fall and hit his head against the car door. They started to beat him ruthlessly, and he lost consciousness. Bloan came to the next morning and found stitches on his head. He could not move his arm because his collarbone was displaced from the beating. Bloan has stitches and scars on his head. He has visited hospitals in Bangkok to be treated.

7. Nguyen Duc Vinh, Former Boat Person Returnee and Member of Pro-Democracy Group

He is one of the founding members of a pro-democracy group formed primarily by former boat people returnees from Sikiew camp in Thailand. Beginning in 2010, the Vietnamese government cracked down on members in his organizations and related organizations. On August 24, 2010, he was served with a formal written request to report to Police Force PA38 Protection Unit of Dong Nai province. He was out of town in Lam Dong province at the time, partly to work and partly because he knew that the police in Dong Nai were started going after him. The police who served the summons ordered his wife and kids that they had to tell him to come home and report to the Interrogation Unit on August 31, 2010 otherwise they would issue a criminal order to hunt him down.

On August 31, 2010, he had to return to Bien Hoa and report to the Police Force PA38 Protection Unit of Dong Nai Province. There, he met up with a policeman named Nguyen Thanh Long (he

is not sure of his ranking/title) and two other younger policemen in plainclothes, one of whom was named Tan. Mr. Long gave him a list and a picture and asked him about each person on the list and in the picture. He asked him the same questions as in the past such as: "Where did you meet this person? How do you know this person? What is their address and telephone number? After release from prison, when did you meet this person? Where was the last place you met this person? What did they say? What documents did they give you? They reported that they delivered documents to you, that you met with this person, that person at this place or that place... You have to report to the truth to enjoy leniency from the government. This person already reported everything about you, we know everything...if you are stubborn and conceal the truth we will imprison you indefinitely..." He just answered: "They are friends from the refugee camp in Thailand! I have to worry about making a living. I did not meet with them, I don't know them, I don't know anything about this..." Suddenly, from behind, the two young plainclothes policemen punched him in the hip causing him to fall to the ground, as they yelled: "You are a reactionary but you keep speaking this rhetoric, we have clear evidence but you keep saying you don't know anything. All the while, all your friends are fierce reactionaries. Let's just beat him mercilessly and throw him in prison!" One person lifted him up and the other person punched him in the stomach twice. Suddenly a voice from outside said loudly: "Don't hit him anymore. He is not a criminal! Take him to the room downstairs." The two plainclothes policemen handcuffed him and took him to a dark room with no sunlight. A moment later, he was able to see old furniture in the room. They shouted at him: "We have enough evidence. The people in your group reported everything to us. If you are smart, you should admit it and we will reduce your crime/punishment. If you keep denying it, we will beat you to death and put your skeleton in prison! You decide!" Then they locked the door and left him in the room and did not feed him or give him any water. That night, he was handcuffed and slept on the ground.

During the night, they came to wake him 4 times and interrogated him, asking him the same questions. After each time, he would have to write a statement for a total of four statements. Each time, he wrote the same thing – that these people were friends from the refugee camp and they help each other earn a living; that he didn't know what they do; that he did not know the other people.

The following day in the afternoon, they brought in a bag of rice and a glass of water and took off his handcuffs. They told him: "Eat the rice and then report everything to us truthfully. We will then release you. Don't be foolish. The people in your group already reported everything to us. If you deny everything, you will just be punished more heavily! If you report truthfully, the government will be lenient with you." After he finished eating, they led him upstairs to the room he was in the day before. They continued to interrogate him. They then made him write a statement, and he wrote exactly what he had told them. They made him write an affidavit pledging that he would not tell anyone about what they investigated him about, including his wife and children. In the end, they told him: "We will let you go home for now so you can

think more about this! When we call you, you will have to report to us immediately.” They released him.

Khoảng 10 giờ ngày 15/3/2010 khi anh Vũ Hoàng Quang đang trong lớp học môn Toán Cao cấp (địa điểm trường Trung cấp dạy nghề số 10 – Bộ Quốc phòng tại số 101 Tô Vĩnh Diện, Quận Thanh Xuân – Thành phố Hà Nội) đã bị một nhóm người đi xe biển số xanh vào bắt đi trước sự chứng kiến của giáo viên và sinh viên trong lớp. Anh bị trói tay chân, bịt mắt và đẩy lên xe bị kín đưa đi đến một nơi bịt mắt. Theo lời anh Quang kể lại, sau khi được đưa đến một nơi bịt mắt, anh bị đánh phủ đầu vào gáy, vào mặt bằng dùi cui và ép buộc anh ký vào bản viết sẵn có nội dung như sau:

- Công giáo là phân động, làm bất ổn anh ninh xã hội.
- Công giáo tổ chức gây bạo động trong xã hội
- Công giáo luôn đấu tranh phản đối chính quyền.

Anh Quang đã không chấp nhận ký vào những điều áp đặt và bị tra tấn liên tục suốt cả đêm qua.

Đến 9 giờ sáng nay, ngày 16/3/2010, nhóm người đó bịt mắt và đưa anh Quang lên ô tô vượt ra cánh đồng thuộc Huyện Gia Lâm. Anh đã tự mò vào làng nhờ người đưa về bệnh viện.

Rõ ràng, hành động này đã được sự tiếp tay của nhà trường cho nhóm người này lòng hành bắt bớ, đánh đập sinh viên công giáo ngay trong trường Đại học.

Đây là một hành động trái pháp luật, khi bắt giữ người không đúng trình tự quy định của pháp luật hiện hành. Việc đánh đập tàn nhẫn nạn nhân và thả người bị đánh trong thương ra giữa cánh đồng là hành động vô nhân đạo.

Trước đó, anh Quang đã bị Công an nhiều lần sách nhiễu và gọi đi làm việc vì anh là người Công giáo. Anh đã nhiều lần phản đối sự thỏa mạ và xuyên tạc tôn giáo trong quá trình giảng dạy của nhà trường tại đây.

Trước những hành động trắng trợn hành hung đánh đập sinh viên Công giáo có tính chất khủng bố này, Cộng đoàn Vinh tại Hà Nội tuyên cáo các điểm sau:

- Cục lực phản đối sự phân biệt đối xử, kỳ thị tôn giáo trong các trường đại học ở Việt Nam nói chung và ở Học viện Tài chính Hà Nội nói riêng.
- Học viện Tài Chính phải chịu trách nhiệm trước việc bảo vệ an ninh của từng thành viên là sinh viên trong trường. Việc nhà trường đã tiếp tay cho nhóm người không rõ tung tích ngang nhiên vào khủng bố, bắt bớ đánh đập sinh viên trước sự chứng kiến của thầy giáo, sinh viên trong trường và bắt người trái phép là điều không thể chấp nhận được.
- Cộng đoàn Vinh tại Hà Nội yêu cầu Học viện Tài chính trả lời rõ ràng: Ai đã trực tiếp bắt bớ, đánh đập sinh viên Vũ Hoàng Quang ngày 15/3/2010 và ai chịu trách nhiệm trước pháp luật về vấn đề này.
- Trước mắt, Học viện Tài chính phải chịu trách nhiệm trong việc chăm sóc điều trị cho anh Vũ Hoàng Quang và yêu cầu cơ quan pháp luật điều tra làm rõ về hành động trái pháp luật này.
- Tố cáo trước cộng đồng quốc tế về hành động bắt giữ người trái pháp luật nhằm khủng bố các cá nhân dám chứng minh đức tin của mình. Phải chăng đây là sự kỳ thị phân biệt tôn giáo đã và đang xảy ra trầm trọng trong các trường đại học và hệ thống giáo dục Việt Nam hiện nay?
- Cộng đoàn Vinh tại Hà Nội khẳng định sự ủng hộ và nâng đỡ, đoàn kết với từng thành viên trong cộng đoàn trên cơ sở Sự thật – Công lý – lẽ phải và đúng pháp luật.

Xin mọi người cầu nguyện cho sinh viên Mathia Vũ Hoàng Quang trong lúc khó khăn hiện nay.

Hà Nội ngày 16/3/2010

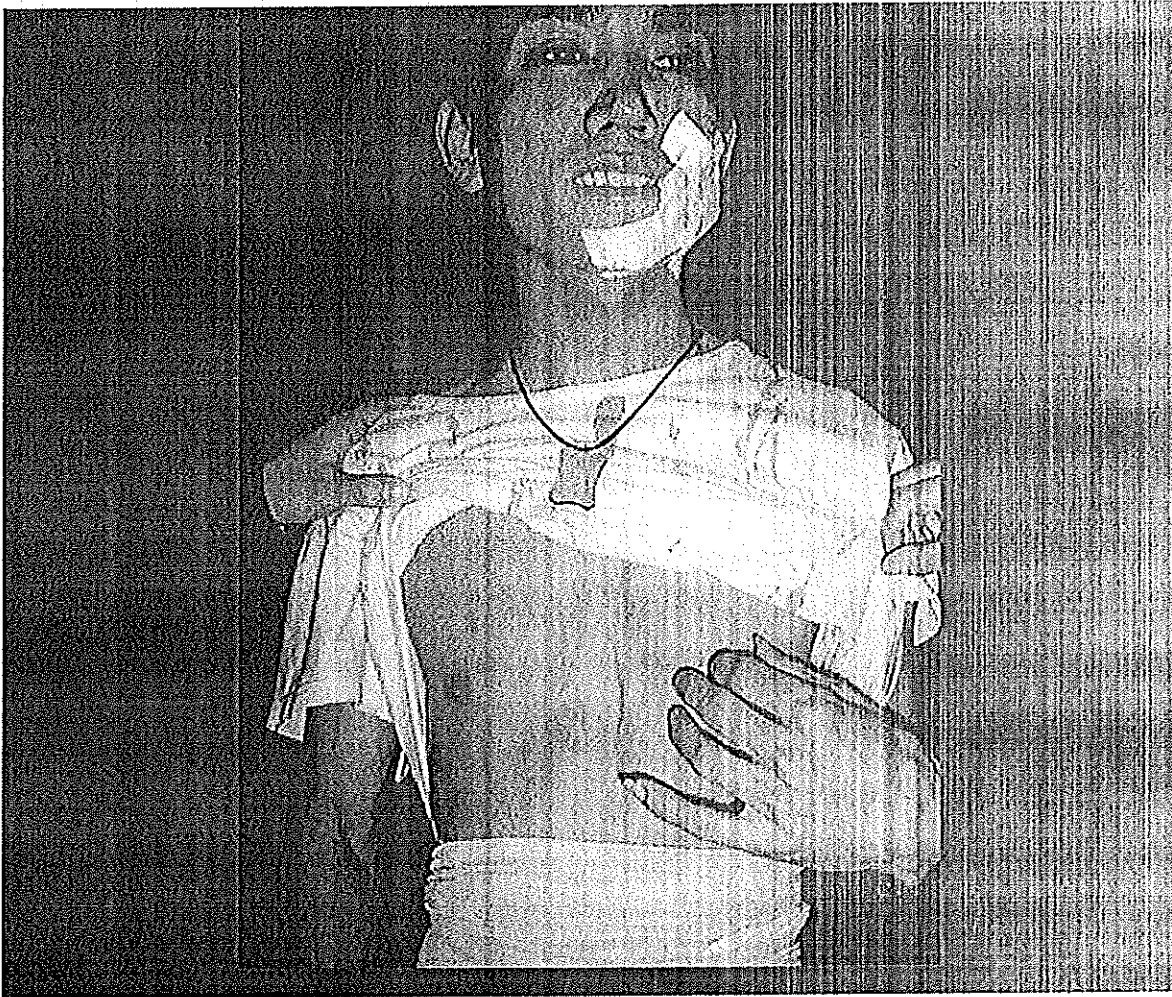
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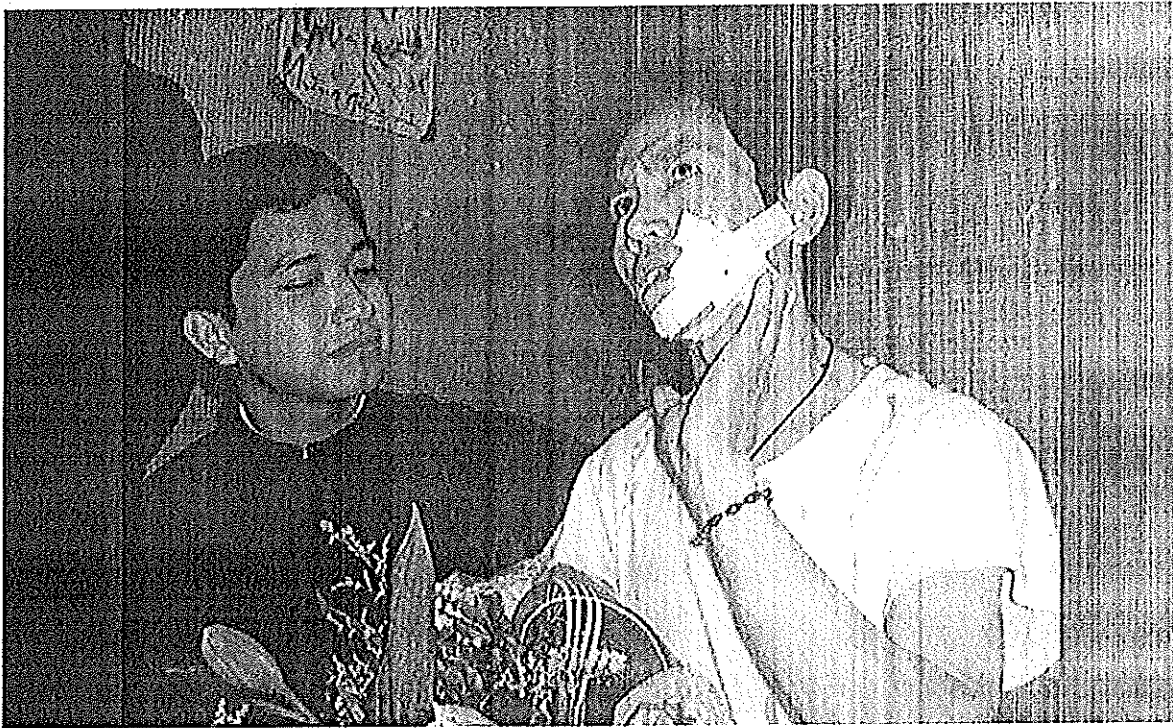
Giuse Nguyễn Văn Thống



Các bạn thăm viếng Sinh viên Mathia Vũ Hoàng Quang







TUYÊN GIẢO CỦA CÔNG ĐOÀN VINH TẠI HÀ NỘI

(Về sinh viên công giáo bị bắt và đánh đập tàn nhẫn)

(trong Học sinh Tài Chính Hà Nội)

Anh Minh Vũ Hoàng Quang, thành viên của Công Đoàn Vinh tại Hà Nội, bị bắt và bị bắt tại chức của Học sinh Tài Chính.

Khởi ngày 10/3/2010 khi anh Quang đang trong lớp học môn Toán Cơ cấp (Địa điểm trường Trung cấp dạy nghề số 10 - Bộ Quốc phòng tại số 101 Tô Vĩnh Diện, Quận Thanh Xuân - Thành phố Hà Nội) đã bị một nhóm người đi xe biển số xanh vào bắt đi trước sự chống kiên của giáo viên và sinh viên trong lớp.

Anh bị trói tay chân và bị mất và đẩy lên xe bị khi đưa đi đến một nơi bí mật.

Theo lời anh Quang kể lại, sau khi được đưa đến một nơi bí mật, anh bị đẩy phủ đầu vào gậy, vào mặt bằng dùi cui và ép buộc anh ký vào bản viết sẵn có nội dung như sau:

- Công giáo là phản động, làm bất ổn an ninh xã hội.
- Công giáo là chức gây bạo động trong xã hội
- Công giáo luôn đấu tranh phản đối chính quyền.

Anh Quang đã không chấp nhận ký vào những điều áp đặt và bị tra tấn liên tục suốt cả đêm qua.

Đến 9 giờ sáng nay, ngày 16/3/2010, nhóm người đó bị mất và đưa anh Quang lên ôtô vượt rào cảnh đồng thuộc Huyện Gia Lâm. Anh đã tự mở vào làng như người đưa về bệnh viện.

Rõ ràng, hành động này đã được sự tiếp tay của nhà trường cho nhóm người này lòng hành bắt bớ, đánh đập sinh viên công giáo ngay trong trường Đại học.

Đây là một hành động trái pháp luật, khi bắt giữ người không đúng trình tự quy định của pháp luật hiện hành. Việc đánh đập tàn nhẫn nạn nhân và tra người bị đánh trọng thương, tra giữa cảnh đồng là hành động vô nhân đạo.

Trước đó, anh Quang đã bị Công an nhiều lần sách nhiễu và gọi đi làm việc vì anh là người công giáo học đã nhiều lần anh phản đối sự thỏa mạ và xuyên tạc tôn giáo trong quá trình giảng dạy của nhà trường tại đây.

Trước những hành động thô bạo trên hình tượng danh dự sinh viên Công giáo es
thành phố không bỏ qua, Công đoàn Vinh tại Hà Nội tuyên cáo các đồng bào:

Các học sinh đại học sư phạm hiện đại sư kỹ thuật tôn giáo trong các trường Đại học ở
Việt Nam nói chung và Học viện Tài Chính Hà Nội nói riêng:

Học viện Tài chính phải chịu trách nhiệm trước việc bảo vệ an ninh của từng thành
viên là sinh viên trong trường. Việc tha bổng đã tiếp tay cho nhóm người không rõ
từng tễch ngang nhiên vào khuôn bô, bắt bớ đánh đập sinh viên trước sự chứng kiến
của thầy giáo, sinh viên trong trường và lời người tài pháp là điều không thể chấp
nhận được.

Công đoàn Vinh tại Hà Nội yêu cầu Học viện tài chính trả lời rõ ràng: Ai là trục
trục bắt bớ, đánh đập sinh viên Vũ Hoàng Quang ngày 15/3/2010 và ai chịu trách
nhiệm trước pháp luật về vấn đề này.

Trước mắt, Học viện Tài chính phải chịu trách nhiệm trong việc chăm sóc điều trị
cho anh Vũ Hoàng Quang và yêu cầu cơ quan pháp luật điều tra làm rõ về hành động
trái pháp luật này.

Tổ cáo trước công đồng quốc tế về hành động bắt giữ người trái pháp luật nhằm
khủng bố các cá nhân dám chứng minh đức tin của mình. Phải chăng đây là sự kỳ thị
phân biệt tôn giáo đã và đang xảy ra trầm trọng trong các Trường Đại học và hệ thống
giáo dục Việt Nam hiện nay?

Công đoàn Vinh tại Hà Nội khẳng định sự ủng hộ và nâng đỡ, đoàn kết với từng
thành viên trong công đoàn trên cơ sở Sự thật - Công lý - lẽ phải và đồng pháp luật.

Xin mọi người cầu nguyện cho sinh viên Mathia Vũ Hoàng Quang trong lúc khó khăn
hiện nay.

Hà Nội ngày 16/3/2010

LM CÔNG ĐOÀN VINH TẠI HÀ NỘI

Giuse Nguyễn Văn Thống

EXHIBIT B

STATUS OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN VIETNAM:

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S SITUATION

The Vietnamese government claims that our people enjoys religious freedom. When discussing religious freedom, officials frequently display pictures of recently built churches and scenes showing large numbers of believers attending Masses to convince others that there is religious freedom in Vietnam. Nothing is further from the truth.

A. "FREEDOM" AS DEFINED BY THE GOVERNMENT

1. Free to Worship? No. Forced to Renounce One's Faith? Yes.

Everyone knows that once a person declares his faith, the government will restrict his fundamental rights and apply ingenious methods of discrimination. All believers feel the government's pressure to varying degrees. Government employees who are known to be believers could be fired or at least be shunned and passed over when it comes to awards and promotions. If the person who becomes a believer is someone with stature, the government will use its entire political apparatus, consisting of many organizations and groups, to put pressure on the person and his family. In remote villages in the highlands and near the country's border, the government uses force to prevent people from practicing their religion or to make them renounce their faith. In Northwestern Vietnam, the government even uses border guards for this purpose.

At the same time, in cities from Ha Noi to Quang Ngai to Saigon, from 2008 on, when Catholics apply for identity cards or household registration, the police would issue such documents with the word "NONE" next to the "Religion" item, even after the applicant had declared that he was Catholic on the application form. Whatever its motive, the police is clearly pressuring people to renounce their faith, at least on official documents. In practice, when these people engage in activities aimed at preserving justice and truth, the police would claim that they are not Catholics in view of their official documents. Moreover, these people would encounter many difficulties when applying for admission to schools or for employment, selling property, or dealing with a government agency. The government employees would try to make the process very difficult for such applicants. We witnessed a number of such tragic cases involving people who were trying to sell their houses in Ha Noi. Therefore, if someone applies for an ID card or household registration, he should check the documents issued by the government very carefully and immediately request any needed corrections. Otherwise such persons would become victims of the government's tactic of using the administrative process as a tool of religious oppression.

2. Free to go to church, to assemble, or pray? No!

On the books, Vietnam's law recognizes freedom of religion. However, the government continues to violate this freedom in many locations throughout the country.

In Saigon, in the sprawling Phu My Hung region, when nuns and private citizens asked for priests to come and celebrate Mass, the government put up all kinds of obstacles. After a long struggle by the applicants on behalf of their right to religious freedom, the government finally allowed the nuns to invite some priests to come and celebrate Mass, but only in the early morning hours when hardly any believer could attend!

In Hanoi, when people went to the Dong Chiem Church to pray and engage in charitable work, the police blocked their way and used violence, causing dozens to be injured. When Catholics from other parishes come to Thai Ha Church on religious occasions, the government usually tries to stop them or harass them through tactics such as shooting at the tires on their vehicles, confiscating driver licenses, preventing vehicles from entering the town, prohibiting vehicles from other towns to use highways and streets that lead to Thai Ha Church. They even tried to prevent a bishop from celebrating Mass in Thai Ha, e.g., Bishop P.X Nguyễn Văn Sang when he led a group of priests and believers who traveled from Thai Binh Diocese to Thai Ha Parish on their annual pilgrimage.

It is even worse in the mountainous and border areas. For example, in many locations under the jurisdiction of the Redemptorists in Gialai, priests and even the bishop could not come to celebrate Mass. In Lai Châu, Sơn La and Điện Biên, the local government does not acknowledge any religious establishment and consequently has not allowed any church to be built or priests from other locations to come and celebrate Mass over the past several decades. Only recently the government started to allow a few priests to celebrate Mass in a "semi-official" way at a few spots along Highway 6. Still, in many hamlets in the three provinces, local authorities continue to harass Catholics who gather in someone's home for prayers. Such harassment includes fines, arrests and beatings. I, myself, had to celebrate mass in hiding during the night usually in the basement of private homes. Several times I had been hunted down by the police and the faithful had to lead me to the woods and steep hills to avoid police's pursuit.

3. Free to build places of worship? No!

Vietnam's law allows Catholics to remodel, repair or build churches, monasteries and other church facilities. It is quite a challenge to implement any of this in practice because government officials at all levels will try hard to prevent such activities.

First: With respect to existing facilities, the government uses delaying tactics when the Church submits applications for repairing or remodeling, or for building on Church land. Government officials usually come up with reasons to deny parishes or religious orders' requests for construction permits that would meet their needs. For example, Fr. Pham Minh Trieu, pastor of Bao Long parish in Nam Dinh, has tried for 15 years in vain to apply for a permit to renovate the parish church. The local government would do anything to hinder the repair or building project of the church as proposed by the parishioners. Fr. Trieu also reported that as the parishioners were digging pond and building the monument of Our Lady in the front yard of their church, police and soldiers were sent out to harass and prevent them from doing so.

Second: In the remote regions or in the highlands, construction of church is strictly prohibited by the government; the government always tries to block the construction of new churches and prevent believers from engaging in religious activities in spite of the large number of Catholics living there. In Sơn La, Lai Châu and Điện Biên, with a combined area of 45,000 km², not a single church has been built to serve the large number of resident Catholics. The government has not provided land or allowed the Church to accept land donated by private citizens for this purpose.

Third: In new new urban developments and new commercial zones of existing towns, the government has not allowed the construction of new churches to meet the needs of the faithful. For example, there is no church building in the Phú Mỹ Hưng area in the southern part of Saigon, a so-called "modern" development. Moreover, when the government implemented modernization plans, they demolished existing churches and forced the faithful to relocate. In Saigon, the government tore down the church and the lepers' asylum in Thanh Binh, and uprooted all the Thu Thiem parishioners when it carried out the modern development of Thu Thiem District. The government is also applying pressure with the aim of tearing down the church and monastery of the Holy Cross Order as part of their plan for commercial development. The government did the same to Du Loc Parish and Dong Yen Parish in Kỳ Anh, Hà Tĩnh Province when it established the Vũng Áng commercial district.

Fourth: With respect to religious orders, the government forbids the building of new convents and monasteries in areas served by the orders. When members of an order first come to a new area, they must make do with facilities borrowed from the local parish or purchased as the property of one of the members. The fact that these facilities are legally private property and not church property, contributes to the risk of them being confiscated or being ordered to vacate as the government attempts to put a halt to such religious activities.

Fifth: The government has torn down church properties -- or modified or changed their use -- that it had "borrowed", "leased", or forcibly taken from the Church in an illegal manner. Its objective is to obliterate the religious character of the properties and transform them into private properties. Right in Hanoi, the government still occupies the Đa Minh Church, one of the most beautiful churches in Hanoi (at the Hùng Vương-Chùa Một Cột intersection). In the past, the government used it as a restaurant. In 2011 the government is tearing down the Carmelite and Saint Paul de Chartres monasteries, church properties that had been used by the government in their original form until recently. Also in Hanoi, the government took land from the Fatima Order (Ham Long Parish) in order to build a public school, seized the church and has been using it as an administrative facility, while letting non-Catholic families live in the building in an attempt to erase the religious character of the property. Such official tactics can be seen in many towns and cities.

B. INSTANCES OF LACK OF FREEDOM AND UNEQUAL TREATMENT

The government has treated Catholics and the Catholic Church in the harshest manner. This mistreatment and discrimination can be categorized as follows:

1. Church property is not protected under the law

Beginning in 1954 in the North when the Communist Party took power in Northern Vietnam and in 1975 in the South when it took over South Vietnam, it has not recognized the people's right to own land – a reactionary legal approach that goes against the flow of modern democracy and serves as the basis for the government to confiscate properties (actually for the benefit of high-level officials). However, the government has acknowledged the "land use" rights of individuals and organizations through the issuance of certificates, popularly known as "Red Certificates", authorizing such uses or certifying their ownership of real estate built on the land.

There is one exception: the government does not issue Red Certificates to religious organizations, resulting in virtually no parish or religious order in Vietnam having documents that prove their ownership of properties. When asked about this, government officials usually give the standard response: "because the government has not had time to develop policy" or "the government has not yet studied the matter and extended the practice to religious organizations". In itself, this response revealed the government's discriminatory treatment of religious organizations. The misery does not end there. Without papers proving their rights to use land and ownership of buildings, parishes and religious orders have a terrible time in their transactions with utilities companies and in handling affairs related to their properties. In addition, they have to live with an ever-present risk, arbitrary confiscation by the government. If the victim protested, the government would ask for proof of ownership. When the victim presented papers issued by the previous government, government officials would say: "Documents issued by the old regime are not valid". The regime refuses to issue ownership documents, but asks for such documents while refusing to accept documents issued under the previous political system when it wants to rob the Church. If a religious organization reacted strongly and the international community showed concern, as in the matter of the apostolic delegation's property in Thái Hà, the government would try to brush over the issue by labeling it "a dispute related to land ownership", not a religious freedom issue.

The Communist government had other tricks up its sleeves. Five years ago, soon after it issued the decree on religious matters in 2005, in 2006 it requested that religious organizations apply for property ownership documents. However, after the parishes and religious orders listed all their properties, including those already confiscated, the government stopped in its tracks and continued its policy of not issuing Red Certificates to religious organizations. Any organization that wants to proceed must accept the loss of their illegally seized properties. For this reason, church property is still like the appetizing morsel dangling from a string in front of a cat -- the insatiable Communist Party whose hatred for religion is well known. Can there be religious freedom when the law does not acknowledge the Church's ownership of its properties, when religious organizations are never

sure about being able to use of their own land and facilities that they have been using for over a century? The regime's tactic has been nothing less than a covert and devious effort to neutralize and oppress religion.

2. The Church is not free to carry out her traditional religious activities.

In Vietnam, the Church is not at all free to engage in traditional activities, i.e., religious events must be approved by the government. Retreats, conferences involving local, national or international religious groups must have official approval, unless one wants to run the risk of harassment and reprisals, including petty revenge. The Church has no freedom in establishing dioceses, parishes, religious orders, and convents and monasteries. The government requires seminaries to let government employees teach Vietnamese history, actually the history of Vietnam's Communist Party, for propaganda purposes and to influence the thinking of future clergy members. The government controls the seminaries' admission process, the ordination of new priests, the re-assignment of priests, etc. The Church must REQUEST authorization and may only carry on once the government has given its APPROVAL. From 2005 on, the government has replaced the word "REQUEST" with the word "REGISTER", but the system is still the "REQUEST -- APPROVAL" system that is now more cleverly disguised. If the government does not "APPROVE" and a church organization or a clergyman still goes ahead, the government will call the activity illegal, try to block it, and retaliate later. In 2010 the government prevented two Redemptorist seminarians from being ordained, using tactics such as asking the appropriate bishops to desist from ordaining these two.

Vietnam's government even inteferes with the appointment of bishops, an activity that is clearly under the Vatican's purview. The government accepts only the Vatican's choice of bishops if the individuals have been approved by the government, nominally by the office of the prime minister. In practice, the approval comes from the People's Committee, the Bureau of Religious Affairs, and the police, from the central government to the provincial and city level. Should the central government approve and the provincial or city government disagree, the process would grind to a halt. When a Vatican-proposed candidate is not approved by the government, the appointment of a new bishop can take years. Some dioceses went up to 12 years without a bishop, e.g., Hưng Hóa from 1991 to 2003. In practice, the government interferes grossly in Church affairs and is carrying out a strategy aimed at oppressing the Church in a sophisticated and devious way. How can the Church maintain its independence and authority? How can the Church appoint the type of bishops that suits her needs when the government has a say in each step? Therefore I believe that the Church and Vietnam's government have been dealing with each another on playing field that is anything but level, a dysfunctional situation that has diminished the Church's legitimate autonomy.

3. Catholics do not have equal rights, including political rights.

In the past, the Communist Party did not enroll members who are Catholics. Only those who renounced their faith and Christian nature were accepted into the party, after declaring that they were atheists. However, from 2000 on, the party started to recruit Catholics in an attempt to use these new Communists in its assault on the Church. Communists who happen to be Catholic are practically denied the chance to play any leadership role within the government. They are not promoted to mid-level and senior positions. Even in areas where the proportion of Catholics among the local population is very high, e.g., Thái Bình, Nam Định, Đồng Nai, etc., no Catholic has been promoted beyond the position of chairman of the village administrative committee. At the present time, we have not seen any Catholic holding the position of chairman at the district, province and city level. Currently there is not a single Catholic among the ministers of departments and the officer corps of the armed forces. In every governmental unit, including scientific organizations, Catholics have not been promoted to responsible positions even if they are ethically and technically qualified.

4. The Church is not treated like other organizations with respect to financial and commercial activities

The government allows domestic and foreign entities to lease land and buy properties for building manufacturing and commercial facilities, going as far as letting Chinese and Taiwanese lease land and build their commercial and industrial centers in Vietnam. Ironically, the same government does not allow the Church to lease or buy land, or use her properties for income-producing activities. Worse, the government is illegally occupying land and commercial facilities that once belonged to the Church, and forbids Church organizations from opening bank accounts. This discriminatory measure considerably hampers the receiving of monetary aids for religious or social projects from benefactors.

The government often hinders the operation of companies and stores owned by Catholics. Worse, when a Catholic community happens to be in a location with high financial potential and increased land value, the government would draft "development plans" with the intent to force the residents to leave their homes or destroy their businesses. Examples include the confiscation of land belonging to Cồn Dầu parishioners in the Đà Nẵng Diocese; the demolition of Chợ Sắt in the town of Biên Hòa, within the Xuân Lộc Diocese – an important business center of the Church; the demolition of the residential section of the parish and facilities of the Holy Cross Order in Thủ Thiêm -- a residential area, a church and an ancient monastery in Saigon that happened to be located on a highly desirable piece of land.

5. Socially, there is no equality for Catholics

The government considers Catholics second class citizens everywhere. Laborers, government employees, and students at all levels are the subject of monitoring and oppression. The government uses subtle and sometimes grossly obvious means to discriminate. For example, T, a college student from Thái Hà Parish who had been active in religious activities, has been watched closely by the police. At graduation time, the police pressured his college to deny him his diploma.

Moreover, the government does not accept Church organizations as legal entities. The government and many entities still do not recognize the seals and signatures of Church officials representing dioceses, parishes and religious orders. Consequently, the clergy's activities are constrained. For example, I cannot use libraries because their management does not recognize letters of introduction issued by the Father Superior of my order. The People's Committee with jurisdiction over my monastery refuses to issue a letter of introduction to me, claiming that I am not under their purview. When I try to do business at a bank, a school, or the post office, the same constraints apply. Once, a sister who maintained the website of the Episcopal Conference of Vietnam wired 400,000 Vietnamese dollars (about 30 U.S. dollars) from Saigon to Hanoi as a payment for my articles, the post office asked for a government paper proving that I was a legal resident in Thái Hà Church. The government has not issued me such a document because I was not allowed to register as a resident of Thái Hà Church – such registration requires the official certification of the legal entity responsible for my residency, which for me is the Redemptorist Order; however, my Order is not recognized as a legal entity. One can conclude that in the current Communist-ruled Vietnam, religious organizations, believers, and especially members of the Catholic clergy are being isolated and marginalized.

6. There is no freedom and no equal treatment with regard to education, communication, and charitable activities

Clergy members, except the few individuals who toe the Communist Party's line, may not teach in colleges. Catholics may not enroll at military, police and security academies (and some other institutions). The Church and affiliated organizations may not run schools from the primary level through university level, or vocational schools. While the government allows us to run pre-school and kindergarten establishments, local officials frequently try to cause us difficulties. Schools and hospitals that used to be owned and run by the Church had been confiscated by the government and

have been operated as public institutions for some time. Now, the government plans to privatize them, causing them to fall into the possession of government officials or their relatives, without the prospect of the Church being able to get them back and serve society through those institutions.

The Church may not own publishing companies, periodicals, radio stations and TV stations, nor can she pay for space on newspapers or time on radio and TV to make announcements or report on major religious events. The government-owned media even censor obituaries of deceased priests and demand changes in content and wording. Christians typically face roadblocks whenever they try to rent facilities for important religious events. For example, Protestants rented Mỹ Đình Stadium to celebrate Christmas of 2010. Right before Christmas Day, the police pressured the stadium management to negate the contract. On Christmas Day, the police harassed and beat up people who came to celebrate.

The government allows the Episcopal Conference of Vietnam to issue only a single monthly newsletter, "Hiệp Thông", 100 copies, each not exceeding 100 pages of size A5. I made calculations using the font type of the publication (Times New Roman, Size 14) and found that if each of the 7 million Vietnamese Catholics got an equal share of this publication, in any given year each person would get 5 letters of the alphabet. Catholic websites with foreign domains such as chuacuuthe.com of the Redemptorist Order, have been blocked by firewalls set up by Vietnam's government and subjected to hackling around 10 times in the past few years. When a parish wants to issue a bulletin within its church, the government also interferes through harassment, threats, and even prohibition when the news does not please the government, no matter how accurate.

The government does not allow the Church to open charitable facilities serving handicapped people, orphans, lepers, etc. The Church used to own and run these types of facilities, but the government has confiscated them. The government also attempts to prevent the Church from organizing relief efforts in response to natural and man-made disasters. For example, Thái Hà Church had to give up on the plan to establish a charity center in Thạch Bích, Hanoi, because government officials wanted to skim 10% off the funds needed for the project. At the same time, priests and religious brothers/sisters could not continue with many of their relief efforts on behalf of the very poor who live in mountainous areas because local officials demanded that donated material be turned over to them so that they could distribute it themselves. If the officials had laid their hands on the supplies, very little or nothing would have filtered through to the intended recipients. When facing the crisis of a declining educational system, health care system, morality and culture in Vietnam, the government's actions show that it prefers to let citizens go hungry, suffer from diseases, and remain uneducated and poor, rather than acceding to the religious organizations' request for a chance to participate in serving the people and building society.

7. There is no freedom in selecting where one lives and no freedom to travel

The government turned a blind eye when Chinese citizens came to Vietnam to live and work, and, in some cases, cause trouble for Vietnamese residents. However, when the Catholic clergy and faithful who are dedicated to serving their communities want to travel to the places where they can serve, the government places restrictions on where they may move to, while restricting their freedom to travel. Any clergy member who needs to work in a different location must "register", i.e., get the government's approval. However, the government tries to restrict this type of travel in various ways. When the government fails to issue its approval of someone's application for residency (in Vietnam one must get government approval before one moves to another area), the person's daily life becomes much more complicated. In the Thai Ha monastery, there are approximately 15 resident priests and brothers, all without the government's approval for residency registration, i.e., long-term residency. The church encounters difficulties in transactions involving the post office, utilities, telephone service, and processes involving the local government on account of the residency status of the 15 individuals. The system of residency approval is a violation of the freedom to select where one wants to live, particularly in the case of priests and brothers and sisters.

The government violates citizens' right to travel freely. For example, the police constantly monitors and even trails Thái Hà clergymen. The police has set up a camera aiming at the entrance to the church so that they can monitor everything and everyone who comes and goes, all the time. Frequently the government violates the clergy's right to travel in a most obvious and illegal manner. For example, the Ninh Bình police refused to issue me a passport in 1999 without giving a valid reason other than labeling me a "reactionary." When the police in Ho Chi Minh City issued me a passport, the Ninh Bình police requested the HCM City police to retract its decision and prohibit me from going abroad. Even when one has a passport, there is no guarantee that one's trip would be allowed. For example, in June 2010 the Hanoi police and HCM City police suddenly prohibited Rev. Nguyễn Văn Phương from traveling to Rome. In December 2010 the HCM City police prevented the Regional Superior of the Redemptorists, Rev. Phạm Trung Thành, from traveling to the USA. On July 10, 2011, the HCM City police continued to prevent Rev. Phạm Trung Thành from traveling to Singapore for the annual conference of Regional Superiors in Southeast Asia, and on July 12 the Tây Ninh police prevented Rev. Đinh Hữu Thoại, a Redemptorist, from traveling to Cambodia. All these police actions are illegal because the applicants have no police arrest record, have never been in prison, and have not been charged with any crime.

C. IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

1. In 2004 Vietnam's government issued the Ordinance on Belief and Religion; in 2005 it issued a new decree on religious affairs; in 2007, it issued a White Paper on religious freedom. The regime felt that such actions sufficiently proved that it respects religious freedom and is concerned about meeting the people's spiritual needs. The truth is that it sought merely to use impressive words in a propaganda campaign to cover up its increasing control of religion while trying to placate domestic and foreign critics.

The government and its agents would point to those documents when asked whether there is religious freedom in Vietnam – a question that is so abstract and open-ended that could be easily dodged. In order to truly learn about the reality in Vietnam, one must ask pointed questions such as: Does the government officially recognize the legal status of the Catholic Church in any written document? Does the government treat Catholics just like other citizens? Are Catholics admitted to academies for the military, police and security forces? Can Catholics be appointed to mid-level and high-level government positions? Does the Catholic Church receive the same treatment as other domestic and foreign entities? Does the law protect church property? Has the Church been allowed to publish periodicals, or open schools, publishing houses, health clinics and hospitals; or charitable centers to serve the people? Does the government respect the Church's right to carrying out her traditional religious activities? Can the Catholic Church set up bank accounts or lease land? And other questions along this line...

Actually, the government has been mistreating its Catholic citizens compared to the way it treats foreigners who live and work in Vietnam, and the government's treatment of the Catholic Church is much worse than its treatment of foreign entities that operate in the country. What is more painful is that the other religions and their believers suffer the same treatment as the Catholic Church and our faithful. How can anyone trust that Vietnam enjoys religious freedom when believers and churches are discriminated against and are not free to serve the people, something that the other citizen groups and non-religious organizations may engage in?

2. The nature of Vietnam's Communist Party compels its members to eradicate all religions, or at least, to control them tightly, transform them, oppress them and made them serve the regime's agenda of dominating all aspects of society through the party's policy edicts, laws and actions.

The government still uses the national media and educational system to train various levels of personnel in ways to oppress the Catholic Church and use propaganda against her. The government continues to make false accusations and declare that the Church has committed such and such "crimes" in Vietnam and in other nations. In government-sanctioned books used in schools, there is plenty of libelous material aimed at painting a very negative picture of Catholics, to the point of not

being credible. The party still attempts to make non-Catholics view the Church as the evil and dangerous entity that Communists have been imagining forever.

The government continues to use its "divide and conquer" strategy against the various religions and against groups within each religion, using highly sophisticated tactics, particularly in its uneven treatment of different faiths. One could see this clearly when it uses public money (from the taxes that all citizens had paid) to build for Vietnam's Buddhist Sangha, which is controlled by the government, the largest Buddhist temple in Southeast Asia, Bái Đính Temple in Ninh Bình, at the cost of trillions of Vietnamese dollars (tens of millions of U.S. dollars). The government also uses public funds to support Buddhist events such as the World Buddhist Conference V, held in 2008 in Vietnam. On the other hand, it continues to outlaw the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam.

The same "divide and conquer" policy is applied to the Catholic Church. The government accords a few clergy members and religious institutions certain privileges while oppressing the Catholic orders that speak out against religious persecution by the government.

3. The Communist regime has grown increasingly heavy-handed in its religious persecution in view of the Communist Party's inherent distrust of religion and perpetual dedication to abolish religious life. The government did not engage in the wanton destruction of religious facilities, the abuse of priests and believers, the desecration of religious symbols, etc. as it is doing now. These types of horrendous acts have been occurring more and more frequently since the US government took Vietnam out of the list of Country of Particular Concern (CPC) in 2006. From 2007 to 2011, the regime has carried out the following oppressive measures against the Catholic Church: Seizing land from Thái Hà Parish and the apostolic delegation's land from the Hanoi Archdiocese; seizing land from Tam Tòa Parish, Loan Lý Parish, Thủ Thiêm Parish, the Order of St Paul de Chartres in Vĩnh Long, the Order of St. Vincent de Paul in Saigon, the Order of the Divine Word in Nha Trang, the Order of Heavenly Piece in Huế, the Order of Lasalle in Huế, etc.; demolishing the Virgin Mary's statue in Đồng Định and the Cross in Đồng Chiêm; removing Mary's statue in Bầu Sen; damaging properties belonging to the Order of St. Paul and the Carmelite Order in Hanoi; razing the Bình Triệu Church in order to build the Law School of HCM City, etc.

Furthermore, the regime has been performing other suppressive acts, including raids, beatings, arrests, dishing out long prison sentences, or prohibiting members of the Church from traveling abroad, and is spearheading a systematic campaign against the Church, using the regime's total control of the media and school curricula, and its influence in various communities. When evaluating the nature and degree of severity of these recent acts, one can conclude that such acts are brazen and arbitrary, and are squarely aimed at the religious establishment. These are the type of acts that the regime did not dare to commit a few decades earlier. The demolition of the Cross and other sacred icons are examples of such acts. In Hanoi, the regime used to refrain from demolishing the Carmelite Monastery with its cross perched high above its roof; in Saigon, the regime used to cover the tower and Cross in the front of the church located near the Bình Triệu Bridge instead of tearing down this Christian symbol. However, since 2007 the regime has shown no such restraint when demolishing these iconic landmarks in an attempt to wipe out all traces of legitimate Church ownership.

Through the regime's numerous acts of repression and oppression directed at all faiths in Vietnam, we have determined that the Communist rulers have been grossly violating religious freedom. Consequently, if someone asserted that "there is religious freedom in Vietnam", we believe that the person either: (1) lies; or, (2) has not spent time to examine thoroughly this issue; or, (3) did something that enabled the police to blackmail him into saying the "official" line; or, (4) is so concerned about his safety and well-being that he must say things that the regime wants him to say; or, (5) the person works for the regime as a police or other security personnel, or in some other capacity. It is our belief that bringing religious freedom to Vietnam is an arduous and very long trip, and anyone who claims that religious freedom exists in Vietnam now is guilty of self-deception, misleading others, and whitewashing the oppressive regime in Vietnam.

Reverend Peter Nguyễn Văn Khải, Redemptorist Order
Rome, Italy October 16, 2011