



**Vietnamese Canadian Federation
Fédération vietnamienne du Canada**

Violations of Human Rights in Vietnam

**Quarterly Report
April – June 2012**

**Khue-Tu Nguyen
Commissioner for Human Rights
Vietnamese Canadian Federation
July 2012**

Preface

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation is pleased to release its April – June 2012 Quarterly Report on human rights violations in Vietnam. In releasing this report, the Federation hopes to increase public awareness of the continuing violations of the fundamental human rights by the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. These sacred rights were stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights issued by in 1948 by the United Nations, of which Vietnam is one of the signatories.

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

Vietnamese Canadian Federation
July 2012

Executive Summary

In a span of three months, the government of Vietnam arrested at least 86 people (this does not account for official arrests where the numbers were not reported, nor does this number include unreported or unconfirmed arrests), charged 23 rights activists for “anti-state propaganda,” acts of “terrorism,” and “plots to overthrow the government” to years in prison, rejected the jail appeals of 3 rights activists, and had police beat a number of people too great to have been possible to count and report. The government’s violations of human rights rage on.

Cases of suppression of religious freedom continue to illustrate horrific examples of police brutality. **Fr. Joseph Nguyen Van Binh** was savagely beaten into a coma by police; **Venerable Thich Quang Thanh** was pinned to the ground, beaten with a truncheon, and trampled on by multiple policemen; and a deployment of hundreds of policemen harassed and roughly assaulted or beat **Venerable Thich Thien Hanh, Venerable Thich Nhu Dat, Venerable Thich Chon Niem, Venerable Thich Tanh Nhon, Venerable Thich Chi Thang, Venerable Thich Chan Phuong, Venerable Thien Thien Tanh, Le Cong Cau, Venerable Thich Vien Dinh, Thich Nhu Tan, Thich Dong Minh, Thich Vien Hy, Venerable Thich Quang Do, Venerable Thich Khong Tanh** and their Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) followers in many pagodas located in Saigon and Hue, preventing them from attending a demonstration to protest for Vietnam's territorial integrity. In the days preceding celebrations of a traditional Buddhist holiday, senior monks of UBCV faced threats to ban those celebrations and found their church under constant surveillance, which prevented the delivery of food and supplies to the pagoda. Authorities also refused to let Catholic priests celebrate Easter with ethnic minority people.

The Communist Party of Vietnam continues to use vaguely defined articles in their penal code to detain and/or sentence dissidents to years in prison for advocating for their human rights: **18 members of a nonviolent organization** were charged over “plots” to overthrow the government; **Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan**, a Vietnamese-American pro-democracy activist, was arrested and accused of terrorism in Vietnam; **Vo Viet Dzien** a pro-democracy activist, was arrested for “anti-state plots”; **Runh, Byuk, and Jonh**, Christian ethnic minority activists, were arrested for “undermining national political unity”; Catholic activists, **Duong Van Dau, Tran Huu Duc, Chu Manh Son, and Hoang Phong** were sentenced to prison for 42 months followed by 18 months’ probation, 39 months and 1 year probation, 36 months and 1 year probation, and 18 months of prison, respectively, for “propaganda against the state”; and **Phan Ngoc Tuan** was sentenced to five years in jail for “spreading anti-state propaganda.”

The government of Vietnam carries on its violations of its citizens’ land rights. **20 protesters** were arrested at a land eviction; **11 and 20 more** were arrested at two other land grabs respectively; in a separate event, **30 farmers** were arrested at a land protest; during yet another event, **even more farmers were arrested** (numbers unreported); and land rights activists **Nguyen Ngoc Cuong** and **Nguyen Ngoc Tuong Thi** remain in jail, suite to Nguyen Ngoc Cuong’s appeal being rejected.

Blogger **Ho Thi Bich Khuong** and activist pastor **Nguyen Trung Ton**, who were respectively sentenced to five years in prison and three years house arrest, and two years in prison and two years house arrest for “collecting documents and writing articles with tarnished the reputation of the Communist Party and the Socialist regime” last year, had their jail appeals rejected.

The government strives to stifle the dissemination and the public's awareness of their acts of violence and repression. Bloggers are imprisoned: **Phan Thanh Hai, Nguyen Van Hai, and Ta Phong Tan**, currently in custody, are facing a maximum of 20 years of imprisonment for contributing material to the online "Free Journalists Club" of Vietnam, which is considered "propaganda against the state." Bloggers like **Nguyen Xuan Dien** had their blogs' contents hacked, deleted and/or altered by authorities. Journalists are beaten: **Nguyen Ngoc Nam and Han Phi Long** were covering land rights when attacked. The government's new decree, "Decree on the Management, Provision, Use of Internet Services and Information Content Online," increases censorship by ending online anonymity, forcing internet firms to censor, which criminalizes any expression of dissident views and reports of violations of human rights by the government.

Violations of Human Rights in Vietnam

Quarterly Report April – June, 2012

**April
4**

Vietnam charges 18 over 'plot' to overthrow government

The highest punishment for such a crime is the death penalty.

State media gave few details of the group, which they said in February had been uncovered in Phu Yen province, north of the resort of Nha Trang.

In an operation at the beginning of February, official media said police had made several arrests at the base of what they called a subversive organization in the Huynh Long eco-tourism area.

Initially the group was accused of abusing democratic freedoms, a crime with a maximum jail term of seven years.

The new charge of "plotting to overthrow the people's government" comes under Article 79 of the penal code, which can carry the death penalty.

The Vietnamese People's Army newspaper accused the group's leader, whom it named as Phan Van Thu, of setting up two companies and investing in an eco-tourism park as a cover for recruiting supporters.

"This case shows that the 'peaceful evolution' strategy is being implemented by hostile forces in many ways," the newspaper said. ^[1]

**April
11**

Authorities refuse to allow priests to celebrate Easter with ethnic minority people

Dak Ha district authorities in Kon Tum province refused to allow the celebration of Easter rites in the village of Turia Yop.

Bishop Michael Hoang Duc Oanh of Kontum said Catholics are hated, maltreated and discriminated against by authorities in this district where religious activities are limited.

Catholics are also not allowed to build churches and are told to practice their faith at homes and without priests.

“Thousands of Catholics in this area have not enjoyed religious freedom for forty years,” he said.

“They have no priests, no churches and no liturgical services,” he added. He said Catholics should enjoy religious freedom and live proper lives like others.^[2]

**April
13**

Draft decree would end online anonymity, force foreign internet firms to censor

Reporters Without Borders calls on the Vietnamese authorities to abandon plans for a decree that would increase online censorship to an utterly unacceptable level and exacerbate the already very disturbing situation for freedom of expression in Vietnam.

According to information provided by the banned pro-democracy movement Viet Tan, which Reporters Without Borders has verified with various sources, the government intends to issue the decree in June. Entitled “Decree on the Management, Provision, Use of Internet Services and Information Content Online,” it would reinforce the already considerable legislative arsenal deployed against dissidents.

Using a deliberate vague language that would allow arbitrary interpretation, the current draft of the decree suggests that the government wants to pressgang Internet companies, including foreign ones, into helping it to reinforce online censorship and control of Internet users. Google and Facebook could be among the foreign companies affected.

As well as developing the privatization of censorship, it could criminalize any expression of dissident views and reporting of news that strays from the Communist Party official line. It also seeks to prevent journalists, bloggers and netizens from using the protection of pseudonyms when reporting online.^[3]

**April
14**

Priest savagely beaten into coma by Hanoi police

Police stormed an orphanage at Chuong My in the capital of Hanoi and forced the orphans to leave their house before ransacking religious items, destroying a statue of Our Lady, and destroying the house.

Fr. Joseph Nguyen Van Binh, the pastor of Yen Kieu Parish in the Archdiocese of Hanoi, who ran the orphanage, came to the place with dozens of parishioners to protest. Hundreds of police swooped on protesting parishioners. The priest went into coma after dozens of police officers kicked and beat him with batons. They left him half dead on the ground.

Local parishioners rushed him to a local hospital where doctors transferred him further to the Emergency Department of the Viet Duc Hospital. Police reportedly banned anyone from visiting the priest.^[4]

**April
15**

Vietnam bloggers face 'propaganda' trial

Three well known Vietnamese bloggers face prosecution for "propaganda against the state" after being accused of posting political articles on a banned website, state media said.

Phan Thanh Hai, **Nguyen Van Hai** and **Ta Phong Tan** were accused of contributing material to the online "Free Journalists Club" of Vietnam, the Thanh Nien newspaper said.

The report said the bloggers posted 421 articles on the site between September 2007 and October 2010 and accused them of "distorting the truth, denigrating the party and state".

"Phan Thanh Hai and Nguyen Van Hai also attended training in Thailand to overthrow the regime of Vietnam in March 2008," the newspaper added.

The bloggers, who are already being held in custody, face a maximum of 20 years imprisonment for the charges.

Phan Thanh Hai's blog dealt with issues deemed sensitive in Vietnam, such as a dispute with China over maritime sovereignty, controversial

bauxite projects, a scandal around a debt-ridden state-owned shipbuilder and cases of famous dissidents. ^[5]

**April
17**

US pro-democracy activist accused of terrorism in Vietnam

A Vietnamese-American pro-democracy activist was arrested and accused of terrorism for allegedly trying to sabotage liberation celebrations commemorating the end of the Vietnam War, state media said.

Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan, 58, of California, was detained after arriving at the airport in southern Ho Chi Minh City, Tuoi Tre newspaper reported. He is accused of planning to hold protests for Viet Tan, a banned U.S. exile group, during the week's May Day festivities and the April 30 anniversary of the fall of the former U.S.-backed South Vietnamese capital, Saigon, to the northern communists in 1975.

Authorities also found many documents in Quan's possession on "terrorist training," the paper said. Quan, a mathematician, was previously sentenced to six months in jail by a Ho Chi Minh City court in 2008 for terrorism.

After being deported from Vietnam, Quan continued to travel from the U.S. to Thailand and Malaysia to train members of the Viet Tan group on nonviolent struggles in Vietnam, Tuoi Tre said.

Hanoi often uses vague national security laws to charge pro-democracy activists with terrorism, but the U.S. government has said it has seen no evidence that California-based Viet Tan, also known as the Vietnam Reform Party, is a terrorist organization.

"The Vietnamese government's accusation of 'terrorism' against Dr. Quan is completely fabricated and has no basis," said a statement posted on Viet Tan's website. "The detention of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan is the latest example of the Vietnamese Communist Party's ongoing crackdown on human rights defenders." ^[6]

**April
19**

Vietnam detains man for 'anti-state' plot

Vietnam arrested a farmer for plotting to overthrow the state and disrupt the anniversary of the fall of Saigon, said a report.

Vo Viet Dzien, a 41-year-old fish farmer, was taken into custody in southern Vietnam after police “uncovered his involvement” with the US-based Restoration Party, a banned pro-democracy group, the VNExpress news website reported.

The little-known organization was plotting to “undermine national unity” by jamming radio frequencies and broadcasting anti-state messages on April 30, the report said, citing investigators at the Ministry of Public Security.

The date marks the fall of Saigon and the southern regime in 1975, an event which forced the United States to pull its combat troops out of the country, heralding the end of a decades-long conflict.

Rights campaigners say the accusation that a group is conspiring to overthrow the state is regularly used to silence dissidents in authoritarian Vietnam, where the communist party limits political debate.^[7]

April 24

Vietnam arrests 20 after massive land clashes

Vietnamese police arrested 20 people after hundreds of farmers clashed with police in a protest over a disputed plot of land near the capital city of Hanoi.

Between 2,000 and 4,000 heavily armed riot police used tear gas and clubs to break up the protest and evict farmers camped out in Van Giang district of Hung Yen province in an attempt to keep the authorities and private developers away from the site, the BBC reports.

A private firm, Viet Hung Co Ltd, has been trying since 2004 to develop a satellite city that would cover 500 hectares of land in the area.

According to the Associated Press, more than 4,000 families will lose their farmland, and residents say the compensation offered – about \$1,700 for every 360 square meter plot of land – is inadequate, accusing officials of corruption.

Land rights disputes with local authorities are becoming an increasingly contentious issue in Communist-ruled Vietnam, where the state owns all land and usage rights are not always clear or protected, the Agence France Presse reports.^[8]

**April
24**

Police beat reporters during Vietnam land eviction

Police and security guards beat two journalists from Vietnamese state radio while they were covering the mass eviction of farmers from land slated for a housing project, the journalists and state-controlled media said.

The incident was captured on a video posted on YouTube, which showed police and guards beating and kicking two helmeted men and hitting them with sticks during the high-profile land seizure last month. **Nguyen Ngoc Nam**, chief of political and economic news at the Radio Voice of Vietnam, and staff reporter **Han Phi Long**, came forward this week to describe what happened.

Nam told the Today's Countryside newspaper he yelled to the security staff that he and his colleague were journalists trying to do their job. "We are journalists, why did you beat us?"

Long was forced to take two weeks off from work for medical treatment, the paper said.

The two reporters and the national radio station have asked provincial authorities for an explanation, but they have not responded, it said.

Last week, provincial vice governor Nguyen Khac Hao told a high-level government conference that the case was handled properly, and he accused anti-government activists of trying to paint the incident in a bad light by posting fake video clips.

However, state media quoted another provincial official as saying Hao had not seen the video involving the journalists.

Land rights cases have attracted increased attention in Vietnam in recent years as farmers have been pushed off their land to make way for projects ranging from industrial parks to luxury golf courses. ^[9]

**May
3**

Crackdown in Thua Thien-Hue province ahead of Buddha Day (2,556th Vesak celebration)

Vietnamese authorities cracked down on an officially unrecognized Buddhist organization with followers around the country ahead of the anniversary of the Buddha's birth, according to a religious rights group.

In Thua Thien-Hue, UBCV members had been forced to tear down logos specially designed for Vesak to symbolize the international outreach of the organization, which has members in 80 different countries.

The Paris-based International Buddhist Information Bureau (IBIB) said that senior monks in the province had been summoned for interrogation and told to sign an indictment of the UBCV and its plans for Vesak celebrations, which the monks had refused to do.

It said the monks had vowed to refuse all indictments and to continue with Vesak celebrations, even if they were forced to hold sit-ins and nonviolent demonstrations in the face of possible police action. ^[10]

May 3

Crackdown in Quang Nam-Danang province ahead of Buddha Day

Vietnamese authorities cracked down on an officially unrecognized Buddhist organization with followers around the country ahead of the anniversary of the Buddha's birth, according to a religious rights group.

In Quang Nam-Danang, UBCV Buddhist Youth leader Le Cong Cau told the IBIB that security police had imposed a round-the-clock surveillance on Giac Minh Pagoda, which is the headquarters of the UBCV provincial committee and the organization's Buddhist Youth Movement.

The Paris-based International Buddhist Information Bureau (IBIB) said that the local police station opposite the pagoda had trained a camera on the building's entrance, and posted an official at the window to take down the license plates of all cars entering the pagoda's courtyard.

It said around 20 other officials had been permanently posted around the entrance and in surrounding cafes, "ready to intercept anyone who enters or leaves the premises," preventing the delivery of food and supplies to the pagoda.

"Buddhists from the Giac Minh congregation are obliged to wait until nightfall to secretly bring bags of rice and basic necessities to the monks inside," the group said.

Senior monks from Giac Minh have also repeatedly been summoned for interrogations related to planned Vesak activities. ^[10]

**May
3**

Crackdown in Phu Yen province ahead of Buddha Day

Vietnamese authorities cracked down on an officially unrecognized Buddhist organization with followers around the country ahead of the anniversary of the Buddha's birth, according to a religious rights group.

The Paris-based International Buddhist Information bureau (IBIB) said that according to Thich Giac Hieu, head of the UBCV's Phu Yen provincial committee, several monks and nuns, as well as members of the UBCV Buddhist youth movement, had been summoned for interrogations over the past few days.

He said that all had been warned of "serious consequences" if they attempted to attend UBCV Vesak celebrations in Phu Yen this weekend.
[10]

**May
3**

Crackdown in Binh Thuan province ahead of Buddha Day

Vietnamese authorities cracked down on an officially unrecognized Buddhist organization with followers around the country ahead of the anniversary of the Buddha's birth, according to a religious rights group.

In Binh Thuan province, UBCV provincial youth commissioner Thich Thong Hai was called for a "working session," or police questioning.

The IBIB said that Thich Thong Hai had been accompanied by Tran Van Y and Le Cuong, two leaders of the UBCV's Buddhist Youth Movement, but that police had refused to let the two men follow him into the building.

"During the 'working session,' which lasted two hours, People's Committee officials and police told Thich Thong Hai that the UBCV in Binh Thuan would not be allowed to hold Vesak celebrations," IBIB said.

"They warned that if the UBCV persisted despite this ban, the authorities would take 'preventive measures.'"

Vesak is the most important event in the Buddhist calendar, and the IBIB said that UBCV members across the country had expressed concern that

authorities will prevent them from celebrating the nearly 2,000-year-old unbroken religious tradition.

The IBIB said that UBCV Patriarch Thich Quang Do, an 84-year-old nominee for the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize, had also been prevented from preaching to followers at the Thanh Minh Zen Monastery in Saigon, where he is being held under virtual house arrest.

“This ongoing persecution belies Vietnam’s repeated declarations that it ‘respects religious freedom and human rights,’” the IBIB said, calling on the international community to press Vietnam ceasing repression of the UBCV.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a congressional watchdog, said the Vietnamese government controls all religious communities, severely restricts and penalizes independent religious practice, and represses individuals and groups viewed as challenging its authority.

Vietnam continues to imprison and detain individuals for religious activity and for advocacy of religious freedom, the commission said, adding that independent religious activity remains illegal while legal protections for government-approved religious organizations are vague.^[10]

**May
5**

Vietnam dissident has jail appeal rejected

A Vietnamese land rights activist will serve seven years in jail after a court rejected an appeal against his conviction for spreading anti-government propaganda, according to state media.

Nguyen Ngoc Cuong, 56, and his son **Nguyen Ngoc Tuong Thi** were convicted in October 2011 in southern Dong Nai province of using an online forum "to distort the policies of the state and the party," official media reported.

"As the appeal of Nguyen Ngoc Cuong had no mitigating circumstances, the court decided to uphold his conviction of seven years imprisonment imposed in the first trial," the Communist Party newspaper Nhan Dan said.

However, his son's sentence was reduced by six months to one-and-half years in prison, the daily added.

The pair rose to prominence for their campaigns on behalf of farmers embroiled in land disputes with local authorities, an increasingly sensitive issue in Vietnam.

The two men were arrested in March 2011 for distributing more than 1,200 "anti-government" leaflets, giving money to protesters and for publishing online interviews critical of the communist regime.

Charges of propaganda against the state and attempting to overthrow the regime are routinely used against dissidents in a country where the Communist Party forbids political debate.^[11]

**May
8**

Eleven jailed over land clashes

Vietnam jailed 11 people from the ethnic Nung group for up to four years as punishment for clashing with security forces over a land grab in a northern province.

They were arrested in August 2011 after clashes between villagers and about 1,000 police and soldiers over a long running land dispute in Son Dong and Luc Ngan districts in Bac Giang province.

Five of them were jailed on by a military court for between 42 and 54 months for "disturbing public order" while six others were sentenced by a separate court to between 12 and 48 months for the same offence.^[12]

**May
9**

Vietnam arrests Christians for 'anti-state activity'

Vietnam has arrested three Christian ethnic minority tribespeople in the central highlands for "anti-state activity," official media said.

The men, from the Ede and Gia Rai tribes, have been accused of "undermining national political unity" in central Gia Lai province, the communist party mouthpiece Nhan Dan reported.^[13]

**May
9**

Vietnamese farmers arrested over land row

Vietnamese police arrested a number of farmers over land ownership rights in the communist nation, state media said.

The farmers were upset with the compensation they were offered to give up their land for an industrial park about 80 km (50 miles) southeast of Hanoi, the Tuoi Tre newspaper reported, without saying how many were arrested in the incident.

Video clips and photographs posted on Vietnamese blogs showed images of riot police clashing with angry farmers on rice fields.

Farmer Pham Ngoc Doanh said the combination of new land and money offered represented “a big loss”, according to Tuoi Tre.

It said the planned industrial park needs to resettle 970 farming households, but 118 of those affected have not agreed to accept the offer.

Land disputes with local authorities are an increasingly contentious issue in communist Vietnam, where all land is owned by the state and usage rights are not always clear or protected. ^[14]

**May
24**

Four Catholic activists, on trial for “propaganda against the state,” are sentenced

A Vietnamese court sentenced four Catholic activists of Vinh, under Article 88 of the Penal Code, for distributing "anti-government leaflets" and conducting "propaganda against the state". The young people - college students or recent graduates - appeared before the judges of the province of Nghe An, in the north of the country. According to prosecutors, they were active in the *Redemptorist News* information network and volunteers of a Pro-Life movement, which is fighting for the protection of human life. Their claims of innocence during the trial and the protests of thousands of Christian activists camped outside the courthouse awaiting the verdict proved to no avail.

Local witnesses reported that **Duong Van Dau** received a sentence of 42 months in prison, followed by 18 months' probation, **Tran Huu Duc** 39 months in prison and one year of probation; **Chu Manh Son** 36 months in prison and one year of probation, and finally **Hoang Phong**, sentenced to 18 months.

In spite of months of preventive detention awaiting trial, the four activists received support and solidarity from the Vietnamese Catholics, public opinion - which appreciates the work done for the benefit of society and the poor - and the international community. Thousands of faithful from

Thai Ha and Hanoi camped outside the court, trying to gain access as per the authorities' promise of open proceedings in court.

In fact, only close relatives were allowed to attend the hearing, the majority, including Fr. Anthony Nguyen Van Nien and Fr. Francis Xavier Hoang Si Huong, Cau Ram parish, were forced to remain outside reciting rosaries and brandishing placards reading "My brother is innocent" and "We protest against the arbitrary and illegal arrests of innocent people."
[15]

**May
30**

Vietnam rejects dissidents' jail appeal

Vietnam upheld the jail sentences of two human rights activists, throwing out an appeal against their conviction for spreading anti-government propaganda, a judicial source said. After a half-day hearing, "the prison sentences of **Ho Thi Bich Khuong** and **Nguyen Trung Ton** were upheld on appeal this morning," an official at the court in central Nghe An province told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Female blogger Khuong, 44, was sentenced in December last year to five years in prison followed by three years house arrest, while activist and pastor Ton, 40, was given two years in jail and two more under house arrest.
[16]

**June
6**

Vietnam dissident jailed for 5 years

A court in southern Vietnam sentenced a dissident to five years in prison, an official said.

Phan Ngoc Tuan, 53, was found guilty of spreading anti-state propaganda by the court in Ninh Thuan province which also ordered him to serve three years under house arrest, a court official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Tuan was charged with distributing anti-state documents and leaflets in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City between April 2010 and his arrest in August 2011. His prison term will reflect time already served.

According to Kien Thuc, a popular online newspaper, Tuan had received money from "reactionary groups and individuals" to spread documents defaming the Communist Party and the Vietnamese state.

Tuan denied the allegations, the report said.

Charges of disseminating anti-state propaganda and attempting to overthrow the regime are routinely laid against dissidents in a country where the Communist Party forbids political debate.^[17]

**June
10**

Police beat Buddhist monk

Vietnamese police have beaten a monk who is a member of an outlawed Buddhist association after pulling him over for not wearing a helmet, an overseas rights group said.

Thich Quang Thanh, a member of the unsanctioned Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV), was beaten by traffic police in southern Vietnam's Dong Nai province, the Paris-based Vietnam Committee on Human Rights said in a statement.

After he was pulled over while riding a motorbike on Highway 51, Thich Quang Thanh apologized and prepared to pay a fine for not wearing a helmet, but police threw the motorbike in their truck and punched him in the face, the rights group said.

After calling for backup, a group of policemen pinned him to the ground, beat him with a truncheon and trampled on him, stopping him from calling for help, the group said. They also stopped passers-by who tried to interfere, it said.

Police took him in for questioning in Phuoc Thai village, releasing him several hours later.

Photos Thich Quang Thanh took of his body shortly after the beating showed bruises and scars.

The unregistered UBCV, with followers around Vietnam, has clashed with officials since its founding in the 1960s. Its leader, Thich Quang Do, lives under house arrest in Saigon.^[18]

**June
11**

Communist officials beat Catholics in Quy Chau to seize their land

Communist Party officials attacked the members of a small parish in Quy Chau District in order to force them to give up land owned by the local Church, which they illegally promised to some local businessmen.^[19]

**June
13**

Authorities shutter land dispute blog

Nguyen Xuan Dien, who reported extensively on a number of land disputes in Vietnam, said he had been brought in for questioning by authorities over his online activities, during which time he realized that his site had been the target of a hacking attack.

“I am sure that the investigation was launched because of my blog [content],” Dien told RFA’s Vietnamese service.

“During an online question and answer session held on June 12, the Minister of Information and Communication said that there is no legal jurisdiction over blog management, so I don't know how the Hanoi director of the ministry plans to handle my case or other similar ones.”

Dien said that while he was questioned, his blog displayed different content than what he had originally posted, leading him to believe it had been hacked.

Authorities then presented him with an administrative order to shut down his blog due to “politically sensitive” material linked to a bauxite mining project in central Vietnam, which he complied with, but he has since been unable to retrieve the original content.

“We have been trying to recover my hacked blog with much technical assistance,” he said.

“My blog contains much information about concerned issues over the past year that need to be archived and later referenced in notebook form. But even if I can recover it, whether the public will have access to it is another matter entirely.”

The targeting of Dien’s blog comes amid reports that a number of other sites run by online activists may also have been blocked.

Owners of the blogs, many of which are linked to articles critical of the government or which are deemed “politically sensitive,” report that netizens using certain Internet service providers (ISPs), including Vinaphone, Mobiphone, and Viettel, have been unable to access their sites in recent days, reports said.

Many of the blog sites also contained information about how netizens can use proxy servers to bypass government firewalls that prevent them from accessing certain sites. ^[20]

**June
15**

‘Thugs’ hired to clear villagers’ land

Clashes broke out between villagers and a group of men hired to clear their land for a controversial development site on the outskirts of the Vietnamese capital, leaving several villagers injured and others vowing to protect their homes should demolition crews return, sources said.

The site in Hung Yen province’s Van Giang district has been the scene of a number of confrontations over the past several years since local authorities granted the developer 500 hectares (1,235 acres) of land used by the villagers.

The villagers say the land allocation was made without fair negotiations and have refused to leave.

One villager, who spoke to RFA’s Vietnamese service on condition of anonymity, said that a group of “thugs” hired by the developer accompanied heavy machinery onto the land Friday in an attempt to clear villagers away.

“This morning, five caterpillars came to clear the land. Some of us rode motorbikes to drive them away,” the villager said.

“They continued to advance and some thugs who we believe were hired by [the developer] started beating us,” he said.

“One of us has a broken arm and another was beaten about the head. Others have shoulder and hand injuries.”

The villager said that the person with the broken arm was a woman and that the person with the head injury was a man. All of those wounded during the clash had been brought to hospital for treatment and x-rays.

“We did not notify the police or local authorities because we know that these agencies will not protect us anymore,” he said.

Some twenty protesters were arrested by security forces.^[21]

**June
20**

30 arrested in land protest

Vietnamese authorities arrested 30 farmers as they held a third day of protests in front of a municipal building in the capital demanding the

government return land they say they were forcibly evicted from three years ago.

One of the groups of farmers, from Ha Dong district on the outskirts of Hanoi, said they had gathered in opposition to an earlier ruling by a state inspector who found that the confiscation of their land was legal.

“We do not agree with the conclusion reached by the State Inspectorate—that is the reason for our protest,” the farmer, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told RFA’s Vietnamese service.

“We don’t want to have to do this—we are in middle of the farming season. However because of this injustice, we have been forced to lead a prolonged public protest.”

Members of the security forces, who during earlier protests had looked on but had not intervened, moved in, arresting 30 of the group and taking them to a “rehabilitation” center in Hanoi’s Dong Anh district.

The Hanoi city government requisitioned the farmers’ land, in Duong Noi village’s La Duong commune, in 2009 to develop two new townships, as well as a hospital and school. Since then, only 350 of 4,000 households have resisted eviction by authorities.

On the second day of protests in front of the Vietnam Communist Party’s Petitions Office near Mai Xuan Thuong Park, nearly 100 of the farmers had said they were willing to lay down their lives to protect their land, with some even threatening self-immolation.^[22]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Bao Quoc Pagoda Buddhists from demonstrating

Hundreds of Security Police and people’s defense brigades surrounded the Bao Quoc Pagoda, harassing and assaulting Buddhist monks, nuns and lay-followers attempting to join demonstrations called for by UBCV Patriarch Thich Quang Do to protest Chinese threats against Vietnam’s territorial integrity.

In Hue, late in the evening, Police broke into the private quarters of **Venerable Thich Thien Hanh**, head of the UBCV Provincial Committee in Hue at the Bao Quoc Pagoda and ordered him to call off the demonstration at the Buddhist Martyrs Memorial the next day. They

threatened to take “firm measures” to prevent Buddhists from taking part. Venerable Thich Thien Hanh refused to call off the demonstration.

Police surrounded Bao Quoc Pagoda and prevented Thich Thien Hanh from leaving the premises.

At the same time, Police set up road-blocks around the Buddhist Martyrs Memorial, prohibiting all pedestrians and traffic from circulating in the area, and systematically intercepted all monks, nuns and Buddhists attempting to join the demonstration.^[23]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Long Quang Pagoda Buddhists from demonstrating

At the Long Quang Pagoda, senior UBCV dignitary **Venerable Thich Nhu Dat** was intercepted by crowds of Police. Police vans blocked the road to his Pagoda, preventing anyone from entering or leaving the building.^[23]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Bao Quang Pagoda Buddhists from demonstrating

At the Bao Quang Pagoda, **Venerable Thich Chon Niem**, Head of the Hue UBCV’s Commission on Lay Buddhists was stopped by crowds of Police and people’s defense agents at Quang Te Hill as he set off with a delegation of Buddhist monks and followers. Police roughly assaulted the Buddhists and forced them to turn back.^[23]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Tu Hang Pagoda Buddhists from demonstrating

Venerable Thich Tanh Nhon of the Tu Hang Pagoda in Tuan village in the mountains near Hue, was intercepted after he boarded a ferry boat to cross the Perfume River along with fifty Buddhist followers to join the demonstration.^[23]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Phuoc Tanh Pagoda Buddhists from demonstrating

Venerable Thich Chi Thang from Phuoc Tanh Pagoda reached the An Cuu bridge with a group of followers before the People’s Committee’s Chairman ordered Security Police to forcibly escort them back to their Pagoda. Police attacked the group with electric truncheons, wounding one of the monks on the head and causing profuse bleeding.^[23]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Tho Duc, Anh Tinh, and Kim Quang Pagoda Buddhists from demonstrating

At the Tho Duc Pagoda, Security Police locked **Venerable Thich Chan Phuong** and Buddhist followers inside the Pagoda for several hours to prevent them attending the demonstration. **Venerable Thien Thien Tanh** from An Tinh Pagoda was also intercepted by Police, as well as a number of monks, nuns and followers from Kim Quang Pagoda, which has recently left the State-sponsored Buddhist Church to join the UBCV.^[23]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Buddhist Youth Movement members from demonstrating

Le Cong Cau, leader of the UBCV-affiliated Buddhist Youth Movement was prohibited from joining the demonstrations and subjected to “working sessions” with the Police for seven hours from 3:30pm–10:30pm. Police surrounded his home throughout the night. Other members of the Buddhist Youth Movement, an unofficial educational movement which has some 500,000 members in Vietnam, were also prevented from leaving their homes.^[23]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Giac Hoa Pagoda Buddhists from demonstrating

In Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), from 5:00am, Security Police blocked the entrance to Giac Hoa Pagoda, secretariat of the outlawed UBCV. At 6:00am, five Security Police formally read out an order prohibiting the monks from joining the demonstrations.

At 7:30am, despite the Police ban, **Venerable Thich Vien Dinh**, Deputy leader of the UBCV along with **Thich Nhu Tan**, **Thich Dong Minh**, **Thich Vien Hy** and a delegation of UBCV monks and followers tried to go to the Thanh Minh Zen Monastery to escort **Thich Quang Do** to the

demonstrations. Over a hundred Security Police and plain clothed people's defense agents forcibly pushed the monks back.

Police told the monks they were forbidden to demonstrate because the UBCV is an "illegal" organization, and demonstrations are "political acts which violate the law". Thich Vien Dinh replied that Vietnam has signed the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which guarantees the right to peaceful assembly.

A Security Policeman named Tot pulled out of his pocket a copy of Thich Quang Do's call for a nationwide demonstration to protest Chinese expansionism. "This appeal to demonstrate is political! You are not allowed to engage in politics", he said angrily, "Get back inside your pagoda, you aren't going anywhere. No way will we let you join the demonstrations". Venerable Thich Vien Hy, a young UBCV monk at Giac Hoa Pagoda, protested: "You can threaten children like that, but we are not afraid of you". His remark enraged the Security official. He ordered the Police to use force to silence the monks. Police pushed them all back inside the Pagoda and blocked all the doors. No one was allowed to enter or leave the building for several hours. Even Buddhists who came to ask monks to perform funeral rites for deceased parents were roughly turned away.^[23]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Lien Tri Pagoda Buddhists from demonstrating

At Lien Tri Pagoda in Thu Duc, Police surrounded the Pagoda from early morning and prevented **Venerable Thich Khong Tanh**, the UBCV's Commissioner for Social and Humanitarian Affairs and members of his congregation from attending the demonstration.^[23]

**June
30**

Vietnam deploys Security Police to prevent Thanh Minh Zen Monastery Buddhists from demonstrating

The Thanh Minh Zen Monastery, where UBCV Patriarch Thich Quang Do is under house arrest, was surrounded by Police throughout the night. Early this morning, Security officials brought an official summons for Thich Quang Do to come for a "working session" at the Phu Nhuan Police Station.^[23]

References:

- [1] BBC News
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-17617165>
- [2] UCANews
<http://www.ucanews.com/2012/04/11/anger-after-easter-service-ban/>
- [3] Reporters Without Borders
<http://en.rsf.org/vietnam-draft-decree-would-end-online-13-04-2012,42312.html>
- [4] VietCatholic News
<http://vietcatholic.net/News/Html/97222.htm>
- [5] Doha Center for Media Freedom
<http://www.dc4mf.org/en/content/vietnam-bloggers-face-propaganda-trial>
- [6] Fox News
<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2012/04/29/us-pro-democracy-activist-accused-terrorism-in-vietnam/>
- [7] The Jakarta Globe
http://www.thejakartaglobe.com/international/vietnam-detains-man-for-anti-state-plot-report/512635#Scene_1
- [8] GlobalPost
<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/asia-pacific/vietnam/120425/vietnam-arrests-20-after-massive-land-clashes>
- [9] Inquirer News
<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/190471/police-beat-reporters-during-vietnam-land-eviction>
- [10] Radio Free Asia
<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/crackdown-05032012184026.html>
- [11] Agence France-Presse
http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jkChOmIECu9a2XAd_aYJcBBGtrOA?docId=CNG.c6b1f0108945bd3cf2b01ca38fe93ebf.671
- [12] Radio Free Asia
<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/land-03092012215643.html>
- [13] The Daily Star
<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2012/May-09/172792-vietnam-arrests-christians-for-anti-state-activity.ashx#axzz1zQb1dKMm>
- [14] TIMES Online
http://www.sundaytimes.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18998:vietnamese-farmers-arrested-over-land-row-report&catid=81:news&Itemid=625
- [15] AsiaNews
<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Four-Catholic-activists,-on-trial-for-propaganda-against-the-state,-are-sentenced-24844.html>
- [16] MSN Malaysia News
<http://news.malaysia.msn.com/regional/vietnam-rejects-dissidents-jail-appeal-1>
- [17] TIMES Online

http://sundaytimes.lk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20038:vietnam-dissident-jailed-for-5-years&catid=81:news&Itemid=625

[18] Radio Free Asia

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/monk-beaten-06192012154610.html/>

[19] AsiaNews

<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Communist-officials-beat-Catholics-in-Quy-Chau-to-seize-their-land-25078.html>

[20] Radio Free Asia

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/blog-06132012171203.html/>

[21] Radio Free Asia

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/clashes-06152012152150.html>

[22] Radio Free Asia

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/arrests-06202012141031.html/>

[23] Que Me: Action for Democracy in Vietnam

http://queme.net/eng/news_detail.php?numb=1863

Vietnamese Canadian Federation
Suite 1 – 885 Somerset St. West
Ottawa, ON K1R 6R6 Canada
Tel. (613) 230-8282
Fax (613) 230-8281
Email: VCFOttawa@gmail.com
Website: www.vietfederation.ca