

in addition to the Government of Vietnam's 4th periodic report

January 2024



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1. Introduction

This report addresses the Vietnamese Government's indirect abets enterprise companies to grab Montagnards' lands and damage the environment and livelihood in result in the Central Highlands as its apathy toward people's petitions when they call for help, as well as addresses the Vietnamese Government's use of government-controlled churches as instruments to carry out religious repression, including forced renunciation and/or conversion of faith, against Montagnard women.

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is an authoritarian state ruled by a single party, the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP). Vietnam's communist leaders are as anti-religion as those in China and North Korea but use more subtle and sophisticated tactics to suppress religious freedom. Ideologically, the Vietnamese leadership steadfastly follows Marxism-Leninism, which Vietnam's new President re-affirmed in his 2 March 2023 acceptance speech.¹ In their ideological worldview, religions are "the opiate of the masses" -- the ruling class uses religions to maintain its dominance over the working class. Abolition of religions - or co-optation and control - is therefore a precondition for a classless society.

- The Evangelical Church of Vietnam – South (ECVN-South)

ECVN-South, founded in 1921 in South Vietnam, was recognized by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 2001. The Central Highlands region in southern Vietnam is home to many indigenous peoples commonly known as "Montagnards" whose languages are distinct

¹ Vietnam's new president pledges to make people's interests focal point of policymaking, VNExpress, 2 March, 2023, available at: <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnam-s-new-president-pledges-to-make-people-s-interests-focal-point-of-policymaking-4576602.html>

from the mainstream, official Vietnamese language spoken throughout much of the rest of the country. The founding of ECVN-South, whose members in the Central Highlands are primarily Montagnards, predated the takeover of South Vietnam by the communist regime in 1975. In April 2001, the government offered it legal recognition² and at the same time launched a brutal crackdown on all Montagnard house churches in the Central Highlands, most of which were affiliated with ECVN-South. By 2004, practically all Montagnard house churches had been destroyed, burned or closed. In February 2001 and April 2004, tens of thousands of Montagnard Christians held peaceful demonstrations to demand religious freedom and return of ancestral lands.³ They were crushed by the police; reportedly numerous demonstrators were injured and several died, and hundreds arrested;⁴ with some still serving prison sentences. This led Vietnam to be designated a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for its violations of religious freedom by the U.S. Department of State in 2004-2006.⁵

In exchange for legal recognition, ECVN-South has stopped advocating for its own Montagnard followers. In 2001, the same year it recognized ECVN-South, the government proceeded to crack down on all Montagnard house churches in the Central Highlands. By 2004, practically all Montagnard house churches had been destroyed, burned or closed. Between 2001 and 2004, tens of thousands of Montagnard Christians held peaceful demonstrations to demand religious freedom. They were crushed by the police; reportedly numerous demonstrators were injured or died, and hundreds arrested; some are still serving prison sentences. This led Vietnam to be designated a country of particular concern (CPC) in 2005 and 2006. ECVN-South not only stayed quiet about the brutal crackdown but also abstained from and

Starting in 2005 an increasing number of Montagnard Christians left ECVN-South and formed new house churches independent of ECVN-South, such as the Degar Protestant Church and the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands (ECCCH).

To this day, the police continue to coerce members of independent Montagnard house churches to join ECVN-South or other government-recognized churches. Many Montagnard Christians would rather face repression than joining or re-joining ECVN-South because they don't want to submit themselves to government control and/or because of their past experience with ECVN-South.

ECVN-South maintained a deafening silence - at least publicly - while its Montagnard members became victims of brutal persecution. Families of ECVN-South members may have consoled and/or provided material and/or moral support to the families of those killed or imprisoned, but

² While the ECVN-South historically included Montagnard churches in the Central Highlands as members, the government's official recognition in April 2001 did not extend to Montagnard congregations, which continued to be considered illegal. Instead, they must go through an "additional, lengthy, government-supervised, church-by-church process". Reg Reimer, *Vietnam's Christians: A Century of Growth in Adversity*, William Carey Library, Pasadena California, 2011, p. 105

³ Socialist Republic of Viet Nam: Renewed concern for the Montagnard minority, Amnesty International, 27 April 2004, available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa41/005/2004/en/>

⁴ Vietnam: Violence against Montagnards During Easter Week Protests, Human Rights Watch, 14 April, 2004, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2004/04/14/vietnam-violence-against-montagnards-during-easter-week-protests>

⁵ Smaller protests broke out -- and were quickly quashed -- in September 2002 and April 2008. Human Rights Watch, "Montagnard Christians in Vietnam: A Case Study in Religious Repression," March 2011, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2011/03/30/montagnard-christians-vietnam/case-study-religious-repression>

the organization was silent. In exchange for legal recognition, ECVN-South seemed to have abandoned its Montagnard members and let itself be used by the government as a shield to deflect international criticisms.

Starting in 2005 an increasing number of Montagnard Christians left ECVN-South and formed new house churches independent of ECVN-South, such as the Dega Protestant Church (Hội thánh Tin lành Đê Ga) and the Evangelical Church of Christ of Vietnam (Hội thánh Tin lành Đấng Christ Việt Nam).⁶ The government has since worked hand-in-hand with ECVN-South to suppress unaffiliated Montagnard Christian house churches.

Some registered churches in Vietnam have reported improvements under the Law on Belief and Religion. While it is true that churches operating under the umbrella of the government have enjoyed greater latitude under the new law, it is a fallacy to reason that as long as the government lets enough churches under its umbrella, that means it is making progress toward religious freedom. Oftentimes, slight improvements reported by government-recognized churches come at the (unreported) heavy expense of non-recognized ones: Such reported improvements practically help the government assert greater state control over religions.

Politically, the regime considers effective control of the masses the key to its monopoly on power. As religions encourage people of the same faith to act in community and follow a calling higher than the communist doctrine, the regime sees this as a threat that must be nipped in the bud. In this regard, not much has changed since 2005, when the United States designated Vietnam as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC).⁷

In practice, the country's leadership seeks to strike a balance between its inherent enmity towards religions and its need to present a façade of tolerance to the world by simultaneously implementing three strategies.

1.1 The background of Montagnard

Vietnam has over 50 ethnic groups, the dominant one being the “Kinh” group, accounting for approximately 85 million people or 85% of the population.⁸ Of the remaining 15% or 15 million people from ethnic and indigenous communities.

The Montagnards are the indigenous people of Vietnam who have resided, for many generations, mainly in the five provinces in the Tay Nguyen Central Highland Area of Vietnam, including Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Lam Dong, Gia Lai and Kon Tum. There are many ethnicities of Montagnard people including Ede, Jarai, Mnong, K'ho and Bana. Despite of being called Montagnards in general, these ethnicities are distinguished by a variety of customs, cultures and languages. In 1962, the population of the Montagnard people in the [Central Highlands](#) was estimated to number as many as one million. According to a statistic by the government in 2009, the total population of

⁶ The independent house church movement was started in 2000 by Montagnard pastors. A few years later, this movement picked up steam after the government brutally quashed mass protests. Vietnam decried this reactionary “Dega Protestantism” movement (some such churches took the name of Dega Church XX, YY, etc.)

⁷ Extreme Policy Makeover: Re-Evaluating Current U.S.-Vietnam Relations under the International Religious Freedom Act, Washington International Law Journal, 6 January, 2005, available at:

<https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1394&context=wilj>

⁸ https://vietnam.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Ethnic_Group_ENG.pdf.

the Montagnard people is estimated to be 1,284,621, not including other ethnic minorities who are also living in the Central Highland.

Their main means livelihood is agriculture, which put great importance in their ability to own lands. They also have high concentration consideration in protecting forest and lands, before the northern people of Vietnam.

In terms of religion, Evangelism is one of the mainstream religions across the country, especially among the 5 provinces in the Tay Nguyen Central Highland, which first arrived at the Montagnard people in Dak Lak 92 years ago in 1931.

The Montagnard people have a long history of fighting alongside with the U.S. army and the former Vietnamese Republican regime of Saigon throughout the Vietnam War. Ever since the Revolution, this community became forgotten and the target for the persecution from the authority. The loyalty of the Montagnard people towards the former regime as well as the U.S. army turned into the seed of hatred in the eyes of the current regime. The current regime always refers to the historical nemesis, as well as the Evangelical faith, in their reasoning for the arbitrary persecution towards the current generation of Montagnard people in Tay Nguyen, despite of these people have little understanding as to why such persecution upon them.

Between 2001 and 2018 there have been approximately 489 Montagnard people getting arrested for their religious belief, the majority of whom are the leaders of the congregations.

Between 2007 and 2016 there have been up to 8 Montagnard people killed by the public security for speaking up about the freedom of religious and human rights for the Montagnard people, not mentioning those who were killed during the protests in 2001 and 2004.

Another concerning issue is that there are currently 1560 Montagnard people who are living in their very indigenous territory are holding the stateless status. These stateless communities are living in the communes and districts inside Gia Lai province where the border between Vietnam and Cambodia is.

These stateless people are deprived from access to education as well as other social benefits due to their lack of identity documents. This is another consequence of holding on to one's religious belief, where these people are deprived of the right to live like other normal citizens, where there is no provision of identity documents, no rights to speak up about the unjust in the society, with the constant threat of persecution upon them if they do so.

Between 2010 and 2018 there were around 18 churches of the Montagnard people being forced to close down, or even get burnt down or demolished mid-construction.

These stateless people are also the victims of the land grabbing under the hands of the authority, in which land right is used as means of blackmailing the Montagnard people into renouncing their religion. This became the main reason why the Montagnard people had to flee to other countries to seek protection.

In 2017 there are approximately 176 Montagnard people seeking asylum in Cambodia. Under the collaboration between the Vietnamese and Cambodian authorities, between 2017 and 2018 there have been a great number of extraditions back to Vietnam, while the others due to the fear of facing more persecution after the extraditions had fled to Thailand from Cambodia. Currently there are only 49 Montagnard people left who are seeking asylum in Cambodia.

Currently, there are around 1200 Montagnard refugees and asylum seekers in Thailand. These refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Thailand between 2006 and 2024, the majority of who are the victims of religious persecutions who are also arbitrarily accused of political motivations, along with others who are activists and Civil Society members.

2. Persecution engines

2.1 Religious ground

Montagnard Christians are targeted for their religious beliefs. Two Montagnard evangelists from the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands - Y Krec Bya and Nay Y Blang - were arrested in 2023 and will be tried for made up “crimes” because they refused to join ECVN-South.⁹ Following shooting incidents in the Central Highlands on 11 June 2023, the government launched a massive crackdown and Montagnards live in fear.¹⁰

In the Central Highlands, after the shooting incidents of 11 June, 2023, government attempts to blame “Dega Protestantism”, “Montagnards working for reactionary FULRO expatriates”, etc. and heavy-handed arrests, beatings, and threats using the incidents as a pretext to force independent house churches to submit to government-controlled churches have increased the divide between Montagnards and other ethnic groups, notably the dominant “Kinh” ethnic group.

Y Sĩ Êban - Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands - was arrested at the airport in November 2022 when he was about to board the flight from Tan Son Nhat Airport, Vietnam to Bali, Indonesia. He had hoped to share with the Special Rapporteur - FoRB (Dr. Ghanea) the persecution of independent Montagnard house churches, but instead, was detained and beaten (report submitted to SR - FoRB on 4 December 2022). As of 29 August 2023, he has been under surveillance day and night for the past 23 days and is too afraid to leave home to go to work. The police want to force him to join ECVN - South

Evangelist Y Krêc Byă, a resident of Cuor Knia 2 Village, Êa Bar Commune, Buôn Đôn District, Đắk Lắk Province, was a member of ECVN-South when he participated in peaceful demonstrations to call on the Government to respect Montagnards’ right to religious freedom, stop destroying their religious facilities, refrain from expropriating their lands, and release those detained or imprisoned. He was arrested and sentenced to eight years in prison. After returning home from prison, Y Krêc Byă decided to leave ECVN-South and join the newly established

⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/06/08/human-rights-watch-submission-european-union-ahead-eu-vietnam-human-rights-dialogue>. Montagnards in the Central Highlands must join the Evangelical Church of Vietnam - South or renounce Christianity if they choose not to join. The government harasses, fines, and threatens those who belong to unregistered religious organizations or independent house churches.

¹⁰ <https://www.voanews.com/a/deadly-conflict-in-vietnam-s-central-highlands-ramps-up-persecution-of-ethnic-minorities-/7183904.html>

Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands, of which many members were, like him, disenchanted former members of ECVN-South.¹¹

In January 2022, Y Krec Bya was interrogated three times between the 5th and the 28th day of the month. Each time the police ordered him to leave his church or else risk being punished “according to the law”.¹² Y Krec Bya continued to be harassed, interrogated, and threatened in 2022 and 2023 until he was detained and prosecuted in early April 2023.

Security Investigation Agency personnel reading the order to prosecute and detain Y Kréc Bya on 8 April 2023

<https://cand.com.vn/Ban-tin-113/bat-doi-tuong-pha-hoai-chinh-sach-dai-doan-ket-i689378/>

In the evening of 20 November 2022, Evangelist Y Jũ Hwing, member of the Degar Protestant house church in Klat C Village, Êa Drông Commune, Buôn Hồ Town, Đắk Lắk Province, received the interrogation request delivered to him by Y Suong Knul, member of the police of Êa Drông Commune. On 21 November, at 8 am, he arrived at the police station to meet Y Philip Niê, Security Police of Buôn Hồ Town. This man and his fellow police officers interrogated Y Jũ Hwing until noon. The police threatened him with long-term imprisonment unless he joined ECVN-South.

In 2022 the government refused to consider and even harassed and/or fined several Montagnard evangelists who repeatedly submitted requests to their commune governments asking for clarification and guidance on a provision in the Law on Belief and Religion that appears to authorize independent religious groups to practice their religion without registration with, or approval by their commune governments. The punishment happened soon after they submitted the requests and the fines were ostensibly for “administrative violations” that took place many months earlier.

On 10 June 2022, Cư M'gar District government fined Y Don Niê and Y Củng Niê, for their religious practice “without the prior approval of the People’s Committee of Cư Suê Commune” (i.e., independent of government-controlled religious organizations), and for observing on 22 August 2021 the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief and in December 2021 the International Human Rights Day. On 10 June 2022, this government belatedly fined another observer of these International Days, Y Thịnh Niê, for the related offense of forwarding pictures to Y Quynh Bdap (leader of MSFJ) in June - August 2021 for posting on the Facebook page of MSFJ.

On 6 September, 2022, with the support of other mandate holders, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief raised this case in a joint allegation letter to the Vietnamese Government¹³. The Vietnamese Government responded on July 23, 2023:

Y Củng Niê, Y Thịnh Niê, Y Don Niê are individuals with complicated activities related to FURLO organization (an organization that takes advantage of ethnic and religious issues to threaten national security, incite riots, secession, and self-rule in the territory of Viet Nam). In the process of living in

¹¹ Later, a subgroup left under Pastor A Ga to establish the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands.

¹² In 2021 and prior years, at least from the reports we translated and submitted, the government did not explicitly order victims to join or rejoin ECVN-South as frequently as from 2022 on. In past reports, the government typically ordered them to leave their “illegal” churches.

¹³ AL VNM 4/2022, available at:

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=27538>

the locality, the above 03 individuals have often taken advantage of themselves as ethnic minority people to provide false information, fabricate false accusations against the government and local police force of religious and ethnic oppression; contacted organizations abroad that lack goodwill towards Viet Nam to propagate false information, slandered Viet Nam of human rights violations, and created inaccurate information about the human rights situation in Viet Nam.

In May 2022, the local police invited Y Cung Niê, Y Thinh Niê, and Y Don Niê to the headquarters to discuss. Sending invitations to citizens is a normal activity of the Vietnamese police force, prescribed in the Criminal Procedure Code, for the purpose of coordinating information collection, clarifying issues related to the process of ensuring local security and order or investigating a criminal case. Inviting citizens to discuss is not an arrest, so according to the law, a lawyer is not required; citizens receiving an invitation have the right to invite lawyers, legal representatives, and relatives to accompany them. Allegations of the above three cases of being arrested and interrogated without a lawyer is incorrect. During the discussion process, the three individuals above admitted to providing false and fabricated information about the activities of local government agencies and the State's guidelines, policies and laws in the field of religion and ethnicity; transferring information abroad for the purpose of accusing Viet Nam of human rights violations and religious persecution. The meeting was recorded in a minute signed by Y Cung Niê, Y Thinh Niê, and Y Do Niê.

On that basis, the People's Committee of Cư M'gar district issued a decision to sanction administrative violations against Y Cung Niê, Y Thinh Niê, and Y Don Niê according to Article 7 of Decree No. 144/ND-CP dated 31 December 2021. The decision to sanction is based on the violations of the law by these individuals, not related to the fact that the three individuals above submitted an application to the government asking for guidance on registration of religious activities and "International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief".

In its response, the Vietnamese Government falsely alleged that these three Montagnard Christians are member of FULRO¹⁴, which ceased to exist in 1992; that they fabricated information to tarnish the government in incident reports submitted to the UN Special Rapporteur on FORB; and that they admitted to doing so. Moreover, to this day the government has yet to respond to their requests for guidance to register their independent house churches in accordance with the Law on Belief and Religion.

In all, in the past 24 months, 6 Montagnard house churches have written to different levels of government to request guidance on registering their religious activities to no avail.¹⁵ Some of these house churches were recently intensely pressured to join ECVN-South. For example, several households, including that of Y Don Niê, deputy leader of the independent Sut M'dung Village Church, left and joined ECVN - South.

To inflict fear and humiliation, the local authorities have arranged for house church leaders to be publicly denounced and shamed in front of their fellow villagers. The victims are required to be present but not permitted to speak in their own defense.

On 29 July 2020, Evangelist Nay Y Blang - Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands in Pung B Village, Ea Lâm Commune, Sông Hinh District, Phú Yên Province - was interrogated

¹⁴ FULRO is the acronym for the French equivalent of *United Front for the Liberation of Oppressed Races* (disbanded in 1992). Montagnards and a small number of other indigenous fighters used guerilla tactics to oppose what they considered oppressors, i.e., South Vietnam and then Communist Vietnam (after Vietnam was forcibly unified under the Hanoi Communist government in 1975).

¹⁵ Sut M'dung Village, Draï Si Village, Tara Puor Village, Ea Khit Village, Cue Village, and Dhia 2 Village - all in Dak Lak Province.

and forced to sign the police interrogation report which consisted of the minutes of the interrogation, with a “confession” added by the interrogator. He refused to sign it. The police ordered him to sign a pledge to leave his independent house church. He resisted. The police warned him that he must pay an administrative fine and if he did not comply, they would seize his assets. Nay Y Blang refused to pay, saying that it was not right to criminalize him for resisting their pressure to recant his faith. The police angrily said that they would hold a public denunciation of Nay Y Blang in the presence of all the villagers where he would be shamed into confessing to his criminal adherence to the Evangelical Church of Christ and collusion with the international community.

At times, the police escalated their intimidation and humiliation tactic by targeting an entire family and spreading fear among residents of multiple villages.

In the morning of 25 March 2023, about 40 police officers rallied residents from three villages in Krông Năng District, Đắk Lắk Province – Giêr, Wik, and Đê villages - to attend a public denunciation held at Êa Truôr Elementary School of Wik Village. Evangelist Y Năi Mlô of the Dega Protestant house church of Đê Village, Êa Hồ Commune, Krông Năng District, Đắk Lắk Province and other members of his household had to witness Senior Lieutenant Colonel Y Thu Êban from the Security Branch, Police Department of Đắk Lắk Province verbally attack his absentee son whose name is Y Pher Hdruê – a member of Thailand-based MSFJ. Y Thu Êban also issued warnings to villagers about the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands.

Churches that tacitly compromise with the government are not spared public humiliation when they deviate from government policies. The Good News Mission Church is one such example. Before mid-2022, although it was not officially recognized, it was allowed to operate to a limited extent by the government. Lately its members are told that their church is illegal. It still has hundreds of followers in the Central Highlands and still avoids speaking up for its Montagnard members.¹⁶

Public denunciation on 15 November 2020: Victims were Evangelists Y Săc Mlô and Y Song Mlô, Dhiă Village, Cù Nê Commune, Krông Buk District, Dak Lak Province. At that time, they were with the unregistered but mostly tolerated Good News Mission Church (now they and their village church members consider themselves independent house churches).

Around 8 AM, the government staged a public denunciation in Dhiă Village. Approximately 50 police officers participated, along with nearly 200 villagers. The event ended at 11 AM.

Y Ngul Mlô, Police of Krông Buk District, said: No one should follow Y Săc Mlô who is with the Good News Mission Church because the government has not recognized this church. The government has recognized the Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South). Y Săc Mlô is not qualified enough to preach to his church. Y Ngul Mlô, Police of Krông Buk District, said: Y Song Mlô must remove the Cross which he had attached to his gate because only certified preachers may enroll in religious classes and conduct house church activities.

The police said: the Good News Mission Church, the Evangelical Church of Christ, and the International Dega Church in the Central Highland have been working to overthrow the Vietnamese government using the guise of religion.

¹⁶ This information was provided by some church members in mid-2022.

The police showed films about asylum seekers in Thailand and Cambodia. The police said: See? Y Bham Ênuôl and Ksor Kok died in exile. No villager shall follow Y Sác Mlô because his group works to undermine the government - due to their lack of education. You villagers must be careful when using Facebook because Facebook contains many reactionary articles which tell lies to undermine the security and order in villages. They plot to overthrow the Vietnamese government. No villager shall listen to those reactionaries in Thailand such as Y Quynh Bdap, Y Pher Hdruê, and Y Arôn Êban who are with MSFJ (MSFJ), or Pastors Y Hin Niê, A Ga and Y Duên Bdap in the US.

Even ECVN-South members are subjected to public denunciation for stepping out of the boundaries set by local government authorities.

Deacon Y Bhen Mlô, a member of ECVN-South, deviated from government policy by observing the UN International Day of 22 August 2022 to commemorate victims of violence based on religion or beliefs. On 31 August 2022, he was subjected to a public denunciation in Trăp Village, Đắk Lắk Province. At the public denunciation, the vice chairman of the commune said that Y Bhen Mlô and Y Nêp Niê held a sign when observing 22 August 2022, in opposition to the Vietnamese government. Nobody should be enticed by bad people living abroad into observing the UN Day commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief. (Source: report submitted to the Special Rapporteur in November 2022).

In many instances, ECVN-South pastors have been found to take part in public denunciations, leading the way for government officials and some villagers hand-picked by the police to verbally abuse and humiliate leaders of independent house churches.

On 21 October 2022, Evangelist Y Krêc Byă was forced to attend a public denunciation session at his village. The government convened over 200 villagers for the denunciation against the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands. Ms. H'Kao Knul, member of the Security Police of Buôn Đôn District, falsely accused the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands of being a front for establishing a separate Montagnard State. She then condemned Pastor A Ga, this church's founder who lives in the United States, to be the instigator. She warned that the government will use the law to punish those who joined this church, and declared that Evangelist Y Krêc Byă was being investigated by the police for this. Pastor Y Čuah Hđők of ECVN-South accused that the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands was guilty of disobeying God and the Vietnamese government and that its members who refused to join ECVN-South would not be accepted by God in Heaven. He went on to claim that only ECVN-South is loyal to the Vietnamese government and never collaborates with foreign opponents of the Vietnamese State.

Using ECVN-South to target independent house churches was not an aberration of the local or district government authorities. On 4 February, 2023, ECVN-South Pastor Nay Sia appeared on the television program of the Police Department of Đắk Lắk Province to accuse leaders of the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands of "taking advantage of religion for political purposes, disturb the lives of citizens, to undermine beliefs... Their goal is to overthrow the government and establish a Dega state."¹⁷ On 18 June 2023, only a week after a shooting incident in Đắk Lắk Province that caused the death of some local government employees and police

¹⁷ Vạch bộ mặt phản động của "Hội thánh Tin lành Đấng Christ Tây Nguyên" (Unmasking the reactionary face of the "Church of Evangelical Christs in the Central Highlands"), AN-TT Đắk Lắk, 4 February 2023, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_9S8cx7EyA

officers, this video was posted again, likely to imply that the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands must bear responsibility for the violent act of 11 June 2023.¹⁸

- Policies of the Party and the State

On 4 February, 2023, the same day the Police Department of Đắk Lắk Province featured ECVN-South Pastor Nay Sia on its television program, the Ministry of Public Security also aired practically the same propaganda piece under a slightly different title: “Unmasking the malicious conspiracy of the reactionary organization 'Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands'”,¹⁹ which featured the same ECVN-South Pastor Nay Sia attacking the said house church. It carried an almost identical content as the aforementioned television program aired by the Police Department of Đắk Lắk, also on 4 February 2023. The decision to use ECVN-South as a tool to set the stage for an all-out attack on the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands stemmed from State policy and carried out by the Government of Đắk Lắk Province.

The Ministry of Public Security repackaged this propaganda piece for its daily news program, also broadcasted on 4 February, 2023, but with a title that more directly reflected the policy at the highest level of government: to eliminate the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands, which is also the conclusion of this and the aforementioned television programs:

“In fact, for a long time in the Central Highlands, the life of religious freedom and pure belief has always been facilitated by the State Party and authorities at all levels. Particularly for Protestantism (in the Central Highlands), the Vietnamese State has only recognized five organizations, including the Evangelical Church of Vietnam - South, the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Christian Missionary Church, and the Evangelical Christian Church. And of course, the reactionary organizations disguised as religion under names such as the Evangelical Church of Christ of Vietnam and the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands need to be eliminated, need to be boycotted by the community.”²⁰

The persecution against Montagnard Christians emanates from policies of the Communist Party and central government through the Central Highlands Steering Committee which set policies for the State to implement in the Central Highlands up until its dissolution by the VCP Central Committee in 2017 and in July 2020, Decision No. 352/QĐ-UBND on Project on continuing tasks for ethnic minorities and mountainous areas (from the 3 former steering committees - Northwestern, Central Highlands, and Southwestern).²¹ The continuous targeting of independent Montagnard Christians shows that nothing has changed much. Previously, the Ministry of Public

¹⁸<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NP03Tb9vNtE>

¹⁹ Vạch mặt âm mưu thâm độc của tổ chức phản động 'Hội thánh Tin lành đấng Christ Tây Nguyên' (Unmasking the malicious conspiracy of the reactionary organization 'Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands'), An Ninh TV,

²⁰ Cần loại bỏ tổ chức phản động Hội Thánh Tin lành đấng Christ Tây Nguyên (Need to eliminate the reactionary organization Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands), Public Security Television, 4 February, 2023, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7Cvo36N0Yk&t=88s>

²¹ For information about how Central Highlands Steering Committee tasks were re-designated after 2017, see: <https://luatvietnam.vn/co-cau-to-chuc/quyet-dinh-352-qd-ubdt-2020-de-an-tiep-nhan-nhiem-vu-cong-tac-dan-toc-va-mien-nui-186333-d1.html>

Security used its Central Highlands Security Bureau (PA 90) to coordinate the implementation of policies set by the Central Highlands Steering Committee. Now, government websites still carry articles praising PA 90 suppressive operations.²²

Government websites associated with the Public Security Ministry and Prime Minister's office discuss very explicitly the need to "eradicate the evil cults" -- the official characterization of the various unapproved Montagnard Christian denominations that have been so thoroughly persecuted. In the sections that follow, some Vietnamese government websites are listed, but the links are no longer operational. After BPSOS posted a report proposing the Global Magnitsky sanction against the late Police General Trần Đại Quang, former Minister of Public Security and then President of Vietnam, the government removed several of his articles from government websites and "sanitized" some others, but BPSOS captured the images of several such articles. Appendix 3 includes an original article that was later sanitized to hide the actual repression policy set by the central government, with images captured by BPSOS before it was sanitized. Appendix 3 also traces the origins of the policy to suppress religious freedom in Montagnard communities, regardless of the subsequent removal of incriminating materials from government websites.

Articles such as the one titled "Those who rescue the people from darkness", dated February 27, 2015, and published on Public Security Minister Quang's website: "...When I arrived in the Central Highlands, our task of rescuing the people from the evil Hà Môn cult²³ was accomplished only recently. The Security Team of the Police Force of the Town of Kontum performed deeds that were representative of the indefatigable efforts of security forces throughout the Central Highlands in our fight against reactionary enemy forces disguised as ethnic religious groups..."²⁴

Equally explicit material was in another article by the Public Security Ministry:

"Through 10 years of growth and combating the enemy, a more mature Ethnic Communities Security Office (PA90) of Gia Lai Province, in coordination with the local government and the people, has derailed plots by the reactionary FULRO and contributed to the security of the region. From 2004 on, the Office has unmasked and dealt with several FULRO organizations, 'Dega Evangelical Church', and established 3 projects to end FULRO elements' operation out of the forest. The Office captured 12 Hà Môn Cult adherents, convinced 69 fugitives to give themselves up, made substantial progress in resolving the Hà Môn Cult issue, and achieved several other unheralded successes.

"With its outstanding results, PA90 has been honored 4 times with the President's Order of Merit while its employees have been honored with several other awards from the President, the Prime Minister, and other officials."²⁵

In July 2021, the police coordinated simultaneous, pre-dawn raids of a dozen homes belonging to targeted house church leaders and their followers. To terrorize them, police officers put manacles and even leg shackles on the victims' limbs and kept them at police stations until late evening. Their purpose was to shut down the house churches and direct all to join registered churches such

²² <https://cand.com.vn/Truyen-thong/Nhung-nguoi-linh-anh-hung-chong-Fulro-i350223/>

²³ This sect is a Catholic offshoot of Catholicism. Members worship Mary - the mother of Jesus.

²⁴ <http://trandaiquang.org/nhung-nguoi-cuu-dan-ra-khoi-bong-toi-u-me.html> (Vietnam has removed this article; its screenshots were preserved by BPSOS).

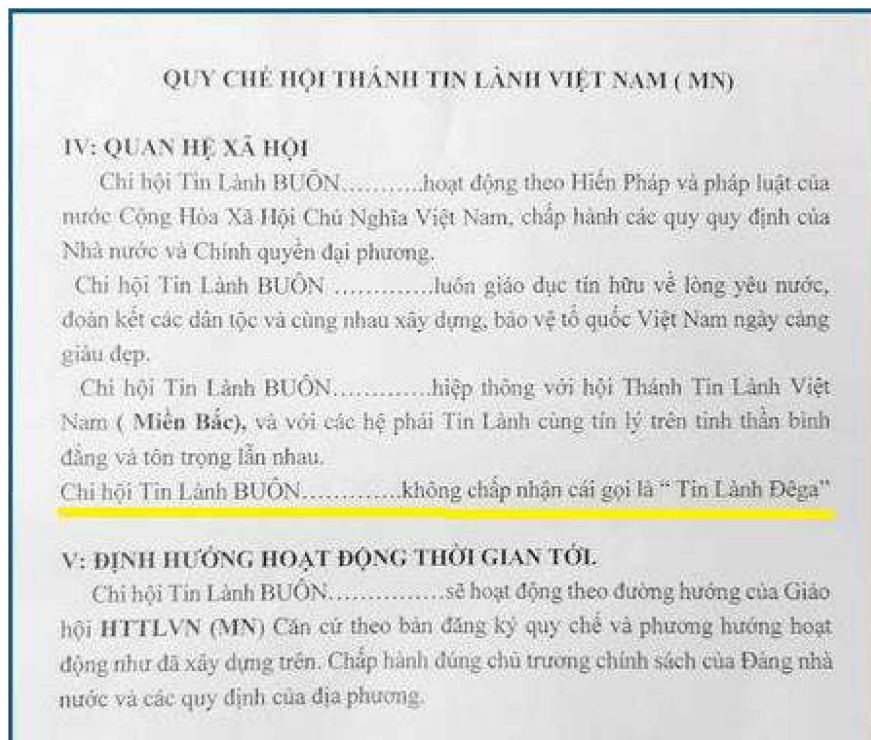
²⁵ Heroes in the battle against FULRO, Văn Nghệ Công An, 13 May 2015, available at:

<http://vnca.cand.com.vn/Truyen-thong/Nhung-nguoi-linh-anh-hung-chong-Fulro-350266/>

as ECVN - South. This series of violations is in Appendix 1, Recent religious incident reports for Montagnards submitted to the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief.

- ECVN-South publicly boycotting independent house churches

The government has increasingly pressed members of unaffiliated Montagnard house churches to join ECVN-South. At the same time, ECVN-South has launched a campaign to explicitly boycott the Dega Protestant Church, a network of independent house churches. The Vietnamese government has deleted many incriminating articles, videos, and other evidence formerly found online, but we came across a page from a document (date unknown, shown below) on the bylaws of a village branch of ECVN-South.



ECVN – South. Page from a document specifying obligations of affiliates at the village level, which includes boycotting Dega Protestantism and following government policy.²⁶

In the above document, ECVN-South imposed the requirement on all its members to “not acknowledge the so-called ‘Dega Protestantism’,” thus violating Article 22 of ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, Article 18 of International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, and provisions 1-3 of Article 5 of Vietnam’s 2016 Law on Belief and Religion:

Prohibited acts:

1. Discriminating and stigmatizing people for beliefs or religions.

²⁶ According to Human Rights Watch, this protestantism “combines aspirations for independence and the particular type of evangelical Christianity many highlanders practice. Montagnard preachers often use Biblical stories of the lost tribes of Israel and the promised land to illustrate the political struggle for independence”. <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/vietnam/viet0402-08.htm>

2. Forcing others to follow or not to follow, bribing others into following or not following, or hindering others in following or not following a belief or religion.

3. Profaning a belief or religion.

Furthermore, this regulation undermines the “rule of law” principle and allows local authorities to impose their arbitrary interpretation of the national law. Namely, ECVN-South’s regulation requires its affiliates to “comply with the policies of the Party and State and the regulations of local authorities.” As explained before, the policies of the Party and State are to outlaw and eliminate unaffiliated Montagnard house churches while regulations of local authorities are often arbitrary and at times violate national law.

- Escalation of repressive policies

Since July 2022, the central government’s Decree No. 144/2021/NĐ-CP on administrative violation penalties has been used more and more by the local government in an escalation of the repression of independent Montagnard Christian house churches.²⁷

On April 8, 2023 the police of Đắk Lắk Province arrested Evangelist Y Krêc Byă as he was hosting an Easter vigil service at his home. All fellow church members were ordered to leave except eight male members were taken into temporary police custody, where they were forced to denounce Y Krêc Byă on video before being released. On the same day, the Police Department of Đắk Lắk Province announced criminal prosecution against Y Krêc Byă for “sabotaging the State’s national unity policy” under Article 116 of Vietnam’s Penal Code, which may carry a sentence of up to 15 years in prison. The Government appears to have interpreted his steadfast refusal to join ECVN-South as an act of disunity with this state-sanctioned church.

On the same day that the Police Department of Đắk Lắk Province initiated criminal prosecution against Y Krêc Byă, it also announced criminal prosecution against Pastor A Ga, in absentia under the same charge of “sabotaging the State’s national unity policy.” Pastor A Ga is the founder of the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands and a resident of Raleigh, North Carolina. According to Freedom House’s 2022 report on transnational repression, he has been a target of MPS.

After the two shooting incidents in Ea Ktur and Ea Tieu communes, Chu Quynh District, Đắk Lắk Province that left 9 government officials and citizens dead, the government mounted a mass crackdown against Montagnards that involved arbitrary beatings, arrest, and detention. The government encouraged or condoned Vietnamese civilians to play vigilante against Montagnards. Local authorities took advantage of the situation to aggressively force members of independent house churches to join ECVN-South or they would be accused of taking part in terrorism, and arrested and imprisoned.

For example, Y Dương Bkrông from Phong Village, Êa Tul Commune, Cư M’gar District, Đắk Lắk Province.²⁸

²⁷ Clause 4.c, Article 7, Decree No. 144/2021/NĐ-CP dated 31 December 2021 for penalties for administrative violations related to public security, social order, social security, social vices, fire prevention and fire fighting, primary responders, and preventing and combating domestic violence

²⁸ Report submitted to Special Rapporteur FoRB on 18 July 2023

On June 20th, he and his family members rode in his truck to Cũ Dliê Mnông, 6 km from home to find fallen timber to make a fire with. He was wearing fatigues because many Montagnard farmers wear these durable garments when doing heavy farm work.

Around 1 pm, five dozen riot police officers arrested him, beat his wife who tried to stop them, and carried him away in a transport truck. Later, he realized that they had brought him to the station of the Police of Buôn Ma Thuột City because the shooting incidents in Cũ Kuin District had taken place only 30 km from his home. The police beat him cruelly, thinking he was involved with the terrorists who killed government personnel on 11 June 2023.

Police interrogators punched and used batons to brutally beat him to force him to admit that he had supplied weapons to those who shot dead several victims. He wept and begged them to stop. The more he wept, the harder they beat him. They injected a drug in his back, then continued to question him. He said in desperation and pain: even if you imprisoned me and let me die in prison, or if you killed me now, the truth is I have nothing to do with those terrorists.”

On 20 August, 2023, he shared his experience with the UN Special Rapporteur on FORB at an event hosted by BPSOS to mark the International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief. Please see the medical analysis of Mr. Y Duong Bkrong’s health condition after being injected with an unknown drug that send along this report as appendix 1.

- Montagnard Christians are targeted for their religious beliefs. Women who belong to this indigenous group are being targeted and oppressed by the government in a different way.

a) Female members of targeted ethno-religious communities include, among others, Montagnards who live primarily in the Central Highlands of Vietnam and Hmongs who live primarily in the northern provinces of Vietnam. Ms. H Ik Kbuor, a Montagnard woman, refuses to join the government-controlled Evangelical Church of Vietnam - South, even after Evangelist Y Krec Bya, her husband, was unjustly detained and prosecuted in early April 2023. This couple’s home has been used for religious services by the local followers of the banned Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands.

Extracts from past reports submitted to SR-ForB in recent years: Ms. H Ik Kbuor, Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands.

9 October 2023, Ms. H IK Kbuôr, Cũr Knia 2 Village, Êa Bar Commune, Buôn Đôn District. Evangelist Y Krêc Byă, her husband, is in detention awaiting trial for his lawful religious practice. At 8 am she arrived at the police station as requested, to be interrogated by Tư Đức Bình. They accused her church of being a front for opposing the government, asked about religious practice led by Y Yuan Byă (who replaced detained Y Krec Byă), ordered her to leave the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands, stop all contact with Pastor A Ga, and sign a pledge to follow their orders. They released her at close to 5 pm.

From 15 November 2023 to present, Ms. H IK KBUôr (wife of Evangelist Y Krêc Byă who is being detained and prosecuted), Cũr Knia 2 Village, Êa Bar Commune, Buôn Đôn District, Đắk Lắk Province

The police have been monitoring her home on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings to stop her fellow church members from participating in religious service at her home. The police even park a van in front of her home as a warning that they would arrest and drive victims to detention centers should they dare assemble for religious service. This shows that the charge of “sabotaging national solidarity” against her husband is nothing more than punishment for not joining a government-controlled religious organization.

On 15 November 2023: Ms. H Ik Kbuôr, Čuôr Knia 2 Village, Êa Bar Commune, Buôn Đôn District, Đắk Lắk Province.

More than 20 Security Police officers arrived at the home of H Ik Kbuôr (wife of detained Evangelist Y Krêc Byă) at 7 pm on Wednesday 15 November to stop a dozen Montagnard Christians from participating in the religious service. Security Police of Buôn Đôn District, Mr. Y Thê Knul, threatened to have all detained unless they stopped. The police also monitored her during the UN Special Rapporteur’s visit, before this incident.

17 November 2023, H IK Kbuôr, Čuôr Knia Village 2. Êa Bar Commune, Buôn Đôn

At 8 am she arrived at the government center of Êa Bar Commune to be interrogated about the religious service held at her home on 15 November 2023, and ordered her to join the registered Evangelical Church of Vietnam - South. She remained silent, but had to sign the interrogation report and pledge prepared by the police.

29 November 2023, Ms. H IK Kbuôr, Cuôr Knia 2 Village, Buôn Đôn District

She tried to visit her detained husband - Evangelist Y Krêc Byă - but the police asked her to leave the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands first, before they allowed her to see him. That evening, several police officers wanted to enter her home. She did not let them in. The police chased away her fellow believers who tried to visit her.

5 December 2023, Ms. H IK Kbuôr, Cuôr Knia 2 Village, Êa Bar Commune, Buôn Đôn District, Đắk Lắk

She came to the station of the police of Buôn Đôn District as requested, to be interrogated by Phạm Hoàng Minh, security investigation team.

Police: we kept warning you about remaining with the Evangelical Church, but you continue to break the law by not joining the registered Evangelical Church of Vietnam - South. Do you want to go to prison?

Reply: We don’t disrupt public order or attack the government. We won’t stop our religious practice, whether the government agrees or not.

Police: We can arrest you anytime, like now. We will never allow you to visit your husband in detention until you leave your banned house church.

They let her leave at 7 pm, but many government persons passed back and forth near her home to intimidate her.

b) Victim Ms. H Lisa Nie, born in 2000, is a mother of a young child living with 8 other relatives in a shack. Her husband, a member of Montagnards Stand for Justice (MSFJ), fled to Thailand and has been working with Boat People SOS to help Montagnard Christians and Montagnard victims of human trafficking (at the end of this document are some messages and documents on Montagnard victims of human trafficking from H Lisa).

Ms. H Lisa Nie and her family - Montagnard Christians living in the Central Highlands of Vietnam - have been persecuted for many years because they refuse to join the government-controlled Evangelical Church of Vietnam - South. Police and government set up monitoring stations near their home, follow family members around, deny their requests for needed government documents,

arrest family members for interrogation without prior notice, enter their home whenever they choose to intimidate them, seize their cell phones for unlawful examination of private information, subject them to public denunciation sessions, and stop them at the airport when they were ready to board flights to visit relatives in neighboring countries or attend regional conferences on freedom of religion or belief and meet with UN and western government representatives.

On 26 February 2023, the police talked to her employer about her “anti-State, reactionary activities” to pressure him to fire her from her low pay job (7 USD per day). Yesterday the police stood near her home to prevent her from going to work for another employer (she lost that potential work assignment because he had to hire someone else).

In mid-March 2023, she and her daughter were about to fly to Thailand with other travelers in a tour group when airport police stopped them and handed them to police officers from her Central Highlands province. The provincial security police interrogated her about the arrangement for her guided tour, the source of the money, her online training by Boat People SOS on Vietnamese and international law, including the plan of peaceful action developed in consultation with human rights organizations - using Vietnamese law and international advocacy to claim their rights to religious freedom. The police had already read the plan from other sources and quizzed her on the status of each milestone from the lawful, non-violent plan. They took back the travel ban order issued by the airport police to hide this persecution evidence.

Further, the constant presence of the police is very stressful for the family, particularly the 3-year old daughter of H Lisa. The child is scared of the police and cries a lot each time they show up.

19 March 2023: H Lisa Niê at her home in Êa Kăp Village, Êa Sin Commune, Krông Búk District, Đắk Lắk Province

A large group of police officers entered their home, terrifying members of the family, especially her three-year old daughter and two other school-age children. H Lisa was terrified, too. The police intimidated the family and left. This and similar past incidents are unlawful and traumatic for the victims. H Lisa is constantly fearful of being arrested and sent to prison.

13, 14 March 2023: H Lisa Niê and three-year-old H Phêby Êban from Êa Kăp Village
11/03/2023, they left Đắk Lắk at 2 a.m., arrived at Ho Chi Minh City at 3 p.m., stayed in a hotel. On 13 March, left hotel for Tân Sơn Nhất Airport. At 11 a.m., she and the rest of the tour group checked their baggage and received tickets. Around noon, they stood in line. Airport police came and took her plane tickets, passport, and the birth certificate of her daughter. She quickly called her father, Evangelist Y Sắc Mlô, to inform him of the incident. The police took her to the Immigration and Foreign Travel Management Office at the airport. Three police officers stayed in the room with her while two others sat outside the room. On 13 March, at 10 p.m., police officers from Đắk Lắk came and brought them back. Around 7 a.m. on 14 March, they arrived in Đắk Lắk and she was led into an interrogation room of the security police of the provincial police department. They asked her many questions about the financing and planning for her Thailand tour, her voluminous reporting of violations to international human rights organizations for reporting to the UN and international community, the peaceful action plan for her local group involving training on the use of cell phones and the internet, Vietnamese law, international covenants, how to collect information for UN reports, need for milestones useful to tracking progress of advocacy projects, etc. They also claimed that Boat People SOS, Montagnards Stand for Justice, and the other human rights organizations schemed to defame the Vietnamese Government. They still have her cell phone.

10 March 2023, around 6 a.m., four police officers from the Police of Krông Búk District and police force of the commune came and monitored her home until the evening. A family in the neighbourhood had some work for her, but she dared not venture outside and therefore lost a day's earnings because the would-be employer had to hire someone else to do the work.

H Lisa called the chief of police of Êa Sin Commune about strangers standing near her home from early morning, telling him that one of the men was named Phúc. The chief told her “not to worry”.

26 February 2023, police officers talked to a family whose cropland provided seasonal employment for H Lisa Niê. They told this employer that H Lisa Niê was being watched by police in the province because she intends to oppose and undermine the Vietnamese State. She had been employed from October 2022 by this property owner to water and fertilise crops (primarily macadamia and jackfruit), dig trenches, plant seedlings, trim branches, remove weeds, among other tasks. She was also paid to watch the employer's home when they went somewhere for a few days. At times, they paid her to clean the house. This job was at least a reliable source of income for her family.

Latest incidents: March 2023 to 3 April 2023, the significantly reduced hiring by local employers - after the police told them to not hire members of the family headed by Evangelist YSM because they “sabotage government policy of national unity” - and continued police presence near their shack resulted in her (HLN, a daughter of YSM) decision to escape, although the police still kept her cell phone and passport after they interrogated her in mid-March 2023 (travel ban event described earlier). She could no longer support her large family and the risk to her was higher. She and her young daughter arrived in Thailand in the afternoon of 5 April 2023. Born in 2000, resided in Krong Buk District, Dak Lak Province before fleeing to Bangkok.

2.2 Land grabbing

Most Montagnard households are significantly poorer than the average Vietnamese household. Although the National Assembly recently promulgated a resolution aiming to have agricultural companies give back some land to ethnic families, typically the land returned to the people is of poor quality or too far from where they live, according to Professor Đặng Hùng Võ, formerly vice minister of Natural Resources and the Environment. He said that the lack of suitable cropland is a key issue for poverty-stricken ethnic communities in remote areas.²⁹

While internet accessibility has been increasing rapidly, gender inequality has not improved much, with female workers working abroad more likely to become victims of human trafficking.³⁰ Many such victims were rescued and repatriated, but have received no assistance from the government, and most of the culprits have not been prosecuted.³¹

- The Lam Dong Authority, in collaboration with the C47 bidder, orchestrated the confiscation of lands in K'Ren Hamlet on the 20th February 2023 under the pretext of the Ta Hoet water catchment project. However, evidence has surfaced indicating an ulterior motive: the subsequent sale of the seized lands to the Han Viet Company for the construction of a golf course and holiday resort. This raises concerns about corruption, lack of transparency, and the blatant disregard for the rights of the indigenous people.

²⁹ https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/is-the-policy-to-support-ethnic-minorities-effective-07162021125555.html

³⁰ <https://www.iwgia.org/en/vietnam/4659-iw-2022-vietnam.html>

³¹ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-trafficking-in-persons-report/vietnam/>

The K'Ho indigenous people, predominantly Evangelists and Catholics, faced significant challenges during the land clearing process. Religious leaders were coerced by the Authority to convince their followers to surrender their lands. Despite opposition from some local religious guilds, the authority persistently pressured the residents through Sunday services. Approximately 110 households were directly affected, with 76 households expected to be impacted later.

Importantly, the K'Ho people, forcibly evicted from their homes and farmlands, have received minimal resettlement assistance and financial compensation. The compensation offered by the authority was lower than initially claimed, with residents only receiving VND 170 million (approx. 7000USD) per 1000 m² for residential land and VND 20 million (approx. 800USD) per 1000 m² for agricultural land. Only 30% of the impacted households have received their compensation so far, and those without proper land documents were only compensated for their agricultural lands. The lack of proper resettlement plans and fair compensation further exacerbates their vulnerabilities, leaving them marginalized and disenfranchised.

Children and women protested against land confiscation were beaten and hospitalized. Please see the excerpt in the attached report. [UNPO: UNPO and Montagnards Community Report: Land Confiscation and Injustice against K'Ho Indigenous People in K'Ren Hamlet, Lam Dong Province, Vietnam](#)

[2825.pdf \(unpo.org\)](#)

- On September 2, 2022 Forest rangers from Gia Lai province went to Plei Hla village, Ia Hla commune, Chu Puh District to force activist Siu Nan to sign a land allocation paper to the authorities, when he did not sign them, they beat him and continue to grab the land to get revenge on him for having met with the US consulate delegation to report on his community's religious freedom and human rights situation

Buon Ja Wam Forestry One Member Limited Liability Company was assigned by the local government of Dak Lak province, Cu Mgar district to 6,940 hectares of forest and forest land in the two communes of Ea Kiet and Ea Kuêh in 1993. In 1996, this unit signed a contract to subcontract to local households with an area of 400 hectares of land for cultivation, and collect products every year. However, since 2016, many households have stopped submitting products, leading the company to file a lawsuit requesting the court to demand people to pay debts and return land.

In 2018, this company filed a lawsuit against 13 households for not fulfilling their contractual obligations to lease the property.

In March 2022, hundreds of farmers in Cu M' Gar District for several days continuously protested against land acquisition. Ede indigenous people in Ea Kiet commune, Cu M'Gar district, Dak Lak province gathered to raise slogans to claim land use rights.

A resident in village 11, Ea Kiet commune, said on condition of anonymity for safety reasons, about the reason why people stopped paying contracts:

“People are now standing up to fight for their rights because they realize that this company is deceiving people. Because, as we have understood, when you have linked up with each other

to do business, you have to invest capital for people, then people will have annual income to pay taxes, pay the output to the company. But on the contrary, the company did not invest a single grain of fertilizer or a drop of water, or any technology, but collected annual output from the people. Then, if any household did not meet the deadline to submit its output to the company every year, the company sends people to their home to harass and threaten. In some cases, people were not able to deliver output in time to the company, they beat people to the extent of 20, 30 percent injuries, but in the end, the government could not handle anything. Because the people realize that there is a certain group of interests behind this company, they are covering up for this company. This company is clearly wrong, but the government did not help us, so we do not know whom should we call to, and the people had to suffer slavery.”

In an article in the online newspaper Enterprise Integration in 2018, Mr. Phan Quoc Tan, Deputy General Director of Buon Ja Wam Forestry One Member Limited Liability Company, said that the reason people stopped submitting products was "incited by wrongful subjects".

<https://doanhnghiepv.vn/kinh-doanh/doanh-nghiep-lam-nghiep-buon-ja-wam-va-nhung-vu-kien-gay-xon-xao-du-luan/2020033110575830>.

[Đắc Lắc: Nông dân biểu tình phản đối công ty lâm trường vì không chịu “cảnh nô lệ” — Tiếng Việt \(rfa.org\)](#)

- On April 21, 2023, the indigenous Ede people in Ea Bhok commune Cu Kuin district protested against a project to discharge waste into the lake, dozens of riot police were dispatched to suppress them, causing many injuries and arrests. According to the authorities of Dak Lak province, the project of the Drainage System of the Administrative Center of Cu Kuin District was implemented to bring rainwater from the district's agencies into Ea M'ta Lake, Ea Bhok commune. However, the people around the lake opposed the project because they feared that wastewater would be discharged into the lake along with rainwater, which could cause environmental pollution as well as flooding in the area near the lake.

On April 20 and 21, dozens of riot police with batons and shields arrived on several troop carriers to suppress the people and help carry out the final part of the project. Dozens of riot police clashed with local people holding red flags with yellow stars and most of them were women, who wanted to prevent the implementation of the project. These people live in village 5 and Ea M'ta village, Ea Bhok commune.

A woman said anonymously for security reasons. Three people were hospitalized and discharged on April 24, while those arrested at the police station were released on the same day of April 21 after having to write a pledge not to oppose the project, if they oppose again they will be arrested and imprisoned. The project continued to be implemented because people were not allowed to approach.

On April 20, the local authorities expressed their determination to carry out the remaining part of the project, considering any action that obstructs the construction as illegal. According to

state media, the authorities warned that they would severely punish those who opposed, but did not mention anything about the crackdown on April 21, 2023.

[Biểu tình đòi ngưng dự án xả thải ở Đắk Lắk: Người Ê-đê bị Cảnh sát đánh đập — Tiếng Việt \(rfa.org\)](https://www.rfa.org)

2.3. Political view

a) Targeting MSFJ in aftermath of the June 11, 2023 shootings in Dak Lak Province

Montagnards Stand for Justice (MSFJ) was founded in 2018 by four Montagnards seeking asylum in Thailand to help train Montagnards in Vietnam on Vietnamese and international laws, civil society, Vietnam's obligations under international treaties and covenants, and how to collect information and prepare reports on religious persecution to the United Nations and international community. These four co-founders are:

- 1) Y Phic Hdok, a UNHCR-recognized refugee who is currently in the United States
- 2) Y Quynh Bdap, a UNHCR-recognized refugee still in Thailand. All his family members also have refugee status except for his younger brother Y Yohan Bdap, who has been in Thailand for five years but has not received a refugee status determination (RSD) interview.
- 3) Y Pher Hdrue, an asylum seeker in the RSD process
- 4) Y Aron Eban, an asylum seeker in the RSD process

MSFJ, incorporated as a non-profit organization in the United States, serves as a liaison to the international community for Montagnard communities at risk of political and religious persecution inside Vietnam. The organization also facilitates the training of Montagnard Christians in Vietnam about identifying and reporting human rights violations. MSFJ members have attended many international forums to highlight the persecution faced by Montagnards in Vietnam, including the annual Ministerial on International Religious Freedom hosted by the US Department of State, the annual Southeast Asia Freedom of Religion or Belief (SEAFORB) Conferences co-hosted by BPSOS and its civil society partners, and the annual International Religious Freedom Summit hosted by a coalition of some 80 civil society organizations (CSOs).

An ongoing activity involves MSFJ providing timely reports on religious persecution in Vietnamese to BPSOS for BPSOS to translate and submit to the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the US Department of State. The US Department of State's 2023 International Religious Freedom Report acknowledged that BPSOS reported 92 human rights violations targeting Montagnards in Vietnam's Central Highlands in 2022; the vast majority of these violations were documented by MSFJ.

Since 2021, MSFJ has worked with BPSOS to identify Montagnards trafficked to Saudi Arabia and Cambodia. Scores of them have been rescued and repatriated as a result. The UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children has initiated multiple joint allegation letters to the Government of Vietnam regarding cases documented by MSFJ.

Over the past four years, the Vietnamese government authorities in the Central Highlands of Vietnam where most Montagnards live have been falsely alleging and condemning MSFJ for "anti-state" activities with the aim to establish an independent Montagnard ("Dega") nation in

the Central Highlands.

The danger to MSFJ members has intensified in the aftermath of two attacks on 11 June by armed Montagnards which caused the death of several police and government personnel in Dak Lak Province³². MSFJ immediately issued a statement denouncing the violence³³.

Despite the statement and the absence of any evidence linking MSFJ to the attacks, the Government of Vietnam continues to link the organization to the shootings. The Ministry of Public Security's (MPS) official media outlets have recycled old television programs and publications targeting MSFJ, and added photos of the Montagnards who were arrested for suspected involvement in the recent shootings to create the false impression that somehow MSFJ was tied to these violent incidents. While MPS initially abstained from directly implicating MSFJ, government-friendly social media explicitly accused MSFJ of being the instigator of these attacks. Moreover, Police officer Y Thiep Kpa is the Deputy Captain of Vice Captain of the Reconnaissance Squad Number 2 in the Department of Ethnic Security of the Dak Lak Provincial Public Security. Disclosed that Dak Lak provincial police clearly knew MSFJ was not involved and had nothing to do with the shooting, but still targeted them just because they want to take revenge on their work, because they have exposed the government wrongdoing on social media, so they did to BPSOS.

On 21 June, the Police of Chu Se District, Dak Lak Province implicated that MSFJ was responsible for the 11 June violent incidents, via an article published on its official Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/conganhuyenchuse/posts/pfbid02WDM8SpKc5nQaPWhdnv64doGYGg3cE9zNVGZAcajPLeo2hkGXWfngdxS6FjAyan5el>. The article specifically named Y Quynh Bdap and Y Phic Hdok and displayed the photo of Y Pher Hdrue crossed out with a large, bold red X.

Furthermore, there are signs that the Government of Vietnam is actively monitoring Montagnard refugees in Thailand following those attacks. On 28 June, witnesses among the Montagnard refugee/asylum seeker community in Thailand reported seeing four individuals in black taking photographs of Montagnard parents as they picked up their children at the Sao Thong Hin School. The following day, Montagnards in the Bangyai area reported a man in black taking photos of their apartment complex and several of its Montagnard residents.

On 4 July, at 11:30am the police in Vietnam came to the residence of Y Quynh Bdap's parents, forcing them to identify their son from a line-up of six individuals. His father was then made to sign a form acknowledging that he had positively identified Y Quynh Bdap. This appears to be the first step in the process of criminal prosecution of a suspect in absentia.

On 7 July, the MPS published on its official website the article titled "BPSOS blatantly slandered and misrepresented facts after the terrorist attacks in Dak Lak", wherein the MPS attacked

³² <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/prosecute-06232023145504.html>

³³ <https://www.facebook.com/MSFJUSTICES>

BPSOS and identified MSFJ and ECCCH as two organizations “led by expatriates living in Thailand” that are in the MPS’ crosshairs. The article reported that on 20 June MPS Deputy Minister Nguyen Van Long met with the Department of Prisons Director of Thailand’s Ministry of Justice to “effectively implement the ‘Agreement on Transfer of Convicts and Cooperation in Criminal Judgment Execution’” signed by Vietnam and Thailand in 2010. This meeting may signal heightened risks for Montagnard refugees and asylum seekers in Thailand.

b) Targeting female human rights defenders in aftermath of the June 11, 2023 shootings in Dak Lak Province

- H Tlun Bdap, (nickname: Sani) came from a Montagnard Protestant family in Cu Kuin District, Dak Lak Province, Vietnam, whose livelihood is farming (coffee and rice). Several of her family members joined the large-scale Central Highlands protest in 2004 to demand religious freedom and other equal treatments of Montagnards. They were beaten, tortured, and imprisoned.

Montagnards Stand for Justice (MSFJ) was founded in 2018 by four Montagnards seeking asylum in Thailand to help train Montagnards in Vietnam on Vietnamese and international laws, civil society, Vietnam’s obligations under international treaties and covenants, and how to collect information and prepare reports on religious persecution to the United Nations and international community.

H Tlun is a member of Montagnards Stand for Justice - MSFJ. Currently, many Vietnamese state media websites have posted many untrue videos, slandering our organization Montagnards Stand for Justice as a terrorist organization, after the shooting incidents in Dak Lak on June 11, 2023 despite Montagnard Stand For Justice group is a peaceful organization that guides their members, their communities, and other domestic communities on how to keep safe and learn civil society and Vietnamese law as taught by BPSOS and other NGOs. It is the Vietnamese Government which represses, arrests and harasses Montagnard religious believers, and accuses MSFJ of being a reactionary organization, while we are a civil society organization supporting people facing legal issues such as land confiscation and registration for religious practice. Taking advantage of the shooting incidents in Cu Kuin District on June 11, 2023, the government took action to suppress churches in the country and my family, slandering me and our MSFJ group as the ones behind it. After this incident, and using that as an excuse, they wanted to take revenge on MSFJ group and the opinion pages and some police pages posted on Southeast Asia Magazine, Facebook pages, and many other websites. "They blamed MSFJ - Y Quynh Bdap, Y Pher Hdue and 15 other members of MSFJ - for being a reactionary organization undermining and defaming villages in the Central Highlands". H Tlun Bdap is active in MSFJ, and she was told that the police would kidnap and take her to Vietnam because she was with FULRO (United Front for

the Liberation of Oppressed Races) in which she has never been involved in.

- H Biap Krong also known as Rebecca or Becky, is a Montagnard Christian. When still in high school, Ms. Krong started collecting information about imprisoned Montagnard Christian leaders to pass to an advocacy organization in Australia. She traveled to different villages in the Central Highlands to meet with family members of those prisoners of conscience. By 2016, she had collected information on over 400 cases when her advocacy work was discovered by the communist police. She left home, went into hiding and later fled to Thailand. She has been declared a refugee under the protection of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). She has spoken at many regional and international forums on the rights of women, minorities and indigenous peoples. In December 2018, she attended a consultation meeting with UN officials in Geneva ahead of the Universal Periodic Review for Vietnam. She twice traveled to the U.S. to meet with officials of the State Department and U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom. In December 2019, she was a panelist at the conference on freedom of religion or belief organized by the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) in Bali, Indonesia, speaking about the persecution faced by Hmong and Montagnard. On 21st December 2023, Public Security TV (ANTV) - Ministry of Public Security ANTV released a new that slandered and falsely accused MSFJ of being a terrorist and pointed out that Ms H Biap Krong is a member of MSFJ, even though H Biap Krong has never been a member of the MSFJ, and had more than 10 years of experience in peaceful human rights activism. However, the Vietnamese government took advantage of the opportunity after the shooting on June 11 to smear and attack her on the national social media to undermine the international community's trust in this strong female activist. Please see appendix 2 sent with this report.

3. The Shrinking Space of Civil Society

a) On December 5, 2023, the U.S. Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Mrs. Susan Burns visited Dak Lak Province of Vietnam, which is most known to be the home of indigenous peoples in the Central Highlands. A day before the visit of Mrs. Susan Burns, on December 4, 2023, the local authorities of Cu Kuin District sent countless law enforcement officers to Ea Khit Village, Ea Bhok Commune, Cu Kuin District, Dak Lak Province to severely monitor the villagers' movements and activities. The law enforcement officers not only watched the villagers but also approached activists in order to prevent them from meeting Mrs. Susan Burns, despite no meeting with activists from this particular village being on the agenda. Please see appendix 3

sent along with this report [Tổng lãnh sự Hoa Kỳ làm việc tại Đắk Lắk \(voatiengviet.com\)](http://voatiengviet.com).

On the same day of the visit of Mrs. Susan Burns, Mrs. Y Ruet Mlo, a Montagnard Christian activist, was working on the farm harvesting his coffee crop. He received a visit by the local authorities from the Cu Kuin District at the farm. Two police officers then requested him to return home under forceful action; he was told he would be punished if he refused to comply with the request [Chính quyền cảnh gác Y Ruet Mlo \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com).

b) A Facebook page under the name Krông Pắc Quê Tôi (Krong Pac My Homeland) [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) is believed to be managed by the internet commentators under the authorities' instruction, aiming at defaming the Montagnard communities, activists, Montagnard Christians, and their religious beliefs. In Vietnam, countless similar FB pages exist to defame the political dissidents and religious followers, and it is not difficult to tell who is running such pages.

On December 16, 2023, the FB page Krông Pắc Quê Tôi (Krong Pac My Homeland) made a post on its page containing a statement that says "The district police of Krong Pac launched a peak campaign to ensure security for the Lunar New Year of 2024" [CÔNG AN HUYỆN KRÔNG PẮC RA QUÂN THỰC HIỆN CAO... - Krông Pắc Quê Tôi | Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CongAnHuyenKrongPac). Although this post did not mention the prevention of Christmas celebration, it has been a threat to the people who live in this particular area, and as a result, many Christian communities were oppressed when celebrating Christmas.

c) On December 25, 2023, nine police officers from the District of Buon Don and Buon Ako Dung Village Administration Board visited Preacher Y Lem Mlo's home at Buon Ako Dung, Ea Enuol, Buon Don District, Dak Lak Province to demand him not to organize Christmas celebration because his church (the Church of Christ) was not permitted by the government to operate. The police forced preacher Y Lem Mlo and his family to follow the registered congregation, the ECVN – South, and said that if he refused to follow this congregation, they would confiscate his family and cast them out to live in exile abroad. The police then started to pull off the catalog of his congregation, which had the words "Merry Christmas 2023" written on it. [The video recorded when the church's catalog is being taken down]. Officers H Blen, Y Luong Kbuor, Nguyen Thi Phuc, Nguyen Thi Binh Chuong, Y Dong Nie, Tu Duc Binh, H Poly Eban, H Diep Bya, and H Ruc Bya then took the catalog with them and left <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/uVLAsxTor2foXNCu/?mibextid=qi2Omg>.

d) On December 20 and 23, 2023, at the residence of preacher Y Lak Bya in Buon Trap Village, Ea Drong Commune, Buon Ho Town, Dak Lak Province, two public security officers, Y Thep Nie and Y Si Nie, both from Buon Ho Town police department, investigated preacher Y Lak Bya about his religious and social activities. The officers lectured the preacher, telling him not to gather people in a crowded group at home to celebrate Christmas. They portrayed the Church of Christ, independent private churches, and Good News Mission Church as the congregations of reactionaries that were against the state and the communist party. Before leaving the congregation, the two officers reminded the preacher not to organize the Christmas day.

e) On December 23, 2023, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, three public security officers, Y Thep Nie, Ea Drong Commune public security officer, Y Si Nie, and Mr. Dung, the Buon Ho Town public security officers, visited preacher Y Blah Nie in Buon Hne Village, Ea Drong Commune, Buon Ho Town, Dak Lak Province. They questioned the preacher to find out whether he had traveled to other villages or not. The preacher replied "no" to their question. They added "yes, you should comply with the law, do not infringe", and when he asked them "what law did he infringe", they then told him that he needed to comply with the authorities and that he would not be allowed to gather people to celebrate Christmas day. They demanded him to follow the ECVN – South, and said that it was forbidden to follow unregistered churches.

4. Recommendations

UN mandate holders:

- UN Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures should conduct their independent investigation of government-created or controlled religious organizations being used by the Vietnamese government as its instruments of religious suppression, such as ECVN-South, ECVN-North, the Cao Dai Sect created by the government in 1997, and the Buddhist Church of Vietnam created by the government in 1981, among others.
- UN Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures should raise questions and concerns about the roles of government-created or controlled religious organizations, such as ECVN-South and ECVN-North, in their communications with the Vietnamese government and their reviews of Vietnam's compliance with UN conventions.
- UN Special Rapporteurs should communicate directly with ECVN-South and ECVN-North and request, as a first step, that they issue a policy statement denouncing forced renunciation of faith as a matter of principle and refusing to admit anyone who only join them as a result of duress or coercion.

- The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) should expedite the refugee status determination (RSD) process for Montagnards being targeted for transnational repression by the Vietnamese Government and the resettlement of those already recognized as refugees.

U.S. Government:

- The US Department of State's International Religious Freedom (IRF) Office should include the roles of non-state violators of religious freedom such as ECVN-South in its annual report on international religious freedom, and consider applying targeted sanctions against the leaders of such non-state violators.
- Delegations from IRF Office and USCIRF visiting Vietnam should meet with these non-state violators and communicate to them the ramifications of their gross violations of human rights, particularly the right of religious freedom, and with their victims to obtain supporting evidence of such human rights violations.
- The US Government should encourage the Vietnamese authorities to investigate and criminally prosecute these non-state actors for violating Vietnam's Law on Belief and Religion, particularly, for violating provisions 1-3 of Article 5 (Prohibited Acts) of Vietnam's 2016 Law on Belief and Religion and provisions in other laws, i.e., on anti-defamation and on infringing upon the interests of other citizens.

Other Governments (particularly key trading partners with Vietnam such as EU members and Japan):

- Engage Vietnam through periodic meetings on freedom of religion or beliefs in which country representatives ask Vietnam about a limited number of specific cases provided by NGOs
- Review the language of bilateral or multilateral trade agreements to ensure that a credible mechanism exists for encouraging Vietnam to do more to comply with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and seriously address the specific cases provided by NGOs.

5. Annexes

- a) Appendix 1** (Extracts from PDF file submitted along to this report) CCPR Report - Jan 2024 on Vietnam - Y Duong Bkrong - Medical Report

History and Physical Patient:

Y Duong Bkrong

Age 30

Date of Interview and Exam: 28/08/2023

History: Patient is a 30-year-old man from the central highlands' region of Vietnam. His social demographics are that he is a Protestant Êde Montagnard. I was asked to conduct a medical history and physical to facilitate his UNHCR application.

Patient reports baseline good health with no chronic diseases or medications. He reports that in the past few months the Vietnamese local police had pressured him to join the local state church. After refusing to leave his own religion, the patient was arrested from June 20-24th 2023 by the Vietnamese authorities after being accused of staging an uprising with a militia. The patient denies these accusations and says the uprising was actually performed by associates of the Vietnamese police to give cause for arrest.

During his four-day imprisonment, Mr. Duong describes being kept in isolation, being injected with medications which caused him to vomit and made him unable to eat, and being beaten with fists and blunt objects. He describes being injected with a medication into his back and being told that he would die from this injection in two years. The most horrific experience he describes was having his hands and ankles bound to each other by a system of ropes that would tighten if you moved to the point they would cause excruciating pain, cut off circulation to the limbs, and place unbearable tension on the joints. He describes being bound in this position for a day. From his description this sounds similar to the "Vietnamese rope trick" which was a torture implemented on prisoners of war during the Vietnam American War.

Since his imprisonment, Mr. Duong has relocated to Bangkok, Thailand as a refugee fleeing from religious persecution. He presently lives with his wife and two infant children in a single room without kitchen, shower, or toilet on the outskirts of Bangkok. In this room is a single padded cushion shared by the family of four. All of his possessions are visible in this room. There is a clothing rack with approximately 15 articles of clothing hanging on it. There is a small corner or some food items and baby bottles. There are two toys for the children on the floor. Our interview and physical was conducted on a thin bamboo mat on the floor which he took out for us as his only item of furniture.

PMHx:

None

PSHx:

Appendectomy 2013

PHx:

Parents are both living without any diagnosed chronic illnesses. No known familial disease

Medications: None

Allergies: None

Social History: as described above. Patient denies smoking cigarettes or marijuana. Patient denies alcohol consumption.

Physical exam:

General: thin gentleman, poor grooming, flat affect, somewhat cautious but polite and friendly
HEENT: Head normocephalic, atraumatic. Sclera white. Extraocular movements intact. Conjunctiva with mild pallor. Pupils round, symmetric and reactive to light. Uvula midline. Dentition: Teeth intact with extensive caries. Trachea midline. Neck full range of motion. No cervical lymphadenopathy.
CV: regular rate and rhythm. No gallups, rubs or murmurs. Good distal perfusion. Good distal pulses

Lungs: clear to auscultation bilaterally

Abd: Soft, Non-tender, Non distending. No palpable masses. +BS in all four quadrants.

GU exam: deferred

Back: Spine straight. Full range of motion.

Ext: Warm and well perfused. Full range of motion.

Neuro: Cranial nerves intact. Strength, Sensation, and proprioception full and symmetric throughout.

Assessment and Plan:

This is a 30 yo, Protestant Êde Montagnard man recently fleeing Vietnam and seeking asylum on the grounds of religious persecution. He presently lives in Nonthaburi, Thailand with his wife and two children.

- 1) Psyche: Patient is a survivor of physical and psychological torture. He exhibits sequelae of acute traumatic stress disorder as well as post-traumatic stress disorder. He has invasive thoughts and memories about his detainment. He has insomnia and anorexia secondary to these persistent fears and anxieties. This has lead to a 9 kg weight loss since his imprisonment. These fears interfere with his ability to form social connections, attend to personal grooming, perform his functions as a father and husband, and derive a sense of joy or gratitude from life. Patient is still suffering from extreme anxiety about this unknown substance that was injected in his back and the threat of death in two years.
- 2) Social condition: patient presently lives with basic shelter necessities but lacking several material comforts. Patient is isolated from his extended family and ethnic and religious community geographically and suffers great anxiety from uncertainty about his future and his immigration status. He feels understandable frustration from his inability to work and a lack of physical and financial security for his family. From the view of Maslow's hierarchy, he is deficient in all tiers. His basic physiologic needs are not being met(He suffers from anorexia and weight loss from his PTSD as well as lack of sleep). He lacks a sense of safety from a personal fear of the retaliation by the Vietnamese government and from shelter and income insecurity. He can never achieve a sense of belonging isolated from his community and living without any kind of recognized refugee status from Thailand. Lastly, clearly the trauma of his experience has caused a depersonalization-derealization which is obvious during the history and physical. There were points when the patient seems withdrawn and almost catatonic. It greatly pained me to have to force him to relive his experience as it still causes him visible distress. This has greatly affected his esteem which undermines his role as a father, husband, and individual. None of these can be addressed until he achieves refugee status and can be immigrated into a safe, consistent, stable environment.
- 3) Injected Poison: I am unaware of any medication which can be injected and cause death at a two year time frame. Likely this was a contrivance to serve as psychological torture. It has been very successful as the patient suffers from extreme anxiety and insomnia due to this tactic. Patient was reassured during this interview that I believe this was a trick designed to make him suffer mentally. Long term medical assassinations or homicide involve either chronic exposures to toxins or an exposure to a radioactive substance such as Polonium-210. The most famous example of this was the assassination of Alexander Litvinenko by Russian secret intelligence in 2006. He was exposed to poisoned tea on Nov 1st and fell ill that day ultimately died of acute radiation syndrome on Nov 23rd. The half life of Polonium-210 is approximately 4.5 months meaning that after two years only 2.5% of the original dose would be remaining. The pharmacokinetics make it seem impossible that they injected him with a lethal substance; however, the psychiatric damage of this ploy may be irreversible.

- 4) Recommendations: I would strongly support Mr. Duong's application for refugee status. He is continuing to suffer from the physical and mental torture he received at the hands of the Vietnamese government. He cannot begin any kind of healing until he is in a safe, permanent environment with security and stability for his family.
- 5) Would recommend basic bloodwork (CBC with differential, Full Chemistry Panel, Coagulation studies, and Liver Function Tests) to rule out any chemical poisoning. This can be done annually for two years to give him peace of mind and counter the pernicious effects of this psychological torture. I would also recommend exposure to a dosimeter or geiger counter to rule out radiation exposure.

Daniel Vo MD, FAAP

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American Board Certified in Anesthesiology
American Board Certified in Pediatric Anesthesiology
Licensed to practice in the State of Hawaii: MD-19647

- b) **Appendix 2** (Extracts from PDF file submitted along to this report) CCPR Report - Appendix 2 - The real identity of Y Quynh Bdap

The real identity of Y Quynh Bdap: leader of the group "Montagnards Stand for Justice"

Chân tướng của Y Quynh Bdap: Kẻ cầm đầu nhóm "Người Thượng đứng lên vì công lý" | GNST | ANTV

Published by: **Public Security TV (ANTV) - Ministry of Public Security**

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Link to Drive:

Source link 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFI5fwSAaF8>

Archive link 1:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20231222035807/https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFI5fwSAaF8>

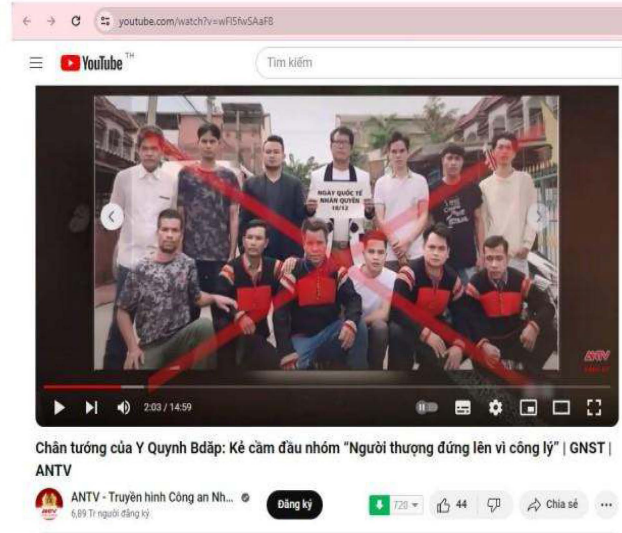
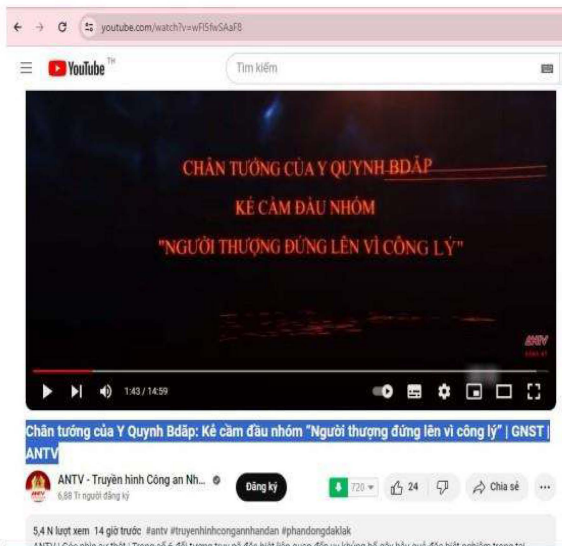
(00:00 - 01:42) Announcer THU HƯƠNG

Ladies and gentlemen, last November 30, the security investigation agency of Đắk Lắk Province issued a special wanted notice for six suspects involved in a terrorist incident that caused particularly serious consequences in Cư Kuin District, Đắk Lắk Province last June. Among these six subjects is Y Quynh Bdap, the leader of the expatriate FULRO group called Montagnards Stand for Justice, abbreviated as MSFJ, operating in Thailand. As a subject with a history of opposing the government, even though he had been sent to re-education camps, Y Quynh still did not wake up and kept making more and more serious mistakes.

Since illegally leaving for Thailand in 2019, this subject's anti-state activities have become increasingly fierce. He is a capable agent for a number of Vietnamese reactionary organizations and FULRO expatriates based in the US. In addition to deceiving and luring people to flee across the border, he aims to destabilize security, public order, and political order in ethnic minority areas. This subject regularly posts a lot of information that misrepresents and falsely accuses the Vietnamese government of violating democracy, human rights, and religious freedom, thus

inciting narrow-minded ethnic-centered ideology, separatism and self-rule to serve their purpose of establishing a separate state in the Central Highlands.

What is the reactionary nature of Y Quynh Bdap and MSFJ like? What was his role in the early morning terrorist attack on 11 June in Cư Kuin District? The security investigation agency of Đắk Lắk Province had to issue a special arrest warrant. This is the information we are going to provide you in this week's program; please follow along.



(01:42 - 03:25) Female Announcer

Y Quynh Bdap, the leader of Montagnards Stand For Justice, is from the Ede ethnic group. This subject was born in 1992, in Cuê Village, Băng Adrênh Commune, Krông Ana District, Đắk Lắk. Although still young, Y Quynh Bdap soon embraced an anti-government ideology. His father, Y Phor Eban, was one of the participants in FULRO activities and played a key and active role in the 2001 riots in the Central Highlands. Having been re-educated when he was only in high school, Y Quynh Buon Dap spread songs praising FULRO and lured friends to participate in propaganda against the state. In 2009, when he was warned by authorities, Y Quynh pledged not to do it again. However, not long after, he continued to connect with FULRO expatriates to secretly carry out sabotage activities.

In February 2012, he was detained by Đắk Lắk Province police for five months on charges of sabotaging the national unity policy. In late 2013, it was found that Y Quynh Bdap and a number of subjects continued to remain in contact with a number of FULRO expatriates in the US. He was made to self criticize in the presence of villagers. After that, the government showed leniency in giving him more opportunities to amend.

The deceitful and tricky character of Y Quynh Bdap was clearly revealed after each violation. His outwardly sincere repentance when criticized in front of villagers or when meeting with the authorities was just a cover even though the government had been lenient and given him the opportunity to correct his mistakes many times.



(03:25 - 04:06) Y QUYNH BDAP, Cuê Village, Bắg Adrênh Commune, Krông Ana District, Đắk Lắk

And I realized my misdeeds. Siblings in my family as well as other brothers and sisters out there, you should not follow bad people, especially Dega people based abroad who misrepresent facts. We should trust the Party and the State. Especially students, gullible in their youth, should not follow Y Chon A Dung or Dega reactionary people from abroad who misrepresent facts. Don't look at materials posted on websites or Facebook. If you chat or Facebook, you had better avoid looking at those websites.

(04:06 - 05:50) Female Announcer

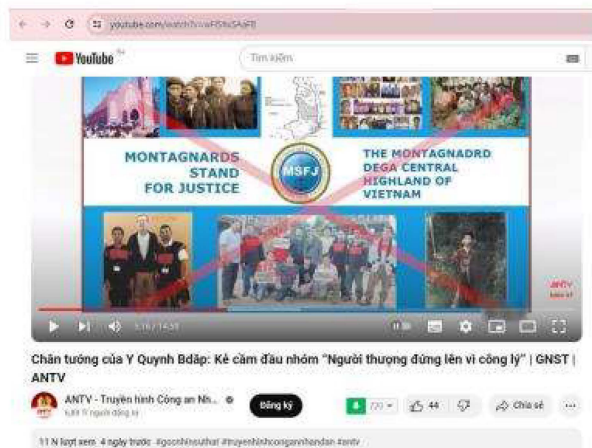
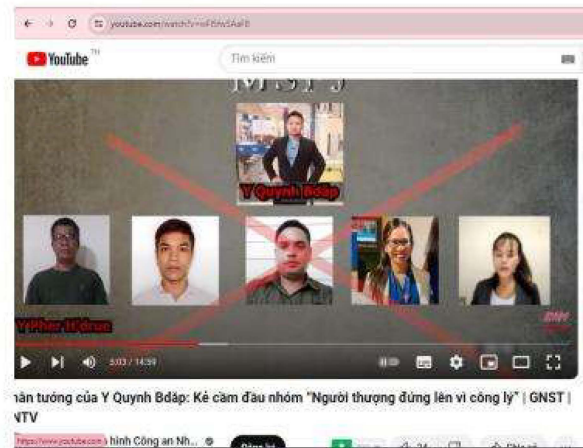
In 2018, Y Hin Niê and members of the Evangelical Church of Christ in the US stepped up their networking with people living in the country to restore their reactionary organization which uses religion as a cover. It's the Evangelical Church of Christ of Vietnam which had just been wiped out by Đắk Lắk Province police.

Y Quynh Bdap and a number of key individuals living in the country continued to be enticed and followed directions from abroad. They gathered supporters and enticed them to pursue anti state activities in Đắk Lắk Province and other Central Highlands provinces,

When the organization was at risk of being discovered, he quickly dragged his wife and children across the border to Thailand. Once there, in July 2019, he gathered anti-state Central Highlands individuals from ethnic minorities who were taking refuge there, forming the group Montagnards Stand For Justice, abbreviated as MSFJ. Y Quynh Bdap himself leads the group. The effective assistants of Y Quynh Bdap are all subjects who have a history of opposing the government such as: Y Pher Hdrue, Y Phik HDok, Y Aron Êban, H Biap BKrông, H Tlun Bdap, and so on.

Under the guise of advocating for justice for the Montagnards in the Central Highlands, with the support of Vietnamese reactionaries and FULRO expatriates in the US, they have attracted dozens of other subjects to join MSFJ. Trained in civil society, trained in operating methods, networking to increase their number and build hidden cells in the country, they directed those in the country to collect information about cases in ethnic minority areas. Taking advantage of the government's loopholes and shortcomings in implementing policies of the State and Party on ethnicity and religion to misrepresent and falsely accuse Vietnam of suppressing religious

freedom, democracy, and human rights. Then they incited narrow-minded ideology centered on ethnicity and separatist self-rule.





(05:50 - 06:40) Senior Lieutenant Colonel Y THU ÊBAN, deputy commander, Police of Cư Kuin District, Police Department of Đắk Lắk Province

Their average daily income is no more than 300 baht per person. And Y Quỳnh works as a construction assistant. Then he met some subjects who had crossed the border. Then they got together as an organization called Montagnards Stand for Justice. In fact, this organization uses "justice" as its name, but in reality it has a reactionary nature, it is a reactionary organization misusing ethnicity and religion to undermine security and harm the Party and State.



(06:40 - 07:15) Senior Lieutenant Colonel LÊ HỮU TUẤN, deputy director, Police Department of Đắk Lắk Province

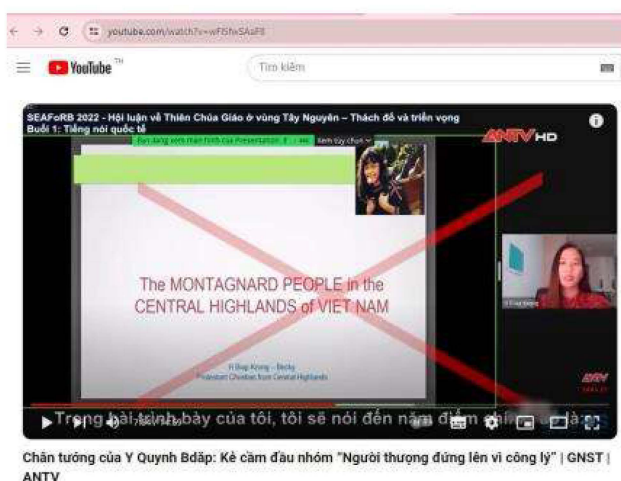
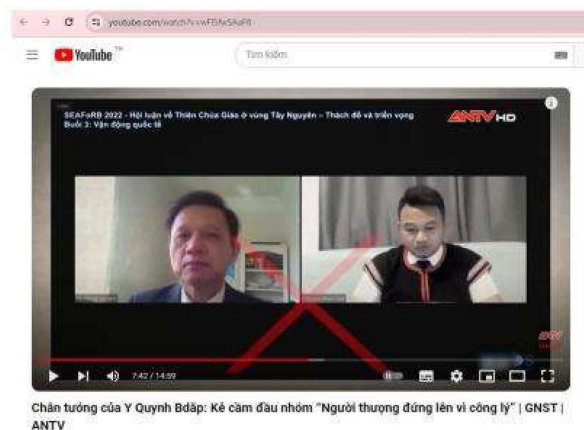
After he escaped to Thailand in 2018, his anti-state activities were further encouraged by foreign organizations. Thus, he became even more active. He continued to be propagandized and pursued activities targeting people in the country, from spreading propaganda, online meetings,

to instructing his people and terrorism.



(07:15 - 08:43) Female Announcer

They not only contact and receive support from several organizations of FULRO expatriates in the US, such as the Evangelical Church of Christ UMCC, the Evangelical Church of Christ of the Central Highlands CSVC, MSFJ, Montagnard Refugees Organization (MRO), Montagnard Human Rights Organization (MHRO), among others. A Vietnamese reactionary organization plays an important role in directing most of the activities of Montagnards Stand for Justice, that is BPSOS led by Nguyễn Đình Thắng. Under the direction of Nguyễn Đình Thắng, Y Quỳnh Bdap and key members of MSFJ have promoted networking with those in the country. They vigorously carry out anti-state activities using social networking applications. They set up many Facebook and YouTube forums such as: Montagnards Stand for Justice, Voice of the Central Highlands News, Đắk Lắk News, Dega Stand for Freedom, with programs in several languages including Ede. They continuously post information that misrepresents, divides, discriminates against people, and incites separatism and self-rule. In addition, they use applications such as WhatsApp and GoToMeeting to hold secret meetings and train people in the country. By 2023, they had 7 recruited more than thirty individuals in the country specializing in collecting misleading photos and documents to send abroad. These enable foreign-based individuals to slander and accuse Vietnam of violating democracy, human rights and religious freedom.



(08:43 - 09:27) Senior Lieutenant TRƯƠNG HỒNG QUÝ, commander, Homeland Security Office, Police Department of Đắk Lắk Province

One of their tasks involves directing those in the country to gather sensitive information, information related to the work of authorities. Then they collect information related to the implementation of policies on ethnicity and religion in minority ethnic regions in the Central Highlands and send it abroad to mislead, use selectively, slander, and harm the reputation of Vietnam on international forums and create a reason for intervention by organizations and individuals based abroad.

That is their first task. Their second one is concurrently carried out, involving spreading destabilizing propaganda. They network with cells in the country, entice them, and build up a secret base of supporters. Their activities aim to serve their plot to secede and achieve self-rule, thus establishing a Dega State in the Central Highlands.

(09:27 - 10:05) Female Announcer

Y Bhen Mlô. Y Sel Mlô and Y Nep Niê are three among those who joined Montagnards Stand for Justice and secretly operated in the country. They were discovered by the security investigation agency of Đắk Lắk Province in early October 2021. Through social networks and online applications, these three subjects have been trained and instructed on how to operate since 2019. until discovered. They used many Facebook accounts to regularly contact and report

the situation to Y Quynh Bdap and key members of MSFJ for the latter to post a lot of false information and enable foreign-based subjects to twist the facts and oppose the government.

(10:05 - 10:45) Mr. Y Bhen Mlô, Trấp Village, Ea Tam Commune, Krông Năng Distri, Đắk Lắk Province

I followed the people in Thailand like Mr. Y Quynh, Y Pher, Y Sani, Y Aron, and Y Bhiang... these people undermine the national unity policy of Vietnam. Following the path of these people means achieving nothing. I realized that what I and those who follow me had been doing was very wrong. Breaking the law. From now on, I hope the government will forgive me for this crime and mistake.

(10:45 - 11:40) Female Announcer

When starting to develop the plan for the dawn attacks on 11 June, from early 2023 until then, in addition to regularly directing the leader living in the country, H'ren Eban, to aggressively recruit members for the Dega fighters in Đắk Lắk, from the US, Y Mút Mlô and key members of the group supporting MSFJ directed Y Quynh Bdap (as a representative for MSFJ in Thailand) to participate in the materials support plan. They encouraged the domestic operatives to implement the plan. Confessions from those who participated in the terrorist attacks show that Y Quynh Bdap had personally contacted them many times, promised financial support, purchased weapons, and directed the gathering of participants and action plan involving operatives in the country.

The one who worked with them the most was Y Vong Buonya who used Messenger and WhatsApp.

(11:40 - 11:44) Male Police Officer

Before attacking the government centers as you did, had the targets been announced?

(11:44 - 11:50) Excerpts from the confessions of Y BA BYÃ (taken at the detention center)

Yes, we had selected them, e.g., the government centers of Ea Tiêu Commune and Ea Ktur Commune.

(11:50 - 11:52) Male Police Officer

Did Y Quynh say anything?

(11:52 - 11:56) Excerpts from the confessions of Y BA BYÃ (taken at the detention center)

Y Quynh told us to complete the task and we must not give up..

(11:56 - 12:00) Male Police Officer

Is Y Mút the leader of the Montagnards support group in the US?

(12:00 - 12:01) Excerpts from the confessions of Y Krông PHÔK (taken at the detention center)

Yes.

(12:01 - 12:05) Male Police Officer

Afterward, what did you tell Y Quynh?

(12:05 - 12:14) Excerpts from the confessions of Y Krông PHÔK (taken at the detention center)

Let Y Quynh handle the recruitment of participants living in Vietnam.

(12:14 - 12:17) Male Police Officer

You meant Y Mút delegated the task to Y Quynh.

(12:17 - 12:18) Excerpts from the confessions of Y Krông PHÔK (taken at the detention center)

Yes

(12:18 - 12:20) Male Police Officer

He delegated to Y Quynh the recruitment task, correct?

(12:20 - 12:26) Excerpts from the confessions of Y Krông PHÔK (taken at the detention center)

Recruiting and organizing Dega fighters in the Central Highlands.

(12:26 - 12:56) Female Announcer

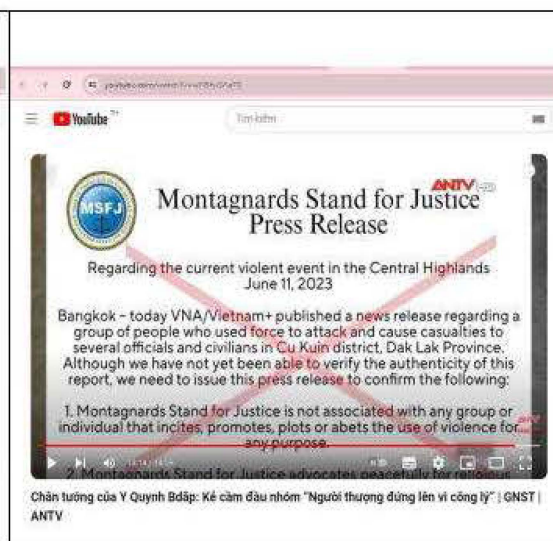
Two clips, each nearly two minutes long, were recorded by Y Ba Buonya himself, showing the subjects armed and gathered in huts and fields in Jung A Village, Ea Ktur Commune before taking action. And they were sent to Y Quynh Bdap as their report to him. The illusion of foreign intervention to take land and establish the Dega state as Y Mút Mlô and Y Quynh Bdap kept preaching quickly collapsed. All those participating in the massacre were arrested and are awaiting strict verdicts.

(12:56 - 13:45) Senior Lieutenant Colonel LÊ HỮU TUẤN, deputy commander, Police Department of Đắk Lắk Province

The involvement of Y Quynh can be proven by documents as well as the statements of the defendants, clearly showing his role in directing, instigating, and inciting. In addition, his role in enticing and promising to support, the promise being: if you do it, some organizations will support you by providing weapons. And he also exhorted those participating in the 11 June evening incident to complete the task. And all of these documents have collected by the investigation agency, following the correct procedures.

(13:45 - 14:24) Female Announcer

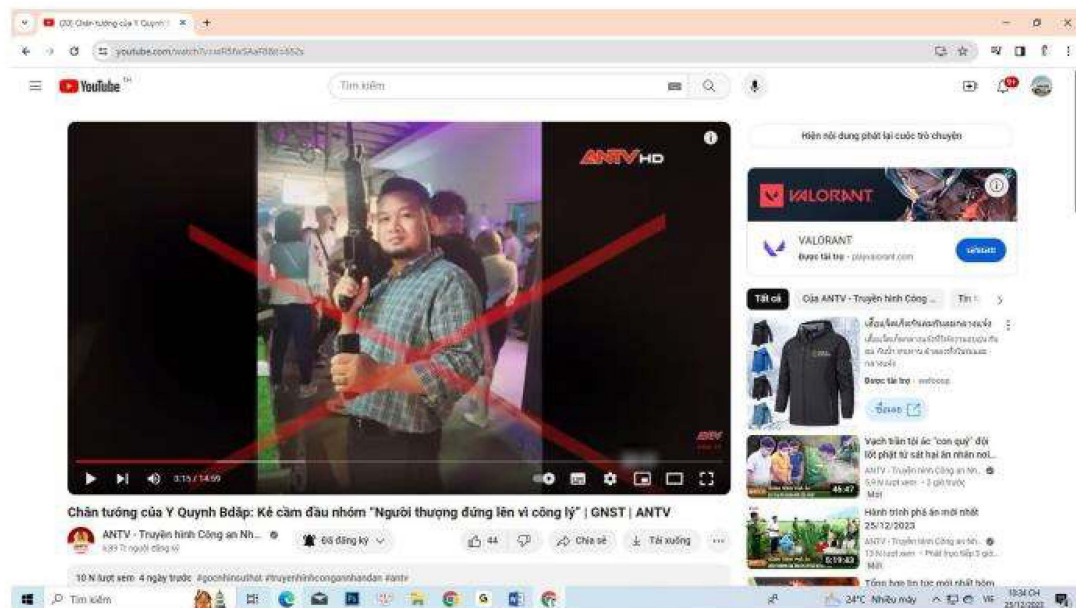
Immediately after learning that a special arrest warrant had been issued against him, on his personal Facebook page and the page of Montagnards Stand for Justice - MSFJ, Y Quynh Bdap loudly proclaimed his innocence and called on foreign organizations for help. This action is not unfamiliar, because a few days after the terrorist attacks took place, like a startled person, he hastily posted a notice that the MSFJ organization he led was not involved in the incident. While 10 it can take time, he will not easily escape. The best way for Y Quynh Bdap and the other wanted subjects is to surrender and benefit from lenient treatment by our legal system.





(14:24 - 14:59) Announcer THU HƯƠNG

At this point, our Perspective on Truth program for this week is about to end. Thank you for taking the time to watch. Goodbye and see you again on next week's program.



(Please note that Y Quynh Bdap went to Khao San Road with friends and they played BB Gun. After their visit to this entertaining place, they posted some pictures on FB about the fun time they had. The Vietnam government blatantly used these pictures to accuse Y Quynh Bdap of terror.) [Mach Song Media - Khi cây súng giả và nỏ bắn cá trở thành công cụ tuyên truyền](#)
The person the media used for the confession interview on this the media denounced Y Quynh Bdap by force and his speech was drafted by the authorities.

c) Appendix 3 (Extracts from PDF file submitted along to this report) CCPR Report - the police guarded Buon Ea Khit Village upon the visit of U.S. Consul General

The pictures showing the police guarded Buon Ea Khit Village, Ea Bhok Commune, Cu Kuin District, Dak Lak Province on 4,5,6 December 2023, upon the visit of the U.S. Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to Dak Lak Province. (Picture were provided by a human rights activist in Buon Ea Khit Village).



Police vehicle



Police officer in plain clothes on a motorbike.



Police vehicle





Police in plain clothes in front of a house church