



---

# VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

---

2022



## Table of contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>I/ Introduction .....</b>   | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>II/ Methodology .....</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>III/ Good human rights practices .....</b>  | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>IV/ Human rights violations.....</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>1. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press .....</b>   | <b>10</b> |
| 1.1. Laws restricting freedom of expression and information .....                                  | 10        |
| 1.2. Arrests and Convictions of Government Critics .....   | 12        |
| <b>2. Freedom of assembly .....</b>  | <b>16</b> |
| 2.1. Legal provisions related to freedom of assembly .....   | 16        |
| 2.2. Suppression of protests, peaceful gatherings and registered NGOs .....                        | 18        |
| <b>3. Rights of persons deprived of liberty .....</b>  | <b>23</b> |
| 3.1. Violation of the right to legal aid .....   | 23        |
| 3.2. Torture in detention camps and police stations.....   | 28        |
| 3.3. Abuses in prison.....   | 29        |
| <b>4. Freedom of religion.....</b>   | <b>34</b> |
| 4.1. Persecution of Duong Van Minh religion .....  | 37        |
| 4.2. Persecution of Protestant groups in the Central Highlands .....                               | 40        |
| 4.3. Suppression of Tinh That Bong Lai.....  | 43        |
| 4.4. Suppression of places of worship and activities of Catholic and Buddhist establishments ..... | 47        |
| <b>5. Land rights .....</b>  | <b>50</b> |
| <b>V/ Conclusion .....</b>   | <b>53</b> |
| <b>Appendix.....</b>   | <b>55</b> |

## **I/ Introduction**

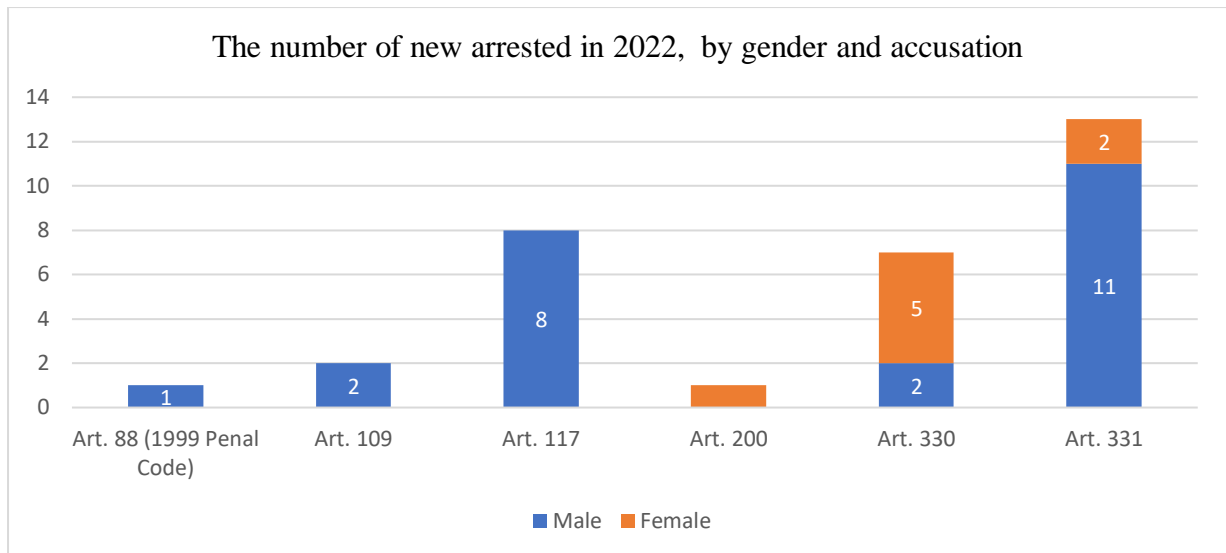
Since 2022, Vietnam has been emerging from the shadow cast by a two-year pandemic by reopening policies and assisting in the restoration of socioeconomic activities. People's lives have gradually resumed back to their normal course.

On the other hand, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong's anti-corruption campaign has intensified, resulting in the dismissals, investigations, and prosecutions of a large number of officials from local to central levels. Healthcare, education, finance, diplomacy, and law enforcement are among the government sectors being most scrutinized. Not only senior officials but also famous business executives have been arrested, revealing complicated relationships and market manipulation agreements between officials and businesses.

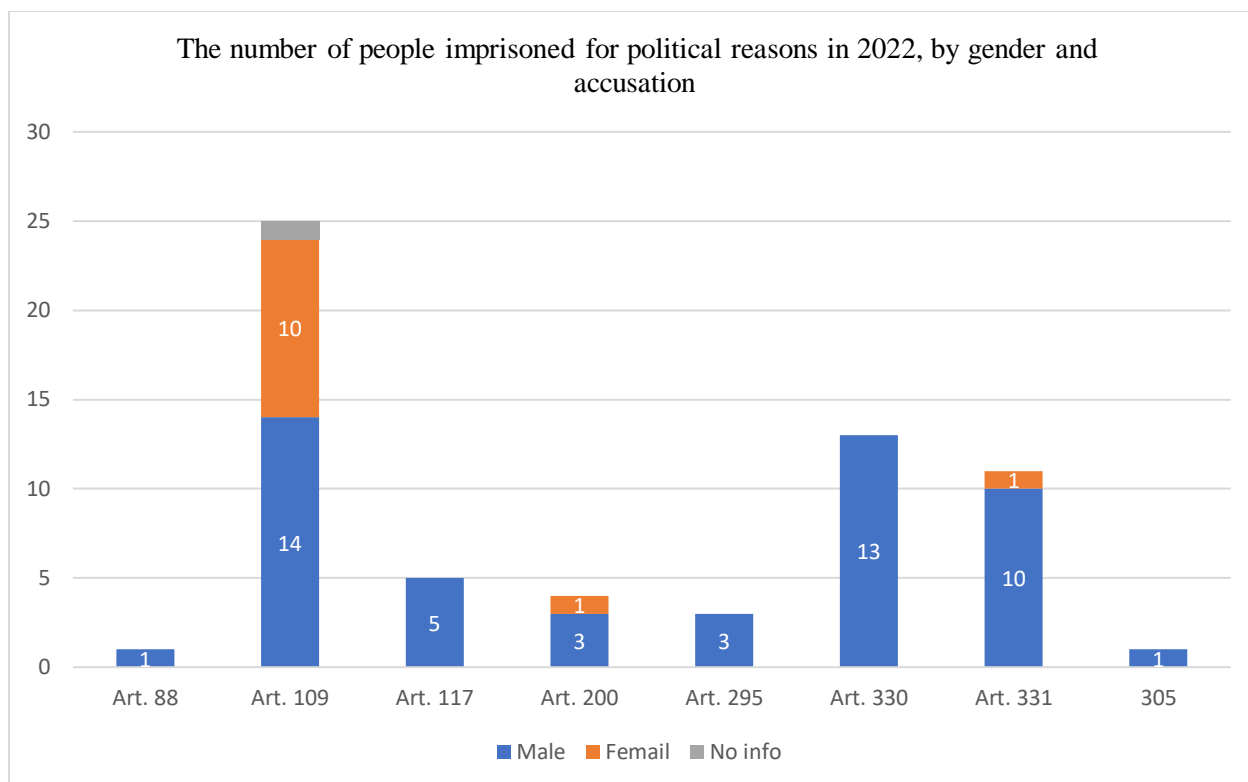
Trong's "blazing furnace" is on an unprecedented scale in terms of the areas investigated, the number of high-ranking officials and large corporations involved. With constant and overwhelming information in the press and public focus on new arrests, it is not an exaggeration to say that the corruption fight has overshadowed many other social inadequacies, including human rights violations. However, many significant human rights events, as well as serious violations, occurred in 2022.

Vietnam's human rights record has remained poor over the years. Civil and political rights have been primarily violated, with freedom of expression and freedom of assembly being the two most severely and systematically violated rights. The year 2022 also saw a lot of harassment and repression targeting religious freedom of both small independent religious groups and well-founded religious institutions.

According to the press, in 2022, at least 32 people were arrested for security crimes such as attempting to overthrow the government (Art. 109 of the 2015 Penal Code), propaganda against the state (Art. 117 of the 2015 Penal Code or Art .88 1999 Penal Code), resisting public enforcer on duties (Art. 330 2015 Penal Code), and abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the state, legitimate rights and interest of individuals and other organizations (Art. 331 2015 Penal Code). Among them, anti-state propaganda and abusing democratic freedoms still dominate as the most common accusations.



Also in the past year, at least 62 people were tried and sentenced to prison for political reasons. In which, 24 people were sentenced to long-term imprisonment for allegedly carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the government due to their association with the Provisional National Government of Vietnam from overseas; 13 people were tried on charges of resisting public enforcers on duty and 11 people for abusing democratic freedoms. Also, 4 leaders of local NGOs were tried at first instance and appellate court on charges of tax evasion; 3 followers of Duong Van Minh were tried for violating regulations on safety in crowded places. In addition, there was a case where the person was sentenced for violation of both Article 117 and Article 305 of the 2015 Penal Code (illegal possession of explosives).



This report will list and briefly analyze the events and human rights violations recorded by the drafting team from January 1, 2022 to December 10, 2022. The report is divided into 5 parts:

Part 1: Introduction to the Vietnamese context and a brief overview of the human rights situation

Part 2: Methodology

Part 3: Review of good human rights practices and achievements in 2022

Part 4: Listing and analyzing human rights violations in 5 groups of rights and issues.

Part 5: Conclusion

Within the limitation of this report, not all human rights violations can be covered; we can only focus on 5 areas that, in our assessment, are the most prominent, providing the overall picture of human rights practices in Vietnam over the past year. The issues discussed are freedom of speech and freedom of the press; freedom of assembly; the rights of persons deprived of liberty; freedom of religion; and land rights.

## II/ Methodology

Enumeration and descriptive methods are used mainly and throughout the report. Data set was built from December 10, 2021 to December 10, 2022, the figures were continuously reviewed and updated until the report got published on December 10, 2022.

The report's appendix contains lists of people arrested and tried for exercising fundamental and inseparable human rights recognised by Vietnam in both domestic and international forums. These lists were compiled based on publicly available information, so they may have overlooked cases that were previously unknown to the public.

The majority of the cases and information mentioned have been thoroughly reported and are easily verifiable through domestic and international press resources. Some information provided by the victim and his or her family was also collected in the report.

Please email any comments, questions, or case inquiries to the drafting team at: [information.humanrights@protonmail.com](mailto:information.humanrights@protonmail.com)

### III/ Good human rights practices

The Vietnamese government has some encouraging human rights practises in 2022, the majority of which are carried out at international forums, such as:

- Vietnam published the mid-term report on the implementation of the UPR recommendations in the third cycle in March. This is the first time the Vietnamese government has drafted and officially submitted a voluntary report to update the status of the UPR recommendations.

- In September 2022, Vietnam submitted a periodic national report on children's rights and held a dialogue with the United Nations CRC Committee on Children Rights Monitoring.

- On October 11, 2022, Vietnam officially became a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council for the term 2023-2025.

Domestically, the Vietnamese government has taken a number of encouraging human rights practices, including dealing with human rights violations by the police force, for example:

- A ward police official was stripped of his police title after abusing his power and assaulting a woman in May 2022.<sup>1</sup>

- Three police officers were disciplined with dismissal and stripped of their police titles after violently attacking two teenagers who violated traffic laws in Soc Trang in September 2022.<sup>2</sup>

- The Supreme People's Procuracy prosecuted and detained two police officers from Vu Thu district in Thai Binh province in November 2022 for using corporal punishment, which resulted in the death of a male suspect at the local prison earlier this year.<sup>3</sup>

However, these violations are being handled in large part because the incidents were captured on camera, posted online, and sparked public outrage. In cases where photographic/video evidence of police beatings cannot be presented, the case is usually not

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://vnexpress.net/pho-cong-an-phuong-bi-dinh-chi-cong-tac-vi-danh-phu-nu-4458765.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://vietnamnet.vn/hop-bao-thong-tin-chinh-thuc-vu-cong-an-danh-hai-thieu-nien-o-soc-trang-2065440.html>

<sup>3</sup> Tuoi Tre Online, Arrest the former captain, deputy head of the district police for using corporal punishment, <https://tuoitre.vn/bat-cuu-doi-truong-doi-pho-cong-an-huyen-vi-dung-nhuc-hinh-20221110181815351.htm>

investigated or dismissed as a non-violation. As a result, dealing with allegations of human rights violations is still uncommon.

Furthermore, at the end of November, the Binh Tan district court in Binh Thuan province sentenced former warden Nguyen Doan Tu to two years in prison for using corporal punishment on inmates, causing 3% injury to female inmates at a prison in the area. Unfortunately, according to information gathered by the drafting team, this sentence carries a heavy revenge motive against Mr. Nguyen Doan Tu for his statements and testimonies on social media, before a number of international agencies on corruption, corruption, and torture in the Vietnamese prison system.

In 2017, the Prime Minister of Vietnam approved the Scheme to include human rights education in the national education curriculum, targeting that by 2015, all public educational institutions will have taught human rights. Up to now, Vietnam has had intensive and specific activities to implement this education project. At the end of 2021, the Prime Minister of Vietnam issued a Directive to strengthen the implementation of the above project. The Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, the unit assigned to lead the implementation of the human rights education project, has developed communication materials and teaching materials at various levels and collaborated with many schools to provide training for lecturers and teachers. In 2022, human rights teaching training has been organized for law lecturers in universities, journalists, editors in some provinces, police officers. Materials on human rights education are being accepted and are about to be taught in police and military training institutions. In addition, 4 sets of human rights manuals for preschool, primary, middle and high schools are also being researched and developed.

In early April 2022, the Ministry of Public Security announced that it had brought 17 religious book titles, totaling more than 4,400 books, to 54 prisons across the country.<sup>4</sup> Vietnam has 16 government-recognized religions. However, the Ministry of Public Security only brought 6 titles of Buddhist scriptures and 3 titles of Bibles to the prison. The remaining 8 titles are research books on religion and the Party's religious policies published by the People's Public Security Publishing House. The Bibles brought into the prison are only available in Vietnamese and English, and there are no books in ethnic minority languages, making it

---

<sup>4</sup>VOV, Handing over more than 4,400 religious publications to prisons of the Ministry of Public Security, <https://vov.vn/phap-luat/ban-Giao-hon-4400-an-pham-ton-Giao-cho-cac-trai-giam-cua-bo-cong-an-post934437.vov>



difficult for ethnic minority prisoners who are not fluent in the official Viet language to use. Therefore, the Ministry of Public Security still needs to do more to really "ensure everyone's right to access to scriptures and religious publications", as announced by Major General Thung Van Nghiem, deputy director of the Department of National Defense at the handover ceremony.

In general, good human rights practises in Vietnam in the last year have been few and have a strong political flavour due to the influence of international mechanisms. The investigation of law enforcement abuse of power continues on a case-by-case basis and has not yet evolved into an effective mechanism to protect human rights. The implementation of the project to universalize human rights education is the most notable long-term effort. The success of this project could help normalise a sensitive issue that has lingered for decades, bringing human rights values closer to everyone.

## **IV/ Human rights violations**

### **1. Freedom of speech and freedom of the press**

#### **1.1. Laws restricting freedom of expression and information**

The Constitution and laws guarantee freedom of expression, including freedom of the press and other media; however, the government does not respect these rights and has enacted a number of laws that restrict freedom of expression. The 2018 Cybersecurity Law empowers the government to administratively sanction “untrue and fake news” statements. Furthermore, the 2015 Penal Code allows the government to imprison a person for up to 20 years for the crimes of "abusing democratic freedoms and rights in order to infringe upon the interests of the State, legitimate rights of other people and organisations (article 331)," and "propaganda against the state" (article 117).

In terms of the right to information, Vietnam enacted the Law on Access to Information in 2016, the 2020 Law on Protecting State Secrets, and a slew of decrees and decisions to limit public access to information. The list of state secrets includes 32 areas, including activities of associations such as the Women's Association, The Labor Union, Youth League, Farmers' Association, and ethnic and religious issues.

The Vietnamese government restricts statements that criticise the leadership, the government, the party, or support democracy and pluralism, while also promoting populist values in cyberspace through the military and public security forces. “Force 47” was established in 2017 under the Ministry of National Defense with the goal of directing public opinion on all aspects and issues. Force 47 was deployed to the communal level, Vietnam's lowest administrative unit, in 2022, and its membership includes both professional military personnels and local militias. Another body, the Steering Committee of 35 Party Committees of Central Agencies, was established in October 2021 with the task of "protecting the Party ideology, combating distorting and anti-reactionary arguments".<sup>5</sup> This is the Party organ with the authority to direct propaganda plans at the central level, orient public opinion, and coordinate propaganda agencies, the press, as well as the army's cyber warfare force, and police in online repression campaigns targeting activists, independent news channels, and international news sites.

---

<sup>5</sup> <https://nhandan.vn/thanh-lap-ban-chi-dao-35-dang-bo-khoi-cac-co-quan-trung-uong-nhiem-ky-2020-2025-post671507.html>

Press platforms in Vietnam must be affiliated with a government agency and are subject to strict censorship by several agencies, including the Ministry of Information and Communications, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Defense, and the Communist Party's Propaganda Department. Vietnam does not acknowledge the independent press; any form of ownership, operation, or private publishing is punishable by law. The Propaganda Department always requires major media organizations to meet on a regular basis to discuss taboo topics and requires newspapers and radio stations to self-censor. Journalists who do not comply with self-censorship may face internal sanctions, administrative sanctions, or the revocation of their press card.

In 2022, the Ministry of Information and Communications (Ministry of Information and Communications) implemented a review and sanctioned a number of press agencies and magazines to combat the phenomenon known as "news-lisation." The government's argument is that magazine institutions are specialised theoretical agencies, and thus do not have the function of reporting news in many fields, conducting investigative and anti-negative reports in all fields.<sup>6</sup> This is a planned action from the National Press Planning Project to 2025 (in the form of Decision No. 362/QĐ-TTg promulgated in 2019) to deprive associations and social organisations of the right to establish press agencies, as permitted by the 2016 Press Law.

Because of pre-censorship and the suppression of diversity and independence in press activities, social networks are the only remaining space for freedom of information and expression. The Vietnamese government, on the other hand, has been tightening this space with a long-term strategy: the promulgation of legal regulations targeting social media users, companies providing social media platforms, administrative sanctions and criminalization of those accused of violations, and the implementation of propaganda campaigns to suppress online speech. From that came the complete control of the information circulation on the network.

Nguyen Manh Hung, Minister of Information and Communications, stated in a hearing before the National Assembly on November 4, 2022, that the ministry would issue regulations

---

<sup>6</sup> <https://vtv.vn/van-hoa-giai-tri/bao-hoa-tap-chi-tu-nhan-hoa-bao-chi-khi-gia-tri-cao-quy-cua-nghe-bao-bi-danh-doi-bang-vat-chat-20221012115738866.htm>

requiring "bad news" (information believed to distort policy or smear the government) to be removed from social media within 3 hours and false news to be removed within 24 hours.<sup>7</sup>

Not only is the Ministry of Information and Communications requiring social media platforms to remove posts as required, but also has it recently imposed the responsibility of self-censorship on social networks, which not only requires social networking platforms not to run ads with illegal content, or run ads on illegal content and websites on the Ministry of Information and Communications' "black list" (Decree 70/2021/ND-CP related to the Advertising Law). These regulations also place obligations on advertising agencies and brands, requiring business units to review their advertising activities in order to avoid "black lists" of trademarks, online content creators, and websites. Violators will be sanctioned and named publicly. For companies found hosting illegal comments, the Ministry of Information and Communications openly threatened to block their servers and activities, as well as increase administrative fines (Decree 53/2022/ND-CP related to the Law on Cybersecurity). This regulation has had a direct impact on advertising, the primary source of revenue for social networks, prompting multinational corporations such as Facebook, Google, and Tiktok to work more closely with the government. As a result, all actors in cyberspace are responsible for self-censorship: service providers, individual users, content creators, and business entities.

The government generally avoids making disparaging remarks about China and the Russian Federation. Since the beginning of the Ukraine war, the Vietnamese government has taken steps to suppress pro-Ukrainian sentiments and condemnation on Russia by prohibiting and closely monitoring Ukraine-themed gatherings. Authorities have asked some Ukrainians living in Hanoi to remove the Ukrainian national flag they had hung on their balcony without providing a satisfactory explanation.

## **1.2. Arrests and Convictions of Government Critics**

With vague provisions in the Law on Cybersecurity and Penal Code, the Vietnamese government has carried out a series of arrests, prosecutions, and convictions for individuals who express dissent in cyberspace over the last year. Criminal charges are primarily used are spreading propaganda against the state (Article 117 of the Penal Code), and abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the state, individuals, and other organisations (Article 331 of the Penal Code):

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/technology/vietnam-require-24-hour-take-down-false-social-media-content-2022-11-04/>

- On January 5, 2022, Mr. Nguyen Thai Hung and Ms. Vu Thi Hoang Kim were arrested by police in disguised who raided their home, while Mr. Hung was sharing his views on society and politics on his own Youtube channel called “Nói bằng thực TV” (Speak with the truth TV). Mr. Hung and Ms. Kim were sentenced to 4 years and 2 and a half years respectively in prison for violating article 331 of the Penal Code. They were tried at a closed trial without a defense lawyer on November 22, 2022;

- On January 6, 2022, Mr. Nguyen Duc Hung was detained on charges of conducting propaganda against the state for posting articles on human rights and democracy on Facebook. On July 13, 2022, Mr. Hung was sentenced to 5 years in prison by the court of Ha Tinh province in a closed trial;

- On January 12, 2022, Mr. Le Manh Ha, owner of the YouTube channel “Tiếng dân TV” (The people’s voice) and a frequent speaker on the issue of land coercion, was arrested and prosecuted under article 117 of the Penal Code. Mr. Ha was later sentenced to 8 years in prison by the court of Tuyen Quang province on October 25, 2022;

- On January 14, 2022, former warden Le Chi Thanh was sentenced to 2 years for resisting officials on duty. Mr. Thanh was additionally tried for abusing democratic freedoms on June 22, 2022 and sentenced to 3 years more in prison. Mr. Le Chi Thanh used to work as a warden at Thu Duc Prison (Z30D) and denounced the abuse of power by the prison management and the Ministry of Public Security's tolerance of corruption in the prison system. Former warden Nguyen Doan Tu, who confirmed that Mr. Le Chi Thanh's accusations were true, was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison for corporal punishment. Human rights observers have found the arrests and convictions of the two former prison guards questionable.

- On January 21, 2022, Mr. Nguyen Bao Tien, who transported the books of journalist Pham Doan Trang published by Liberal Publishing House, was sentenced to a total of 6 years and 6 months in prison for propagating against the government (Art. 117 of the 2015 Penal Code) and “illegal possession of explosives” (Art. 305 of the 2015 Penal Code).

- Citizen journalist Le Van Dung, who runs the Youtube channel Chan Hung TV, was tried and sentenced to 5 years in prison on charges of violating article 88 of the 1999 Penal Code (crime of propaganda against the state);

- On July 5, 2022, Mr. Nguyen Lan Thang, a well-known activist who regularly comments on socio-political issues on facebook, was arrested for allegedly violating article 117 of the 2015 Penal Code;

- On August 30, 2022, the Hanoi court held a first-instance trial of independent journalist Le Anh Hung and sentenced him to 5 years in prison according to article 331 of the 2015 Penal Code. Mr. Hung was arrested in July 2018 and has been put under coercive treatment at the Central Institute of Forensic Psychiatry for more than 3 years.

- On September 7, 2022, Mr. Bui Tuan Lam, a facebooker who created Salt Bae parody after the "gold-plated beef" scandal of Minister of Public Security To Lam, was arrested for allegedly conducting anti-government propaganda under article 117 of the Penal Code;

- On September 9, 2022, Mr. Phan Son Tung, owner of the youtube channel “Vì Việt Nam Thịnh Vượng” (For a prosperous Vietnam) was arrested on charges under article 117 of the Penal Code. Mr. Tung is a frequent commentator on the political and social situation on youtube and has hundreds of thousand followers. Around the beginning of August, Mr. Tung publicized the idea of founding a new political party in Vietnam on his Youtube and Facebook channels.

- On September 8, 2022, Mr. Dang Dang Phuoc, a music lecturer at Dak Lak Pedagogical College, was arrested for allegedly violating Article 117 of the Penal Code 2015 by posting and sharing articles with criticizing public policy on Facebook.

- On November 18, 2022, the Thanh Hoa Provincial Court held a first-instance trial of activist Bui Van Thuan on charges of conducting propaganda against the state under article 117 of the Penal Code. The court concluded that Mr. Thuan had 27 Facebook posts with anti-government content, thus sentenced him to 8 years in prison. According to his wife Trinh Thi Nhung, Mr. Bui Van Thuan was handcuffed in the morning hearing, and got handcuffed legcuffed in the afternoon hearing. Mr. Thuan refused the right to appeal because he "did not trust the current judicial system".

Besides arresting and convicting dissidents, the Vietnamese government employs many other forms of repression and harassment, such as:

- Monitoring: Many activists and their families have reported being followed and watched in their daily lives and on social media. When political and diplomatic events occur, the government increases surveillance and prevents dissidents from leaving their homes. Many activists have claimed that they have been barred from leaving the country for many years.

- Difficulty in administrative procedures: Many activists report difficulties carrying out administrative procedures at local government agencies, such as being unable to have their personal and criminal records confirmed, or to renew their passports or citizenship identification. The administrative procedures renders many dissidents unable to complete their

job applications and find stable jobs. For example, recently, Mr. Dang Ngoc Thanh in Tra Vinh was forced to stop his training course to be maritime officers at the Maritime Training and Manpower Center of the University of Transport in Ho Chi Minh City, due to accusation of submitting incorrect personal record.<sup>8</sup> Mr. Thanh said that he had submitted all the required documents upon admission and said that he was forced to drop out of school because he had participated in a protest against the Special Economic Zone Bill in 2018 and shared his disagreements on some public issues on social media. Mr. Thanh was detained in the police station for 1 day, beaten and fined 7.5 million VND after participating in a protest with thousands of people on June 10, 2018.

- Cyber-bully: Dissidents often face intimidation and insults from pro-communist commentators, being named and smeared in public opinion-oriented articles and government-run nationalist groups. Sometimes people from these groups even go to the private homes of some activists to cause trouble, the police often do not investigate or prosecute the illegal behavior of these thugs.

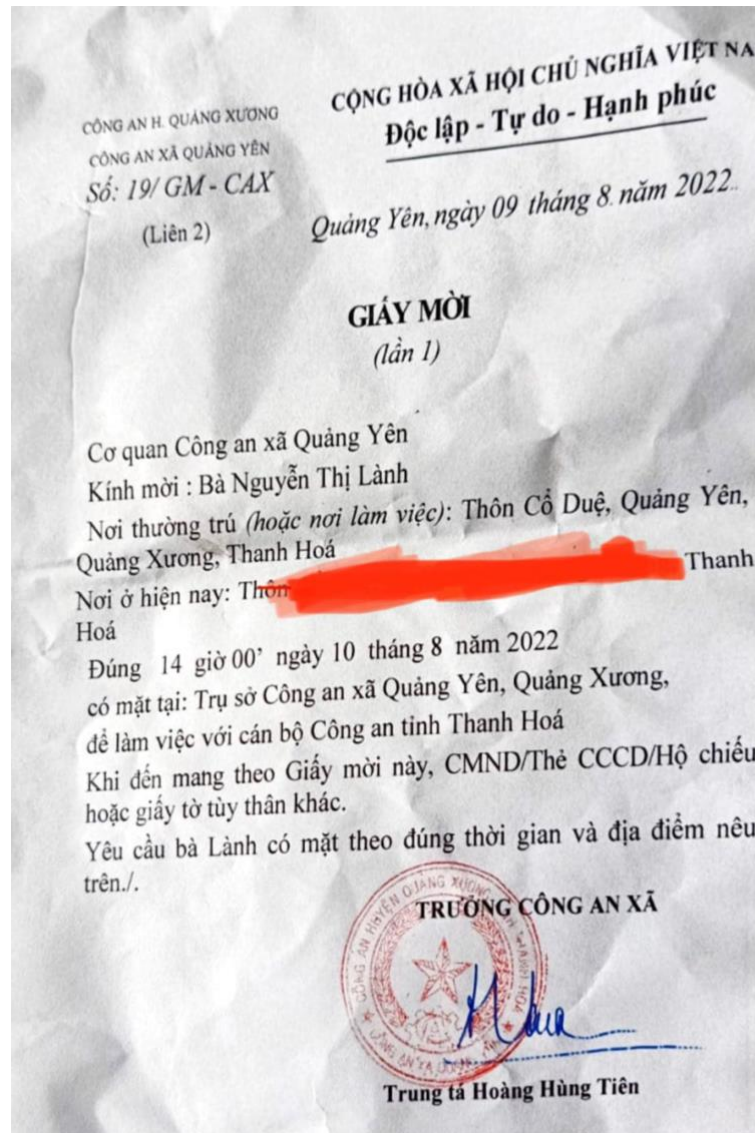
- Forced admittance to a mental hospital: Activists like Le Anh Hung, Trinh Ba Phuong, and Pham Chi Thanh were all forcibly sent to a mental hospital during their temporary detention. Most of the families confirmed that prisoners of conscience had normal mental and psychological health before being arrested. Some people who could contact their families claimed they had been beaten, made to take, or given drugs intravenously, which had rendered them mentally confused. These activists were later tried and sentenced to heavy prison sentences. The most recent case admitted to a mental hospital is the female activist Nguyen Thuy Hanh, who has been hospitalized for depression treatment since the end of April 2022.

Harassment measures, such as monitoring activities, invitation for a coffee session to work with the police, and restricting freedom of movement, are also used by security forces to undermine the will to fight and force POCs to accept their sentences. On August 10, 2022, Thanh Hoa province police invited Ms. Nguyen Thi Lanh, the wife of POC - Pastor Nguyen Trung Ton, to the police headquarters to inquire about the details of her prison visits and threatened to close her small business often asked her to come to work. The wives of POCs Luu Van Vinh and Dang Dang Phuoc recently reported being threatened by police for

---

<sup>8</sup>RFA, A man who participated in protesting the SEZ bill was denied attending maritime officer training course: <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/student-participating-in-protest-against-china-forced-to-quit-professional-training-12022022072145.html>

advocating for their husbands' release on social media and sharing information about other prisoners of conscience and their families. Ms. Nguyen Thi Anh Tuyet, the fiancée of POC Do Nam Trung, reported that security police intervened, causing her cafe business to close; prison number 5, Thanh Hoa province, where Trung is detained, conditioned that he would meet his fiancée only after he accepted his sentence.



*Invitation letter for Ms. Nguyen Thi Lanh, wife of Pastor Nguyen Trung Ton, to work with Thanh Hoa provincial police on August 10, 2022*

## 2. Freedom of assembly

### 2.1. Legal provisions related to freedom of assembly

The 2013 Constitution states that Vietnamese citizens have the right to assemble, form associations, and protest, but in practice, people are strictly controlled in organizing any



activities attracting a large number of people, especially if they are related to religion, politics, human rights, or labor.

Up to now, the legal documents that directly and comprehensively regulate the people's right to assemble are Decree 38/2005/ND-CP stipulating a number of measures to ensure public order and Circular 09/2005/TT-BCA of the Ministry of Public Security guiding the implementation of Decree 38/2005/ND-CP; both documents have been kept in effect since 2005 and have never been amended or supplemented. According to the provisions of these two legal documents, any gathering of 5 or more people in a public place requires written permission from the local People's Committee; gathering at public agencies to make petitions related to their own and their families' rights and interests, or recommendations on social issues, also triggers the same administrative process. The curriculum vitae of the organizer, the names of the attendees, the date and time of the activity, and the content of the activity must all be included in the application file for permission to organize such an activity.

Despite the fact that 11 years have passed since the National Assembly agreed to include this law in the construction program, the Draft Law on Protests has yet to be completed. The lack of completeness of other relevant laws, such as the law on state of emergency, regulations on the management of the use of weapons and explosives, and so on, explains the delay in introducing this bill. At the same time, the Ministry of Public Security emphasized that the law's drafting must be thorough to ensure that no hostile or reactionary forces use it to distort or conduct anti-corruption activities.<sup>9</sup>

The establishment of private or independent organizations is generally prohibited by the government; instead, people are encouraged to work within the framework of professional or mass organizations established or controlled by the party, such as trade unions. As a result, despite the fact that the new Labor Code has been in effect for two years, the Vietnamese government still owes its employees written instructions on how to establish and operate an organization representing employees at an enterprise, which is expected to actually operate for the legitimate interests of employees. Although allowing the establishment of such an independent form of trade union is a key condition for Vietnam to successfully get its trade partners ratify the EVFTA and CPTPP, the delay in issuing legal regulations has helped Vietnam nullify the above commitment without incurring any sanctions.

---

<sup>9</sup>VnExpress, Delayed submission of the Draft Law on Protests: <https://vnexpress.net/loi-thoi-gian-trinh-du-thao-luat-bieu-tinh-4098091.html>

Concerning the EVFTA mechanism's supervision group of civil society organizations, the Vietnamese government has successfully nullified the independence of Domestic Advisory Group (DAG) members in Vietnam by convicting representatives of some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with high expertise and independence. Vietnam also ensures that those experts do not join the DAG by stipulating that NGOs that have committed illegal acts will not be chosen as members of the Vietnam DAG (article 3 of the Ministry's Decision No. 1972/QĐ-BCT Industry and Trade on the Establishment of a Domestic Consulting Group DAG Vietnam).

The Vietnamese government has established mechanisms to limit the freedom of NGOs to establish and operate. NGOs must obtain central government approval before holding conferences with foreign sponsorship or participation. Even during normal operations, NGOs are informally monitored and questioned by the Ministry of Public Security.

Cultural events, conferences and seminars require a organizing license from competent authorities, which is based on relevant legal documents such as Decree 103/2009/ND-CP, Decree 01/2012/ND-CP, Decree 79/2012/ND-CP, Decision 76/2010/QĐ-TTg. As a result, events involving foreign elements must be licensed by the relevant ministries and sectors. Security, defense, politics, border and territory, religion, and human rights-related events and seminars must be approved by the Prime Minister.

## **2.2. Suppression of protests, peaceful gatherings and registered NGOs**

### **Protests of investors in stocks and bonds**

Over the last year, numerous protests in Vietnam have occurred as a result of poor economic policies and corruption. In addition to protests against the land policy, there have been numerous protests in the past by bond investors in real estate businesses. A lot of investors bought bonds from banks due to faslely interpretation of bank employees on investing bonds and money saving. People who use other banking services, such as mortgages and savings accounts, have also been impacted by the inability of real estate companies and banks to pay corporate bonds. Protesters numbered in the thousands, the majority of whom were middle-class citizens from across Vietnam's provinces. Bond investors of Tan Hoang Minh Group held the first rallies in June 2022 in Hanoi. At the end of 2022, the protests have increased in number of participants and spreaded to other big cities.



*Bond investors of Tan Hoang Minh protest in Hanoi (source: Facebook)*



*Bond investors and customers in Nha Trang request Sacombank to pay money (Source: Facebook)*

Unlike previous pro-democracy and human rights demonstrations, the protests of individual investors have not been mass suppressed or brutally clashed with the authorities. There have yet been criminal charges against protesting investors. Except for a few articles

when the protests first erupted in June, the mainstream press does not report or comment on them. However, many videos have been circulated on social media showing security agents in plain clothes forcibly pushing protesters onto buses or water being blasted on crowds of protesters in cold weather.<sup>10</sup> Many protesters reported they were beaten after being forced to board a bus, detained for a day, and administratively fined. Many others were summoned to the police and were administratively fined for disturbing public order.

Protests over economic problems have been taking place in many major cities across the country for the past six months. However, the continuation of economic protests does not indicate a better human rights situation, but rather that the government has yet to reach an internal agreement on how to deal with bond investors. Meanwhile, the authorities continue to use plainclothes security forces and unconventional methods to keep protests from growing in size and duration.

### **Space for civil society**

Any peaceful gatherings will be disrupted by the government if they are about topics that do not align with the Party's viewpoint. For example, fundraising events for Ukrainians were canceled at the last minute due to a lack of permission from the authorities. A discussion on Ukrainian culture, which Ukrainian embassy representatives attended, was cut short due to power outages caused by Vietnamese authorities<sup>11</sup>; some attendees were stopped by security forces on their way to attend the seminar. Power cuts are also one of the tactics commonly used by Vietnamese authorities to obstruct meeting where they feel they do not have full control over the content.

On April 5, Van Viet (Viet Literature), a forum of the Campaign Committee to establish the Independent Literature Association, published a letter titled "How much longer to suffer?" by literary critic Nguyen Thi Tinh Thy who received the Van Viet Award for her book "Dare to Look Back." According to this female critic, despite being deeply honored, she was unable to accept Van Viet's award due to government pressure. She claimed she was approached by security and told not to accept the award "to avoid affecting the general security situation".<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yU5a3auWXY4>

<sup>11</sup>RFA, Hanoi: Talks on Ukrainian culture are disrupted, <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/the-workshop-on-ukraine-culture-was-intervened-with-blackout-and-prevention-07182022085723.html>

<sup>12</sup>Nguyen Thi Tinh Thy, How much longer to suffer?, <http://vanviet.info/van-de-hom-nay/cn-kho-bao-lu-nua/>

This incident happened two months after poet Thai Hao was assaulted by plainclothed security to prevent him from accepting the Van Viet Award in the poetry category.<sup>13</sup> Van Viet is an annual award given by Van Doan Doc Lap (Independent Literature Association), a Vietnamese organization founded by famous writers, critics, and intellectuals to protect the freedom of expression.

Civil space is restricted not only in peaceful gatherings and discussions, but also in the activities of legally registered civil society organizations. For many years, the regulations governing the establishment, application for funding, and operation of civil organizations have allowed the government to intervene in all activities and projects of civil organizations. The Vietnamese government has used strict regulations to prevent the formation of many independent and open-minded civil society groups and organizations. As a result, civil society organizations in Vietnam can be divided into "reactionary" organizations (or "underground" organizations, which are not authorized by the government to exist) and formal NGO (which are successfully registered). Previously, these mainstream NGOs were thought to be in a safe or relatively safe zone within the civil society sector. They may be monitored by the police and frequently invited to work, but no one has been arrested or imprisoned, nor have many well-known NGOs abruptly ceased operations in such a short period of time as in the last two years.

In 2021 and 2022, the authorities arrested and imprisoned four leaders of well-known Vietnamese NGOs for alleged tax evasion. Mr. Mai Phan Loi and Mr. Bach Hung Duong, leaders of the MEC Community Education and Communication Center, were sentenced to 48 and 30 months in prison, respectively, for nearly 2 billion VND in tax evasion. Mr. Dang Dinh Bach, Director of the Center for Legal Research and Policy for Sustainable Development LPSD, was sentenced to 5 years in prison for allegedly evading approximately 1.38 billion VND in taxes. Nguyen Thi Khanh, director of GreenID, was sentenced to 21 months in prison for allegedly evading 456 million VND in personal income tax from the Goldman Environmental Prize, which is worth \$200,000. In comparison to cases of corporate tax evasion or corrupt officials, the amount of money these NGO leaders were accused of evading was much lower, but the sentences they received were harsher. Furthermore, these NGO leaders are all relatively independent activists with expertise and the ability to advocate for policy in areas

---

<sup>13</sup>RFA, Poet Thai Hao was beaten on his way to receive the Van Viet Award, <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/comment/blog/poet-thai-hao-harassed-while-on-the-way-to-an-award-ceremony-03072022091753.html>

where they excel. Before being arrested, Mr. Mai Phan Loi and Dang Dinh Bach, representing MEC and LPSD, were campaigning to urge the government to establish a DAG advisory group under the EVFTA agreement. Meanwhile, GreenID advocates for environmental policies, such as petitions opposing the construction of new coal power plants. The policy advocacy of MEC, LPSD, and GreenID demonstrates the expertise and influence of independent organizations, which may have triggered the Vietnamese government, leading to the arrests and prison sentences of the four activists mentioned above.

The prosecution of Nguyen Son Lo, former director of the SENA Institute of Technology Research and Development, for allegedly violating democratic freedoms, adds weight to the argument that the Vietnamese government has been suppressing civil society. On July 27, 2022, the Ministry of Public Security issued an order prohibiting Mr. Lo from leaving the residence and charged him under Article 331 of the Penal Code. SENA Institute was founded in 1992 and was once regarded as Vietnam's strategic think tank, conducting numerous studies and making policy recommendations in a variety of fields. Mr. Nguyen Son Lo wrote numerous comments and policy proposals to be sent to the competent authorities. Unfortunately, Mr. Lo's efforts forced him to explain himself to the Central Inspection Committee and he was attacked by the police of Bach Thong district, Bac Kan province, for "using open letters to express views against the Party and State".<sup>14</sup> Before Mr. Lo was charged, the SENA institute was suspended on July 5, 2022, to carry out the dissolution procedures because it violated the regulations governing the establishment, operation, and dissolution of science and technology organizations.

Not only SENA, but other well-known names in the mainstream NGO world have vanished one by one. Transparency International's consulting firm Towards Transparency has announced that it will cease operations on January 1, 2022, with no plans to reopen.<sup>15</sup> In November 2022, the Center for Action and Cooperation for Environment and Development (CHANGE Vietnam) abruptly announced its closure.<sup>16</sup> The LIN Community Development Support Center has announced on its Facebook account to be closed since January 1, 2023. The

---

<sup>14</sup> Electrical portal of Bach Thong district, Suggestions to build the Party or to oppose the Party, <https://bachthong.gov.vn/gop-y-xay-dung-dang-hay-chong-dang/>

<sup>15</sup> Towards Transparency, Notice, <https://towardstransparency.org/thong-bao/>

<sup>16</sup> Ho Chi Minh City Tourism Association, CHANGE environmental protection organization officially stops working, <http://www.hta.org.vn/tin-tuc-su-kien/to-chuc-bao-ve-moi-truong-change-chinh-thuc-ngung-hoat-dong-5798.html>

above organizations have one thing in common: they are all organizations with expertise, a great reputation, and strong policy advocacy capabilities, but they all abruptly announced that they would cease operations for no apparent reason, confusing the public who are unfamiliar with the situation of NGOs in Vietnam.

The arrest of activists and the forced dissolution of a number of official NGOs is unprecedented in Vietnam. The above phenomenon is not difficult to explain for those who have worked and observed Vietnam's civil society for a long time, but it still gives a shiver as the government's brutal intervention goes rampant. It is unclear how much of an impact this "Kill the Chickens to Scare the Monkeys" tactic will have on mainstream NGOs in Vietnam, but it is clear that many NGOs are looking to transform their operating model, from NGOs to social enterprises, in order to ease administrative procedures grip and because tax regulations for social enterprises are clearer and less confusing.

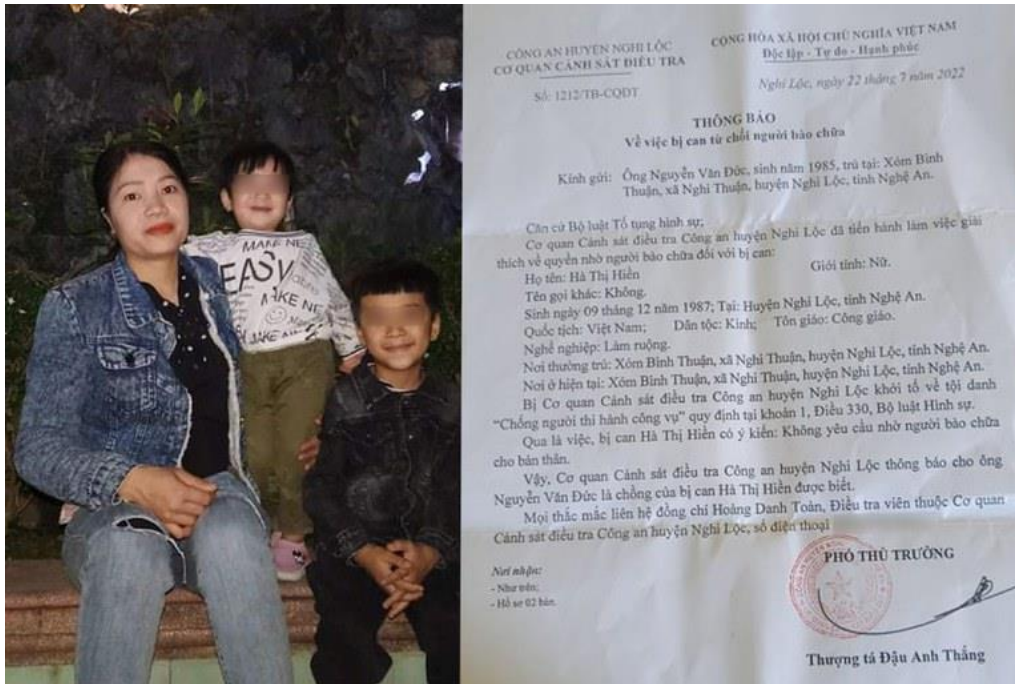
### **3. Rights of persons deprived of liberty**

#### **3.1. Violation of the right to legal aid**

Although the law allows detainees to have access to a lawyer from the moment they are detained, authorities use a variety of bureaucratic delays to keep detainees from reaching a lawyer on time. In cases involving allegations of national security or political sensitivity, Vietnamese law prohibits suspects from contacting lawyers or family members until the police have completed their investigation and the offender has been formally charged. Authorities frequently coerced those under investigation into foregoing their right to counsel in exchange for a reduced sentence or the absence of ill treatment in prison. Ms. Vu Thi Kim Hoang, who was arrested along with Mr. Nguyen Thai Hung in January this year on charges of violating Article 331 of the 2015 Penal Code, told Radio Free Asia (RFA) that the police force persuaded and threatened Ms. Hoang and Mr. Hung to sign a petition to refuse lawyers, so the couple had no defense lawyers and few opportunities to speak up for themselves during the first-instance trial.

Although Vietnam's criminal procedural laws demand that the accused and others with relevant rights and obligations be properly notified of the trial time, the authorities regularly fail to do so and refuse to allow the families of the defendants to attend the trial. Do Le Na, the wife of independent parliamentary self-nominee Le Trong Hung, told RFA that neither her family nor her attorney had been informed of the appellate trial, and that Mr. Hung had repeatedly asked to see a lawyer prior to the appeal but that the detention facility had not

informed the lawyer of this.<sup>17</sup> The seven parishioners, who had been arrested for allegedly disturbing public order (article 330 of the Penal Code) after protesting against the decision to disrupt people's roads in Nghi Loc district, Nghe An province, had to sign an application to refuse a defense lawyer because the police threatened to increase the sentence. The families of the defendants were not informed of the time and place of the first-instance trial. They only knew about the trial through two plainclothed commune policemen who came to supervise the families on the day of the first-instance hearing.<sup>18</sup>



*Ms. Ha Thi Hien, one the 7 parishioners arrested in Nghi Loc district, Nghe An province; and the Notice of Ms. Hien's resignation from the defense counsel*

In cases involving defense attorneys, the lawyers frequently face challenges from the investigating police, the prosecutor, and even the judges. Obtaining a defense certificate from the investigating agency is the first step in representing a client. This procedure is not only

<sup>17</sup>RFA, Mr. Le Trong Hung was allowed to meet his family after the "no one knew" appeal. <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/poc-le-trong-hung-meet-his-family-after-the-appellate-04262022020811.html>

<sup>18</sup>RFA, Nghe An: Seven parishioners of Binh Thuan were sentenced to prison for protesting against the demolition of residential roads. <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/seven-residents-in-listen-an-convicted-because-objecting-demolition-of-road-12052022080808.html>



inconvenient, but it also establishes a hierarchical relationship between the police and the lawyer. In the Tinh That Bong Lai case, the Long An provincial police agency made it difficult for Lawyer Dang Dinh Manh to register to defend Mr. Le Tung Van. The police prolonged the process by telling that the lawyer's application lacked verification, or the officer in charge of recording the receipt was absent. The Long An province police are therefore to blame for the delay of registration process for defense attorneys, yet the police exploited this very justification to keep the attorney from getting in touch with and representing Mr. Le Tung Van, who was under house arrest.<sup>19</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup>RFA, Tinh That Bong Lai case: Police prevent registration of legal procedures and access to clients [https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in\\_depth/tinh-that-bong-lai-case-police-prevent-registration-of-legal-procedures-and-access-to-clients-01102022123611.html](https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/tinh-that-bong-lai-case-police-prevent-registration-of-legal-procedures-and-access-to-clients-01102022123611.html)

## ĐƠN KHIẾU NẠI

**Kính gửi** : THỦ TRƯỞNG CƠ QUAN CẢNH SÁT ĐIỀU TRA HUYỆN ĐỨC HÒA

**Đồng kính gửi** :- GIÁM ĐỐC CÔNG AN TỈNH LONG AN (để biết)  
- TRƯỞNG CÔNG AN HUYỆN ĐỨC HÒA (để biết)  
- VIỆN KIỂM SÁT NHÂN DÂN HUYỆN ĐỨC HÒA (để giám sát)  
- LIÊN ĐOÀN LUẬT SƯ VIỆT NAM (để biết)  
- ĐOÀN LUẬT SƯ THÀNH PHỐ HỒ CHÍ MINH (để biết)

**Trích yếu** : V/v Khiếu nại Cơ quan Cảnh sát Điều tra – Công an Huyện Đức Hòa từ chối nhân thủ tục đăng ký luật sư - Cản trở luật sư hành nghề, thực hiện các quyền theo quy định Bộ luật Tố tụng Hình sự

Tôi ký tên dưới đây là ĐẶNG ĐÌNH MẠNH, luật sư thuộc Đoàn Luật sư TP. Hồ Chí Minh, người đăng ký bảo chữa cho ông LÊ TÙNG VÂN, thành viên Tĩnh Thất Bồng Lai/Thiền Am Bên Bờ Vũ Trụ tọa lạc tại Lập Thành, Hòa Khánh Tây, Đức Hòa, Long An bị khởi tố hình sự.

Trần trọng kính gửi Quý vị đơn này để trình báo và khiếu nại sự việc như sau :

### 1. VỀ VIỆC LUẬT SƯ ĐĂNG KÝ BẢO CHỮA :

Nguyên, sáng ngày 07/01/2022, tôi đến trụ sở Cơ quan Cảnh sát Điều tra – Công an Huyện Đức Hòa để nộp các văn bản đăng ký bảo chữa cho ông LÊ TÙNG VÂN, gồm ba văn bản sau :

1. Công văn giới thiệu của tổ chức hành nghề luật sư : VĂN PHÒNG LUẬT SƯ ĐẶNG ĐÌNH MẠNH;
2. Phiếu đề nghị luật sư : Của ông LÊ THANH MINH TÚ - Con trai của ông LÊ TÙNG VÂN.
3. Thẻ luật sư : Bản sao có thị thực;

Và xuất trình bản chính Thẻ luật sư theo quy định điểm a, khoản 2, điều 78 Bộ luật Tố tụng Hình sự hiện hành về “Thủ tục đăng ký bảo chữa”

Cán bộ tiếp nhận đề nghị tôi chờ để xem xét. Sau khi chờ hơn một tiếng rưỡi đồng hồ, tôi vào nhắc nhở thì cán bộ trực đã từ chối nhận các văn bản nêu trên với các lý do không đúng quy định Bộ luật Tố tụng Hình sự hiện hành.

Sáng ngày 10/01/2022, tôi trở lại để tiếp tục thực hiện thủ tục đăng ký luật sư và có bổ sung thêm văn bản khai sinh của con trai ông LÊ TÙNG VÂN. Nhưng vẫn tiếp tục bị từ chối.

### 2. VỀ VIỆC LUẬT SƯ TIẾP XÚC VỚI THÂN CHỦ :

Chiều ngày 08 và sáng ngày 09/01/2022, tôi đến Tĩnh Thất Bồng Lai/Thiền Am Bên Bờ Vũ Trụ tọa lạc tại Lập Thành, Hòa Khánh Tây, Đức Hòa, Long An để tiếp xúc với thân chủ là ông LÊ TÙNG VÂN. Nhưng cả hai lần đều bị lực lượng phong tỏa ở đây ngăn cản việc tiếp xúc cho dù không có quy định nào của pháp luật, hoặc quyết định nào của cơ quan chức năng cấm đoán việc ông LÊ TÙNG VÂN tiếp xúc với luật sư của mình.

1.

*Lawyer Dang Dinh Manh's complaint about being prevented by the police from registering for legal procedures and approaching clients in Tinh That Bong Lai case*

*(Source: Facebook Le Thanh Minh Tu)*

Following that, despite the fact that five lawyers had successfully registered legal aid procedures for people in Tinh That Bong Lai, Long An police continued to block lawyers from participating in DNA collection processes for 27 people living in Tinh That Bong Lai, including children, to investigate allegations of "fraud to appropriate property." The Long An police did not inform the lawyers about the DNA testing, and when the lawyers found out and asked to testify as representative lawyers, they were denied. After the police had finished

collecting samples, the lawyers were allowed to see their clients. The police justified that the lawyers were registered to represent the client in the Abuse of democratic freedoms case, so they have nothing to do with this case. Mainstream media then quoted the police agency accusing the lawyers of misrepresenting, insulting, slandering the authorities, recording videos and posting them on Youtube to direct public opinion internally and abroad.<sup>20</sup>

Vietnam's practice shows that it is difficult for lawyers to play a clear role in protecting human rights because of oppression by the government. Lawyers defending petitioners or dissidents often face prison sentences such as Le Thi Cong Nhan, Nguyen Van Dai, Le Quoc Quan; or lose their practice license, as in the case of Vo An Don and Nguyen Dang Trung; or get assaulted as in the case of Tran Thu Nam and Le Van Luan. Recently, lawyer Le Hoang Tung was attacked by investigator Tran Duc Minh, of the Criminal Police Department, Ho Chi Minh City Police, causing injury on May 17, 2022.<sup>21</sup> One day after the incident, Ho Chi Minh City police announced that lawyer Le Hoang Tung fell and injured himself, and the investigator did not assault anybody.<sup>22</sup> On July 20, 2022, two female defense lawyers in the Tinh That Bong Lai case, Dao Kim Lan and Ngo Thi Hoang Anh, were assaulted at the gate of the People's Court of Duc Hoa district, after the first day of the first-instance trial. There is no further information on the police investigation into the assault of two female lawyers.<sup>23</sup>

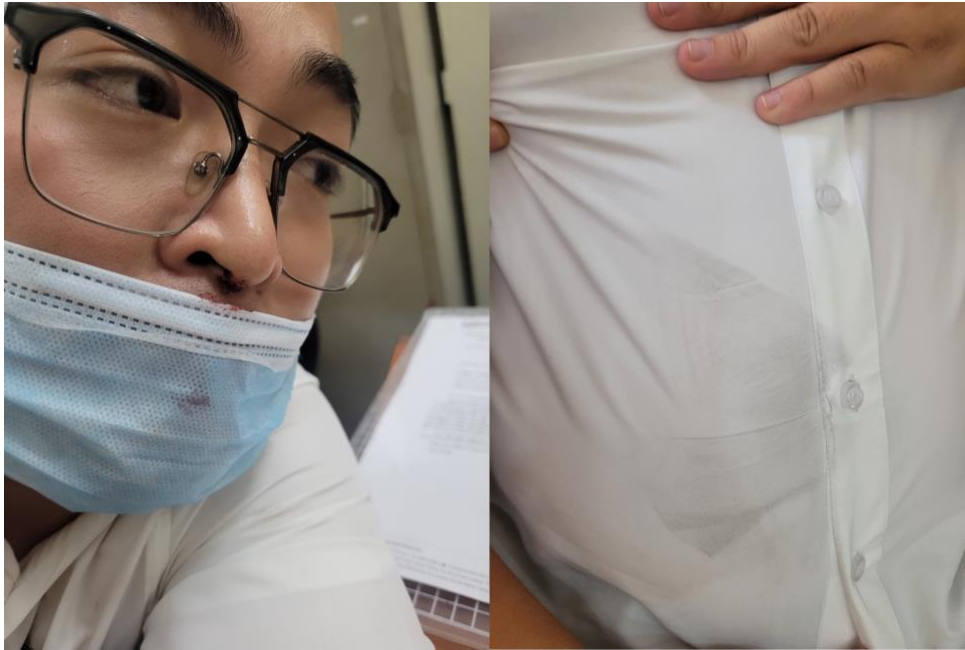
---

<sup>20</sup>Zingnews, Many people in Peng Lai Tinh Vien protested when the police took DNA samples <https://zingnews.vn/nhieu-nguoi-o-tinh-that-bong-lai-chong-doi-khi-cong-an-lay-mau-adn-post1360309.html>

<sup>21</sup>RFA. Ho Chi Minh City: Lawyer was assaulted by the police at the headquarters of the criminal police department. <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/attorney-denounced-of-being-assaulted-by-the-police-at-the-police-department-05182022051712.html>

<sup>22</sup>The Laborer, What is the truth about "a lawyer beaten by an investigator at the Ho Chi Minh City Police headquarters"?, <https://nld.com.vn/phap-luat/thuc-hu-viec-luat-su-bi-dieu-tra-vien-danh-tai-tru-so-cong-an-tp-hcm-20220518214335662.htm>

<sup>23</sup>Law Online, Trial of the case of 'Bang Lai': The lawyer reported being assaulted in front of the court, <https://plo.vn/xet-xu-vu-tinh-that-bong-lai-luat-su-trinh-bao-bi-hanh-hung-truoc-cong-toa-post690138.html>



*Photo of injuries and shoe marks on the chest of Lawyer Le Hoang Tung*

*(source: Vietnam Lawyers e-Journal)*

In political cases, no matter how hard they try to defend, the defense lawyer's role is still limited to being a channel of communication between the detained person and the outside world, an observer and witness to the extent of the government's human rights violations. To further limit lawyers' ability, the government issued the Ordinance on administrative sanctions for acts that allegedly obstruct legal proceedings on August 18, 2022, including penalties for lawyers and journalists for disclosing investigative secrets or providing false information that delays investigation and trial activities. The fine varies between 7 million and 30 million VND (approximately \$280 and \$1,200).

### **3.2. Torture in detention camps and police stations**

Law enforcement brutality is still a major issue in Vietnam. Although the government has taken steps in the last year to investigate and prosecute police officers who beat people, cases that are received and handled are still rare and place a heavy burden of proof on victims. Cases without specific photographic evidence are frequently dismissed as lacking sufficient evidence and concluding that the police did not violate the law. Some of the cases reported by the media are:

- On February 20, 2022, Mr. Bui Van Bich was found dead at the police custody house of Vu Thu district, Thai Binh province. It was not until November 2022 that this incident was

revealed to the public, along with the information that two police officers would be held for criminal responsibility for Mr. Bich's death.<sup>24</sup>

- At the end of September 2022, Mr. Tran Dinh Son, an amateur youtuber, reported to the media that he had been beaten by the police of Tan Phu commune, Cu Chi district, Ho Chi Minh City and got the camera and phone confiscated after trying to fish in an industrial zone. The police threatened and prevented Mr. Son from taking an injury assessment and denied the accusations of assaulting Mr. Son.<sup>25</sup>

- On July 1, 2022, Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Diep was arrested by police in Nhon My commune, Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province at a cockfighting site, together with about 11 people at around 3pm. At 11pm, Mr. Diep was taken to the emergency room but died on the way to the hospital. The police have so far remained silent about Mr. Diep's death reason.

- On September 18, 2022, Mr. Rcom Jack was found dead by hanging at the police detention camp of Kon Ray district, Kon Tum province.

- On October 18, 2022, Mr. Dao Ba Phi was found dead in a hanging position at the police custody house of Dong Hoa town, Tuy Hoa city, Phu Yen province. Phu Yen Provincial Police issued a statement concluding that Mr. Phi committed suicide and he was buried by the police because his family did not come to receive the body. However, Mr. Dao Ba Phi's family said they only received an urgent arrest notice on October 20 and had many doubts about his death. Six people who shared information about the suspicion that the police beat people to death from Mr. Dao Ba Phi's family were then administratively sanctioned with a total fine of nearly 40 million VND (about 1,700 USD).<sup>26</sup>

### **3.3. Abuse in prison**

Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security maintains its policy of keeping prisoners, particularly prisoners of conscience, in harsh living conditions in order to punish and weaken

---

<sup>24</sup>Youth Online, Arrest the former captain, deputy head of the district police for using corporal punishment, <https://tuoitre.vn/bat-cuu-doi-truong-doi-pho-cong-an-huyen-vi-dung-nhuc-hinh-20221110181815351.htm>

<sup>25</sup>RFA, HCMC: A YouTuber accused the commune police of beating and destroying the camera, <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/youtuber-in-hcm-city-says-being-beaten-by-communal-police-09222022073339.html>

<sup>26</sup>Vietnamnet, Posting false information about the suspect's suicide in the detention house, 6 people were fined, <https://vietnamnet.vn/dang-tin-sai-su-that-vu-nghi-can-tu-sat-trong-nha-tam-giu-6-nguoi-bi-phat-2076950.html>

their mental strength. Along with sending prisoners of conscience to prisons far from their families, authorities allowed prison guards to use psychological measures to make imprisoned activists' lives more miserable, such as preventing them from seeing their families, preventing them from receiving more food and medicine from their families, or preventing other prisoners from interacting with political prisoners. Prisoner complaints and denunciations are rarely received by competent authorities. The law allows inmates to direct their complaints and denunciations to the Procuracy, but all letters from prisoners must be censored by the prison. Even if the procuracy receives prisoners' complaints, they usually briefly investigate, and always conclude that there is no violation as claimed in the denunciation. There is no independent inspection system to monitor activities in prisons, so prisoners have no real right to complain or denounce.

Activists are still beaten and retaliated against in detention camps. On January 14, 2022, former prison guard Le Chi Thanh reappeared after 8 months of detention, with an emaciated and difficult-to-walk appearance, which is totally contrast to his healthy look when being arrested. During the interrogation on October 19, 2021, Mr. Le Chi Thanh denounced the fact that was tortured in prison, his hands and feet had been hung for seven days. All eating, drinking and urinating and defecating must have be done on the spot. Mr. Le Chi Thanh's lawyer has drafted a denunciation since October 2021, but the case has not been investigated or mentioned by the authorities. The photos of Mr. Thanh at the first-instance trial confirms the torture allegations as well as the level of brutal retaliation by Vietnamese police against those who dared to speak out and expose the system's wrongdoings.



*Mr. Le Chi Thanh at the time of his arrest (left photo) and at the first instance court (right photo) (source: RFA)*

The family of land activist Trinh Ba Tu informed the press that Tu was beaten and shackled for 10 days in a disciplinary room in September 2022. The mistreatment of prisoners at prison camp No. 6, Thanh Chuong, Nghe An is said to be retaliation for Mr. Tu's writing a denunciation of prison No. 6's harsh policy, which resulted in the death of prisoner Do Cong Duong at the camp. In September and October, Mr. Tu was barred from calling or visiting. Mr. Tu went on a 22-day hunger strike to protest the prison's abuse until September 28, 2022. When Mr. Tu told his relatives about being tortured at the meeting on September 20, 2022, the guards immediately stopped the meeting and forcibly brought Mr. Tu back to the cell. Mr. Tu's family made a denunciation and complaint to the competent authorities. On November 23, 2022, Mr. Tu's family had an in-person meeting with the Procuracy of Nghe An province. The Procuracy representatives stated that they had entered the prison to obtain statements from guards and other prisoners, but no one saw Mr. Tu being beaten, so the Nghe An province procuracy concluded that Tu had never been beaten.

The living conditions in Vietnam's prison system are harsh, unsanitary, and medically unfit. Many former inmates have reported being held in cramped, crowded cells; the cells are extremely hot in the summer and extremely cold in the winter; and some prisons even mistreat prisoners by removing fans or cutting power in the hot summer. Food is not in accordance with regulations and is unsanitary; water is dirty and polluted. Some prisons are located near

construction sites, which causes noise and air pollution. Because of the harsh living conditions, the majority of the prisoners developed skin and joint diseases. Meanwhile, many prisons deny prisoners access to adequate medical care, exacerbating their illnesses. Such harsh living conditions cause many healthy people to become sick, and those who are already sick are increasingly degenerated.

Le Thi Binh, a female prisoner who was recently released on November 22, 2022, described the toxic environment, poor nutrition and medical care, and the situation of guards beating inmates at An Phuoc prison in Binh Duong province.<sup>27</sup> According to Ms. Binh, An Phuoc prison has about 500 female prisoners. Nearly 20 political prisoners and prisoners of conscience are held together in an area called "Security," where they can communicate with each other on a daily basis, including activists Pham Doan Trang, Nguyen Thi Ngoc Hanh, Hoang Thi Thu Vang, Dinh Thi Thu Thuy, Huynh Thi To Nga, Ngo Thi Tuong Vi, etc. Political prisoners are isolated in the prison, and criminal prisoners are not permitted to communicate with political prisoners. When a criminal prisoner speaks to a member of the Security group, the guards will summon them to question and intimidate them. Prisoners are allowed three meals of meat, two meals of fish, and two meals of eggs per week, according to prison regulations. The meat, on the other hand, was two small pieces, and the fish was a dry and stinky which was only steamed hastily and then fed to the prisoners. Prisoners who have family support are mostly reliant on it. Female prisoners at An Phuoc are assigned to one of two jobs: scraping rubber trees or making votive papers for export to China. Inmates must be exposed to hazardous materials while working without protective equipment. All prisoners have to work 10 hours a day, political prisoners are only made to work 5 days a week, while other prisoners are forced to work 7 days a week. Furthermore, the prison assigns a very high daily product quota; if prisoners fail to meet the quota, they will be fined or disciplined (not considered for reduction of sentence, have to do cleaning chores or be beaten). Prisoners are either not paid or paid very little. Anyone who speaks out against the labor regulations were either fined or beaten..<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup>RFA, Former prisoner Le Thi Binh: An Phuoc prison beat, forced female prisoners to do hard labor, <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/former-prisoner-of-conscience-le-thi-binh-says-an-phuoc-prison-camp-beat-and-force-female-prisoners-work-hard-11232022080412.html>

<sup>28</sup>In May 2022, inmates at Gia Trung prison, Gia Lai province also denounced the prison guards for not letting them out of the cell, except for an hour to get food and water, because they



Ordinary criminal prisoners, according to Ms. Binh and other former political prisoners, are forced to do hard labor, beaten, and treated unfairly many times more than political prisoners in general. In An Phuoc camp, prisoners are not provided with adequate medical care; only Panadol drugs are provided for all illness, and prisoners' families are permitted to send in certain drugs. One time, a medical team visited the prison for a perfunctory medical examination, doctors only asked a few questions, and then recorded in the medical record that inmates' health was normal.

In the past year, there was a case of prisoner Do Cong Duong who died at Thanh Chuong camp, Nghe An province on August 2, 2022, which has raised many concerns about the prison system in Vietnam. Mr. Do Cong Duong was in good health prior to his arrest in early 2018, but he developed a number of illnesses during his sentence, including heart disease, pneumonia, and respiratory failure. His family repeatedly petitioned him for medical treatment, but the prison warden still refused. It was not until his illness became too severe that he was taken to the hospital in Thanh Chuong district, Nghe An province for treatment, but it was too late.<sup>29</sup> According to Clause 3, Article 49 of the Law on Criminal Judgment Execution 2010, prisoners who die while serving sentences, such as Mr. Duong, will be buried by prisons and their remains will only be returned to their families after three years. Mr. Duong's case is not unique in Vietnam; in 2019, POC Dao Quang Thuc died at Thanh Chuong prison while serving a 13-year sentence.

As can be seen, prisoners do not receive adequate medical care from the prison's health station and are frequently denied requests for medical examination and treatment in the hospital. Only when the prisoner's health is exhausted and the disease has become too severe after a long period without treatment will the prison transport him to an outside hospital, but by then it is too late and the chances of recovery are very slim. Outraged by the government's mistreatment and concerned for the lives of young people, about 30 survivors' families wrote an open letter on August 9, 2022, urging the Vietnamese government to honor its international commitments to respect and ensure human rights, including prisoners' rights, and to guarantee

---

protested against forced labor in the camp.  
RFA:<https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/political-prisoners-at-gia-trung-prison-said-to-be-maltreated-for-refusing-to-labor-05172022083455.html>

<sup>29</sup>RFA, Political prisoner Do Cong Duong died while serving his sentence,  
<https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/prisoner-of-conscience-do-cong-duong-died-in-prison-08032022085632.html>

prisoners' access to clean water, safe food, and timely medical care.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, the Vietnamese government provides no response to the letter.

#### 4. Freedom of religion

The Vietnamese government restricts religious practice activities by legal regulations, regulations on registration and operation. The 2016 Law on Beliefs and Religions still applies a multi-step process of registration and recognition of religious groups with multiple levels of approval in order to maintain the ask-for-permission relationship between the state and religious organizations. Firstly, religious organizations must have the approval of the government to operate legally (Article 2.12 and Chapter V, Section 1); all religious activities must be registered, more specifically, permission must be obtained, and permission must be obtained which can be denied (Chapter IV); and third, the government continues to have the authority to interfere in the internal affairs of religions, especially in the selection, ordination, and appointment of monks. (Chapter V, Sections 2 and 3). These provisions are contrary to the universal human rights standards enshrined in the UDHR and ICCPR, international documents Vietnam has committed to respect and enforce. And the government abuses legal regulations to recognize only 43 organizations belonging to 16 religions<sup>31</sup> and turned large and long-standing religious groups such as the Unified Buddhist Congregation of Vietnam, the Original Hoa Hao Buddhist Congregation, and the Chon Truyen (True Line) Cao Dai Congregation into outlaws.

In June 2022, the Government Committee on Religious Affairs published two draft decrees containing provisions to help the government control religious freedom more tightly. The draft replaces Decree 162/2017/ND-CP implementing a number of articles of the Law on Belief and Religion that stipulate: The central and provincial governments have the right to suspend all religious activities of religious organizations, affiliated religious organizations (article 13); The central government has the right to suspend all training activities of religious

---

<sup>30</sup>Germany Information, Open Letters from Families of Prisoners of Conscience in Vietnam, <http://www.viettin.de/content/th%C6%B0-ng%E1%BB%8F-c%E1%BB%A7a-c%C3%A1c-gia-%C4%91%C3%ACnh-t%C3%B9-nh%C3%A2n-l%C6%B0%C6%A1ng-t%C3%A2m-en%E1%BB%87t-male>

<sup>31</sup>Tien Phong, Distorting the religious situation in Vietnam: The familiar tactic of hostile forces, <https://tienphong.vn/xuyen-tac-tinh-hinh-ton-Giao-o-viet-nam-chieu-bai-quen-thuoc-cua-cac-the-luc-thu-dich-post1481449.tpo>

training institutions (article 17); and Religious activities, including the online ones, also require permission from the government (article 28). The second draft is a draft decree on administrative sanctions in the field of belief and religion, which, if approved, will become the first document on administrative sanctions in the field of religion. The draft stipulates 4 forms of administrative sanctions when violating the Law on Belief and Religion, including: fines, public apology, suspension of activities and dissolution of religious organizations. Notably, the draft allows the government to deeply interfere in the internal operations of religious organizations that commit violations, such as forcibly canceling the transfer of dignitaries, forcing the cancellation of appointment results, religious mandate, election results, etc. The government also has the power to force a halt to the ceremony while it is in progress. These are known as “remedial measures” after the violation.

In addition, the criminalization of legitimate religious freedom activities that are not in line with the state's policy includes crimes such as undermining the unity policy (Article 116 of the Penal Code), crimes of making, possessing, spreading or propagating information, documents and items aimed at opposing the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Article 117), the crime of disturbing public order (Article 318)... are the blatant abuses of the law to suppress religious freedom.

In addition, the guise of "land acquisition for public purposes" is also used quite often to narrow the places of worship of independent religious organizations and Christian churches. The religious lands that were taken did not really serve the community, but were gradually turned into hotels, apartments, and commercial centers. In July 2022, the government published the Draft Amendment to the Land Law for comments. This draft not only preserves decades of inadequate regulations on religious land, but also amends and supplements in the direction of further tightening the land use rights of religious organizations.

Vietnamese police monitor, harass, and sometimes forcefully suppress religious groups operating outside the state-controlled religious system. Followers of religions such as Cao Dai, Hoa Hao, Christianity, and Unified Vietnamese Buddhism face the risk of constant surveillance and intimidation. Followers of religious groups in the Central Highlands and Northwest may face mass prosecution, forced renunciation, detention, interrogation, torture, and years of imprisonment. The following are some typical cases recorded in 2021-2022:

- On February 20, 2022, the Secretary of the Party Committee and Vice Chairman of the People's Council of Vu Ban town, with the excuse of preventing gatherings during the

Covid-19 epidemic, rushed to the sanctuary to disrupt when the Archbishop Pastor Joseph Vu Van Thien was leading a mass at Vu Ban parish, Lac Son district, Hoa Binh province.

- On January 29, 2022, Father Tran Ngoc Thanh, assistant priest of Sa Loong family, Dak Mot parish, Kon-Tum diocese, was slashed to death by a blade-wielding man right when the priest was conducting confession. The authorities have been investigating the case. Earlier on April 22, 2021, another person stabbed a priest and two parishioners with a knife at An Khe parish church, also in Kontum diocese. The phenomenon of many Catholic priests being assaulted in recent years has been reported by BPSOS, an organization that monitors the religion by the overseas Vietnamese. The organization blamed "incitement to hatred" against religions in Vietnam as the cause of these attacks.

- On March 26, 2022, the government of An Giang province set up two checkpoints at the church's headquarters in Long An commune, Cho Moi district, An Giang province to prevent Original Hoa Hao Buddhist followers from attending the ceremony commemorating the Honorable Master's Absence Day (The Master is their religious leader, the Honorable Huynh Phu So). On June 15, 2022, the government of An Giang province continued to prevent Original Hoa Hao Buddhist followers from celebrating the anniversary of the Master's Enlightenment of Hoa Hao Buddhism. Meanwhile, on June 16, the Central Board of Hoa Hao Buddhist Congregation, the only Hoa Hao Buddhist organization licensed by the government, could easily organized the celebration with the presence of the government's representatives, local authorities and a large number of dignitaries and believers.

- On July 22, 2022, Ms. Nguyen Xuan Mai, a follower of True Line Cao Dai, was detained for nearly 7 hours at Tan Son Nhat airport when returning from the 2022 International Conference on Religious Freedom taking place in Washington D.C, USA.

- On October 24, border security at Tan Son Nhat International Airport stopped the exit of Father Truong Hoang Vu of the Redemptorist Order of Can Gio (Saigon Archdiocese) when he was on his way to the United States. Father Truong Hoang Vu has been in charge of the program "Thanking the disabled veterans of the Republic of Vietnam" of Can Gio Redemptorist Church for 4 years.

- On May 26, 2022, Deputy Minister of Public Security - Senior Lieutenant General Luong Tam Quang presented certificates of merit to police officers of Kon Tum province for their achievements in eliminating Ha Mon "cult" after the campaign to suppress this belief for

the past 23 years.<sup>32</sup> Provincial authorities in this area believe that Ha Mon's activities have political and reactionary elements, but do not give any specific evidence. In 2021, the government of Mang Yang district, Gia Lai province, where there were 1,357 Ha Mon followers in 2011, said that it had completely abolished Ha Mon religion in this district.<sup>33</sup> In March 2020, three Bana ethnic people were arrested by Gia Lai Provincial Police after nine years of hiding in the forest for fear of being hunted down by the authorities for following Ha Mon religion.<sup>34</sup>

With the serious religious persecutions in recent years, Vietnam has been placed on the Special Watch List for Religious Freedom by the United States. This is the first time in 16 years since Vietnam was removed from the US List of Special Concerns.

#### **4.1. Persecution of Duong Van Minh religion**

Duong Van Minh is a religion created by Mr. Duong Van Minh in 1989 and spreaded in the mountainous provinces of Northern Vietnam. This belief imparts faith in God, retains the traditional living customs of the Hmong, but changes them to make them less outdated, helping them save more time and money. The most typical change is in the practice of funerals. According to the old custom, the people must do the following: hanging a corpse for 7 days and 7 nights, having to feed the dead body with rice, slaughtering a cow, slaughtering a buffalo, eating and drinking with the corpse for 7 days, then carrying the corpse to bury without a coffin, then 13 days later people must slaughter buffaloes to worship evil spirits. To change this custom, Mr. Duong Van Minh built a funeral home, the dead will be taken there, relatives visit the deceased and pray to God within 24 hours; then the dead person will be buried. The Hmong themselves also noticed the progress in this burial method, so many people voluntarily followed it. However, the government believes that Duong Van Minh's religion is a cult. Mr. Duong Van Minh was arrested in 1990 and sentenced to 5 years in prison on charges of fraudulently appropriating people's property and propagating superstitions.

---

<sup>32</sup>VOV, Ha Mon cult in Kon Tum has been basically eliminated,

<https://vov.vn/xa-hoi/ta-dao-ha-mon-o-kon-tum-da-co-ban-bi-xoa-bo-post946425.vov>

<sup>33</sup>People's Army, Lesson 4: Party cell at Military - Frontline,

<https://www.qdnd.vn/da-phuong-tien/longform/bai-4-chi-bo-quan-su-tien-phong-tuyen-dau-664457>

<sup>34</sup>Ho Chi Minh City Police, The 9-year journey of hiding of 3 cult-followers,

[https://congan.com.vn/vu-an/phong-su/hanh-trinh-9-nam-lan-tron-cua-3-doi-tuong-theo-ta-dao\\_94504.html](https://congan.com.vn/vu-an/phong-su/hanh-trinh-9-nam-lan-tron-cua-3-doi-tuong-theo-ta-dao_94504.html)

Since then, the government has continuously carried out a campaign to suppress followers of this faith. In the northern provinces, local authorities sent people to destroy funeral homes, places of worship in the homes of the Hmong, followers were forced to sign papers to renounce their religion or get persecuted and sentenced. In the mainstream press, it is flooded with false information about Duong Van Minh's religion, accusing it of being an illegal organization, spreading superstitions about the end of the world. The most serious was the government's accusation of Duong Van Minh's religion "using religion to do opposition activities", propagandizing against the state and plotting to establish the "Kingdom of the Mong". These positions of the government have been pointed out by many researchers as questionable.<sup>35</sup>



*Left: Tuyen Quang government mobilized people to give up Duong Van Minh religion (pictured above), the government had people dismantle the Funeral house of people in Bac Kan; Right: Police and medical forces raid the funeral of Mr. Duong Van Minh in December 2021 (Source: Luat Khoa Magazine)*

However, the campaign to suppress Duong Van Minh's religion has continued for many years. After the founder of the religion Duong Van Minh died, the Tuyen Quang provincial government mobilized about 300 mobile policemen and people wearing medical protective

---

<sup>35</sup>Luat Khoa, Who is lying to you about Duong Van Minh's religion: the military or the police?, <https://luatkhoa.org/2021/10/ai-dang-noi-doi-ban-ve-dao-duong-van-minh-bo-doi-hay-cong-an/>

suits to raid the house of Mr. Duong Van Minh. They beat and threatened worshipers then took away 35 people who were present at the funeral.<sup>36</sup> In the following days, new people were continuously detained for investigation, the total number of people arrested by local police for investigation increased to 56 people. However, only 15 of these people were later criminally prosecuted and sentenced to between 2 and 4 years in prison. In two closed court sessions in May 2022, the total penalty was more than 38 years in prison and a fine of 285 million VND for the accusations of "resisting people on duty" and "violating safety in crowded places". ". During the time of detention for investigation, the police informed that all 15 of these people had filed an application to refuse lawyer Nguyen Van Mieng, whose families requested to provide detainees legal assistance, as well as refused to meet anyone, including their own family members. This raises a lot of doubts about the police forcing them to sign the application to refuse a lawyer because only a few families have applied for a lawyer, but all 15 people have filed a refusal stating the lawyer by name, Mr. Mieng.

After that, the state press began to be flooded with information about the campaign to eliminate Duong Van Minh religion in many cities. Thousands of Duong Van Minh followers in Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Thai Nguyen and Bac Kan provinces were constantly pressured by the government and demanded to give up their religion.<sup>37</sup> The government of Bao Lam district, Cao Bang province demolished many funeral homes at 3 a.m., broke into private houses, demolished altars, confiscated worshiping utensils of people following Duong Van Minh religion and replaced them with Ho Chi Minh's photo.<sup>38</sup> These actions are disguised by local authorities as "mobilizing people not to follow illegal organizations" and fighting superstition. But it should be noted that worshiping and altar-building activities exist in many other ethnic groups in Vietnam, including the largest ethnic group, the Kinh, and even praised by the government as "the beauty" and "tradition" of Vietnam.

---

<sup>36</sup> RFA. Hundreds of police raid the funeral of founder Duong Van Minh. <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/hundreds-of-vn-police-raid-the-funeral-of-religious-founder-duongvan-minh-12272021042535.html>

<sup>37</sup>Law Khoa, Repression of Duong Van Minh's religion: 3 issues the government must clarify, <https://luatkhoa.org/2022/10/dan-ap-dao-duong-van-minh-3-van-de-chinh-quyen-phai-lam-ro/>

<sup>38</sup>RFA, A series of Duong Van Minh religious groups in Cao Bang were raided overnight, [https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in\\_depth/a-number-of-houses-under-duong-van-minh-church-raided-at-night-08092022093521.html](https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/a-number-of-houses-under-duong-van-minh-church-raided-at-night-08092022093521.html)



*The altar at the house of a resident of Duong Van Minh (left) religion and after being broken into the house by the police to remove it. Source: RFA.*



*Altar of Kinh people (Source: Me Linh district web portal, Hanoi)*

#### **4.2. Persecution of Protestant groups in the Central Highlands**

The Central Highlands region is considered by the Vietnamese government to have a complicated political situation because there are many indigenous peoples who follow Protestantism. In an article published on July 28, 2022, Party Building Magazine said that out of 1.2 million Protestants nationwide, there are 873,700 believers, equivalent to 73% of ethnic minorities. Protestants who are ethnic minorities are concentrated in two areas: the northern



mountainous region with 238,900 followers and the Central Highlands with 575,940 followers.<sup>39</sup>

The Vietnamese government does not recognize indigenous groups such as the Montagnards in the Central Highlands, and does not sympathize with branches of Christianity. As a result, the government has carried out many campaigns to suppress people in this area over the years, in which persecution of Protestant groups is a focus.

- In Dak Lak province, Buon Ma Thuot city police prevented 40 Protestants from celebrating at a house in K'mrong Prong B village, Ea Tu commune on July 5, 2022.<sup>40</sup>

- From July 8 to 10, 2022, the government of Ea Lam commune, Song Chinh district, Phu Yen province prevented followers of the Evangelical Christ Church from gathering for religious activities.<sup>41</sup> On July 13, 2022, three members of the church, including Mr. Nay Y Bang and Mr. Kshr Y Them, were invited by the government to work on the activities of the church.

- On October 14, 2022, some independent Protestants in Dak Lak said they were constantly stopped and guarded by the government at the entrances to villages and houses of the people.

- On October 30, 2022, the government of Cu Ebur commune, Buon Ma Thuot city, Dak Lak province broke into Mr. Y Nguyet Bkrong's house to disperse a religious activity of the followers of the Evangelical Church of Christ.

The government has always accused independent religious groups of breaking the law and conspiring against the government, but has failed to provide substantive evidence. Many Protestant groups have tried to register with local authorities, but they were not accepted and were even more severely persecuted. Such is the case of the Evangelical Church of Christ,

---

<sup>39</sup>Party Building Magazine, Promoting freedom of belief and religion in Vietnam.<https://web.archive.org/web/20220812172057/https://www.xaydungdang.org.vn/nhan-quyen-va-cuoc-song/thuc-day-quyen-tu-do-tin-nguong-ton - Giao-o-viet-nam-17284>

<sup>40</sup>RFA, A group of Central Highlands Protestants are constantly prevented from practicing their religion.[https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in\\_depth/a-group-of-independent-protestant-montagnards-said-to-be-continually-prevented-from-practicing-their-belief-07062022094633.html](https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/a-group-of-independent-protestant-montagnards-said-to-be-continually-prevented-from-practicing-their-belief-07062022094633.html)

<sup>41</sup>VOA, Protestants in Phu Yen are harassed and threatened by the government.<https://www.voatiengviet.com/a/6666353.html>

founded by a group of Montagnards in 2006. Pastor A Ga a member of this denomination tried to register religious activities for his church in commune people's committees. But after he provided the list of followers, the police reached out to the people on the list and threatened in order for them to give up this belief.

All the attempts to speak out by the Central Highlands people to protect their rights to freedom of belief and religion were brutally suppressed by the government:

- On May 20, 2022, the Court of Dak Lak province sentenced Mr. Y Wo Nie to 4 years in prison for allegedly violating Article 331 of the Penal Code. According to the indictment, Mr. Y Wo Nie was charged with writing 3 reports on the religious situation in the Central Highlands to send to the United Nations Human Rights Commission and the United States Commission on Religion; meeting and presenting the religious situation of the Central Highlands with the US diplomatic representative in 2020; and take online classes on international human rights law, religious freedom and Vietnamese civil law. After Mr. Y Wo Nie was convicted, the Dak Lak provincial police continued to ask his family to come work on his case.

- Mr. Nay Y Blang reported being repeatedly harassed by local authorities after he contacted a diplomat at the US Consulate General in Ho Chi Minh City in August of this year to report the situation of religious persecution in Vietnam. Mr. Bay Y Blang had a follow-up meeting with the religious delegation from the US Department of State on September 30, 2022, but was detained by local security forces at Phu Lam bus station in Tuy Hoa city on September 29, 2022 while on the way to the meeting in Saigon. Since then, he has been constantly monitored and hindered by the police in all activities, even when working in the fields. On November 22, 2022, more than 300 policemen, medical staff, and commune officials pulled up to Mr. Nay Y Blang's house at 4-5 am to search the house and seize the most valuable asset, a motorbike that costs 24 million VND.

The Central Highlands Evangelical Church is one of 12 churches belonging to the Evangelical Christ Church with followers of ethnic minorities in the provinces of Dak Lak, Tra Vinh, Khanh Hoa, Lam Dong, Quang Ngai, and Phu. Yen, Binh Phuoc, Gia Lai, and Kon Tum. The pastors and followers of the Evangelical Church of Christ all denied activities against the State of Vietnam and said that they only wanted to practice religious freedom, not be forced to follow any religious organization.

This church is facing a very dark future when the government repeatedly accuses them of collaborating with former FULRO members abroad to oppose the government, conspiring

to incite separatism, self-rule, and state establishment, Dega. It seems that the next goal of the police in the Central Highlands is to destroy this church at all costs.



*Mr. Nay Y Blang (wearing a striped shirt) in a meeting with the authorities in Phu Yen  
(Source: RFA)*

### **4.3. Suppression of Tinh That Bong Lai**

Tinh That Bong Lai is a religious practice group with a tendency towards Buddhism, led by Mr. Le Tung Van. This group thought they could operate without registration with the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha.

At this retreat, many children have been raised as orphans and participated in many television talent shows. When the Tinh That Bong Lai became more and more famous, monks of the Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha spoke up. These monks accused the members of the retreat of taking advantage of Buddhism, known as "monks" for short. On the other hand, the Sangha also alleges that the members of the retreat have insulted Buddhism through films produced by the monastery and released on social networks. Many people also follow the suspicion that this place uses children and religion for profit. In November 2021, the Government Committee for Religious Affairs and the Long An province government said that they would handle the Tinh That Bong Lai.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup> Nguoi lao dong Magazine, Tinh That Bong Lai - everything is basically done! (interview with Chairman of Long An Provincial People's Committee), <https://nld.com.vn/hoi-nong-dap-nhanh/vu-tinh-that-bong-lai-moi-viec-co-ban-da-done-20211107111906983.htm>

By early January 2022, the authorities prosecuted the case and arrested four members of the Tinh That Bong Lai, including Mr. Le Tung Van, 90 years old. The press immediately reported that this establishment was prosecuted by the police for incest and fraud. The police at the beginning were also very active in providing information to the press. They were always vague about the allegations of incest, despite those who are believed to be "the products of incest" are the children and the fact there has never been enough evidence for such a serious crime "incest". And so far, the police have only prosecuted the crime of "abusing democratic freedoms" and "fraudulent appropriation of assets" with members at Tinh That Bong Lai. After the Department of Children voiced a request to stop sharing information and pictures of children in Tinh That Bong Lai, the authorities suddenly realized their responsibility to protect children's rights, but that was just the show for the media. And perhaps because there is no agency to remind them to respect procedural principles and the rights of suspects, a series of human rights violations have occurred.

On January 14, 2022, Colonel Van Cong Minh, Deputy Director of Long An Provincial Police said in a press conference: "The case is under investigation, the police are coordinating with the People's Procuracy and People's Court to agree and give the final results of the case. It is necessary to agree on the crimes and when the final results are available, information will be provided to the press".<sup>43</sup>The function of the court is to adjudicate independently and only in accordance with the law, which is a constitutional principle and a leading principle in the principles of the Criminal Procedure Code. However, in this case, the three institutions of investigation, the prosecution and the court met to agree on the crime. This destroyed the most basic foundation of independence and accountability of each institution which requires that they cannot be mixed or allowed to coordinate with each other. The court engaged in the establishment of charges with investigative and prosecutorial authorities, apparently, has lost its must-have independence in terms of proof and adjudication. And unlike the investigative agency, the court is also a place where the principle of presumption of innocence is applied, it is almost the last place for the accused to present his innocence. But that became an impossibility before this unification. Apparently, due process has been ignored, and there seems to be a sentencing available to members of Tinh That Bong Lai.

---

<sup>43</sup>Vietnamnet, Long An Provincial Police informed about the case in 'Bong Lai's sanctuary'<https://vietnamnet.vn/cong-an-tinh-long-an-thong-tin-vu-an-o-tinh-that-bong-lai-808992.html>

During the investigation and trial process, the members of Tinh That Bong Lai were often prevented from contacting their lawyers. The police had at least 3 times collected DNA samples from all residents of Tinh That Bong Lai, including children, but only officially made one sample collection on September 24, 2022. According to a group of lawyers counseling the Tinh That, the government forces of about 50 people flooded this religious establishment and coercively collected DNA from people who were not related to the informant news. Those who did not agree to take samples were physically restrained by three or four public enforcers, then squeezed their throats to collect samples. In particular, 10 children aged 14 months to 12 years were sampled without a guardian present. When the team of lawyers received the news and arrived, they were stopped at the door,

During the trial, the defendants and defense lawyers were also subjected to unfair treatment from the trial panel. Unlike many political cases, the trial of Tinh That Bong Lai was thoughtfully broadcast live by local authorities at the Culture and Radio Center of Duc Hoa district, Long An province to the public. However, whenever the defense lawyer and the defendant spoke, the sound was muffled and could not be heard clearly. The trial panel frequently interrupted the defense attorneys and shortened their argument in the appellate session causing all 5 defense lawyers to stand up to protest.<sup>44</sup> 6 members of Tinh That Bong Lai were tried at first instance court on July 20 and 21, 2022 and appellate court on November 3 and 4, 2022. After two trials, six defendants were sentenced to from three to five years in prison. After the trial on July 20, two female defense lawyers in the case, Dao Kim Lan and Ngo Thi Hoang Anh, were assaulted in front of the People's Court of Duc Hoa district while taking the car back.

---

<sup>44</sup> Phap Luat Online, Tinh That Bồng Lai Case: The defendants refused to say the last word, <https://plo.vn/vu-tinh-that-bong-lai-cac-bi-cao-khong-ai-chiu-noi-loi-sau-cung-post706223.html>



*The trial on July 21, 2022 (source: PLO)*



*The lawyers simultaneously stood up to ask the court to continue argument session the appellate session November 3, 2022(source: PLO)*

The government's hostility towards independent religious groups such as Tinh That Bong Lai simply is because of political reasons. The government wants to control all religious

groups by approving activities, only those groups that the government approves are allowed to officially operate, and even have to become a tool to control religion for the government. Large religious organizations can resist this government influence. However, for small religious organizations, especially new religious groups, the current government is cracking down heavily, looking for ways to suppress and eliminate them, especially if that group has public and attention-attracting activities.

The fact that Tinh That Bong Lai is not registered with the government according to the Law on Belief and Religion but still operates openly, especially on social networks, is something the government does not want. It sets a precedent, and can promote independent Buddhist activities from the management of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha.

On the other hand, the Tinh That Bong Lai possesses the same thing as those prosecuted under Article 331, which is the ability to do mass communication. The monetization of innocuous entertainment videos such as singing and playing by children in the sanctuary may not be something the government is concerned about. However, members here have on several occasions used their influence on social networks to respond to police, local authorities, and church dignitaries. Therefore, the case of Tinh That Bong Lai has many signs of a politically driven religious persecution case, criminalizing human rights practice in Vietnam. In the eyes of the state, for an organization capable of attracting the masses like the Tinh That Bong Lai to continue operating would mean weakening the state's strict policy of controlling religion.

#### **4.4. Suppression of places of worship and activities of Catholic and Buddhist establishments**

According to statistics of the Vietnam Human Rights Network, the Vietnamese government since 1975 has confiscated the land of about 500 religious establishments in the diocese of Saigon and Hanoi for reasons of economic and social and national security development. The confiscated establishments are mainly educational, medical, social, or farming and economic establishments of religious establishments. Some lands were lent by religious establishments to the government for exploitation for social purposes, but were expropriated and used for business, leading to conflicts over land use rights between the government and religious establishments. Most land disputes take place with religious institutions that are relatively independent from the government and with Christian institutions. Meanwhile, dispute settlement mechanisms such as complaints and appeals are not effective, causing religious establishments to feel oppressed when increasingly being narrowed down in space for living and worshiping. In addition to the cases of forced occupation that have not

been resolved for many years such as the case of Cao Dai Temple in Tay Ninh, Lien Tri Pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City, Thien An Order in Hue, new land confiscation in religious establishments continued in the past year.

### **The case of Thien Quang pagoda, Ba Ria - Vung Tau province**

Thien Quang Pagoda belongs to the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, established before 1975 in Xuyen Moc district, Ba Ria-Vung Tau province. Construction of the current temple began in 2000. Under international pressure, the government still allows the monks of the church to maintain limited activities.

In 2018, the local government drew up a project to build a drainage ditch with the aim of helping to irrigate agricultural production in the area near Thien Quang Pagoda, although pepper cultivation here has stalled due to sharp falling pepper prices and the fact that local people had sold most of the garden land. According to the drawing, the ditch cuts across the rectangular land of the temple, taking more than 3,000 square meters of land of this religious establishment, where the main buildings of the temple are located, and turning the remaining land into two triangles. It will be very difficult to re-built the pagoda if the land is taken as planned. The government did not consult the temple before issuing the drawing, but only requested to be cleared from 2019. Thien Quang Pagoda has complained continuously for more than 1 year. In July 2022, the abbot of Thien Quang Pagoda continued to make a complaint to the authorities of Xuyen Moc district, Ba Ria - Vung Tau province, asking to consider the construction of canals,

In addition, the government has not allowed Thien Quang Pagoda to build or repair any facilities for many years. To serve daily needs, Thien Quang Pagoda had to build wooden structures that by law did not require a building permit, but were forced to dismantle by the government. In November, the local government repeatedly sent people and vehicles to the unfinished construction sites with wooden stakes, this group of people wore plain clothes and did not present any documents. On December 10, 2022, the government of Xuyen Moc district came to dismantle the welcome gate that the newly built pagoda was made of wood for the reason of illegal construction. All temple buildings under construction are located in the temple grounds, on the land where wooden structures are allowed to be built without having to ask for permission.

### **The case of Thuong Lam parish, My Duc district, Hanoi**

On October 28, 2022, the government of Dong Tam commune, My Duc district, Hanoi announced a plan to create a communal cultural house in the Song Bat area, where there is a



dispute with Thuong Lam church. According to Father Joseph Nguyen Van Thoan of Thuong Lam parish, this land belonged to Thuong Lam parish more than 100 years ago and was used to help with oil lamps for the church. The former Chairman of Ha Dong province issued a certificate of the church's right to use this land in 1956, to avoid being merged into the cooperative land fund. However, since 1972, Dong Tam commune authorities have arbitrarily appropriated this land and built a village cultural house. Since 2012, Thuong Lam Church has repeatedly applied to the government to return the land so that the parishioners can have a place for religious activities, but it has not been resolved.<sup>45</sup>

The government said that the rebuilding of the cultural house has been approved by the competent authority and is part of the commune's new rural construction program. The project received the support of the majority of people in Hoanh village with 93.87% of households agreeing. The government also said that after being renovated, the cultural house will serve the common activities of people in the whole commune, including Catholics. The activities of organizations and individuals, when required, shall be registered with the local authorities in accordance with the provisions of the law and the operation regulations of the cultural house.

Although it is said that the laity can use the house of culture, in practice the government does not allow religious ceremonies to be held in the area outside the church. A parishioner from Thuong Lam parish gave an interview to the RFA site, recently, religious activities are often prevented by the commune authorities. In 2021, when parishioners set up tents, statues and Christmas decorations in this Song Bat area, the authorities took people to dismantle and transport them to another place. In December 2020, there was an article on a state-owned newspaper that condemned the fact that priest Nguyen Van Thoan and parishioners in Dong Tam commune erected a cross and erected a statue of Our Lady outside and in the campus of Hoanh Village Cultural House. This article expresses the view that the cultural activities of Hoanh village people are completely unrelated to any religion.

Faced with the fact that there is a lack of such religious living space, it is reasonable for Thuong Lam Church to reclaim the Song Bat land. However, the Dong Tam commune government did not have a peaceful solution, but coerced construction on Song Bat land on

---

<sup>45</sup>RFA, Dong Tam: The commune government built a cultural house on church land, which was opposed by the people, <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/dong-tam-upgrades-cultural-house-on-church-land-with-many-policemen-guarding-11072022080903.html>

November 1, 2022. At the same time, the commune government also mobilized hundreds of policemen into the village to put pressure on the people. According to a resident who told RFA radio, the situation on November 1 was not much worse than the day of the Dong Tam attack in 2020, the police set up barricades at all entrances to the commune, each with 5 or more posts up to 7 security guards. After a day, some policemen withdrew. The remaining force wore civilian clothes to patrol around the village. A group of police was even sent to dwell in the homes of parishioners who protested against the project of renovating cultural houses to monitor them from dawn to dusk. Most police officers are very young and they have the Central dialects.<sup>46</sup>

It can be seen that the Dong Tam commune government intentionally coerced the church's land without planning to re-allocate another land, thereby narrowing the area of religious activities of local people. And with the experience in the Dong Tam attack in 2020, the authorities from the central to the commune level are even encouraged to mobilize forces from other provinces to conveniently suppress people when necessary.

## **5. Land rights**

The Vietnamese Constitution does not recognize the right to private land ownership, but rather declares that all land belongs to the entire Vietnamese people, with the government acting as the representative for management and use. The State is the nominal owner, but it cannot directly use or exploit hundreds of millions of land plots across the country. As a result, the State of Vietnam has been forced to hand over certain land rights to individuals and organizations. These legal entities are nominally without absolute private ownership, but have increasingly enjoyed property rights on, or attached to, land through amendments to the Land Law.

Conflicts over land rights become increasingly common when the state discriminates between individuals and businesses on land use rights issues. In recent years, Vietnam has promoted the development of an infrastructure system, as well as investment and tourism projects. This results in the acquisition of a large area of land throughout the country for the purpose of allocating land to corporations to carry out economic projects.

---

<sup>46</sup>RFA, Dong Tam renovated cultural houses on Catholic church land, police scattered the commune, <https://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/news/vietnamnews/dong-tam-upgrades-cultural-house-on-church-land-with-many-policemen-guarding-11072022080903.html>

Land is the primary resource for farmers, so forced land acquisition is a tragedy for millions of plaintiffs. Nominally, the government compensated for the acquired land; that money is only symbolic, cannot help farmers create a new life, but instead forces them into a deadlock with no way out. Meanwhile, land owned by large corporations has increased in value hundreds of thousands of times and been divided into lots for resale, but failing to provide the community with the benefits as promised by the government and businesses. These led to frustration, loss of confidence in public management among people whose land was acquired, and disputes and protests throughout Vietnam.

The government's weak land management policy has led to people lacking production land, while real estate businesses have countless apartment projects and new urban areas. This pushed up land prices and land speculation appeared more and more. The inverse ratio between the access to land resources of individuals and businesses is increasing. Meanwhile, the government's rate of settling complaints and denunciations about land issues remains low.

Inappropriate land policies could have been reviewed sooner if intellectuals had the freedom to criticize the policy without fear of being labeled as "reactionary and anti-state," and if people had the right to file a collective lawsuit when they felt wronged in land acquisition. Land rights petitioners have no choice but to take to the streets to protest because justice cannot be found through judicial means. Tragedically, Vietnam does not have a law on demonstrations, so protesters would be imprisoned for "disturbing public order" or "against public officials".

In 2022, gatherings of land rights petitioners took place throughout the country, for example:

- In March and May 2022, hundreds of farmers in Cu M'Gar district, Dak Lak province raised slogans to demand land rights from forestry company.<sup>47</sup>

- On February 25, 2022, hundreds of farmers gathered at the construction site of the wind power farm in Dak N'Drung, Dak Lak province to protest against inadequate land compensation.

---

<sup>47</sup> RFA, Vietnamese coffee growers protest loss of land rights in Central Highlands, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/coffee-growers-03172022174802.html>

The Land Portal, Hundreds of Ede families in Vietnam demonstrate to demand land from forestry company, <https://landportal.org/news/2022/06/hundreds-edes-families-vietnam-demonstrate-demand-land-forestry-company>

- On July 13, 2022, in Nghi Loc commune, Nghe An province, there was a clash between people and law enforcement due to the problem of acquiring a road and handing it over to the industrial park territory. The area of Nghi Loc commune is home to a large number of Catholics who used to participate strongly in demonstrations against Formosa in 2016. In the eye of the government, this is a complicated community and needs to be repressed. As a result, physical clashes between the authorities and the people took place. 10 people were arrested immediately, 3 were released a few days later, 7 remained were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 4 months to 1 year in prison: 3 were tried for crimes against law enforcement and 4 were tried on charges of disturbing public order. There are many signs showing religious repression in this case.



*Farmers in farmers in Cu M'Gar district, Dak Lak province protest demand their land rights in March, 2022 (Source: FRA)*

Due to shortcomings in land management practices, the Vietnamese government recently submitted a draft amendment to the Land Law for public comment in July 2022. The draft law includes a new and progressive provision that allows people whose land has been recovered to choose a compensation plan: cash, land, or a house. However, this draft also includes two regulations to strengthen religious establishments' land rights, which could lead to disputes and conflicts with the government.

Article 6 (Clause 1, Point c) of the Draft Land Law (amended) stipulates that only “religious organizations” or “affiliated religious organizations” can be allocated, leased land

and recognized of land use rights by the state. If the draft is approved, only establishments recognized by the state as "religious organizations" or "affiliated religious organizations" under the Law on Beliefs and Religions will be allocated, leased land or recognized of land use rights by the State. In addition, Article 8 of the draft also clearly states: "The representative of a religious organization for the use of land by the religious organization" will be responsible for the use of land before the state. Currently, this responsibility rests with the head of the religious establishment. The new regulation implies that the state wants to bind deeper responsibility and requires more detailed explanations from individuals and groups regarding religious organizations' use of land.

Article 178 (Clause 1) of this draft also stipulates that: "Religious land includes land belonging to pagodas, churches, chapels, sanctuaries, cathedrals, religious training institutions, and offices of religious organizations authorized by the state to be operate". This draft provision does not mention other types of religious establishments, making it difficult for religious organizations to request the state to allocate land or change the land use purpose to "religious land" to serve works that are not on the list listed in the text, such as nursing homes, kindergartens, medical examination and treatment places, and other basic places to carry out social-security activities.

The above regulations are only draft laws, but they demonstrate that the land problem in Vietnam is intertwined with other socioeconomic issues, including the practice of basic human rights. The land issue in Vietnam will always be a quandary unless related issues such as the right to collective complaint, the right to protest, and the right to policy criticism are addressed concurrently.

## **V/ Conclusion**

In general, Vietnam still has human rights violations in areas where the country is notorious, such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion, in 2022. Although the authorities did not arrest as many people as in previous years, the number of people brought to trial and the types of human rights violations increased and varied. Human rights activists in Vietnam are serving longer prison sentences than in previous years.

The Vietnamese government is increasingly adept at using legal tools to maintain exclusive political power. Authorities have continuously improved legal regulations over the last year to force technology companies, individual users, and businesses to self-censor on social networking sites. The number of people being summoned to the police station to "work"

and be administratively sanctioned for their online statements grows by the day. The Vietnamese government is increasingly controlling cyberspace, censoring unfavorable content. All statements that negatively influence or despise the regime are dealt with in a shorter period of time.

Furthermore, the Vietnamese government is increasingly ignoring the voices of foreign diplomatic and international organizations. In the past year, there have been numerous cases of human rights violations that have drew international attention; international institutions have sent 'open letters' or proposals to Vietnam, but the government has remained silent, claiming that they are still acting in accordance with Vietnamese law and that what they are doing is for 'national security.' International voices and pressures no longer appear to matter in the eyes of the government, and the government is providing a new perspective that 'the world is in desperate need of Vietnam, and Vietnam's position and role in the present day is increasing in the international arena.' That is one of the reasons why in recent years, democracy and human rights activists has arrested and sentenced to long-term imprisonment.

Aside from the bright spots created by the government to make up its reputation, almost all human rights issues in Vietnam have not improved so far. Religious repression persists and is increasingly extending to groups having absolutely no political influence. By December 2022, the United States had placed Vietnam on a special watch list for Religious Freedom, indicating that Vietnam's response to the religious issue has deteriorated.

The portrait of human rights in Vietnam is a big picture with many interconnected aspects interacting with each other, but in general, the subject that makes the decisions and causes the above problems is the Vietnamese government. To improve this picture, efforts must come not only from Vietnamese human rights activists and international organizations, but also from the Government of Vietnam, which is entirely dependent on their sincerity and willingness to change.

## Appendix

### List of people arrested due to political reasons in 2022

| No. | Full name            | Year of Birth | Gender | Field of activity/group/ association                  | Date of arrest (DD/MM/YYYY) | Allegations under article |
|-----|----------------------|---------------|--------|---|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1   | Nguyễn Đức Hùng      | 1991          | Male   | Facebooker  | 06/01/2022                  | 117                       |
| 2   | Nguyễn Thái Hưng     | 1976          | Male   | Youtuber  | 05/01/2022                  | 331                       |
| 3   | Vũ Thị Kim Hoàng     | 1978          | Female |   | 05/01/2022                  | 331                       |
| 4   | Lê Mạnh Hà           | 1970          | Male   | Youtuber  | 12/01/2022                  | 117                       |
| 5   | Đoàn Từ Tấn          | 1982          | Male   | Official journalist                                   | 05/02/2022                  | 331                       |
| 6   | Nguy Thị Khanh       | 1976          | Female | GreenID   | 06/02/2022                  | 200                       |
| 7   | Trần Văn Bang        | 1961          | Male   | Club Le Hieu Dang                                     | 01/03/2022                  | 117                       |
| 8   | Đặng Như Quỳnh       | 1976          | Male   | Facebooker  | 12/04/2022                  | 331                       |
| 9   | Trương Văn Dũng      | 1958          | Male   | Democratic Brotherhood                                | 21/5/2022                   | 88 (1999 Penal Code)      |
| 10  | Cao Thị Cúc          | 1960          | Female | Peng Lai Temple                                       | 12/5/2022                   | 331                       |
| 11  | Lê Tùng Vân          | 1932          | Male   | Peng Lai Temple                                       | 03/11/2022                  | 331                       |
| 12  | Lê Thanh Nhất Nguyên | 1991          | Male   | Peng Lai Temple                                       | 07/01/2022                  | 331                       |
| 13  | Lê Thanh Hoàn Nguyên | 1990          | Male   | Peng Lai Temple                                       | 07/01/2022                  | 331                       |
| 14  | Lê Thanh Trùng Dương | 1995          | Male   | Peng Lai Temple                                       | 07/01/2022                  | 331                       |
| 15  | Lê Thanh Nhị Nguyên  | 1998          | Male   | Peng Lai Temple                                       | 27/05/2022                  | 331                       |
| 16  | Nguyễn Lâm Thắng     | 1975          | Male   | No-U  | 05/07/2022                  | 117                       |
| 17  | Nguyễn Sơn Lộ        | 1948          | Male   | SENA Institute of Technology Research and Development | House arrested              | 331                       |
| 18  | Bùi Tuấn Lâm         | 1984          | Male   | Facebooker  | 07/09/2022                  | 117                       |
| 19  | Đặng Đăng Phước      | 1963          | Male   | Facebooker  | 08/09/2022                  | 117                       |
| 20  | Phan Sơn Tùng        | 1984          | Male   | Youtuber  | 09/09/2022                  | 117                       |
| 21  | Võ Thanh Thời        | 1989          | Male   | Facebooker  | 22/09/2022                  | 331                       |
| 22  | Nguyễn Minh Sơn      | 1962          | Male   | Facebooker  | 28/09/2022                  | 117                       |

|    |               |      |        |  |                          |     |
|----|---------------|------|--------|--|--------------------------|-----|
| 23 | Phạm Tấn Hòa  | 1970 | Male   | Facebooker, Hoa Hao Buddhist follower      | 15/09/2022 <sup>48</sup> | 331 |
| 24 | Hà Thị Hiền   | 1987 | Female | Parishioners of Binh Thuan parish          | 13/7/2022                | 330 |
| 25 | Trần Thị Niên | 1984 | Female | Parishioners of Binh Thuan parish          | 13/7/2022                | 330 |
| 26 | Bùi Văn Cảnh  | 1944 | Male   | Parishioners of Binh Thuan parish          | 13/7/2022                | 330 |
| 27 | Trần Thị Hoa  | 1970 | Female | Parishioners of Binh Thuan parish          | 13/7/2022                | 330 |
| 28 | Hà Thị Thò    | 1964 | Female | Parishioners of Binh Thuan parish          | 13/7/2022                | 330 |
| 29 | Hà Văn Hạnh   | 1980 | Male   | Parishioners of Binh Thuan parish          | 13/7/2022                | 330 |
| 30 | Bạch Thị Hòa  | 1950 | Female | Parishioners of Binh Thuan parish          | 13/7/2022                | 330 |
| 31 | Huỳnh Tiến    | 1952 | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 28/4/2022                | 109 |
| 32 | Huỳnh Tài     | 1986 | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 28/4/2022                | 109 |

---

<sup>48</sup> We cannot find the exact arrested date, therefore, we temporarily recognize the trial date as arrested date.



## List of people tried due to political reasons in 2022

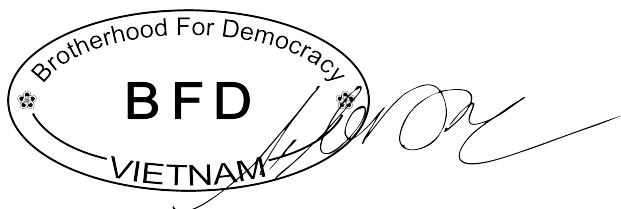
| No. | Full name             | Year of Birth | Gender | Field of activity/group/association        | Date of arrest (DD/MM/YYYY) | Allegations under article | First-instance trial | Second-instance trial | Years in prison |
|-----|-----------------------|---------------|--------|--|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1   | Đặng Đình Bách        | 1978          | Male   | NGO  | 03/07/2021                  | 200                       | 24/01/2022           | 11/08/2022            | 5               |
| 2   | Trần Thị Ngọc Xuân    | 1969          | Nữ     | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 05/05/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 13              |
| 3   | Lương Thị Thu Hiền    | 1968          | Nữ     | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 05/04/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 11              |
| 4   | Nguyễn Thanh Xoan     | 1972          | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 31/03/2022                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 12              |
| 5   | Trần Văn Long         | 1955          | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 13/07/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 10              |
| 6   | Y Hon Ênuôl           | 1988          | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 06/04/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 4               |
| 7   | Y Túp Knul            | 1970          | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 19/06/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 9               |
| 8   | Nguyễn Minh Quang     | 1960          | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 07/05/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 9               |
| 9   | Hồ Thị Xuân Hương     | 1968          | Female | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 17/05/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 10              |
| 10  | Nguyễn Thị Kim Phượng | 1967          | Female | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 31/03/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 10              |
| 11  | Lê Ngọc Thành         | 1972          | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 24/04/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 9               |
| 12  | Phạm Hồ               | 1949          | Male   | Provisional National                       | 20/08/2020                  | 109                       | 18/04/2022           |                       | 3               |

|    |                     |      |        |  |              |                   |            |            |     |
|----|---------------------|------|--------|--|--------------|-------------------|------------|------------|-----|
|    |                     |      |        | Government of Vietnam                      |              |                   |            |            |     |
| 13 | Y Phương Ding Riêh  | 1978 | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 19/06/2020   | 109               | 18/04/2022 |            | 8   |
| 14 | Lê Thị Phi Kim      | 1959 | Female | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 15/07/2021   | 109               | 16/03/2022 |            | 6   |
| 15 | Lê Chí Thành        | 1983 | Male   | Anti-corruption                            | 15/04/2021   | 330               | 14/01/2022 | 13/04/2022 | 2   |
| 16 | Nguyễn Bảo Tiên     | 1986 | Male   | Liberal Publishing House                   | 05/05/2021   | 117;<br>305       | 21/01/2022 |            | 6.5 |
| 17 | Lê Văn Dũng         | 1970 | Male   | Activist                                   | 30/06/2021   | 88<br>(BLHS 1999) | 23/03/2022 | 15/8/2022  | 5   |
| 18 | Đỗ Nam Trung        | 1981 | Male   | Activist                                   | 06/07/2021   | 117               | 16/12/2021 | 24/03/2022 | 10  |
| 19 | Trần Quốc Khánh     | 1960 | Male   | Facebooker                                 | 09/03/2021   | 109               | 28/10/2021 | 17/02/2022 | 6.5 |
| 20 | Nguyễn Hoài Nam     | 1973 | Male   | Journalist                                 | 03/04/2021   | 331               | 05/04/2022 |            | 3.5 |
| 21 | Nguyễn Thị Rành     | 1953 | Female | CPQGVNLT                                   | tháng 4/2021 | 109               | 19/04/2022 |            | 16  |
| 22 | Nguyễn Hoàng Phương | 1970 | NI     | CPQGVNLT                                   |              | 109               | 19/04/2022 |            | 14  |
| 23 | Nguyễn Thị Chính    | 1955 | Female | CPQGVNLT                                   |              | 109               | 19/04/2022 |            | 8   |
| 24 | Nguyễn Anh Hùng     | 1950 | Male   | CPQGVNLT                                   |              | 109               | 19/04/2022 |            | 6   |
| 25 | Văng Bá Cảnh        | 1948 | Male   | CPQGVNLT                                   |              | 109               | 19/04/2022 |            | 5   |
| 26 | Lê Minh Tài         | 1984 | Male   | Criticizing Covid policy                   |              | 331               | 30/03/2022 |            | 1   |
| 27 | Đình Văn Hải        | 1974 | Male   | Activist                                   | 07/10/2021   | 117               | 26/04/2022 |            | 5   |
| 28 | Tôn Nữ Thê Trang    | 1962 | Female | Tiên Rồng Group                            | 2021         | 109               | 15/3/2022  |            | 12  |
| 29 | Nguyễn Xuân Tĩnh    | 1972 | Male   | Việt Tân Tương Trợ                         | 2021         | 109               | 15/3/2022  |            | 9   |
| 30 | Trần Hoàng Huân     | 1988 | Male   | Facebooker                                 | 10/08/2021   | 117               | 05/05/2022 |            | 8   |
| 31 | Y Vô Niê            | 1970 | Male   | Central Highlands                          | 20/09/2021   | 331               | 20/05/2022 | 16/08/2022 | 4   |

|    |                      |      |        |                       |            |     |            |            |      |
|----|----------------------|------|--------|-----------------------|------------|-----|------------|------------|------|
|    |                      |      |        | Evangelical Church    |            |     |            |            |      |
| 32 | Lý Văn Dũng          | 1986 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 4    |
| 33 | Dương Văn Lành       | 1987 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2.5  |
| 34 | Lý Văn Nó            | 1991 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2.5  |
| 35 | Lý Văn Páo           | 1967 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2.5  |
| 36 | Đào Văn Tình         | 1994 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2.5  |
| 37 | Đào Văn Tính         | 1982 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2    |
| 38 | Đào Văn Trần         | 1997 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2    |
| 39 | Lý Văn Dinh          | 1977 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2    |
| 40 | Đào Văn Vên          | 1990 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2    |
| 41 | Đào Văn Khìn         | 1984 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2    |
| 42 | Dương Văn Sơn        |      | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2    |
| 43 | Dương Văn Phình      |      | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/2021    | 330 | 18/5/2022  |            | 2    |
| 44 | Dương Văn Tu         | 1967 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/12/2021 | 295 | 24/05/2022 |            | 4    |
| 45 | Lý Văn Anh           | 1990 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/12/2021 | 295 | 24/05/2022 |            | 3.5  |
| 46 | Dương Văn Lành       | 1984 | Male   | Duong Van Minh Belief | 12/12/2021 | 295 | 24/05/2022 |            | 3.75 |
| 47 | Nguyễn Duy Linh      | 1976 | Male   | Facebooker            | 16/09/2021 | 117 | 9/6/2022   |            | 5    |
| 48 | Bách Hùng Dương      | 1975 | Male   | NGO (MEC)             |            | 200 | 11/01/2021 | 11/08/2022 | 2.25 |
| 49 | Mai Phan Lợi         | 1971 | Male   | NGO (MEC)             | 24/06/2021 | 200 | 11/01/2021 | 11/08/2022 | 3.75 |
| 50 | Cao Thị Cúc          | 1960 | Female | Tịnh thất Bồng Lai    | 12/5/2022  | 331 | 21/7/2022  | 2/11/2022  | 3    |
| 51 | Lê Tùng Vân          | 1932 | Male   | Tịnh thất Bồng Lai    | 3/11/2022  | 331 | 21/7/2022  | 2/11/2022  | 5    |
| 52 | Lê Thanh Nhất Nguyên | 1991 | Male   | Tịnh thất Bồng Lai    | 7/1/2022   | 331 | 21/7/2022  | 2/11/2022  | 4    |
| 53 | Lê Thanh Hoàn Nguyên | 1990 | Male   | Tịnh thất Bồng Lai    | 7/1/2022   | 331 | 21/7/2022  | 2/11/2022  | 4    |

|    |                      |      |        |  |            |     |            |                  |      |
|----|----------------------|------|--------|--|------------|-----|------------|------------------|------|
| 54 | Lê Thanh Trùng Dương | 1995 | Male   | Tỉnh thất Bồng Lai                         | 7/1/2022   | 331 | 21/7/2022  | 2/11/2022        | 4    |
| 55 | Lê Thanh Nhị Nguyên  | 1998 | Male   | Tỉnh thất Bồng Lai                         | 27/5/2022  | 331 | 21/7/2022  | 2/11/2022        | 3.6  |
| 56 | Lê Anh Hùng          | 1973 | Male   | IJAVN, Independent journalist              | 5/7/18     | 331 | 30/8/2022  |                  | 5    |
| 57 | Nguyễn Văn Nghĩa     | 1975 | Male   | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 5/11/2021  | 109 | 6/10/2022  |                  | 7    |
| 58 | Dương Thị Bé         | 1982 | Female | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 5/11/2021  | 109 | 6/10/2022  |                  | 5    |
| 59 | Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Tiên | 1976 | Female | Provisional National Government of Vietnam | 25/2/2022  | 109 | 30/9/2022  |                  | 12   |
| 60 | Phạm Tấn Hòa         | 1970 | Nam    | Facebooker                                 |            | 331 | NI         | 15/09/2022       | 1    |
| 61 | Nguy Thị Khanh       | 1976 | Female | NGO (GreenID)                              | 06/02/2022 | 200 | June 2022  | 21/11/2022       | 1.75 |
| 62 | Bùi Văn Thuận        | 1981 | Male   | Activist                                   | 30/08/2021 | 117 | 18/11/2022 | Refuse to appeal | 8    |

On date, December 20, 2022  
Brotherhood For Democracy  
President



Lawyer Nguyen Van Dai