

MONTAGNARD FOUNDATION, INC.

Dedicated to the Preservation of the Indigenous Peoples of Central Vietnam

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BRUTAL REPRESSION AGAINST THE CHRISTIAN MONTAGNARDS IN VIETNAM URGENT APPEAL FOR THE IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION OF DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES

ON SATURDAY 10 APRIL 2004 MORE THAN 150,000 MONTAGNARDS WILL BEGIN A NONVIOLENT DEMONSTRATION OF PUBLIC PRAYER IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF VIETNAM, AGAINST THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT'S DENIAL OF THEIR FREEDOM TO WORSHIP CHRIST. THE MONTAGNARDS CALL ON THOSE COUNTRIES THAT RECOGNIZE FREEDOM OF RELIGION TO REQUEST ACCESS TO THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS AND TO MONITOR THE SITUATION, ALSO WITH SATELLITES, TO PROTECT THEIR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS.

WITHOUT THE DIRECT INTERVENTION OF LAW ABIDING STATES, THE UN, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION - THE REPRESSION AGAINST THE MONTAGNARDS WILL BE CRUEL AND BLOODY

THE UN SPECIAL RAPORTEURS ON EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS AND TORTURE, AND THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS HAVE DENOUNCED AT THE UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS THE KILLINGS OF MONTAGNARDS BY THE VIETNAMESE MILITARY FORCES FOR THEIR SUPPORT TO THE MONTAGNARD FOUNDATION AND TO THE TRANSNATIONAL RADICAL PARTY. STARTING ON 10 APRIL 2004 MORE THAN 150,000 MONTAGNARDS WILL START PRAYING IN PUBLIC TO CALL ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO INTERVENE TO STOP THE ONGOING REPRESSION AGAINST THE MONTAGNARDS IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF VIETNAM

These hours leading to the Easter celebration in the Central Highlands of Vietnam - there is taking place a brutal repression of the Christian Montagnard peoples. Starting tomorrow more than 150,000 Montagnards will begin a collective public prayer all over the Central Highlands of Vietnam to call on the international community to establish a monitoring presence in the Central Highlands - AS ALREADY REQUESTED BY THE UN COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN 2002, where for more than three years the repression against the Montagnard people has been without mercy and with no control, with thousands of beatings and torture, hundreds of disappearances in the jungle and arrests, extrajudicial executions, rapes and occupation of land which represents the only means of subsistence for the Montagnard populations.

It has been documented by the US Commission on International Religious freedom, by the US State Department and the European Parliament that the Vietnamese Government does not allow the free exercise of religious freedom and religious activities of the indigenous Montagnard people have been especially harsh. With the beginning of their prayers the Montagnard will ask the immediate intervention in the region of the international community to protect them from the human, civil and cultural repression that the Vietnamese regime has been carrying out since 1975.

IN PARTICULAR THE TRANSNATIONAL RADICAL PARTY AND THE MONTAGNARD FOUNDATION APPEAL TO THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL, TO THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, TO THE UN COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, THE US STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND TO THE EU COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL RELATIONS, TO THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENTS AND FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE EU COUNTRIES - TO ASK THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT TO RESPECT THE CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF JULY 2002 ALLOWING THE PERMANENT AND PERVASIVE ESTABLISHMENT IN THE REGION OF INTERNATIONAL AND INDEPENDENT OFFICES TO MONITOR THE COMPLIANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

During the current session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, the Special Rapporteurs on Extrajudicial Executions, on Torture and the Special Representative for human rights defenders have denounced to the Commission the existence of reports related to the killing of some Montagnards also for their support to the Montagnard Foundation and the Transnational Radical Party, in the context of the growing campaign of repression put in place by the Vietnamese Government against the diffusion of the Christian religion and of the peaceful movement to obtain the restitution of lands.

Currently the Vietnamese government has maintained tight security measures over the central highlands trying to prevent word of abuses from reaching the international media and human rights groups. Reports of executions, shootings and rapes have leaked out and while we have received numerous reports of such abuses, we are only able to report on those we have confirmed. The US State Department's recent Religious Freedom Report of 18 December 2003 also stated, "*There were unverifiable reports that between one and seven ethnic minority Protestants died in police custody or died as result of beatings during the period covered by this report.*"

The Montagnard Foundation has confirmed Montagnard Christians being executed by lethal injection and literally hundreds of incidents of beatings/torture of Montagnards by Vietnamese authorities. It is highly likely that many more Montagnards have been killed through torture or outright, by summary executions though these reports of executions taking place in the remote jungle areas cannot be confirmed. These reports may explain the numerous reports of disappearances (of Montagnards) and is likely another reason the Vietnamese government refuses international monitors from having access to the region. The US State Department stated in 2004, "*There were credible reports that some members of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands and Northwest Highlands who were either arrested or detained did not return to their families.*"¹

Human Rights Watch has however, confirmed some recent killings noting the quote below from its 21 April 2003 report when soldiers fired on fleeing refugees.

*"On March 26, 2003 security police and soldiers shot at a group of Jarai men who had gone into hiding in the Dak Doa district, Gia Lai. Five people escaped, but two men were wounded and taken to the commune center, where one of the men, Suoc later died. When his body was returned to his family, his skull had been severely crushed, apparently from additional beatings by security officers at the commune center. The whereabouts of the other man taken into custody, Hwi (Huy) are unknown. A third Jarai man named Ly was arrested and beaten on March 27, but allowed to return to his village."*² (See also below at 26 March 2003).

We have however, confirmed the reports below of killings, shootings, rapes and executions received direct from the Central Highlands. It is noted that in some cases the names and rank of the police or military officers that perpetrated these crimes are identified.

13 DECEMBER 2003 - THROAT CUT - ARRESTED AND EXECUTED BY "MAJOR TUAN": At 7:00 pm in the evening, a group of paramilitary police officers from Dak Dao District surrounded the village of Plei O Dot in the Commune of Ia Bang, Dak Dao District, Gia Lai Province and arrested 2 villagers named "Nih" (41 years old) and "So" (44 years old). They both were Christians and had registered themselves as supporters of MFI and the Transnational Radical Party (TRP), an NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC, which the Vietnamese Government is trying to expel from the UN for its support to the Montagnard people and to the

¹ Vietnam Supra note 3 at section 1. b.

² Human Rights Watch (briefing paper) *New Documents Reveal Escalating Repression*, April 21, 2003.

Montagnard Foundation. "Nih" was number 338 and "So" was number 373 on this list. Both of them were taken to the prison in the district of Dak Doa and tortured by beatings, kicking and electric shock. "Nih" refused to answer questions or renounce Christ and **Major Tuan from Dak Doa police** took a knife and stabbed him in his chest and then cut his throat.

The recorded data of these two peoples as supporters of MFI and the TRP are available for national and international authorities willing to investigate the case. On December 15, 2003, the police took the body of Nih to his family at Plei O Dot but refused to allow the family to perform the funeral and stated they wanted the villagers to see what happens to those who the government does not like. "Nih" was a Christian and had been helping to feed refugees who were hiding in the area. We have since been unable to find out if the dead body has been properly buried or not.

16 OCTOBER 2003 – SHOT FEARED DEAD: at around 12:00 noon, the Cong An (security police) and soldiers went into the village of Buon Cuor Knia, district of Buon Don, province of Daklak, and opened fire at our Christian brother, Y-Hoang Buon Krong, with an automatic AK 47 rifle. He was wounded with four bullets and was hospitalized at Buonmathuot Hospital. It is unknown whether he survived the shooting.

10 OCTOBER 2003 – SHOT FEARED DEAD: at around 2 pm, a group of 12 policemen from the district of Krong Ana, province of Daklak, opened fire at Y-Pho Eban in his house and in front of his wife and children with automatic AK 47 rifle. His wife and children cried out to neighbors for help but the police tied his pregnant wife to a house pole, beat her and stuffed a cloth in her mouth. Y-Phon Eban was wounded with three bullets in his abdomen and he was hospitalized at Buonmathuot Hospital. Before the police shot him the Vietnamese government had sent 2 battalions of soldiers (excluding the Cong An police) to surround his village (Buon Cuoi village, district of Krong Ana, province of Daklak). It is unknown if he survived the shooting.

18 AUGUST 2003 – WOMAN RAPED BY POLICE OFFICER NAMED MAJOR NGUYEN VINH CHINH: Major Nguyen Vinh Chinh, a police officer, with 100 Vietnamese soldiers from Daklak province went to the village of Buon Yang Reh, district Krong Bong, province of Daklak to harass Christians in this area. They forced their way into H'Duen Buondap's house and searched her house thoroughly. They confiscated the Bibles and hymn books found there and stole 150,000 VND. This was not enough and Major Nguyen Vinh Chinh forced H'Duen Buondap in her room and raped her while his soldiers were with him in the house and also were the family members of H'Duen. After that the officers searched each and every house in the village and beat up villagers who resisted their cruel and inhuman actions.

26 MARCH 2003 SHOT AND BEATEN TO DEATH – CONFIRMED BY HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH: approximately 50 Vietnamese soldiers and security forces conducted a sweeping operation in the area of Dir Tok, Ia Pet commune, Dak Doa district, Gia Lai province. At 7:00 am just West of Plei Bia Bre about 700 meters they encountered a group of Degar people who were walking to the Ia Tor river for bathing. The soldiers opened fire at these unarmed civilian Degar people and wounded two of them but the other 7 ran away. The soldiers took the wounded to the commune office. One of the two wounded died and they took his body to his family at the hamlet of Plei Nglom Thung for burial. The family of the dead examined the body and they found out that his skull had been crushed. ***They concluded he died not because of the bullet wound but because of being severely beaten after he was wounded.*** The name of the dead Montagnard person is **Suoc** who was born in 1962, from the hamlet of Plei Nglom Thung, Ia Pet commune, Dak Doa district, Gia Lai province. The name of the other Degar Montagnard who was wounded and captured is R'com Hui who was born in 1962, from the hamlet of Plei Khun, Tra Ba commune, Pleiku city, Gia Lai province. His whereabouts is unknown. Human Rights Watch confirmed this killing and stated in its 21 April 2003 report that, "*When his body was returned to his family, his skull had been severely crushed, apparently from additional beatings by security officers at the commune center.*"³

18 MARCH 2003 – WOMAN RAPED BY POLCE OFFICER NAMED "NGUYEN VAN LINH": Vietnamese government security officer named Nguyen Van Linh in search of Montagnard Christians and land rights activists entered the house of a Montagnard woman and stationed himself there. While he was waiting for her husband to return home so that he could arrest him, Nguyen Van Linh raped the woman named "H'Nui" with a gun pointed to her head. H'Nui was born in 1962, from the village of Buon Krang, district of Krong Ana, province of Daklak. She has suffered extreme physical and mental trauma from this ordeal.

³ Human Rights Watch, supra note 9.

FEBRUARY 2003 – BODIES OF 3 MONTAGNARDS MUTILATED - EYES CUT OUT AFTER EXECUTION:

At the 'secret' military camp at Buon Cu Mblim, Krong Ana district, Dak Lac province Vietnamese soldiers executed 3 Montagnards whose names are unknown on 27 February 2003. The soldiers summoned approximately 100 villagers to look at them telling the villagers "this is how you are going to end up if you follow Kok Ksor and the Montagnard Foundation". The soldiers also told the villages not to believe in Christ as it was against the teachings of Ho Chi Minh. The villagers stated that the eyes of the 3 victims had been cut out. The soldiers then buried the dead bodies outside the camp with their feet protruding from the ground warning the villagers not to approach them.

31 JANUARY 2003 – TORTURED AND EXECUTED:

Vietnamese authorities tortured and executed Y-Su Nie (pictured here) Degar Montagnard Christian after injecting him with lethal chemicals on 31 January 2003. He was from Buon Mbhao village, Mdrak district, Dak Lak province and had been in prison since 15 November 2002 when soldiers arrested him for being a Christian. He was taken to Buonmathuot prison and tortured by beatings and electric shock. he was routinely taken out of prison to publicly denounce Kok Christianity in front of Montagnard villagers. On January 30, handcuffed him and told him he "would soon die, but because the Vietnamese government is merciful we will allow you to see your family one last time". They then injected him with a chemical and released him. When Y-Su Nie saw his family he cried and told them "the government let me come to see you for only a few moments because the police had injected poison in my body". The next day on January 31, 2003, Y-Su Nie died at 10:00 PM. He was buried on 2 February 2003.



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29 OCTOBER 2002 – THREE EXECUTED BY LETHAL INJECTION: Vietnamese Government Security Forces executed by lethal injection in their prison cells 3 Montagnard Christians named: Y-Suon Mlo, from Buon Kuang village, Y-Het Nie Kdam, from Buon Ea Tio and Y-Wan Ayun, Buon Gram village all from Daklak province. These 3 Montagnards were executed for taking part in the peaceful demonstrations of February 2001. They were injected by prison authorities with an unknown drug and died in convulsing spasms within minutes on 29 October 2002.

14 FEBRUARY 2002 –WOMAN RAPED BY SECURITY OFFICER NAMED "TUAN": Montagnard woman by the name of H'Cek was raped in front of her children by a Vietnamese security official by the name of Tuan in the hamlet of Plei Al Hmoi, in the district of Dak Doa, in the province of Gia Lai. Her husband, Bler, participated in the peaceful demonstrations in February of 2001 and was involved with the Christmas celebration in December of 2001. For these reasons, the Vietnamese government sent security officials to arrest him. Unable to arrest Bler who had gone into hiding the security official named Tuan then raped his wife H'Cek in front of her children.

MARCH 2001 – SHOT AND KILLED AT CHURCH SERVICE: a Montagnard Christian named Rmah Blim was shot and killed by police while Vietnamese authorities were burning down a Christian church at Plei Lao village. (See also photo on cover of this report). Authorities burned down the village church and the BBC ran a story "Fury at Vietnam Church Destruction" on 28 March 2001. The US State Department confirmed his killing and reported 1- 5 Montagnard Christians killed. There are unconfirmed reports other Montagnards were also killed and several wounded.⁴

19 OCTOBER 2000 – ARRESTED AND NEVER HEARD FROM AGAIN: Four years ago the Vietnamese government arrested Y Hong Nie a Montagnard or Degar hill tribesman from Buon Cu Po hamlet in the village of Cu Ewi in Dak Lak province, Central Highlands. His crime was that he refused to give his ancestral lands over to the communist authorities. The communist government's police had previously threatened Y-Hong Nie and said they would kill him. This time they came and carried out their threats. Y-Hong Nie's wife stood by helplessly as her husband was dragged from their longhouse. He has never been again by his family and Y-Hong Nie's farm is now under the control of the Vietnamese government

These are just some of the thousands of examples of persecution our people have suffered. Unless urgent action is taken by the international community the Montagnards will suffer a human rights catastrophe.

⁴ Vietnam: supra note 4.

“Our people cannot continue suffering this way as the Vietnamese government continues to arrest, electric shock torture, and kill our peaceful hill tribe people for being Christian or for trying to save our ancestral lands from being confiscated”

Kok Ksor, Montagnard Foundation Easter 2004