Communist Government of Vietnam Oppressing Montagnard Christians in the Central Highlands

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The incidents described below involved members of the Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam (Hội Thánh Tin Lành Đấng Christ). They took place in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. The victims are from the Ha Lang and Ede minority ethnic groups with Vietnamese nationality. Domestic law requires registration of religious associations and activities. This Montagnard Protestant Church submitted its registration application in conformance with the law, including a list of adherents. After the local government received the application, it sent public security agents to church members' homes in an attempt to intimidate them so that they renounce their faith. Agents also threatened several adherents with the loss of civil rights and benefits to their families unless they renounce their religion. The government also sends public security agents and soldiers from border guard units to disrupt religious events such as Christmas celebrations. The police have arrested, detained and tortured church leaders. The government has never allowed the Church to register.

2. IDENTITY OF THE PERSONS CONCERNED

Pastor A Ga (male, Ha Lang ethnic group, born on March 6, 1978), Pastor Y Noen Ayun (male, Ede ethnic group, June 31, 1967), and Missionary Y Jon Ayun (male, Ede ethnic group, February 14, 1976) of the Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam.

Pastor A Ga is from Ro Koi Subdistrict, Sa Thay District, Kontum Province, Vietnam, and oversees 12 churches in Kontum, Gia Lai and Dak Lak. His two assistants, Pastor Y Noen Ayun and Missionary Y Jon Ayun, are from Ea Phe Subdistrict, Krong Pac District, Dak Lak Province. Pastor Y Noen Ayun was in charge of the three house churches in Dak Lak Province. Missionary Y Jon Ayun was tasked to support the followers at one of these three house churches.

In addition some 800 members of the Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam have been directly or indirectly affected.

3. INFORMATION REGARDING THE ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

Pastor Y Noen Ayun and Missionary Y Jon Ayun: Incident taking place in Ea Su Village, Ea Phe Subdistrict, Krong Pac District, Dak Lak Province, as described below.

On January 12, 2014, in the morning five public security agents raided the two victims' homes when they were conducting a prayer service. The house church members who had been praying with them dispersed as the public security agents took the two victims to their station for a week of torture. The public security threatened them with prison terms and forced them to sign an agreement to leave their faith. The two had to sign it under duress because the torture caused too much pain.

After their release, the authorities forbade villagers from visiting Y Noen Ayun and Y Jon Ayun. They are left without assistance or support. Without sufficient food to eat, their families can barely survive. Their wounds caused them a lot of physical harms, but they were too poor to seek medical treatment.

Members of their church, too fearful, dare not gather for church services or activities.

This incident was part of the government's on-going policy to wipe the Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam out of existence in Dak Lak Province.

- Since 2011 public security agents from Dak Lak Province have repeatedly summoned Pastor Y Noen and Missionary Y Jon to their station. There, agents ordered them to renounce their faith and stop their association with the Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam. The agents made threats, saying that their lives could be in danger, they could be imprisoned, and their children could face difficulties in the future. The agents made the two men come to their station many times for this kind of threatening interrogation.
- On December 25, 2012, these two Church leaders attended a Christmas celebration in Kontum Province, held by me, Pastor A Ga. I am their supervising Pastor. The day after, the PA 38 public security police summoned them to the police station for a "working" session. Basically they were told: (1) to report to the police where they had been, whom they had met... while in Kontum Province, (2) to renounce their Christian faith, (3) to stop proselytizing Christianity in the village, and (4) to beware of the dangers to their families if they do not renounce their faith, they would be arrested and their children would not have a good future.
- On January 8, 2013, Colonel Tran Manh Tung, the deputy chief of police of the Krong Pac Hamlet, summoned them to another "working" session. Also present was police Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Tan Hung and members of the provincial PA 38 public security. They were told to not gather villagers for prayer service on Sundays. They were also forbidden from visiting members of their church. Again they were threatened of facing harms to themselves and family members.
- On August 10-11, 2013, public security agents came to the two men's homes early in the morning and took them to their station where they

- tortured the two men for two days because they steadfastly refused to abandon their faith.
- On November 13, 2013, the public security of Dak Lak Province came to their homes and transported them to the police station. There they were kept in separate rooms and subjected to torture for three straight days because they refused to renounce their faith.

The government's persecution is not limited to one province but targets the entire Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam.

I supervised 12 house churches in three provinces in Central Highlands: Seven (7) in Kontum, two (2) in Gia Lai and three (3) in Dak Lak. The house churches where Pastor Y Noen Ayun and Missionary Y Jon Ayun serve is in Dak Lak Province. I lived in and operated out of Khuk Kloong Village, Ro Koi Hamlet, Sa Thay District, Kontum Province.

I joined the Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam in 2003. The persecution against me started soon afterwards. In 2003, the Ngoc Hoi border patrol police unit 707 arrested me twice when I went to Buon Ngai Village, Sa Long Hamlet, Ngoc Hoi District, Kontum Province to participate in religious activities. The police told me: "Don't you show up here again. If we see you once more up here, you will go to jail. Do you understand?"

In 2004, I was once intercepted by the hamlet police as I was on my way to visit my church members. A Nep, Ro Koi Hamlet police chief, beat me, causing bleeding injuries to my mouth.

On January 13, 2005, the village police chief summoned me to the People's Committee for a "working" session. He essentially forced me to renounce my Protestant faith. Then on July 12, 2005 the Committee on Religious Affairs of the Kontum Province invited me to a day-long meeting, where they announced Directive No. 1 of the Prime Minister demanding that all religious gathering places must be registered and all adherents of each and every religious organization must be submitted to the government before people of faith may practice our religion.

I was ordained Pastor January 4, 2006. I have since encountered even greater hardship in my religious activities.

On April 28, 2006, the Office on Religious Affairs of the People's Committee of Sa Thay District summoned me to a working session. They told me to provide them with the list of all adherents of our church; otherwise we may not practice our faith or face arrest. Then on November 20, 2006, the Committee on Religious

Affairs of the Central government invited to a meeting in Ho Chi Mnh city. They explained to us the process and procedures to register our religious activities.

Returning to my village, I followed the instructions, but the village authorities did not allow us register, saying that they did not care about the policy of the central government. On the other hand, the village authorities sent agents to each home of our church's adherents to harass and intimidate them.

In 2007, the People's Committee of my village and the district police as well as the border patrol soldiers convened me to working session after working session. They threatened me, beat me, and detained me repeatedly. They forced me to write down the name and personal information of each of my church's follower. If I disobeyed, I would be jailed.

From 2005 to 2007, the People's Committee of Ro Koi Hamlet, the district police and the border patrol soldiers repeatedly summoned me in for questioning – I still keep 32 of a total of about 40 summons. They threatened me, beat me, and detained me continually. Our Church was concerned and many churchgoers abandoned their faith out of fear.

On December 14, 2007, the Kontum Province's Committee on Religious Affairs summoned me to their office. Present were Nguyen Huynh, head of the Religious Affairs Committee and Mr. Ha Xuan Nguyen. They ordered me to follow the instructions of the Hamlet authorities, which means I had to submit the list of each and every church member, their dates of birth, their addresses... They said that one this had been done, they would approve my registration for religious activities. They threatened to send me to jail and disband our church.

I protested that order because, with all that information, the government would be able to target individual church members. The authorities then caused so much hardship to me and my house churches. They summoned me repeatedly to their office and pressured me to provide them with the list of churchgoers. They did not allow me to leave and did not feed me either. Under threat I eventually had to provide them with the names of churchgoers. They released me at around 6pm. Officials from the Kontum Province's Committee on Religious Affairs were present.

Soon afterwards the authorities targeted my churchgoers one family at a time, forcing them to recant their Christian faith. For example, on July 30, 2008 the Chairman of the People's Committee of Ro Koi Hamlet, accompanied by the police, came to the home of A Ro, a churchgoer of mine in Sa Thay District. They threatened to evict me and his family from the hamlet. Too afraid, A Ro signed a statement recanting his faith.

Throughout the year of 2008, I were investigated and followed by the police. I had to seek pre-authorization in order to leave the hamlet. On September 11, 2008, the police of Sa Thay District summoned me to a working session. The police agent talking to me was a person by the name My. When I asked for the summon, he showed but did not give it to me. He wanted to know exactly where we conducted religious gatherings and my daily movements.

On September 23, 2008 I received another summon from the hamlet police. Three police agents awaited me: Lt. Colonel Nguyen Dinh Son, deputy chief of police of the hamlet; Nguyen Van Dung, chief police, and a police agent by the name Le Thanh Hai. They again forced me to provide the names and personal information of all my church members. I explained to him that this was not required in the Prime Minister's Directive No. 1. He ignored my explanation and insisted that I must provide them with the information they wanted. They kept me at the police station until 6pm. I was too hungry and could not bear it anymore, so I wrote down the list of church members for them.

Soon afterwards, the police came to the homes of many church members to force them to recant their faith. One church member, A Ro, was threatened that he and his family would be evicted from the village. Too afraid, he signed a statement renouncing his faith on September 27, 2008.

On September 30, 2008, the authorities sent us an ultimatum ordering me to provide more names of church members. They threatened me with imprisonment if I disobeyed their order. Two days later, Ms. Trang from the US General Consulate in Ho Chi Minh City called me to inquire about the government's persecution against our church. I reported to her all the harassment and threats of imprisonment. The pressure on me subsided for a while even though I continued to be constantly followed and frequently summoned to the police station.

The situation did not change until 2011. The police visits to my home intensified. They no longer sent me summons but went straight to my home. They came every day and I could not go to work: the district police, the provincial police, the PA 38 police, the border patrol unit 705 soldiers, the provincial border patrol soldiers, the Hamlet's Committee on Religious Affairs, the provincial Committee on Religious Affairs... They interrogated me about my contact with Rev. Y Hin Nie in America and whether I received financial support from him or anyone else. They prohibited me from conducting activities of the Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam, worshiping God in the presence of many people, visiting different places without permission... because the government had not recognized my church.

The police tried to recruit me to work as informant for the Province Police and the Border Patrol. On April 23, 2012, two public security agents by the names Kien and Thien told me that I would gain many benefits by working for them. I declined because, as a Pastor, I would not betray my God. From that point on the authorities stopped issuing summons. Instead they came straight to my house to conduct questioning sessions at my house.

The following people from the above government entities conducted the "working" sessions with me:

- 1. A Nhất, police agent of Ro Koi Hamlet
- 2. A Di, deputy chief of police of Ro Koi Hamlet
- 3. A Nép, chief of police of Ro Koi Hamlet
- 4. A Deo, Chair of the People's Committee of Ro Koi Hamlet
- 5. Lê Ngoc Linh, district police cadre
- 6. Mr. My, police agent of the Hamlet
- 7. Nguyễn văn Dũng, cadre, security team of the hamlet
- 8. Lê Thanh Hiệp, secutiy team leader of the hamlet
- 9. Nguyễn Thanh Tâm, police agent of the hamlet
- 10. Lê Thanh Hải, police agent of the hamlet
- 11. Lt. Colonel Nguyễn Thanh Sơn, deputy chief of police of the hamlet
- 12. Mr. Tâm, police agent, Unit PA 38 of the Provincial Police
- 13. Lieutenant Nguyễn Thanh Nhân, soldier in the border patrol unit 705
- 14. Nguyễn Văn Trổi, soldier in the border patrol unit 705
- 15. Võ Trí Dũng, soldier in the border patrol unit 705
- 16 Mr. Kiên, police agent, border patrol unit of Kontum Province
- 17. Mr. Thiện, police agent, border patrol unit of Kontum Province
- 18. Trần Công Thu, deputy chief of the interior affairs office of Sa Thay District
- 19. Nguyễn Xuân Dãm, cadre on religious affairs, Sa Thay District
- 20. Nguyễn Thanh Long, deputy chief, Committee on Religious Affairs, Kontum Province
- 21. Nguyễn Huỳnh, Chief of Committee on Religious Affairs, Kontum Province
- 22. thác sĩ Hà xuân nguyên.

Those who regularly investigated me are:

- 1. A Nhất, police agent of Ro Koi Hamlet
- 2. Nguyễn Thanh Tâm, police agent of the hamlet
- 3. Lt. Nguyễn Thanh Nhân, soldier in the border patrol unit 705
- 4. Võ Trí Dũng, soldier in the border patrol unit 705

The local authorities continued to force our church members to renounce their faith. On July 13, 2012, the police summoned Y Huy, the 16-years old daughter of A El (in Chot Village, Sa Thay District, Kontum). She took care of the children of

church members. They asked her whether she had attended my house church and what activities had I conducted there, and whether I often visited church members in Chot Village. The police then ordered her and her family to leave the Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam because it had not been approved by the government. A copy of the police summons is enclosed.

On the occasion of Christmas 2012, our church organized a celebratory ceremony for 500 church members. The police, the army and the government of Sa Thay District blocked about 200 of our church members from joining our Christmas celebration even though we had applied for and received permission.

On Christmas' eve, public security agents and soldiers from a border guard unit disrupted our congregation's Christmas celebration. I had submitted a request for authorization to hold the event to the subdistrict's government. Mr. A Deo, the subdistrict administrator, advised me to request permission from the district's government in view of the large number of participants in the proposed celebration. I went to the District Office and met Mr. Nguyen Xuan Dam, the head of the District Office on Religious Affairs. He gave me an application form (see enclosed picture). I submitted the application to the district. The district government authorized the celebration, a decision that the subdistrict government concurred with. On December 24, a government representative telephoned to tell me that they had reneged on their permit. We had bought many items and spent much time preparing for the Christmas event. The government posted traffic police at major intersections to interdict our church members' travel to the event. The subdistrict's public security agents and border guards came to the place where the event was held to forbid us from proceeding. They forced us to give them the list of participants who were present and fined each person 20,000 Vietnamese Dong. Government officials who were involved included: (a) Mr. Le Thanh Minh, Chief of Ro Koi Subdistrict's Public Security, (b) Second Lieutenant Nguyen Thanh Nhan of Border Guards Unit 705, (c) Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tam, Sa Thay District Public Security; (d) Mr. Nguyen Xuan Dam, Head of the District Office on Religious Affairs.

I was very upset because the local authorities and the district authorities had already approved my request to hold the Christmas ceremony. At the last minute they changed their mind and sent agents to disrupt our religious activities. I voiced my disapproval of such a conduct on the Vietnamese-language media overseas such as Dan Lam Bao, Chan Troi Moi, Radio Free Asia... The harassment against me intensified.

Sometimes they came to my house two or three times a day. Church members were very concerned and afraid. They no longer dared to come to prayer services and other religious activities at my house because they saw the police frequenting

my house. My wife and I were very troubled because we could not go out to make a living. We were afraid for my life and safety. Hundreds of Montagnard church members and pastors had been sent to prison in 2001, in 2004 and afterwards. A number of them died in prison or became totaling incapacitated by the time they got released. Many members of the Christ's Protestant Church have been treated badly.

On May 31, 2013, from approximately 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., the Commander of the Province's Public Security Unit (Senior Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Dinh Son), Security forces from Sa Thay District (led by Mr. Le Thanh Hiep, Security Chief of Sa Thay District), public security agents from Ro Koi Subdistrict (led by Mr. Le Thanh Minh, public security agent), and soldiers from Border Guards Unit 7.05 (led by Second Lieutenant Nguyen Thanh Nhan) came to my home, used a camcorder to film and a digital camera to take pictures of my house and family members without asking for my permission. (See enclosed pictures.) After filming and taking pictures, they interrogated me with detailed questions such as "Tell us where you go each day"; "Do you still communicate with Pastor Y Hin Nie?" They also threatened me that if I do not leave the Christ's Protestant Church and do not stop communicating with Pastor Y Hin Nie, I will be jailed. I managed to take pictures of them and, after their departure, I posted those pictures on facebook.

On June 1, 2013, at approximately 7 p.m., security forces from Sa Thay District came to my house to interrogate me about the pictures on Facebook showing public security agents who harassed us on May 31, 2013. They ordered me to remove those pictures. I did not obey. On June 2, 2013, at approximately 7 or 8 p.m., while I was visiting a church member by the name A Duyt, my wife came to alert me that approximately 15 to 20 individuals consisting of members of the district's public security unit, village's public security unit, and border guards, raided my house to arrest me. I fled to Saigon and from there to Thailand.

I arrived in Thailand on June 6, 2013 and registered for refugee protection from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on June 10, 2013.

In summary, the government has repeatedly harassed, detained, and placed me under probation from 2003 when I converted to Christianity – they summoned me to the public security station over 40 times for interrogation to force me to renounce my faith. They explicitly asked me to stop my relationship with the Christ's Protestant Church of Vietnam and to give them all information related to the Church. They also forbade me from communicating with pastors in other countries, particularly those who are also from Vietnam's ethic minority groups. Additionally, they ordered me to seek permission from them whenever I want to go to other subdistricts in Vietnam, and after I return, to report my activities to the

local government; otherwise they would fine me and impose forced labor on me for two to three days for each infringement.

The government continues to harass, detain, and beat up my associates, Pastor Y Noen Ayun and Missionary Y Jon Ayun.

4. STEPS TAKEN BY THE VICTIMS, THEIR FAMILIES OR ANYONE ELSE ON THEIR BEHALF

We could not send complaints to any government agencies in view of the continual harassment by those agencies. For example, on each Sunday, public security agents from the subdistrict and the district and border guards came to a number of our believers' prayer meetings to harass them. Many new church members were too afraid to continue their worship. In a number of other locations, the government forbids us from gathering for prayers.

5. IDENTITY OF THE PERSON SUBMITTING THIS FORM

- Family name: A

- First Name: Ga

- Contact information:

Telephone: 66-853947133, email: aga.ductin@gmail.com,

skype: agaductin.

- Status: pastor of a religious group

- I have the permission from Pastor Y Noen Ayun and Missionary Y Jon Ayun to report their harassment by Vietnam's government.

- Pastor Y Noen Ayun, Missionary Y Jon Ayun and I request that their identity be not publicized.

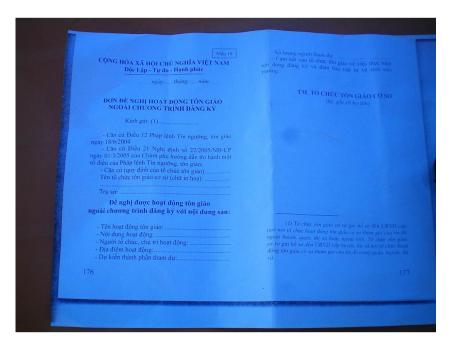
Date of submission: April 8, 2014

Signature of author: _______

Picture 1: Missionar Y Jon Ayun, Pastor A Ga, and Pastor Y Noen Ayun, at a hotel in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, March 2012.



Picture 2: Application form for registration of religious activities given to Pastor A Ga by Mr. Nguyen Xuan Dam, Chair of the District Office on Religious Affairs



Picture 3: Border Patrol Unit 705 stopping members of the Ka-Ram Church from conducting Christmas celebration on December 24, 2012. Lieutenant Nguyen Thanh Nhan (in green shirt) shown questioning church members. In white shirt next to Nhan is Missionary A Viei.



Picture 4: Public security agents A Nhat (squatting), platoon chief of the village police, writing out fines to church members, December 24, 2012.



Picture 5: Nguyen Thanh Tam, agent of the hamlet police, taking picture of and disrupting the Christmas celebration, December 24, 2012. This picture was posted on Facebook by Pastor A Ga. The police ordered him to take it down or face punishment.



Picture 6: (from left to right) Lt Nguyen Thanh Nhan (in white shirt); a member of the Border Patrol Unit 705; Le Thanh Hiep (in uniform), Team Leader of security forces of Sa Thay Hamlet; Colonel Nguyen Dinh Son, deputy chief of the hamlet public security; Chief of the Provincial Police (name not known), at Pastor A Ga's home, May 31, 2013.

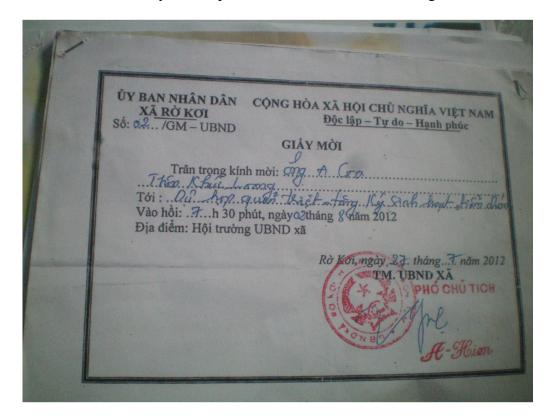




Picture 7: A member of the Sa Thay District Police, at Pastor Aga's home, checking Facebook and ordering him to take down from Facebook the picture showing the police harassing Church members that he had posted, June 1, 2013.



Picture 8: Summon by the People's Committee of Ro Koi Village to Pastor A Ga



Pictures 9 - 16: Public security agents coming to arrest Pastor Y Noen Ayun and Missionary Y Jon Ayun, Puan B, Xa Ea Phe, Huyen Krong Pac, Dak Lak Province on January 12, 2014. Shown in the pictures: Mr. Phuong, Tran Manh Tung (Deputy Chief of the hamlet public security), Nguyen Tan Hung, Que, Lieutenant Hoang Van Tung, Deputy Chief of the village public security).

Picture 9:



Picture 10:



Picture 11:



Picture 12:



Picture 13: The two Montagnard Christians are being taken into the police vehicle.



Picture 14:



Picture 15: Pastor Y Noen Ayun's wife saying goodbye to him and to Missionary Y Jon Ayun.

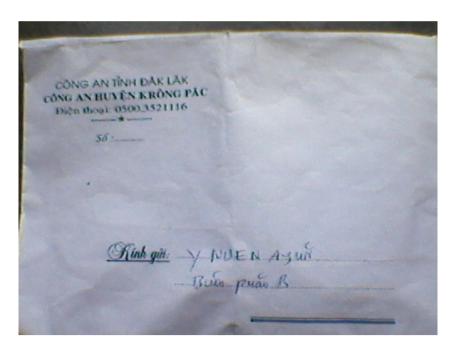


Picture 16:

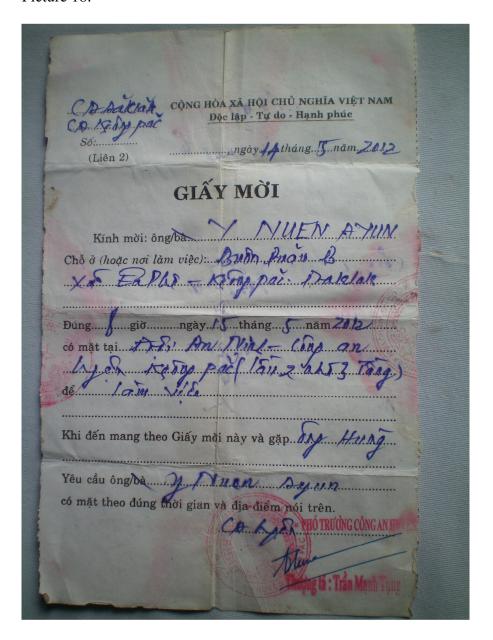


Pictures 17 - 18: Police summons sent to Pastor Y Noen Ayun and Missionary Y Jon Ayun

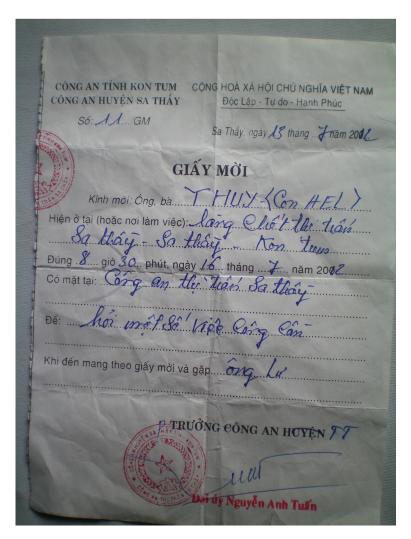
Picture 17:



Picture 18:



Picture 19: Police summon targeting Y Huy, a minor Church member.



Picture 20:



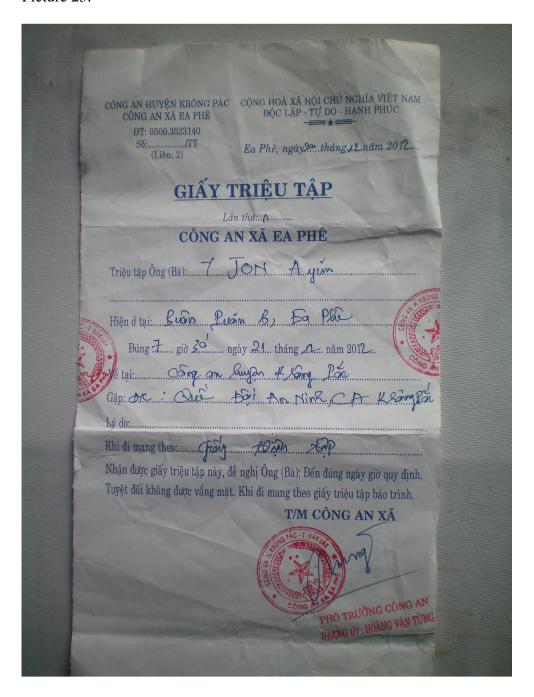
Picture 21:

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Picture 22:

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Alc Napuyan Tan Hung
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Picture 23:



Picture 24:

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	Trân Manh Tung

Picture 25: Communion service conducted by Pastor Y Hin Nie from the US, using Skype, March 20, 2012. Two pastors were among the attendants: Pastor A Ga and Pastor Ksor Laih. Also attending were Missionaries A Doi, Ha Tung and A Viei.

