

Report to the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Does the incident involve an individual or a group?

A group

- If it involves a religious or belief group please state the number of people involved and the denomination of the group:

6 members of Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ in Kontum province

- Locations in which the incidents took place: Socialist Republic of Vietnam -
Nationality(ies) of the victim(s): Vietnamese

(1) Rắc village, Gia-xia commune, Sa-thầy district, Kontum province

(2) Teng village, Chư Pah town, Gia-lai province

- Does domestic law require (re-) registration of religious associations and if yes, what is the current status of the group in question? Yes

In bullet C, paragraph 1, Article 16, Chapter III of Ordinance on Religion and Belief No. 21/2004 / PL-NASC 11 dated on June 18, 2004, the National Assembly Standing Committee (NASC) regulates that "only registered religious organizations with regularly scheduled religious activities are legally recognized as religious organizations".

While established in 2004, not until August 16, 2009 did the Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ formally operate in the Central Highlands of Kontum. Since its establishment, the commune and district authorities have invited us to meet several times regarding the registration for religious activities of our Church. When we registered by filling out the official form provided by the Government Office of Religion, the local authorities refused to accept it and ordered us to sign up with the pre-filled form prepared by them. We did not accept their form, which came with unacceptable terms; therefore, the Central Highlands government authorities has persecuted and harassed us so many times.

2. IDENTITY OF THE PERSONS CONCERNED

Note: if more than one person is concerned, please attach relevant information on each person separately.

Primary victim: - Family name: A

- First name: Hrủ

- Denomination of his/her religion or belief: Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ

- Place of original residence: Rắ village, Gia-xia commune, Sa-thầy district, Kontum province

- Year of Birth: 1987

- Gender: Male

Other victims / witnesses:

There are five (5) other victims. Please refer to Appendix 1: List of Victims

3. INFORMATION REGARDING THE ALLEGED VIOLATION

- Date and time (approximate, if exact date is not known):

- August 02, 2015; August 03, 2015; August 04, 2015

- Place (location and country/countries):

- Bi village, La óp commune, Ja-grai district, Gia-lai province
- Rắ village, Gia-xia hamlet, Sa-thầy district, Kontum province

- Please provide a detailed description of the circumstances of the incident in which the alleged violation occurred respectively the nature of the governmental action:

(a) On August 2, 2015

We, a group of four (4) people from Kontum, visiting and studying the Words of God with our fellow Christian brothers and sisters of Bi village, La Op commune, Jagrai district, Gia-lai province. We all belong to the Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ denomination.

In Bi village, La Op commune, Jagrai district, Gia-lai province, at around 4:00 pm on August 02, 2015, the border guards of Station 17 arrested us.

I, A Hru, would like to describe in details the violations committed by border guards of station 17. They beat me and members of our group, simply because we went to visit and study the Words of God with my fellow brothers at Bi village.

Soon after we arrived to the village, the border guards of Station 17 stormed into the house (of a church member in Bi village) to question us. They brought us to the public security station. They started to search throughout our bodies and confiscated six mobile phones and 10 million Dong (Vietnamese currency unit) of cash without giving us any written record at all. After that, they tied me up with cords and used stun guns to

injure my body. While beating me up, they separated and took each one of us to different private rooms to investigate and interrogate us, but we all answered them that we came here to visit and study the Words of God with our fellow Christian brothers and sisters because we belonged to the same denomination; besides that, we did nothing else; but they did not believe our testimonies. They accused us of spreading propaganda against the State, and alleged us of organizing illegal border crossing, and then they started to threaten our lives.

They tied a cord around my neck and one of them said: “You’d better obediently tell the truth, otherwise, I will strangle you, nobody will know that I strangle you”. I answered: “I already told you the truth. If you don’t believe us, then we do not know what to say”. They told us “You all telling lie”, then they beat us again. They kicked in our stomach and strongly hit both of my cheeks. When they finished questioning my brothers, my sisters, and me, they put all of us in the same room. At that time, Mr. A Chẵm and his wife, Y Du, shared with us that during the interrogation, the interrogators intended to beat Y Du in the stomach but A Chẵm begged them, explaining that his wife was two months pregnant. They told A Chẵm that he would have to take double hit, one for him and the other for his wife. They beat A Chẵm until he lost consciousness, and slapped his wife, Y Du, on her cheeks. Deacon A Mú̃rc was undressed and beaten by electronic stick for about an hour. Pastor Siu Veo’s shirt was also taken off and beaten by elbows on his head and eyes. Mr. A Hên was kicked so strong that his body was twisted. After that, they locked us up in the room for one night without food and drink. We were so hungry and thirsty.

(b) On August 3, 2015

Approximately 8:00 a.m. on August 03, 2015, the border guards of Station 17 transported all of us to the Ja-grai district public security station in Gia-lai province. When we arrived to the station, they continued to interrogate us with many questions like, did why we come here, whom did we meet, are we planning to entice your friends in the village to believe in Evangelical faith of FULRO, or are we planning to organize illegal border crossing to escape?

We responded that we are purely Christians. Our purpose is to worship God, read the Bible, preach the Gospel, and visit our fellow brothers and sisters in our faith community. Apart from that, we did not know anything else. Believe it or not is up to you. Our words are truthful because we follow the Evangelical religious faith. There is nothing else for us to report.

When Ja-grai district public security agents heard our responses, they loudly shouted at us and scolded us with vulgar languages; they threw at us the following questions: who had asked us to do what we do here? Who gave us the permission to preach the Words of God at this place? They explained that even the Provincial government does not approve/recognize the Evangelical Church of Christ to practice widely in the Central

Highlands. After these questions, they beat us again with hands and kicked us with their feet, and then they used the stun guns to hurt us, and continued to confine all of us for one night in the public security at Ja-grai District, Gia-lai.

(c) On August 4, 2015

Around 9:30 a.m. on August 4, 2015, they told us that four of us would be released, and two members of our group, Deacon A Múc and Pastor Siu Veo, had to stay back. Four members of the group were allowed to go home but everyone was scared, confused, and mentally and physically hurt. We have no news of our two detained brothers because the government officials did not inform the family of their statuses. Currently, they are still temporarily detained at the Ja-grai District public security agent station. Their personal information are:

1. Deacon A-Múc, Rắc village, Gia-xia hamlet, Sa-thầy district, Kon tum province
2. Pastor Siu Veo, Bi village, La óp hamlet, Ja-grai district, Gia-lai province

Truly, we cannot believe that at this age the authorities (border guards and public security agents) still treat our ethnic people so badly, like they treat criminals. They took us to the public security station, interrogated, and beat us up, and confiscated our mobile phones and our money while we did not do anything wrong, except visiting our fellow brothers and sisters in our faith community to learn the Words of God in the Bible.

The Vietnamese government continues discriminating and treating our Evangelical ethnic groups unfairly in the Central Highlands region in Central Vietnam. They continuously allege us of following the FULRO exile group to fight against the Vietnamese Communist government. They force our Evangelical ethnic groups to the corner with a purpose for us to renounce our own religious faith. The government's policy has not changed with time. Following are key incidents that happened to our faith community over the years.

(d) On December 24, 2012

At about 9:00 a.m., two communal and district public security agents came to Deacon A Múc's house to inform him that if we planned to celebrate a Christmas Mass, we must notify the local authorities in advance for permission. They also stated that even if permission was granted, we could only celebrate Christmas inside our house, not on the outside.

Then these two public security agents prohibited us from having any writing in our own native language at the place of worship, but we must write in Vietnamese language. They even ordered us to remove the Holy Cross in our front yard while we were preparing for our Christmas Mass. They stated that if we didn't follow their order to remove the Holy Cross, then they would not allow us to celebrate Christmas Mass even

inside the house. We were afraid that that they would disrupt our Christmas Mass; we eventually had to follow their order by removing the Holy Cross on the front yard.

(e) On September 11, 2008

At about 7:00 am on September 11, 2008, Deacon A Múc was summoned by public security agents to report to the administrative office of Sa-thầy district for a meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to provide them all registered church members. They stated that without providing them our church member list, our church will be disbanded as our religion was not approved by the government yet.

They told Deacon A Múc that we had to join the Southern Vietnam Evangelical Church. He told them that we have the right to choose a religion, a sect, and that is our right. They loudly yelled at him and wrote up a report without allowing him to review it. When he asked them for a copy of the report, the chief public security agent at Sa-thầy district attempted to use his hand to slap his face.

The purpose for them asking the Deacon to write down the name of each church member is to get to know everyone's residence address so that they would come to each home to threaten and force us to renounce our Christian faith. In the past, many of our church members had renounced their Christian faith because their names were provided to the public security agents per the agents' requests. Shortly after their names had been released, many of our church members did not attend Mass or religious gathering sessions. Due to that reason, Deacon A Múc refused to provide the public security agents our church member list.

The public security agents explained that we must join the Southern Vietnam Evangelical Church to practice our faith because this church is legally recognized by the government. The government had not recognized our Evangelical Church of Christ yet. If we did not follow their order, we would be arrested.

(f) On September 19, 2008

At 7:30 a.m. on September 19, 2008, at the same time, the communal and district public security agents requested A Múc to report to their agency office to interrogate him about his religious activities in the Evangelical Church of Christ. In the end, they asked him to report to the district public security station. He then must come to the Sa-thầy district public security station in Kontum province.

The meeting agenda only focused on the sole purpose of forcing him to provide the list of church members and to change his Evangelical denomination. Otherwise they would disband our groups, and arrest and put A Múc in jail. The district public security agents prohibited him to visit Pastor A Ga or come to his house. They accused Pastor A Ga to be the traitor who wanted to fight against the government, and that he organized the Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ group in the Central Highlands with the support

from the criminal FULRO exile group. Due to these allegations, they asked A Múc to renounce his faith as soon as possible. The public security agents, who interrogated him at their station, used profane and disrespectful languages.

- Which indications exist that the victim(s) has been targeted because of his/her religion or belief?

The government authorities at all level do not want the Evangelical Church of Christ to grow in the Central Highland of Vietnam. Therefore, we are continuously repressed, arrested, beaten, harassed, and not allowed to register for our religious activities. The authorities have forced us to provide the list of our church members... All is due to the lack of religious freedom and we are not allowed to freely practice and express our own religious faith.

- Identification of the alleged perpetrator(s), name(s) if known and/or function, suspected motive:

All the violators are the government official members and agents

- Are the perpetrator(s) known to the victim?

Yes

- Are state agents or non-state-actors believed to be responsible for the alleged violation?

Yes

- If the perpetrators are believed to be State-agents, please specify (police, military, agents of security services, unit to which they belong, rank and functions, etc.), and indicate why they are believed to be responsible; be as precise as possible.

1. Colonel Nguyễn Đình Sơn, district Deputy Public Security Chief, Sa-Thầy district, Kontum province
2. Mr. Lê Ngọc Linh, public security agent at Sa-Thầy district, Kontum province
3. Mr. Nguyễn Đức Thanh, public security agent at Sa-Thầy district, Kontum province
4. Mr. A thương, communal public security Chief, Gia-xia commune, Sa-Thầy district, Kontum province
5. Mr. Lê Thành Hiệp, public security lead agent, Sa-Thầy district, Kontum province
6. Mr. Nguyễn Thành Tâm, district public security agent, Sa-Thầy district, Kontum province
7. Several border guards of Station 17, La óp commune, Ja-grai district, Gia-lai province; names: unknown
8. Public Security Agents of Ja-grai district, Gia-lai province; names: unknown

4. STEPS TAKEN BY THE VICTIM, HIS/HER FAMILY OR ANYONE ELSE ON HIS/HER BEHALF? Please indicate if complaints have been filed, when, by whom, and before which State authorities or competent bodies (i.e. police, prosecutor, court):

- No report has been filed because it was the authorities themselves who perpetrated the violence against us.

- Were any other steps taken? No

- Steps taken by the authorities: None

The violators were not probed. Ironically the victims were interrogated. At this time, the Ja-grai district public security agents detained two of our brothers in public security office of Ja-grai district for further interrogation; they would not have much of a chance to be released soon. The names of two detained victims are:

1. Deacon A-Mức, Rắc village, Gia-xia hamlet, Sa-thầy district, Kon tum province
2. Pastor Siu Veo, Bi village, La óp hamlet, Ja-grai district, Gia-lai province

Note on latest development: These two were reportedly released in the evening of August 19, 2015. We have not been able to verify this.

- Indicate whether or not, to your knowledge, there have been investigations by the State authorities; if so, what kind of investigations? Please indicate progress and status of these investigations as well as which other measures have been taken?

None

- In case of complaints by the victim or its family, how have those authorities or other competent bodies dealt with them? What has been the outcome of those proceedings?

None

5. IDENTITY OF THE PERSON OR INSTITUTION SUBMITTING THIS FORM

Family Name: A

First Name: Ga

Phone: 0853947133(+66); Email: aga.ductin@gmail.com; Skype: agaductin

- Status: individual, group, non-governmental organization, religious or belief group, intergovernmental agency, Government. Please specify: Religious group.

If the victim do not directly report this incident, do you act with knowledge and on behalf of the victim(s)? Yes; the victims asked that we file this report.

Please state whether you want your identity to be kept confidential: Kept confidential

August 19, 2015

_____ Signature of the author

Pastor A Ga

Appendix

List of Victim Detail Information

2. Family Name: A
 - First Name: MỨC
 - Religion: Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ
 - Residence Address: Rắc village, Gia-xia commune, Sa-thầy district, Kon tum province
 - Date of Birth: 1982
 - Gender: Male
3. Family Name: A
 - First Name: Chẵm
 - Religion: Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ
 - Residence Address: Rắc village, Gia-xia commune, Sa-thầy district, Kon tum province
 - Date of Birth: 1994
 - Gender: Male
4. Family Name: Y
 - First Name: Du
 - Religion: Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ
 - Residence Address: Rắc village, Gia-xia commune, Sa-thầy district, Kon tum province
 - Date of Birth: 1999
 - Gender: Female
5. Family Name: Siu
 - First Name: Veo
 - Religion: Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ
 - Residence Address: Bi village, La óp commune, Ja-grai district, Gia-lai province
 - Date of Birth: 1988
 - Gender: Male
6. Family Name: A
 - First Name: Hân
 - Religion: Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ
 - Residence Address: Bi village, La óp commune, Ja-grai district, Gia-lai province
 - Date of Birth: 1986

- Gender: Male
- II. Photos:



Photograph 1: Picture of three church members who was released to the village from public security station at Ja-grai district, Gia-lai province



Photograph 2: Family picture of Deacon A Múc



Photograph 3: The Vietnam Evangelical Church of Christ congregation under Deacon A Mức's management at Rắc village, Gia-xia commune, Sa-thầy district, Kontum province

III. Video:

IV. Documents:

(1).....
(2).....
Số :/GM

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM
Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

Sa Thay, ngày 10 tháng 9 năm 2008

GIẤY MỜI

Kính mời : Ông, bà A - Muc
Hiện ở tại (hoặc nơi làm việc) Làng Bắc
xã Ia Xiết - Ia Thây
Đúng 7 giờ 00 ngày 11 tháng 9 năm 199 2008
có mặt tại Công an huyện Ia Thây

để Đàm rã 1 số vấn đề có liên quan
đến công tác lĩnh vực ANTT
Khi đến mang theo giấy mời này và gặp ông
Sa Ngọc Linh - cán bộ CA huyện

(3).....
(4).....

Thượng tá Nguyễn Đình Sơn



Summon Mr. A Muc to report to Sa Thay district Public Security office for questioning
on September 11, 2008

(1) CA huyện Sa Thày CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM
 (2) Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

Số: 68 /GM Sa Thày, ngày 19 tháng 9 năm 2008

GIẤY MỜI

Kính mời : Ông, bà A Muc
 Hiện ở tại (hoặc nơi làm việc) Sông Rài
xã Ia Xiết - Sa Thày
 Đúng 7 giờ 30 ngày 19 tháng 9 năm 199 2008
 có mặt tại Công an huyện Sa Thày
 để làm rõ 1 số vấn đề có liên quan
 đến an ninh trên lĩnh vực ANTT.
 Khi đến mang theo giấy mời này và gặp Ông
Nguyễn Đức Thành - Cán bộ CA huyện



Thượng tá Nguyễn Đình Sơn

Summon Mr. A Muc to report to Sa Thày District Public Security office for questioning on the same date, September 19, 2008

C.A. Xã Gia Xá
Việt
 Số:

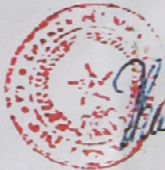
CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM
 Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc

Ngày: 18...tháng...09...năm 2008

GIẤY BẢO
 (Lan thứ 1)

Yêu cầu ông: Đ. H. M. K.
 Hiện ở tại: Quang Hải và gia đình

Dùng 8 giờ...ngày 19 tháng 09 năm 2008
 Có mặt tại: C.A. Xã Gia Xá
 Do: Lam 1 Sở An ninh liên quan trên địa
 Khi đến mang theo giấy báo này và gặp Đ. H. M. K.


TRƯỞNG CÔNG AN XÃ
[Signature]
 A-11209

Summon Mr. A Muc to report to Gia Xá Communal Public Security station for
 questioning on September 19, 2008