

Case BPSOS-07 – Nguyen Huu Tan

Prepared by BPSOS, June 16, 2017

Contact information: bpsos@bpsos.org; 703-538-2190

Egregious human rights violations: arbitrary detention, torture, death in police custody

- (1) **Colonel Phạm Văn Ngân** (DOB: July 17, 1958; birthplace: Hoa Binh Commune, Tra On District, Vinh Long Province), Deputy Director of the Public Security (Police) Department of Vinh Long Province, Member of the Standing Committee of Communist Party Chapter of Vinh Long Provincial Police. He announced, to the victim's wife and father, the death of Nguyen Huu Tan at the Police Department's Temporary Detention Center, attributing it to suicide. Subsequently he went to the victim's house twice to pressure the family to bury or cremate the victim's body as soon as possible, citing environmental concerns and cultural traditions as reasons. He also appeared on television and held a press conference to announce Tan's death by suicide.



Col. Phạm Văn Ngân

- (2) **Trần Văn Rón** (DOB: November 1, 1961; birthplace: Phu Loc Commune, Tam Binh District, Vinh Long Province): Secretary General of Vinh Long Provincial Communist Party Committee (10th session, 2015-2020). He accompanied Colonel Ngan to the victim's house so as to press the victim's family to drop their demand for independent autopsy and impartial investigation.



Trần Văn Rón

- (3) **Nguyễn Văn Quang** (born 1959; birthplace: An Khanh Commune, Chau Thanh District, Dong Thap Province): Chairman of the People's Committee of Vinh Long Province, Deputy Secretary of the Vinh Long Provincial Party Committee. He accompanied Colonel Ngan to the victim's house so as to press the victim's family to drop their demand for independent autopsy and impartial investigation.



Nguyễn Văn Quang

- (4) **Trương Văn Sáu** (DOB: January 1, 1959; birthplace: Phu Loc Commune, Tam Binh District, Vinh Long Province): Chairman of Vinh Long People's Council (9th session, 2016-2021), Permanent Deputy Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee. He accompanied Colonel Ngan to the victim's house so as to press the victim's family to drop their demand for independent autopsy and impartial investigation.



Trương Văn Sáu

- (5) **Col. Lê Văn Hoàng** (DOB: N/A; birthplace: N/A): Permanent Deputy Chief of the Investigative Unit of Police Department of Vinh Long Province. He signed the urgent arrest order dated May 3, 2017 authorizing the arrest of Nguyen Huu Tan on charge of disseminating anti-state materials.
- (6) **Col. Phạm Văn Sum** (DOB: N/A; birthplace: N/A): Superintendent of the Temporary Detention Center of Police Department of Vinh Long Province. He signed the official announcement that Nguyen Huu Tan had had committed the crime of disseminating anti-state materials and committed suicide.

References:

Trump Faces Human-Rights Test With Vietnamese Leader's Visit

<https://www.courthousenews.com/trump-faces-new-human-rights-test-vietnamese-leaders-visit/>

Family of Vietnam Hoa Hao Buddhist Questions Death in Custody Ruled 'Suicide'

<http://www.rfa.org/english/news/vietnam/suicide-05042017153429.html>

Activists question Buddhist's death in police custody

<http://www.ucanews.com/news/activists-question-buddhists-death-in-police-custody/79169>

Background Information:

In the morning of May 2, 2017, the victim, Mr. Nguyen Huu Tan, was abducted by the Vietnamese police while going out for his morning coffee as usual. That evening, about two hundred plainclothes and uniformed police escorted him home, surrounded the house, blocked off the streets, and conducted a house search that lasted several hours. He was accused of disseminating anti-State documents under Article 88 of the country's Penal Code. Even though the police did not find any evidence to substantiate their accusation, they read the Emergency Arrest Notice and took the victim away shortly after midnight. He was detained at the Temporary Detention Center of Vinh Long Provincial Police Department. Less than 10 hours later (May 3), the victim died with multiple fatal injuries: a cut on his throat that was almost from ear to ear; the gap of the cut was about 2 inches, his windpipe severed, his neck bone exposed. There was a bruise on the victim's forehead and the skull was mushy on his left temple.

The police have been pressuring the victim's family to accept their version of suicide as cause of death. Despite promises by Colonel Pham Van Ngan, the Vice Director of Vinh Long Provincial Police Department, and other top-ranking provincial officials that an investigation was underway and the victim's family would be provided a clear answer about his death, the police held press conference and meeting with state-owned media, local organizations and state-sanctioned religious groups and declared that the victim, Mr. Nguyen Huu Tan, had committed suicide by cutting his own throat with a letter opener. Vinh Long police continue to intensify their threats against the victim's family and threaten to arrest all adult members of the family for conducting anti-state activities. By doing so, the police aim to silence the victim's family and end their quest for a thorough investigation into his death. The entire family is extremely frightened and fearing for their lives. Two of the three surviving brothers fled home and are now living in exile in their own country.