

# Vietnamese People's Evangelical Fellowship

## Summary report on the activities of the Vietnamese evangelical churches in 2017-2018

*Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh*



### Overview

There are 57 Protestant denominations in Vietnam. About 85% of them have registered with the government and have been subject to government control through the Central Committee of Religious Affairs. They are often referred to as the Protestant denominations of the government. The members of their clergy are government-educated and they operate within government-regulated limits.

The remaining 15% is called the "pure" par value. They operate independently and are not government-recognized. They are frequently attacked and persecuted by police. The government's campaign to suppress the "pure" denomination began in 2001, resulting in about 300 churches being closed down in the Central Highlands, dissolved churches and many priests condemned. 7 to 20 years in prison.

Under the attack of the government are the churches of the VPEF Association, the Lutheran Vietnamese and American Protestant Association, the Vietnamese Evangelical Church (Montagnard) and some other churches in the Central Highlands, Northwestern Region and Southwestern Region. The Hanoi government regards these areas as strategic values for national security and therefore has a policy of suppressing ethnic minorities, deporting them from their ancestral lands.

On July 12, 2017, public security in Ea Khit Commune, Ea Bhok Village, Cu Kuin District, Dak Lak Province publicly denounced Pastor Y John Buon Krong and forced him to give up his belief. On July 30, 2017, police arrested and imprisoned Rev. Nguyen Trung Ton, a member of the VPEF. Pastor Doan Van Dien was detained by Dong Nai police without informing his family and then interrogated him for several days.

Protestant or Catholic evangelical prisoners are routinely subjected to persecution, including torture, such as Pastor Y Yich, Rev. Nguyen Trung Ton, Father Nguyen Van Ly... A number of them have died in prison, such as Pastor Siu Blok, Rev. Ksor Tino, among others.

Hundreds of Protestant highlanders in the Central Highlands and Hmong Protestants in the Northwestern Region have left their ancestral lands and villages and fled to neighboring countries. Their numbers are estimated to be more than 2,000 in Thailand and Cambodia. They are facing danger and may be arrested and deported to persecution in Vietnam. If repatriated, they would face torture and long term imprisonment, most likely between seven and twenty years.

The Vietnamese government is confident that they can commit serious violations of human rights, especially religious freedom, through a two-pronged policy. On the one hand, they placate the international community with promises of future improvements and create their own religious organizations to deceive the international public. On the other hand, they heavily oppress independent Protestant groups that they have no control over. These two-pronged tactics have helped Hanoi escape the CPC designation.

## Recommendations

(1) The US government should designate Vietnam as a country of particular concern (CPC) and sanction responsible individuals under the Global Magnitsky Act; this would send a strong and clear message to the Vietnamese government that their ongoing offense against freedom of religion will not be tolerated.

(2) The US government should protect the Montagnards and Hmongs in Thailand and Cambodia from being repatriated to Vietnam where they would certainly face persecution and even torture or death.

This report is dated 21 February 2018.

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