

**To: Special Rapporteur on FORB: An Cu Buddhist Temple's
incidents of religious persecution in 2016-2017 (with May 2017 Supplement)**

(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

7 members of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) listed below (and many unlisted members of this temple's congregation)

-Country(ies) in which the incident took place

Area 49, An Hai Bac Ward, Son Tra District, Town of Da Nang, Vietnam.

-Nationality(ies) of the victim(s)

All are Vietnamese citizens, main ethnic group of Vietnam.

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

Yes. The Communist government of Vietnam requires all religions to register and submit to government control of their operation. An Cu Temple under High Ven. Thích Thiện Phúc is associated with UBCV and has not registered. Police and security forces have been harassing and persecuting clergy members and adherents. The government is isolating the temple and preventing its clergy from performing religious rites. The temple may be seized at any moment. It is located on a 318 square-meter lot in the central part of the Town of Da Nang.

2). Identity of the Persons Concerned

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

1.

Family name: Huynh Middle name and first (given) name: Van Coi

Religious name: Thich Thien Phuc Denomination of his/her religion or belief: UBCV Buddhism

Place of residence or origin: An Hai Bac Ward, Son Tra District, Town of Da Nang.

Birth date: 1963 Gender: male

Nationality(ies): Vietnamese - Ethnic Group: Mainstream Vietnamese

Person authorized to represent victim: Lu Van Bay

This victim's identity may not be revealed by the UN (the complete list of victims is in Part 1 of the addendum).

(3). Information regarding the alleged violation

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

January 13, 2017; May 7-10, 2017

- Place (location and country/countries)

An Cu Temple in Area 49, An Hai Bac Ward, Son Tra District, Town of Da Nang;

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

On January 13, 2017, An Cu Temple's year-end celebration was disrupted. A large number of plainclothes agents wearing masks descended on the temple, beat up adherents, seized their cell phones, and stopped the religious event. Other agents blocked the streets leading to the temple to deny access by other adherents.

<http://www.ghepgvntn.net/le-tat-nien-chua-an-cu-bi-an-ninh-th-anh-pho-da-nang-sach-nhieu-xo-xac-phat-tu/>

August 9-17, 2016:

During the Vu Lan religious period lasting 9 days, August 9-17, 2016, police isolated the temple through harassing adherents and blocking entry into the temple.

August 24-28, 2015:

In Hòa Phước Commune, a part of Hòa Vang District, police surrounded Thích Nữ Quảng Ý's residence during 5 days.

July 2-August 24-26, 2015. Police harassed two adherents as described below:

July 2, 2015, police in Hòa An Ward, within Cẩm Lệ District, gave Mr. Nguyễn Đình Thủy, an adherent, an invitation for 8:30 a.m. on July 3, 2015, to be interrogated at the commune's police station. During the meeting that lasted through the morning, police put pressure on him to stop worshipping at the temple by saying that the abbot engaged in politics and therefore the government decided to stop adherents from worshipping. Police prepared a report on the interrogation the way that suited them, read it to the victim, and asked him to sign. He did not agree with the report, declined to sign, and left.

August 26, 2015: in the afternoon, police in Thanh Khê District and in Sơn Trà District verbally requested Nguyễn Đình Sơn, Nguyễn Đình Thủy's elder brother, to meet for interrogation at the police station in Thạch Gián Ward, within Thanh Khê District. Throughout the afternoon, police repeatedly presented the official reason for suppressing UBCV, namely, it was illegal, not approved; the abbot engaged in politics; that facility was not a temple (it was just the abbot's residence), etc.

www.dieungu.org/.../chua-an-cu-va-tin-do-tiep-tuc-bi-sach-nh-ieu-trong-dai-le-phat-d...

The Communist government required all religious organizations to register and submit to the control of the Fatherland Front Committee and the Religious Affairs Committee – both being government appendages. Religious organizations which do not comply are prevented from operating. Police use many approaches to harass such organizations, e.g., blocking them from conducting traditional, religious activities; intimidating adherents to stop them from worshipping in the temples associated with independent abbots. An Cư Temple in the Town of Đà Nẵng is associated with UBCV, the independent Buddhist organization that does not register. Police has been harassing adherents and preventing them from coming to the temple for praying, for Buddha's birthday celebration, the Vu Lan celebration, and the year-end celebration.

The government also issued invitations to individual adherents to report for interrogation in order to intimidate them and stop them from coming to An Cư Temple. Fearing complications for their loved ones, a number of adherents dare not worship at the temple. As the government plans to force the temple to close and seize its land for a residential construction project while offering an unrealistically low compensation, the temple is facing the risk of closure.

The government's 287.8 million VN\$ offer to the congregation is a small fraction of the market value estimated at 17.5 billion VN\$, making it impossible to rebuild this temple anywhere else. The market value is compared with the government's proposed compensation below.

Market Value

Total land area: 317.8 square meters (m²)

Current market value of 1 m² in Da Nang: 55 million VN\$

Market value of the temple's land: 317.8 m² x 55 million/m² = **17,500 million VN\$**

Government-Proposed Land Price Structure: 0.448 million VN\$ per m² of residential land, 0.035 million VN\$ per m² of orchard land; the government arbitrarily determined that only 150 m² of the temple's land should be valued at 0.448 million VN\$ per m² and the remaining 167.8 m² should be valued at 0.035 million VN\$ per m².

Government-Proposed Compensation:

Residential land: 150 m² x 0.448 million VN\$ per m² = 67.2 million VN\$

Orchard land: 167.8 m2 x 0.035 million VN\$ per m2 = 5.87 million VN\$
Total Land Compensation Value (sum of residential and orchard): 73.0 million VN\$
Compensation for buildings and trees: 214.7 million VN\$

Total Compensation: 73.0 million VN\$ + 214.7 million VN\$ = 287.8 million VN\$

The government's offer is so low that the announced construction project can be construed to be nothing more than a cover for razing Abbot Thich Thien Phuc's temple and diminishing UBCV. As another point of reference, the current estimate of land value in the government's planned project area is 6.3 billion VN\$ per 100 m2.

May 7-10, 2017, preceding Buddha's Birth Celebration (Year 2561 of Buddha)

The local government deployed a 200-person force to isolate and terrorize the clergy and adherents to prevent their religious practice and celebration of the most important Buddhist event. The government used ambulances, freight trucks, fire trucks, and other utility vehicles in the blockade. Its hired thugs blasphemed and insulted the clergy.

May 9, 11 a.m. Abbot Thich Thien Phuc went to Nun Dong Tam's residence to plan a trip to Hue City and celebrate Buddha's birthday in Quoc An Central Temple. As he exited the gate, Mr. Trần Văn Hường, deputy security lead of Son Tra District's police force, Mr. Nguyễn Hữu Khánh, a policeman of that force, and Mr. Lê Bá Công, Vietnam Fatherland Front of An Hai Bac Ward, stopped his motorbike to inquire about his destination. The abbot said that he did not have to tell them, and continued on. A large group of plainclothes agents wearing face masks grabbed his motorbike, causing him to fall down, and pulled the ignition key out. He cried out "Help! Policemen taking my vehicle!". Passersby did not want to intervene. The agents moved away and turned their backs to the onlookers to avoid being photographed. The abbot sat on the ground and silently protested through meditation for nearly 3 hours. His disciple, Nun Thích nữ Quảng Ý, also meditated. His motorbike, a Honda Future with license plate No. 43E1-024.85 is missing.

At the same time, Nun Thích Nữ Đồng Tâm, Adherent Hồ Đủ (Nhuận Tín), and Adherent Nguyễn Chiến (Đồng Sỹ) were nearby but could not see the abbot. The 3 insisted on trying to locate the abbot and protested the persecution, demanding to know why. Their voices were drowned by the government's loudspeakers blaring out made-up reasons for adherents not to enter the temple, e.g., renovation work and a funeral in the temple do not allow the temple to receive adherents. The government has been using this tactic over several years to isolate the temple.

Nun Thích nữ Quảng Ý lives in Nhơn Thọ 2 Village, Hòa Phước Commune, Hòa Vang District, Da Nang City. Police did not allow her to go out. On May 7, 2017, she asked Adherent Quảng Quý to give her a ride to the An Cu Temple on his Honda motorbike because she wanted to help during the festival. The two barely entered the temple's gate when two men caught up with them. One of them was Hòa Phước Commune policeman Lê Văn Hà (the other's identity was unknown). On May 8, at about noon, Mr. Lê Viết Lộc, Fatherland Front of Hòa Vang District, telephoned Adherent Quảng Quý and tried to intimidate him in having the nun taken back to her home. Quảng Quý said that he was busy and could not do so. Finally, on the festival day, just the abbot and the nun celebrated with full rites in the temple.

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

The government has been persecuting the temple's adherents because it does not tolerate independent religious organizations. The government has been disrupting religious events at the temple, including the celebration of Buddha's birthday, Vu Lan, and end-of-year celebrations, through denying access to the temple with roadblocks. Below are the links to the temple's reports of religious freedom violations to the UBCV leadership committee.

<http://www.ghpgvntn.net/le-tat-nien-chua-an-cu-bi-an-ninh-thanh-pho-da-nang-sach-nhieu-xo-xac-phat-tu/>

www.ghpgvntn.net/chinh-quyen-da-nang-van-co-lap-danh-pha-chu-a-an-cu-trong-mu..

www.ghpgvntn.net/chua-an-cu-bi-sach-nhieu-tuyen-truyen-dau-t-o-cong-khai-trong-l..
www.dieungu.org/.../chua-an-cu-va-tin-do-tiep-tuc-bi-sach-nhieu-trong-dai-le-phat-d

- Identification of the alleged perpetrator(s), name(s) if known and/or function, suspected motive:
Are the perpetrator(s) known to the victim? We know that the government of Vietnam is behind all this.
. Their main motive is their superiors' orders.

- Are State agents or non-State-actors believed to be responsible for the alleged violation? State agents are responsible, based on their uniforms and identification. Instead of protecting freedom of religion, these agents suppressed it.

Police personnel usually wear masks combined with civilian clothing when harassing. At other times, a number of police officers wear uniforms but no name tags. It is not easy to know their identity.

- 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.

Adherents receive police invitations to interrogation sessions or are blocked from entering the temple. This is clearly a government operation.

- If identification as State agents is not possible, do you believe that government authorities or persons linked to them are responsible for the incident? Why?

Harassment occurs primarily on the days that the temple conducts religious activities. This is therefore part of the government's campaign against UBCV.

- If there are witnesses to the incident, indicate their names, ages, relationship, and contact addresses. If they wish to remain anonymous, indicate if they are relatives, by-passers, etc.; if there is evidence, please specify.

The victims are also witnesses. See addendum showing victims' information.

(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, etc.).

The congregation feels that it is not worth filing complaints with the government because the same government intends to close down the temple.

- Were there any other steps taken?

Temple personnel reported the government's violations to the UBCV leadership committee, but has not reported to human rights organizations.

- Steps taken by the authorities:

None because the authorities are the perpetrators.

- 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 his family, how have those authorities or other competent bodies dealt with them? What has been the outcome of those proceedings?

No complaint has been filed.

(5). Identity of the person or institution submitting this form:

- Family name:

- Middle name, given name: Van Bay

- Contact number or address (please indicate country and area code):

. Email: withheld for security reason

- Representing the Vietnamese Organization for Freedom of Religion and Belief.

Do you act with knowledge and on behalf of the victim(s)? Yes. The abbot of An Cu Temple authorized this report to be prepared and submitted.

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

Date you are submitting this form: April 7, 2017.

Signature of the author of the report:

ADDENDUM

1/ VICTIMS LIST (continuation from a previous page)

They are all UBCV Buddhists and Vietnamese citizens. They authorized Mr. Lu Van Bay to represent them.

2/- Former nun: Thích Nữ Đồng Tâm. Legal name: Nguyễn Thị Chi. Born: 1976

12 Tran Xuân Le St., Thanh Khe District, Town of Da Nang

3/- Former nun: Thích Nữ Quảng Y. Legal name: Đặng Thị Xinh. B: 1966

Nhon Tho 2 Village, Hoa Phuoc Commune, Hoa Vang District, Town of Da Nang

4/- Mr. Hồ Đủ. Religious name: Nhuận Tín. Born: 1943

Binh Hiep Village, Binh Phuc Commune, Thach Binh District, Quang Nam Province

5/- Mr. Nguyễn Chiến. Religious name: Đồng Sỹ. B: 1965

Village No. 2, Duy Thanh Commune, Lien Chieu District, Town of Da Nang

6/- Mr. Nguyễn Đình Thủy. Religious name: Quảng Lợi. B: 1961

Area No. 89, Hoa Khanh Ward, Lien Chieu District, Town of Da Nang

7/- Ms. Phạm thị Hồng. Religious name: Quảng Liên. B: 1966

Area No. 61, An Hai Tay Ward, Son Tra District, Town of Da Nang

2/ **Photos** showing Government Personnel posted around the temple to harass the congregation on Jan 13, 2017, including one of them using binoculars to watch the temple. Also shown below are: government has demolished homes around the temple, view of the main worship room, and front of the temple.









Celebrating Buddha's Birthday in temple

Abbot and nun protesting through meditation

Trần Văn Hùng, deputy security lead of Son Tra District Police



Government agents who grabbed the abbot's motorbike



Lê Văn Hòa, Hòa Phước
Commune Police, at front
of temple



Police blocking entry
to temple



Police in rear of temple



Police at temple's gate