

**Perpetrator Information**



**Full Legal Name of Perpetrator: Nguyen Cong Van (in Vietnamese: Nguyễn Công Văn)<sup>1</sup>**

**Country: Vietnam**

**Title or Position: Colonel, Director of the Police Department of Kon Tum Province**

**Date of Birth: not found**

**Place of Birth: not found**



**Full Legal Name of Perpetrator: Vu Tien Dien (in Vietnamese: Vũ Tiến Điền)**

**Country: Vietnam**

**Title or Position: Colonel, Deputy Director of the Police Department of Kon Tum Province**

**Date of Birth: 1961**

**Place of Birth: Khoai Chau District, Hung Yen Province<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Col. Van will retire in February 2020 <https://thoidai.com.vn/kon-tum-co-tan-giam-doc-pho-giam-doc-cong-an-tinh-98211.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://tintaynguyen.com/kon-tum-cong-bo-quyet-dinh-bo-nhiem-pho-giam-doc-cong-an-tinh/87554/>

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Basis for IRFA sanctions: Forced conversion through harassment, multiple interrogations, torture, imprisonment, denial of medical care, and intimidation of victims who are Christians living in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, including many Montagnard (ethnic minorities living in the Central Highlands and other remote, primarily mountainous regions).

Command responsibility: Command responsibility is established in three ways.

(1) Violations have happened in a coordinated manner, targeting specific Montagnard house churches across the Kon Tum Province: the Ha Mon Church, the Montagnard Evangelical Church of Christ and the Dega Evangelical Church. Such systematic and on-going persecution of Montagnard Christians emanated from the policy of the Central Highlands Steering Committee, founded in 2002 by the Vietnamese Communist Party. In 2004, the Ministry of Public Security established its Central Highlands Security Bureau (PA 90) to coordinate the implementation of policies set by the Central Highlands Steering Committee. Both Colonel Nguyen Cong Van and his deputy, Colonel Vu Tien Dien, have diligently implemented this policy against ethnic minority Christians. The article dated June 15, 2016 published on the official website of Kon Tum Province's Police Department shows that the ongoing, gross and systematic persecution against Montgnard Christians came from the Police Department's implementation of the said policy:

*"Implementing the plan for eradicating the evil Ha Mon Cult, on June 14, 2016, the task force led by Colonel Vu Tien Dien, deputy director of the province's Police Department and consisting of a number of supervisors from the province's Security Office, participated in a working session with the team from the province that was sent to reinforce the Sa Thay District police force... However, progress still needs to be made in a number of locations where the situation is fluid... The deputy director ordered the reinforcement team to continue to coordinate with the various units in increasing the number of officers on site, to advise the commissars and government in the district... in a determined push to eradicate the Ha Mon Cult in the near future." See <http://conganKonTum.gov.vn/hdccat/xay-dung-luc-luong-ca/56538-dong-chi-dai-ta-vu-tien-dien-pho-giam-doc-lam-viec-voi-doi-cong-tac-tang-cuong-co-so-sa-thay.html>*

(2) The Kon Tum Province Police Department is fully aware of the many egregious violations of religious freedom through requests for investigation submitted by the victims. In at least one incident in late 2016, four victims reported that Colonel Vu Tien Dien directly interrogated them and forced them to abandon their faith.

(3) The Kon Tum Province Police Department has been forwarded inquiries from UN mandate holders on reported human rights violations. The Police Department either denied outright any violations or presented false information in the face of clear evidence. See: <http://dvov.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2017-01-24-GVN-HRC-Response-to-Religious-Freedom-Violations.pdf>

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Impact of applying IRFA visa restrictions to perpetrators: The U.S. Government has repeatedly raised its concern to the Government of Vietnam at human rights dialogues and on many other occasions, but persecution against the independent house churches in Kon Tum Province continues unabated. The targeted sanctions would send a clear message that the U.S. Government takes seriously the ongoing, systematic and egregious persecution against Montagnard house churches in Kon Tum Province. In the short-term, the Police Department of Gia Lai Province may need to think twice before committing the next act of violence against members of independent house churches such as the Montagnard Evangelical Church of Christ (aka Evangelical Church of Christ of Vietnam) and the International Dega Church (aka Dega Evangelical Church). In the longer term, the sanctions may compel the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party to rethink its policy towards Montagnard Christians in the Central Highlands.

For more detailed information, see the Appendices:

Appendix A – Policy of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party towards independent Montagnard house churches in the Central Highlands of Vietnam

Appendix B – Summary statistics of reported violations of religious freedom of Montagnard Christians in Kon Tum Province

Appendix C – List of incident reports submitted to UN mandate holders on gross violations of religious freedom committed by the police in Kon Tum Province

Appendix D – List of current religious prisoners of conscience among Montagnard Christians in Kon Tum Province

**Appendix A –Policy of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party towards independent Montagnard house churches in the Central Highlands of Vietnam**

Persecution against Montagnard Christians emanated from policies at the provincial and regional, if not central, government levels. We can trace the regional policy to the Central Highlands Steering Committee, founded in 2002 by the Vietnamese Communist Party. In 2004, the Ministry of Public Security established its Central Highlands Security Bureau (PA 90) to coordinate the implementation of policies set by the Central Highlands Steering Committee.<sup>3</sup> Several prominent sources (including government websites associated with the Public Security Ministry and Prime Minister’s office) discussed very explicitly the need to “eradicate the evil cults” - the official characterization of the various unapproved Montagnard Christian denominations that have been so thoroughly persecuted. The 2017 report cited articles such as the one titled “Those who rescue the people from darkness”, dated February 27, 2015, and published on Public Security Minister Quang’s website: “...*When I arrived in the Central Highlands, our task of rescuing the people from the evil Hà Môn cult was accomplished only recently. The Security Team of the Police Force of the Town of Kon Tum performed deeds that were representative of the indefatigable efforts of security forces throughout the Central Highlands in our fight against reactionary enemy forces disguised as ethnic religious groups...*” <http://trandaiquang.org/nhung-nguoi-cuu-dan-ra-khoi-bong-toi-u-me.html>

Equally explicit material was in another article by the Public Security Ministry:

*“Through 10 years of growth and combatting the enemy, a more mature Ethnic Communities Security Office (PA90) of Gia Lai Province, in coordination with the local government and the people, has derailed plots by the reactionary FULRO and contributed to the security of the region. From 2004 on, the Office has unmasked and dealt with several FULRO organizations, “Dega Evangelical Church”, and established 3 projects to end FULRO elements’ operation out of the forest. The Office captured 12 Hà Môn Cult adherents, convinced 69 fugitives to give themselves up, made substantial progress in resolving the Hà Môn Cult issue, and achieved several other unheralded successes.*

*With its outstanding results, PA90 has been honored 4 times with the President’s Order of Merit while its employees have been honored with several other awards from the President, the Prime Minister, and other officials.”* Source: Public Security Ministry, Heroes in the battle against FULRO”. See <http://vnca.cand.com.vn/Truyen-thong/Nhung-nguoi-linh-anh-hung-chong-Fulro-350266>

Material from the website of the former public security minister of Vietnam reveals the national policy of suppressing Christianity among Montagnard communities.

Police General & Public Security Minister Trần Đại Quang (b. October 12, 1956 in Quang Thiện Commune, Kim Sơn District, Ninh Bình Province - deceased in 2018 after being elected the President of Vietnam), former Chair of Central Highlands Steering Committee (2011-2016): In the capacity of the Chair of Central Highlands Steering Committee, he supervised the Central Highlands Security Bureau (PA90) in the suppression of independent house churches of ethnic

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<sup>3</sup> Vietnam’s Persecution against Montagnard Christians in the Central Highlands (BPSOS 2017)

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minorities in the Central Highlands. His direct involvement has been widely reported in the Vietnamese official media.

Reflecting the policy set out by the Central Highlands Steering Committee, on June 14, 2013 *World Security*, an official publication of Vietnam's Public Security Ministry, published the article titled "Ha Mon Cult, a FULRO Trick" justifying the crackdown against Montagnard Christians: "...FULRO elements continued to take advantage of the Catholics' belief in the Virgin's miraculous appearances to make up the "Ha Mon Cult" in the Central Highlands to deceive citizens...incite citizens to oppose the government...to supply FULRO members hiding in the forest...". See <http://antg.cand.com.vn/Ho-so-Interpol/Dao-Ha-Mon-%E2%80%93-Tro-doi-tra-cua-bon-phan-dong-Fulro-306015/>

On January 17, 2014, General Quang presided over the Central Highlands Steering Committee conference to review the progress made in 2013 and launch programs for 2014. According to the article titled "Eradicate reactionary Fulro, and the evil cults of Ha Mon and Dega Protestantism" and published on then-Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's website, General Quang reportedly said: "...To enable a stable development for the Central Highlands in 2014 and subsequent years, we must focus on the following measures:... strive to prevent and deter criminal activities, eradicate reactionary FULRO organizations, the evil "Hà Môn" and "Dega Protestant" sects; implement well our policies towards the people and religion, and further strengthen national solidarity." Source: Nguyen Tan Dung website, . <http://nguyentandung.org/xoa-bo-to-chuc-phan-dong-fulro-ta-dao-ha-mon-va-tin-lanh-dega.html>

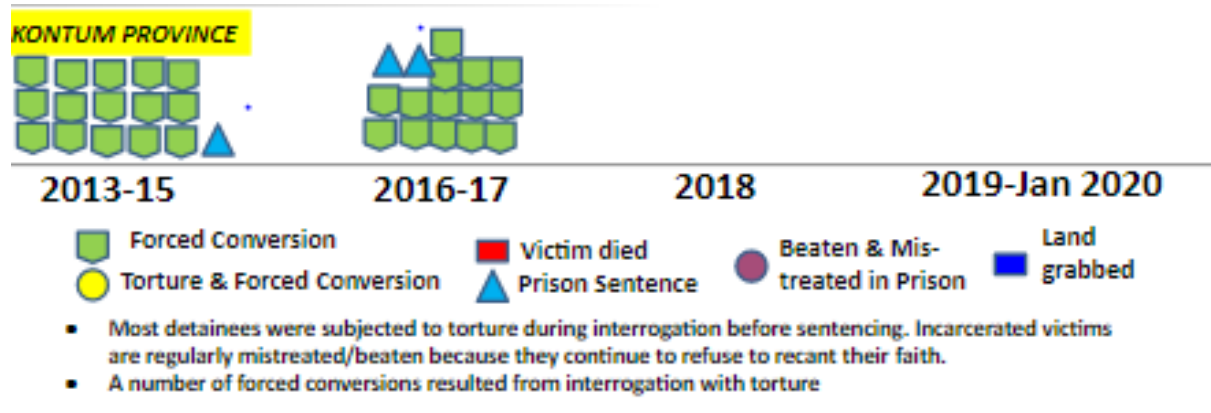
On July 7, 2014, addressing the Central Highlands Security Bureau, he called on it to "...increase activities to be able to assess the situation, to detect, counter, and prevent hostile elements and FULRO's plots; to neutralize efforts in reviving reactionary organizations; and to eradicate the evil cult "Hà Môn" (translator's note: a Central Highlands sect focusing on the worship of Jesus's mother). " Source: Ministry of Public Security, 10-year anniversary of the establishment of the Central Highlands Security Bureau. See <http://cand.com.vn/Cong-an/Cuc-An-ninh-Tay-Nguyen-Ky-niem-10-nam-ngay-thanh-lap-va-don-nhan-danh-hieu-Anh-hung-Luc-luong-vu-trang-nhan-dan-266454/>

**Appendix B -- Summary statistics of reported violations of religious freedom of Montagnard Christians in Kon Tum Province**

Sanctions against the above perpetrators would protect an entire class of persecuted Christians: Montagnard Christians, and particularly members of the outlawed Montagnard Evangelical Church of Christ. In the 1960s American missionaries introduced Protestantism to the Montagnard population in the Central Highlands; as reason for forcing Montagnard Christians to renounce their faith, the Vietnamese government often alleges that Protestantism is an American religion.<sup>4</sup>

The persecution against Montagnard Christians is systemic and follows the policy set out in 2002 by the Communist Party’s Central Highlands Steering Committee. In 2004 the Ministry of Public Security established its Central Highlands Security Bureau (PA90) to coordinate the implementation of this policy. The following chart shows that the Police Department of Kon Tum Province has most vehemently implemented this policy compared to all other provinces in the Central Highlands. Note that the decreased number of incidents of forced renunciation/conversion of faith in 2018 and 2019 is indicative of the police department’s effective elimination of independent house churches.

**PERSECUTION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN CENTRAL HIGHLANDS**



**Figure 1. Religious Freedom Violation Incidents Reported by Victims (submitted to UN Special Procedures)** –references are listed at the end of this report. *Note: Each symbol represents an individual being persecuted on a specific day – can be the same individual on a different day or a different individual on the same day – this characterization allows one to compare the persecution severity among different provinces.*

There is a direct line of command responsibility leading from the police department of a province to the police organizations of districts and provincial towns/cities.

<sup>4</sup> Repression of Montagnards, Human Rights Watch, April 2002: <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/vietnam/viet0402-08.htm>

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See below excerpts from Public Security Ministry's official site,  
[http://mps.gov.vn/web/guest/english\\_detail/-/vcmsviewcontent/bZCI/2401/0/11801](http://mps.gov.vn/web/guest/english_detail/-/vcmsviewcontent/bZCI/2401/0/11801):

### ***The organizational system of the People's Public Security Forces***

*1. The organizational system of the People's Public Security Forces is composed of:*

*a/ The Public Security Ministry;*

*b/ Police Departments of provinces and centrally-run cities;*

*c/ Police organizations of rural districts, urban districts, provincial towns and provincially-run cities;*

*d/ Police organizations of communes, wards and townships.*

*2. Commune police organizations constitute a part-time armed force, playing the core role in "the entire population protects the Fatherland's security" movement and ensuring social security, order and safety at grassroots levels. They submit to the direct and comprehensive leadership of local Party Committees, the management and administration of commune People's Committees, and the professional direction and guidance of superior public security organizations.*

*The Law provides for the organization, operation, equipment, uniform, training, cultivation, regimes, and policies towards commune police organizations.*

*3. Basing oneself on the security and order requirements and within the ambit of his own tasks and powers, the Minister of Public Security shall decide on establishment of police stations and organizations as well as independent units to be disposed in necessary locations.*

**Appendix C -- List of incident reports submitted to UN mandate holders on gross violations of religious freedom committed by the police in Kon Tum Province**

**Summary of Cases**

- a. On March 11, 2015 Preacher A Dân (aka A Punh) of the Southern Baptist Church in Kon Tum led 11 church members from Kon Tum Province to a religious training program in Ho Chi Minh City. They just reached nearby Dak Lak Province when Dak Lak police stopped them, searched and confiscated their cash and Bibles. Police brought them back to Kon Tum Province and delivered them to police in that province. A Dân refused to sign a forced confession -- that they were trying to leave the country illegally. The other victims signed under pressure. Police released the others while detaining A Dân. The Kon Tum People's Court sentenced him to 24 months of imprisonment under the trumped up charge.
- b. On Apr 12, 2016, police interrogated two adherents of the Evangelical Church of Christ, A Trung and Pastor A Đảo (a Kon Tum Province resident), on their meeting with the ambassador-at-large for international religious freedom from the U.S. On June 15, 2016, when Pastor A Đảo led a prayer session at his home in Kon Tum, the government disrupted the prayer session several times while it was ongoing and arrested adherents after they left the session. Officers questioned those who were arrested on their religious activities.
- c. At about 7 pm, August 18, 2016, the police arrested Pastor A Đảo who was riding his motorcycle towards Gia Lai Province. After seizing his cell phone, they forced him to allow them to extract information on his human rights activities, including attending the ASEAN Conference on Religious Freedom (Aug. 1 - 2, 2016) and ASEAN Civil Society Conference and ASEAN People's Forum (Aug. 3 - 5, 2016), both held in Dili, East Timor. After several months of detention with torture to force him to confess, a court sentenced him to 5 years in prison. Prison police guards beat him frequently and his health is now quite poor, based on his family members information after they visited him in prison over the past 3 years.
- d. At approximately 3 p.m. on August 20, 2016, the government launched a crackdown involving approximately 80 individuals from several branches of the government of Gia Lai and Kon Tum Provinces, rapid response police (about 50 officers), Security Branch police, local government officials, border guards and a number of high ranking police officers of Gia Lai and Kon Tum Provinces. They confiscated a desktop computer, a laptop, and materials concerning freedom of religion and human rights from Pastor A Đảo's house in Sa Thay District, Kon Tum. Other perpetrators searched the homes of 2 other adherents of the Evangelical Church of Christ in Sa Thay District (Ms. Y Bech in Kram Village and Deacon A Hlum in Kluk Kloong Village).
- e. On November 9, 2016, police from Gia Lai and Kon Tum Provinces, and from Sa Thay District, and Ro Koi Commune invited evangelists to the offices of the People's Committee of Ro Koi Commune. The Church of Christ invitees were: A Trung, A Hlum, and A Viêi. **Preacher A Trung** had 3 interrogators who took turns to ask him about his Church of Christ activities. They reminded him that the government does not approve the Church and that they would do everything in their power to prevent groups from forming for religious worship. They claimed that FulRo expatriates were behind the Church. The afternoon session involved violence and abuses. As soon as they had brought him into the room, one man slapped him, saying that he was being stubborn and if he continued, the man would break his skull. **Preacher A Hlum** had 3 interrogators with him, one each from the police of Sa Thay District, Kon Tum Province, and Gia Lai Province. The interrogation's objective was identical to A Trung's interrogation. Then they



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gave A Hlum a form to sign whose content is committing to leave the Church of Christ. A Hlum took the form under pressure but did not sign. They said that he should choose and they were giving him time to think. The choices were:

- 1/ Recant the Church of Christ of Vietnam and they will permit him to live safely.
- 2/ Go to prison if he refused to leave his Church.

They said that they would invite him back to Sa Thay District in Kon Tum to continue the interrogation in the near future. **Preacher A Viei** had 3 interrogators. He was the leader of the Church of Christ in KRam Village in Ro Koi Commune. They interrogated him from 8:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m., and resumed the interrogation at 1:00 p.m. They used force and intimidation, including striking his face, pushing him around, banging on the desk, etc. as they tried to force him to recant his faith through 2 threats: imprisonment and heroin injection during his stay in prison. Thi went on until 5 p.m. Seeing that A Viei did not agree to recant his faith, they continued their intimidation efforts by driving him around within the commune, and then outside of the commune. The men sitting by his side slapped his face, roughed him up until he had to sign that commitment, which was not read to him.

- f. On January 20, 2017, Police in 3 Vietnamese provinces of Dak Lak, Kon Tum, and Gia Lai, continued to persecute, in a coordinated manner, members of the Evangelical Church of Christ in Ro Koi Commune in Kon Tum Province and the hamlets Jung and Tara in Dak Lak Province. Victims belong to ethnic minorities living in the Central Highlands. Persecution includes unreasonable interrogations focusing on religious activities and personal beliefs, followed by intimidation aimed at preventing victims' contacts with other Church adherents in Vietnam and other countries, or with international government/NGO personnel whose interests lie in human rights and religious freedom. Vietnamese government personnel used intimidation techniques such as threat of imprisonment, to force them to recant their faith and join another denomination that the government has approved. On Nov 16, 2016, they interrogated Y Bech (K'Ram Village), A Xa (Kluk Kloong Village), A Doan (K'Ram Village), and A Hluh (Kluk Kloong Village), all in Sa Thay District. On Nov 17, they interrogated Y Glen, Tara Hamlet resident (in Krong Pac District). On Nov 22, they interrogated Ksor Sun, Jung Hamlet resident (in Krong Pac District).
- g. Nov 2016 – Jan 2017, police officers at local, provincial and regional levels forced members of the Montagnard Evangelical Church of Christ in Dak Lak Province's Krong Pac District and Kon Tum Province's Sa Thay District to recant their faith. This occurred on November 28 and December 3-16, 2016. Colonel Vu Tien Dien, Deputy Director of Police Department, directly interrogated and ordered victims (A Trung, A Viei, A Hlum, and Y Bech ) to recant their faith.
- h. On March 13, 2015, when adherents of the Baptist Church in Sa Thay District, Kon Tum Province started on their trip to Ho Chi Minh City for religious studies, police in Dak Lak Province arrested and delivered them to police in Kon Tum Province for interrogation. They sent one of the adherents to prison under a false charge because he refused to admit guilt while the other victims yielded to police pressure and confessed to the false charge.
- i. In the 4th week of May 2017, Kon Tum Province police interrogated A Trung on 2 different days to force him to convert to a registered denomination under Communist control (“If you do not leave the Church of Christ, we will interrogate you many more times and may have you go to prison like A Đảo”).

**Appendix D – List of current religious prisoners of conscience among Montagnard Christians in Kon Tum Province**

1. Mr. A Dân (aka Apunh), preacher of the Southern Baptist Church in Kon Tum on March 11, 2015 led 11 church members from Kon Tum Province to a religious training program in Ho Chi Minh City. They just reached nearby Dak Lak Province when Dak Lak police stopped them, searched and confiscated their cash and Bibles. Police brought them back to Kon Tum Province and delivered them to police in that province. A Dân refused to sign a forced confession -- that they were trying to leave the country illegally. The other victims signed under pressure. Police released the others while detaining A Dân. The Kon Tum People's Court sentenced him to 24 months of imprisonment under the trumped up charge.
2. Mr. A Đảo: b. 1981. Residence: Gia Xieng Village, Ro Koi Commune, Sa Thay District, Kon Tum Province. A pastor of the Montagnard Evangelical Church of Christ, he advocated for religious freedom for his fellow church members in the Central Highlands and elsewhere. In August 2016 he attended a recent conference on Freedom of Religion in SE Asia and the ASEAN Civil Society Conference and ASEAN People's Forum. On 04/28/2017 he was sentenced to 5 years in prison for "helping individuals to escape abroad illegally", a charge he denied. He is incarcerated at Gia Trung Prison, Gia Lai Province.
3. Mr. A Quyn: b. 1973. Residence: Ha-mong Katu Hamlet, Ha-mong Commune, Dak Ha District, Kon Tum Province. He practiced his evangelical faith without government approval. He has been arrested and brought to the local police station for interrogation. The local authorities disrupted group worship sessions involving church members, prohibited future group worship, harassed his family, and brutally tortured him. Arrested on 11-18-2013, he was sentenced to 9 years and 6 months in prison pursuant to Article 87. He is currently in Nam Ha Prison in Ha Nam Province.
4. Mr. A Tach (Ba Hloi): b. 1959. Residence: Kon Hram Hamlet, Dak Tre Commune, Kon Ray District, Kon Tum Province. A Catholic preacher, he and many Christians in his village (where he was preaching) protested against the local government for its intervention in the Church's affairs. Fearing this would get out of control, the local government arrested Mr. A Tach on 10/11/2012 and sentenced him to 11 years in prison, followed by 3 years of probation. He is currently incarcerated at Team 23, Subdivision 1 of Prison #5, Thanh Hoa Province.
5. Mr. A Tík: b. 1952. Residence: Kon H'ram Hamlet, Dak To're Commune, Kon Ray District, Kon Tum Province. He was arrested and then on 04/26/2016 sentenced to 8 years in prison and 3 years of probation in a case involving 4 other Montagnard Christians. He was accused of undermining national unity under Article 87.
6. Mr. A Yum (Balk): b. 1940. Residence: Hamlet 5, Dac Tre Commune, Kon Ray District, Kon Tum Province. As a member of the Bahnar ethnic minority group, he had been advocating for religious freedom in the face of government suppression. As a result, he was arrested on 01/06/2012 and sentenced to 8 years in prison pursuant to Article 87.