

# Vietnam: New Documents Reveal Escalating Repression

## *A Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper*

Human Rights Watch has received credible first-hand reports of an escalation of repression by Vietnamese authorities against the ethnic minorities known as Montagnards in Vietnam's Central Highlands.<sup>1</sup> Human rights violations have continued unabated since protests for land rights and religious freedom began in February 2001.

In addition, dozens and perhaps hundreds of Montagnards have tried and failed to obtain protection and asylum from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Cambodia. Since the beginning of this year, more than 100 Montagnards have been forcibly returned from Cambodia to Vietnam.

According to investigations by Human Rights Watch and official Vietnamese sources, more than seventy Montagnards have been sentenced to prison in Vietnam for participating in protests or trying to flee to Cambodia since February 2001.<sup>2</sup> The Cambodian government announced in early April that it will close the refugee transit center operated by UNHCR in Phnom Penh as soon as the final forty-two refugees are resettled. With the two provincial refugee camps operated by UNHCR closed since April 2002, this seriously undermines UNHCR's ability to protect and screen new Montagnard asylum seekers.

This briefing paper provides an overview of events through March 2003, specific recommendations to Vietnamese, Cambodian, and U.N. officials involved with the issue, and, in an attached appendix, English translations of previously unavailable documents: six hand-written Montagnard testimonies on the crackdown and two Vietnamese government directives, the contents of which are summarized below.

### *New Government Directives*

Human Rights Watch has obtained original copies of official government documents issued in February 2003, detailing ceremonies in which Montagnard villagers are forced to "Swear Brotherhood" (*le ket nghia*) with local party cadres in front of pictures of Ho Chi Minh. In addition, local officials are instructed to "coordinate activities with hamlet and village heads, the [Vietnamese Communist Party] Fatherland Front, and all departments to, step by step, eradicate out-dated and backward ways, and eradicate all illegal religious organizations..."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The indigenous Montagnards include several different ethnic groups, including Mnong, Ede, Jarai, Koho, and Bahnar.

<sup>2</sup> For a listing of the Montagnard political prisoners, see: "New Assault on Rights in Vietnam's Central Highlands: Crackdown on Indigenous Montagnards Intensifies," Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, January 2003.

<sup>3</sup> "The Plan: Swearing brotherhood between all government organizations and units with all hamlets and villages in the district," Communist Party of Vietnam, Party Office of Dak Lak, Dak Song District, No 14 – KH/HU, February 12, 2003. For English translation of the documents, see Appendix 8. Vietnamese language document on file at Human Rights Watch.

This latest initiative is consistent with other efforts by Vietnamese government and party officials over the last two years to rein in the “restive” highlanders—whether it be by force (arrests and detention) or coercive ceremonies that require Montagnards to renounce Christianity and swear allegiance to the government and the party. The “swearing brotherhood” ceremonies appear to be an effort to implement the decision of the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) in January 2003 to “better manage religion” and achieve the goal of “great national unity”—perceived as the solution to the problems of land, religion, and ethnicity highlighted at the January party congress.

Human Rights Watch has received reports that loyalty/religious renunciation ceremonies have taken place since the beginning of 2003 in many parts of the Central Highlands, including Ea H’leo (January), Ea Sup (February), and Dak Song (February) districts of Dak Lak. One government document obtained by Human Rights Watch lists twenty-two villages in four communes in Dak Song District, Dak Lak where the ceremony is to take place and provides instructions for how the official program is to be organized.

### ***Continued Repression in the Central Highlands***

To enforce the new directives, in February 2003 the Vietnamese government launched a fresh round of arrests of Montagnard Christians as well as those suspected by the government of wanting to flee to Cambodia or of supporting the U.S.-based Montagnard Foundation, Inc. (MFI), an indigenous rights organization led by Jarai-American Kok Ksor. This followed a wave of arrests and church closures at the end of 2002.

Among the arrests carried out in February in Gia Lai province, Vietnam were fifteen people in Cu Se district, four people in Chu Pah district and two people in Ia Grai district.<sup>4</sup> In Kontum and Gia Lai, leaders of the Mennonite Evangelical Church of the Central Highlands have been beaten and detained.<sup>5</sup> Authorities have closed down church services, ransacked church leaders’ homes, and confiscated Bibles and church workers’ belongings. Officials have withheld or threatened to confiscate family registration documents from Christians and demanded that they cease holding religious services in their homes.

Nine letters written by Mnong church leaders in Dak Lak detail ongoing human rights violations up to the end of February 2003. The violations described in these letters include beatings of church leaders by police and other officials, destruction of churches, official prohibitions on nighttime gatherings and travel outside of villages unless written permission is obtained, and widespread confiscation of villagers’ farm land by authorities.

In one letter a Mnong church leader describes being ordered numerous times for interrogation by commune and district police about church activities. On January 22, he was punched in the head three times during interrogation by a police captain, who threatened that the man would be killed if church members continued meeting together. The next day he was summoned to the police

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<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Watch interview with source in Vietnam, April 2003.

<sup>5</sup> “Urgent Declaration” from a Christian church leader in the Central Highlands, dated February 22, 2003, describing recent incidents in Kontum and Gia Lai. Translation of Vietnamese language document on file at Human Rights Watch.

station again until 10 p.m. The police officers confiscated his Bible and hymnal and pointed a gun at his head, again threatening him with death if church gatherings did not cease.

On February 9, a district policeman came to his house and pointed a gun at him. “All my family was afraid and crying,” the church leader wrote. “The policeman ransacked the church and ordered me to forsake the faith. I said it would be better if he shot me dead in my house.”<sup>6</sup>

Human Rights Watch has collected forty-nine reports from ethnic Ede churches in Dak Lak from December 2002 and January 2003 detailing ongoing persecution of minority Christians and the disbanding of Christian churches in Dak N’Drung, Bu Dak, Dak Gan, Drai Hling, Dak Rla, Buon Rvah, Bu Dop, Bu Bong Leng, Buon Ea Rok, Buon Ca Do Hruc, Bu Prang, Dak R’Lap, Dak Sak, Bu N’Drung, Dak Mleh Buon Kwang, Buon Ea Sup, Buon Poc, and Buon Trun.

Human Rights Watch has also received original copies of dozens of official summonses by police and district officials for prominent Mnong and Ede Christian leaders. One packet includes twelve police summonses for a prominent Mnong pastor, calling him to answer for his religious activities from 1992 to the present. Another packet of documents includes seven summonses for another Mnong pastor from 1992 to the present, as well as an official order to demolish a Christian chapel.

Other incidents detailed in documents smuggled out of the Central Highlands in February and March 2003, translated by Human Rights Watch, include:

- The Vietnamese government has confiscated land upon which the Montagnards had planted coffee, fruit trees, vegetables, rice, and other crops. In February 2003, for example, Vietnamese officials bulldozed three kilometers of land in the village of Puk Saw, Dak Lak, a village of 1,000 people where the Mnong had planted coffee, cashews, fruit trees, and rice. Human Rights Watch has obtained hand-drawn sketch maps and photographs of the bulldozed land.
- Officials are forcing Montagnards to sign “voluntary” papers pledging to withdraw petitions opposing government confiscation of their land.<sup>7</sup>
- Vietnamese authorities have destroyed Christian churches. Authorities have used chain saws to destroy the three churches in Puk Saw, Bu Prang, Dak Bu Sao, and Dak Rung in Dak Lak province.
- Vietnamese authorities and local police have beaten church leaders and suspected MFI activists. On January 22, 2003, police officers beat and detained the pastor of Jang Plei church in Dak Lak, causing him to lose his hearing in the ear where he was hit. Police also shot and wounded the son of a pastor from Puk Saw. On January 23, civilians thought to be acting on behalf of local officials beat a Mennonite church worker in Phu Trung village, Sa Thay district, Kontum. On February 19, district security police ransacked the home of a Mennonite church leader in Phu Ka Ling village, Sa Thay district, Kontum, after confiscating his motorcycle without stating a reason.

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<sup>6</sup> For English-language translation of the Mnong document, written in late February 2003, see Appendix 6. Original handwritten Mnong document on file at Human Rights Watch.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 4. Letters and photographs from Montagnards in Ayunpa district, Gia Lai who have been forced to sign such petitions, dated February 2003, on file at Human Rights Watch.

- On March 26, security police and soldiers shot at a group of Jarai who had gone into hiding in the forest in Dak Doa district, Gia Lai. Five people escaped, but two men were wounded and taken to the commune center, where one of the men, Suoc, later died. When his body was returned to his family, his skull had been severely crushed, apparently from additional beatings by security officers at the commune center. The whereabouts of the other man taken into custody, Hwi (Huy), are unknown. A third Jarai man named Ly was arrested and beaten on March 27, but then allowed to return to his village.<sup>8</sup>
- Vietnamese authorities, including village officials, have imposed restrictions on the freedom of movement of minority Christians. Villagers are not allowed to visit each other's houses during the night. Police are also posted in outlying forests to bar Montagnards from leaving their villages unless they have written permission.
- In violation of article 18.2 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Vietnam is a party, Vietnamese authorities have imposed individualized coercive practices that impair freedom of religion for Christian minorities. For example, police officers are posted inside Christian homes at night, to monitor the activities of Christian families, thereby preventing them from freely observing their religion in their homes.

### ***Failure of Cambodia and UNHCR to Offer Protection to Fleeing Refugees***

Recent repression by Vietnamese authorities has resulted in a new flow of Montagnards seeking asylum in Cambodia. During the first week in February, eighty-six Montagnards crossed the border from Cu Se district, Gia Lai, to Cambodia, where they were arrested by Cambodian security officials and forcibly returned to Vietnam. Some of the group remained in detention as of April.<sup>9</sup>

On February 6, ten Montagnards were arrested near the border of Mondolkiri and Kratie provinces in Cambodia, apparently attempting to make their way to Phnom Penh. They were forcibly returned to Vietnam by Cambodian security officials. This followed the arrest and forcible return to Vietnam of two groups of Montagnards, totaling approximately eighty people, in January.

Human Rights Watch has documented the fact that upon return, many Montagnard asylum seekers are beaten, detained, or sentenced to lengthy prison terms. At least seventeen Montagnards are currently serving prison sentences of up to ten years after being forcibly returned from Cambodia to Vietnam, or for attempting to flee to Cambodia.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, border patrols have been reinforced on both sides of the international boundary. Additional security forces have been posted in minority villages in Vietnam, where officials are systematically pressuring Montagnards to renounce Christianity and pledge not to gather in

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<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Watch interviews with sources in Vietnam and Greensboro, North Carolina, April 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Human Rights Watch interviews with sources in Gia Lai, Vietnam and Mondolkiri, Cambodia, March and April 2003.

<sup>10</sup> For details on Montagnard political prisoners see "New Assault on Rights in Vietnam's Central Highlands: Crackdown on Indigenous Montagnards Intensifies," Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper, January 2003. Torture of Montagnards forcibly returned from Cambodia to Vietnam is extensively documented in Human Rights Watch, *Repression of Montagnards: Conflicts over Land and Religion in Vietnam's Central Highlands*, (New York: April 2002.)

groups or participate in demonstrations. On the Cambodian side of the border, subdecree 124, implemented in March, calls for the deployment of an additional 600 police officers along the border.

In March, Human Rights Watch received a handwritten list of the names of 439 ethnic Muong Christian families (1,206 people) from Dak Song district, Dak Lak province, Vietnam who are requesting international protection in Cambodia. This request was made on thirty-four signed and thumbprinted sheets of paper, which were smuggled across the border to Cambodia in March 2003. "Please have pity for us and rescue the Christian believers and help us receive back our ancestral lands," one of the petitions states. "Only those who have been persecuted have agreed to give their fingerprints below."

Human Rights Watch has also obtained a list of the names of twenty-five Montagnards who have been hiding in the forest in Cambodia since December 2002. "We lack food and medicine," the letter, dated March 22, states. "If you have the heart to help us, please help us otherwise we will die."

### ***Recommendations***

Human Rights Watch recommends that UNHCR in Geneva and Phnom Penh, and embassies in Hanoi and Phnom Penh immediately take the following actions:

1. Insist that the Vietnamese government immediately cease the persistent human rights violations and persecution of Montagnards in the Central Highlands.
2. Urge the Vietnamese government to publish a central registry of all Montagnards held in pretrial detention, and a list of all those convicted and sentenced for peacefully expressing their views or attempting to seek asylum abroad.
3. Inquire about the status and conditions of persons included in the partial list published by Human Rights Watch in January 2003 of seventy Montagnards currently known to be in prison because of their political or religious beliefs.
4. Press the Vietnamese government to allow unfettered U.N. access to the Central Highlands at the annual meeting of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in April 2003.
5. Press Vietnam to invite the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which visited Vietnam in 1994, and the U.N. Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, who visited Vietnam in 1998, for follow-up visits, with unrestricted access to the Central Highlands.
6. Remind the Cambodian government of its obligations under the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees not to return refugees to a place where their lives or freedom are under threat, which is a norm of customary law and the cornerstone of refugee protection.
7. Request the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Human Rights in Cambodia to address the treatment of asylum seekers in Cambodia, including the issue of refoulement of Vietnamese refugees, in his next report.
8. Press the Cambodian government to authorize UNHCR to immediately establish a field presence in Mondolkiri and Ratanakiri provinces, re-open the provincial refugee camps, maintain the refugee transit center in Phnom Penh, and provide protection and assistance to refugees from Vietnam.

9. Offer technical assistance to Cambodian border officials and police on refugee protection standards, and the fundamental norm of nonrefoulement.

Translations of some of the Vietnamese government documents and Mnong, Jarai and Ede accounts are attached.

***Appendix 1: Handwritten letter written in Mnong, which accompanied the list of 1,206 Mnong requesting international protection and assistance<sup>11</sup>***

CHURCH at “A” VILLAGE,<sup>12</sup> DAK RLAP  
February 2003

This concerns three of us brothers who keep the membership roll for all of the Dak Rlap area. Our names are: [names withheld to protect their security].

1. We have asked the authorities to help us three people. We have come here [to Cambodia] two times already to try to get help. The first time was 5 Feb 2003, the second time 21 February 2003.

2. We again tell you, brothers in high places, the difficulties we are facing:

- We are forbidden to follow our religion or worship together even at home.
- There is no land left for us to farm at all.
- When we cut trees to build houses, they shoot at us.

We want to ask you pastors to pray much for us three brothers, and that we may live in peace and have a good life and receive clear guidance in this matter. We don't ask for anything other than your prayers to God to help us.

May the Lord give peace in [smudged].

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***Appendix 2: Handwritten letter written in Mnong<sup>13</sup>***

“B”<sup>14</sup> CHURCH

February 2003

Writing of religious persecution.

1. An accurate account of the actual situation from 05 Dec 2002 to 23 Feb 2003.

The commune government continues to persecute us for our faith. In “B” village on 16 Dec 2002 the pastor, church elder and church officers were ordered to disband the church. They forced the church leaders to write a letter stating that those who followed this religion were wrong and were following the bad religion. They consider our faith to be an offense against them.

2. As a result, the church is being severely persecuted and the church committee forced to disband. We can no longer meet or [unclear]. They say our faith is illegal. So we are full of sadness and without peace.

3. When we construct houses or make our farms, they confiscate our axes and machetes that we use to cut trees. When they see us cutting trees they shoot guns [in the air] and confiscate our tools.

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<sup>11</sup> Mnong language document on file at Human Rights Watch.

<sup>12</sup> Name and specific location of church and church leaders withheld to protect security of petitioners.

<sup>13</sup> Mnong language document on file at Human Rights Watch.

<sup>14</sup> Name and specific location of church withheld to protect security of petitioners.

These are the true facts at “B” church. Thank you.

Those who are persecuting the church are the commune and district authorities of “X” district:

[List of VCP and public security officials follows, as well as the names of provincial secret security police.]

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***Appendix 3: Handwritten letter written in Mnong<sup>15</sup>***

**Letter telling of troubles that have come to us here.**

I, “M”<sup>16</sup>, am the leader of the church at “X” village.<sup>17</sup> I want to let you brothers there know about the severe troubles that are being inflicted on us because of the faith. We are not accepted as workers for the Lord, as lay or ordained preachers. Please, foreign brothers, be concerned about us quickly in this matter. We can no longer take this mistreatment and persecution because of our faith. They say, "Everything you do is wrong."

The most recent thing they did in Dak Rlap district from October to December 2002 is that they want to get rid of all church leaders—lay or ordained preachers, church elders, every officer in the church.

What they say is as follows:

- The faith is wrong.
- Electing leaders of the church is wrong.
- Erecting churches is wrong.
- Giving money in the church is wrong.
- Considering oneself to be a believer is wrong.
- They say that the *Tin Lanh* [evangelical Christian] faith is wrong religion; it is the American and French faith.
- Assembling in large numbers is wrong.

In all this severe persecution of us here, please, brothers higher up, as well as foreigners, be concerned about us quickly. Don't delay in what you do. Set the time and let us know whether to sit or stand.

I am attaching the following:

- A letter of summons.
- A letter announcing a fine for illegal assembly.
- A letter ordering the destruction of a church.

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<sup>15</sup> Mnong language document on file at Human Rights Watch.

<sup>16</sup> Name withheld to protect security of petitioner.

<sup>17</sup> Name of village withheld to protect security of petitioner. The village is located in Dak Rlap district, Dak Lak.

There have been many letters of summons, but we did not keep them, we returned them. We want you, our brothers, to know this. We are not just talking.

Finally we ask our brothers who work for the Lord to pray much for us here. Thank you.

May God the Father be with you.

[Signed]

The writer: "M"

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***Appendix 4: Official Pledge to "Voluntarily" Withdraw Complaint about Recovering Confiscated Land***<sup>18</sup>

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Independence – Freedom – Happiness

PLEDGE

To: People's Committee of "P" Commune  
My name: [withheld to protect petitioner's security]  
Current Residence: "S" Village, "P" Commune, Ayunpa District, Gia Lai Province

My family used to farm the land in what is now called "N" Commune—I'm not sure how much land. In 1992 the government took the land to make communal rice fields, mulberry plantations, etc. We donated our land and did not receive a single penny in compensation. I have heard recently that a number of families have made a petition and sent it to the commune people's committee asking for the return of the land previously donated.

I have now been instructed about the rights and wrongs of the law, and see that making this petition was wrong. So we voluntarily withdraw this petition and won't sue any more, and promise that we will no longer demand the land we donated to the government. If we don't abide by this promise, we accept the full consequences of the law.

"P" Commune  
February 20, 2003

Maker of pledge:

[Thumbprint and petitioner's name]

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<sup>18</sup> Vietnamese-language document on file at Human Rights Watch.

***Appendix 5: Handwritten letter written Mnong<sup>19</sup>***

**The church at “X” village.<sup>20</sup> A report on the persecution of believers.**

This is what is happening.

1. The government summoned the preacher and church leaders to the commune office on 18 Dec 2002. They forced the preachers and leaders of the “Y” church to scatter and destroy all the work of the church. To this day they no longer allow celebration of the birth of Jesus.
2. They summoned the preacher “M” on 19 Dec 2002 and scolded the poor man from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
3. They destroyed the place where a person stands to preach and damaged the door of the church. They said that the American and French religion is wrong, and that we are not allowed to preach or sing or assemble. There were a lot of other things.
  - The one who watches all the time until now is the policeman named “D”.
  - Because of this oppression, believers and the population are discouraged and are scattering like chicks without a mother hen.

We ask people in positions higher up to be concerned about the people of the church. Meanwhile we are waiting.

4 Mar 2003. The secretaries of the church at “Y” village [names follow].

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***Appendix 6: Handwritten letter written Mnong<sup>21</sup>***

February 2003

WE WHO MEET TOGETHER IN 22 CHURCHES IN THE DAK RLAP AREA  
are living in difficulty:

1. The government does not allow us to worship and forces the Christians to write letters promising to disband all the church committees for every church.
2. Forestry officials don’t allow us to cut trees to make our houses and shoot at us with guns.
3. When we cut trees or branches to make our fields, they confiscate all our machetes, axes, and hoes. Our village people have no more peace or well-being.
4. The land we inherited of old from our ancestors. The Vietnamese are destroying our land and mistreating us. When we complain, they won't listen. They oppress us. Soldiers live in every one of our houses.

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<sup>19</sup> Mnong language document, obtained by Human Rights Watch in early March 2003, on file at Human Rights Watch.

<sup>20</sup> Document refers to the same village as in Appendix 3. Name of village and church leaders withheld to protect security of petitioners.

<sup>21</sup> Mnong language document, obtained by Human Rights Watch in early March 2003, on file at Human Rights Watch.

5. Our desire for education. They won't let us learn. They don't allow us to be educated or to learn about the good fortune of the [people in power.]
6. The relationship between the Mnong and them continues to be unequal. For this reason we are full of worry, sadness and fear.

We want to convey this important information to the upper authorities and the international community. Please pray much for our people living in great difficulty.

Please brothers receive this message here as the truth. Thank you very much.

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***Appendix 7: Handwritten letter written Mnong<sup>22</sup>***

**Government persecution of the church at “N” village<sup>23</sup> [Dak Song district, Dak Lak]**

1. 23 Dec 2002. I was summoned the first time to the commune office. They summoned me because of our faith. He said, "Others made you believe. We don't allow you to assemble."
2. 22 Jan 2003. A policeman of the Dak Song district summoned me and questioned me again. He said, "You are the treasurer of the church at “N” village. How much do the believers give you in the offering? You need to follow the government law. You are wrong before the government. We will fine you from 500 to one million dong. Or if we find you assembling, we will kill you on the spot."
3. 23 Jan 2003. He summoned me again to the commune office. There were many who interrogated me: a Lt Col and a Capt [names withheld]. Then another Capt and a 1<sup>st</sup> Lt [names withheld] told one of our own people to interrogate me. They only talked about our faith. At the end they said, "If you persist in the faith and don't stop assembling, if we catch you, you will die. We have warned you."
4. On 9 Feb 2003. A policeman came to my house and pointed a gun at me as if to shoot me in my own house. All my family was afraid and crying. He was a policeman for the Dak Song district. He damaged the church and ordered me to forsake the faith. I said it would be better if he shot me dead in my house.

I greet you brothers. When this letter with my report arrives, please pray for me. Tell my troubles to “MB” of “N” church.

**Trouble at the church at “N” village.** On 22 Jan 2003 I was summoned to the Dak Song district office. My interrogator Capt [name] hit me three times. To this day my ear is still deaf. On 23 Jan 2003 a policeman summoned me to the commune office. I was there until 10 at night. They took away my hymnal and Bible, and they even pointed a gun at my head.

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<sup>22</sup> Mnong language document, obtained by Human Rights Watch in early March 2003, on file at Human Rights Watch.

<sup>23</sup> Name and specific location of church and church leaders withheld to protect security of petitioners.

*Appendix 8: Directions re: organizing the swearing brotherhood ceremony*<sup>24</sup>

Dak Song District  
**Organizing Committee**

**Communist Party of Vietnam**  
Dak Song, 12 February 2003

No 44-HD/BTC

**DIRECTIONS**

**Re: organizing the swearing brotherhood ceremony**

The implementation of no. 14-KH/HU, of 12-02-03 of the Standing Committee of the District concerning the matter of swearing brotherhood between all (government) organizations and units with all hamlets and villages in the district.

In order to standardize the contents, program, representation, schedule and budget, the Standing Committee of the District, and the Organizing Office of Labor and Social Welfare of the District, give the following directions for organizing the swearing brotherhood ceremonies:

**I/ Contents of the program**

	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Implementing Agency</b>
1	Announcing the reasons and introducing representatives	Peoples Committee or Fatherland Front of the commune
2	Read the swearing brotherhood oath, signing it and swearing brotherhood.	Organization assigned responsibility
3	Remarks of high authorities (if present)	
4	Remarks of hamlet and village elders	
5	Giving souvenir gifts (if available)	Organization assigned responsibility
6	Traditional culture and drinking rice wine (if available)	

**II/ Participants**

- **From the commune invite:** the Fatherland Front, the Party Secretary, the chairman of the Peoples Committee, leaders and deputy leaders and elders of the hamlet or village, heads of all (government) commune organizations, and those responsible for mass organizations in the hamlet or village.
- **From the District invite:** Representative of the (Party) Standing Committee, Peoples Committee, the people in charge of the area, all committees that mobilize for the Party, all other district offices and committees, the Fatherland Front, all mobile propaganda teams.

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<sup>24</sup> Vietnamese-language document on file at Human Rights Watch.

- Representatives of the particular organization that has responsibility for the ceremony in the location.

**III/ Scheduling times, means of transportation, and budget**

- Timing: Organize it in the evening (after 7:00 p.m.). The precise time to be proposed by the organization responsible for each ceremony, and approved by the Peoples Committee of the respective hamlet or village and reported to the Party representative and the District Party office, and the District People’s Committee so that there the work can be delegated and direction given.
- Location: The People’s Committee has the responsibility to prepare the location, and to announce to all cadre and citizens of the hamlet or village the time they must come to the ceremony, and the People’s Committee must decorate the place where the swearing brotherhood ceremony will be held.
- Means of transportation: The organization given responsibility for each ceremony must take care of this on their own, or communicate with district Party and district People’s Committee to make appropriate arrangements.
- The budget: Recommended that the organization given responsibility for the swearing brotherhood ceremony contribute from their salary of the CBCNV of their respective unit, or take it from the welfare fund (if available).

The district People’s Committee will support each hamlet or village in the amount of 200,000 VN dong to prepare for the swearing brotherhood ceremony.

- Concerning decorations:
  - + In the center hoist a flag and hang a picture of Uncle Ho
    - + On the right, hang a banner with the name of the village in front of “Swearing Brotherhood Ceremony.
    - + On each side hang the mottos:
      - 1/ “Citizens Unite to Build our Livelihood and Culture”
      - 2/ “Live and Work According to the Constitution and the Law”

Above are some of the basic regulations for the ceremony in which all government organizations and units will swear brotherhood with all hamlets and villages in the district.

Using the basis of this direction, all units should mobilize and organize solemn ceremonies to bring positive practical results.

Copied to:

- the organizations given the responsibility to organize (the ceremony)
- People’s Committee of each commune
- hamlet, village where ceremony will be held.
- Office files

**HEAD OF COMMITTEE**

seal of the CPVN organizing committee of Dak Song District, Dak Lak Province.

signed

**Pham Dinh Bo**

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*Appendix 9: The Plan: Swearing brotherhood*<sup>25</sup>

PARTY OFFICE OF DAK LAK  
DAK SONG DISTRICT

COMMUNIST PARTY OF VIETNAM  
Dak Song, 12 February 2003

No 14 – KH/HU

**THE PLAN**  
**Swearing brotherhood between all government**  
**organizations and units with all hamlets and villages**  
**in the district**

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**I/ The objectives/goals**

The policy of swearing brotherhood between all economic and social organizations with all the hamlets and villages of the minority peoples is for the purpose of strengthening the blood and bone relationship between cadre and Party members with the citizens, striving to get closed to the people, understand them better, and make the citizens more willing to believe and follow us. On the basis of helping the citizens change their way of agriculture and raising animals, in order to have plan for making a living, and appropriate consumption/spending in the family; also to develop the economy, culture and society, and to preserve and bring into greater play traditions of the minority peoples into the greater community of Vietnam.

In order to implement the decisions of the 5<sup>th</sup> term, 9<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee, and fulfill our political responsibilities in the new conditions, the Standing Committee of the District Party Organization, requests all production units and businesses and all administrative units of non-productive agencies in the area, and the Fatherland Front of the District, all mass organizations, all departments of the People's Committee of the district, to have a plan to properly implement, with good results, the swearing of brotherhood with all hamlets and villages (as assigned responsibility by the district).

The matter of swearing of brotherhood with the hamlets and villages of the minority peoples is an activity that carries a lot of practical potential. Therefore, all units that are assigned the responsibility of swearing brotherhood, must clearly understand their responsibilities toward the hamlets and villages, and have a plan to help the citizens in the villages, both in terms of morale and material things, and consider the importance of unity with the minority people. All units or organization which have been assigned responsibilities in this regard, must very soon contact the Party and the government officials of the communes, and cadre of the hamlets and villages, in order to organize solemn swearing brotherhood ceremonies that will have good practical results, and avoid the appearance of showing off and wastefulness.

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<sup>25</sup> Vietnamese-language document on file at Human Rights Watch.

## **II/ The responsibilities of the various (government) units, hamlets and villages in the swearing of brotherhood.**

### **1/ In regard to (government) organizations and units that have been assigned the responsibility of swearing brotherhood:**

Coordinate with Party officials, the government, the Fatherland Front and those units that hold the responsibility of transforming the attitudes of the cadre, and the citizens of the hamlets and villages to swear brotherhood. At the same time, thoroughly propagandize the policies of the Party, and the laws of the State; organizing and implementing in a good way the policy of democracy at the grassroots level (according to Decree No. 29 – ND/CP), and publicizing in a good way the right of ownership of the citizens; leading the citizens to accept in the supervision and management of the State, the management of the cadre, and to build the political infrastructure to be strong and transparent.

Have a tight grasp of all social policies, especially for those families that have something against the revolution. Have our staff promote our policies, and create inspired cadre. Make it your project to train and arrange to use cadre of all the hamlets and villages in an appropriate and practical ways. Positively implement Instruction 19-CT/TU of the Provincial Standing Committee of the Party about training and assigning cadre of the minority groups where they live.

Help the people in the business of changing their way of planting and caring for domestic animals that is better suited to nature and conditions of the local soil, develop the economy and society in order to meet the needs for livelihood, and provide education for the people, build up the technical infrastructure, and strongly promote the mechanization/industrialization of agriculture in the countryside.

Coordinate activities with hamlet and village heads, the Fatherland Front, and all departments to, step by step, eradicate out-dated and backward ways, and eradicate all illegal religious organizations; preserve and respect the traditional culture of the minority groups. Work with care to build up an enlightened life, and an attitude that is daily transformed in understanding, and strongly promote the mobilization program, “All people unite, and build an enlightened culture”. Implement the population plan, and family planning, and look after and protect young children. Attach utmost importance to mobilizing the people to implement the religion and ethnic minority policy in a right way. Lead in extending the national program of fighting criminality.

Always care for the lives of the people, and provide guidance in how to spend and consume in a planned way; help the people reduce poverty, and to rapidly develop the economy; give guidance to all mass organizations to participate in ways to properly manage common economic resources.

Line up the core cadre and bring them from the hamlet, and village to the commune, and give them the information they need, and the work they must do with the leaders and local officials. At the same time coordinate with Party leaders, the Fatherland Front, and mass organizations to promote the work of building the Party, and create inspired people that you can introduce to the Party to build up the membership of the Communist Party of Vietnam; and properly implement Instruction 14-CT/TU, striving for the objective that by the year 2005 all hamlets and villages that we are responsible for will have a Party cell or team.

Participate in building up the government, the Fatherland Front, and strong all-inclusive mass organizations. Guide and simultaneously mobilize all political organizations, and hamlet and village cells, and bring into full play your responsibilities for the people.

Assign one or two cadre to regularly call on and be close to the cadre in the hamlets and villages so you can ascertain the situation, and properly implement your responsibilities as outlined above; regularly attend the meetings of the people in each hamlet and village, and all meetings of the Party, local government and mass organizations. Every month report to your leaders and superiors (through the Policy Branch), in order to help the Standing Committee lead and direct in a timely manner.

## **2/ In regard to the hamlets and villages**

Cadre of the hamlets, villages, the Fatherland Front and the mass organizations of the hamlets and villages, and all cadre of the commune level are responsible to coordinate with economic and social organizations in the spirit of brotherhood, to put forward ideas and in a coordinated way solve the actual problems which may arise in a hamlet of village.

Provide whatever is needed for the cadre in charge of each hamlet or village and have a clear grasp of the people's material and moral welfare, the economy, and social affairs of each hamlet and village.

Provide a place to live and eat, and transportation (if available) for the cadre, and announce the meetings of the cadre, of the people of the hamlets and villages, in order to set a time and determine the agenda of the meeting.

## **III/ Plan for organizing and implementing:**

### **1/ Regarding those organizations or units that have had the swearing brotherhood ceremony assigned to them.**

When the announcement of the assignment is received, the head of the organization or unit needs to contact the leaders and government officials of the hamlet or village, to tell them in order to make a plan to organize the swearing brotherhood ceremony (between now and 1 March 2003). In the hamlets and villages that have a

many organization and units to assign swearing brotherhood responsibilities to, the Party comrades of the Standing Committee or the district Party members of the respective organizations, will take responsibility for leadership, and decide who will represent the respective organizations in signing the brotherhood oath, and accept the chief responsibility for making the plan, and for organizing the delegation of responsibility among the various unit and their personnel; and uniting with the Party organization and the government concerning the appearance, the schedule, the contents and the actual program during the swearing brotherhood ceremony.

We have a plan for delegating cadre who are responsible for each hamlet and village – to organize the actual program and plan, and the time of working with each hamlet and village designated to have a swearing brotherhood ceremony. Send the final program and plan of implementation to the Policy Committee and the District Organizing Committee before 25 February 2003.

Prepare a semi-annual report, and an annual report, and consider this a political responsibility of your unit, which will be considered in the annual evaluation of the quality of the work of your unit.

## **2/ Regarding all the TCCS of the Party, the government, the Fatherland Front and all mass organizations:**

Coordinate carefully, and provide whatever is necessary for the organizations which have been assigned the swearing brotherhood ceremony; meet with the hamlet and village cadre; introduce the hamlet and village cadre to the to the cadre of the organizations responsible (for the ceremony); organize things in a friendly and open manner . . .

Set a time and location, decorate (the venue) and prepare the contents and agenda for the swearing brotherhood ceremony for the units who have had this delegated to them. The swearing brotherhood ceremony must be held by 1 March 2003.

## **3/ Regarding District level, the People's Committee of the District, and other concerned departments.**

Set the time, and arrange transportation, and provide what is necessary to departments, committees and units, so they can implement the responsibilities assigned them in a good manner.

Make a report of the information, and the leaders, and the direction, getting a good read on those units that are not completely fulfilling their responsibilities in the swearing brotherhood business.

It is assigned to all committees responsible for building up the Party, and the various departments and committees of the District People's Committee to evaluate, supervise and speed up the work of all units who have been assigned the swearing of brotherhood

with the hamlets and villages, and to solve whatever problems come up according to their rank and authority assigned to them.

There must be an annual report, to gain from our experiences and contribute to the annual year-end evaluation of building up the Party.

Copied to:

- all d/c HUV (who follow up the leadership of this program)
- all organizations who have been delegated responsibility for implementing
- TCCS of the Party in each commune (for implementing)
- People's Committee of each commune (for implementing)
- Hamlets and villages in the district
- All units working with VDQC (for organizing coordination)
- Office file

**ON BEHALF OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

Seal of Dak Song District Communist Party  
and signature of the Party Secretary

**Vo Nhac An**