

New Assault on Rights in Vietnam's Central Highlands *Crackdown on Indigenous Montagnards Intensifies*

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The Vietnamese government has launched a harsh new crackdown against members of indigenous minorities in Vietnam's Central Highlands, especially evangelical Christians and land rights advocates, according to recent eyewitness accounts, confidential Vietnamese government directives, and citizen complaint petitions obtained by Human Rights Watch.

More than 200 highlanders have been detained and as many as seventy people are currently serving lengthy prison sentences in conjunction with unprecedented peaceful protests for land rights and religious freedom that broke out in the Central Highlands provinces of Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Kontum and Lam Dong in February 2001.¹ At least seventy highlanders have disappeared or gone into hiding in Vietnam. The Vietnamese government has targeted for interrogation and arrest highlanders thought to have participated in the 2001 demonstrations, as well as Christian church leaders and people who have attempted to flee to neighboring Cambodia.

Public directives by government ministries, news articles in the state-controlled press, and internal Vietnamese Communist Party documents demonstrate an official campaign against the "Dega Protestantism" followed by many indigenous minorities in the Central Highlands, against Christians in general, as well as against highlanders perceived to support the movement for land rights and religious freedom.

Unprecedented letters of complaint about the repression of minority Christians in the Central Highlands, submitted to the Vietnamese government by the officially-recognized Evangelical Church of Vietnam, South (ECVNS), appear to have had little effect.²

The government's latest crackdown in the Central Highlands peaked in December 2002, when authorities arrested or detained dozens of highlanders and banned Christmas church services in order to prevent minority Christians from gathering. Six highlanders were detained during the third week in December in Krong Ana and Cu Jut districts, Dak Lak, during Christmas prayer services, while another eight were taken into custody as they were attempting to cross the border to Cambodia. Villagers throughout the Central Highlands were warned they would face fines and even imprisonment if they organized Christmas services. In many areas authorities banned gatherings of four or more people.

On Christmas day the Dak Lak Provincial People's Court handed down lengthy prison sentences to eight highlanders who had been forcibly deported from Cambodia after attempting to reach a

¹ See appendix, List of Montagnard Political Prisoners, page 16.

² The Vietnamese government recognizes only religious organizations that have been approved by the Vietnamese Communist Party's Fatherland Front. The Evangelical Church of Vietnam, South received official recognition in February 2001.

refugee camp there. They were convicted on charges of “illegal migration” and opposing the policy of state and party unity.³

The arrests have continued into January, with five highlanders reportedly detained in Chu Pah district of Gia Lai between January 11 and 16. An earlier round of approximately sixty arrests took place in August and September 2002 in Dak Lak, Gia Lai, and Phu Yen⁴ provinces, where authorities there said they had thwarted plans by highlanders to conduct demonstrations timed to coincide with Vietnam’s National Day. Dozens of people disappeared or went into hiding at that time.

An ethnic Jarai man, who was repeatedly summoned to police headquarters in Chu Pah district, Gia Lai during August and September, described the situation:

The police accused me of trying to convert people to Christianity and contacting people in different villages. I was interrogated about who the leaders of the Montagnards were in my area. Three police officers used bamboo sticks to beat me all over my body, including my head. They kicked me with their boots. Afterwards I was forced to sign a document I did not understand very well, promising I would not participate in politics or ‘illegal’ religion and that I would obey the law. When I was finally released, the police threatened that I would be given “the bullet of a gun” if I joined any demonstrations again.⁵

Ongoing rights violations in the Central Highlands include:

- Arbitrary arrests, detention, interrogation and beatings of minority Protestant church leaders, people suspected of involvement with the movement for land rights and religious freedom, people who have tried to reach Cambodia to seek asylum, and asylum seekers who have crossed the border to Cambodia but have been returned to the Vietnamese authorities.
- Harsh prison sentences of up to twelve years for at least seventy highlanders convicted for alleged involvement with the 2001 protests or for trying to flee to Cambodia. More than 100 others have been detained, although it is unclear whether they have been tried. Those who have been convicted have been sentenced on charges of undermining the policy of state and party unity (article 87 of Vietnam’s Penal Code) or having “illegally migrated abroad to act against the people’s authorities” (article 91). Some have also been charged with undermining public security (article 89). All of the trials have been closed to the public and not publicized in advance.

³ The highlanders were part of a group of 167 people who attempted to seek asylum in Cambodia in December 2001 but were forcibly returned to Vietnam by Cambodian and Vietnamese police on December 27, 2001. While many members of that group subsequently returned to their villages, at least eleven were later sentenced to prison terms of between eight and ten years on charges of “organizing illegal migrations”. As many as sixty members of the group are thought to remain in prison or are missing from their home villages. For further background, see “Vietnam sentences eight men from ethnic minority for organizing exodus,” Associated Press, December 26, 2002; “8 Vietnamese receive jail sentences for undermining unity policy,” Xinhua, December 25, 2002.

⁴ Phu Yen province borders the Central Highlands and includes a population of minority Christians.

⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with Jarai man from Chu Pah district, Gia Lai, November 2002.

- Violations of the right to freedom of religion, church closings and official pressure on Christians to abandon their religion.⁶ Since the beginning of 2002, authorities have ordered the closure of more than 400 Evangelical Christian churches in the Central Highlands, according to the officially recognized Evangelical Church of Vietnam, South.⁷ In addition, the government has renewed its campaign to pressure minority Christians in the Central Highlands to recant their religion. Provincial television networks in the highlands and state-controlled newspapers regularly broadcast coverage of ceremonies in which Christians are shown “volunteering” to leave the church.⁸
- Bans on public gatherings in the Central Highlands, in violation of the right to freedom of assembly. Authorities in many areas regularly disperse gatherings of more than four people and fine or detain the participants, particularly if it is a Christian gathering. Villagers are pressured to publicly pledge not to meet in groups or participate in demonstrations.⁹
- Travel bans and restrictions on freedom of movement within the Central Highlands. In many areas highlanders must receive written permission from village and commune chiefs in order to travel from their villages. Christian pastors and evangelists are barred from traveling in many areas, making it impossible for them to preside at baptisms, marriages, and funerals as they had in the past.
- Strict restrictions on telephone communication, and prohibitions on unsupervised access to the Central Highlands by United Nations personnel, foreign reporters and diplomats. Telephone lines—particularly those which may be used for overseas calls—are often cut.

The Crackdown

The unrest in the Central Highlands began in February 2001, when thousands of indigenous Jarai, Ede, Mngong, Bahnar, Stieng, and Koho people (collectively known as Montagnards) conducted peaceful demonstrations in the provincial capitals to protest the confiscation of ancestral lands and religious repression. In the aftermath of the demonstrations, Vietnamese officials sent thousands of police and soldiers into the region, where they arrested dozens of highlanders. More than 1,500 highlanders fled to Cambodia to seek asylum.¹⁰

⁶ Human Rights Watch has received copies of dozens of citizen complaint petitions and police summonses from Dak Lak during the last six months that detail religious harassment and pressure for churches to close in Ea Sup, Ban Don, Cu Jut, Cu Mgar, Ea Kar, Mdrak, and Krong Pac districts, and in Buon Ma Thuot provincial town. Copies of the Vietnamese- and Ede-language documents on file at Human Rights Watch.

⁷ Public letter issued to Christian congregations by Rev. Thai Phuoc Truong, general secretary of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam, South, October 23, 2002. Copy of the letter and English-language translation on file at Human Rights Watch.

⁸ Videotape of a television program broadcast in Krong Pak, Dak Lak on September 28, 2002, shows ceremonies in which Christians are forced to publicly recant their religion. Videotape is on file at Human Rights Watch. See also public letter from the Vietnamese Broadcasting Group of the Far East Broadcasting Company, October 2002.

⁹ Dak Lak provincial television has covered public ceremonies showing villagers pledging not to demonstrate or meet in groups. Videotape on file at Human Rights Watch of a Dak Lak television program broadcast on September 28, 2002.

¹⁰ In the months following the protests, authorities conducted village meetings to criticize the protest leaders and stress the theme of national unity, and organized ceremonies in which villagers were forced to sign written oaths

The unrest in the Central Highlands has its roots in the struggle over increasingly scarce land. Government-organized resettlement schemes and spontaneous migration have quadrupled the population density of ethnic Vietnamese and other migrants in parts of the highlands since 1975, creating intense pressure on land and natural resources.

In addition, minority Protestants in the highlands have faced official persecution.¹¹ The Vietnamese government views with suspicion minority Protestants, especially those thought to follow *Tin Lanh Dega*, or “Dega Protestantism,” a type of evangelical Christianity practiced by some highlanders that combines cultural pride and aspirations for control over ancestral lands.¹²

Conditions worsened in the Central Highlands in 2002. In March, an agreement between Vietnam, Cambodia and the U.N. to voluntarily repatriate 1,000 Montagnard refugees who had fled to Cambodia crumbled when Vietnam refused to permit U.N. monitors access to the Central Highlands.¹³

Since March, the Vietnamese government has intensified its efforts to control a population seen as rebellious and restive, and to stop the refugee flow to Cambodia. Even highlanders who voluntarily returned to Vietnam from the Cambodian refugee camps in early 2002 have reported being detained, interrogated and beaten by local authorities, who have accused them of trying to organize more protests. Some have been forced to sign loyalty oaths pledging to renounce Christianity and politics.¹⁴

“I was told by local officials that if I returned to Vietnam from the refugee camp in Cambodia, my father would be released from prison,” said an ethnic Mnong man from Dak Lak. “Instead, after I got home, my father was sentenced to eight years in prison, and the police detained and interrogated me several times, accusing me of planning another demonstration.”¹⁵

pledging to abandon Christianity and politics, sealing the pledges by forced drinking of goat’s blood. See Human Rights Watch, *Repression of Montagnards: Conflicts over Land and Religion in Vietnam’s Central Highlands* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2002).

¹¹ The government’s official figure for the number of Christians in the Central Highlands is 229,000, a 400 percent increase since 1975. Protestant leaders say there are well over 400,000. Christianity has been practiced in parts of the highlands since the 1950s and 60s.

¹² Not all minority Protestants support “Dega Christianity,” which is seen as mixing religion and politics. Nonetheless the government mistrusts many minority Protestants in the Central Highlands, particularly those seen as following Dega Christianity, which the government alleges is an offshoot of FULRO (Front Unifié de Lutte des Race Opprimées, or the United Struggle Front for the Oppressed Races), an armed resistance movement in the Central Highlands that died out in the early 1990s.

¹³ Approximately 200 Montagnard refugees voluntarily returned to Vietnam from the Cambodian refugee camps in early 2002. More than 400 new asylum seekers were forcibly returned from Cambodia to Vietnam in April and May 2002 alone, when Cambodia closed its borders and refused to admit new refugees.

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with ethnic Jarai men from Chu Pah district, Gia Lai, November 2002; and interview with Mnong men from Dak Mil district, Dak Lak, January 2003.

¹⁵ Interview with Mnong man from Dak Mil district, Dak Lak, January 2003.

The October 22, 2002 Vietnamese Communist Party Directive

A twenty-one page internal Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) directive, dated October 22, 2002, outlines the government's "campaign to organize the people to struggle against the 'Dega Nation' and 'Dega Protestantism'":

The unshakable position of the Party and State is: We are determined to eliminate the so-called "Dega Nation" and "Dega Protestantism" both as ideas and as organizations. To accomplish this, each government worker, each party member and each citizen of every ethnic group in the district must understand clearly that "Dega Protestantism" is a reactionary political organization posing as a religion created to organize the people for the purpose of struggling for the creation of an "Independent Dega Nation," to destroy the unity of the country and to accomplish the anti-Vietnamese goal of "peaceful evolution"¹⁶ of the American imperialists.¹⁷

The directive, which was likely issued by the VCP to all districts within the Central Highlands, outlines the propaganda methods to be used by local officials, including conducting meetings with entire villages, small groups or individual families, and using village elders or individuals respected in the villages to lobby other villagers:

Push the people to denounce the leaders and hard-core elements who seek to sway the people with their views; try to spread their religion; speak badly of our system; sow divisions among the population; sow division between ethnic Vietnamese and highlanders, between believers and nonbelievers; sow suspicion and hatred; organize illegal demonstrations and flight abroad. Make timely reports to your superiors to enable them to take countermeasures. Be vigilant regarding transfers of money sent by reactionaries in exile to reactionaries within the country for the purposes of deceiving the people and enticing people to flee abroad. Keep close watch of the people in your area, educate the people to be vigilant, not to be misled into participating in demonstrations or going abroad.¹⁸

The document states that government investigations have "revealed more than 150 people in the Dega Christianity organization, in eight districts, twenty-two communes, thirty-seven villages, and 440 illegal Protestant church committees with more than 1,000 elders in nineteen districts and cities." This indicates that not only "Dega Christians" are being targeted by the government, since the figure of 440 church committees covers virtually all of the Evangelical churches in Dak Lak.

According to the document, Dega Christianity is not a true religion but part of a reactionary plot to undermine the government by exploiting the issues of religious freedom and land rights.

¹⁶ "Peaceful evolution" is a term used by the Vietnamese Communist Party to describe a conspiracy of international forces with internal dissidents to use democracy, human rights and religious freedom to try to change the regime.

¹⁷ Vietnamese Communist Party, *Material to Propagandize and Fight Against the Scheme of the Enemy Forces to Establish an Independent Dega Country and Dega Protestantism*, Cu Mgar District, Dak Lak, October 22, 2002. Copy of 21-page Vietnamese-language document and English translation on file at Human Rights Watch.

¹⁸ Vietnamese Communist Party, *Material to Propagandize and Fight Against the Scheme of the Enemy Forces to Establish an Independent Dega Country and Dega Protestantism*, Cu Mgar District, Dak Lak, October 22, 2002. Copy of 21-page Vietnamese-language document and English translation on file at Human Rights Watch.

The method of the enemy is usually to use freedom and democracy, to magnify some of our past shortcomings in developing the economy, culture and society, in order to smear and accuse and then to incite divisions and to reduce the trust people have in the party and the government.

For example, they take advantage of some shortcomings in our administration of land issues, and demand land for production, causing divisions between the various ethnic groups in the province, and between ethnic minorities and ethnic Vietnamese, and between ethnic minorities that have migrated from other areas.

Some bad elements gather and take advantage of the lack of understanding concerning our religious policies among those who follow religion, and draw them into illegal religious activity. They incite them to demand the building of churches, and to propagate religion illegally, accusing the local authorities of not respecting religious freedom.

They take advantage of the low standards of the people and their many hardships in order to destroy the government, and fight against the implementation of the policies of the party and government among the various segments of society - policies such as family planning, the program of settled agriculture, and [programs to] revitalize the traditional cultures of the minorities. Instead, they incite and deceive the people under the banner of independence and demands for land.

In particular, in the recent past they incited some of the masses of the ethnic minorities, especially among the young people, to organize and carry their demands to the commune, the district and the province and cause political disorder. And they seduced people into crossing into Cambodia to serve the long-lasting evil scheme of destroying us¹⁹

Detentions and official pressure on minority Christians have also been reported in Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa provinces, which border the Central Highlands and include a population of ethnic minority Protestants. In August and September there were reports that as many as seven ethnic Jarai had been detained in Phu Yen province.

In Khanh Hoa, police officers from the PA38 unit within the Ministry of Public Security, which monitors religious activities, were dispatched to Christian villages to prevent “illegal religious activities.” A provincial police report in May 2002 from Khanh Hoa described an official competition for police officers (the “contest to guard the security of the nation”) used to persuade families to abandon Christianity. Gift packets of 100,000 dong (U.S.\$7) were given to each family who renounced their religion.²⁰

The government has publicly broadcast the successes of its campaign against minority Protestants in the official state media. In an article in a provincial newspaper in May 2002, authorities reported on the “voluntary” abandonment of Christianity by 405 people in seventeen

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ *Preliminary Report, No. 120/BC-TD, Khanh Hoa Provincial Police*, May 22, 2002. Copy of Vietnamese-language document and English translation on file at Human Rights Watch,

villages in Krong Pak district, Dak Lak.²¹ In November, the official *Phap Luat* (Law) newspaper reported that more than 2,700 Christians had severed connections with “bad elements who abuse religious issues to sow divisions in national unity.” In addition, *Phap Luat* reported that dozens of evangelical Christians had been forced to confess to having preached illegally, and thirty-seven religious “cells” had been disbanded.²²

State television networks have repeatedly broadcast programs called “Volunteering to Leave the Christian Church,” showing public ceremonies in which Christians line up to publicly recant their religion. A twenty-five minute videotape of a television program broadcast on September 28, 2002, obtained by Human Rights Watch, shows several such ceremonies in Krong Pac district of Dak Lak. The program shows government officials sitting on a platform in front of a banner that reads “The Self-Appointed Protestant Elders’ Committee Voluntarily Disbands.” One-by-one dozens of Montagnards—mostly young men—are shown approaching a microphone to laboriously read a statement in which they admit their wrongdoings, pledge not to gather in groups or participate in demonstrations or “illegal” religious activities, and promise to follow the laws of the party and the state or face the full consequences of the law.²³

Party directives have been reinforced by renewed propaganda efforts aimed at minority Christians in the highlands. Hundreds of provincial and district officials have been dispatched to the villages, including thirty-three senior provincial officials in April 2002, to “engage in mobilizing the masses, helping with social and economic development, and enhancing security and defense in these villagers where governments are weak.”²⁴ A party resolution in August urged all highlanders in Gia Lai to join party organizations and beware of “hostile foreign forces.”²⁵ During a December visit to Gia Lai, the Secretary of the VCP Central Committee, Phan Dien, called for renewed vigilance against schemes by counter-revolutionaries to cause disturbances and social divisions in the region.²⁶

Complaints by Church Leaders Ignored

Leaders of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam, South (ECVNS), which received legal recognition from the Vietnamese government in 2001, have sent written complaints about the suppression of Christians in the highlands to the government. A petition to the Prime Minister and the Central Committee for Religious Affairs, signed by Rev. Duong Thanh, acting president of the General Council of the ECVNS, dated October 19, 2002, describes the persecution:

Now many local chapels have been closed, and many church leaders have been arrested and terrorized both mentally and physically. The Christians are not allowed to meet with each other and have fellowship with each other. The amount of fines imposed upon us for gathering to worship God has increased to an unendurable level. At some places, the local authorities have forced the Christians

²¹ *Dak Lak Cuoi Tuan* (Dak Lak Weekend), May 17, 2002.

²² “Report: Protestant missionaries illegally preaching in Vietnam’s restive Central Highlands,” Associated Press, November 1, 2002.

²³ Videotape of a Dak Lak television broadcast showing ceremonies in which Christians recant their religion on file at Human Rights Watch..

²⁴ “Vietnam to strengthen local governments in Central Highlands,” Associated Press, April 15, 2002.

²⁵ “Vietnam Steps Up Propaganda in Restive Highland Province,” Associated Press, August 26, 2002.

²⁶ “Politburo Member Pushes Gia Lai to Protect Security,” *Vietnam Economic News*, December 4, 2002.

to deny our faith through various forms such as forcing us to drink the blood of goats sacrificed to idols, abusing the governmental idea of establishing a model village where there are cultural activities but no religious activities, forbidding our church members to attend weekly church services, and confiscating Bibles and Christian literatures. The local authorities even used the government broadcasting programs and the government owned newspapers to propagate and smear against Protestant Christians and instigate the public to hate us.²⁷

A public letter issued to Christian congregations by Rev. Thai Phuoc Truong, general secretary of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam, South, dated October 23, 2002, states that more than 300 churches in Dak Lak have been forced to close and many religious leaders have been persecuted:

[W]e have been made aware that recently all the churches in Dak Lak have encountered many difficulties. As of October 1, 2001 there were more than 135,792 believers in 412 churches, but now only fifty-six are able to carry on modest activities. The others have had to disband and Christians are allowed only to worship in their own private homes. The remaining churches are also being disbanded. All the believers, especially of the minority peoples, are not allowed to meet together for worship. The provincial church committee has reported this to local authorities, but the persecution has only gotten worse.²⁸

To date the government has granted legal recognition to only two Evangelical churches in Dak Lak and three in Gia Lai. Authorities have rejected legal recognition of a list of 440 churches in Dak Lak, which were accepted by the ECVNS and submitted to the government in late 2001. Instead, 354 churches were forced to close in between January and September 2002, according to ECVNS.²⁹

Other incidents of religious repression in the Central Highlands since July 2002 include the following:

- In November and December 2002, sources in Vietnam reported that authorities were conducting village-wide and house-by-house campaigns in Ea Kar, Ban Don and Ea Sup districts of Dak Lak to pressure Christians to sign government pledge forms promising to recant Christianity and to cease meeting with other Christians or spread the Christian message.³⁰ Authorities conducted house-to-house searches for Christian and political literature. In Buon Pan Lam, authorities confiscated Bibles and forced people to sign

²⁷ Letter from Rev. Duong Thanh, General Council of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam, South to the Prime Minister and the Central Committee of Religious Affairs, copied to the People's Committee of Dak Lak province and the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of Dak Lak province, October 19, 2002. Copy of the Vietnamese-language letter and English translation on file at Human Rights Watch.

²⁸ Public letter issued to Christian congregations by Rev. Thai Phuoc Truong, general secretary of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam, South, October 23, 2002. Copy of the letter and English translation on file at Human Rights Watch.

²⁹ Public letter issued to Christian congregations by Rev. Thai Phuoc Truong, general secretary of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam, South, October 23, 2002. Copy of the letter and English translation on file at Human Rights Watch.

³⁰ Copy of government pledge form in use in Ea Kar district on file at Human Rights Watch.

papers stating that they were voluntarily turning them in. In Buon Drai village, police seized religious literature and pressured Christian leaders and followers to publicly renounce their religion.³¹

- During November, Human Rights Watch received reports of Christian ministers and followers in Lam Dong province being summoned for interrogation about their activities.
- In October 2002, churches in Mdrak and Krong Pac districts of Dak Lak were ordered to close and Bibles, furniture, and musical instruments were confiscated. In Dak Nong, security officials regularly surrounded one church during Sunday services. Police used the church microphone to ask church members to abandon Christianity, and local officials ordered that the church disband by November 3.³²
- During September and October, churches in Ban Don, Cu Jut, and Ea Sup districts of Dak Lak reported incidents of harassment against Christians and house churches.³³
- In August and September, authorities called meetings in some villages of Chu Pah district, Gia Lai, every two or three days to warn people not to join any more demonstrations and to abandon their religion.³⁴
- On August 28 police raided a church meeting in Plei Cham Ne, Gia Lai, where they detained most of the forty-seven participants.³⁵
- In August, authorities ordered the curtailment of all church activities in one commune in Buon Ma Thuot and informed church elders that their activities were illegal and that any type of Christian activities were explicitly forbidden.³⁶
- In August, church leaders in Cu Mgar district of Dak Lak were summoned for interrogation scolded for organizing their church leadership “illegally” and forced to sign documents disbanding their church.³⁷
- In July, a highlander in Krong Pac district of Dak Lak was summoned for questioning at the commune center after he organized a Christian funeral service for his mother-in-law attended by more than 2,000 people. He was warned not to organize any such ceremony again and ordered to apologize to the commune authorities, the police, and the village.³⁸
- Also in July, elders from a church in Buon Ma Thuot were interrogated and threatened with “re-education” if they did not cooperate with authorities by curtailing church activities on the grounds that such activities were “illegal.”³⁹
- In July, church elders in Ea Kar, Ea Sup, and Buon Ma Thuot districts in Dak Lak were ordered to disband their congregations and cease all Christian activities.⁴⁰

³¹ Human Rights Watch interview with source in Vietnam, December 2, 2002.

³² Name of church withheld to protect security of church members. Public letter from the Vietnamese Broadcasting Group of the Far East Broadcasting Company, October 2002.

³³ Letters from churches in Ban Don (September 2002); Report from church in Cu Jut district; Letter from church in Ban Don (September 26, 2002); Letter about incident in Ea Sup on October 5, 2002. The names and locations of the churches have been withheld to protect the security of petitioners. Documents on file at Human Rights Watch.

³⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Jarai villager from Chu Pah district, November 2002.

³⁵ Human Rights Watch interview with source in Vietnam, October 2002.

³⁶ Letter and report from church in a commune of Buon Ma Thuot city, August 13 and 14, 2002. The name and location of the church has been withheld to protect the security of petitioners. Documents on file at Human Rights Watch.

³⁷ Letter from church in Cu Mgar district, August 12, 2002. The name and location of the church has been withheld to protect the security of petitioners. Document on file at Human Rights Watch.

³⁸ Letter from Krong Pac, July 29, 2002. The Ede-language document is on file at Human Rights Watch.

³⁹ Letter from church elders, July 31, 2002. The name and location of the church has been withheld to protect the security of petitioners. Document on file at Human Rights Watch.

The 2002 Arrests

During 2002, authorities arrested or detained more than 100 Montagnard church leaders, land rights advocates, and individuals suspected of trying to flee to Cambodia or guide other asylum seekers there. During interrogation sessions by police, some detainees were threatened and beaten with sticks or electric shock batons.⁴¹ Fearing arrest, more than seventy highlanders disappeared or went into hiding. Dozens more disappeared after they were released from prison.

A round of arrests and harassment of highlanders began in March 2002, with reports that six highlanders had been detained in Gia Lai (Ia Grai, Chu Pah and Cu Se districts). In April, ten ethnic Jarai were detained in Ayun Pah district of Gia Lai. The arrests continued into June, even as Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung publicly attributed the troubles in the Central Highlands to mistakes by the nation's leadership.⁴² During June and July at least fourteen highlanders were detained in Dak Lak and Gia Lai.⁴³

The government intensified its crackdown in August and September, when more than sixty highlanders were detained in Dak Lak and Gia Lai provinces.⁴⁴ Another seven highlanders were reportedly detained in Phu Yen province, with at least eight others reported missing there. Authorities charged that highlanders were planning demonstrations in Buon Ma Thuot city and some of the districts, timed with Vietnam's National Day (September 2) and the September 20 anniversary of the founding of the highland resistance movement known as FULRO (Front Unifié de Lutte des Race Opprimées, or the United Struggle Front for the Oppressed Races).⁴⁵ On September 20, police reportedly "wiped out [a] plan to organize a riot" in Buon Ma Thuot, according to an article in the official *Quan Doi Nhan Dan* (People's Army) newspaper.⁴⁶

In late August, police tightened security in Mdrak district of Dak Lak, where they detained at least thirty Ede villagers on the grounds that they were planning a demonstration.⁴⁷ District officials in Mdrak said that a protest took place during the third week in August in Sao hamlet, Mdrak. The charges and place of detention of the majority of those arrested were not made public.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ Report from church elders, Ea Kar district, July 4 and August 13, 2002; Letter from churches in Ea Sup and Ea Dar, July 22, 2002; Letter of complaint from churches in Buon Ma Thuot, July 26, 2002. The name and location of the churches have been withheld to protect the security of petitioners. Documents on file at Human Rights Watch.

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch interview with Jarai men from Chu Pah district, Gia Lai, November 2002; interview with Mnong men from Dak Mil district of Dak Lak, January 2003.

⁴² Clare Arthurs, "Hanoi admits role in hilltribes crisis," BBC, June 12, 2002; "Hanoi admits mistakes in restive Central Highlands," Reuters, June 12, 2002.

⁴³ Arrests were reported in Cu Se and Ia Grai districts of Gia Lai, and in Buon Don, Krong Ana and Buon Ma Thuot provincial town in Dak Lak.

⁴⁴ Arrests were reported in August and September in Krong Bong, Krong Ana, Krong Pac, Cu Jut, Cu Mgar, Dak Mil, Mdrak, and Ea Kar districts of Dak Lak, and in Dak Doa, Cu Se, Ea H'leo, Chu Pah and Pleiku provincial town of Gia Lai.

⁴⁵ Voice of Vietnam text web site, Hanoi, in Vietnamese, November 25, 2002; cited in "Vietnamese army paper criticizes 'hostile forces' using religion to cause unrest," BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, November 26, 2002.

⁴⁶ "Army Newspaper Slams Attempts to Lure Minority Refugees," Vietnam Economic News, November 22, 2002.

⁴⁷ "Vietnam arrests scores of hill tribe members for attempting new protest," Associated Press, September 6, 2002; "Demonstrators arrested in Vietnam's Central Highlands," Agence France Presse, September 6, 2002.

⁴⁸ "Vietnam denies ethnic unrest in Central Highlands," Agence France Presse, September 15, 2002.

One of those arrested in Mdrak district was Y Su Nie, accused by government officials of trying to organize a protest in Mdrak.⁴⁹ Sources in Vietnam state that police first came in September to arrest Y Su Nie. A confrontation with Y Su's family and other villagers ensued, in which one of Y Su's sons was allegedly shot by police in the leg. When the officers left to get reinforcements Y Su Nie fled. The police then reportedly detained most of the men in Mdrak—not only Protestants, but Catholics and non-Christian Ede as well.⁵⁰ The chief of commune police in Ea Pil stated on September 5: "We arrested all the demonstrators. Nobody could escape."⁵¹

In September, commune and district police in Chu Pah district of Gia Lai detained and beat an ethnic Jarai man, whom they accused of trying to convert people to Christianity and of contacting people in different villages. They interrogated him about who the Montagnard leaders in his area were. He was beaten with bamboo sticks and forced to sign a pledge not to participate in politics or "illegal" religion.⁵²

In Dak Mil district of Dak Lak, police arrested nine Mnong people in September, accusing them of wanting to flee illegally to Cambodia. Police repeatedly summoned others for questioning about their activities; some were beaten during interrogation.⁵³ Families of highlanders who resettled in the United States fell under particular scrutiny.⁵⁴

In October, more than 600 "fast deployment" military teams were dispatched to the region, which largely remained off limits to international observers.⁵⁵ In Dak Doa district of Gia Lai the youth section of the military corps began to mobilize villagers in October to follow party and government policies, thereby "rooting out a hot-bed of trouble makers."⁵⁶

On October 24, authorities in Mdrak district reported that Y Su Nie and another man named Y Khai had "surrendered" to police in Mdrak district and confessed to having made contacts with "bad elements" and "foreign reactionary forces" to disrupt public security and sabotage the government.⁵⁷ Their current whereabouts are unknown.

In December, authorities stepped up the security presence in the Central Highlands, issuing warnings to villagers not to gather for Christmas ceremonies, and detaining church leaders in order to prohibit them from organizing church services. Security forces were reportedly dispatched to the mountainous Cu Tola area in Cu Se district of Gia Lai to search for highlanders hiding in the forest. At least twenty-four arrests were reported during December alone. On

⁴⁹ "New unrest flares in Vietnam's central highlands," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, September 6, 2002.

⁵⁰ Human Rights Watch interview with recent visitor to Vietnam, who asked to remain anonymous to protect his security, October 15, 2002.

⁵¹ "New unrest flares in Vietnam's central highlands," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, September 6, 2002.

⁵² Human Rights Watch interview with Jarai man from Chu Pah district, November 2002.

⁵³ Interview with Mnong men from Dak Mil district, Dak Lak, January 2003.

⁵⁴ Human Rights Watch interview with Mnong man from Dak Mil district, Dak Lak, November 12, 2002.

⁵⁵ Vietnam News Agency web site, Hanoi, October 21, 2002.

⁵⁶ Vietnam News Agency, October 21, 2002.

⁵⁷ "Two Montagnards surrender to charges of instigating anti-government protests," Associated Press, October 30, 2002; "Two Initiators of Riot in Central Highlands Give up to Police," Vietnam News Brief Service, October 30, 2002.

December 23, seven people were arrested in Krong Ana district, Dak Lak, and another eight in Ho Chi Minh City as they were preparing to flee to Cambodia.⁵⁸

Seeking Asylum a National Security Offense

More than 1,000 highlanders who have tried to cross the border to seek asylum in Cambodia have been forcibly returned to Vietnam since 2001, where many were subsequently detained or arrested. Some were eventually released, but at least eighteen were sentenced to prison terms of up to ten years on charges of “organizing illegal migrations” or enticing or guiding others to flee to Cambodia—allegedly to undermine the Vietnamese government’s policy of state unity.⁵⁹

At least fifty others have received harsh prison sentences for their alleged involvement in the 2001 demonstrations. None of the trial dates were announced in advance, and no diplomats or foreign correspondents were allowed to attend. Given the documented practice in similar trials in Vietnam, it is doubtful that the defendants were allowed access to any meaningful legal representation. The only official press reports, if any, were announcements of the verdicts after the trials were over.

Highlanders known to have been convicted in 2002 after being forcibly returned from Cambodia include:

- Four highlanders in Cu Se district, Gia Lai (Siu Beng, Siu Be, Hnoch, and Kpa Hling) sentenced on January 25, 2002 to prison terms of up to six and a half years for “organizing illegal migrations.” The state media reported that the men had been deported from Cambodia in April and May 2001.⁶⁰
- Rlan Loa, an ethnic Jarai from Krong Pac district, Gia Lai province, sentenced in October to nine years in prison for having “illegally migrated abroad to act against the people’s authorities”. Rlan Loa was part of a group of 167 asylum seekers who were arrested in Cambodia and forcibly deported to Vietnam in December 2001.⁶¹
- Three Ede men, Y Tim E Ban, Y Coi B Krong and Y Tho Mas E Ya, sentenced on October 22 to eight years in prison and two years’ probation on charges of inciting local people to flee Vietnam. They were part of the group of 167 highlanders deported from Cambodia to Vietnam in December 2001.⁶²
- Two Jarai, Ksor Dar and Rahlan Phyui, sentenced on November 15 to three and two years respectively for allegedly having guided Montagnard asylum seekers to Cambodia in November 2001.⁶³

⁵⁸ The current whereabouts of those arrested in Krong Ana district is unknown. Seven of the eight Montagnards arrested in Ho Chi Minh City were reportedly sent to prison in Buon Ma Thuot, Dak Lak.

⁵⁹ They have been charged under article 91 of Vietnam’s Penal Code with attempting to “illegally migrate abroad to act against the people’s authorities.”

⁶⁰ “Four Defendants Receive Jail Terms for Organizing Illegal Migrations,” Vietnam News Agency, January 27, 2002.

⁶¹ “Nine-Year Jail Term for Ant-State Ethnic Minority,” *Vietnam Economic News*, October 8, 2002. *Cong An Nhan Dan* (People’s Police), October 7, 2002.

⁶² Agence France Presse, “Three Montagnards jailed in Vietnam for organizing escape to Cambodia,” October 24, 2002; Xinhua, “Reactionaries in Vietnam sentenced to imprisonment,” October 24, 2002.

⁶³ Agence France Presse, “Vietnam jails two Montagnards for arranging escape to Cambodia,” November 18, 2002.

- Eight highlanders who had been forcibly deported from Cambodia in December 2001, sentenced on December 25, 2002 on charges of inciting local people to illegally migrate and opposing the policy of state and party unity. Y Thuon Nie was sentenced to ten years in prison, while seven others were sentenced to eight years each (Y Pum Bya, Y Tien Nie Kdam, Y Boh Lien, Y Are Nie, Y Lem Bkrong, Y Ju Nie; and Y Nai Mlo).⁶⁴

The October 2002 party document shows that Vietnam does not recognize the basic rights under international law to leave one's own country and to seek asylum, but instead views the act of seeking asylum abroad as a national security offense:

That bad elements incite ethnic minorities to illegally cross the border into Cambodia is within the scheme and strategy of "peaceful evolution" of the enemy forces, of which America is the leader. Whoever listens to the enticing words of the bad elements and crosses the border into Cambodia illegally with the hope of emigrating to America will not realize this. Because this is a deceptive slogan of the Americans, in order to sow discord in the area of the Central Highlands.⁶⁵

Equally alarming is the Vietnamese government's congratulatory statements to Cambodia regarding its refoulement (forcible return) of asylum seekers, which is prohibited under the 1951 Refugee Convention and by international customary law. The October 2002 directive states: "The Cambodian government has returned to Vietnam a number of people who crossed the border illegally, and this is completely correct and in keeping with foreign relations principles today."

The Vietnamese government has repeatedly promised that there would be no reprisals against those who fled to Cambodia and that those who "repent" would be welcomed back home. In February 2002, the chairman of the Dak Lak People's Committee told reporters: "There is no reason to worry about the safe return of those ethnic minority people who illegally fled to Cambodia ... No one loves these people better than their families and we do."⁶⁶

The October 2002 Party document urges those who have fled to Cambodia to "return to their homeland and reunite to make a living, develop the economy, and take care of their children's education."⁶⁷

Despite these official pledges of lenience, there is ample documentation that returnees from Cambodia—not only those forcibly deported but also those who have returned to Vietnam voluntarily—have been interrogated, detained, and mistreated. In one instance, security forces

⁶⁴ Associated Press, "Vietnam sentences eight men from ethnic minority for organizing exodus," December 26, 2002; Xinhua, "8 Vietnamese receive jail sentences for undermining unity policy," December 25, 2002.

⁶⁵ Vietnamese Communist Party, *Material to Propagandize and Fight Against the Scheme of the Enemy Forces to Establish an Independent Dega Country and Dega Protestantism*, Cu Mgar District, Dak Lak, October 22, 2002. Copy of 21-page Vietnamese-language document and English translation on file at Human Rights Watch.

⁶⁶ Vietnam News Agency web site, Hanoi, in English, February 21, 2002, Cited by BBC Monitoring February 21, 2002.

⁶⁷ Vietnamese Communist Party, *Material to Propagandize and Fight Against the Scheme of the Enemy Forces to Establish an Independent Dega Country and Dega Protestantism*, Cu Mgar District, Dak Lak, October 22, 2002. Copy of the Vietnamese-language document and English translation on file at Human Rights Watch.

pushed, kicked, and verbally abused a returnee in the presence of international observers and reporters when the man said the reason he had originally fled to Cambodia was because Vietnam lacked respect for human rights.⁶⁸

Recommendations

As the two-year anniversary approaches of the 2001 demonstrations in the Central Highlands, the Vietnamese government has intensified its suppression of peaceful protestors, targeting in particular evangelical Christians.

Human Rights Watch calls on Vietnam to release all Montagnards who have been imprisoned solely for peaceful expression of their religious and political views, or for attempting to seek political asylum abroad. The government should publish in a central register the names of all highlanders held in pre-trial detention in police stations or prisons, along with the charges against them, and make public the names of those who have been convicted and sentenced. All persons charged in connection with the protests in the Central Highlands should receive trials that meet the standards set forth in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Vietnam is a party. The trials should be public, open to both Vietnamese citizens and foreign observers. Those accused should have access to legal counsel of their choosing and the free assistance of an interpreter, as mandated by both the ICCPR and Vietnam's Constitution.

Human Rights Watch also urges Cambodia's international donors to insist that Cambodia re-open provincial refugee camps for Vietnamese asylum seekers. The camps have been closed since March 2002, when Cambodia announced it would no longer accept asylum seekers from the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Donors should urge the Cambodian government to continue to uphold its obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention and they should make public and private interventions with the Cambodian government if and when Cambodian security officials forcibly return refugees from Cambodia.

The international community, particularly Vietnam's donors, should 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. Recommendations for U.N. access should be pushed at the annual meeting of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, which convenes in Geneva on March 17.

⁶⁸ Human Rights Watch interview with an international observer to the U.N.-sponsored repatriation of fourteen highlanders to Vietnam in February 2002.

Appendix 1: Partial Listing of Montagnard Prisoners, January 2003

The following listing of highlanders currently imprisoned or detained in Vietnam for peaceful expression of their religious or political beliefs, or for attempting to flee to Cambodia, should not be considered to be exhaustive. Vietnam does not allow access to its prisons or the Central Highlands by independent monitors, nor does it generally publish the names, locations, and charges against people in detention. This listing is derived from investigations by Human Rights Watch, from official Vietnamese sources as reported in the state media, and from other sources that provided sufficient information to indicate a high probability that the persons have been imprisoned. The charges, when known, are all derived from official Vietnamese state media accounts.⁶⁹

No.	Name	Ethnic Group	Year of Birth	Home Village	Home District	Home Province	Date of Arrest	Trial Details and Sentence	Charges	Comments
1	Bom Jana	Bahnar	1956	Plei Kueng Grai	Dak Doa	Gia Lai	6/2/2001	Sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment plus 5 years probation, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, Sept. 26, 2001.	Inciting social disorder, opposing the policy of state and party unity, and organizing illegal activities to establish an "independent Dega state" and "Dega Protestant sect."	
2	Ksor Kroih	Jarai	1963	Plei Sor	Dak Doa	Gia Lai	6/2/01	Sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment plus 5 years probation, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, Sept. 26, 2001.	Undermining national unity.	
3	Ksor Poi [Poi]	Jarai	1962	Plei Kueng Grai	Dak Doa	Gia Lai	6/2/01	Sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment plus 5 years probation, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, Sept. 26, 2001.	Undermining national unity.	
4	Siu Boch	Jarai	1965	Plei Lao	Cu Se	Gia Lai	10/3/2001	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment plus 5 years probation, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, Sept. 26, 2001.	Undermining national unity.	Arrested after a police raid on a prayer meeting, Plei Lao, Gia Lai, in which one villager was killed.
5	Siu Yui	Jarai		Plei Lam Klah	Cu Prong	Gia Lai	26/2/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment plus 5 years probation, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, Sept. 26, 2001.	Undermining national unity.	

⁶⁹ Errors in listings of prisoners in Vietnam are difficult to avoid because the Vietnamese government does not make public the names of people who have been detained, convicted or sentenced; their places of detention; or the charges against them.

6	Siu Tinh	Jarai	1963	Plei Tot Bioc	Cu Se	Gia Lai	6/2/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment plus 5 years probation, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, Sept. 26, 2001.	Undermining national unity.	
7	Siu Un	Jarai		Buon Blec	Ea H'leo	Dak Lak	2/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, Sept. 26, 2001.	Undermining national unity.	
8	Y Nuen Buon Ya [Kpa Nuen]	Ede		Buon Ea Sup	Ea Sup	Dak Lak	25/2/01	Sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment plus five years probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Sept. 26, 2001.	Destabilizing public security.	
9	Y Nok Mlo	Ede		Buon Ktla	Krong Buk	Dak Lak	16/2/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Sept. 26, 2001.	Destabilizing public security.	
10	Y Bhiet Nie Kdam	Ede		Buon Pheo	Krong Buk	Dak Lak	2/01	Sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Sept. 26, 2001.	Destabilizing public security.	
11	Y Tum Mlo	Ede		Buon Mrao	Krong Hnang	Dak Lak	4/2/01	Sentenced to 8 years and 4 months of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Sept. 26, 2001.	Destabilizing public security; illegal possession of military weapons.	
12	Y Phen Ksor	Jarai		Buon Sek	Ea H'leo	Dak Lak	25/2/01	Sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Sept. 26, 2001.	Same as above.	
13	Y Rin Kpa	Jarai	1968	Buon Drao	Ea H'leo	Dak Lak	2/01	Sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Sept. 26, 2001.	Destabilizing public security.	
14	Y Drut Nie [Nay Y Druk]	Jarai		Buon Sek	Ea H'leo	Dak Lak	25/2/01	Sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Sept. 26, 2001.	Destabilizing public security; destruction of public property.	
15	Y Nglu	Jarai		Plei Glung	Ayun Pah	Gia Lai	2/01	Sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment, Ayun Pah, Gia Lai, Oct. 2001.	Disturbing public order and illegally detaining people.	
16	Siu Seo	Jarai	1970	Plei Joning	Ayun Pah	Gia Lai	2/01	Sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment, Ayun Pah, Gia Lai, Oct. 2001.	Same as above.	
17	Siu Un	Jarai	1965	Plei Glung	Ayun Pah	Gia Lai	2/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment, Ayun Pah, Gia Lai, Oct. 2001.	Same as above.	
18	Siu Tel	Jarai	1959	Plei Ke [Kelan]	Ayun Pah	Gia Lai	2/01	Sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Ayun Pah, Oct. 2001.	Same as above.	

19	Rmah Djoan [Djuan]		1958	Plei Athai	Ayun Pah	Gia Lai	2/01	Sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Ayun Pah, Oct. 2001.	Same as above.	
20	Ksor Alup	Jarai	1948	Plei Breng 2	Ia Grai	Gia Lai	4/01	Sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment, Oct. 2001.		
21	Kpa Bring	Ede		Buon Jung	Krong Pac	Dak Lak		Sentenced to 9 years of imprisonment, Oct. 18, 2001.		
22	Y Bliet Ayun	Ede	1956	Buon Jung [Cu Wu]	Krong Pac	Dak Lak		Sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment, Oct. 18, 2001.		
23	Y Khu Nie	Ede		Buon Tri "B"	Ea H'leo	Dak Lak	9/01	Sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment, Oct. 18, 2001.		
24	Y Nuen[g] Nie	Ede	1972	Buon Ea Yong	Krong Pac	Dak Lak		Sentenced to 2 years of imprisonment, Oct. 15, 2001.		
25	Y Kao Buon Ya	Jarai		Buon Ea Sup 1	Ea Sup	Dak Lak	26/3/01	Sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment, Oct. 18, 2001.		
26	Ksor Sun [Y Sun Ksor]	Jarai	1960	Buon Jung Cu E wi	Krong Pac	Dak Lak		Sentenced to 2 years of imprisonment, Oct. 18, 2001.		
27	Y Wang Nie (Kdam)	Jarai		Buon Areng [Arieng]	Ea H'leo	Dak Lak	4/01	Sentenced to 4 years of imprisonment, Oct. 18, 2001.		
28	Ksor Blung	Jarai	1958	Plei Breng 3	Ia Grai	Gia Lai	4/01	Sentenced to 4 years of imprisonment, Oct. or Nov., 2001		
29	Y Nong (Buon Ya) [Kpa Nong; Y Nong Kpa]	Jarai	1968	Buon Ea Sup	Ea Sup	Dak Lak	26/3/01	Sentenced to 4 years, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Nov. 19, 2001.		
30	Y Muk Nie	Jarai	1970	Buon Ea Sup 2	Ea Sup	Dak Lak	26/3/01	Sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Nov. 19, 2001.		
31	Y Mriu Eban	Jarai	1968	Buon Ea Sup 2	Ea Sup	Dak Lak	26/3/01	Sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment, Nov. 19, 2001.		
32	Siu Sop [Y Sop Siu]	Ede	1968	Buon Sup 2	Ea Sup	Dak Lak	26/3/01	Sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment, Nov. 19, 2001.		
33	Siu Beng	Jarai	1964	Plei Betel	Cu Se	Gia Lai	30/4/01	Sentenced to 3.5 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Cu Se, January 25, 2001.	Organizing "illegal migrations".	Arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia, April 30, 2001.
34	Kpa Hling	Jarai	1961	Plei Ho Bi	Cu Se	Gia Lai	15/5/01	Sentenced to 5.5 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Cu Se, January 25, 2001.	Organizing "illegal migrations".	Arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia, May 15, 2001.

35	Y Hnoch [Hnaoch]	Bahnar	1959	Brong Mang	Dak Doa	Gia Lai	15/5/01	Sentenced to 5.5 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Cu Se, January 25, 2001.	Organizing "illegal migrations".	Arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia on May 15, 2001.
36	Siu Be	Jarai	1957	Plei Luh Ngo	Cu Se	Gia Lai	30/4/01	Sentenced to 3.5 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Cu Se, January 25, 2002.	Organizing "illegal migrations".	Arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia, April 30, 2001.
37	Rahlan Loa [Rlan Loa]	Jarai	1964	Buon Toat	Krong Pac	Dak Lak	12/01	Sentenced to 9 years of imprisonment plus five years probation, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, August 10, 2002.	Illegally leaving Vietnam to oppose the people's administration.	Arrested on Dec. 27, 2002 in Cambodia and forcibly returned to Vietnam one month later.
38	Y Tim E Ban	Ede	1968	Buon Dha Prong	Buon Ma Thuot	Dak Lak	24/12/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment plus two years probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Oct. 22, 2002.	Organizing "illegal migrations".	Arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia, Dec. 27, 2001.
39	Y Coi B Krong	Ede	1972	Buon Ko Mleo	Buon Ma Thuot	Dak Lak	24/12/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment plus 4 years probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Oct. 22, 2002.	Organizing "illegal migrations," compromising national security, sabotaging the popular regime.	Arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia, Dec. 27, 2001.
40	Y Tho Mas E Ya	Ede	1955	Buon Bu Dak	Dak Mil	Dak Lak	29/11/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment and 4 yrs probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Oct. 22, 2002.		
41	Ksor Dar	Jarai	1955	Plei Weh	Dak Doa	Gia Lai		Sentenced to 3 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, Nov. 15, 2002.	Organizing "illegal migrations."	
42	Phyui [Rahlan Phyui]	Jarai	1971	Plei Sung Kat	Duc Co	Gia Lai		Sentenced to 2 years of imprisonment, Peoples' Court, Gia Lai, Nov. 15, 2002.	Organizing "illegal migrations."	
43	Y Pum Bya	Ede	1965	Buon Kmien	Krong Buk	Dak Lak	12/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment and 4 years of probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Dec. 25, 2002.	Undermining the policy of state and party unity, organizing "illegal migrations" and contacting overseas groups to cause disorder in Buon Ma Thuot on Feb. 3, 2001.	
44	Y Thuon Nie	Ede	1973	Buon Kwang	Krong Buk	Dak Lak	12/01	Sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment and 4 years of probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Dec. 25, 2002.	Same as above.	Arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia, Dec. 27, 2001.

45	Y Tien Nie Kdam	Ede	1980	Buon E Nao	Buon Ma Thuot	Dak Lak	12/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment and 4 years of probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Dec. 25, 2002.	Same as above.	Arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia on Dec. 27, 2001.
46	Y Boh Nie [Yboh Lieng]	Ede	1968	Buon Drao	Buon Ma Thuot	Dak Lak	12/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment and 4 years of probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Dec. 25, 2002.	Same as above.	Thought to have been arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia on Dec. 27, 2001.
47	Y Are Nie [Yaro Nie]	Ede	1965			Dak Lak		Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment and 4 years of probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Dec. 25, 2002.	Same as above.	Thought to have been arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia in Dec. 2001.
48	Y Lem Bkrong	Ede	1962	Buon Kwang		Dak Lak	12/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment and 4 years of probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Dec. 25, 2002.	Same as above.	
49	Y Ju Nie	Ede	1964	Buon Brieng	Ea Kar	Dak Lak	12/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment and 4 years of probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Dec. 25, 2002.	Same as above.	Thought to have been arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia in Dec. 2001.
50	Y Nai Mlo	Ede	1966	Buon De	Krong Hnang	Dak Lak	12/01	Sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment and 4 years of probation, Peoples' Court, Dak Lak, Dec. 25, 2002.	Same as above.	Arrested and forcibly returned from Cambodia on Dec. 27, 2001.
51	Prom [Y Prom]	Bahnar	1963	Plei Bia Bre	Dak Doa	Dak Lak		Reportedly sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
52	Nay Pham [Phom]	Jarai	1953	Plei Ko Te [K'Te]	Ayun Pah	Gia Lai	4/2/01	Reportedly sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
53	Siu Thuk	Jarai	1963	Plei Lao	Cu Se	Gia Lai	10/3/01	Reportedly sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.	Arrested after police raid on prayer meeting, Plei Lao, Gia Lai.	
54	Kpa Thop [Siu Thop]	Jarai	1963	Plei Lao	Cu Se	Gia Lai	10/3/01	Reportedly sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.	Arrested after police raid on prayer meeting, Plei Lao, Gia Lai.	
55	Siu Grih [Kpa Krih]	Jarai	1958	Plei Lao	Cu Se	Gia Lai	10/3/01	Reportedly sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.	Arrested after police raid on prayer meeting, Plei Lao, Gia Lai.	

56	Hyan	Bahnar	1965	Plei To Drah	Cu Se	Gia Lai	22/5/01	Reportedly sentenced to 2 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
57	Dol	Bahnar	1960	Plei To Drah	Cu Se	Gia Lai	22/5/01	Reportedly sentenced to 2 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
58	Rmah Teng	Jarai	1958	Plei Bo 1	Cu Se	Gia Lai	10/3/01	Reportedly sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.	Arrested after police raid on prayer meeting, Plei Lao, Gia Lai.	
59	Ksor Hnel	Jarai	1976	Plei Bo 1	Cu Se	Gia Lai	10/3/2001	Reportedly sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.	Arrested after police raid on prayer meeting, Plei Lao, Gia Lai.	
60	Rmah Anur [Anuh, Anhur]	Jarai	1950	Plei Bo 1	Cu Se	Gia Lai	10/3/01	Reportedly sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.	Arrested after police raid on prayer meeting, Plei Lao, Gia Lai.	
61	Goih	Bahnar		Plei To Drah	Cu Se	Gia Lai	5/10/01	Reportedly sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
62	Byun	Bahnar		Plei Lon B12		Gia Lai		Reportedly sentenced to 8 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
63	Y Het Nie Kdam	Ede		Buon Sek	Ea H'leo	Dak Lak	28/8/02	Sentence not known.	Interviewed by gov't press in Dec. 2002 after reports that person with the same name (different home address) had died from a lethal injection in prison.	
64	Dinh Mlem	Bahnar	1975	Plei To Drah	Cu Se	Gia Lai	5/10/01	Reportedly sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
65	Brong Kpa	Ede		Buon Jung	Krong Pac	Dak Lak		Reportedly sentenced to 9 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
66	Y Nuel Nie	Ede		Buon Jung	Krong Pac	Dak Lak		Reportedly sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
67	Bli	Bahnar	1964	Plei Pheo	Cu Se	Gia Lai		Reportedly sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
68	Siu Ye	Jarai	1978	Plei Mo	Cu Se	Gia Lai		Reportedly sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
69	Bah		1966	Plei Hrai Dong	Cu Se	Gia Lai		Reportedly sentenced to 6 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		
70	Em	Jarai	1955	Plei Ia Lang	T.P. Pleiku	Gia Lai		Reportedly sentenced to 7 years of imprisonment; trial date unknown.		



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THE VOICE OF PARTY, STATE AND PEOPLE OF VIETNAM**

No 792

NEWS

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Four receive jail terms for organising illegal migrations



Siu Beng and Siu Be at the court.

The people's court of Chu Se district of Central Highlands Gia Lai province on January 25 sentenced four defendants, who were charged with "organising illegal migrations" with jail terms ranging from three years and a half to six years and a half, local sources report.

The defendants include Siu Beng and Siu Be, residents of Ia H'Ru commune, who were sentenced to six years and a half and three years and a half in prison respectively, and H'Naoh and K'Pa Hling, residents of Ia Bang commune of Chu Se district, who both received imprisonment for five and a half years.

The defendants were among those who had been incited by hostile and reactionary forces in the United States to organise illegal migrations of local ethnic minority people. (VNA)

