

From the Law Office of Nguyen Van Dai
Ha Noi, Vietnam
August 21, 2006

Vietnam Steps up Repression of Religious Freedom

Vietnamese authorities at the provincial level brutally persecute house churches while their central government welcomes Ambassador John Hanford of the U.S. Bureau on International Religious Freedom.

Starting Sunday August 6 the Public Security Police of Thanh Hoa has stepped up their effort to hinder the religious activities of house churches in the following areas:

- Xom 6, Xa Thieu Vien, Huyen Thieu Hoa;
- Thon Hoang Lap, Xa Dong Phu, Huyen Dong Son
- Thon Yen Co, Xa Quang Yen, Huyen Quang Xuong
- Xa Quang Tan, Huyen Quang Xuong

On August 14, the Public Security Police of Xa Quang Tan, Huyen Quang Xuong entered the home of Mr. Nguyen Duc Dung, the leader of the Baptist General Conference Church, and used force to remove the Church's sign. The attached pictures show the police taking down the sign and Bui Sy Thuc, Deputy Chief of Policy, satisfied upon completion of his task.



Public Security Police taking down the sign of the Baptist General Conference Church, August 14, 2006



Bui Sy Thuc, Deputy Chief of Public Security Police, August 14, 2006

On the same day the Thanh Hoa Public Security Police assaulted several members of the Full Gospel Church.

On August 14, Tran Van Ky, a key member of the the Full Gospel Church of Thanh Hoa Province paid a visit to his fellow church member Nguyen Trung Ton at Thon Yen Co, Xa Quang Yen. There Ky and Ton were met by Dao, Provincial Public Security Officer and Huynh, Hamlet Public Security Officer. When Ky left Ton's house at 18:30, he was followed by five men under the direction of the police officers.

When he just left Thon Yen Co, Ky was stopped and beaten savagely. The attackers took away his cell phone and threw him and his bike into a ditch. He was later rescued by passersby. See attached pictures of Ky on the day he was assaulted and the day after.

Ms. Nguyen Thi Hoa, who paid a visit to Ton's house, was also intercepted by attackers, assaulted, and thrown into a ditch.

Today (August 21, 2006), Ton was summoned by the Provincial Committee on Religious Affairs. He was told that Thanh Hoa Province is considering allowing a few groups to register their religious activities. In the meantime no group may conduct religious activities. Ton was told to immediately cease all religious activities.



Tran Van Ky, August 14, 2006



Tran Van Ky, August 15, 2006

June of this year Ton and several of his fellow church members were detained, interrogated and then brutally assaulted by the police. This incident, reported in our Vietnam Update dated June 20, prompted the U.S. embassy to send an official to Thanh Hoa but was blocked from meeting with Ton's group. See attached pictures of Nguyen Trung Ton, Hac Ngoc Si, and Nguyen Thi Nhan.



Hac Ngoc Si and Nguyen Trung Ton, June 18, 2006



Nguyen Thi Nhan, June 4, 2006