

6. Destroying 24 SSFO in four provinces

The 24 SSFO of the Duong Van Minh religion in the four Northeastern Provinces Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Tuyen Quang and Thai Nguyen were destroyed by Vietnamese government forces between May and December 2013. Regardless whatever reason was given by local authorities, i.e. non-conformed application, building on state-properties, etc., the real motivations were the eradicating of the Duong Van Minh religion and dismantlement of SSFO ordered by the controversial dispatch No. 518/TGCP-TGK of the Government Committee for Religious Affairs on June 7, 2013 (see 5.4.1). Believers of the Duong Van Minh religion complained that the government didn't respect their legitimate rights. For instance believers in Hamlet Na Nhuom (Cao Bang Province) complained that all petitions on the destruction of their SSFO in 2007 were not answered by the government in the last five years whereas the authorities of Village Nam Quang appeared to hinder them on the same day when they started rebuilding the SSFO on May 16, 2013.⁵²

6.1. Funeral rituals of the Duong Van Minh religion

Hmong people have the burial custom of hanging a corpse on the wall for 7 days and nights and giving rice to the corpse. During that time the family had to kill buffaloes and cows to give a big funeral party to the visitors. Then the corpse was buried without a coffin. Thirteen days after the burial the family had to kill buffaloes and cows to worship the ghost of the dead and hang a crossbow on the wall to prevent the ghost coming back to the house. Hmong believers of the Duong Van Minh religion believe that the traditional funeral custom is unhygienic, expensive and noisy and have changed to the burial procedure taught by Mr. Duong Van Minh.

Mr. Duong Van Minh teaches them to keep the corpse in a coffin and then have the family will sit around it for 24 hours before burial. The Duong Van Minh believers have stopped practicing the custom of beating drums, blowing trumpets noisily and holding expensive funeral parties. They use the following wooden funeral accessories to replace the traditional custom (see **Picture 13**):

- a crucifix with the words "Sky, Earth, Sun, Moon" on it. The crucifix should replace the deity crossbow in Hmong folklore/myth;
- a long table to place the coffin on;
- a swallow to transport the soul to heaven;
- a toad to replace the traditional sound of drums;
- a cicada to replace the traditional sound of trumpets.

In some regions Duong Van Minh believers use only a table on which a picture of a swallow is engraved. The coffin of the dead is marked with signs in different colors: black for a death at home, blue for death by poisoning and red for death by accident.⁵³

⁵² The delegation of the authorities of Village Nam Quang who met the believers of the DVM religion in Hamlet Na Nhuom on May 16, 2013 comprised of officers of the Village Nam Quang: Chief of the People's Committee, Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party, Chief of Fatherland Front, Chief of Army, Chief of Public security, Chief of Veterans Association, Committee for Religious Affairs and a cadre of the Communist Party.

⁵³ "Đơn đề nghị gửi Ban Dân Vận Trung ương, đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam" (Petition to the Central Committee for Ethnic Affairs of the Communist Party of Vietnam), signed by Mr. Hoang Van Gianh representing Hmong people in the Provinces Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Tuyen Quang and Thai Nguyen, 12/10/2012 (Document kept at VETO!-Office)



**Picture 12 & 13: Funeral storage shed built on private land in Tuyen Quang Province and its content:
A table with engraved swallow for the coffin, a cross, a toad and a cicada on a small table**

Mr. Duong Van Minh teaches them to build a small shed for storing these funeral accessories which the believers in the village can share. Each SSFO is no bigger than seven square meters. The Duong Van Minh believers have built in total 24 SSFO in the Provinces Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Tuyen Quang and Thai Nguyen in 2007 and 2013 but all were destroyed by the government.

(See APPENDIX 1: List of 24 sheds for storing funeral objects of Duong Van Minh religion)

6.2. Construction wave of SSFO in three Northern Provinces in 2007

The first construction wave occurred in 2007 and resulted in 13 SSFO in the North Eastern Provinces Cao Bang, Bac Kan and Tuyen Quang. At that time there weren't any SSFO in the Province Thai Nguyen. In the first wave of construction the starting days for the construction were different and ranged from September 2007 to end of December 2007.

The very first 13 SSFO were not destroyed on the same day. The sheds existed from one day to one year. The SSFO in the hometown of Mr. Duong Van Minh (Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang) had just a wooden frame when government forces arrived and prevented further construction. Most of the SSFO in Province Cao Bang survived about 12 months before they were destroyed. The longest lasting SSFO survived 15 months and was destroyed on Jan 20, 2009. This shows that the Vietnamese provincial and local authorities are not paying most attention to the meaning of the SSFO in the Duong Van Minh religion or didn't have a uniform strategy at that time.

6.3. Construction wave of SSFO in four Northern Provinces in 2013

In the second wave the construction of all 24 SSFO in the four Northeastern Provinces Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Tuyen Quang and Thai Nguyen was started simultaneously on May 16, 2013. Herein eleven sheds were built and another 13 destroyed sheds were rebuilt or renovated.

A Duong Van Minh believer reported that the common date on May 16, 2013 was chosen by village elders because it would be a good day. Another reason for the enthusiasm could be the news received in early 2013 that Mr. Duong Van Minh was alive and was being treated in a Hanoi hospital. Years before many Duong Van Minh believers were uncertain when they heard the police saying that Mr. Duong Van Minh died.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Interview with Mr. D, a Duong Van Minh believer on 15/3/2014

The Province Cao Bang has the most sheds (11) and its District Bao Lam has the highest concentration rate with seven SSFO. A Duong Van Minh believer in District Bao Lam explained that the population of Hmong people there is higher than the Kinh people and the villages there are far away from each other. So they needed more sheds. **(See Table 2: Concentration of sheds in provinces and districts).**

Provinces (4)	Number of sheds demolished (24)	Number of districts (12)	Highest concentration (16 sheds concentrated in just 4 districts)
Bắc kạn	3	3	
Cao Bằng	10	4	7 sheds in District Bảo Lâm
Tuyên Quang	4	3	2 sheds in District Hàm Yên
Thái Nguyên	7	2	4 sheds in District Đồng Hỷ 3 sheds in District Võ Nhai

Table 2: Concentration of sheds in provinces and districts

A SSFO costs from 6 to 7 million VND (300 USD – 350 USD) if made of brick. Wooden sheds have lower costs. The building material costs were shared equally and voluntarily by the Duong Van Minh believers. At the trial of Mr. Hoang Van Sang on 14/3/2014, the People’s Court in District Yen Son, Province Tuyen Quang accused Mr. Sang of having (illegally) collected money to buy building materials from 97 Hmong people, each giving 65000 VND (approximately 3 USD), totaling 6 million VND (300 USD), to build the SSFO in Village Hùng Lợi, District Yên Sơn, Province Tuyên Quang. But the Hmong testified at the trial that they had contributed voluntarily. Mr. Hoang Van Sang was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment on the charge of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam’s Criminal Code]. (See the case of Hoang Van Sang in 7.3)

Province Thai Nguyen didn’t have any SSFO in 2007. In 2013 the Duong Van Minh believers there built six SSFO which were completely destroyed by government forces on Dec 5 and 6, 2013.

6.4. The destruction of SSFO in Province Tuyen Quang

6.4.1. Overview of the destruction of four SSFO in Province Tuyen Quang

Three SSFO in Province Tuyen Quang were destroyed on 15/10/2013. The building of the SSFO in Hamlet Ban Khe was obstructed and the shed couldn’t be built. The sheds in this province existed no more than 5 months. **(See Table 3: List of 4 demolished sheds in Tuyen Quang Province)**

Address of the shed for storing funeral objects	Construction (dd/mm/yyyy)	Demolition (dd/mm/yyyy)	Prior demolition	
			Construction (dd/mm/yyyy)	Demolition (dd/mm/yyyy)
Hamlet Bản Khê, Village Thượng Nông, District Nà Hang, Province Tuyên Quang	16/5/2013	16/5/2013	25/12/2007	20/1/2009
Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang	16/5/2013	15/10/2013	Jul 2007	Jul 2007
Hamlet Lè, Village Hùng Lợi, District Yên Sơn, Province	16/5/2013	15/10/2013	No	No

Tuyên Quang				
Thôn Minh Tiến, Village Minh Hương, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang	16/5/2013	15/10/2013	No	No

Table 3: List of 4 demolished sheds in Tuyen Quang Province

6.4.2. CASE STUDY 1:

The demolition of the SSFO and arrest of four believers in Hamlet Ngoi Sen

In the eyes of the Vietnamese government Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang is a hotspot because it is the location of Mr. Duong Van Minh and many of his active believers.

In 2007 the Duong Van Minh believers there started the construction of a wooden SSFO until it was stopped by government forces. According to the judgment No. 07/2014/HSST,⁵⁵ from 2007 to 2013, three representatives of the Duong Van Minh believers, Mr. Duong Van Tu, Mr. Ly Van Dinh and Mr. Dao Van No:

“have sent many petitions to local and central authorities asking for the recognition of the Duong Van Minh religion and the construction of the SSFO. They received many times the answer that the Duong Van Minh belief is an illegal organization and not recognized (note: by the state) and the construction of SSFO is unlawful.”

On 16/5/2013 Mr. Duong Van Tu brought a petition by 45 Hmong people to the Chairman of the People’s Committee of the Village Yen Lam, Mr. Pham Dinh Huynh, asking him for the permission for a SSFO but Mr. Huynh refused to receive the petition. The Duong Van Minh believers started the construction of the SSFO (2,2 m x 1,7 m). The three representatives had advanced the amount of 5 660 000 VND (approximately 280 USD) for buying building materials. Reliable source in Tuyen Quang said the SSFO was built on the property of Mr. Hoang Van Dinh, a Duong Van Minh believer. The source said that in the days following the construction the public loudspeakers propagated that the SSFO stored weapons and mines owned by the Duong Van Minh organization.

By end of September 2013 the Duong Van Minh believers were worried when they heard that a second SSFO in Province Cao Bang was destroyed. Therefore **Mr. Duong Van Tu** decided to travel to Hanoi to hand to the central government a complaint signed by 30 believers in Province Tuyen Quang. He was arrested there on Oct 10, 2013. The kidnap-like arrest of two other believers - **Mr. Ly Van Hau** and **Mr. Hoang Van Pao** - on Oct 14, 2013 caused uncertainty among the Duong Van Minh believers in Province Tuyen Quang. Later the police reported that they had been arrested because of having destroyed a forest in 2007.

On Oct 15, 2013, the government sent about 1000 persons to destroy the SSFO in Hamlet Ngòi Sen: 500 persons directly participated in the destruction and 500 other persons blocked all access (**Picture 14**). They were local police (in moss green uniforms), riot police (in black uniforms with shields with label “CSCĐ 113”), traffic police (in yellow uniforms), army, civil defense force and many other persons in plainclothes (**Picture 15**). Signboards forbidding filming and photographing were installed. Video cameras, photo cameras and mobile phones belonging to Hmong people were confiscated.

⁵⁵ Verdict of People’s Court of District Ham Yen, Tuyen Quang Province, No. 07/2014/HSST, Trial of Duong Van Tu and Ly Van Dinh on 20/3/2014

About 80 Duong Van Minh believers, most of them are women and teenagers, gathered around the SSFO for peaceful protest, crying and chanting “Oh God! Oh God!”⁵⁶. Government forces carried each of the protesters out of the area. Some were beaten but nobody was severely injured. Forces in uniforms set siege to protect men in plainclothes using hammers, crowbars and wooden bars to destroy the SSFO (**Picture 15**) and dig the foundation of the shed (**Picture 16**). They carried the smashed building materials away. The destruction was completed in a half hour. A video clip on the demolition taken from a hidden place in Hamlet Ngòi Sen shows that the Hmong believers were absolutely peaceful:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GooyJz3DOY>

Later **Mr. Ly Van Dinh** was arrested on Nov 19, 2013. **Mr. Dao van No** was searched by the police and went underground. On March 20, 2014, the People’s Court of District Ham Yen has sentenced Mr. Duong Van Tu to 21 months and Mr. Ly Van Dinh to 15 months imprisonment on the charge of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam’s Criminal Code].⁵⁷ (see case of Duong Van Tu and Ly van Dinh in 7.1) Additionally the police have arrested two other Duong Van Minh believers from Province Tuyen Quang, **Mr. Hoang Van Sang** and **Mr. Thao Quan Mua**, on Oct 10, 2013.



Picture 14: Surrounding after dispersing the Hmong protesters in Ngoi Sen on Oct 15, 2013

⁵⁶ A witness told VETO! that the believers are prepared because they knew the date of the destruction in advance. The people gathering around the SSFO for peaceful protest were women and teenagers. Men were required not to participate for avoiding escalation. (interview on 14/3/2014)

⁵⁷ Verdict of People’s Court of District Ham Yen, Tuyen Quang Province, Trial of Duong Van Tu and Ly Van Dinh on 20/3/2014



Picture 15: Demolition of the shed in Hamlet Ngoi Sen on Oct 15, 2013



Picture 16: Digging up the foundation of the shed in Hamlet Ngoi Sen on 15/10/2013

6.4.3. Video clips on destruction of SSFO in Province Tuyen Quang

Following video clips on destruction of SSFO are available on YouTube:

- Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GooyJz3DOY>
- Hamlet Lè, Village Hùng Lợi, District Yên Sơn, Province Tuyên Quang
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Fy3gR4OSGM>

6.5. The destruction of SSFO in Province Cao Bang

6.5.1. Overview of the destruction of 10 SSFO in Cao Bang

The Province Cao Bang with its 10 sheds has the most SSFO of the four Northeastern provinces.

Cao Bang is also the home of the first two destructions in 2013 (in Hamlet Lũng Gà and Hamlet Văn Thụ), only two days after their construction on May 16, 2013. Maybe these destructions have a character of a pilot project to test the reaction of the Duong Van Minh believers.

Generally the amount of destroyed SSFO in Province Cao Bang is: two in May 2013, one in September 2013 and seven in November 2013. All seven SSFO in District Bao Lam were destroyed on Nov 24, 2013. To carry out the destruction of these seven SSFO in District Bao Lam, the Cao Bang government must mobilized in total from 3 500 to 5 000 officers because in each village of the District it must engaged at least 500 policemen, soldiers and militia. The SSFO in Province Cao Bang lasted only from two days to six months. **(See Table 4: List of 11 demolished sheds in Province Cao Bang)**

Address of the funeral storage shed	Construction (dd/mm/yy)	Demolition (dd/mm/yy)	Prior demolition	
			Construction (dd/mm/yy)	Demolition (dd/mm/yy)
Hamlet Phiêng Roọng, Village Thạch Lâm, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	14/11/2007	25/11/2008
Hamlet Phiêng Phăng, Village Nam Quang, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng.	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	16/11/2007	30/12/2008
Hamlet Khuổi Vin, Village Lý Bôn, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	16/11/2007	4/12/2008
Hamlet Nà Pháo, Village Vĩnh Quang, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	17/09/2007	21/11/2008
Hamlet Nà Thần, Village Thạch Lâm, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng.	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	18/11/2007	25/11/2008
Hamlet Nà Hếng, Village Nam Quang, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	19/09/2007	10/12/2008
Hamlet Lũng Gà, Village Văn Dính, District Hà Quảng, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	18/5/2013	20/12/2007	22/7/2008
Hamlet Văn Thụ, Village Nam Tuấn, District Hoà An, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	28/9/2013	24/12/2007	16/1/2009
Hamlet Cốc Nghè, Village Cổ Linh, District Pắc Nặm, Province Bắc Kạn	16/5/2013	19/11/2013	25/12/2007	16/9/2008
Hamlet Nà Nhuôm, Village Nam Cao, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	25/12/2007	8/1/2009
Hamlet Bồ Đích, Village Quốc Toản, District Trà Lĩnh, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	18/5/2013	No	No

Table 4: List of 10 demolished sheds in Province Cao Bang

6.5.2. CASE STUDY 2:

The demolition of the SSFO and severe assault against believers in Hamlet Khuoi Vin

The crackdown in Hamlet Khuôi Vin, Village Lý Bôn, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng on 24/11/2013 is the most severe because government forces have used excessive violence and at least three different chemical weapons to severely injure the Hmong believers. VETO! believes that this crackdown was well prepared due to the fact that Village Khoi Vin has the most pious Duong Van Minh believers.

The SSFO in Village Khuoi Vin was firstly built in November 2007 and lasted until its destruction in December 2008. Thereafter the Duong Van Minh believers sent many petitions to central, provincial and local government agencies but didn't get an adequate answer.

On May 16, 2013 the Duong Van Minh believers started the renovation of the SSFO and finished it on May 22, 2013 (**Picture 17**). On Sep 10, 2013 the government invited the Duong Van Minh believers to a meeting, told them that the Duong Van Minh religion is an illegal organization and read the so-called dismantlement-decision. A video tape passed to VETO! documented the first part of this meeting (**Picture 18**). On this occasion, Mr. Nông Bày Chuyên, Chief of the Organizational Committee of the Communist Party in District Bao Lam, read an instruction from the Communist Party in District Bao Lam, saying that the Duong Van Minh believers had *“obstructed the dismantlement, and had photographed and filmed the dismantlement to serve the plot against the government. Going in crowd for complaining to the People’s Committee of the village, district and province had badly affected the political security and public order.”*⁵⁸

On Nov 24, 2013 Government forces comprising of 500 policemen (in moss green uniforms), riot police (in black uniforms bearing shield), the traffic police (in yellow uniforms), the army, civil defense force and people plainclothes moved to Village Khuoi Vin to destroy the SSFO (**Picture 19**). About 100 believers were standing around the SSFO and have chained one to other. They were crying. They were dragged, chased, beaten with electric batons and bars (**Picture 20**). Some young Hmongs laying on the ground were kicked and jumped on. Lý Thị Dinh, a 12 years old girl, was injured severely on the head (**Picture 22**). Mrs. Ma Thị Dậu was beaten with a bar three times in the back and fell unconscious (**Picture 23 & 24**).⁵⁹ The government forces took control after 10 minutes. The destruction of the SSFO lasted about 15 minutes (**Picture 21**). Bricks and fibro-cement sheet roof were smashed.

When the riot police carried Mrs. Ma Thị Dậu away many Duong Van Minh believers followed them to know where they were going. After a pursuit of about 3 km the riot police threw out gas bottles to stop them. About 30 Hmong fainted when they inhaled the gas (**Picture 25**). Mrs. Hoàng thị Dinh (1) had leg and arm burns because the gas bottle exploded very near to her (**Picture 26 & 27**). The face and the nose of another woman of the same name, Mrs. Hoàng thị Dinh (2), were still swollen 3 days after the incident and she claimed of shortness of breath (**Picture 28**). The health station of the Village Ly Bon refused to treat the victims or to transfer them to the district hospital. The victims have picked three gas bottles in different colors: green, yellow and grey.

⁵⁸ Video clip on the meeting with government's officers in Village Khuôi Vin on 10/9/2013 and on the destruction of the SSFO on 24/11/2013 was provided by a Duong Van Minh believer (Video clip kept at VETO! office)

⁵⁹ Interview with Mrs. Ma Thị Dậu on 15/3/2014 (Document kept at VETO! office)

The green bottles were exploded and couldn't be identified **(Picture 29)**.

The yellow bottle has 3 letter blocks with following markings **(Picture 30)**:

- First block: “Bộ Công An” (English: Ministry of Public Security) and “E112-H56”
- Second block: “Quả N-N-V” (English: Bottle N-N-V)
- Third block: “Năm sản xuất: 20” (English: Year of production: 20) and “Năm hết hạn: 20” (English: Year of expiration)

The grey bottle has 3 letter blocks with following markings **(Picture 31)**:

- First block: “Bộ Công An” (English: Ministry of Public Security) and “E112-H56”
- Second block: “Quả C-K-N” (English: Bottle C-K-N)
- Third block: “Năm sản xuất: 20” (English: Year of production: 20) and “Năm hết hạn: 20” (English: Year of Expiration).



Picture 17: Finishing the shed in Hamlet Khuoi Vin on Oct 22, 2013



Picture 18: Meeting with Party's and Government officers in Khuoi Vin on Sep 24, 2013



Picture 19: Police surrounded the funeral storage shed in Khuoi Vin on Nov 24, 2013



Picture 20: Hmong believers beaten savagely in Hamlet Khuoi Vin on Nov 24, 2013



Picture 21: Demolition of the funeral storage shed in Hamlet Khuoi Vin on Nov 24, 2013



Picture 22: Ly Thi Dinh (12 years old) was hit on the head (Khuoi Vin on Nov 24, 2013)



Picture 23: Mrs Ma Thi Dau was beaten unconscious (Hamlet Khuoi Vin on Nov 24, 2013)



Picture 24: Injuries on the back of Mrs Ma Thi Dau (Hamlet Khuoi Vin on Nov 24, 2013)



Picture 25: 30 persons unconscious due to the use of chemical weapons (Nov 24, 2013)



Picture 26: Burns on arms of Mrs Hoàng Thi Dinh (1) due to chemical weapons (Nov 24, 2013)



Picture 27: Burns on legs of Mrs Hoàng Thi Dinh (1) due to chemical weapons (Nov 24, 2013)



Picture 28: Swollen face of Mrs Hoang Thi Dinh (2) due to chemical weapons on Nov 24, 2013



Picture 29, 30, 31 (left to right): Chemical weapons used at the crackdown in Khuoi Vin on Nov 24, 2013

6.5.3. Video clips on destruction of SSFO in Province Cao Bang

- In Hamlet Văn Thụ, Village Nam Tuấn, District Hoà An, Province Cao Bằng on Sep 28, 2013: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9eh4CeZkd0>
- In Hamlet Khuổi Vin, Village Lý Bôn, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng on Nov 24, 2013: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DXGJa5UK3s&feature=share>

6.6. The destruction of SSFO in Province Bac Kan

6.6.1. Overview of the destruction of 11 SSFO in Bac Kan

The two SSFO in Province Bac Kan were destroyed in November and December 2013 and have lasted from six to seven months. (See Table 5: List of 2 demolished sheds in Province Bac Kan)

Address of the funeral storage shed	Construction (dd/mm/yy)	Demolition (dd/mm/yy)	Prior demolition	
			Construction (dd/mm/yy)	Demolition (dd/mm/yy)
Hamlet Đồng Luông, Village Quảng Chu, District Chợ Mới, Province Bắc Kạn	16/5/2013	21/12/2013	31/12/2007	4/11/2008
Hamlet Lũng Lạ, Town Nà Phặc, District Ngân Sơn, Province Bắc Kạn	16/5/2013	14/11/2013	No	No

Table 5: List of 2 demolished sheds in Province Bac Kan

6.6.2. Video clip on destruction of SSFO in Bac Kan

Video clip on an attempt to destroy the SSFO in Hamlet Lũng Lạ, Town Nà Phặc, District Ngân Sơn, Province Bắc Kạn on May 18, 2013 (See 5.4.2.3. Decision on Compulsory Measures of District Ngân Sơn, Bac Kan). The SSFO was finally destroyed in Nov 14, 2013.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwmMMbrpUOQ>

6.7. The destruction of SSFO in Province Thai Nguyen

Seven SSFO were destroyed in Province Thai Nguyen. All are new built in 2013, unlike in the Provinces Tuyen Quang, Cao Bang and Bac Kan in which the first SSFO were built in 2007. The SSFO in Province Thai Nguyen were concentrated in two districts: four in Dong Hy and three in Vo Nhai. Except one SSFO whose construction was obstructed from the beginning, the other SSFO in Province Thai Nguyen were destroyed on Dec 5 and 6, 2013. Thus the six SSFO in this province existed for about seven months. (See Table 6: List of 7 demolished sheds in Province Thai Nguyen)

Address of the funeral storage shed	Construction (dd/mm/yy)	Demolition (dd/mm/yy)	Prior demolition	
			Construction (dd/mm/yy)	Demolition (dd/mm/yy)
Hamlet Lân Thùng, Village Phương Dao, District Võ Nhai, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	16/5/2013	No	No
Hamlet Trung Sơn, Village Quang Sơn, District Đồng Hỷ, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	5/12/2013	No	No
Hamlet Bắc Phong, Village Dân Tiến, District Võ Nhai, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	5/12/2013	No	No
Hamlet Kim Sơn, Village Thần Xa, District Võ Nhai, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	5/12/2013	No	No
Hamlet Liên Phương, Village Văn Lang, District Đồng Hỷ, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	6/12/2013	No	No

Hamlet Mỏ Nước, Village Văn Lang, District Đồng Hỷ, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	6/12/2013	No	No
Hamlet Bản Tền, Village Văn Lang, District Đồng Hỷ, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	6/12/2013	No	No

Table 6: List of 7 demolished sheds in Province Thai Nguyen

The SSFO in Hamlet Bắc Phong and in Hamlet Kim Son of District Vo Nhai were built on parcels which belong to believers of the Duong Van Minh religion. After the destruction the People’s Committee of District Vo Nhai requested the owners to pay the “costs of compulsory measures” of 52 million VND (2600 USD) and 38 million VND (1900 USD) respectively ⁶⁰.

7. Imprisoned Duong Van Minh believers

Currently at least ten believers of the Duong Van Minh religion are detained. Among them eight believers are charged with “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam’s Criminal Code] and four were sentenced to prison terms up to 24 months. **(see Appendix 2: List of 10 imprisoned Hmong believers of Duong Van Minh Religion)**

The main argument used by Vietnamese People’s Courts to sentence the Duong Van Minh believers is provided by the Government Committee for Religious Affairs (Vietnamese: Ban Tôn giáo Chính phủ), stating that the Duong Van Minh religion had been an illegal organization. The defendants and believers of the Duong Van Minh religion are aware that even if they apply for the construction of the SSFO the authorities wouldn’t give them the permission. In the past 25 years they had sent many applications and complaints to local and central government’s authorities but only get a prolonged silence or an absurd rejection. Therefore construction of SSFO without waiting longer for permission is exercising of the right to freedom of religion or belief in view of excessive administrative restrictions.

Article 258 of the Vietnam Criminal Code is a vague-worded and catch-all provision and therefore liable to permit interference by the authorities. The ban of the Duong Van Minh religion and of construction of SSFO violates the right to freedom of religion, belief (article 18 ICCPR), the ban of sending complaints violates the right to freedom of opinion and expression (article 19 ICCPR) and the ban of organizing demonstrations violates the right to peacefully assembly (article 21 ICCPR).

7.1. Duong Van Tu and Ly van Dinh

Mr. Duong Van Tu, born in 1967, is living in Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang. Mr. Tu was dismissed Chief of Hamlet because of his Duong Van Minh religion. He was arrested on Oct 10, 2013.

Mr. Ly Van Dinh, born in 1963, is living in Hamlet 1A Thống Nhất, Village Yên Phú, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang. His membership in the Communist Party of Vietnam was suspended in November 2013 because he is a Duong Van Minh believer. He was arrested on Nov 19, 2013.

⁶⁰ (a) Thông báo chi phí thực hiện cưỡng chế số 2195/TB-UBND (Announcement on costs of compulsory measures No. 2195/TB-UBND), People’s Committee of District Vo Nhai, Dec 31, 2013 (Document available at VETO!)

(b) Thông báo chi phí thực hiện cưỡng chế số 2196/TB-UBND (Announcement on costs of compulsory measures No. 2196/TB-UBND), People’s Committee of District Vo Nhai, Dec 31, 2013 (Document available at VETO!)

On Mar 20, 2014, the People's Court of District Ham Yen has sentenced Mr. Duong Van Tu to 21 months and Mr. Ly Van Dinh to 15 months imprisonment on the charge of "Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State" (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam's Criminal Code]. **(Picture 32)**

Mr. Dao Van No is searched by the police and going underground.

According to the judgment of the People's Court of District Ham Yen, Province Tuyen Quang, Mr. Duong Van Tu and Mr. Ly Van Dinh joined the Duong Van Minh religion in 1989⁶¹. Duong Van Tu, Ly Van Dinh, Dao Van No and other Hmong believers built the SSFO in Hamlet Ngòi Sen in 2007 which was subsequently destroyed by government's forces. From 2007 until 2013 the three men had then sent "many petitions to local and central authorities asking for the recognition of the Duong Van Minh religion. They advanced the amount of 5.660.000 VND (approximately 280 USD) for buying building materials for the SSFO in Hamlet Ngòi Sen in 2013" (ibid.). A reliable source in Tuyen Quang said the SSFO was built on the property of Mr. Hoang Van Dinh, a Duong Van Minh believer. Vietnamese authorities claimed that it was "built on a plot reserving for a community house in Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm" (ibid.). The source said that in the days after the construction the public loudspeakers propagated the SSFO of the Duong Van Minh organization had stored weapons and mines. On Oct 10, 2013 Mr. Duong Van Tu was traveling to Hanoi to handover to the central government a complaint signed by 30 believers in Province Tuyen Quang. He was arrested there. Mr. Ly Van Dinh was arrested in Province Tuyen Quang on Nov 19, 2013. In February 2014 his family said that he could not move his arm freely because it was beaten with an electric truncheon at the arrest.

The website of the Communist Party in Province Tuyen Quang reported that "Attorney Tran Thu Nam, representing the two defendants at the court on Mar 20, 2013, had summed up that the construction of the SSFO is based on the voluntary of the people; the defendants have only offended regulations on land and construction which don't need to be prosecuted. But the prosecutor has opposed that the construction of SSFO is aimed to serve the 'Duong Van Minh belief which is an illegal organization according to the official dispatch No. 518/TGCP-TGK of the Government Committee for Religious Affairs. Furthermore, the defendants have incited the people and violated deliberately the law. They only have informed the local authority about the construction of the SSFO with one application'"⁶²

⁶¹ Judgement No. 07/2014/HSSST of the People's Court of District Ham Yen, Province Tuyen Quang in the trial of Mr. Duong Văn Tu and Lý Văn Dinh on Mar 20, 2014 (Document available at VETO!-Office)

⁶² "36 tháng tù cho 2 kẻ xây dựng 'nhà đôn' trái phép ở Yên Lâm (**36 months imprisonment for 2 persons who have built illegal funeral shed in Yen Lam Village**), Tuyen Quang Online, Communist Party of Vietnam in Tuyen Quang Province, Mar 22, 2014
<http://www.baotuyenquang.com.vn/phap-luat/an-ninh-trat-tu/36-thang-tu-cho-2-ke-xay-dung-nha-don-trai-phep-o-yen-lam-37213.html>



Picture 32: Mr. Duong Van Tu (l) and Mr. Ly Van Dinh (r) at the trial in District Ham Yen, Province Tuyen Quang on Mar 20, 2014 (Tuyen Quang online)



Picture 33: 600 H'Mông believers called for release of Duong Van Tu and Ly Van Dinh at the trial in District Ham Yen, Province Tuyen Quang on Mar 20, 2014

About 600 believers of the Duong Van Minh religion demonstrated for the release of Mr. Duong Van Tu and Mr. Ly Van Dinh on Mar 20, 2014 (**Picture 33**). They walked over 10 km to reach the court. On the way the police have stopped them to tear their banners at about 8:00 AM. Mr. Hoàng Văn Minh was arrested and released at 7.30 PM. At around 3.00 pm, when hearing the summing-up of the lawyer over the outside loudspeakers they chanted “Freedom for Duong Van Tu and Ly Van Dinh”. Subsequently, the mobile police 113 have attacked them with truncheon, electric batons and tear gas. According to a report sent to VETO! ⁶³ eleven persons were beaten unconscious and brought to the hospital after the trial ended. ⁶⁴ The police have arrested eight other Hmong believers, took their finger prints and released them at 7.30 PM on the same day. ⁶⁵

7.2. Thao Quan Mua

Mr. Thao Quan Mua, born in 1964, is living in Hamlet Minh Tiến, Village Minh Hương, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang. Mr. Mua was arrested on Oct 10, 2013. At the trial on Mar 20, 2014, the People’s Court of District Ham Yen has sentenced Mr. Thao Quan Mua to 18 months imprisonment on the charge of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam’s Criminal Code]. (**Picture 34**)

According to the website of the Communist Party in Province Tuyen Quang, Mr. Mua joined the Duong Van Minh religion in 2000. ⁶⁶ The government believes he was the organizer of the construction of the SSFO in Hamlet Minh Tiến in 2007 and 2013. But Mr. Mua reiterated at the trial on Mar 27, 2014 that the construction has followed a common aspiration of the Duong Van Minh believers and he hasn’t incited them. The construction in 2007 couldn’t finish because of the authorities’ intervention. The articles wrote that: “*With others he has then sent petitions to central and local authorities asking them for the recognition of the Duong Van Minh belief and permission for constructing the SSFO.*” (ibid.)

In 2013 he and other Duong Van Minh believers planned to build a SSFO in Hamlet Minh Tiến, Village Minh Hương, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang on May 16, 2013. Foreseeing that the authorities would not issue permission and hinder the construction he has applied pro forma for the permission on May 16, 2013 but on the other side started with the construction on the same day. The SSFO was finished on May 19, 2013.

Since the authorities ordered him to demolish the SSFO Mr. Mua “*appointed persons to take care of and protect the SSFO. Convinced by his words a dozen of persons has neglected their work and engaged in the monitoring. As he saw that many (note: government’s) working groups are coming to explain and persuade people of the state policy he wrote petitions,*

⁶³ Report of a Hmong witness on the demonstration on Mar 20 2014 (Document available at VETO! office).

⁶⁴ Eleven Hmongs were beaten unconscious on Mar 20, 2014: Ms. Lý Thị Sầu, Ms. Lý Thị Đầu, Ms. Đào Thị Chua, Ms. Đào Thị Chia, Ms. Dương Thị Hà, Ms. Lý thị Xuân, Ms. Hoàng Thị Sầu, Ms. Ngô Thị Sỹ, Mr. Dương Văn Lành, Mr. Hạng Seo Cu and Mr. Lý Văn Châu.

⁶⁵ Additionally to Mr. Hoàng Văn Minh other eight Hmongs were arrested at the sit-in on Mar 20, 2014: Ms. Đào Thị Xi, Mr. Dương Văn Sơn, Mr. Lý Văn Thông, Mr. Lý Văn Páo, Mr. Sùng Seo Pùa, Mr. Hoàng Văn Dinh, Mr. Dương Văn Sinh and Ms. Lý Thị Dung .

⁶⁶ “18 tháng tù cho kẻ cầm đầu xây dựng “nhà đôn” trái phép ở Minh Hương” (18 months imprisonment for a leader who has organized the building of an illegal funeral shed in Minh Hương Village), Tuyen Quang Online, Communist Party of Vietnam in Tuyen Quang Province, Mar 29, 2014

<http://www.baotuyenquang.com.vn/phap-luat/an-ninh-trat-tu/18-thang-tu-cho-ke-cam-dau-xay-dung-nha-don-trai-phep-o-minh-huong-37528.html>

collected signatures of believers of the illegal organization Duong Van Minh and brought it to the 'Citizens Reception Center of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and State of Vietnam' asking for recognition of the Duong Van Minh belief and protection of the SSFO." (ibid.)

While submitting a petition Mr. Mua was arrested in Hanoi on Oct 10, 2013. The SSFO in Hamlet Minh Tiên, Province Tuyên Quang was destroyed by government's forces on Oct 15, 2013.

The trial against Mr. Thao Quan Mua on Mar 18, 2014 was delayed after starting a while, probably because of the demonstration of around 1.000 Duong Van Minh believers in front of the court. At the trial on Mar 27, 2014, the People's Court of District Hàm Yên sentenced Mr. Thao Quan Mua to 18 months imprisonment. The court said that Mr. Mua had *"infringed upon the public order, the administrative work of state agencies; directly infringed the right to land management of the People's Committee of Village Minh Huong; affected the trust of part of Hmong ethnics in the implementation of Party's guidelines, State's policies and laws; damaged the prestige, the effective management and administration of government, agencies, committees, branches, society organizations; caused disorder in the local area, caused bad rumors in the society ... Additionally the activities of Thao Quan Mua have infected some poor families who followed the illegal Duong Van Minh organization so they didn't accept state's subvention, their children were dropped out of schools, refused state's financial assistance, which affected the education and training plan of the local authorities."* (ibid.)



Picture 34: Mr. Thao Quan Mua at the trial in District Ham Yen, Province Tuyen Quang on Mar 27, 2014 (Tuyen Quang online)



Picture 35: 1000 H'Mông believers called for release of Thao Quan Mua at the trial in District Ham Yen, Province Tuyen Quang on Mar 18, 2014

7.3. Hoang Van Sang

Mr. Hoang Van Sang, born in 1962, is living in Hamlet Lè, Village Hùng Lợi, District Yên Sơn, Province Tuyên Quang. Mr. Sang was Deputy Chief of the Hamlet and policeman. He was arrested on Oct 10, 2013. At the trial on Mar 14, 2014, the People's Court of District Yên Sơn has sentenced Mr. Hoang Van Sang to 18 months imprisonment on the charge of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam's Criminal Code].⁶⁷ **(Picture 36)**

According to the website of the Communist Party in Province Tuyên Quang Mr. Sang joined the Duong Van Minh religion in 1989.⁶⁸ In 2007 the Duong Van Minh believers started the building of the SSFO in Hamlet Lè, Village Hùng Lợi, District Yên Sơn, Province Tuyên Quang which was later destroyed by the government. The article wrote that at the national parliament's election in May 2011, Mr. Sang had refused the voter card. “*He had propagated that the State doesn't care about the aspirations of the Hmong ethnics so he refused (note: to vote). Because he was the group leader (note: of the Duong Van Minh religion), Deputy Chief of the Hamlet and policeman the believers of the illegal Duong Van Minh organization also refused their voter cards. Hoang Van Sang has continued to refuse rice seeds given by the State, prevent his children and grandchildren receiving the state's financial assistance for poor families and ethnic minorities. Some believers of the illegal Duong Van Minh organization have followed him and didn't allow their children to go to school or to receive state's assistance...*” (*ibid.*)

⁶⁷ Hmong Ordered Jailed for Defying Vietnamese Government Campaign (English), Radio Free Asia, Mar 14, 2014

⁶⁸ “Xét xử công khai vụ “nhà đôn” trái phép ở Hùng Lợi” (Open trial regarding the illegal funeral shed in Hung Loi Village), Tuyen Quang Online, Communist Party of Vietnam in Tuyen Quang Province, 15/3/2014

Attorney Tran Thu Nam summed up at the trial on 14/3/2014: „*The Hmongs have voluntary joined the Duong Van Minh religion and not because of Mr. Hoang Van Sangs incitement. Mr. Hoang Van Sang is one of the believers of the Duong Van Minh religion and has with other people financially contributed in the construction of the SSFO which was for religious worship and derived from the voluntary. Everyone has recommended, proposed and authorized Mr. Hoang Van Sang in buying building materials.*

Thus we cannot say that Mr. Hoang Van Sang has incited anyone because among those who have financially contributed to the construction of the SSFO there is nobody who complained or asked Mr. Hoang Van Sang to pay back their money. There is no victim amongst the folk. Those who refused rice seeds or prevented their children to go to school are not incited by Mr. Hoang Van Sang. They testified before this court that the loudspeakers had bad-mouthed the Hmong people so they became headaches and didn't want to receive anything. It was happened not because of the incitement of Mr. Hoang Van Sang.”⁶⁹

The trial against Mr. Hoang Van Sang was the first one in a series of trials against believers of the Duong Van Minh religion that the government has announced in advance. Some hundreds Hmong protesters have gathering in front of the People's Court of District Yen Son and called for his release. **(Picture 37)**



Picture 36 & 37: Mr. Hoang Van Sang (l) (Tuyen Quang online) and Hmong believers protesting in front of the court house at the trial in District Yen Son, Province Tuyen Quang on Mar 14, 2014

⁶⁹ “Phiên tòa xử ông Hoàng Văn Sang, dân tộc H’Mông theo đạo Dương Văn Minh” (Trial against Mr. Hoang Van Sang, an ethnic Hmong of the Duong Van Minh religion), Interview with Att. Tran Thu Nam after the trial, Radio Free Asia, 14/3/2014

http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/tria-hmong-nw-fune-ri-03142014083229.html

7.4. Ly Van Hau and Hoang Van Pao

Mr. Ly Van Hau and Mr. Hoang van Pao (born in 1973), are living in Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang. They were arrested on Oct 14, 2013, on the eve of the destruction of the SSFO in Hamlet Ngòi Sen

Mr. Hau and Mr. Pao have actively contributed to the construction of the SSFO in Hamlet Ngòi Sen on May 16, 2013. According to a reliable source, police said that they had to serve their three years' prison sentences given at a trial in 2008. In the trial on Aug. 17, 2008, Mr. Pao was charged with "destroying forest" [art. 189 and art. 47 VCC] during a famine in 2007 and sentenced to three years in prison. Additionally Mr. Pao had to pay a fine of 2,5 Mio VND (approximately 120 USD). It is unclear why these sentences are reanimated after nearly 7 years and if they are linked with the current oppression campaign against the Duong Van Minh believers.

7.5. Duong Van Thanh, Hoang Van Su and Hoang Van Sinh

Mr. Duong Van Thanh (born in 1981), *Mr. Hoang Van Su* (born in 1989) and *Mr. Hoang Van Sinh* (born in 1989) are living in Bac Kan Province. They were arrested on Feb 14 and 23, 2014 on the charge of "Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State" (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam's Criminal Code]. On July 30, 2014 the People's Court of Ngan Son District sentenced Mr. Duong Van Thanh to 24 months, Mr. Hoang Van Su to 18 months and Mr. Hoang Van Sinh to 15 months imprisonment.

Mr. Duong Van Thanh was appointed police officer of Hamlet Lung Lia in 2011 but he refused to control and to sanction the Duong Van Minh believers because of their religion. According to the indictment, Mr. Duong Van Thanh had called for contribution to build a small shed for storing funeral objects (SSFO) of about 7.5 square meters in Lung Lia Hamlet, Bac Kan Province. He had also produced the wooden funeral objects stored in the shed. He had called the followers to obstruct the government's destruction of the SSFO on May 17, 2013. On Oct 12, 2013, Mr. Duong Van Thanh went with dozens of H'mong believers to Hanoi to ask the government to stop the persecution of the Duong Van Minh religion. On this day he and Mr. Thao Quan Mua were arrested when they submitted the complaint to the Citizens' Petitions Office of the Party and State in Hanoi. He was released later but Mr. Thao Quan Mua was later sentenced to 18 months in prison.

Mr. Hoang Van Su contributed to the construction of the SSFO in Lung Lia Hamlet. On May 17, 2013 government's forces came to stop the construction but failed because he and the followers defended it vehemently. On Nov 21, 2013 hundreds of police officers and militia destroyed the shed for storing funeral objects (SSFO) in Lung Lia Hamlet. From May to November 2013 Mr. Hoang Van Su was interviewed twice by the exile Vietnamese Radio Chan Troi Moi for which he was later accused of "abusing democratic freedoms".

Mr. Hoang Van Sinh was appointed Chief of Lung Lia Hamlet in 2010 but he refused to control and to sanction the Duong Van Minh believers because of their religion. In May 2013 Mr. Hoang Van Sinh officially supported the application for the building of a SSFO in the hamlet. Because the authorities didn't reply to their application, the Duong Van Minh followers built the SSFO. On May 16, 2013 Mr. Hoang Van Sinh was ordered by his superiors to dismantle the shed, but he refused to sign the dismantling order. On May 17, 2013 government's forces came to stop the building of the SSFO but failed because the followers defended it vehemently. On November 14, 2013 hundreds of police officers and militia

destroyed the shed for storing funeral objects (SSFO) in Lung Lia Hamlet. Mr. Hoang Van Sinh protested against this arbitrary act because he argued, as Chief of Hamlet he should be informed beforehand. On February 14, 2014 Mr. Duong Van Thanh and Mr. Hoang Van Su, Sinh's brother, were arbitrary arrested. Mr. Hoang Van Sinh wrote petitions to the central government and went to Hanoi to petition for their release. Then within the same month Mr. Hoang Van Sinh was dismissed from his position of Chief of Hamlet.

7.6. Vu A Su

Mr. Vu A Su, born in 1986, is living in Hamlet Nà Pháo, Village Vinh Quang, District Bão Lâm, Province Cao Bằng. He was arrested on Nov 24, 2013 in Province Cao Bang on the charge of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam’s Criminal Code]. At the trial on May 6, 2014, Mr. Su was sentenced to 2 years in prison, and so far the highest sentence against a Duong Van Minh follower. Two week before the trial his family was informed by witnesses who received an invitation of the court that he would be tried. The witnesses and the family protested in vain against the short schedule.

On May 16, 2013 the Duong Van Minh followers built a new small SSFO of about 6 square meters in Na Phiao Hamlet to replace the one which was destroyed in 2008. But the government ordered them to dismantle the shed. Complaints of followers against this order were not replied. Therefore Mr. Su went to the People’s Committee of Bao Lam District in July 2013 to discuss but the authorities refused him. Subsequently he went to the market and showed a poster with pictures of the SSFO and the funeral objects inside. The police beat him and confiscated his poster accusing him of defaming the state.

On Nov 24, 2013 hundreds of police officers and militia surrounded the SSFO in Na Phiao Hamlet. Mr. Su was among dozens of H’Mong believers who are standing around the SSFO to protest against the attack. They were beaten and chased. Mr. Vu A Su was arrested during the police raid. After the incident his brother went to the People’s Committee of Vinh Quang Village to ask his whereabouts and was beaten by the Secretary of the Communist Party, Mr. To Van Thu. On the next day his wife went to the People’s Committee of Vinh Quang Village. Because she refused to sign a paper stating that her husband has committed a crime, she was handcuffed and arrested. Under the use of force the police took her fingerprint on the confession paper and released her later in the day.

8. Other suppressive and discriminating measures

8.1. Hostile propaganda

Local authorities use printed materials, public loudspeakers placed around villages and meetings to spread bad propaganda about the Duong Van Minh religion (see propaganda materials, 5.5). Politically, the propaganda machine called the Duong Van Minh religion and its believers “reactionary”. In Vietnam reactionary is a person against the ruling Communist Party and the government thus should be arrested or sanctioned. Additionally the Duong Van Minh believers are called unethical. Additionally the Duong Van Minh believers felt hurt because this propaganda is either fabricated or generalization of errors made by individuals which aims to isolate the Duong Van Minh believers in the Hmong community. Many Hmong fear harassment and avoid contact with Duong Van Minh believers. The so called schism among the Hmong is therefore not derived from the belief or the way of life of the Duong Van

Minh believers but initiated by the government's propaganda and interference. This negative propaganda has insulted the honor of Hmong people so many believers' families responded by not sending their children to school or refusing the government's assistance. The government branded them as anti-state policy. (See case Hoang Van Sang, 7.3)

8.2. Forcing to sign renouncement declarations

Since 1989 the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam and authorities in the Provinces Cao Bang, Tuyen Quang, Thai Nguyen and Bac Kan have advocated and carried out a policy of forcing the Duong Van Minh believers' families to sign renouncement pledge, which is now called "commitment paper for not believing and following the propaganda of the illegal Duong Van Minh organization" (see 5.4.2). The signing of renouncement of the Duong Van Minh religion is carried out in village meeting or by police when visiting families. Police were armed with guns and handcuffs to augment the pressure. The families are threatened that if they refuse they will no longer enjoy the support of the government.

A not verified source said that in early April 2014 two believer's families in Province Bac Kan were visited by police armed with handcuffs. They have signed the renouncement pledge. Some Duong Van Minh believers in this province panicked and fled into the forest.

The case of *Sung Van Tu* in 8.3 shows that the pressure was also practiced in state-sanctioned organizations such as the Association of Veterans.

8.3. Expelling from the Communist Party, state agencies and state-sanctioned organizations

As mentioned in 4.3, the Communist Party feared the political influence of the Duong Van Minh religion when it has realized that „*21 cadres in hamlets, 4 prestigious persons, 1 member of the village's People's Council, a secretary of the youth organization, 5 persons of political organizations, 3 policemen and 16 members of the Communist Party*” have joined the Duong Van Minh religion.⁷⁰

Hmongs working in state agencies are usually people with good Vietnamese proficiency whereas many Hmong don't have good Vietnamese skills. If they are arrested and sentenced the Hmong Duong Van Minh religion would lose the ability to complain against violations of the right to religious freedom.

According to reliable sources, at least the following chiefs of hamlet were expelled from the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam and dismissed their functions because they are Duong Van Minh believers, some of them were sentenced later:

- *Mr. Lý Văn Ninh*, Chief of Hamlet Văn Thu, Village Nam Tuấn, District Hoà An, Province Cao Bằng; Mr. Ninh has written many complaints on behalf of the Duong Van Minh religion. He is summoned frequently and interrogated by the police each time when he leaves the village.

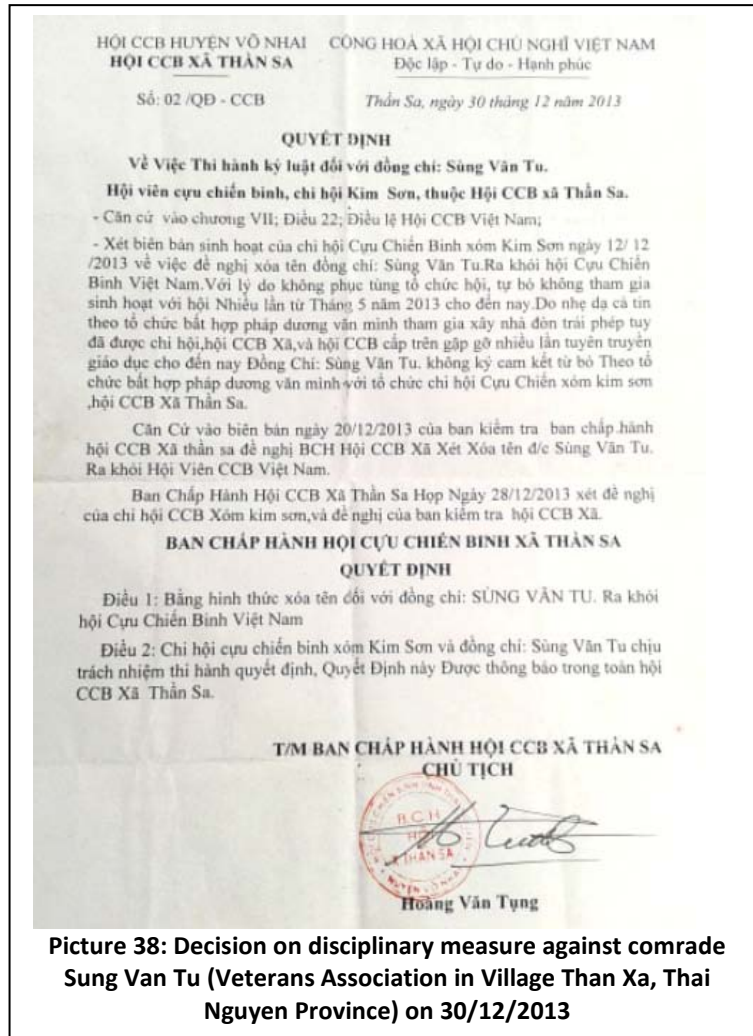
⁷⁰ Thông báo kết luận Hội nghị Triển khai các giải pháp ngăn chặn, tiến tới xóa bỏ đối với tổ chức bất hợp pháp Duong Van Minh trên địa bàn một số tỉnh Tây Bắc (**Concluding Communiqué of the Conference on the Deployment of measures to prevent in order to erase the illegal organization Dương Văn Minh in some North -Western Provinces**) [SECRET], No. 09-TB/BCĐTB, Central Presidium of the Steering Committee for Northwestern Region of the Communist Party Vietnam, 25/4/2012

- *Mr. Hoàng Văn Phùng*, Chief of Hamlet Nà Hég, Village Nam Quang, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng; Mr. Phùng refused to apply for leaving the Communist Party of Vietnam. Subsequently he was expelled from the party.
- *Mr. Dương Văn Tu*, Chief of Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang; Mr. Tu was arrested on 10/10/2013 and sentenced to 21 months imprisonment on the charge of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam’s Criminal Code] on 20/3/2014. (see 7.1)
- *Mr. Hoàng Văn Sang*, policeman and Deputy Chief of Hamlet Lè, Village Hùng Lợi, District Yên Sơn, Province Tuyên Quang; Mr. Sang was arrested on 10/10/2013 and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment on the charge of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam’s Criminal Code] on 14/3/2014. (see 7.3)
- *Mr. Hoàng Văn Sinh*, Chief of Hamlet Lũng Lịa, Town Nà Phặc, District Ngân Sơn, Province Bắc Kạn). He was arrested on 23/3/2013 on the charge of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam’s Criminal Code]. Before his arrest Mr. Sinh was dismissed Chief of Hamlet Lung Lia. (see 7.5)
- *Mr. Lý Văn Đình* (Hamlet 1A Thống Nhất, Village Yên Phú, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang); His membership in the Communist Party of Vietnam was suspended in November 2013 because he is a Duong Van Minh believer. He was arrested on 19/11/2013 and sentenced to 15 months imprisonment on the charge of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State” (religious freedom) [article 258 Vietnam’s Criminal Code] on 20/3/2014. (see 7.1)

Additionally the following Duong Van Minh believers were dismissed from their functions in state-sanctioned organizations:

- *Mr. Lý Văn Dũng*, Secretary of the Communist Youth Organization Ho Chi Minh in Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang; He was dismissed in December 2013;
- *Mr. Hoàng Văn Giang*, Deputy President of the Farmers Association in Village Nam Quang, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng. He was dismissed in May 2012.
- *Mr. Sùng Văn Tu* was expelled from the Veterans Association in Village Thần Xa, District Võ Nhai, Province Thái Nguyên because he has „*joined the illegal Duong Van Minh organization and contributed in the illegal construction of SSFO* “ (see **Picture 38**: “Decision on disciplinary measure against comrade Sung Van Tu” below).

Persons who were expelled from the ruling Communist Party in Vietnam or state agencies will have a bad record as “suspicious person” in their political register and thus have problem to find a new job.



8.4. Harassments

The Duong Van Minh believers, especially activists, are frequently harassed in their daily life:

8.4.1. Summons

They are frequently summoned for interrogation at the police stations. This measure has caused fear and uncertainty among the believers (see instruction to summon, interrogate and intimidate issued by the Communist Party in Province Cao Bang, 5.3.2). At least a dozen persons have gone underground to avoid arrest. Four of these persons who had going hidden in the forests and mountains up to 4 months were introduced to officers of the US. Embassy in Hanoi on Jan 24, 2014. After the meeting three persons returned to their houses. Their escort person was interrogated once by the police who signaled that they are aware of the meeting.

8.4.2. Illegal house searches

This measure has caused a lot of uncertainty because the police could refer to any imaginary reason to search houses of Duong Van Minh believers at day and night. The most used reasons are searching for robbers or drugs. In the days before the trials against some Duong Van Minh believers in March 2014 police and militia patrolled in some villages of Province Tuyen Quang and searched for potential demonstrators in houses of Duong Van Minh believers.

8.4.3. Control of identity card and driver license

The police could refer to any imaginary reason to ask the identity card or driver license of the Duong Van Minh believers who attempted to visit their fellows. The police could hold these personal documents for hours or days. When Mr. Duong Van Minh came back to his home town in Province Tuyen Quang by end of January 2014 the police have blocked every access paths led to his house. Many believers from other provinces were harassed and prevented from visiting him.

8.4.4. Confiscation

During the raids and demolitions of SSFO the police have confiscated video cameras, digital cameras, mobile phones and wallets of the Duong Van Minh believers and didn't return them.

9. Demonstrations for religious freedom

In mid of October 2013 about 100 Hmong people from the Provinces Cao bang, Bac Kan, Tuyen Quang and Thai Nguyen demonstrated for right of religious freedom of the Duong Van Minh religion in the capital Hanoi. They lived in tents in the Mai Xuan Thuong Park **(Picture 39)** and went daily to central government agencies to demand a written order to ban local authorities from offending the honor of the Hmong people, brutally maltreating them, recovering the honor of Mr. Duong Van Minh, prosecuting local officials for violating the laws and destroying their SSFO. The petition was signed by 48 persons.⁷¹

(see DOCUMENT 4: 131008 UrgentDenounce of HMong-DuongVanMinh.pdf)

⁷¹ Urgent Denounce of Hmong believers of Duong Van Minh Religion, 8/10/2013, signed by 48 persons.

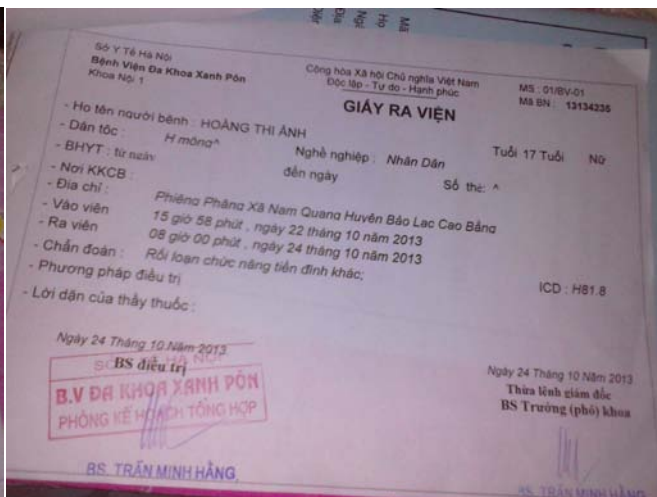
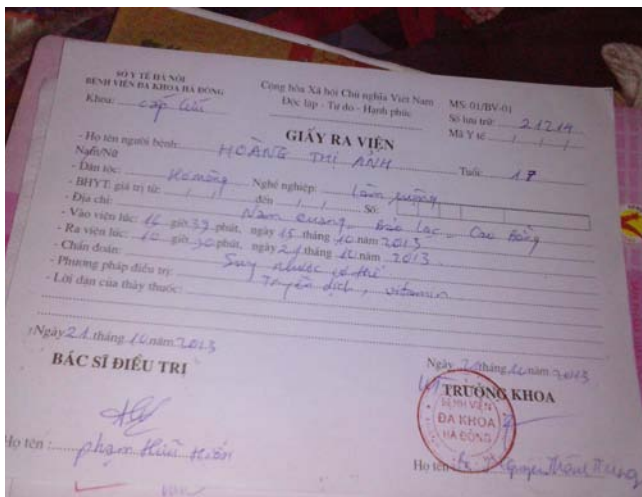


Picture 39: Sit-in of Hmong believers in Hanoi on 15/10/2013 (DanLamBao)

On the afternoon of Oct 15, 2013 the police dispersed violently the demonstrators and took them to the “Citizens Reception Center of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and State of Vietnam” in Hanoi. Victims said that the attacking policemen have used martial art to hit them on dangerous meridian points on their bodies causing pains and paralysis. *Mr. Duong Van Phung* and *Ms. Hoang Thi Anh* (17 years old) were beaten unconscious (**Picture 40 & 41**). They were taken to emergency hospital. Ms. Anh lapsed into a coma from Oct 15, 2013. The emergency department of Policlinique Ha Dong (Ha Noi) diagnosed asthenia and released her on Oct 21, 2013 (**Picture 42**). Her cousin brought her on the next day (Oct 22, 2013) to the Policlinique Xanh Pôn (Ha Noi) which diagnosed vestibular dysfunction (**Picture 43**). It released her on Oct 24, 2013 although she could not walk (**Picture 45**). Her cousin carried her on the way back to Province Cao Bang (**Picture 46**).



Picture 40 & 41: Hoàng Thị Ảnh (l), Dương Văn Phùng (r) were beaten unconscious on Oct 15, 2013 (DanLamBao)



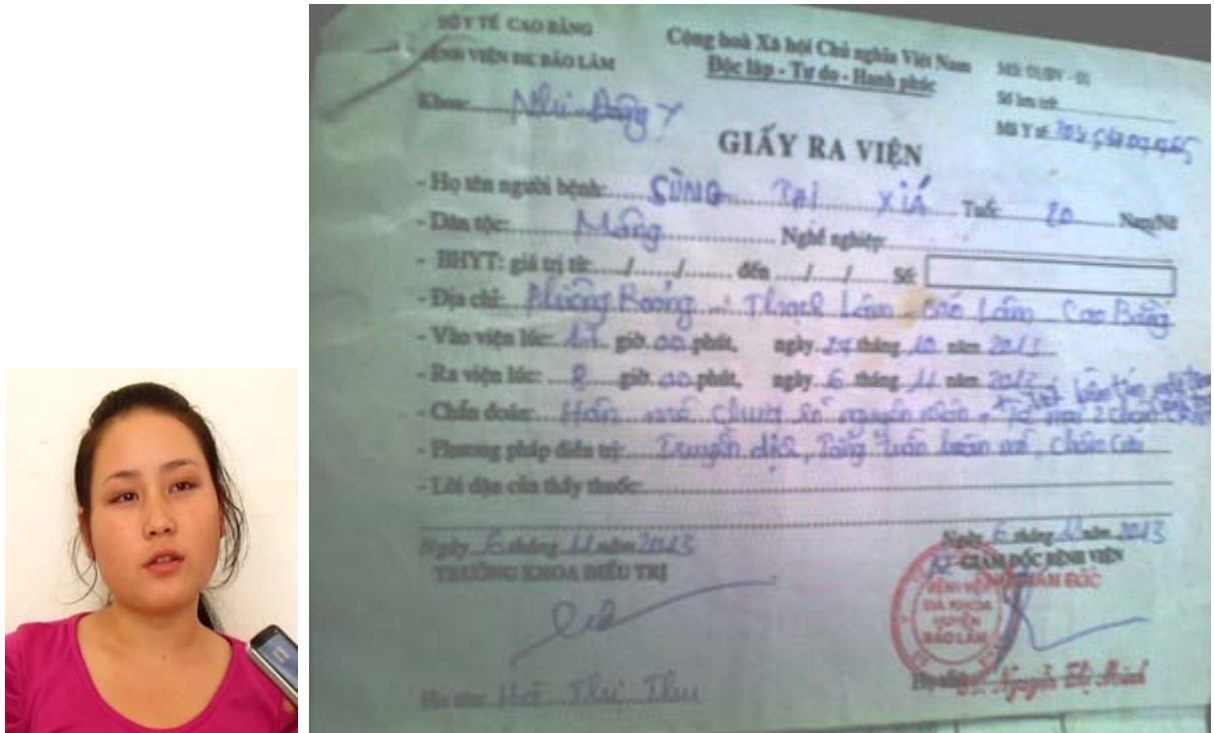
Picture 42 & 43: Hoang Thi Anh laid in two hospitals from 15 to 21 and from 22 to 24 Oct 2013



Picture 45 & 46: Hoang Thi Anh on the way going home to Cao bang Province on Oct 24, 2013

At midnight on Oct 24, 2013 the police started a second crackdown against the Duong Van Minh believers. They beaten them severely and brought them to the “Citizens Reception Center of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and State of Vietnam” in Hanoi. They were screened there and put into buses bringing them back to their home Province in Cao bang, Tuyen Quang and Thai Nguyen. A dozen Hmong people were injured. *Mr. Hoang Van Hai* and *Ms. Sung Thi Xia* were beaten unconscious. Subsequently Ms. Xia (20 years old) was

treated for 14 days in the Hospital of District Bao Lam, Province Cao Bang. The hospital diagnosis: “coma, bruised face and leg paralysis” (Picture 47).



Picture 47: Sung Thi Xia (photo taken on Dec 13, 2013) was hospitalized from Oct 24, 2013 until Nov 6, 2013

At 3 PM on Oct 25, 2013 three rights defenders: Mrs Bui Thi Minh Hang, Mr. Truong Van Dung and Mr. Le Thien Nhan went to the police station in Precinct Thuy Khue, Hanoi to demand the return of personal items to the Hmong people who were deported the day before. They were arrested after a controversial dispute. Mr. Truong Van Dung and Mr. Le Thien Nhan were beaten severely by the police. Mr. Dung has scratches on his face, bruises on his body and three broken ribs⁷². Dung and Nhan were shackled (Picture 48). Rights defenders in Hanoi gathered in front of the police station and asking for the release of the three persons. They were released at 9.30 PM.

⁷² “Truong Văn Dũng bị công an đánh gãy 3 xương sườn số 7, số 8 và số 9” (Police have broken the ribs No. 7, 8 and 9 of Mr. Truong Van Dung), Blog Nguyen Tuong Thuy, 26/10/2013 <http://nguyentuongthuy2012.wordpress.com/2013/10/26/truong-van-dung-bi-cong-an-danh-gay-3-xuong-suon-so-7-so-8-va-so-9/>



Picture 48: Mr. Truong Van Dung (l) and Mr. Le Thien Nhan (r) in shackles in the police station Thuy Khue, Hanoi on 25/10/2013 (screenshot of a video clip by Bui Thi Minh Hang)

10. Acknowledgments

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VETO! is very grateful to Mr. Duong Van Minh and many Hmong individuals who shared their knowledge and experiences with us, and provided us with valuable documents, videos and pictures. We appreciate especially their contributions keeping in mind that they are living under very difficult circumstances and the risk of their safety and freedoms.

APPENDIX I

List of 24 funeral storage sheds of Duong Van Minh religion

Vietnamese notations:

Hamlet = Thôn; Village = Xã; District = Huyện; Province = Tỉnh; Town = Thị Trấn

No	Address	Date of construction (dd/mm/yy)	Date of demolition (dd/mm/yy)	Prior demolition		Province	District	Note
				Date of construction (dd/mm/yy)	Date of demolition (dd/mm/yy)			
1)	Hamlet Đồng Luông, Village Quảng Chu, District Chợ Mới, Province Bắc Kạn	16/5/2013	21/12/2013	31/12/2007	4/11/2008	Bắc Kạn	Chợ Mới	
2)	Hamlet Lũng Lạ, Town Nà Phặc, District Ngân Sơn, Province Bắc Kạn	16/5/2013	14/11/2013	No	No	Bắc Kạn	Ngân Sơn	Construction prohibited on 17/5/2013
3)	Hamlet Cốc Nghè, Village Cổ Linh, District Pắc Nặm, Province Bắc Kạn	16/5/2013	19/11/2013	25/12/2007	16/9/2008	Bắc Kạn	Pắc Nặm	
4)	Hamlet Phiêng Rọng, Village Thạch Lâm, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	14/11/2007	25/11/2008	Cao Bằng	Bảo Lâm	Construction prohibited on 18/5/2013
5)	Hamlet Phiêng Phăng, Village Nam Quang, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng.	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	16/11/2007	30/12/2008	Cao Bằng	Bảo Lâm	
6)	Hamlet Khuổi Vin, Village Lý Bôn, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	16/11/2007	4/12/2008	Cao Bằng	Bảo Lâm	Construction completed on 22/5/2013
7)	Hamlet Nà Pháo, Village Vĩnh Quang, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	17/09/2007	21/11/2008	Cao Bằng	Bảo Lâm	
8)	Hamlet Nà Thần, Village Thạch Lâm,	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	18/11/2007	25/11/2008	Cao Bằng	Bảo Lâm	Construction

	District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng.							prohibited on 18/5/2013
9)	Hamlet Nà Hég, Village Nam Quang, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	19/09/2007	10/12/2008	Cao Bằng	Bảo Lâm	Construction hindered on 18/5/2013 but completed on 22/5/2013
10)	Hamlet Lũng Gà, Village Văn Dính, District Hà Quảng, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	18/5/2013	20/12/2007	22/7/2008	Cao Bằng	Hà Quảng	The first to be demolished in the 4 provinces, only 2 days after its construction.
11)	Hamlet Văn Thụ, Village Nam Tuấn, District Hoà An, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	28/9/2013	24/12/2007	16/1/2009	Cao Bằng	Hoà An	The second shed to be demolished, under the direction of the same Provincial Chair
12)	Hamlet Nà Nhuôm, Village Nam Cao, District Bảo Lâm, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	24/11/2013	25/12/2007	8/1/2009	Cao Bằng	Bảo Lâm	Construction prohibited on 17+18/5/2013
13)	Hamlet Bồ Đích, Village Quốc Toản, District Trà Lĩnh, Province Cao Bằng	16/5/2013	18/5/2013	No	No	Cao Bằng	Trà Lĩnh	
14)	Hamlet Bản Khẻ, Village Thượng Nông, District Nà Hang, Province Tuyên Quang	16/5/2013	16/5/2013	25/12/2007	20/1/2009	Tuyên Quang	Nà Hang	Obstruction by the local government. The shed could not be built.

15)	Hamlet Ngòi Sen, Village Yên Lâm, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang	16/5/2013	15/10/2013	Jul 2007	<i>Jul 2007</i>	Tuyên Quang	Hàm Yên	First demolition right after the wooden frame was erected
16)	Hamlet Lè, Village Hùng Lợi, District Yên Sơn, Province Tuyên Quang	16/5/2013	15/10/2013	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Tuyên Quang	Yên Sơn	
17)	Hamlet Minh Tiến, Village Minh Hương, District Hàm Yên, Province Tuyên Quang	16/5/2013	15/10/2013	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Tuyên Quang	Hàm Yên	Construction completed on 22/5/2013
18)	Hamlet Lân Thùng, Village Phương Dao, District Võ Nhai, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	16/5/2013	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Thái Nguyên	Võ Nhai	Obstruction by the local government. The shed could not be built.
19)	Hamlet Trung Sơn, Village Quang Sơn, District Đồng Hỷ, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	5/12/2013	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Thái Nguyên	Đồng Hỷ	
20)	Hamlet Bắc Phong, Village Dân Tiến, District Võ Nhai, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	5/12/2013	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Thái Nguyên	Võ Nhai	
21)	Hamlet Kim Sơn, Village Thần Xa, District Võ Nhai, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	5/12/2013	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Thái Nguyên	Võ Nhai	
22)	Hamlet Liên Phương, Village Văn Lang, District Đồng Hỷ, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	6/12/2013	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Thái Nguyên	Đồng Hỷ	
23)	Hamlet Mổ Nước, Village Văn Lang, District Đồng Hỷ, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	6/12/2013	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Thái Nguyên	Đồng Hỷ	
24)	Hamlet Bản Tền, Village Văn Lang, District Đồng Hỷ, Province Thái Nguyên	16/5/2013	6/12/2013	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	Thái Nguyên	Đồng Hỷ	

APPENDIX 2

List of 10 imprisoned Hmong believers of Duong Van Minh Religion (Update on July 30, 2014)

	Name	Arrest day dd/mm/yyyy	Trial day & Prison Sentence	Charge (§ VCC)	Prison	Province
1	Duong Van Tu	10/10/2013	20/3/2014 21 months	Abusing democratic freedom, §258 VCC	Prison TK235 in Tuyen Quang Province(Address: Trại giam TK235, Xóm 22, xã Kim Phú, Huyện Yên Sơn, Tỉnh tuyên Quang)	Tuyen Quang
2	Ly Van Dinh	19/11/2013	20/3/2014 15 months	Abusing democratic freedom, §258 VCC	Prison TK235 in Tuyen Quang Province(Address: Trại giam TK235, Xóm 22, xã Kim Phú, Huyện Yên Sơn, Tỉnh tuyên Quang)	Tuyen Quang
3	Thao Quan Mua	10/10/2013	27/3/2014 18 months	Abusing democratic freedom, §258 VCC	Prison TK235 in Tuyen Quang Province(Address: Trại giam TK235, Xóm 22, xã Kim Phú, Huyện Yên Sơn, Tỉnh tuyên Quang)	Tuyen Quang
4	Hoang Van Sang	10/10/2013	14/3/2014 18 months	Abusing democratic freedom, §258 VCC	Prison TK235 in Tuyen Quang Province(Address: Trại giam TK235, Xóm 22, xã Kim Phú, Huyện Yên Sơn, Tỉnh tuyên Quang)	Tuyen Quang
5	Ly Van Hau	14/10/2013	27/02/2008 3 years	Destroying forest, §189, §47 VCC	Prison TK235 in Tuyen Quang Province(Address: Trại giam TK235, Xóm 22, xã Kim Phú, Huyện Yên Sơn, Tỉnh tuyên Quang)	Tuyen Quang
6	Hoang Van Pao	14/10/2013	27/02/2008 3 years	Destroying forest, §189, §47 VCC	Released in May 2014 due to temporary discontinuance of serving the sentence for one year.	Tuyen Quang
7	Duong Van Thanh	14/2/2014	30/7/2014 24 months	Abusing democratic freedom, §258 VCC	Prison Suối Viên, Bắc Kạn Province (Address: Trại giam Suối Viên, Tỉnh Bắc Kạn)	Bac Kan
8	Hoang Van Su	14/2/2014	30/7/2014 18 months	Abusing democratic freedom, §258 VCC	Prison Suối Viên, Bắc Kạn Province (Address: Trại giam Suối Viên, Tỉnh Bắc Kạn)	Bac Kan
9	Hoang Van Sinh	23/3/2014	30/7/2014 15 months	unknown	Detention center of Public Security in Ngân Sơn District, Bắc Kạn Province (Address: Phòng Công an huyện Ngân Sơn, Tỉnh Bắc Kạn)	Bac Kan
10	Vu A Su	22/11/2013	7/5/2014 24 months	Abusing democratic freedom, §258 VCC	Prison of Cao bang Province (Address: Trại giam Tỉnh Cao Bằng, Thị xã Cao Bằng, Tỉnh Cao Bằng)	Cao Bang

DOCUMENTS:

DOCUMENT 1: 120425 Communiqué of Steering Committee North West Region.pdf

DOCUMENT 2: 120531 Order of Communist Party in Cao Bang Province.pdf

DOCUMENT 3: 130504 Launching a Concerted Campaign in Van Thu Hamlet.pdf

DOCUMENT 4: 131008 Urgent Denounce of H Mong-Duong Van Minh.pdf