

# URGENT ACTION

## MONKS AND NUNS THREATENED WITH EVICTION

**A mob with official backing is attempting to evict nearly 200 Buddhist monks and nuns from a monastery in central Viet Nam. The group have been sheltering there since they were evicted from another monastery in September, by a similar mob.**

On 11 December a mob of around 100 people, some of whom the monks and nuns recognised as police officers, forced the abbot of Phuoc Hue Monastery to sign an agreement to expel the monks and nuns no later than the end of the year. The mob had gone into the monastery on 9 December, and stayed there, harassing the monks and nuns, most of whom are under 25, and pressuring the abbot to sign the agreement. They disrupted a European Union (EU) delegation investigating the situation at the monastery on 9 December. The authorities have denied any involvement, but have consistently failed to provide any protection for the monks and nuns, or ensure they are offered suitable alternative accommodation.

In September a similar mob, which included police officers, had forced the monks and nuns out of another monastery, Bat Nha. Most of the monks and nuns, who at that time numbered 379, had taken shelter at Phuoc Hue.

The authorities have been actively involved in the mob's actions: they have ordered members of Communist Party organisations to take action against the monks and nuns; pressured members of the monks and nuns' families to give up their way of life; and occasionally blocking supplies of food and other essentials to the monastery.

The monks and nuns are followers of Buddhist leader Thich Nhat Hanh, a monk based in France. He came to prominence as a Buddhist peace activist in the 1960s, and is an advocate of freedom of religion and other human rights.

### **PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY, in English, Vietnamese, French or your own language:**

- Calling on the authorities to protect the monks and nuns from Phuoc Hue from harassment, threats and eviction;
- Urging them to take action to ensure that the Phuoc Hue Monastery is allowed to conduct its activities without fear of harassment or eviction;
- Urging them to order a prompt and impartial investigation into the mob attacks against the monasteries in Bat Nha in September and Phuoc Hue in December, and into reports that the police failed to protect the monks and nuns;
- Calling on them respect the right to freedom of religion, and ensure that religious groups in Viet Nam are able to practice their religion freely.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 FEBRUARY 2010 TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Pham Gia Khiem

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1 Ton That Dam Street

Ba Dinh district, Ha Noi

Viet Nam

**Fax: +8443 823 1872**

**Email: [bc.mfa@mofa.gov.vn](mailto:bc.mfa@mofa.gov.vn)**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Minister of Public Security

Le Hong Anh

Ministry of Public Security

44 Yet Kieu Street

Ha Noi

Viet Nam

**Fax: +8443 942 0223**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The government maintains rigid control over all aspects of religious life in Viet Nam. Members of churches not officially approved by the state face repression, including being forced to renounce their faith, administrative detention and imprisonment. The Vietnamese authorities have a long history of persecuting religious groups they believe oppose the state. Members of such groups are regularly arrested, harassed and kept under surveillance. These include members of the evangelical Protestant community, Roman Catholics, Hoa Hao Buddhists and the Cao Dai church. The senior leadership of the banned Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam has been under house arrest or restrictions for decades, including the Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, Supreme Patriarch, who had been under house arrest since 1982 until his death in July 2008, and newly appointed Supreme Patriarch Thich Quang Do. Human rights violations against evangelical Christian Montagnards in the Central Highlands have continued for years, and people from the mostly Buddhist Khmer Krom community in southern An Giang province likewise face persecution.

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