

Vietnam: Widespread Police Brutality, Deaths in Custody

Fatal Police Beatings Cause Public Protests

September 22, 2010

(New York) - The Vietnamese government should promptly open thorough and transparent investigations into a series of deaths caused by the use of lethal force by policemen and hold the responsible officers accountable, Human Rights Watch said today.

Human Rights Watch has documented 19 incidents of reported police brutality, resulting in the deaths of 15 people, all reported in the state-controlled press in Vietnam during the last 12 months. The Vietnamese government should publicly recognize this problem, issue orders outlawing abusive treatment by police at all levels, and make clear that any police officers found responsible for such practices will face disciplinary action and, where appropriate, criminal prosecution, Human Rights Watch said.

"Police brutality is being reported at an alarming rate in every region of Vietnam, raising serious concerns that these abuses are both systemic and widespread," said Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director of Human Rights Watch.

In some cases, detainees died after beatings inflicted while they were in the custody of the police or civil defense forces (*dan phong*). In other instances, victims were killed in public areas when police used what appears to have been excessive force. Many of these incidents provoked public protests throughout Vietnam during the past year.

Deaths of people in police custody or at the hands of police have been reported in provinces in the far north such as Bac Giang and Thai Nguyen, in major cities such as Hanoi and Da Nang, in Quang Nam along the central coast, in the remote highland province of Gia Lai, and in the southern provinces of Hau Giang and Binh Phuoc.

In many cases, those killed in detention were being held for minor infractions. For example, on June 30, 2010, Vu Van Hien of Thai Nguyen died in police custody after being detained following a dispute with his mother. An autopsy revealed that he died due to severe bleeding in the brain and that he had suffered multiple injuries, including a broken jawbone and broken ribs.

Three weeks later, on July 23, public protests erupted in Bac Giang in response to the death of 21-year-old Nguyen Van Khuong. He died just hours after being taken into police custody for riding a motorcycle without a helmet.

Local media coverage of these events has been uneven, raising continuing concerns about government control of the press in Vietnam. In some instances, media reports have led to investigations of police brutality cases that had previously been covered up. For example, a series of articles published by the newspaper *Family and Society* in February prompted the Justice Department in Hai Duong province

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RFA Tiếng Việt: Human Rights Watch báo động tình trạng nhiều người chết khi bị công an bắt giữ

Police brutality is being reported at an alarming rate in every region of Vietnam, raising serious concerns that these abuses are both systemic and widespread.

Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director of
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to request further investigation into the suspicious death in custody of Dang Trung Trinh on November 28, 2009, which police had dismissed previously as a "death due to illness."

On the other hand, there has been almost no local coverage of other key cases, such as the death of Nguyen Thanh Nam at Con Dau Parish in Da Nang. After participating in a funeral procession in Con Dau on May 4 to a cemetery located on disputed land slated for development by the government, Nam was summoned, interrogated, and beaten by Da Nang police several times. On July 2, Nam was severely beaten while in custody of the local civil defense force and left bound in a remote field. He died at home from his injuries on July 3.

Local residents who responded to telephone queries from Radio Free Asia said they were afraid to talk about the Con Dau case, especially the cause of Nam's death. Government authorities have denied police culpability, stating that Nam died from a stroke. The official explanation has been rejected by members of Nam's family, including his older brother in testimony before the US Congress on August 18.

"Rather than silencing the media or allowing journalists to publish only when given a green light, the Vietnamese government should step back and permit investigative reporting into these matters," Robertson said. "Independent journalism can help bring to light abuses that local police and authorities hope to sweep under the carpet."

In the 19 incidents of police brutality documented since September 2009, there are no reports that police officers were convicted by a court for their actions. In the majority of cases, higher officials have imposed minor punishments such as requiring offending officers to apologize to the victim's family, accept transfer to another unit, or write a report about the incident for review by superiors.

In the few cases in which offending police officers have been suspended and/or detained pending investigations, such as the case in Bac Giang, the result appears to have been a response to pressure from public demonstrations against police brutality and exposés on independent internet sites that feature incriminating accounts by witnesses, photographs, videos, and blog reports.

"Many of these disturbing cases are no secret, and it is up to government ministries and Vietnam's National Assembly to investigate," Robertson said. "Until police get the message from all levels of government that they will be punished, there is little to stop them from this abusive behavior, including beating people to death."

Annex: Reported Incidents of Police Brutality Compiled from Vietnamese State Media

Human Rights Watch's findings are based primarily on incidents of police abuse reported in the government-controlled press in Vietnam. This includes official organs of the Vietnamese Communist Party, army, police, Supreme Court, and general inspectorate office (*Thanh Tra*), as well as other officially registered newspapers and online publications in Vietnam that operate under governmental regulations such as *Nha Bao & Cong Luan* (Journalists and Public Opinion), *Gia Dinh & Xa Hoi* (Family & Society), *Viet Nam Net*, *Phap Luat Viet Nam* (Law of Vietnam), *Phap Luat TP HCM* (Law of Ho Chi Minh City), *Doi Song & Phap Luat* (Life & Law), *Dan Tri* (Popular Knowledge), *Lao Dong* (Labor), *Nguoi Lao Dong* (Laborer), *Dai Doan Ket* (Great Unity), *Tuoi Tre* (Youth), *Tien Phong* (Vanguard), *Nong Nghiep* (Agriculture), *Dan Viet* (Vietnamese People), *Dat Viet* (The Land of Viet), and *VN Express*. To a lesser degree, media sources based outside of Vietnam, including the Vietnamese-language services of the BBC, Radio Free Asia, and Voice of America, and Vietnamese-language web pages and blogs inside Vietnam and abroad, were also consulted.

* **September 9, 2010: Tran Ngoc Duong**, 52, died in police custody at the People's Committee headquarters in Thanh Binh commune, Trang Bom district, Dong Nai province a few hours after he was detained for a minor dispute with his neighbor. The police told his family that he had committed suicide by hanging himself. His wife expressed doubts that suicide was the cause of death. She

said that Duong was found dead sitting down, with a leather belt around his neck and no marks on his neck. The case is reportedly under investigation.

Sources:

Giang Huong, "[A Man Hangs Himself in the Headquarters of the Commune People's Committee](#)" [Mot nguoi dan ong treo co trong tru so UBND xa], *Bee.net.vn*, September 13, 2010.

Vinh Minh, "[A Man Dies at the Headquarters of the Commune People's Committee](#)" [Mot nguoi dan ong chet tai UBND xa], *Viet Nam Net*, September 13, 2010.

*** August 8, 2010: Tran Duy Hai**, 32, died in police custody in Hau Giang province after his arrest a day earlier on suspicion of snatching a woman's gold necklace. On August 12, Hau Giang's provincial police chief announced that an autopsy had determined that Hai had committed suicide by hanging. Within hours of the death the body had been cremated, preventing further investigation. No information has appeared in the media regarding whether officials have responded to complaints filed by the family with the provincial police and justice departments.

Sources:

Quoc Huy, "[Hau Giang: A Person Dies at the Police Station](#)" [Hau Giang: Mot nguoi dan chet tai tru so cong an] *Dan Viet*, August 11, 2010.

Quoc Huy, "[The Case in which a Citizen Died at the Police Station: The Department of Justice will Join \[the investigation\]](#)" [Vu cong dan chet o tru so cong an: Vien Kiem sat se vao cuoc], *Dan Viet*, August 12, 2010.

Quoc Huy, "[The Family of the Victim who Died at the Police Station has Filed a Complaint](#)" [Gia dinh nan nhan chet o tru so cong an khieu nai]; *Dan Viet*, August 13, 2010.

V.D, "[Tran Duy Hai Died in Temporary Detention; He Committed Suicide by Hanging](#)" [Tran Duy Hai chet trong Trai tam giam do treo co tu sat], *Cong an Nhan dan*, August 16, 2010.

*** August 6, 2010: Hoang Thi Tra**, 20, was shot and injured by undercover traffic police in Thai Nguyen province while riding on the back of her boyfriend's motorcycle. Two undercover police on a motorcycle chased the couple, who were riding without helmets, and shot Tra in the thigh after the motorcycle capsized and fell over. Tra underwent a five-hour operation to remove the bullet. After widespread public outcry, on August 11 police officials announced the three-month suspension of a police lieutenant, one of the officers involved in the shooting, pending further investigation. The deputy provincial police chief, Colonel Nguyen Nhu Tuan, told *Nong Nghiep*: "Many people know about and witnessed this incident; therefore it cannot be hidden or covered up."

Sources:

Khac Nguyen, "[Going Out with her Boyfriend and Shot in the Thigh](#)" [Di Choi voi ban trai bi ban thung dui], *VN Express*, August 8, 2010.

Nhom PV [Journalists], "[New Information about the Case of 'a Female Student who Was Puzzlingly Shot'](#)" [Thong tin moi vu "uan khuu nu sinh o Thai Nguyen bi ban"], *Phap Luat Viet Nam*, August 10, 2010.

Thai Uyen & Minh Duc, "[Being Shot for not Obeying an Order from Traffic Police?](#)" [Bi ban do khong chap hanh hieu lenh CSGT], *Thanh Nien*, August 11, 2010.

"[The case of the Shooting of a Female Student: It Was Not Necessary to Fire the Shot. Both Officers in the Shooting Are Related to Provincial Police Officials](#)," [Vu nu sinh bi ban: Chua can thiet phai no sung], *Nong Nghiep*, August 12, 2010.

*** July 30, 2010:** After **Nguyen Van Trung**, 46, engaged in a minor verbal conflict in a restaurant with a commune-level police

officer in Binh Thuan province, the officer called the civil defense force (*dan phong*), a voluntary security force under the authority of village People's Committees that often collaborates with local police. Four civil defense force members arrived and beat Trung repeatedly on his head and back with clubs until he was unconscious. Members of the defense force then took him on a motorbike to police headquarters, where he was handcuffed. Police officers "cursed, kicked, and hit him," causing him to "spit blood," *Phap Luat* reported. After Trung's family arrived at the police station and loudly protested, police allowed them to take Trung to the local hospital's emergency room. He had multiple bruises and contusions all over his back and stomach, a black eye, and cuts on his head that required stitches. *Phap Luat* reported that on August 1, the chief and deputy commune police chief visited Trung in the hospital. They pressured his wife not to file a complaint about the case, promised to pay his medical bills, and offered to secure an apology from the offending police officers.

Sources:

Nguyen Phu Nhuan, "Being Beaten Unconscious for Reminding [a police officer] about a 'Bribe'" [Bi danh ngat xiu vi nhac chuyen lot tay], *Phap Luat TP HCM*, August 5, 2010.

"Binh Thuan: A Severe Police Beating" [Binh Thuan: bi cong an danh trong thuong], *Dai Doan Ket*, August 6, 2010.

* **July 23, 2010: Nguyen Van Khuong**, 21, was beaten to death in police custody after being detained for a traffic violation by police in Tan Yen district, Bac Giang province. After massive protests in Bac Giang, a police officer was arrested for "causing death while carrying out official duties" under penal code article 97. Three other officers were suspended from duty for further investigation, but no further information has appeared in the media about the status of the investigation.

Sources:

"Bac Giang Provided Information about the Trouble-Making Case at the Provincial People's Committee" [Bac Giang thong tin ve vu gay roi o tru so UB tinh], *Lao Dong*, July 27, 2010.

"Arrest the Police Lieutenant who Beat a Person to Death in Bac Giang" [Bat giam thieu uy cong an danh chet nguoi tai Bac Giang], *Lao Dong*, August 6, 2010.

"Prosecute a Former Lieutenant who Caused a Person's Death" [Khoi to nguyen Thieu uy lam chet nguoi], *Cong an Nhan dan*, August 6, 2010.

Ha Linh, "The Case in which a Citizen Died at the Police Station of Tan Yen District (Bac Giang): Detain a Police Lieutenant (August 10, 2010)" [Vu cong dan chet tai tru so Cong an huyen Tan Yen (Bac Giang): Bat tam giam mot thieu uy cong an (10/08/2010)], *Dai Doan Ket*, August 10, 2010.

* **July 21, 2010:** Police from La Phu commune, Hoai Duc district, Hanoi - including the deputy chief of the commune police - stopped **Nguyen Phu Son's** truck, dragged him out of the vehicle, and beat him repeatedly with electric shock batons on his head and body. *Phap Luat & Xa Hoi* reported that Son's father went to the police station and saw his son "handcuffed with bruises all over his face. The deputy chief of police told him, 'I am on duty therefore I have the right to beat your son. I dare you to file a claim. Go ahead and file a claim wherever you want...'" He was admitted to a hospital the next day, *Nha Bao & Cong Luan* reported, and Son's medical file reported that his entire body was "covered with bruises, especially on the lower rib area; [and there are] several head and chest injuries from a severe beating the day before." Afterward, the deputy chief of the commune police who participated in the beating was asked to report on the case to his superiors. There is no information as to whether any other investigatory steps have been taken.

Sources:

Vu Anh Minh, "Hanoi Needs to Quickly Clarify the Case in which a Person Was Beaten at La Phu Commune" [Ha Noi: Can som lam ro

vu mot nguoi dan bi danh tai xa La Phu], *Nha bao & Cong luan*, July 30, 2010.

Nhat Minh, "I Have the Right to Beat People (!?)" [Toi co quyen danh nguoi (!?)], *Phap luat & Xa hoi*, August 1, 2010.

* **July 3, 2010: Nguyen Thanh Nam**, 43, died after being beaten in Da Nang by police and members of the local civil defense force (*dan phong*). In articles published by Vietnam News Agency and other official state media, the Da Nang Religious Affairs Committee and other provincial authorities rejected as "completely false" reports that Nam was beaten to death by security forces, stating that he had died at home from a stroke. Nam had been one of the members of the funeral assistance team during a controversial funeral procession on May 4 to the Con Dau Parish cemetery, located on a piece of land that the government has slated for use as an economic development zone. During the funeral, police used truncheons and electric shock batons to beat people in the procession and arrested more than 60 persons, according to participants interviewed by Radio Free Asia afterward. Most of those arrested were subsequently released. In mid-May, six of those who had been detained were charged with opposing law enforcement officers and disturbing public order. Nam, who was beaten badly by police on two occasions after being summoned to the police station for questioning, went into hiding on July 2 to avoid being summoned again. He was apprehended that night by the civil defense force, who tied him up and took him to a nearby rice field. When his wife arrived, she found him bound and covered in mud and blood. He died at his house as a result of his injuries. To date, there has been no report of any investigation being carried out into the killing.

Sources:

J.B. Nguyen Huu Vinh, "A Memo from Con Dau - Part IV - The Death of Toma Nguyen Thanh Nam" [Con Dau ky su - Ky IV - Cai chet cua anh Toma Nguyen Thanh Nam] - Videotaped interview with Nguyen Thanh Nam's wife, *Nu Vuong Cong Ly*, August 22, 2010.

"US Congressmen's Claims of Attacks in Vietnam Refuted," *Vietnam News Agency*, August 20, 2010.

"Police Attack Hearse, Seize Coffin in Con Dau," [Cong an tan cong xe tang, cuop quan tai o Con Dau], *RFA*, May 4, 2010.

Viet Long, "Police Charge Six People in the Crackdown on Con Dau Funeral," [Cong an Viet Nam khoi to 6 giao dan Con Dau], *RFA*, May 18, 2010.

Mac Lam, "Interviewing the Wife of a Con Dau Catholic about the Situation of Her Husband in Jail" [Vo mot giao dan Con Dau ke ve tinh canh cua chong o trong tu], *RFA*, September 5, 2010.

Gia Minh, "Representative of the US Embassy Goes to Con Dau to Learn about the Death of a Catholic" [Dai dien Dai su quan My den Con Dau tim hieu cai chet cua giao dan], *RFA*, September 6, 2010.

* **June 30, 2010: Vu Van Hien**, 40, died two days after being arrested and detained at the police headquarters in Dai Tu District, Thai Nguyen Province. *Phap Luat* reported that when the police took Hien to the district hospital on June 29, he was in a coma and suffering from multiple injuries. The victim's brother-in-law told *Phap Luat* that "at the Dai Tu hospital, I found Hien unconscious, his mouth full of blood, his limbs bruised and scratched." An autopsy revealed that he had a broken jaw, fractured skull, blood clots in his lungs, four broken ribs, and a broken shinbone. By the time he was transferred to the provincial hospital, Hien had stopped breathing and was pronounced dead. While the police stated that Hien had a 'neurological disorder' and had hit his head twice on the wall of the detention facility, *Phap Luat* stated in its July 26 edition that the newspaper's "own investigation suggested that it was most likely he had been beaten to death." *Lao Dong* newspaper, which reconfirmed the findings of the autopsy and checked Hien's hospital files, concluded in an article on August 13 that "Given these injuries, it is certain that Vu Van Hien was beaten to death." As of late September, there was no information about any police officers being held legally accountable for the death.

Sources:

Thien Minh, "A Citizen Died upon Leaving Police Station" [Mot cong dan tu vong sau khi roi tru so cong an], *Phap Luat Viet Nam*, July 26, 2010.

Chi Tung & Thu Huyen, "Three Ducks Cost the Life of a Person" [Ba con vit nuot mot mang nguoi], *Lao Dong*, August 13, 2010.

* **June 7, 2010:** Responding to a report of a burglary, two police officers beat to death **Nguyen Phu Trung**, 41, in Thuy Xuan Tien village, Chuong My district, Hanoi. According to articles in *VN Express* and *VTC News*, the police officers, along with two civilians, beat Trung with an electric baton, a padlock, and a wooden club and then dumped him by the side of the road, where villagers found him the next day. One month later, four people, including the two police officers involved in the beating, were arrested and placed under investigation.

Sources:

Trong Hieu, "Two Police Officers Joined the Beating to Death of a Man" [Hai cong an vien tham gia danh chet nguoi], *VN Media*, July 8, 2010.

Nam Anh, "Two Police Officers Under Investigation for the Alleged Case of Beating a Man to Death," [Hai cong an bi dieu tra ve nghi an danh chet nguoi], *VN Express*, July 10, 2010.

Uy Vu, "An Alleged Case of a Commune Deputy Police Chief Beating People to Death and Throwing the Body into the Street" [Nghi an pho cong an xa danh chet nguoi roi vut ra duong], *VTC News*, July 10, 2010.

* **May 25, 2010:** A police officer shot and killed **Le Xuan Dung**, 12, and shot and wounded **Le Huu Nam**, 43, who died five days later, and wounded **Le Thi Thanh**, 37, during a protest over land rights at Nghi Son Petrochemical Refinery in Thanh Hoa province, government media and the BBC and Radio Free Asia reported. An article about the incident that was posted online the day after the shooting on the official government website *Thanh Tra* was later removed. On May 28, provincial authorities announced that one police officer would be arrested and prosecuted for "causing death while carrying out his duty," and that investigations would also be carried out regarding criminal acts committed by the protesters.

Sources:

Van Thanh "Thanh Hoa: Gunfire, 3 Dead and Injured Persons" [Thanh Hoa: Sung no, 3 nguoi chet va bi thuong], *Thanh Tra*, May 25, 2010.

Van Thanh, "More information on the incident in which gunfire shot 3 dead and injured persons: The person who fired the gun causing the unjust death of Dung is a police officer" [Thong tin tiep ve vu no sung, 3 nguoi chet va bi thuong o Thanh Hoa - Nguoi no sung gay cai chet oan nghiet cho chau Dung la cong an], *Thanh Tra*, May 26, 2010, (Both articles from *Thanh Tra*, accessed by Human Rights Watch on May 31, 2010, were removed from the web site in June.)

Trieu Long, "Gunshots were fired at Nghi Son Economic Zone: 3 dead and injured" [Sung no o KTT Nghi Son: 3 nguoi chet va bi thuong], *Nong Nghiep Vietnam*, May 27, 2010.

Hoang Lam, "Prosecute and detain the person who fired the gun" [Khoi to, bat tam giam nguoi no sung], *Tien Phong*, May 29, 2010;

"The incident in which the police fired gunshots at Nghi Son: the 2nd victim has died" [Vu cong an no sung o Nghi Son: nan nhan thu hai da chet], *Phap Luat TP HCM*, May 31, 2010.

* **May 7, 2010: Vo Van Khanh**, 29, died while held at police headquarters in Dien Ban district, Quang Nam province, government media and the BBC reported. During a routine traffic check a few days earlier, police confiscated Khanh's motorcycle because he was not carrying the proper paperwork. On May 7, Khanh went to the police station to retrieve his motorcycle. Later that day, police called his family to inform them that Khanh was dead, claiming he had hanged himself with his shoelaces after being taken into police custody for suspected theft. His family attributes Khanh's death to an assault by police, noting that when his body was returned to them, they found that his ribs were broken, his face was scratched, and there were bruises on his chest and rib cage, and shoeprints on his body. Autopsies performed by Quang Nam and Da Nang authorities claimed the cause of death was suicide, and said that bruises came from rescue

efforts and that the broken ribs occurred during the autopsy. According to a May 9 article in *Ngươi Lao Dong*, the police said Khanh's injuries were caused by emergency medical procedures to save his life. Khanh's family rejected the official explanation and refused to accept the autopsies. More than four months later, there have been no reports of any police officers being held accountable or even placed under investigation in regard to Khanh's death.

Sources:

Q. Chau, "A Person Dies in Detention," [Mot người chết khi bị tạm giam], *Ngươi Lao Dong*, May 9, 2010.

Q. Chau "Family of Victim Requests Another Autopsy," [Gia đình nạn nhân yêu cầu giám định lại tử thi], *Ngươi Lao Dong*, May 9, 2010.

Q. Chau, "Death in Detention: Police Gave 10 Million Dong to the Family of the Victim," [Vu chết khi tạm giam: Công an đưa 10 triệu cho gia đình nạn nhân], *Ngươi Lao Dong*, May 10, 2010.

H. Tao & H. Son, "The Autopsy of Suicidal Hanging in District Police Custody Case Remains Unchanged," [Ket qua giám định vụ treo cổ tự tử tại CA huyện không thay đổi], *Dat Viet*, May 21, 2010.

* **April 24, 2010:** Police in Ba Ria-Vung Tau province summoned **Pham Tuan Hung**, 37, for questioning on suspicion of stealing a cell phone. At the station, "police used handcuffs to handcuff him to the window and used batons to beat him many times, until he fainted," *Phap Luat* reported. At 2 a.m. police released Hung. "Upon returning home with a bruised body and in a panic, Hung was bedridden and did not eat anything," *Phap Luat* reported. When Hung - who is an epileptic - did not get better, but continued to bleed from his nose and mouth and suffer from many nightmares and seizures, he sought treatment at a hospital in Dong Nai. *Lao Dong* reported that he was admitted to the hospital "with signs of head injuries and many other flesh wounds; he was in a panic and almost had a mental breakdown." Commune officials apologized to the family and paid for some of his medical bills. District authorities said that the police officers who carried out the beating would be "dealt with according to regulations," according to *Ngươi Lao Dong*. There have been no further reports in the media on this case.

Sources:

Son Khe & Minh Hieu, "A Mentally Sick Person is Beaten and Bedridden" [Một người tâm thần bị đánh nằm liệt giường], *Phap Luat TP HCM*, June 1, 2010.

"Commune Police Beat a Person [so severely] that he Was Admitted to a Hospital because he Was Suspected of Stealing a Cell Phone" [Công an xã đánh dân phải nhập viện vì nghi trộm điện thoại?], *Lao Dong*, May 12, 2010.

"Will Deal with the Issue in Accordance with Regulations" ["Se xử lý theo quy định"], *Ngươi Lao Dong online*, July 10, 2010.

* **April 24, 2010:** A traffic policeman and a commune policeman in Khanh Hoa chased and severely beat **Huynh Tan Nam**, 21, for not wearing a helmet and left him by side of the road in a "severely critical condition" with multiple injuries, *VN Express* and other government media sources reported. He had a severe neck injury, a bruised right temple bone, a broken sphenoid bone, a broken right cheekbone, and torn ligaments. Dien Khanh district police later gave the victim's family some money to defray medical fees. The traffic police officer remained on the police force but was transferred from traffic control to other duties. There has been no information in the media as to whether the commune policeman involved in the beating was ever disciplined in any way.

Sources:

Huyen Tran, "Traffic Patrol Police and Police Beat a Person Severely and then Run Away" [CSGT, công an đánh người thương nang rồi bỏ chạy], *Viet Nam Net*, April 25, 2010.

Kieu Mi & Tuong Vi, "Severely Injured After Being Chased by Traffic Police" [Trong thương vi bị cảnh sát truy đuổi], *VN Express*, April 26, 2010.

* **January 21, 2010: Nguyen Quoc Bao**, 33, died in detention at the police headquarters in Hai Ba Trung District, Hanoi.

Government media sources, including *VN Express* and *Lao Dong*, reported that the Army Forensic Agency performed an examination and found that Nguyen Quoc Bao had severe head injuries and multiple wounds on his wrists and ankles at the time of his death. On March 27, *Lao Dong* published an article entitled, "While in Police Detention: The Victim Died from Being Beaten on the Head." Seven police officers were suspended, pending further investigation, though eight months later there had been no reports as to whether any of the officers had been arrested or charged in connection with the incident.

Sources:

"Puzzling Facts Behind the Death of a Suspect at Ha Dong Police Station" [Uan khuc sau cai chet cua nghi pham tai cong an Ha Dong], *VN Express*, March 15, 2010.

"While in Police Detention: The Victim Died from Being Beaten on the Head" [Trong khi bi cong an tam giu: Nan nhan chet do bi danh vao dau], *Lao Dong*, March 27, 2010.

"A 33-Year-Old Man Died at the District Police Station" [Nguoi dan ong 33 tuoi chet tai cong an quan], *VN Express*, March 29, 2010.
Nam Anh, "The Man who Died at the District Police Station Exhibited Signs of Being Tortured" [Nguoi dan ong chet tai cong an quan co dau hieu bi nhuc hinh], *VN Express*, April 30, 2010.

Tran Quyet, "Knock on the door of pain of the father whose son died at the district police station" [Go cua noi dau cua nguoi cha co con bi chet tai tru so cong an quan], *Doi Song & Phap Luat*, May 8, 2010.

* **December 22, 2009: Nguyen Van Long**, 41, died while in police custody in Bom Bo commune, Bu Dang district, Binh Phuoc province. Government media sources reported that when Long's wife visited him at the police station on the evening he was arrested, he told her he was in pain after being severely beaten and needed medicine. At the police station the next morning, she was informed that he had "committed suicide," the *Viet Nam Net* reported. Police officials said they interrogated Long on December 22 but stopped when he did not confess, according to *VN Express*. The next morning, police found Long dead, *Phap Luat TP HCM* reported. On December 23, hundreds of people gathered at the commune People's Committee office in protest. Nine months later, the case reportedly remains under investigation.

Sources:

Thuy Nguyen, "Abnormal Death at the People's Committee Office" [Chet bat thuong trong tru so UBND xa], *Viet Nam Net*, December 24, 2009.

Bang Phuong, "Binh Phuoc: A Suspect Died at the Commune Police Station" [Binh Phuoc: Mot nghi can chet tai tru so cong an], *Phap Luat TP HCM*, December 27, 2009.

* **November 28, 2009: Dang Trung Trinh**, 32, died shortly after being arrested and held by police after a conflict with his cousin in Tien Dong commune, Tu Ky district, Hai Duong province. The police announced that Trinh died from liver disease, but a forensic examination conducted by the district forensic team in the presence of district police and a member of the victim's family showed that his ribs were broken and there were bruises all over his body, *Dan Tri* reported. On January 22, 2010, the district police decided not to prosecute the case. However, after a series of articles in *Gia Dinh & Xa Hoi*, the Tu Ky District Justice Department overruled the decision. On June 30, the district police investigation bureau issued Decision 27/QĐ to prosecute the case for "illegal arrest and detention," not for manslaughter, though state media accounts do not specify who was to be prosecuted.

Sources:

Binh Minh, "A Resident Died at the Commune Police Station" [Mot nguoi dan chet tai tru so cong an xa], *Gia Dinh & Xa Hoi*, February

1, 2010.

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*** November 21, 2009: Nguyen Manh Hung**, 33, died in police detention in Ha Dong District, Hanoi. He had been held incommunicado for 11 days, from November 10. The police said that on the day of his death Hung had chest pains and difficulty breathing, so they took him to the hospital, *VN Express* reported. The police said Hung died in the hospital, although the hospital director said he was dead on arrival, *VN Express* reported. Hung's father said his son's body was "completely dry, all ten fingers and toes were bruised... and swelling and bruises covered one third of his leg," *VN Express* reported. The police investigation bureau in Hanoi rejected a complaint filed by the victim's father stating that police had unlawfully arrested Hung, failed to report his detention, and caused his death by torturing him. Citing the forensic report and Hung's cellmates, who reported there were no signs of him being tortured, the police investigation bureau concluded that Hung died from heart failure.

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*** September 14-17, 2009 (two deaths): Tran Minh Sy**, 23, died on September 17 while in police detention in Gia Lai province. He was among the more than 75 people arrested the previous day, when thousands gathered to protest the death of **Pham Ngoc Den**, 29, on September 14 while being chased by traffic police in Gia Lai for not wearing a helmet. The police claimed that Tran Minh Sy died from heart and lung diseases, *Tuoi Tre* reported. Eight police officers later received reprimands or warnings for their behavior during the protests in Gia Lai, but no one on the police force was punished for the death in custody of Tran Minh Sy or the death of Pham Ngoc Den, which sparked the protests. Instead, 15 protesters were sentenced to prison in May 2010.

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