

WRITTEN QUESTION P-0027/04  
by Marco Pannella (NI)  
to the Commission

Subject: Ongoing campaign of murder and torture by Vietnamese Government officials: arrest of Mr Nih, 41 years old, Christian and TRP supporter, on 13 December 2003 in Dak Doa

On 13 December 2003, a group of Vietnamese paramilitary police from the Dak Doa district surrounded the village of Plei O Dot, in the commune of Ia Bang, Dak Doa district, Gia Lai province, and arrested two villagers, Nih (41) and So (44), who were both Christians and supporters of the Montagnard Foundation, Inc. (MFI) and the Transnational Radical Party (TRP). Nih and Soh were registered (under numbers 338 and 373 respectively) on the lists of MFI and TRP supporters, which may be inspected by any national or international authorities wishing to investigate this incident. They were both transferred to the Dak Doa district prison and tortured with beatings and electric shocks. Nih refused to answer questions or to renounce his Christian faith and Major Tuan, of the Dak Doa police, stabbed him in the chest and then cut his throat. On 15 December 2003, the Vietnamese police brought Nih's body to his family in Plei O Dot, preventing them from holding a funeral and declaring that they wished to show the whole village what happened to anyone who was not a friend of the Vietnam Government. We still do not know whether the body has been buried. Nih was a farmer and a lay member of his local church, who had always rejected government control over its religious activities. He was killed because he had given food and help to Montagnard refugees hiding in the jungle between Vietnam and Cambodia. He leaves a widow and three children, who have also been subject to threats and discrimination.

In view of the foregoing,

1. Is the Commission aware of the events described and, if not, how it will follow up its constant assurances that it has the matter in hand, despite the fact that it has never once admonished, or taken retaliatory action against, the Vietnamese Government, to ascertain whether, and ensure that, those responsible for this atrocity are duly tried and the victims of violent acts of this kind are freed immediately?
2. What it thinks of the fact that the Government of Vietnam regards as a criminal act the exercise of an individual's political right to become a member of an NGO with consultative status at ECOSOC and the UN, such as the Transnational Radical Party, which promotes human rights by non-violent means?
3. Whether it intends, in the context of the cooperation agreements, to ask for the Central Highlands of Vietnam to be opened up and for a European delegation to have access to them?