

REPORT ON PRISONER-OF-CONSCIENCE MS. LE THI HONG LIEN

Today is 25 March 2005. I am Le Quang Du, the father of Le Thi Hong Lien who is a prisoner of Tong Le Chan Prison (TLC Prison).

This morning at 8:40 AM my family and I went to the Bien Hoa Mental Hospital (BHHM) to visit my daughter, also accompanied by Mrs. Le Thi Phu Dung, acting General Secretary of the Vietnam Mennonite Church.

After waiting nearly two hours they finally brought out my daughter so we could meet her. During this visit I met the medical director of the BHHM, in Area B4, the prison section of the BHHM. I asked Mr. Tam about the condition of my daughter. He advised me that he was not the one directly responsible for her care, but rather it was a man named Quang. In discussions with Mr. Tam, he said that as far as he knew they were administering drugs to my daughter to try to cure her, but he had no idea when my daughter might be cured, but he thought she was showing some reduction in her symptoms.

Then some police officers came by. I talked briefly with them about my daughter's condition. At this time my daughter acted as if she wanted to say something so I asked, "What is it you want to say to your father?" She said that when I left the prison after visiting her on 23 March 2005, a policeman named Viet, of the TLC Prison, came into her cell and screamed at her, "How dare your [uses very crude and pejorative pronoun] father accuse us of shorting your food? We feed you before we feed others." She said he then seized her Bible and roughly searched through her belongings. Then an officer I had not met before, who identified himself as Son and was a major, engaged me wanting to smooth things over about them giving insufficient food to my daughter. But he challenged me and explained without apologizing that they had done nothing wrong, and he wondered why I was running around always looking for something negative and accusing them. I said I did not go around accusing people for nothing and that I had evidence for my concerns.

I know that Mr. Tam, the medical director, said that when my daughter was completely well, they would send her back to the TLC Prison. This is not what officers Viet and Son told me. They said that when my daughter was cured they would free her. They also told me that I had to pay money for food so my daughter could get three meals a day (20,000 dong per day), but this week I will not give them money for food for my daughter. They want 200,000 dong a week to add supplemental food paid to the police at Unit A10, but they keep changing personnel there. (Implication is that the money goes for food.)

While Mrs Le Thi Phu Dung was comforting my daughter, my daughter asked her, "Do the police go to my family to seize my things like they did when I was in Chi Hoa Prison? They seized two bags from me there and left me without any clothes at all." My daughter also communicated (to Mrs Dung) that the situation here in the BHHM was

very hard and frightening. Every time my daughter sees a uniformed policeman she cowers in fear.

When I arrived (at the security room) this morning, I noticed that the door to my daughter's room (a lockdown room) was unlocked and that many men were pushing their way into the room where she is incarcerated, but I myself was not allowed to go in to see that she was secure.

I said to my family that it's as if my daughter is penned up with wolves. It's horribly frightening. Please pray that peace will come to her in her trauma. When we visit, the attendants are reserved, but when we leave they treat her cruelly. And all I can do is bite my tongue, unable to help my own flesh and blood.

This is the testimony of a father who meekly carries a basket to the prison when he visits his daughter. When I see her, I am unable to have a normal conversation with her. Every time I visit, I see that they do not give her enough food. This morning I saw men come and go freely into the room she is locked up in, and I am unable to protect her because they won't let me go to her room. They only let me go to the security room next to my daughters cell. I can't go in to visit her. LQD

And from Ms. Lien's father's report on his 23 March 2005 visit.

During this visit he saw her quite inadequate untouched breakfast, and saw she was not given any food at because she was not in her room when they came by. Her cell-mates confirmed this was usual.

Lien's father wrote:

"I am convinced that during our visits the officials modify their behaviour and speak nicely. But most of the time, in truth, they treat my daughter as a despised prisoner, a mental case, someone beneath them! I also believe they violate the rights of women and their privacy, especially my daughter."

Notes:

Ms. Lien still has not been officially transferred to the Bien Hoa Mental Hospital, though she has been there for a month. She still has guards from the distant Tong Le Chan Prison. Her parents still must use their Tong Le Chan Prison visitation papers to visit.

Ms. Lien is speaking some, but clearly not normally. She remains traumatized and fearful at the sight of any uniformed officer.

Ms. Lien's parents are convinced she is inadequately feed in spite of paying money for food.

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