

URGENT ACTION

LETHAL INJECTION LOOMS FOR 117 PRISONERS

Some 117 death row prisoners in Viet Nam have exhausted their appeals and will face imminent execution when a change in the law comes into effect on 27 June. There are more than 530 prisoners under sentence of death.

The authorities in Viet Nam amended the Law for Enforcement of Criminal Verdicts in June 2010, to change the method of execution from firing squad to lethal injection, on the grounds that it was more humane. A shortage of drugs for use in lethal injections has meant a delay in implementation of the law, and this has resulted in no executions being carried out since January 2012. However, the courts have continued to impose death sentences.

The shortage of lethal injection drugs followed changes made in 2011 to European Union (EU) regulations on trade in equipment and substances which can be used for capital punishment, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, adding barbiturate anaesthetic agents to the list of articles requiring an export authorization.

The Viet Nam authorities changed the law again in May 2013, so that drugs sourced from outside the EU or manufactured in-country could be used in lethal injections. The amended law comes into effect on 27 June. The Minister of Public Security has said that 117 death row prisoners will be executed immediately, using drugs manufactured in Viet Nam.

Since the change in the method of execution, Viet Nam has built facilities around the country and trained staff to administer lethal injections. In 2012, more than 86 death sentences were imposed, two of them for embezzlement.

Please write immediately in Vietnamese, English or your own language:

- Demanding that the authorities immediately halt any plans to resume executions, the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and a violation of the right to life, protected in international human rights law;
- Calling on them to immediately establish a moratorium on executions with a view to abolition of the death penalty, in line with four UN General Assembly resolutions adopted since 2007, including resolution 67/176 on 20 December 2012;
- Calling on them, in the meantime, to commute all death sentences and reduce the number of offences punishable by the death penalty.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 AUGUST 2013 TO:

Minister of Public Security

Lt Gen Tran Dai Quang
Ministry of Public Security
44 Yet Kieu Street, Hoan Kiem District
Ha Noi, Viet Nam
Fax: +844 3942 0223
Online contact form:
http://www.mps.gov.vn/web/guest/contact_english

Salutation: Dear Minister

Chairman of the National Assembly

Nguyen Sinh Hung
Office of the National Assembly
35 Ngo Quyen St, Hoan Kiem District
Ha Noi, Viet Nam
Online contact form:
<http://www.na.gov.vn/htx/English/C1330/default.asp?sAction=lienhe#17QlnwBAqPhn>

**Salutation: Dear National Assembly
Chairman**

And copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Pham Binh Minh
Minister of Foreign Affairs
1 Ton That Dam Street
Ba Dinh District, Ha Noi, Viet Nam
Fax: +844 3823 1872
Email: bc.mfa@mofa.gov.vn

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

Viet Nam's National Assembly held discussions in November 2012 over how to resolve the situation of an increasing number of prisoners awaiting execution. It was claimed that this was causing overcrowding in difficult prison conditions, with three prisoners having committed suicide and others allegedly requesting that they be executed soon. Some National Assembly members advocated returning to using the firing squad.

Viet Nam retains the death penalty for 21 offences, including violent crimes, national security offences, drug trafficking and embezzlement. In January 2010, the number of capital offences was reduced from 29, but moves towards a further reduction appear to have stalled.

Statistics on the death penalty have been classified as a "state secret" since January 2004, and there is a general lack of transparency over its application. No information is publicly available on who is currently awaiting execution and for what crimes. State-controlled media report on some death sentences, enabling a minimum level of monitoring of the use of the death penalty in the country. However the total and accurate figures are not available. Government officials publicly stated that the number of prisoners under sentence of death was higher than 530 in January 2013, when discussions were underway on how to resume executions.

Name: Unknown
Gender m/f: both

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