

URGENT ACTION

JAILED BLOGGER ON HUNGER STRIKE

Imprisoned Vietnamese blogger Nguyen Van Hai, known as Dieu Cay or “the peasant’s pipe”, has been on hunger strike since around 20 June in protest at the harsh treatment of himself and other political prisoners. He is serving a 12-year sentence for his writings and his health has deteriorated badly. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Nguyen Van Hai is detained at Prison No 6, Thanh Chuong District in Nghe An province, north central Viet Nam. The prison authorities refused permission for his family to visit him on 16 July, and then allowed them only a five-minute meeting on 20 July in the presence of guards. Nguyen Van Hai is said to be very weak, barely able to talk or walk.

Nguyen Van Hai co-founded the Free Journalists Club in September 2007 and became one of Viet Nam’s most influential bloggers, writing on a wide variety of issues, including social injustice, human rights abuses, and national sovereignty. He was first arrested in April 2008, tried on politically-motivated charges of tax evasion and sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison. Instead of being released at the end of his sentence in October 2010, he was held for investigation for “conducting propaganda” against the state under Article 88 of Viet Nam’s Penal Code.

During this extended detention period, his family and lawyer were frequently refused permission to visit him. He was eventually tried on 24 September 2012 and received a 12-year prison sentence with five years’ house arrest on release. In an appeal letter written shortly after his trial in September 2012, he wrote that he had undertaken a protest hunger strike in February 2011 which lasted until he was taken to hospital after 28 days on 6 March 2011.

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

- Demanding that the authorities release Nguyen Van Hai immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to instruct the prison authorities to take immediate steps to resolve the complaints made by Nguyen Van Hai, which would lead to him ending his hunger strike;
- Calling on them to ensure that Nguyen Van Hai has access to any medical attention he may require, that his family is allowed regular visits, and that he is treated in accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 SEPTEMBER 2013 TO:

Minister of Public Security

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

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
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

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#I7QInwBAqPhn>

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nguyen Van Hai appears to have received particularly harsh treatment. In the appeal letter written following his trial in September 2012, he describes the “infringements” against him during the investigation period and the trial. Since his initial arrest in April 2008, he was frequently moved from prison to prison, often without informing his family. Prison No 6, his current location, is distant from where his family lives, more than 1400 kms away, making it difficult for them to visit him.

Another prisoner of conscience, Cu Huy Ha Vu, went on hunger strike in May 2013. He is detained at Prison No 5, Yen Dinh, Thanh Hoa province. He ended his protest after 25 days when he received a written response from the prison authorities to his complaints about the conditions of his detention.

Prison conditions in Viet Nam are generally harsh, with poor food and limited health care. According to former prisoners of conscience, political prisoners are sometimes subjected to solitary confinement, which makes them vulnerable to ill-treatment by the guards and other prisoners.

Freedom of expression is severely restricted in Viet Nam. The authorities routinely harass and imprison peaceful activists who criticise government policies and advocate greater freedoms, in order to silence them. Dozens of prisoners of conscience, including bloggers, lawyers, writers, labour activists, businesspeople and supporters of opposition groups, are serving long prison terms under legislation which criminalizes peaceful dissent.

Name: Nguyen Van Hai, also known as Dieu Cay
Gender m/f: m

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