

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 41/05/97
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To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office /Southeast Asia sub-regional team
Date: 4 February 1997

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION
Vo Van Pham *alias* Vo Thanh Long
Viet Nam

Keywords

Theme: Prisoner of conscience / solitary confinement / ill-health
Profession/association: Nurse

Summary

Vo Van Pham (also known as Vo Thanh Long) was arrested on 6 July 1991 by the public security forces of Nghia Binh province in central Viet Nam. He was charged and tried under Clause 1 of Article 73 of the Vietnamese Criminal Code as someone "who organizes, incites, or actively participates in the establishment [of an] organization aimed at overthrowing the people's government [and] causes grave consequences". Vo Van Pham was found guilty and sentenced to 12 years imprisonment as well as to two years probation at the end of his prison term. In November 1994, Amnesty International learned that Vo Van Pham was being detained at Z30D/K1 "reeducation" camp at Ham Tan, Binh Thuan province, where many other political prisoners are held. AI believes he is still held there and is appealing for his unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience.

Recommended actions

Letters are requested from health professionals to the addresses below. Letters can be in English, French or your own language and should:

- express deep concern at the imprisonment of Vo Van Pham, stating that he appears to have been arrested and detained for his non-violent political activity and that AI considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.
- seek information on the current state of health of Vo Van Pham
- call for his immediate and unconditional release.

Addresses

Vo Van Kiet
Prime Minister
Hoang Hoa Tham
Ha Noi
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Tran Binh Trong
Ha Noi, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

Le Minh Huong

Nguyen Manh Cam
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
1 Ton That Dam
Ha Noi
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

Please send copies of your letters to: the diplomatic representative of Viet Nam in your country.

And: please forward information on the case of Vo Van Pham to your Nurses' Association urging that they communicate with the Vietnamese authorities.

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IMPRISONED NURSE
Vo Van Pham *alias* Vo Thanh Long
Viet Nam

Vo Van Pham is a nurse who is serving a sentence of 12 years' imprisonment and is adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International. He was arrested on 6 July 1991 in central Viet Nam in the same connection as two other men and sentenced on charges of someone "*who organizes, incites, or actively participates in the establishment*" of an "*Organization aimed at overthrowing the people's government*" and "*causes grave consequences*". It appears from the official indictment that his crime had been to make comments in favour of multi-party democracy in Viet Nam and allegedly planning the organization of a political grouping to participate in a democratic political system. In addition to his 12 year sentence of imprisonment, he was also sentenced to a further two years' probation to take effect from the end of his prison term. Vo Van Pham is currently held in Z30D/K1 "re-education" camp at Ham Tan, Binh Thuan province.

Although Amnesty International does not have details about his trial, it believes it likely that he was not afforded a fair trial and also that he may not have had proper access to a legal representative of his choice. According to Amnesty International's information, defence counsel is often assigned to a defendant just before trial, allowing no time for proper consultation or preparation of adequate defence. During the trial itself, the defence counsel is normally permitted only to plea for leniency on the defendant's behalf.

Vo Van Pham is aged 49 and is married with six children. He was born in 1947 and was resident in Quang Ngai city at the time of his arrest in 1991. He studied at Danang Nursing School from 1968-1969 and subsequently worked as a nurse in Quang Ngai General Hospital. At the end of 1969 he joined (or was conscripted into) the local armed forces. After the communist victory, he was detained in "re-education" without charge or trial until February 1976, as were hundreds of thousands of other people known or suspected to be associated with the defeated South Vietnamese regime. He is believed to have resumed his career as a nurse prior to his re-arrest in 1991.

Amnesty International has called upon the Vietnamese authorities in the past to release Vo Van Pham and is again renewing its appeals for his immediate and unconditional release on the grounds that he is a prisoner of conscience.