

# Amnesty.org feature

**Date:** 13 June 2007  
**AI Index:** ASA 41/007/2007

## Internet dissident released in Viet Nam

Internet dissident Nguyen Vu Binh has been released from prison after spending almost five years behind bars.

According to official media, the 39-year-old was granted an amnesty by President Nguyen Minh Triet on 8 June, after he sent a letter to the head of state "pleading for clemency".

The journalist and writer served over two-thirds of his seven-year sentence. According to media reports, he left Ba Sao prison on 9 June to be reunited with his wife and two daughters in their Ha Noi home.

Amnesty International (AI) had considered Nguyen Vu Binh a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for the peaceful expression of his opinions. The organisation has campaigned extensively for his release.

He was arrested in September 2002 and convicted for "spying" after he wrote and posted articles about democracy on the internet and kept email contact with political groups in exile.

In addition to the seven years in prison, Nguyen Vu Binh was also sentenced to a three-year probation period following his release. It remains unclear whether he is currently under such probation or whether he is a free man. AI is calling for no such restrictions to be imposed on him.

It is hoped the release marks the reversal of a political crackdown in which more than 20 people, including lawyers, trade unionists, religious leaders and internet dissidents, have been arrested in Viet Nam. Eleven of these have been convicted in apparently politically-motivated trials.

AI calls on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all those serving prison sentences for exercising their right to peaceful dissent.