

EXTERNAL

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MEDICAL CONCERN

**DOAN Viet Hoat
VIET NAM**

Doan Viet Hoat is an adopted prisoner of conscience who was arrested in 1990 and sentenced in March this year to 20 years' imprisonment. His sentence was later reduced on appeal to 15 years. Doan Viet Hoat was previously detained for a period of 12 years without trial for the peaceful expression of his political opinions and had only been at liberty for two years before his re-arrest in 1990. He is aged 52 and is reported to be suffering from kidney stones for which he is without any medical attention.

Background

Doan Viet Hoat graduated in English from Saigon University in 1965. He taught English at a high school for a year before becoming personnel adviser at Vanh Hanh University, a Buddhist University in Saigon. In 1967, he gained a scholarship from the US-based Asia Foundation and attended Florida State University in the USA. He returned to Vietnam in 1971 and took up a post as vice-president of administration at Van Hanh University. During this period he also worked in an unofficial capacity as a consultant with the Asia Foundation to promote educational and cultural exchanges between Vietnamese and US students. The Asia Foundation is a private foundation which is mainly funded by the United States Government.

Doan Viet Hoat was first arrested in August 1976, a year after the end of the Vietnam war after all private educational establishments had been taken over by the state. He was accused of "anti-revolutionary activities against the socialist regime", but was never brought to trial; he was released 12 years later in February 1988. On 17 November 1990 he was rearrested at his home in Ho Chi Minh City and accused of undertaking counter-revolutionary activities against the government. He and seven other political prisoners were brought to trial two years later and sentenced to long jail terms at a public trial lasting for two days in March 1993. All were alleged to belong to an illegal organization, formed in June 1989 and headed by Doan Viet Hoat, which was named *Dien Dan Tu Do* (Freedom Forum). The group was accused of publishing an unlicensed newsletter which included articles written by its members and translations of articles from abroad which were critical of the Vietnamese Government; they were also accused of sending articles abroad for publication. The group is reported to have published ten issues of the newsletter before their arrest.

Doan Viet Hoat was incriminated by the official Vietnamese press prior to his formal conviction by the court. During his trial the presiding judge reportedly sided with the prosecution by making subjective remarks against the defendants and intimidated the defendants by threats and yelling. Doan Viet Hoat's sentence and those of other members of the group were reduced during an appeal hearing in July 1993. The Vietnam News Agency's reporting of the hearing described the case as extraordinarily serious and damaging to national security; it

stated that the court had reduced some sentences "because the forum's activities were discovered early and their consequences were limited".

Shortly after this hearing, Doan Viet Hoat and some of those sentenced with him were transferred from Chi Hoa Prison in Ho Chi Minh City to labour camp KO2 Z30D in Ham Tam. Conditions in the camp are much harsher than in prison and living conditions poor. The prisoners are made to do hard labour, provided with inadequate food rations, and, although the camp has a small clinic, there are said to be no medicines provided by the camp authorities.

Doan Viet Hoat is reported to suffer considerable pain as a result of kidney stones, but is still obliged to undertake hard labour for six days a week and appears to be without any medical attention. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience arrested for the peaceful expression of his political views, and is calling for his unconditional release from prison.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Asia
Date: 2 November 1993

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**ĐOÀN VIỆT HOẠT
VIỆT NAM**

Keywords

Theme: POC/ ill-health/ medical care

Summary

Đoan Việt Hoạt is a 52-year-old academic who is serving a sentence of 15 years' imprisonment after being convicted of counter-revolutionary activities. The charge resulted from the discovery of a newsletter containing articles critical of the Vietnamese Government. He is adopted as a prisoner of conscience. Doan Việt Hoạt suffers from kidney stones, but is reported to be without medical attention.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below:

- expressing concern at reports that Doan Việt Hoạt has been transferred to a labour camp in Hàm Tam where he is required to undertake hard labour although he suffers from kidney stones causing him considerable back pain
- noting that there appears to be little provision for medical care at Hàm Tam camp and urging that Doan Việt Hoạt is given access to a doctor
- calling for Doan Việt Hoạt's release from imprisonment on the grounds that he was imprisoned solely for the peaceful exercise of his political opinions.

Addresses

Vo Van Kiet
Prime Minister
Hoang Hoa Than St
Hanoi
Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Nguyen Trong Nhan
Minister of Health
138A Giang Vo
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and to diplomatic representatives of Vietnam in your country