

Vietnam: Truong Quoc Huy (m)

Concern: Prisoner of Conscience

"A growing number of brave activists are defying Internet repression and using the Internet to fight for human rights" Amnesty International press release, Viet Nam: Internet repression creates climate of fear, (AI Index ASA 41/010/2006)

Prisoner of conscience Truong Quoc Huy was arrested on 18 August 2006 whilst using chatroom facilities at an internet café in Ho Chi Minh City. Since his arrest his whereabouts remain unknown. He has reportedly been charged under Article 88 of the Criminal Code for "conducting propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam" which carries a sentence of up to 20 years' imprisonment. .

Truong Quoc Huy had been previously arrested at his home in Ho Chi Minh City on 19 October 2005, along with two brothers and a female friend. The group had been taking part in a chatroom discussion hosted by New York based web company PalTalk entitled "the voice of people in Viet Nam and Abroad". Fifty police officers entered the house at around 3pm, beat and kicked the four and took them to B34 Security Prison.

Truong Quoc Huy's brother, Truong Quoc Nghia was subsequently released, while the others were detained under Article 79 of the Criminal Code (Carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration) and held incommunicado for nine months. They were refused legal representation and family visits. Whilst in custody, the computer business of Truong Quoc Tuan, the third brother, went bankrupt.

When interviewed in August 2006, six weeks after his release, Truong Quoc Huy said that he would continue to criticise the government and expressed his support for Bloc 8406, an on-line petition calling for peaceful political change and respect for human rights. He was again arrested on 18 August 2006 by plainclothes policemen at an Internet cafe in Ho Chi Minh City where he had logged on again to the PalTalk website.

Amnesty International believes that Truong Quoc Huy is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Please write to the authorities:

- Demanding credible information from the authorities about the charges made against Truong Quoc Huy, his place of detention, and information about his health.
- Calling for his immediate and unconditional release and all of the many others who have been detained for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and access to information.
- Calling on the authorities to repeal or amend Internet decrees, the Press Law (amended in 1999), the Publishing Law, and the State Secrets Protection Ordinance and above all the 1999 Criminal Code as a matter of urgency to bring it into line with Viet Nam's international human rights obligations. In so doing, ensure that ambiguous provisions relating to national security are clearly defined or removed, so they cannot be applied in an arbitrary manner to stifle legitimate dissent, debate, opposition, and freedom of expression.
- Calling for the removal of all restrictions and arbitrary interference on the operation and usage of the Internet that violate the right to freedom of expression and end practices, such as censorship, monitoring and surveillance that do not conform with Viet Nam's human rights obligations.

Please send appeals to:

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung
Office of the Prime Minister
Hoang Hoa Tham
Ha Noi
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

