

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

## News Flash

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### **Viet Nam: Appalling sentence for elderly dissident**

Amnesty International is appalled by the 30-month sentence imposed on Dr Nguyen Dan Que by a court in Ho Chi Minh City today. Dr Que, 62, is a distinguished doctor, long-standing human rights activist and Amnesty International member. He will now remain in prison until September 2005. Dr Que has now spent over 19 of the last 26 years in detention for his beliefs.

The organization is extremely concerned for the health of Dr Que, who suffers from serious medical conditions. For most of the 16 months since his arrest, he has been held in incommunicado detention.

At his trial, Dr Nguyen Dan Que was found guilty of "abusing democratic rights to jeopardize the interests of the state, and the legitimate rights and interests of social organizations and citizens." To Amnesty International's knowledge, Dr Que has had no legal representation and the trial was not open to outside observers.

Amnesty International considers Dr Que a prisoner of conscience who should never have been arrested and is calling for his unconditional release.

Dr Nguyen Dan Que was arrested in March 2003 outside his home in Ho Chi Minh City while on his way to an Internet cafe. The authorities initially stated that he was being investigated for espionage. His arrest came four days after he had issued a statement asserting there was no freedom of information in Viet Nam, which was circulated via the Internet and published outside Viet Nam.

Public Document

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