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Viet Nam: Halt imminent execution of Lê Văn Mạnh and order investigation into allegations of torture

Amnesty International has written to Trương Tấn Sang, President of Viet Nam, calling on him to order a halt to tomorrow's scheduled execution of 32-year-old Lê Văn Mạnh and for an investigation into allegations that Lê Văn Mạnh was tortured in police custody to be opened.

In October 2005, Lê Văn Mạnh was convicted of the March 2005 rape and murder of 12-year-old Hoàng Thị Loan in Thanh Hóa province. This was the first of a long series of criminal proceedings which saw Lê Văn Mạnh convicted and sentenced to death on two occasions for the above offences, only for those convictions to be overturned.

In 2008, Lê Văn Mạnh was convicted and sentenced to death for a third time for the same offences; on this occasion his conviction and sentence were upheld on appeal. On 16 October 2015, Lê Văn Mạnh's family received notification that he is to be executed on 26 October 2015.

Lê Văn Mạnh has maintained his innocence throughout the criminal proceedings against him and alleges that the confession on which his conviction is based on was obtained under torture. Amnesty International has received information that the proceedings against Lê Văn Mạnh were characterized by procedural errors and that he did not receive adequate legal representation on appeal.

In ratifying the Convention against Torture earlier this year, Viet Nam has undertaken to take all measures to ensure that no one is subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and that "any statement which is established to have been made as a result of torture shall not be invoked as evidence in any proceedings, except against a person accused of torture as evidence that the statement was made".

The death penalty is the ultimate, irreversible denial of human rights. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the right to be free from cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. When a death sentence is imposed following a trial which does not meet international law and standards on fair trial, including the standards contained in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Viet Nam is a party, it violates international law.

In view of the allegations of torture in the case of Lê Văn Mạnh and Viet Nam's obligations under the Convention against Torture and the ICCPR, Amnesty International calls on Viet Nam to immediately order a stop to the planned execution of Lê Văn Mạnh and order an investigation into allegations that he confessed under torture and was wrongly convicted.

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