

URGENT ACTION

DEMAND RELEASE OF BLOGGER AND ASSISTANT

Blogger Nguyen Huu Vinh and his assistant Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy have been held without trial in Viet Nam since May 2014, in excess of the time allowed under national law. Following a visit in late October by his family and lawyer, there are increasing concerns for Nguyen Huu Vinh's health and conditions of detention.

Nguyen Huu Vinh co-founded the popular blog, *Anh Ba Sam* in 2007, which is known for its anti-China posts and criticism of the government. He and his assistant, **Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy**, were arrested in May 2014 under Article 258 (2) of the Penal Code for "abusing democratic freedoms". This provides for up to seven years' imprisonment. The indictment was issued in February 2015 setting out charges in connection with two other political blogs – *Dan Quyen* (Citizens' Rights) and *Chep Su Viet* (Writing Vietnam's History), both of which were critical of government policies and officials, and have been shut down by the authorities. The indictment states that the two blogs had more than 3.7 million page views.

According to national law, suspects charged under Article 258 (2) can initially be held in pre-trial detention for up to six months, and following indictment, held in temporary detention for a maximum of a further 90 days for trial preparation. In this case however, after 17 months in detention, no trial date has been set.

Nguyen Huu Vinh's family have petitioned the authorities for his release and for that of Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy, without response. In late October, Nguyen Huu Vinh told his visiting family and lawyer that he was suffering from a skin condition with a red rash covering his body, for which he has not received adequate medical treatment.

Nguyen Huu Vinh is a former policeman and son of a former high-ranking government official and member of the ruling Communist Party of Viet Nam, who was Ambassador to the former Soviet Union. He is married with two children. Little is known about his assistant Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy, who is described in the indictment as divorced with two children. Nguyen Huu Vinh and Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Please write immediately in Vietnamese, English or your own language:

- Demand the authorities release Nguyen Huu Vinh and Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy immediately and unconditionally as they are prisoners of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that both detainees have immediate access to appropriate medical care and that they are treated in accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 DECEMBER 2015 TO:

Minister of Public Security

Gen Tran Dai Quang
Ministry of Public Security
44 Yet Kieu Street, Hoan Kiem district
Ha Noi, VIET NAM
Online contact form:
http://www.mps.gov.vn/web/guest/contact_english
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Pham Binh Minh
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
1 Ton That Dam Street, Ba Dinh district
Ha Noi, VIET NAM
Fax: + 844 3823 1872
Email: bc.mfa@mofa.gov.vn
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Minister of Justice
Ha Hung Cuong
Ministry of Justice
60 Tran Phu Street, Ba Dinh district
Ha Noi, VIET NAM
Fax: + 844 627 3959
Email: botuphap@moj.gov.vn

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Viet Nam is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which guarantees the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. However, these rights are severely restricted in law and practice in Viet Nam. Vaguely-worded articles in the national security section of Viet Nam's 1999 Penal Code are frequently used to criminalize peaceful dissenting views or activities. Those at risk include people advocating for peaceful political change, criticizing government policies, or calling for respect for human rights. Article 258 (Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, the legitimate rights and interests of organizations and/or citizens), is frequently used to detain, prosecute and imprison dissidents for their peaceful activism, including bloggers, labour rights and land rights activists, political activists, religious followers, human rights defenders and social justice activists, and even song writers.

Prison conditions in Viet Nam are harsh, with inadequate food and health care that falls short of the minimum requirements set out in the UN Standard Minimum Rules and other international standards. Prisoners of conscience have been held in solitary confinement as a punishment or in isolation for lengthy periods. They have also been subjected to ill-treatment, including beatings by other prisoners with no intervention by prison guards. Some prisoners of conscience are frequently moved from one detention facility to another, often without their families being informed. Several prisoners of conscience have undertaken hunger strikes in protest at abusive treatment and poor conditions of detention.

Name: Nguyen Huu Vinh (m); Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy (f)

Gender m/f: Both

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