

AI Index: PRE 01/631/2012
21 December 2012

Viet Nam: Release bloggers, stop silencing dissent

Three Vietnamese bloggers given harsh prison sentences for alleged anti-state propaganda must be freed immediately, Amnesty International said ahead of their appeal hearing on 28 December 2012.

The bloggers were sentenced on 24 September 2012 after a trial lasting only a few hours.

Nguyen Van Hai, known as Dieu Cay (“the peasant’s pipe”) was sentenced to 12 years in prison; former policewoman Ta Phong Tan to 10 years; and Phan Thanh Hai, known as AnhBaSaiGon, to four years.

Their appeal hearing will take place at the Supreme People’s Court in Ho Chi Minh City.

“The bloggers’ sentences are a blatant attempt by the Vietnamese authorities to silence dissenting views,” said Rupert Abbott, Amnesty International’s Researcher on Viet Nam.

“We consider the bloggers to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression through their online writings. They must be released immediately and without conditions.”

“The Vietnamese authorities have this year stepped up their harsh crackdown on voices critical of the government, with bloggers, songwriters, lawyers, labour activists, members of religious groups, democracy activists and others put behind bars.”

“This is a very worrying trend that must end – human rights defenders should be allowed to contribute to the development of their country, not fear prison because of their peaceful activities.”

Further information

[“Vietnam: Bloggers sentenced to prison in Vietnam”](#), Amnesty International Urgent Action, 4 October 2012.

“Viet Nam: Bloggers’ shameful jail sentences aim to stifle free speech”, Amnesty International Press Release, 24 September 2012.

“Viet Nam: Halt crackdown on freedom of expression”, Amnesty International Press Release, 7 August 2012.