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Free Vietnamese Internet dissidents!

Viet Nam continues to arrest, imprison and harass people for expressing their opinions through the internet – whilst at the same time claiming that their citizens are entitled to these rights.

Take action to free Nguyen Vu Binh and Truong Quoc Huy now!

"Everyone has the right to express his/her wishes and opinions on political, economic, social and cultural issues in the mass media."

This quote, from the Vietnamese government's 2005 report "*Achievements in the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Vietnam*" suggests that the Vietnamese people enjoy the right to freedom of expression. The reality however, is very different.

Viet Nam has passed a string of laws in recent years attempting to limit the opportunity for freedom of expression on the Internet. As well as automated filtering and blocking technology, there is a dedicated police task-force monitoring and controlling Internet use. The authorities nurture self-censorship by creating fear with arbitrary law enforcement and harsh punishments.

Many Internet dissidents, including those who have already spent years in prison for exercising their right to freedom of expression, are under close surveillance, harassed and threatened, and have had their computers confiscated.

Nguyen Vu Binh, 37, imprisoned since September 2002, is serving a seven-year sentence after publishing criticism, partly through the World Wide Web, about corruption and violations of human rights. Accused of "spying", the charges against him included that he "communicated via emails" with "reactionary" organizations overseas and disseminated information about human rights in Viet Nam.

Nguyen Vu Binh is detained at Ba Sao prison camp in Nam Ha province, northern Viet Nam. He has been regularly disciplined for refusing to sign a "confession".

On 19 October 2005 three young Vietnamese chatroom users, Truong Quoc Tuan, **Truong Quoc Huy** and Pham Ngoc Anh Dao were arrested in Ho Chi Minh City. After nine months in detention without access to legal representation or visits by family members, the three were suddenly released on 7 July 2006. No charges were ever brought against them. Only six weeks later Truong Quoc Huy was re-arrested at an Internet café in Ho Chi Minh City.

At the time of writing, his family have heard no further news about him; his whereabouts are unknown and no public charges have been brought against him.

Amnesty International considers Nguyen Vu Binh and Truon Quoc Huy to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression and association.

Call to action

Call on the government of Viet Nam to immediately release Nguyen Vu Binh and Truong Quoc Huy, and stop the harassment and threats against other Internet dissidents.

Write to the Vietnamese authorities demanding the release of Nguyen Vu Binh and others imprisoned for expressing their political views online

Sample letter

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to urge the immediate and unconditional release of prisoners of conscience Nguyen Vu Binh and Truong Quoc Huy.

These men have only exercised their legitimate right to freedom of expression through the Internet; Nguyen Vu Binh by communicating with others outside Viet Nam about human rights and corruption and Truong Quoc Huy by taking part in an Internet chat room and expressing support for other dissidents advocating political reform.

Your government has said many times that Vietnamese citizens have the right to freedom of expression. Arresting and imprisoning people like Nguyen Vu Binh and Truong Quoc Huy directly contradicts this.

I call on you to uphold the rights of all Vietnamese citizens to freedom of expression and association, to release Nguyen Vu Binh and Truong Quoc Huy immediately and stop the harassment and arrest of countless others who have a valid and positive contribution to make towards the progress of Viet Nam.

Yours sincerely,

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Vietnamese students use computers in an internet cafe, Hanoi, Vietnam

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