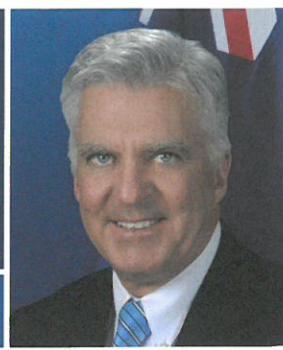




# Chris Hayes MP



FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FOWLER

Ref: 55161143E/150622YN  
17 December 2015

The Hon Julie Bishop MP  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I write on behalf of the Australian Vietnamese community to bring to your urgent attention the recent arrest of Mr Nguyen Van Dai in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Mr Nguyen Van Dai is a prominent Vietnamese lawyer who has been actively engaged in representing human rights activists that have fallen foul of the Vietnamese Government and its questionable judicial system.

On Wednesday, Mr Nguyen was arrested by Vietnamese authorities and charged under Article 88 of the Vietnamese Penal Code for "conducting propaganda against the state", which carries a punishment of up to twenty years imprisonment. A week before his arrest, Mr Nguyen was brutally beaten by Vietnamese authorities disguised as thugs for leading a training forum for human rights defenders.

As one of the few practising human rights lawyers in Vietnam, Mr Nguyen is also the founder of the Committee for Human Rights which focuses on restoring justice and human rights to those that have been innocently persecuted in Vietnam. Therefore, this is not the first time Mr Nguyen has been targeted by the Vietnamese authorities and was previously imprisoned for four years in 2007 on similar charges for representing a Church and advocating for religious liberty. His legal licence to practice law was revoked at that time.

According to the UNHCR, Mr Nguyen's recent incident is the third violent attack that has occurred on activists in Vietnam since September. Vietnam has been heavily criticised for failing to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators.

Given Australia's obligations under a number of international human rights treaties, I believe we have a moral responsibility to condemn human rights violations wherever they occur.

Therefore, I respectfully request the Australian Government to take an active interest in this case.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Hayes".

Chris Hayes MP  
Federal Member for Fowler  
Chief Opposition Whip