



PRESS RELEASE

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Life of Vietnamese Activist in Danger Due to Gross Mistreatment in Prison

The Vietnamese government should immediately cease the ill-treatment, physical and psychological abuse of Dang Xuan Dieu while in arbitrary detention.¹ News reports of Dang Xuan Dieu being forced to sleep and eat next to his excrement; denied access to adequate food, clean drinking water and regular showers; and subjected to humiliation and torture reveal the inhumane conditions of his detention.

In January 2013, together with 13 activists Dang Xuan Dieu was sentenced to 13 years in prison for “attempting to overthrow the government” based on his work as a community organizer who advocated for education for children living in poverty and aid to people with disability and his writings that highlighted the Vietnamese government’s religious persecution.

International human rights organizations, elected officials and foreign embassies in Hanoi have called for Dang Xuan Dieu’s immediate release. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has ruled that Dang Xuan Dieu and his fellow activists’ detention was arbitrary and unlawful.

According to reports, Dang Xuan Dieu, who is currently serving one of the longest politically motivated sentences in Vietnam, has been held in solitary confinement and subject to physical and psychological abuse as punishment for protesting his ill. On several occasions, prison officials forced Dang Xuan Dieu to “model” while other prisoners painted him into a “half-human/half-beast” figure.

¹ Radio Free Asia, October 8, 2014: “Vietnamese Engineer-Activist Treated Like a ‘Slave,’ RHumiliated in

Dang Xuan Dieu has been on prolonged hunger strikes since April 2014 to demand better treatment. In retaliation, prison officials act with impunity and have reportedly let other prisoners beat and treat Dang Xuan Dieu like a “slave.”

Despite the signing of the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment last November, according to reports from those in detention, the Vietnamese government continues to show blatant disregard for the humane treatment of prisoners.

In light of these reports, we call on foreign embassies in Hanoi to make every effort to visit Dang Xuan Dieu in prison and monitor his health. Attention from distinguished international personnel can and will improve his conditions.

The Vietnamese government must release Dang Xuan Dieu immediately and unconditionally and must take all steps to provide him and other prisoners with humane treatment and appropriate access to sanitary facilities in accordance with their international obligations.

For more information, please contact:

ACAT France

Christine Laroque, Asia Programs Manager, laroque@acatfrance.fr and +33 1 40 40 74 09

Access

Jochai Ben-Avie, Policy Director, jochai@accessnow.org and +1 347 806 9531

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Eva Galperin, Global Policy Analyst, eva@eff.org and +1 415 436 9333 ex. 111

English PEN

Cat Lucas, Writers at Risk Programme Manager, cat@englishpen.org and +44 20 7324 2539

Media Legal Defence Initiative

Nani Jansen, Legal Director, nani.jansen@mediadefence.org and +44 780 540 4089

PEN International

Cathy McCann, Researcher, Cathy.McCann@pen-international.org and +44 20 7405 0338

Viet Tan

Hoang Tu Duy, Spokesperson, dhoang@viettan.org and +1 202 596 7951