

President Nguyen Minh Triet,
Office of the President,
1 Bach Thao,
Hanoi,
Vietnam.

23 August 2010

Re: Arbitrary detention of human rights defender Professor Pham Minh Hoang

Your Excellency,

Human rights defender **Professor Pham Minh Hoang** was arbitrarily detained on 13 August 2010. Professor Pham Minh Hoang is a lecturer at the Ho Chi Minh City Polytechnic Institute, and, according to a statement released by his wife following his arrest, he is concerned with social justice and corruption.

On 13 August 2010 Professor Pham Minh Hoang was arbitrarily detained under Article 79 of the Vietnamese Penal Code (VPC) on charges of belonging to a banned political group. Prior to his arrest the authorities had reportedly told the human rights defender that he would be arrested if he did not confess to belonging to the democracy group Viet Tan. Article 79 of the VPC bans any "activities aimed at overthrowing the Government". Professor Pham Minh Hoang's current detention location is unknown.

Professor Pham Minh Hoang actively supported protests against bauxite mining in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. He had also attended a conference that was held in Saigon which looked at the issue of Vietnamese sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands. The Professor's wife has reported that the police are investigating leadership training courses that Professor Pham Minh Hoang had offered to some of his students.

Front Line believes that the arrest and detention of Professor Pham Minh Hoang are a direct result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights, and see them as forming part of an ongoing pattern of harassment against human rights defenders in Vietnam. Front Line is seriously concerned for the physical and psychological integrity of Professor Pham Minh Hoang and all pro-democracy activists in Vietnam.

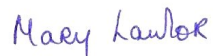
Front Line urges the Vietnamese authorities to:

1. Immediately drop all charges against Professor Pham Minh Hoang, as it is believed that they have been brought against him solely on account of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of Professor Pham Minh Hoang and ensure that his treatment whilst in detention adheres to all those conditions set out in the *Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners*, adopted by General Assembly Resolution 45/111 of 14 December 1990;
3. Take immediate measures to ensure that Professor Pham Minh Hoang has full access to his family and lawyers;
4. Ensure in all circumstances that human rights defenders in Vietnam are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals, and free of all restrictions

including judicial harassment.

Front Line respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw attention to Article 5(a): *“For the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, at the national and international levels: (a) To meet or assemble peacefully”*; and Article 6 (b): *“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (b) As provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to other views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms.”*

Yours sincerely,



Mary Lawlor
Director