

October 4, 2011

Nguyen Tan Dung
Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Office of the State
1 Bach Thao
Hanoi, Vietnam

CC:
French Foreign Ministry
Alain Juppé
Ministere des Affaires etrangeres
37, Quai d'Orsay
75351 Paris
France

Dear Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung,

We, international digital freedom and human rights organizations, call on the Government of Vietnam to release blogger, human rights defender, and lecturer Pham Minh Hoang.

Mr. Hoang, a dual French-Vietnamese citizen sentenced on August 10 to three years in prison and an additional three years house arrest, is a well-known blogger whose articles on education, the environment, and Vietnamese sovereignty in respect to China have been widely read. He is also a lecturer in applied mathematics at the Ho Chi Minh City Polytechnic Institute, an activist campaigning against bauxite mining by Chinese firms, and has participated in conferences on Vietnam's sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly Islands. Mr. Hoang has worked tirelessly to promote human rights and to empower and encourage civic participation among his pupils and peers.

At Mr. Hoang's trial, Judge Vu Phi Long ruled that his writings had "blackened the image of the country" and were "aimed at overthrowing the people's government." Mr. Hoang, on the contrary, has claimed that he was exercising his free speech and was unaware that he had committed any crimes.

We would like to remind the Government of Vietnam that Mr. Hoang's blogging activities, as well as his activism, are guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Vietnam is a party to, as well as by Articles 35, 50, 53, and 69 of the Vietnamese Constitution.

We call on Vietnamese authorities to recognize Mr. Hoang's right to expression, and to lift any charges or convictions related to his protected expressive activities, and—with these charges lifted—to ensure his release.

Signed,

ACAT-France (Action des chrétiens pour l'abolition de la torture - France)

ARTICLE 19

Committee of Concerned Scientists

Committee to Protect Journalists

Electronic Frontier Foundation

Front Line Defenders

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