



Viet Tan (Vietnam Reform Party)

*With members inside Vietnam and around the world,
Viet Tan aims to establish democracy and reform the country through peaceful means.*

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Hanoi Postpones An Inconvenient Trial

According to family sources, six Vietnamese democracy activists will not be tried as scheduled on September 24, 2009 in the northern city of Hai Phong. Hanoi decided to avoid a controversial show trial while state president Nguyen Minh Triet is in New York for the United Nations General Assembly. He is to speak on Friday, September 25.

The trial of six Vietnamese activists for “propaganda against the socialist state” will be postponed until after Nguyen Minh Triet returns to Vietnam. The activists (writer Nguyen Xuan Nghia, university student Ngo Quynh, former communist party member Nguyen Manh Son, essayist Nguyen Van Tinh, land rights activist Nguyen Van Tuc, and electrician Nguyen Kim Nhan) published articles on the internet advocating for Vietnam’s territorial sovereignty and planned to hang public banners calling for human rights and multiparty democracy. They were arrested in September 2008.

Authorities did not convey news of the delay to the families, as required by Vietnamese law, but notified lawyers of the defendants that the proceedings were being postponed due to the illness of one detainee, essayist Nguyen Van Tinh. The family of Nguyen Van Tinh have not received any word regarding his health condition.

Two other Vietnamese democracy activists arrested last September are to be tried this week in Hanoi for anti-government propaganda. They are engineer Pham Van Troi (to be tried on September 24) and high school teacher Vu Hung (to be tried on September 25). It unclear whether their proceedings will be rescheduled.

To date, none of the families of the eight democracy activists have received official notice of the time or place of the trials. This is a violation of Vietnam’s criminal procedure code.

By hiding court details from the families and avoiding a political trial on the eve of Nguyen Minh Triet’s address at the United Nations, the Hanoi government acknowledges its shameful human rights record.

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