



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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Vietnamese authorities violate their own laws and carry out repression in Ben Tre province

The Government of Vietnam finally acknowledged detaining Professor Pham Minh Hoang—lecturer at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology—one month after his arrest and only after Viet Tan brought the matter to public attention. Prior to September 9, the authorities attempted to keep the detention a secret even though Professor Hoang’s family repeatedly protested the police action.

It is troubling that the communist authorities remain silent on the detention of three other Viet Tan members: Pastor Duong Kim Khai, Ms. Tran Thi Thuy and Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tam. These three individuals were arrested between mid-July and early August. Their families have not received any news from police. By covertly arresting and denying the defendants the right to legal representation, security police possess unchecked power to commit physical abuses and forced confessions.

The Vietnamese authorities have also violated their own Criminal Procedure Code by holding the above individuals beyond the time limit permitted without an official detention order and notification to family. In the case of Pham Minh Hoang, only after his family issued a public appeal circulated outside Vietnam did the Ministry of Public Security provide a temporary detention order.

In a further example of abuse of power, during July and August, security police in Ben Tre province (located in the Mekong delta) launched a crackdown against land rights activists, physically beating people and using electric prods. In addition to Viet Tan member Nguyen Thanh Tam, several individuals were arrested and charged with violating Article 79 of the penal code (“attempting to overthrow the socialist government”).

Once again, Viet Tan challenges the Hanoi regime:

- To demonstrate why training youths, defending the country’s environment and territorial sovereignty, exercising freedom of religion and campaigning for social justice are considered “aiming to overthrow the socialist government.”
- To allow citizens to air their grievances at a public forum and not be repressed; let people concerned with the China threat to speak out on Vietnamese sovereignty and not be arrested; and permit all who disagree with the Communist Party to engage in peaceful political activities without being terrorized by the security apparatus of the state.

Viet Tan condemns the human right abuses committed by the communist authorities against citizens seeking social justice. We call on human rights defenders to support the victims of police brutality in Ben Tre province and demand that the Vietnamese authorities release all political prisoners including the members of Viet Tan listed above.

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