



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 should reverse conviction of prominent dissident and stop criminalizing peaceful expression

Vi Duc Hoi, a former Vietnamese Communist Party member serving an 8 year prison sentence, will have his case presented before an appeals court in Lang Son province on April 26, 2011. Convicted for "propaganda against the socialist state" in January, he should be released immediately.

Fifty-four year old Vi Duc Hoi joined the Communist Party in 1980 and oversaw the party school of Lang Son province where he trained local party leaders. Through his writings and speeches, he called for democratic reforms and was eventually expelled from the Communist Party. He is the highest ranking former party member in prison for his political beliefs.

Like many other bloggers and democracy activists in recent years, Vi Duc Hoi was convicted under Article 88 of the Vietnamese Penal Code. There are currently over 20 Vietnamese activists in prison or under house arrest for so-called anti-state propaganda:

- Convicted on Apr 4, 2011: Cu Huy Ha Vu (7 years imprisonment)
- Detained without trial since Oct. 2010: Nguyen Van Hai, Phan Thanh Hai
- Convicted on Jan. 29, 2010: Pham Thanh Nghien (4 years imprisonment)
- Convicted on Oct. 9, 2009: Nguyen Xuan Nghia, Ngo Quynh, Nguyen Manh Son, Nguyen Van Tinh, Nguyen Van Tuc, Nguyen Kim Nhan (2 to 6 years imprisonment)
- Convicted on Oct. 6-8, 2009: Tran Duc Thach, Vu Hung, Pham Van Troi (3 to 4 years imprisonment)
- Convicted on Jul. 3, 2008: Luong Van Sinh (2 years imprisonment)
- Convicted on Apr. 25, 2008: Pham Ba Hai, Vu Hoang Hai, Nguyen Ngoc Quang (2 to 5 years imprisonment)
- Convicted on Jan. 29, 2008: Truong Quoc Huy (6 years imprisonment)
- Convicted on May 15, 2007: Tran Quoc Hien (5 years imprisonment)
- Convicted on May 11, 2007: Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan (3 to 4 years imprisonment)
- Convicted on May 10, 2007: Le Nguyen Sang, Huynh Nguyen Dao, Nguyen Bac Truyen (3 to 5 years imprisonment)
- Convicted on Mar 30, 2007: Nguyen Phong, Nguyen Binh Thanh, Nguyen Van Ly (5 to 7 years imprisonment)

The Hanoi government's application of "rule by law" to suppress dissent epitomizes its disregard for human rights and is in violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a signatory. The continued criminalization of peaceful expression is ultimately a brake on the country's development.

Vi Duc Hoi and all the other prisoners of conscience named above must be released without delay.

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