



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 authorities expel Viet Tan member from Australia for photographing farmer protest

Nguyen Van Be, an Australian citizen and member of Viet Tan, was expelled from Vietnam on May 18, 2009. He and his wife arrived in Vietnam on April 9, 2009 to visit family. Mr. Be witnessed many instances of social injustice and became drawn to scenes of farmers protesting against corruption. He took photos of dozens of aggrieved farmers demonstrating near the US Consulate in Saigon on April 27.

On May 1, Nguyen Van Be and his wife were detained at Saigon's Tan Son Nhat airport while preparing for their flight back to Australia. Police confiscated the digital camera which contained photos of the farmer protest. The couple was detained and interrogated separately for two straight weeks. The Ministry of Public Security accused them of allegedly breaking Vietnamese laws and taking photos of restricted areas.

The couple was released and expelled from Vietnam on May 18 following the intervention of the Australian consulate.

Viet Tan condemns the arbitrary detention and mistreatment of Mr. and Mrs. Nguyen Van Be. Rather than addressing the legitimate demands of Vietnamese citizens against government land grabs and corruption, the Vietnamese authorities terrorize an innocent couple for taking photos of a peaceful protest.

To justify the illegal two-week detention of Nguyen Van Be and his wife, Hanoi's state media ran stories completely distorting the couple's visit to Vietnam and Viet Tan's efforts for peaceful democratic change. Once again, the Vietnamese communist authorities have demonstrated that they are the instigators of terror and disrespect for rule of law in Vietnam.

The mission of Viet Tan is to overcome dictatorship, build the foundation for a sustainable democracy, and demand justice and human rights for the Vietnamese people through nonviolent struggle based on civic participation.

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