



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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Promoting democracy through nonviolent means should not be a crime

Today in Saigon, in a trial lasting less than six hours, Vietnamese communist authorities convicted a member and two supporters of Viet Tan of “terrorism.”

Detained since November 17, 2007, Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan received a sentence of six months and will be expelled from the country; Somsak Khunmi (also known as Nguyen Quoc Hai) received a sentence of nine months plus three years probation; Nguyen The Vu received a sentence of five months, twenty-six days plus one year probation.

The manner in which authorities arrested, detained and orchestrated a campaign to falsely charge the three activists was a fundamental violation of human rights.

Today was ultimately a trial—before public opinion—of the arbitrary legal system and reckless propaganda of the communist regime against Viet Tan.

The court proceedings proved that:

- The regime was unable to substantiate its outrageous accusations.
- The communist legal system was feckless when put under public scrutiny.
- Public opinion, in Vietnam and abroad, recognized that Viet Tan’s efforts to disseminate pro-democracy ideas is essential to nonviolent struggle, and does not constitute terrorism as charged by the regime.
- Fraudulent tactics by the Ministry of Public Security could not deceive anyone.

The trial outcome also is a testament that the Viet Tan activists should not have been imprisoned for the last six months or received additional sentences. Moreover, the regime has no basis to continue jailing other democracy activists such as Father Nguyen Van Ly, Attorneys Nguyen Van Dai and Le Thi Cong Nhan, and members of the Vietnam Populist Party, People’s Democratic Party, Vietnam Progression Party, the United Workers-Farmers Organization, and many other political and social organizations. The continued detention of democracy activists is an admission of fear by the regime for peaceful democratic change.

Members of Viet Tan inside the country and around the world will build on the results that have been achieved, and in partnership with the wider Vietnamese democracy movement, work to overcome the dictatorship and achieve democracy. Only on the foundation of freedom and democracy, will Vietnam achieve a just and humanistic society and join in the progress of the world community.

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