

Vietnam – Prisoners of Conscience

Dang Xuan Dieu

Birth date : July 8, 1979
Activity : Christian, blogger, social activist, engineer
Date of arrest : July 30, 2011
Sentence : January 9, 2013 sentenced to **13 years in prison** followed by 5 years house arrest
charge : Attempt to overthrow the government (article 79)
Prison location : Xuyen Moc Prison, Ba Ria Town, Vung Tau Province (South Vietnam)



Dang Xuan Dieu is an engineer and a social organizer. He is actively involved in causes such as access to education for low-income students, helping victims of hurricanes or disabled persons. He is a citizen journalist and has written various articles for the Vietnam Redemptorist Journal. Sentenced to 13 years in prison, Dang Xuan Dieu suffered ill-treatment in detention. A recently released fellow prisoner says Dang Xuan Dieu is treated as a "slave" by the other prisoners with the complicity of the guards. In August 2013, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNGWAD) recognized the arbitrariness of the detention of Mr. Dang Xuan Dieu, stating that his detention violates several articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Vietnam is signatory.

International interventions for Dan Xuan Dieu : see Annex 1

Tran Thi Thuy

Birth Date : February 2, 1971
Activity : tradeswoman
Date of arrest : August 10, 2010
Sentence : May 30, 2011 sentenced to **8 years in prison** followed by 5 years house arrest
charge : Attempt to overthrow the government (article 79)
Prison location : K5 Long Khanh prison, Dong Nai province



Tran Thi Thuy is an activist for justice, both for herself and other victims of forced expropriations in the province of Ben Tre. Ms. Thuy is a faithful Hoa Hao Buddhist and a member of Viet Tan. Tran Thi Thuy was arrested on August 16, 2010 on charges of "subversion's attempts", under clause 2 of Article 79 of the Criminal Code, and sentenced to eight years in prison followed by five years house arrest. Subjected to forced labor and prison brutality, her health deteriorated sharply. Her family is often harassed and brutalized by security force and criminal gangs directed by authorities. In December 2011, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNGWAD) recognized the arbitrariness of the detention of Ms. Tran Thi Thuy, stating that his detention violates several articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Vietnam is signatory.

International interventions for Tran Thi Thuy : see Annex 1

Ho Duc Hoa

Birth Date : March 6, 1974
Activity : Christian, blogger, social activist
Date of arrest : July 30, 2011
Sentence : January 9, 2013 sentenced to **13 years in prison**
followed by 5 years house arrest
Charge : Attempt to overthrow the government
(article 79)
Prison location : Nam Ha prison, Ha Nam province



Ho Duc Hoa is a social organizer and has written articles for the Vietnam Redemptorist Journal. A member of the Vinh Diocese, Hoa is also a member of the John Paul II Group for Pro-Life and was actively involved in causes such as access to education for low-income students, assistance to victims of hurricanes or disabled persons.

He was arrested as part of a large-scale crackdown totaling 17 human rights activists (mostly from the Vinh Province). In August 2013, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNGWAD) recognized the arbitrariness of the detention of Mr. Ho Duc Hoa.

International interventions for Ho Duc Hoa : see Annex 1

Nguyen Dang Minh Man

Birth Date : January 10, 1985
Activity : Christian, citizen journalist
Date of arrest : August 2, 2011
Sentence : January 9, 2013 sentenced to **8 years in prison**
followed by 5 years house arrest
Charge : Attempt to overthrow the government
(article 79)
Prison location : Prison N°5, Yen Dinh, Thanh Hoa province



Nguyen Dang Minh Man is a social activist and a photo journalist. She took and posted pictures showing the slogans "HSTSVN", initial Vietnamese letters for "Paracel & Spratlys belong to Vietnam".

After attending a seminar on non-violent struggle organized by Viet Tan, she was arrested and convicted with 13 others. Despite the number of people in the dock, their trial lasted only two days. Minh Man was sentenced to 8 years in prison, and five years house arrest. In October 2014 the English Media Legal Defence Initiative NGO, and Oxford University have submitted a complaint to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNGWAD) to protest against the arbitrariness of the detention of Miss Minh Man.

International interventions for Nguyen Dang Minh Man : see Annex 1

Nguyen Van Dai

Birth date: May 6, 1969
Activity: Human rights lawyer, blogger
Date of arrest: December 16, 2015
Date of trial: Detained without trial
Charge: Conducting Propaganda against the state (Article 88)
prison location: B14 Prison, Hanoi



Since his arrest, his wife Vu Minh Khanh has not been allowed to visit him but has recently been able to send supplies to him. In December attorney Ha Huy Son submitted the paperwork to become Dai's defense lawyer but was declined by the Ministry of Public Security.

Nguyen Van Dai is a human rights lawyer and a blogger. He founded the Committee for Human Rights in Vietnam in 2006, dedicating his life to civil empowerment through legal means with programs aimed at expanding legal networkings, building capacity for future human rights defenders and increasing legal education by disseminating and authoring publications on civil and legal rights.

Dai also founded the “Brotherhood for Democracy” in May 2013, a group of mostly former jailed dissidents to co-ordinate mobilising efforts throughout Vietnam.

Dai was previously tried in May 2008 and sentenced to five years in prison (later reduced to four years) for “conducting propaganda against the state” (Article 88) and was forced to close his offices. He was released to four years of house arrest on March 9, 2011 and disbarred. Dai concluded his house arrest in March 2015 but experienced regular police harassment, physical attacks and surveillance.

Dai was the recipient of Human Rights Watch’s Hellman-Hammett Award and Vietnam Human Rights Network’s Human Rights Award in 2007.

International interventions for Nguyen Van Dai : see Annex 2

Le Thu Ha

Birth date: 1982
Activity: Human rights lawyer
Date of arrest: December 16, 2015
Date of trial: Detained without trial
Charge: Conducting Propaganda against the state (Article 88)
prison location: B14 Prison, Hanoi



Le Thu Ha is the secretary of the independent organization, the Brotherhood for Democracy Association. Currently, it is not known whether she has been formally charged.

Lê Thu Ha had been arrested on 23 September with four other staff members of the independent Lương Tâm (Conscience) TV, set up in August 2015 to broadcast short video clips on YouTube about human rights issues in Viet Nam. She was an English translator for the broadcasts. Ha Noi security police held the five for questioning until late in the evening.

Activists tried to visit Lê Thu Hà at B14 prison on 20 December, but were not authorized to visit. She is at risk of torture and other ill treatment. Human rights defenders facing criminal charges are subject to severe and often brutal treatment during pretrial detention and investigation

International interventions for Le Thu Ha : see Annex 2

Tran Huynh Duy Thuc

Birth date: November 29, 1966
Activity: Human rights defender, blogger, entrepreneur
Date of arrest: May 24, 2009
Sentence : January 20, 2010, sentenced to **16 years in prison**, followed by 5 years house arrest
Charge: Attempt to overthrow the government (Article 79)
prison location:



Tran Huynh Duy Thuc was a former manager of the internet company OCI. In 2005, with others such as Le Thanh Long, he created a group of Chan study on the political and social situation in Vietnam.

In November 2008, he created two blogs: Change We need and Tran Dong Chan where he published articles and columns about the leaders of the political regime.

In March 2009, he went to Phuket, Thailand, to meet other democracy activists in order to create political organizations capable of replacing the Vietnamese Communist Party when the situation requires it. When he returned to Vietnam, he was accused of having founded the Socialist Party of Vietnam.

On 24 May 2009, Tran Huynh Duy Thuc was arrested under the initial charge of “promoting anti-government propaganda” under Article 88 of the Vietnamese Criminal Code for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. On 20 January 2010, in a one-day trial, Tran Huynh Duy Thuc and his three co-defendants – Le Cong Dinh, Nguyen Tien Trung and Le Thang Long – were prosecuted at the People’s Court of Ho Chi Minh City for “conducting activities aimed at overthrowing the people’s administration” under Article 79 of the Criminal Code. Thuc was sentenced to 16 years’ imprisonment followed by 5 years of house arrest, while Dinh, Trung and Long, were sentenced, respectively, to 5 years, 7 years and 5 years’ imprisonment followed by 3 years of house arrest.

On 29 August 2012, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) adopted the opinion that Thuc and his three co-defendants’ detention violated the right to freedom of opinion and expression guaranteed by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), as well as the right to liberty and security of person (Article 9) and the right to freedom of association (Article 21), to which Vietnam is a party.

International interventions for Tran Huynh Duy Thuc : see Annex 3

Annex 1 :

Franz Jessen, European Union ambassador in Vietnam, January 11, 2013 :



the EU Ambassador in Vietnam, Franz Jessen, expressed concern about sentences ranging from 3 to 13 years handed down prison on January 9 in the province of Nghe An, against 14 bloggers and journalists, for acts related to the exercise of freedom of expression.

Jessen recalled the fundamental right of everyone to freely express their opinions in a peaceful manner in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Vietnam is a party.

He added that this sentence appears to be incompatible with the international obligations of Vietnam»

European Parliament Resolution (2013/2599(RSP) of April 18, 2013 :



[...]

Expresses its deep concern about the conviction and harsh sentencing of journalists and bloggers in Vietnam; condemns the continuing violations of human rights, including political intimidation, harassment, assaults, arbitrary arrests, heavy prison sentences and unfair trials, in Vietnam perpetrated against political activists, journalists, bloggers, dissidents and human rights defenders, both on- and offline, in clear violation of Vietnam's international human rights obligations ; [...] »

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0189+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Rupert Abbott, Amnesty International, 9 January 2013 :



« The charge of attempting to overthrow the government is without merit, and these people were detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression. We call on the Vietnamese authorities to release these activists immediately and unconditionally»

ACAT – Urgent Call for Ms Tran Thi Thuy, 20 March 2014 :



« Land rights activist, Ms. Tran Thi Thuy, 42, has been arbitrarily detained since 2010. She is, moreover, deprived of medical care and is subjected to very harsh prison conditions. Currently detained at the prison of K5 Xuan Loc camp in Dong Nai province (in the south), she remains subject to forced labor. She should dry fifty kilos of fish per day backbreaking work. Following

several fainting, a medical examination in autumn 2013 showed that her spine was calcified and had calculations of the gallbladder

**Front Line Defenders – Dang Xuan Dieu, social activist,
severely mistreated in jail,
15 October 2014 :**



« The first detailed information on Dang Xuan Dieu of prison abuse were made public on Oct. 7, 2014, when his former cell mate, Mr. Truong Minh Tam, was released. Mr. Truong Minh Tam said Dieu is treated as an "animal" and a "slave" in prison. Each cell is normally between 6 and 8 square meters, and prisoners are sometimes chained in pairs. Mr. Tam reported that during summers, prison authorities put more prisoners in the cell of Dang Xuan Dieu, making it difficult to breathe with the warmth atmosphere. While in winter, Dang Xuan Dieu finds himself alone in his cold cell.

According to information received, sometimes Dang Xuan Dieu is deprived of toilet paper. Feces were often deliberately left in his cell for several days, creating an unhealthy and unbearable smell. Reportedly, the human rights defender was forced to live and sleep next to their feces. He was not allowed to have regular showers or brushing teeth »

**Global Voices – a citizen photojournalist in prison hunger
strike, 11 December 2014 :**



« Nguyen Dang Minh Man was arrested there over three years for taking photographs during a protest and sentenced to eight years in prison for subversion.

She is currently serving his prison sentence in Camp No. 5, Yen Dinh in Thanh Hoa province. The conditions are harsh, and she is subject to heavy physical labor. On November 16, 2014, Minh Man and three other prisoners of conscience have been placed in segregation for unknown reasons. On November 28 2014, Minh Man began a hunger strike to protest against this unfair treatment »

Annex 2 :

Organizations calling for the release of Mr. Nguyen Van Dai and Ms. Le Thu Ha

<https://www.amnesty.nl/nieuwsportaal/pers/calling-release-vietnamese-activists-nguyen-dai-and-le-thu-ha>

1. Amnesty International – England
 2. Christian Solidarity Worldwide – England
 3. Front Line Defenders – IRELAND
 4. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation – South Africa
 5. Civil Rights Defenders – Sweden
 6. International Service for Human Rights – Swiss
 7. International Commission of Jurists – Swiss
 8. Freedom House – United States
 9. Human Rights Foundation – United States
 10. Humanitarian China – United States
 11. National Congress of Vietnamese Americans – United States
 12. People In Need – Czech Republic
 13. Văn Lang – Czech Republic
 14. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) – Thailand
 15. Foundation for Community Educational Media – Thailand
 16. SHANAH – Burma
 17. Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS) – Indonesia
 18. Institute for Policy Research and Advocacy (ELSAM) – Indonesia
 19. Legal Aid Center for the Press (LBH Pers) – Indonesia
 20. ASEAN SOGIE Caucus – Philippines
 21. Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Conscience Empowerment (VOICE) – United States, Australia, Canada & Europe
 22. Hội Anh Em Dân Chủ (Brotherhood for Democracy) – VIỆT NAM
 23. Diễn đàn Xã hội Dân sự (Civil Society Forum) – VIỆT NAM
 24. No-U Miền Trung – VIỆT NAM
 25. Phong trào Con đường Việt Nam (Vietnam Path Movement) – VIỆT NAM
 26. Hội Ái hữu Tù nhân Chính trị và Tôn giáo Việt Nam (Vietnamese Political & Religious Prisoners Friendship Association) – VIỆT NAM
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- AFP, Vietnam arrests high-profile lawyer on anti-state charges, 16.12.2015,
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3362080/Vietnamarrests-high-profile-lawyer-anti-state-charges.html>
 - EU Ambassador in Vietnam protested against the arrest of lawyer Nguyen Van Dai on behalf of all EU Member States, 17.12.2015,
http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/vietnam/press_corner/all_news/news/2015/20151217_en.htm
 - UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Press Release about the violent attacks on lawyer Nguyen Van Dai, 11.12.2015,
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16865&LangID=E>
 - Reuters, Vietnam jails activist lawyers for up to 5 years, 12.05.2007,
<http://asia.news.yahoo.com/070511/3/31plp.html>

- Report about lawyer Nguyen Van Dai after his release from Nam Ha prison, 10.04.2011, <http://davidlovenghuyen.blogspot.de/2011/04/taynguyen-1.html>
- Website „The Brotherhood for Democracy“, <http://www.hoidanchu.org/p/gioi-thieu-ve-hoi-anh-em-dan-chu.html>, available from 22.12.2015
- Website „Vietnam Human Rights Committee“: <https://vietnamhumanrightscommitte.wordpress.com/>, available from 22.12.2015
- Website „Vietnam Human Rights Center“: <http://vnhrc.org/>. This site is no more available since the arrest of lawyer Nguyen Van Dai. Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported about an event of „Brotherhood for Democracy Association“ and „Vietnam Human Rights Center“ on 05.12.2015 in Hanoi: <http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/blog/aedc-vietnam-human-rights-center-celebrate-humanrights-day-12112015111337.html/>
- Facebook Nguyen Van Dai, Assaults on members of „Brotherhood for Democracy Association“, 31.01.2015, <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=329543640586877&set=a.123882327819677.1073741828.100005937302699&type=1&theater>
- Facebook Le Thu Ha, Report about prohibition of leaving the country, 03.04.2015, <https://www.facebook.com/le.thuha.7169>
- Author Nguyen Tuong Thuy, One cannot muzzle „Conscience TV“, 01.10.2015, <http://www.rfavietnam.com/node/2825>

Annex 3 :



Joint Statement Calling for the Release of Vietnamese Prisoner of Conscience Tran Huynh Duy Thuc

*To mark the Thuc's 6th year of imprisonment
24/05/2010 – 24/05/2015*

<https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/asa41/1731/2015/en/>

SIGNED:

1. California State Senator Janet Nguyen, Thirty-Fourth District - USA
2. Amnesty International – ENGLAND
3. Civil Rights Defenders – SWEDEN
4. Freedom House – USA
5. International Commission of Jurists – SWITZERLAND
6. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) – THAILAND
7. Asian Human Rights Commission – HONG KONG
8. Assistance Association for Political Prisoners – BURMA
9. Burma Partnership – BURMA
10. Centre for Human Rights Education– PAKISTAN
11. Citizens for Justice and Peace – INDIA
12. Imparsial – INDONESIA
13. Justice and Peace Netherlands, The Hague – NETHERLANDS
14. Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders – HONG KONG
15. OT Watch Mongolia – MONGOLIA
16. Taiwan Association for Human Rights – TAIWAN
17. Commission for the Disappeared and Victims of Violence (KontraS) – INDONESIA
18. Triangle Women's Support Group – BURMA
19. Van Lang – CZECH REPUBLIC
20. Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Conscience Empowerment – PHILIPPINES
21. Association for the Protection of Religious Freedom – VIETNAM
22. Association of Former Political and Religious Prisoners of Vietnam – VIETNAM
23. Bach Dang Giang Foundation – VIETNAM
24. Bau Bi Tuong Than Association – VIETNAM
25. Canadian Youth for Human Rights Vietnam – VIETNAM
26. Civil Society Forum – VIETNAM
27. Chuong Bo Evangelical Protestant Church – VIETNAM
28. Evangelical Lutheran Church American and Vietnam – VIETNAM
29. Former Vietnamese Prisoners of Conscience - VIETNAM
30. Independent Journalist Association – VIETNAM
31. No – U Mien Trung - VIETNAM
32. REM Defenders – VIETNAM
33. Vietnam Path Movement – VIETNAM
34. Vietnamese Bloggers Network – VIETNAM
35. Vietnamese United Buddhist Sangha – VIETNAM
36. Group of Nguyen Kim Dien Priest – VIETNAM