URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE TORTURED TO CONFESS

Journalist and human rights defender Nguyen Van Hoa was convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison in December 2017 for reporting on the 2016 Formosa environmental disaster in central Viet Nam. Tortured by the authorities to confess to his "crime", he is currently being held in solitary confinement as punishment for his refusal to cooperate. Nguyen Van Hoa is a prisoner of conscience and should be immediately and unconditionally released.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc
Số 16, Lê Hồng Phong,
Bà Đình, Hà Nội, Việt Nam
Email: ttll.mfa@mofa.gov.vn

His Excellency Prime Minister,

*I am writing to express my concern about the treatment of **Nguyen Van Hoa**, a journalist and human rights defender who has been imprisoned solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression. Currently held in An Diem Prison, Nguyen Van Hoa has been tortured by prison officials in an attempt to force him to admit his "crime". After refusing to cooperate, he was placed in solitary confinement on 12 May and has remained there ever since.*

Nguyen Van Hoa was arrested in January 2017 after covering a public demonstration on the Formosa environmental disaster. He was convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison on the charge of "conducting propaganda against the state".

Viet Nam is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention Against Torture. The Constitution of Viet Nam also explicitly bans the use of torture and other ill-treatment. As a result, the Vietnamese government is obligated to end the use of torture by its law enforcement officials, as well as to promptly and effectively investigate allegations of torture and bring to justice anyone suspected to be responsible.

Specifically, I urge you to:
- ***Immediately and unconditionally release Nguyen Van Hoa who is a prisoner of conscience as he has been imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, and***
- ***Pending his release, ensure Nguyen Van Hoa is protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in prison and that there is a prompt and impartial investigation into allegations of torture***

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 23 May 2019, prisoner of conscience Hoang Duc Binh who is presently imprisoned at An Diem prison with Nguyen Van Hoa, told his family during their monthly visit that Nguyen Van Hoa is being held in solitary confinement and had been tortured by prison guards.

Nguyen Van Hoa is a journalist who worked for the Vietnamese service desk at Radio Free Asia. In summer 2016, the Formosa environmental disaster occurred in the four provinces in the central coastline of Viet Nam. Nguyen Van Hoa was among the first media persons to approach the affected area and cover the situation.

Several demonstrations were held by people in Ha Tinh and Nghe An provinces during the period of the disaster to demand the Vietnamese government to respond to the situation. The local authorities reacted to these demonstrations with anti-riot police, using excessive force. Clashes happened between police and protestors leading to a series of arrests targeting community leaders, environmental activists and journalists.

Nguyen Van Hoa was arrested in June 2017 and charged with "conducting propaganda against the state" under article 88 of the 1999 Penal Code. On November 2017, in a secret trial, Nguyen Van Hoa was convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison. Neither his lawyer nor his family were present during the court proceedings.

In August 2018, Nguyen Van Hoa was allowed to testify in court during a trial against environmental activist Le Dinh Luong. During those proceedings, he told the judge that he had been beaten by interrogators to give forced confessions. Instead of promptly launching an investigation into his claim, the judge sent him back to prison and without any action on the allegation.

During his time at An Diem prison, the authorities have attempted many times to force Nguyen Van Hoa to admit the charges against him but they have never succeeded.

Amnesty International often receives reports from various sources about the ill-treatment of prisoners of conscience in prisons across the country. . Incidents include: beatings by a cell mate or prison guard, reduction in food rations, restricted or no access to medical care. Also, there are reports of cancellation of family visits. In addition, prisoners have reported being held incommunicado or under conditions of solitary confinement for an extended period.

Amnesty International has recently released a [report](#) showing that the number of prisoners of conscience   jailed across Viet Nam has surged by one third to 128 in signs of a growing crackdown on peaceful activism. Over the past year, the Vietnamese authorities have intensified their crackdown on the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, thought, conscience, and religion.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Vietnamese, English
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 6 July 2019
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFFERED PRONOUN: Nguyen Van Hoa (he/him)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

<u>Minister of Public Security</u>
Tô Lâm
Email: ttll.mfa@mofa.gov.vn
Salutation: Dear Minister

Call: Stop all harassment and intimidation against Nguyễn Văn Hóa, undertake a prompt, thorough and effective investigation into his alleged torture and end his solitary confinement. Immediately and unconditionally release him.

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR AN NGOC TRAN Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam 12-14 Victoria Road W8 5RD 020 7937 1912 Fax 020 7937 6108 officeldn@vietnamembassy.org.uk www.vietnamembassy.org.uk **Please check with your section before sending appeals after the above date.**