



Cộng Đồng Người Việt Tự Do Úc Châu Vietnamese Community in Australia

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4th October 2010.

Hon. Kevin Rudd MP
Foreign Minister of Australia
Australian Parliament House
Canberra

Dear Sir,

Re: The arrests and detentions of the Vietnam Reform Party's members in Vietnam.

In recent weeks, the Vietnamese authorities have quietly arrested a number of activists, among them four individuals accused of “attempting to overthrow the socialist government” based on their involvement with the Vietnam Reform Party (or Viet Tan). We were given four names of these Viet-Tan detainees by representatives of the Party in Australia. They are:

1. **Mr Pham Minh Hoang**, 55 years old, lecturer at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology, arrested on August 13, 2010 in Saigon.
2. **Pastor Duong Kim Khai**, 52 years old, member of the Mennonite Church of Vietnam, arrested on August 10, 2010 in Saigon
3. **Ms Tran Thi Thuy**, 39 years old, merchant, arrested on August 10, 2010 in Dong Thap
4. **Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tam**, 57 years old, farmer, arrested on July 18, 2010 in Ben Tre

Mr Pham Minh Hoang is a scholar and patriot concerned for the future of the country's youths. He actively participated in the campaign to regain Vietnam's sovereignty over the Paracel and Spratly islands from China's claim and occupation, protested the government's decision to allow a state-owned Chinese company to mine bauxite in the Central Highlands, and blogged on issues of national concern under the penname Phan Kien Quoc.

Pastor Duong Kim Khai sought to apply religious teachings in everyday life, serving others despite personal hardships. In addition to caring for his congregation, in the last 10 years he actively helped the disposed farmers of all faiths in Ben Tre and Dong Thap provinces with their petitions to redress the unfair and illegal stealing of their lands by the corrupted state officials and business developers.

Mr Nguyen Thanh Tam and Ms Tran Thi Thuy have persistently campaigned for social justice on behalf of poor farmers in Ben Tre and Dong Thap provinces who have lost their lands over the last 20 years.



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The Vietnamese Community in Australia is alarmed and concerned about the recent increase in arbitrary arrests and indefinite detentions of people whose democratic and socially conscientious activities are deemed and accused by the regime as “aiming to overthrow the socialist government”

Based on what we know, Viet Tan is a political party that is committed to a non-violent struggle to end the social injustices, promote social empowerment and mobilisation of the people to contribute to Viet-Nam’s true democracy, justice and equality.

We do not believe training young people, defending the country’s environment and territorial sovereignty, exercising freedom of religion and campaigning for social justice are acts of “treason” or “overthrowing” a government.

As Vietnam is a member of the APEC forum, a Signatory to the UN Human Rights Charter and has been involved in the Australia-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue, we urge you to take up our concern to the Vietnamese government over the well being of these detainees.

We respectfully request the Australian government to,

- express our community’s concern and disapproval at these and other arrests of religious, intellectual, political and social justice activists in VN
- request an immediate release of these Viet-Tan members and other political detainees.
- temporarily suspend the **Human Rights Technical Cooperation Program (HRTCP)** to Vietnam until more concrete and measurable improvements or proofs of Vietnam actual implementation of its International HR Treaties are evident.

We are looking forward to receiving a prompt reply and action from you and the Department on this matter. Thank you for your time and support. We can be contacted at the listed contact details.

Yours sincerely,

Phong Nguyen (Mr.)

Federal President

On behalf of the Vietnamese Community in Australia