



## IPA Protests Ban on Vietnamese Publisher

Geneva, 20 February - For immediate release

**Deeply concerned about the 3-month ban imposed on the Da Nang Publishing House in Vietnam, the International Publishers Association (IPA) wrote to the Vietnamese Minister of Information and Communications, seeking clarification and transparency about the motives and circumstances leading to this temporary ban, and on the “severe mistakes” committed by Da Nang, as reported in State media. IPA also called on the Vietnamese authorities to reinstate the license of Da Nang at the end of the probation period in mid-March 2009.**

According to various sources, the Vietnamese authorities issued a penalty on 12 December 2008, putting all activities of the Da Nang publishing house on hold for 3 months because it would have committed “severe mistakes” in publishing a book entitled *Rong Da (Stone Dragon)* authored by Mr. Vo Ngoc Tien and Le Mai. The penalty would be in effect from 15 December 2008 to 15 March 2009. After this probation period, the Da Nang publishing house would have to submit a report to the Ministry of Information and Communications for it to decide whether or not to re-instate Da Nang’s publishing license.

In addition, the Ministry of Information and Communication would have also decided to “discipline” all of the Da Nang staff deemed responsible for the publishing of *Rong Da*. The staff of this publishing house under licence since 1984 would also have been replaced by new staff.

Bjorn Smith-Simonsen, Chair of IPA’s Freedom to Publish Committee, declares: “The 28<sup>th</sup> IPA Publishers Congress, meeting in Seoul, Korea, in May 2008, passed a resolution calling on Vietnam “to engage and implement reforms, which will improve the freedom to publish in your country and will allow publishers to contribute freely to the cultural, social and economic wealth of Vietnam without fear of imprisonment, persecution or harassment for themselves, and their associates”. We urge the Vietnamese Government to take the path described in this resolution, and to reinstate the Da Nang publishing house as it was before 12 December 2008. Finally, ahead of Vietnam’s review on 8 May 2009 on the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the working group of the Universal Periodical Review (UPR) in Geneva, we call upon Vietnam to respect its international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), in particular Article 19, which it acceded to in 1982”.

## International Publishers Association

### Notes for Editors:

### More about IPA:

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is the global non-governmental organisation representing all aspects of book and journal publishing worldwide. Established in 1896, IPA's mission is to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness for publishing as a force for cultural and political advancement worldwide. IPA is an industry association with a human rights mandate. IPA currently has 65 member associations in 53 countries.

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