

Press Release

Stockholm 09 March 2007

Göran Lindblad

Member of Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs

Vice President Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe

PACE

Press release regarding arrested dissidents in Vietnam

Release political prisoners in Vietnam!

Two known dissidents, both lawyers faced sudden arrest two days ago. The Vietnamese governments' arrest of two oppositional lawyers, Nguyen Van Dai and Le Thi Cong Nhan, is receiving attention by Swedish parliamentarians presently in Hanoi. The Swedish group of parliamentarians has spoken to the Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam, Pham Gia Khiem, who is also the Minister of Foreign Affairs during the day, demanding the immediate release of the two as well as all political prisoners. Demands for a reform of the judicial system, introduction of a free press and free expression, and the right to assembly were made as well.

The group has also met with the wife of one of the lawyers as well as the mother of the other one. Furthermore, there has been telephone contact with additional dissidents in Hanoi and Ho Chi Min City. The two lawyers were arrested in Hanoi this Tuesday for "propaganda against" the nation's communist government.

The wife of Nguyen Van Dai has been denied meeting her husband and providing him with necessary medication in remand prison. She is also worried about the risk of torture.

By urgent request of the relatives we now demand guarantees that the arrested will be set free, and that they are not tortured, even though Vietnam has not ratified the UN Convention against torture.

We are deeply concerned about the malfunctioning judicial system. For example the lack of right to an attorney and the right to full access in advance to all evidence concerning the case.

Vietnam must live up to United Nations standards on Human Rights if they aspire to become a member of the Security Council 2008.

According to the Millennium Declaration Vietnam has a lot to accomplish in the field of democracy and human rights

Göran Lindblad (m) Committee on Foreign Affairs +46 706 710366

Vice President Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe PACE

Kerstin Lundgren (c), Committee on Foreign Affairs +46 705 918102

Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe PACE

Lars Lindén (kd), Committee on Foreign Affairs +46 706 533793

Bodil Ceballos (mp) Committee on Foreign Affairs +46 705 733380

Nina Larsson (fp) Committee on Defence +46 703 640090

Aleksander Gabelic (s) Committee on Environment and Agriculture +46 703 165505

President UN Association of Sweden