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Asia - Vietnam

Jailed blogger

NGO coalition, including RWB, urges UN to press for jailed blogger's release

13 March 2013

Read the [special report on Internet surveillance in Vietnam](#)

Vietnam is on the Reporters Without Borders list of "[Enemies of the Internet](#)" and is now the [world's third biggest prison for bloggers and cyber-dissidents](#), after China and Oman.

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

13 March 2013

Today, a broad coalition of human rights organisations has called for UN free speech and human rights watchdogs to intervene and secure the immediate release of Vietnamese blogger and human rights activist Le Quoc Quan.

Le Quoc Quan has been held in solitary detention by the Vietnamese authorities since his arrest on 27 December 2012 on trumped up allegations of tax evasion. He has been allowed to see his lawyer only twice and has been refused any access to his family.

Le Quoc Quan has long been on the radar of the Vietnamese authorities for his human rights work. As a lawyer, he represented many victims of human rights violations, but was disbarred in 2007 on suspicion of engaging in "activities to overthrow the regime". Despite such threats, he continued with his human rights advocacy and as a result he has been arrested several times since. In August 2012, he was hospitalised after being severely beaten near his home by unknown assailants. The assault has not been investigated.

The Media Legal Defence Initiative, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Lawyers for Lawyers, Access Now, Media Defence – Southeast Asia, Electronic Frontier Foundation, Reporters Without Borders, Frontline Defenders, English PEN, Avocats Sans Frontières Network, Index on Censorship and Article 19 have requested that the United Nations' Special Rapporteurs on freedom of expression, human rights defenders and freedom of association conduct an urgent intervention with the Vietnamese authorities on Le Quoc Quan's behalf.

In a detailed petition the coalition argues that Le Quoc Quan is being persecuted for his legitimate blogging and human rights advocacy, in violation of his rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association. They argue furthermore that Vietnam is in blatant violation of the principles contained in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

A parallel petition has been sent to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, asking it to formally declare that Le Quoc Quan's detention is arbitrary and demand his immediate release from the Government of Vietnam.

Both petitions can be downloaded from the website of the Media Legal Defence Initiative: click [here](#) for the letter to the Special Rapporteurs and [here](#) for the petition to the UN Working Group.

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