

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/vietnam-court-upholds-long-jail-sentences-28-12-2012,43848.html>

Asia - Vietnam

Unacceptable ruling

## Court upholds long jail sentences for bloggers on appeal

28 December 2012

Reporters Without Borders condemns the rulings that courts issued today in the cases of three bloggers – **Nguyen Van Hai** (also known as Dieu Cay), **Ta Phong Tan** and **Phan Thanh Hai** (also known as Anhbasaigon) – and yesterday in the case of **Nguyen Van Khuong**, an investigative journalist also known as Hoang Khuong.

The organization also condemns yesterday's arrest of the blogger and activist **Le Quoc Quan** and calls for his immediate release.

"Dieu Cay, Ta Phong Tan and Anhbasaigon did nothing to deserve these sentences," Reporters Without Borders said. "By confirming long jail terms for these bloggers, the Vietnamese authorities are displaying their contempt for basic freedoms and freedom of expression in particular.

"We are very worried by the possible outcome of the trial on 8 January of nine young Catholic bloggers including [Paulus Le Son](#) and yesterday's arrest of the blogger and human rights activist Le Quoc Quan.

"We urge the European Union, this year's winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, to put pressure on the Vietnamese government to end its relentless crackdown on dissidents in general and news providers in particular."

The long jail terms that two of the three bloggers received on 24 September were upheld today on appeal. The activist Dieu Cay and the former police officer Ta Phong Tan remain sentenced to 12 and 10 years in prison, respectively, followed by five years of house arrest.

The blogger Anhbasaigon, the only one of the three to plead guilty, had his sentenced reduced from four to three years in prison followed by three years of house arrest.

The months that the three bloggers have spent in detention since their arrest have been difficult. When Dieu Cay was allowed a closely-monitored visit by his son, Nguyen Tri Dung, for just a few minutes on 7 November, he complained of being held in Chi Hoa prison's AB section, which is normally reserved for those sentenced to death.

Ta Phong Tan, creator of the "Justice and Truth" blog, has paid a particularly high price for her commitment. [Her mother took her own life last July by setting fire to herself outside the headquarters of the People's Committee in Bac Lieu.](#)

Anhbasaigon's wife, Nguyen Thi Lien, told Reporters Without Borders in a phone call that he was suffering from frequent headaches, insomnia and high blood pressure, and that he was completely crushed by the length of his sentence.

An appeal court yesterday upheld the four-year jail sentence that Hoang Khuong, a journalist with the daily Tuoi Tre, received for arranging for a police officer to be offered a bribe in the course of investigating a corruption story. [Detained since January](#), Khuong specialized in covering corruption cases.

"What Khuong did in order to obtain irrefutable proof of Vietnamese police corruption, which he reported in his [article](#), cannot be treated as attempted corruption," Reporters Without

Borders said. "We urge the justice system to reverse its rejection of his appeal request and to release him on the grounds that his work was in the general interest."

"Corruption" and "tax fraud" charges are often brought against Vietnamese journalists and bloggers. It was allegations of tax fraud that were used to arrest the blogger Le Quoc Quan and, in April 2008, Dieu Cay.

Several bloggers were arrested during today's appeal hearing and Tan's sister, Ta Minh Tu, was not allowed into the court.

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

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