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Asia - Vietnam

Early releases

Two netizens released from prison, 31 others still held

14 April 2014

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that two netizens who had spent several years in prison – **Vi Duc Hoi** and **Nguyen Tien Trung** – were released on 11 and 12 April respectively although they are now assigned to a form of house arrest.

Arrested in October 2010, [Hoi was sentenced in 2011 to five years in prison on a charge of anti-government propaganda](#) under article 88 of the 1999 penal code for writing articles critical of the state. A former Communist Party official who ran a training centre in the northern province of Lang Son, he is now due to spend three years under house arrest.

He reportedly rejected the conditions originally imposed for his release from prison, namely abstention from any political activity aimed at promoting democracy and from writing articles expressing his views. The official reason for softening the terms of his release has not been given.

Trung was arrested in July 2009 on charges of anti-government propaganda and “subverting the people’s administration,” and was [sentenced to seven years in prison](#) under article 79 of the penal code. He should have been released from prison in January 2015 in order to begin a period of house arrest.

“While the release of these two netizens from prison is good news, only their full freedom would be satisfactory,” said Benjamin Ismail, the head of the Reporters Without Borders press freedom index. “Above all, we call on the authorities to release the 31 netizens who remain in prison in violation of their fundamental rights.

“The government should take account of all the recommendations made when the UN Human Rights Council examined the situation of human rights in Vietnam in February, and should repeal all of the legislative articles that are systematically used to jail independent news providers.”

Two other bloggers have been freed in recent weeks. [Dinh Dang Dinh](#), who was jailed in 2011 for launching a petition against a bauxite mine project, was released on 21 March but died on 3 April of stomach cancer, which was not treated while he was in prison.

[Cu Huy Ha Vu](#) was released on condition that he agree to go into exile and immediately flew to the United States. He was sentenced in 2011 to seven years in prison on a charge of anti-government propaganda after trying to bring a legal action against Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung in connection with a bauxite mining project.

Vietnam is ranked 174th out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#). It is also classified as an [Enemy of the Internet](#) because of its crackdown on bloggers and cyber-dissidents.

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