

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/vietnam-bloggers-celebrated-in-paris-16-12-2013,45624.html>

Asia - Vietnam

Tribute and crackdown

Bloggers celebrated in Paris, arrested and beaten in Vietnam

16 December 2013

The political police have been arresting and mistreating bloggers in Vietnam in recent days, both before and after an 8 December ceremony in Paris at which the [Vietnam Human Rights Network](#) and the France-Vietnam Solidarity Association paid tribute to Vietnamese bloggers.

Three activists in the fight for freedom, human rights and democracy – [Le Quoc Quan](#), a human rights lawyer, [Tran Huynh Duy Thuc](#), a blogger who heads Research for Democracy, and Nguyen Hoang Quoc Hung, a blogger who defends workers rights – were awarded the 2013 Vietnam Human Rights Prize at the Paris ceremony, which Reporters Without Borders and other NGOs such as Lawyers Without Borders attended.



“We condemn the police violence against cyber-dissidents and netizens,” Reporters Without Borders said. “The only thing these disgraceful methods achieve is to demonstrate the weakness of the authorities, who are using all possible means to gag those speaking out against the regime.”

“We congratulate the Vietnam Human Rights Prize laureates and we hope that this recognition will finally make the authorities understand the importance of freedom of expression and information. We reaffirm our unconditional support for Vietnam’s bloggers and we remind the authorities that their repressive methods are neither just nor effective.”

“The Vietnam Human Rights Prize awards and the creation of a new network of young bloggers should make it clear to the Communist Party’s officials that the more they try to gag the media and independent news providers, the more the latter will respond with peaceful resistance and the more we will work with them to help news and information to flow freely in Vietnam.”

Reporters Without Borders was represented at the award ceremony by Benjamin Ismaïl, the head of its Asia-Pacific Desk, who spoke about the courage of Le Quoc Quan and Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, who are in prison because of the information they provided online.



Recorded statements by the blogger **Huyn Thuc Vy**, who won the 2012 prize and who has been the victim of police violence in the past, Le Quoc Quan's wife and Tran Huynh Duy Thuc's father were played during the ceremony.



**Intervention orale
de la femme de
Le Quoc Quan**

Translation in [English](#)

Audio recording of THDT's father :



**Intervention du
père de Tran Van
Huynh**

Translation in [English](#)

In her video recording, Huyn Thuc Vy thanked everyone present for supporting the laureates and stressed the importance for future generations of the struggle being waged by Vietnamese both inside Vietnam and abroad:

*"A year ago, I had the honour of receiving this prize along with two other, very *courageous* young women, who have seen the inside of communist prisons. I thank you for allowing me to say a few words at this important event (...) At this festive time, we think of our three friends, Le Quoc Quan, Tran Huynh Duy Thuc and Nguyen Hoeng Quoc Hung. Although life is short, they will have to endure ten years in prison or even more.*

"We, the Vietnamese inside and, especially, outside Vietnam must speak out in defence of our

three friends. I therefore particularly thank our compatriots abroad who have not forgotten our country. Young people like me living in Vietnam can have confidence in our fight for freedom, human rights and democracy in our country.

"We have felt your unfailing support and even if our friends, Le Quoc Quan, Tran Huynh Duy Thuc and Nguyen Hoeng Quoc Hung, cannot be present here today to be honoured for their courage, commitment and patriotism, they and their families really appreciate this exceptional encouragement."

Le Quoc Quan's wife thanked the organizers for the award, their support and the encouragement that the prize represents for her husband, all the other laureates and all other people in a similar situation. She said everyone's support, in whatever form, was a great help for Quan, who is in prison awaiting the outcome of his appeal. She ended by voicing the hope that all these efforts would one day allow Quan and all the other prisoners of conscience to receive, in person, the prizes they have been awarded for their struggle.

Reporters Without Borders and many other human rights organization have addressed a joint letter to the judge in charge of hearing Le Quoc Quan's appeal, in which they call for his release. The letter, which was also sent to foreign embassies in Hanoi, points out the legal weaknesses of the tax fraud charges against Quan and the violations of international law that marked his trial on 2 October 2013.

Read the letter to the judge, in [english](#) and [vietnamese](#)

Read here the [portraits of laureates](#).

While tributes were paid abroad to Vietnam's bloggers, they were harassed by the police in Vietnam as they gathered in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi on 8 December to celebrate Human Rights Day and the official launch of the Network of Vietnamese Bloggers (NVB) on 10 December.

The assembled activists and bloggers carried green balloons with the message "Our human rights must be respected." Uniformed and plainclothes police dispersed the crowds, bursting the balloons and tearing up the copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that they had been brandishing.

Plainclothes police beat the bloggers **Chau Van Thi** and **Hoang Dung** in Ho Chi Minh City, while in Hanoi, **Dao Trang Loan**, **Le Hien Duc** and **Pham Minh Vu** were roughed up.

A group of bloggers was attacked at round 5 p.m. on 8 December in Ho Chi Minh City while heading to the demonstration. A woman blogger, **Nguyen Hoang Vi**, was [dragged and beaten](#). **Me Nam**, another woman blogger, was pushed to the ground while carrying her five-year-old son.

Seven other bloggers – **Hoang Dung**, **Nguyen Tien Tuyen**, **Tran Hoang Han**, **Trung Hieu Hieu**, **Vo Cong Dong**, **Hoang Bui** and **Tin Ba** – who were nearby were beaten when they rushed to help them. Vi and Nam were forced to return home, where a policeman prevented them from leaving for several hours.

As well as breaking up attempts by bloggers and activists to organize events, the authorities also constantly hound high-profile bloggers. The recently released **Nguyen Phuong Uyen**, for example, was [expelled from her university](#) on 29 November for "violating



the law of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.”

Her mother, Nguyen Thi Nhung, said Uyen had been under constant surveillance and forcibly isolated ever since her release in August. The police told relatives, friends and neighbours to have nothing to do with her because she was a “reactionary.” When she and her mother were dining with friends in September, the police stormed in, roughed them up and forced them to return to Ho Chi Minh City.

Click to [watch the video](#)

The plight of the jailed teacher and blogger **Dinh Dang Dinh**, who underwent an operation for liver cancer last month, is also worrying. Dinh is serving a six-year sentence (upheld on appeal on 26 November 2012) under article 88 of the penal code for posting articles about corruption and other sensitive issues such as Vietnam’s bauxite mining.

Dinh’s health has declined dramatically while in detention, partly as a result of being mistreated by prison guards, and Reporters Without Borders is today posting a letter in which his family requests his release.

Read the letter in Vietnamese and english [here](#).

Reporters Without Borders has undertaken several initiatives to help independent news providers in Vietnam, which is ranked 172nd out of 179 countries in its [press freedom index](#) and which features in the 2013 Reporters Without Borders “[Enemies of the Internet](#)” special report on surveillance. Last July, Reporters Without Borders launched a petition for the release of the 35 bloggers currently held in Vietnam. After trying unsuccessfully to hand the petition to Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung during his [visit to Paris](#) in September, RWB is planning other attempts to give it to senior officials. So far, 32,000 people have signed it. You can sign it [here](#).

In September, Reporters Without Borders released an investigative report that sheds light on the methods the government uses to censor the traditional media and its persecution of the community of bloggers, cyber-dissidents and human rights defenders.

Read the Vietnam report, “Programmed death of freedom of information,” [here](#).

Reporters Without Borders also collects funds to provide financial and material support to independent news providers who are censored and persecuted. Support this Reporters Without Borders initiative by making donation [here](#).

You can download those documents on our website :

- Dinh Dang Dinh’s family letter (Viet / Eng), (Word - 95.5 kb)
 - , (PDF - 25.5 kb)
 - , (PDF - 37.7 kb)
 - , (PDF - 267.6 kb)
 - , (PDF - 713.3 kb)
 - , (JPEG - 25.8 kb)
 - , (JPEG - 28.3 kb)
 - , (JPEG - 38 kb)
 - , (JPEG - 31.9 kb)
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 - , (JPEG - 27.6 kb)
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