



VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
MẠNG LƯỚI NHÂN QUYỀN VIỆT NAM

A Nonprofit Organization – EIN 33-0910909

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Honorable Ugo Astuto
Acting Managing Director
Asia and the Pacific in the European External Action Services (EEAS)

Dear Mr. Astuto:

On behalf of the Vietnam Human Rights Network, may I thank you for your recent meeting in Hanoi, the fifth round of the annual enhanced Dialogue on Human Rights in the spirit of the EU-Vietnam Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) signed in 2012. Your frank discussion of the many lapses in the respect of human rights in Vietnam is very much welcomed as Hanoi needs to be constantly reminded of its responsibilities on this score, especially now that it sits in the UN Council on Human Rights.

In your discussion on December 15, you have mentioned many specific cases of concern to the European Union such as the three death sentences given to Le Van Manh, Ho Duy Hai and Nguyen Van Chuong; the harassment of human rights defenders like Do Thi Minh Hanh (labor rights activist), Nguyen Van Dai (of the Democracy Brotherhood), etc.

The case of Lawyer Nguyen Van Dai is especially worrisome since he has just been arrested on charges of "Conducting propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" on December 16 while on his way to the meeting with the European Union officials who were in Ha Noi for the EU-Viet Nam human rights dialogue. He is currently in detention pending investigation and at risk of ill-treatment. As you may know, Nguyen Van Dai is one of the most prominent human rights defenders in Vietnam and well-known to the whole world. When even a notable human rights defender like him can be beaten up savagely by the police on December 6 after he returned from a seminar in Nghe An on the occasion of the 67th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and prevented by security policemen to go and meet with you on the morning of December 16, then it's clear that Vietnam is a long way from meeting standards of human rights that the European Union would like to see in Vietnam. His case is symptomatic for even if a prominent person like him could be beaten up with impunity by the police, then what can one expect from the police in Vietnam in the case of much less well-known persons. The fact that over 200 persons have died in police custody in the last few years is another indication of the brutality and barbarity of the regime's police force.

That is why we would like to ask that you raise a very strong voice of condemnation of what happened to Attorney Nguyen Van Dai, practically under your very own eyes. Thank you for your kind consideration of our request.

Sincerely yours,

Nguyen Ba Tung
Chairman