

URGENT ACTION

HEALTH OF PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE CRITICAL

Nguyễn Văn Túc health is quickly deteriorating to the point where he is fainting on a daily basis, yet the authorities continue to deny him adequate medical treatment and have moved him to a remote prison, making family visits much more difficult. Determined to be a prisoner of conscience, Nguyễn Văn Túc should be immediately and unconditionally released.

Nguyễn Văn Túc, 55, faces alarming health concerns including a heart condition which can make him faint up to three times a day, haemorrhoids making his anus bleed constantly and the rapid deterioration of his eyesight. Despite having requested immediate medical treatment many times, the prison authorities have never responded and Nguyễn Văn Túc continues to suffer from treatable ailments.

On 8 November 2018, when Nguyễn Văn Túc's wife went to visit her husband as scheduled, the prison guards told her that he had been moved to another prison located 400 kilometres away. Four days later, after making the five-hour trip to the new prison, she was only able to meet with him after begging the prison guards. After the visit she expressed her alarm at the deterioration of Nguyễn Văn Túc's health and continues to worry about his well-being.

Nguyễn Văn Túc was arrested in September 2017 in Thai Binh province, north Viet Nam, under Article 79 of the 1999 Penal Code for his alleged "attempt to overthrow the government". On 10 April 2018, the local court convicted and sentenced him to thirteen years in prison and three years house arrest on release. The appeal court upheld the verdict and sentence in September 2018 making his final sentence one of the heaviest ever imposed upon a peaceful activist in the country.

Vietnamese authorities often move prisoners of conscience to remote locations as a form punishment. Thanh Hóa province, where Nguyễn Văn Túc is currently being held, is well-known for its harsh weather with extremely hot summers and freezing winters in mountainous area. With food described as "horrible" by former prisoners, and prisoners being forced to sleep on a cement bed with only a thin blanket in winter and no protection from the searing heat in summer there is heightened concerns for Nguyễn Văn Túc's well-being.

Please write immediately in English, Vietnamese or your own language, urging the authorities to:

- Immediately provide adequate medical treatment to Nguyễn Văn Túc in full accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules);
- Release Nguyễn Văn Túc immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for exercising his rights to freedom of peaceful association and expression;
- Ensure that pending his release, Nguyễn Văn Túc is protected from torture and other ill-treatment including through deliberate denial of adequate medical treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 DECEMBER 2018 TO:

State President

Nguyễn Phú Trọng
Số 2 Hùng Vương, Ngọc Hồ, Ba Đình,
Hà Nội 118708, Vietnam
Fax : +844 437 335 256
Email : webmaster@president.gov.vn
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Public Security

Tô Lâm
44 Yên Kiêu - Hoàn Kiếm - Hà Nội.
Fax: +844 382 318 72
c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Email : tuyentruyenbc@mofa.gov.vn
Salutation : Dear Minister

And copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Phạm Bình Minh
7 Chu Van An street,
Ba Đình district, Hanoi
Fax : +84-24-3823 4137
Email : tuyentruyenbc@mofa.gov.vn

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR THAO VAN NGUYEN Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 12-14 Victoria Road W8 5RD 020 7937 1912 Fax 020 7565 3853 officeldn@vietnamembassy.org.uk
www.vietnamembassy.org.uk

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nguyễn Văn Túc is a member of a non-registered organization called Brotherhood for Democracy whose stated agenda is promoting a multi-party system in Vietnam. The Vietnamese government has consistently punished harshly those challenge its power, however peacefully.

In 2017, the Vietnamese government carried out a crackdown on Brotherhood for Democracy and arrested seven of its members, having arrested its founder, human rights lawyer Nguyễn Văn Đài, in December 2015.

Nguyễn Văn Túc is a prisoner of conscience for the second time, having previously served four years (2008-12) in prison after being convicted under Article 88 of the Penal Code for “propaganda against the state.” He has been active in human rights, pro-democracy, and maritime sovereignty activism.

Nguyễn Văn Túc is one of 97 known prisoners of conscience in Viet Nam included in the list published by Amnesty in April 2018. Viet Nam is one of the most prolific jailers of peaceful activists in Southeast Asia, where prison conditions are harsh especially for political prisoners. Torture and other ill-treatment, including prolonged incommunicado detention, prolonged solitary confinement, beating and deliberately withholding medical treatment, are prohibited absolutely under international law but remain common practices by Viet Nam authorities.