



BY AIRMAIL

**Baroness Catherine Ashton
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for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice-President of the European Commission
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1 July 2013

Re: Mr. Le Quoc Quan and his upcoming trial on 9 July 2013

Your Excellency,

The signatory organisations respectfully request your special attention to the unlawful arrest and detention of the prominent Vietnamese lawyer, blogger and human rights defender Mr. Le Quoc Quan.

As you may know, Mr. Le Quoc Quan is currently arbitrarily detained due to having exercised his right to freedom of expression, his right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, as well as his activities as a human rights defender.

Mr. Le Quoc Quan is a qualified lawyer and active blogger. On his popular blog he exposes human rights abuses commonly ignored by Vietnamese state media. Prior to being disbarred in 2007, Mr. Le Quoc Quan defended human rights cases in court. Upon his return from the United States, he was arrested in 2007 and detained for 100 days. In April 2011, he was arrested again and ultimately released without charges. In August 2012, Mr. Le Quoc Quan was severely injured in a violent attack, that may have involved state agents. On 27 December 2012, Mr. Le Quoc Quan was arrested and charged for alleged 'tax evasion'.

These charges are widely seen as ill-founded and brought for the extra-legal purpose of silencing Mr. Le Quoc Quan. His detention pending trial of these charges violates the liberty provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The United Nations Human Rights Committee has determined compliance with the ICCPR. Article 9 requires that pre-trial detention be used only in exceptional circumstances where established risks to public safety and/or the integrity of the legal systems cannot be adequately contained by any other means. We know of no evidence on any risk posed to the public or the integrity of the Vietnamese legal system by Mr. Le Quoc Quan being free.

Further, he was detained incommunicado for the first two months and is still imprisoned for the time being. His trial will take place in the **People's Court of Hanoi on 9 July 2013**. We understand that his trial is public.

More detailed information about Mr. Le Quoc Quan and the unlawful interference with his human rights is set forth in the attached Letter of Allegation, recently sent by the signatory organisations to the United Nations Special Rapporteurs. Mr. Le Quoc Quan is on the European Union's list of Prisoners of Concern.

The presence of international observers may encourage the Vietnamese Government to respect their international human rights obligations. We therefore respectfully request you to send a high-level delegation to attend the 9 July trial. In addition, we urge you to raise your concerns with the Vietnamese Government and request for the immediate and unconditional release of Le Quoc Quan.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Yours sincerely,

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