



BY AIRMAIL

H.E. Mr. Nguyễn Tấn Dũng
Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
01 Hoang Hoa Tham street, Ba Dinh district
HANOI, **VIETNAM**

Fax: 0084 08 04 41 30

Amsterdam, 4 April 2015

Re: Continuing harassment of human rights lawyer Nguyen Van Dai

Your Excellency,

Lawyers for Lawyers is an independent and non-political Dutch foundation that seeks to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession.

Lawyers for Lawyers is very concerned about the ongoing harassment of human rights lawyer Nguyen Van Dai. Dai was under house arrest in Hanoi since 2011, serving a four-year sentence that was due to end on 5 March 2015. He has been the victim of several acts of intimidation in the months leading up to the end of his house arrest.

On 30 January 2015, two unidentified men broke the front door of his apartment in Hanoi, and threatened to burn his home and assault him. He reported the incident to the police.

On the day his house arrest was supposed to end, the authorities informed him they wouldn't officially end his probation unless he would officially promise, at the police station, that he would not continue his work as a human rights lawyer or any other work criticizing the government. When Dai refused to do so, "thugs" were sent to his home to harass him on March 5 and 6.

Shortly thereafter, the authorities have given Dai the written confirmation of the expiration of his house arrest. Lawyers for Lawyers has been informed, however, that the police is still surveilling him.

Nguyen Van Dai is, since his return to Vietnam after years in Eastern-Germany, a well-known human rights activist. He has been under control of government officials for many years now, and this house arrest followed on the four years imprisonment he was sentenced to in 2007 for propaganda against the state. Nguyen Van Dai founded the *Committee for Human Rights of Vietnam* and his work as a human rights lawyer and blogger is disapproved by the Vietnam authorities.

The recent attacks on Dai come in a context of a series of physical assaults against human rights defenders, bloggers and human rights lawyers that have taken place in the previous months, which were perpetrated either by police officers or groups of people in the street. Reportedly, there has been a failure to investigate these attacks.



This conduct is contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which contains international principles adopted by the United Nations and which remains the cornerstone of the UN human rights system. More specific for the role of human rights lawyers we endorse article 16¹ of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, an instrument that is universally applicable. Moreover, this conduct is contrary to article 9² of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which treaty Vietnam has ratified, and by which Vietnam is therefore legally bound.

In view of the above, Lawyers for Lawyers urges and calls upon the authorities in Vietnam, in compliance with the international human rights obligations of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to:

1. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Nguyen Van Dai;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the threats against Nguyen Van Dai and attack on himself and his home, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights lawyers in Vietnam are able to carry out their legitimate activities as a human rights lawyer without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions

We thank you for your attention to this very important. We are confident of your good will and sense of justice and will continue to monitor this case closely.

Yours sincerely,

LAWYERS FOR LAWYERS

Phon van den Biesen
President

¹ This article reads: "Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics".

² This article reads: "Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law."