



BY AIRMAIL

H.E. Mr. Trương Tấn Sang
President of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
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Amsterdam, 25 November 2015

Subject: Physical attack on lawyers Mr Tran Thu Nam and Mr Le Luan

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 concerned about the physical attack on human rights lawyers Mr Tran Thu Nam and Mr Le Luan and the arrest and detention for one day of lawyer Tran Vu Hai. We have reason to believe that Tran Thu Nam and Le Luan were targeted in connection to their legitimate activities as attorneys.

According to our information, on 3 November 2015, human rights lawyers Mr Tran Thu Nam and Mr Le Luan were attacked by eight masked men on motorcycles in Hanoi. They tried to escape, but were caught and beaten before the assailants left on their vehicles. They recognised one of the attackers as a local police officer. Tran Thu Nam and Le Luan sustained several injuries, including to their faces, and received medical treatment in the local hospital.

Tran Thu Nam and Le Luan are Hanoi-based human rights lawyers providing legal support to the victims of police brutality and other human rights abuses by the authorities. Currently they are supporting the family of Do Dang Du, who died on 10 October 2015 in police custody after being held there for two months on a charge of theft. The lawyers questioned the validity of the autopsy carried out on Do Dang Du's body as it failed to include an examination of internal organs, which could prove that he died as a result of injuries sustained in a beating.

The attack happened right after the human rights lawyers had met with the family of Do Dang Du to discuss further steps in the legal proceedings regarding his death in police custody. Do Thi Mai, Du's mother, witnessed the attack.

Furthermore, on the morning of 12 November 2015, police officers arrested lawyer Tran Vu Hai and detained him at the Xuan La police station. Tran Vu Hai was part of a larger group of lawyers who planned to visit relevant government offices to submit, amongst others, letters regarding the attack on Tran Thu Nam and Le Luan. Tran Vu Hai was released after 13 hours.

Various organizations, among them Lawyers for Lawyers Foundation, fear that the attack on Tran Thu Nam and Mr Le Luan is connected to, and serves to frustrate, their invaluable human rights activities.



As a member of the United Nations Assembly, Vietnam is bound by the UN Basic Principles of the Role of Lawyers adopted by the Assembly in 1990. We would draw your attention to Articles 16 and 17 of the Principles in particular which state that:

16. Governments shall ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference (...)

17. Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities

In view of the above, Lawyers for Lawyers respectfully urge you to:

1. Make sure that a prompt, thorough, impartial and transparent investigation into the attack on lawyers Mr Tran Thu Nam and Mr Le Luan will be carried out, so as to identify all those responsible, bring them before a competent and impartial tribunal and apply to them the sanctions provided by law

2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all lawyers in Vietnam are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals, intimidation, threats and free of all restrictions.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We are confident that the Vietnamese government will give this case the attention it deserves and we will continue to monitor this case closely.

Sincerely,

Lawyers for Lawyers

Adrie van de Streek
Executive director

Letters concerning the same topic were sent to:

H.E. Mr. Nguyễn Tấn Dũng, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

A copy of this letter was sent to:

- The Vietnam Bar Federation
- Netherlands Embassy in Ha Noi