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## **Vietnam: Human rights defender Le Huu Minh Tuan arrested**

On 12 June 2020, human rights defender and journalist **Le Huu Minh Tuan** was arrested by the Security Bureau of Investigation in Ho Chi Minh City. He is currently detained in Chi Hoa prison.

[Le Huu Minh Tuan](#) is a human rights defender and a young freelance journalist. He has been a member of the Independent Journalists' Association of Vietnam (IJAVN) since 2015, a civil society organisation established in 2014 which promotes the right to free speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of association. Since joining the Association, Le Tuan's work has focused on social injustices, domestic politics and the Vietnamese democracy movement.

On 12 June 2020, the Ho Chi Minh City Security Bureau of Investigation arrested Le Huu Minh Tuan. The human rights defender is being charged under Article 117 of the penal code, which relates to making, storing, distributing or disseminating information and materials to oppose the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The charge entails a maximum prison sentence of twelve years. Le Huu Minh Tuan's arrest follows the arrests of the president of IJAVN, Pham Chi Dung, and vice-chairman, Nguyen Tuong Thuy, in November 2019 and March 2020 respectively. Both remain in detention. Since the arrest of the group's president last year, Le Huu Minh Tuan had been repeatedly summoned by security officials.

Le Huu Minh Tuan's arrest is the third arrest of a IJAVN member in eight months. The ongoing judicial harassment of members of the organisation can be viewed as a deliberate attempt by the state to silence those who criticise it.

Front Line Defenders condemns the arrest of Le Huu Minh Tuan and is deeply concerned by the judicial harassment of members of the Independent Journalists' Association of Vietnam. It believes that human rights defender Le Huu Minh Tuan, along with the group's leaders and members, are being targeted as a result of their peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in the Vietnam to:**

1. Immediately release Le Huu Minh Tuan, Pham Chi Dung, and Nguyen Tuong Thuy from prison and drop all charges against them, as they are believed to be solely motivated by their legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Vietnam are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.