

14 September 2018

Vietnam: Human rights defender sentenced to 12 years in prison

On 12 September 2018, Vietnamese human rights defender **Nguyen Trung Truc** was sentenced to 12 years in prison by a court in Dong Hoi City in the province of Quang Binh on charges of trying to overthrow the state.

[Nguyen Trung Truc](#) is a pro-democracy human rights defender and member of **Brotherhood for Democracy**. He served as the group's representative in Vietnam's central region. [Brotherhood for Democracy](#) promotes democracy and human rights in Vietnam by providing human rights training and education to Vietnamese citizens throughout the country. Brotherhood for Democracy assists victims of government corruption, land appropriation, and corporate negligence to file legal suits in defense of their rights.

On 12 September 2018, after a half-day trial, Nguyen Trung Truc was convicted under Article 79 of Vietnam's 1999 penal code with carrying out activities "aimed at overthrowing the people's administration". After the trial, his lawyer said that the prosecutors had failed to present any evidence supporting their charges. The human rights defender denied all the accusations made by the state prosecutors against him.

On 4 August 2017, Nguyen Trung Truc was arrested in Quang Binh province. During the arrest, the human rights defender was forced to sign documents and the police confiscated his family member's phones and papers.

This is the latest conviction in a recent series of lengthy sentences handed out to human rights defenders in Vietnam. On 5 April 2018, eight members of Brotherhood for Democracy were found [guilty and sentenced](#) to lengthy prison sentences of 9-15 years each. Members of Brotherhood for Democracy are regularly arrested on vague and broadly defined charges such as Article 79.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the unjust conviction and prison sentence handed to Nguyen Trung Tuc, as it believes such are directly connected with his peaceful and legitimate work for human rights in Vietnam.

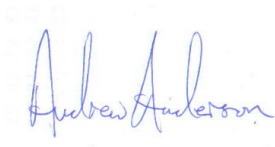
Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Vietnam to:

1. Immediately release Nguyen Trung Truc and quash the sentence against him;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Nguyen Trung Truc while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the '*Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment*', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Return the phones and papers of Nguyen Trung Truc's family members confiscated during the arrest, as they are manifestly not linked to any criminal activity;
4. Release all other human rights defenders and 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 from all restrictions.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the *United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 12 1. *“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms”* and (2): *“The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.”*

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Anderson
Executive Director