

9 September 2015

## Vietnam: Human rights defenders severely beaten

On 29 August 2015, four human rights defenders were among those physically attacked by policemen and a number of unidentified individuals in the Central Highlands province of Lam Dong, following a celebration to mark the release of human rights journalist Mr **Tran Minh Nhat**. Among those attacked were human rights defenders Ms **Tran Thi Nga**, Mr **Truong Minh Tam**, Mr **Chu Manh Son** and Mr **Le Dinh Luong**.

Mr **Chu Manh Son** and Mr **Truong Minh Tam** have been actively involved in campaigning against China's policy in the East Sea. The human rights defenders were detained for their activities in 2011 and 2013, respectively. Chu Manh Son was released in April 2014, after [serving](#) his 30-month prison sentence for "propaganda against the state". After his release in 2015, Truong Minh Tam spoke out about mistreatment and torture in Vietnamese prisons. Ms **Tran Thi Nga** is a women's rights defender and member of the independent movement **Vietnam Women for Human Rights**. Mr **Le Dinh Luong** has taken part in campaigns in support of imprisoned activists in Vietnam and actively uses social media to share information about human rights violations in the country.

On 28 August 2015, the celebration was hosted by Tran Minh Nhat, the released human rights journalist who works for the Vietnam Redemptorist News. He was arrested on 27 August 2011 and, following four years in prison, he returned home to begin his three years of house arrest.

On the morning of 29 August 2015, the human rights defenders and other guests boarded two buses from Tran Minh Nhat's house in Da Don commune, Lam Ha district to travel back to Saigon and Da Lat city. At 9:30, half an hour after their departure, the buses were stopped in Duc Trong district, about 30 kilometres from where Tran Minh Nhat resides, and approximately 30 plain-clothes policemen and a number of unidentified individuals forced their way onto the buses and attacked and physically assaulted the human rights defenders, as well as other guests. On the bus to Saigon, Le Dinh Luong was assaulted, along with two other guests. They suffered serious injuries to the face, head and body. On boarding the bus bound for Da Lat city, the perpetrators began to physically and verbally attack Tran Thi Nga. They subsequently dragged Truong Minh Tam off the bus and physically assaulted him. Chu Manh Son was pinned to the floor as two or three people attacked him and destroyed a number of his belongings, including his smartphone and Ipad.

Front Line Defenders expresses its grave concern at the violent attack on human rights defenders Tran Thi Nga, Truong Minh Tam, Chu Manh Son and Le Dinh Luong and believes that they were specifically targeted on account of their peaceful work in defence of human rights.

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

1. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Tran Thi Nga, Truong Minh Tam, Chu Manh Son and Le Dinh Luong;
2. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the violent attack, 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 defenders in Vietnam are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.