

Statement of concern over the case of Nguyễn Ngọc Như Quỳnh and Trần Thị Nga by scholars and professionals around the world

Mr. Trần Đại Quang, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Prime Minister
Ms. Nguyễn Thị Kim Ngân, Chairman of the National Assembly
Mr. Nguyễn Phú Trọng, General Secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party

Cc: Foreign Embassies in Hanoi

Dear Sirs and Madam:

We are deeply concerned about the charges and sentences against Ms. Nguyễn Ngọc Như Quỳnh, also known as blogger Mẹ Năm, and Ms. Trần Thị Nga.

According to Vietnam's state media, Ms. Nguyễn Ngọc Như Quỳnh, arrested in October 2016, and Ms. Trần Thị Nga, arrested in January 2017, were accused of “posting articles, video clips and documents containing anti-state propaganda on Facebook, YouTube, giving interviews with foreign media outlets ‘distorting’ the situation in Vietnam”.

The charges violate the right to freedom of expression as provided in international human rights law that Vietnam is bound to respect. Nevertheless, Vietnam’s courts sentenced Ms. Nguyễn Ngọc Như Quỳnh on 6/29/2017 and Ms. Trần Thị Nga on 7/25/2017 to ten years’ and nine years’ imprisonment, respectively. These are particularly heavy sentences against the two women who are mothers with children under 10 years old, for activities that should not and must not have been criminalized in the first place.

For legal and humanitarian reasons, we strongly request that Ms. Nguyễn Ngọc Như Quỳnh and Ms. Trần Thị Nga be immediately and unconditionally released.

While the country prepares to host APEC 2017, it is important to recognize that APEC goals for “sustainable economic growth and prosperity” are based on a fundamental respect for the inherent dignity and worth of all persons.

As friends of Vietnam, we urge the authorities to reconsider their position on all prisoners of conscience in Vietnam and resolve differences through dialogue and constructive engagement. That approach will accelerate Vietnam’s progress and development.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and trust that you will respond in a manner that reflects the civility and dignity of Vietnam.

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25	Nguyễn Điền	Independent Researcher	Australia
26	Nguyễn Ngọc Giao	Journalist; former Lecturer of Mathematics, University of Paris VII	France
27	Nguyễn Đức Hiệp	Atmospheric Scientist, Office of Environment & Heritage, NSW	Australia
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