

# VIETNAM CALLED UPON TO END ACTIONS AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS ABROAD

*Joint statement by the Vietnam Human Rights Network and Defend the Defenders on Hanoi's repression of human rights defenders and journalists abroad*

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The Vietnam Human Rights Network and Defend the Defenders on Tuesday, February 03, [issued a joint statement](#) warning of what they described as an expanding pattern of transnational repression by Vietnamese authorities targeting human rights defenders and journalists living outside Vietnam.



The organizations cited an [arrest warrant issued on Jan. 30, 2026](#), by Dak Lak Provincial Police for Dr. Nguyen Dinh Thang, a United States citizen and chief executive officer of Boat People SOS (BPSOS). Vietnamese authorities accused Dr. Thang of “terrorism,” alleging that he directed unrest in Dak Lak Province in June 2023.

The organizations rejected the allegations, stating that Dr. Thang has spent more than three decades engaged in humanitarian assistance and peaceful advocacy related to religious freedom and minority rights in Vietnam.

The case follows the late-2025 convictions, in absentia, of two activists residing in Germany: human rights lawyer Nguyen Van Dai and journalist Le Trung Khoa. Both were [sentenced to 17 years in prison](#) under Article 117 of Vietnam’s Criminal Code, which criminalizes the “making, storing, or disseminating information against the state.”

Nguyen Van Dai, a former prisoner of conscience, was previously imprisoned in Vietnam in 2007 and again in 2018 on charges widely criticized by international human rights groups. Now living in Germany, he continues to engage in public advocacy related to democracy, press freedom, and human rights in Vietnam.

Le Trung Khoa, a German citizen based in Berlin, is editor-in-chief of Thoibao.de, an independent Vietnamese-language news outlet. The publication reports on political, social, and economic developments in Vietnam, including issues such as corruption, environmental degradation, and internal governance.

According to the Vietnam Human Rights Network and Defend the Defenders, the activities of Dr. Thang, lawyer Dai, and journalist Khoa are peaceful and protected under international human rights law. The organizations said the prosecutions represent attempts to intimidate critics abroad and deter engagement between Vietnamese civil society and the international community.

In their joint statement, the organizations called on the Vietnamese government to end legal and extraterritorial actions against activists overseas, withdraw all charges against Dr. Nguyen Dinh Thang, and annul the convictions of lawyer Nguyen Van Dai and journalist Le Trung Khoa.

They also urged United Nations human rights mechanisms, including relevant Special Rapporteurs, to seek clarification from the Vietnamese government regarding the cases. In addition, the organizations called on democratic governments to raise the cases in bilateral and multilateral forums, link cooperation with Vietnam to measurable human rights improvements, and consider targeted sanctions or visa restrictions against officials implicated in serious human rights violations.

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\* The Vietnam Human Rights Network (VNHRN) was established in 1997 as a consortium of individuals and organizations committed to the defense and promotion of human rights and civil liberties for all Vietnamese citizens, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international human rights instruments.

\* Defend the Defenders (DTD) is an independent human rights organization that monitors, documents, and reports on the deteriorating human rights situation in Vietnam.

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