

PEN CANADA

for FREEDOM of EXPRESSION

Nguyen Vu Binh, who is a leading member of the Democracy Club for Vietnam, has been held incommunicado since 25 September 2002. He was sentenced by the Hanoi People's Court during a three-hour trial on 31 December 2003, to seven years' imprisonment, to be followed by three years' house arrest on charges of espionage. Following the proceedings, the official Vietnam news agency reported that Nguyen had been convicted of having "written and exchanged, with various opportunist elements in the country, information and materials that distorted the party and state policies." He is also accused of communicating with "reactionary" organisations abroad. His sentence was upheld on appeal on 5 May 2004. He is currently held at Ba Sao forced labour camp, in Nam Hà province, in very poor conditions with common criminals. His blood pressure was reported by his wife on 7 January 2007, to be dangerously high. Nguyen Vu Binh has been seriously ill for some time with an undiagnosed chronic gastrointestinal disease and high blood pressure. Despite repeated appeals, he has not been given the urgent medical treatment he requires.



The 39-year old writer is thought to have been targeted for the online publication of one of his critical essays, "Some Thoughts on the China-Vietnam Border Agreement". Nguyen Vu Binh is a former journalist who worked for 10 years for *Tap Chi Cong* (Journal of Communism), the official publication of the Communist Party of Vietnam. In January 2001, he left his post to form the independent Liberal Democratic Party. He has since written several articles calling for political reform and criticising government policy, and has been under close surveillance since April 2002. He was briefly detained in July 2002.

PEN Canada urges that Nguyen be allowed to see a specialist so that his condition can be diagnosed and effectively treated in hospital where his family can care for him. PEN further calls for his immediate and unconditional release in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to which Vietnam is a signatory, and on humanitarian grounds.

Send appeals to:

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President, Socialist Republic of Vietnam
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Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng
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