



To: Health Professional Network
From: Health and Human Rights Team
Date: 1 August 2005

Medical action
Dr Pham Hong Son
Viet Nam

(update on medical action ASA 41/023/2004, 1 October 2004)

Summary

Dr Pham Hong Son, a 36-year-old prisoner of conscience, medical doctor and businessman, who has been in prison since March 2002, is reportedly coughing up blood. He also continues to suffer from an inguinal hernia. AI is calling for his immediate and unconditional release, and investigation and appropriate treatment of his health problems.

Background

Before his imprisonment, Dr Pham Hong Son shared information about democracy and human rights that he found on the worldwide web and wrote, via the Internet, to friends and government officials. Charges against him included contact with other dissidents in Viet Nam and e-mail contact with people in the Vietnamese community in exile overseas, and collecting and distributing information accusing the state of violating human rights.

Dr Pham Hong Son was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment for espionage on 18 June 2003, which was reduced to five years' imprisonment following an appeal. He was also sentenced to three years' house arrest on release from prison.

Dr Pham Hong Son is reportedly held in a cell without windows at temperatures which can reach more than 40 degrees Celsius. The *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* state that:

“11. In all places where prisoners are required to live or work,

(a) The windows shall be (..) so constructed that they can allow the entrance of fresh air (..).”

Dr Pham Hong Son is held at the remote prison camp of Yen Dinh in Thanh Hoa province, making family visits difficult. He is married with two young children.

Recommended action

Please write to the authorities below, using the following as a guideline:

- Explain that you are a health professional concerned with human rights and are writing about the case of Dr Pham Hong Son, detained at the Yen Dinh prison camp in Thanh Hoa province;
- Say that you consider him to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned for the peaceful expression of his political opinions, and as such he should be immediately and unconditionally released;
- Express concern at reports that Dr Pham Hong Son has been coughing up blood and ask if he has been given a full medical examination and appropriate medical care; and note also that he is suffering from an inguinal hernia for which he has reportedly received inadequate medical care;
- Ask the authorities if any treatment is planned, urging them to provide Dr Pham Hong Son with access to full and appropriate medical care immediately;
- Express concern that, in contravention of the *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*, he is reported to be held in a cell without windows and urge that, pending his release, his living conditions meet standards set out in the SMR;
- Invite a response.

Addresses

Phan Van Khai
Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister
Hoang Hoa Tham
Ha Noi, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
Fax: + 844 823 4137
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Uong Chu Luu
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
25A Cat Linh Street
Dong Da District
Ha Noi, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
Fax: + 844 843 1431
Salutation: Dear Minister

Le Hong Anh
Minister of Public Security, Ministry of Public Security
15 Tran Binh Trong Street
Hoan Kiem District
Ha Noi, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
Fax: + 844 199 2682 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Salutation: Dear Minister

Please also write to diplomatic representatives of Viet Nam accredited to your country.

If you receive no reply within six weeks of sending your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response. Please send copies of any letters you receive to the International Secretariat, attention of Health and Human Rights Team.