



Name: Nguyen Bac Truyen

Prominent religious freedom advocate, two-time prisoner of conscience

Age: 50

Area of Origin: Vietnam

Nationality: Vietnamese

Sentence: 11 years imprisonment, followed by 3 years of probation

Reason for his arrest and imprisonment:

Mr. Nguyen Bac Truyen is a Hoa Hao Buddhist, who has been imprisoned twice for his peaceful advocacy for religious freedom and basic human rights. On July 30, 2017 he was abducted near his workplace at the Catholic Redemptorist Church in Ho Chi Minh City. Later in the day, the website of the Ministry of Public Security announced that he was arrested along with three other activists on charges of “carrying out activities aiming to overthrow the people’s government”. Mr. Truyen was held incommunicado and without access to legal defense for several months. On April 5, 2018, in a one-day trial, closed to the public, he was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment and 3 years probation. On June 4, 2018, the Appeal Court upheld his sentence. Mr. Nguyen Bac Truyen is currently being held at An Diem Prison, Dai Hung commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province.

Mr. Nguyen Bac Truyen is a peaceful religious freedom advocate and the recipient of the 2011 Hellman Hammett Award of Human Rights Watch. He was arbitrarily arrested in 2006 and sentenced to 3.5 years in prison and 2 years of probation due to his pro-democracy activism. After his release from prison in 2010, Truyen took the leading role of the Vietnamese Political and Religious Prisoners Friendship Association, a mutual assistance association that provide poverty-stricken prisoners of conscience and their families with prison visitation, medical checkups, legal consultation, and scholarships for their children who otherwise cannot afford to go to school.

As a legal scholar, Nguyen Bac Truyen also provided pro-bono legal assistance and training on basic human and civil rights to families of political prisoners, victims of illegal land appropriation, Catholics, Hoa Hao Buddhists, Hmong and Montagnard Christians, Cao Dai followers, and members of other persecuted religious communities.

At the time of his arrest in 2017, Truyen has been working as the coordinator of the assistance program for war invalids operated by the Bureau for Justice and Peace of the Catholic Redemptorist Church. With a yearly budget of over 800,000 USD (as of 2016), the program has helped more than 5,000 veterans of the former Republic of South Vietnam, who are considered by the Vietnamese government as the enemies who fought against them in the war. These war invalids have been cruelly discriminated against and living in extreme hardship.



(Mr. Truyen (left) was enjoying his work at the church with war invalids)



(Mr. Truyen and Hoa-Hao Buddhists met two members of the German Parliament on Jun 10, 2017)

Nguyen Bac Truyen is an effective religious freedom advocate, who authored several incident reports on human rights violations against Hoa Hao Buddhists and other persecuted religious communities to the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on Freedom of Religion or Belief. He often served as the liaison between human rights activists, civil society organizations and persecuted religious groups with diplomatic missions and international human rights

organizations. In some occasions he also participated in dialog and briefing via the internet with members of the US Congress and Canadian Parliament.

Nguyen Bac Truyen was the first entrepreneur in Vietnam who voluntary introduced social compliance and gender equality standards in his two companies beginning in 2004. His two companies had been arbitrary closed during his first prison term. He could not find any stable job without being harassed. He and his wife were under heavy surveillance and frequently attacked by state security agents and their henchmen. The couple was evicted from their home in Dong Thap province and prohibited from returning to the place where they had been supporting the heavily persecuted independent Hoa-Hao Buddhists in the Mekong Delta. Prior to his arrest Mr. Truyen could not find a safe shelter in Ho Chi Minh City and often had to relocate.

Current status, as of February 2019

Nguyen Bac Truyen is serving his 11 years prison sentence at **An Diem Prison**, Dai Hung commune, Dai Loc district, Quang Nam province. The prison camp is more than 800 km (500 miles) away from his family. It is located in a remote area where roads can become treacherous and even impassable during rainy season.

- Urgently request the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Nguyen Bac Truyen. Requests can be sent to the following officials:

Permanent Representative of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the United Nations
Dang Dinh Quy

886 United Nations Plaza, Ste 435
New York, N.Y. 10017
Other Contact Information
Telephone: (212) 644-1564
Fax: (212) 644-5732

Ambassador **Ha Kim Ngoc**

1233 20th St. NW, Ste 400
Washington, DC 20036
Telephone: (202) 861-0737

President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Nguyen Phu Trong

1 Hoang Hoa Tham St.
Ba Dinh District
Hanoi, VIETNAM