

24 July 2018

Vietnam: Le Dinh Luong's first trial hearing set for 30 July

On 22 July 2018, **Le Dinh Luong's** (Vietnamese: Lê Đình Lương) daughter announced that the human rights defender is due to face trial on 30 July 2018. The People's Court of Nghe An province will try the defender over a year after his arrest, on charges of "carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration." If convicted, Le Dinh Luong could face between twelve and twenty years in prison, life imprisonment, or capital punishment.

Le Dinh Luong is a pro-democracy human rights defender who has taken part in campaigns in support of imprisoned activists in Vietnam and actively used social media to share information about human rights violations in the country. He has also campaigned for compensating fishermen whose livelihoods were destroyed by the Formosa waste spill disaster in April 2016. He was previously attacked in Central Highlands province of Lam Dong in August 2015 following a celebration to mark the release of human rights journalist [Tran Minh Nhat](#).

On 24 July 2017, Le Dinh Luong was arrested in Nghe An province on charges of violating Article 79 of the 1999 Penal Code by "carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration". He was arrested in Hoang Mai town by plainclothes policemen on his way home, after visiting the family of fellow human rights defender [Nguyen Van Oai](#). The human rights defender is accused of membership of Viet Tan, a U.S. based pro-democracy organisation, which the Vietnamese authorities consider to be a terrorist organisation. He is also accused of calling for a boycott of parliamentary and people's council elections.

On 4 July 2018, authorities in Nghe An province issued a letter allowing Le Dinh Luong to meet his lawyers in Nghi Kin temporary detention facility to prepare for his defence. They are scheduled to meet on 24 July, giving them only six days to prepare.

Le Dinh Luong has been kept in incommunicado pre-trial detention since his arrest. His family hasn't been allowed to meet him, despite repeated requests, and has been attacked by the police on multiple occasions. Four days after his arrest, Le Dinh Luong's son and daughter-in-law were attacked by security officers in Ho Chi Minh City, where his son was beaten and his daughter-in-law was forcibly taken while looking after their 18-month-old baby to Ward 8, Go Vap District for interrogation. She was released later that night. On 18 August 2017, 15 relatives of the detained human rights defender, including his son, were brutally beaten by the police in Nghe An province when they went to the province's Department of Public Security to request a meeting with him. Le Dinh Luong's wife has expressed worry about his physical condition as he suffers from multiple health problems, for which his family have not been permitted to send medication. It is unclear whether his family and relatives will be able to attend his hearing even though it is open to the public.

Front Line Defenders condemns the charges against Le Dinh Luong and expresses concern about the lengthy period of his pre-trial detention. It believes that the human rights defender is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence and promotion of human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Vietnam to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Le Dinh Luong and drop all charges against him;

2. Ensure that the treatment of Le Dinh Luong, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the *“Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment”*, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Allow Le Dinh Luong immediate and unfettered access to his family, as well as with access to necessary medical treatment;
4. Ensure the physical and psychological security and integrity of Le Dinh Luong’s family and carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attacks from police that they suffered, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
5. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Vietnam and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognised Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Articles 12 (1). *“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others, to participate in peaceful activities against violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms”* and 12(2): *“The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration”*.

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Anderson
Executive Director