

February 25, 2020

Ambassador Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger  
President  
Human Rights Council  
United Nations  
Geneva, Switzerland

Re: Request to investigate the gross human rights violations in Dong Tam, Vietnam

Dear Ambassador,

We, the undersigned human rights organizations, write to draw your attention to the recent crackdown in Dong Tam near Hanoi.

On January 9, Vietnamese authorities reportedly mobilised 3,000 riot police to raid Hoanh Hamlet, Dong Tam Commune, killing 84-year-old community leader Le Dinh Kinh and arresting at least 27 residents (names included below). This occurred in the context of a prolonged land dispute in which the Hanoi municipal authorities tried to seize valuable land for redevelopment—threatening the livelihood and displacement of nearly 10,000 long-time residents.

Prior to the attack, police locked down the whole area and suspended phone and internet service. Independent journalists and international media outlets were banned from travelling to Dong Tam to report on the attack. Trinh Ba Phuong, a citizen journalist, based 25 miles away in Hanoi, was detained and put under house arrest for broadcasting a livestream on Facebook, reporting on the events as riot police stormed Dong Tam.

Since then, both Trinh Ba Phuong and his brother Trinh Ba Tu, as well as a number of other activists, continue to be harassed and threatened with arrest for trying to shed further light onto the police action. Vietnamese authorities pressured Facebook to remove content about Dong Tam and government trolls have targeted the accounts of human rights activists.

A month after the attack, at least 27 residents are still being held incommunicado and their well-being is unknown. They are all barred from legal access. Under the pretext of blocking “terrorist financing”, the Ministry of Public Security ordered Vietcombank to freeze the bank account to which hundreds of individuals donated money to support Le Dinh Kinh’s family with funeral expenses. The holder of the account, social activist Nguyen Thuy Hanh, has not been able to withdraw 528 million Vietnamese dong (\$23,000 USD).

This appalling police brutality in Dong Tam and the repression following reveals the escalation of human rights abuse in Vietnam. The Vietnamese government continues to show complete

disregard for international conventions including the UN Convention Against Torture and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Therefore, we urgently call on you and the UN Human Rights Council to:

- Arrange for a Special Rapporteur to investigate the Dong Tam incident and provide recommendations on holding any officials responsible for gross human rights abuses accountable.
- Urge the Vietnamese government to release all individuals arbitrarily detained during the police raid on Dong Tam on January 9th and to cease all forms of retaliation against the residents of Dong Tam and their supporters
- Insist that the Vietnamese government allow independent media organisations and civil society to freely travel to Dong Tam and speak with local residents without fear of retribution

Signed,

Nathalie Seff  
Executive Director  
**Action by Christians for the Abolition of  
Torture (ACAT) France**

Nguyen Le Hung  
**Bau Bi Tuong Than Association**

Nguyen Van Dai  
**Brotherhood For Democracy**

Vu Manh Hung  
**Chu Van An Educational Profession  
Association**

Rodolphe Prom  
**Destination Justice**

Nguyen Tuong Thuy  
**Independent Journalists Association of  
Vietnam**

**Liberal Publishing House**

Reverend Anthony Dang Huu Nam  
**My Khanh Parish, Vinh Diocese**

Christophe Deloire  
General Secretary  
**Reporters Without Borders**

**Safeguard Defenders**

Reverend JB Nguyen Dinh Thuc  
**Song Ngoc Parish, Vinh Diocese**

Rolin Wavre  
**Swiss-Vietnam Committee (COSUNAM)**

Do Hoang Diem  
**Viet Tan**

Duong Thi Phuong Hang  
**Vietnamese Journalists Union**

Trinh Thi Ngoc Kim  
**Vietnamese Students Union**

**Watchdogs Unleashed**

List of those who were arrested during the Dong Tam incident:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Lê Đình Công	55	Son of Lê Đình Kinh
Lê Đình Chúc	40	Son of Lê Đình Kinh, has 3 young children, including a 10 days old baby
Lê Đình Doanh	34	Grandson of Lê Đình Kinh
Lê Đình Uy	31	Grandson of Lê Đình Kinh
Lê Đình Quang	37	Nephew of Lê Đình Kinh
Trần Thị Phương	40	Has three children with Bùi Văn Tiến, born 2007, 2013, and a baby 18 months old.
Trần Thị La	42	Single mother
Mai Thị Phần	55	
Nguyễn Thị Dung	57	
Nguyễn Văn Điều	64	
Bùi Viết Tiến	17	
Bùi Văn Tuấn	40	
Bùi Viết Hiểu	74	
Nguyễn Quốc Tiến	40	Has 3 children with Đào Thị Kim, born in 2004, 2007, and 2013
Đào Thị Kim	38	
Nguyễn Văn Quân	40	Single father with 3 young children
Nguyễn Thị Bét	58	
Nguyễn Thị Đục	55	
Nguyễn Văn Tuyển	48	
Nguyễn Văn Niên	40	
Nguyễn Thị Lụa	53	
Lê Đình Quân	44	
Trịnh Văn Hải	40	
Bùi Thị Nối	56	
Bùi Văn Tiến	41	
Nguyễn Văn Duệ	52	
Lê Đình Hiểu	32	Has two young children, is about to give birth to a third child