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Who is Dr. Nguyen Dan Que?

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Dr. Nguyen Dan Que

1942 Born in Hanoi, Vietnam.

1945 His father, a member of the Vietnamese Nationalist Party, was assassinated by the Communists.

1954 The family, the mother and five children immigrated to Saigon after the Geneva Accord.

1966 Dr. Que graduated from Saigon Medical School and joined the faculty as an assistant professor.

1968-1974 Dr. Que received a scholarship from the United Nations's World Health Organization (WHO) for special training in medicine in Belgium (1968), France (1969), and England (1972).

1974 Dr. Que refused a job offer from WHO to return to Vietnam to teach at Saigon Medical School as Assistant Professor of Endocrinology.

1975 Communists took over South Vietnam. Dr. Que was then made Chief of Medicine at Cho-Ray Hospital in Saigon. He had the opportunity to leave the country but chose to stay to provide medical care to the poor.

1976 Dr. Que was removed from the position of Chief of Medicine of Cho-Ray Hospital after he criticized the Communist Party's discriminatory health care policies.

1978 He formed the National Progressive Front. He published two underground newspapers, The Uprising (Vung Day) for the youth and The People's Uprising (Toan Dan Vung Day) for the general public, to question the government's violations of basic human rights and to demand that the government reduce military spending and invest in the welfare of the people.

1978-1988 Dr. Que and 47 associates were arrested and imprisoned without trial; they were tortured and five died in captivity. When Dr. Que demanded improvement in the treatment of political prisoners, he was incarcerated in a five-by-six foot cell without sanitary facilities for two months.

1988 Under the intense intervention of Amnesty International Dr Que was released in Feb 1988. After his release, Dr. Que became the first Vietnamese member of Amnesty International.

1990 Dr. Que founded the Non-Violent Movement for Human Rights (Cao Trao Nhan Ban).

On May 11, 1990, Dr. Que issued the Manifesto urging the communist regime to respect human rights, to accept political pluralism and free and fair elections.

Dr. Que was re-arrested, imprisoned and held incommunicado.

1991 Under intense international protest and pressure, Hanoi brought Dr. Que to a half-hour sham trial in November and sentenced him to 20 years of hard labor followed by 5 years of house arrest for "trying to overthrow the government".

1992-1998 Dr. Que was transferred from one prison to another. Despite his poor health, he was forced to perform hard

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labor and kept in solitary confinement.

On September 3rd, 1988 Dr. Que was released but kept under house arrest.

On March 17, 2003 Dr. Que was arrested again for the 3rd time with charge of espionage. He is currently held at the Municipal Prison of Saigon, 237 Nguyen Van Cu street, District I, Saigon.

On 7-29-2004 Dr. Que was brought to trial, and in a kangaroo court in Saigon , Dr. Que was sentenced to two and half years with charge of: "abusing democratic rights to jeopardize the interest of the state";

On 9-22-2004: Dr. Que was quietly transferred to a remote labor camp in Thanh Hoa Province.

On 2-1-2005: Under the intense intervention of the international community Dr. Que was released but he is put under constant police surveillance.

Dr. Que was adopted as a "Prisoner of Conscience" by Amnesty International. His unrelenting non-violent advocacy for human rights, freedom and democracy for the people of Vietnam gained him national reputation as a "Si Phu", a Vietnamese tribute to an intellectual who heroically dedicates his life to the welfare of the people and the country. US Senator J. Robert Kerrey likened Dr. Que to Vaclav Havel and the President of AFL-CIO, Mr. Lane Kirkland, has compared Dr. Que to Andrei Sakharov, Lech Walesa and Nelson Mandela. Dr. Que has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize several times by a group of US Senators and Congressmen, most recently in 2005.

He is Laureate of the Heinz R. Pagels of Scientists Human Rights Award in 2004 of the New York Academy of Sciences, Award for Distinction in Civil Courage in 2004, Hellman/Hammatt Human Rights Watch Award 2002, Robert Kennedy Human Rights Award in 1995 and Laureate of The Raoul Wallenberg Human Rights Award in 1994.