

Rallying For Democracy

<http://www.rallyingfordemocracy.org>

VIETNAM: Human rights lawyer and blogger arrested just three days after completing jail term

10/03/2010 13:37 by admin

10 March 2010

Reporters Without Borders condemns the way the authorities are treating human rights lawyer and blogger Le Thi Cong Nhan, who was detained for three hours yesterday, just three days after she was released on completing a three-year jail sentence.

Police took her to a Hanoi police station for allegedly violating the terms of the supplementary sentence of three years of house arrest that she is now supposed to serve. Some sources said their real reason for detaining her was to prevent her from meeting a foreign journalist.

"We hail Le Thi Cong Nhan's release, which unfortunately did not take place until she had completed the prison sentence," Reporters Without Borders said. "But it is unacceptable that this brilliant lawyer and courageous activist should be made to serve an additional three years of house arrest in the capital after three years in jail."

The press freedom organisation added: "As far as we are concerned, she is still not free. She is now imprisoned in her home in order to punish her for her continued commitment to human rights."

When Le Thi Cong Nhan was released on 6 March from Prison No. 5 in the northern province of Thanh Hoa, she was escorted to her Hanoi home to begin serving the three additional years of house arrest to which she was sentenced in 2007.

Aged 30, Le Thi Cong Nhan told international radio stations she would continue to be committed to human rights. Before her arrest in March 2007, she made extensive use of the Internet to promote human rights and she defended free expression eloquently at her May 2007 trial.

Reporters Without Borders calls for the immediately release of fellow lawyer Nguyen Van Dai, who was convicted at the same time Le Thi Cong Nhan on the same charge of "hostile propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" under article 88 of the criminal code. Dai was given a four-year sentence.

Information on the sentences that were imposed on appeal:

<http://www.rsf.org/Jail-sentences-for-two-cyber.html>

Petition for the release of Dai and Nhan and more information about their case:

http://www.rsf.org/en-petition27774-Nguyen_Van_Dai_and_Le_Thi_Cong_Nhan.html

Reporters Without Borders has asked the European Union to suspend its human rights dialogue with Vietnam in protest against the fact that it is currently holding at least 21 journalists and netizens.