

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED VIETNAMESE ACTIVIST AT RISK OF DEPORTATION

On 6 March, Thai immigration police arrested Vietnamese activist Le Chi Thanh and detained him at Bangkok's Suan Phlu Immigration Detention Centre (IDC). Le Chi Thanh is a former police officer who used social media to expose corruption and misconduct within Viet Nam's public security sector. In 2021 and 2022, he was sentenced to a total of five years in prison on trumped up charges for peacefully expressing his views on social and political issues. Following his release, he lawfully entered Thailand and obtained a work permit after that. Thai authorities claimed that his work permit became invalid after Vietnamese authorities cancelled his passport. Le Chi Thanh was not notified of this cancellation before his arrest. If he is forcibly returned to Viet Nam he is likely to face harm, including torture and other ill-treatment. Le Chi Thanh must be immediately and unconditionally released.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul
Government House, 1 Phitsanalok Road, Bangkok, Thailand
Email: prforeign@prd.go.th

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing to express my grave concern for Vietnamese anti-corruption activist **Le Chi Thanh** who was arrested by immigration police on 6 March and is currently detained at Bangkok's Suan Phlu Immigration Detention Centre (IDC). He is at risk of imminent deportation to Viet Nam.

Le Chi Thanh is a former police officer who used social media to expose corruption and misconduct within Viet Nam's public security sector. In 2021 and 2022, he was sentenced to a total of five years in prison on trumped up charges for peacefully expressing his views on social and political issues. Following his release, he lawfully entered Thailand and obtained a work permit. Thai authorities claim that Le Chi Thanh's work permit became invalid following the Vietnamese authorities' cancellation of his passport. Le Chi Thanh was never informed of this cancellation prior to his arrest. At present, he is a refugee in Thailand.

I am concerned about reports that Thai authorities allowed personnel from the Vietnamese Embassy to visit Thanh at the detention center. This visit appears to align with the existing pattern observed in many cases where Vietnamese officers were able to visit Vietnamese asylum seekers and refugees held in Thai detention facilities to pressure them into 'voluntarily' returning to Viet Nam.

Further, I am deeply disturbed by Le Chi Thanh's report that he was **tortured by police officers during pre-trial detention in Viet Nam in 2021, including being beaten and hung by his arms and legs**, after he was arrested for exercising his right to freedom of expression. This information points to a **real and serious risk of further human rights violations, including torture and other ill-treatment**, that Le Chi Thanh is likely to face if returned to Viet Nam.

Prime Minister, I urge you to:

- **Refrain from forcibly returning Le Chi Thanh to Viet Nam in line with Thailand's obligation under the absolute international legal obligations of non-refoulement, the UN Convention Against Torture, and the domestic law on torture and enforced disappearance;**
- **Immediately release Le Chi Thanh and ensure that he and other asylum seekers have access to a full, effective, and fair assessment of their asylum claims and resettlement;**
- **Refrain from permitting visits by Vietnamese officials to Vietnamese detainees with ongoing asylum procedures without their consent and not at their request which could potentially serve as threats, intimidation and coercion of the refugees and asylum seekers to return to Viet Nam against their will;**
- **Pending his release, ensure Le Chi Thanh is treated in full accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) and is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and provided access to legal assistance and medical care if needed.**

Your sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In April 2021, Le Chi Thanh was arrested for “resisting officers on official duty” due to allegedly resisting officers during his encounter with traffic police in Thu Duc City. Thanh was livestreaming traffic police to stop them from moving his car; a seemingly politically motivated arrest due to his activism. He was sentenced to two years in prison in January 2022. Later in June 2022, he received an additional prison sentence for three years for “abusing democratic freedoms to infringe on State and individuals’ legitimate rights and interests,” under Article 331 of Viet Nam’s Penal Code due to his Facebook posts which criticized Vietnamese authorities.

During his court hearing, Thanh reported being tortured to coerce confessions in pre-trial detention, including being beaten and hung by his arms and legs for seven days by police officers. In November 2022, UN experts sent a letter to the Vietnamese government raising concerns over such torture. His case echoes Amnesty International’s past [findings](#) that prisoners of conscience, including human rights defenders, face systemic risks of torture and other ill-treatment in detention.

UN experts have previously documented a pattern in which Vietnamese officials visited Montagnard and Hmong refugees held in Thai detention facilities to pressure them into ‘voluntarily’ returning to Viet Nam. These incidents raise serious concerns about Thailand’s ability and willingness to provide effective protection to Vietnamese refugees, who remain especially vulnerable to intimidation and coercion by Vietnamese officials.

Civil society groups and UN experts have repeatedly warned of growing cooperation between Thai and Vietnamese authorities to target dissidents. Their concerns are reinforced by a series of alarming incidents, including the enforced disappearance of Thai activists in Viet Nam in January 2019, the abduction of Vietnamese blogger [Truong Duy Nhat](#) in Thailand later that month and the enforced disappearance of Vietnamese independent journalist [Duong Van Thai](#) in April 2023. Most recently, in February 2026, Thai authorities [forcibly returned](#) Indigenous Montagnard human rights defender Y Quynh Bdap to Viet Nam, underscoring an escalating pattern of transnational repression.

Article 13 of Thailand’s Prevention and Suppression of Torture and Enforced Disappearance Act prohibits officials from deporting, expelling, or extraditing any person to another country where there are substantial grounds to believe they face a risk of torture, cruel/inhuman treatment, or enforced disappearance. Thailand is also a State Party of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment which places legal obligations for Thailand to adhere to the principle of non-refoulement. Such obligations require Thailand to provide immediate protection for Le Chi Thanh and ensure that he does not get sent back to Viet Nam where he faces a substantial risk of persecution, torture or other ill-treatment.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Thai
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 30 September 2026
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Le Chi Thanh (he/him)