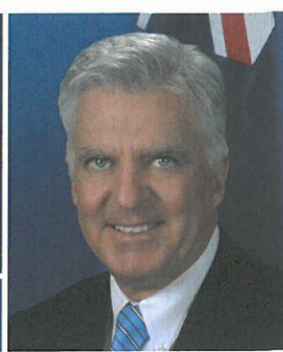




Chris Hayes MP



FEDERAL MEMBER FOR FOWLER

Ref: SY
08 January 2016

Mr Hugh Borrowman
Australian Ambassador to Vietnam
Australian Embassy Hanoi,
8 Dao Tan Street, Ba Dinh District
HANOI, VIETNAM

Dear Ambassador,

I write to you regarding Vietnamese citizen Mr Trinh Minh Nhat, a social and religious activist and reporter for Vietnam Redemptorist News. Mr Nhat is a human rights defender involved in upholding the protection of social, cultural and economic rights within Vietnam.

Mr Nhat was previously arrested in 2011 along with 17 Vietnamese Catholic and Protestant youth and sentenced to four years in prison and three years house arrest. Mr Nhat was accused along with other activists of having links with the Viet Tan. According to the charges, the authorities were of the view that Mr Nhat carried out activities aimed at overthrowing the Government.

After serving four years in prison, Mr Nhat was released in August 2015 and was able to return to his home for the remainder of the sentence. I am advised that following his release from prison however, Mr Nhat was attacked and threatened by Police officers outside Lam Ha hospital as well as being beaten and detained for 12 hours by Police whilst on his way home to Saigon.

The harassment Mr Nhat has endured has not only been targeted at him. I am also advised that his family have now become victims of ongoing harassment and acts of intimidation. The perpetrators are alleged to have been hired by the Vietnamese police to dissuade Mr Nhat from continuing of his human rights advocacy.

The nature of the harassment includes the destruction of crops owned by Mr Nhats brother, including the destruction of 155 coffee plants and 11 avocado trees. Two days later, seven pepper vines were destroyed and an additional 400 pepper vines have been chemically poisoned.

Mr Nhat's older brother discovered 382 of his pepper vines to be chemically poisoned. Further to these events on the 2 January 2016, the family home was

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stoned by unknown individuals, causing Mr Nhat's family to fear for their lives. Mr Nhat and his family have reported these events to the police but are yet to receive any kind of response. Many human rights defenders have also expressed their concerns at the attempts to disrupt Mr Nhat's efforts to continue his human rights activities, and are concerned for his psychological well-being and safety, and that of his family.

Clearly, Mr Nhat is a heroic individual who has risked his life and liberty to stand up for basic rights and freedoms of others. I personally spoke to Mr Nhat via skype on December 13, 2015 during a local event to recognise International Human Rights Day. He is a very inspirational young man.

I seek your assistance in this matter to monitor the welfare of Mr Nhat and his family and other activists whose only crime is to seek the advancement of human rights in Vietnam.

Yours sincerely



Chris Hayes MP
Federal Member for Fowler
Chief Opposition Whip

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