



## STATEMENTS BY THE SPOKESPERSON

# Statement by the Spokesperson on the sentencing of human rights defenders in Vietnam

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Today's sentencing of six human rights activists by the An Giang Court brings to at least 16 the number of human rights activists and bloggers prosecuted and sentenced by Vietnamese courts in the last two weeks. These individuals have advocated the promotion and protection of rights guaranteed under the Vietnamese Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Their sentences are in direct breach of these same international obligations, which Vietnam has itself signed up to.

The freedoms of opinion and expression - online and offline - are fundamental pillars of democracy, and make vital contributions to ensuring transparency, social justice, sustainable, inclusive development and sustained stability and prosperity. The European Union expects the Vietnamese authorities to immediately release all bloggers and human right activists imprisoned for having peacefully expressed their views.

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