

The authorities continued to use vaguely worded offences to charge and convict peaceful activists, mainly through Article 258 (abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the state, the legitimate rights and interests of organizations and/or citizens) of the 1999 Penal Code. Three pro-democracy activists arrested in May 2014 while monitoring anti-China protests were sentenced in February to between 12 and 18 months' imprisonment under Article 258 in Đng Nai province.

Prominent human rights lawyer and former prisoner of conscience Nguyn Văn Đài and his colleague, Lê Thu Hà, were arrested in December on charges of "conducting propaganda" against the state under Article 88 of the Penal Code. The arrest took place several days after Nguyn Văn Đài and three colleagues were brutally assaulted by 20 men in plain clothes shortly after delivering human rights training in Ngh An province.

Blogger Nguyn Hu Vinh and his associate Nguyn Th Minh Thuy remained held in pre-trial detention since their arrest in May 2014. They were charged under Article 258 of the Penal Code in February in connection with the blogs Dân Quyn (Citizens' Rights) and Chép s Vit (Writing Vietnam's History), both critical of government policies and officials and since closed down.¹

Prominent blogger and journalist T Phong Tn was released in September and flown immediately into effective exile in the USA. She had served four years of a 10-year prison term on charges of "conducting propaganda" against the state.