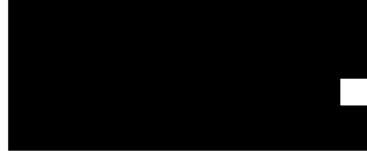


Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Department of Home Affairs
DFAT Consulate Hanoi
DFAT Consulate HCMC

Via email: senator.wong@aph.gov.au



17 October 2026

Hiep Tran
Kidnapped and held in Vietnam

Dear Senator the Hon Penny Wong

1. I refer to the letter from [REDACTED] dated 12 October 2026 regarding the detention of Mr Tran Hiep in Vietnam, and Senator the Hon Penny Wong's call to Chloe Dang, Mr Tran's wife, yesterday. It was very much welcomed.



4. This information is extremely sensitive. As such, prior to providing any further information we would like confirmation that such information will only, at this stage, be used at a high level for confirmation the men were kidnapped and to advocate for their immediate release as victims of transnational repression.
5. Further, during the consular visit on 15 October 2026 Mr Tran stated to the Consulate-General: "I want you to know that I never entered Vietnam on my own. I never crossed the border. I am struggling mentally - traumatised and terrified by the situation."
6. No doubt should remain that this is a case of transnational repression.
7. The kidnapping of Mr Tran by Vietnamese authorities means this is not an ordinary consular assistance case. Mr Tran did not place himself in danger or contribute in any way to the current situation.

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.



8. The Vietnamese Government and individuals within it must be held responsible for the kidnapping by the Australian Government. Given the circumstances of the kidnapping, it is likely the Vietnamese Government planned the kidnapping – ie it was not opportunistic. This raises the distinct possibility that the Vietnamese Government was already planning to kidnap Mr Tran when Vietnamese General Secretary and President To Lam made an official state visit to Australia (from 9 to 12 August 2026).
9. The Australian Government must take strong and immediate action to bring Mr Tran home. Securing consular and family access, providing clothing, money and hygiene products, while important, should not distract from the fact that Vietnam kidnapped an Australian citizen and he is wrongfully detained.
10. It is the Vietnamese Government and individuals that must be held to account. It is they that committed criminal acts, not any of the three men. In these circumstances, Australia should refuse to recognise the legitimacy of any criminal process, including the current pre-trial detention of the men, that could last for up to two years.
11. It is also with great disappointment that we learnt that at exactly the same time of the first consular visit in HCMC to Mr Tran, the Australian Embassy in Hanoi was celebrating the signing of a supplementary agreement between the Government of Vietnam and the Government of Australia for the project “Vietnam-Australia Partnership Program on Economic Growth, Energy Sector (Aus4Growth Energy Sector).” Chloe came across smiling photos of Australian and Vietnamese officials celebrating together on the official Australian Embassy Facebook page.¹ This greatly upset Chloe and others within the Australian Vietnamese community. Holding such a ceremony at this time is inappropriate and insensitive. All communications between Vietnam and Australia should currently be centred around the release of Mr Tran. Any agreement, understanding, arrangement or similar should be contingent on the release of Mr Tran. Anything else is unacceptable.
12. We call on the Australian Government to:
 - (a) File against Vietnam in the International Court of Justice for breach of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations
 - (b) Pursue criminal sanctions under paragraph 115.3 of the Schedule of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* against (at least) the Vietnamese Minister of Public Security General Lương Tam Quang
 - (c) Impose sanctions on (at least) the Vietnamese Minister of Public Security General Lương Tam Quang and Vietnamese General Secretary and President To Lam
 - (d) Summon the Vietnamese Ambassador H.E. Mr. Pham Hung Tam to answer questions regarding the kidnappings

¹ <https://moit.gov.vn/tin-tuc/viet-nam-va-australia-ky-ket-thoa-thuan-bo-sung-trien-khai-du-an-aus4growth-linh-vuc-nang-luong.html> and <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianEmbassyVietnam>

(e) Expel the Vietnamese Ambassador H.E. Mr. Pham Hung Tam

13. I look forward to hearing back on an urgent basis.

14. A version of this letter will be made public.

Regards



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Human Rights for All

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