



## **VOICE STATEMENT ON BLOGGER ME NAM'S TRIAL 30 JUNE 2017**

Blogger Me Nam was convicted and sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment after a one-day trial in Vietnam yesterday. She had dared to criticize the government in her blogs, calling for transparency and accountability, as well as social and political reforms. Despite their peaceful nature, she was found guilty of 'conducting propaganda against the state', a criminal offence under Vietnam's draconian Penal Code.

VOICE is shocked and outraged over the sentencing of Blogger Me Nam by Vietnam's kangaroo court system, which did not even allow her mother and two young children to attend the trial. Her mother was only allowed to follow the trial through a TV screen in an adjacent room.

VOICE is appalled by the inhumane treatment Blogger Me Nam has received since her arrest. She was denied her right to see her appointed legal counsel, which was only granted recently, denied her right to wear her chosen attire at the trial, and even denied her basic right to the use of sanitary products. It is the intention of the Vietnamese authorities to strip Me Nam of her integrity and self-respect. She was forbidden to see her family until one day before the trial, the first and only time since her arrest in October 2016. The meeting lasted five minutes.

Yet, despite the grave deprivation and gross violations of her rights, this is what Blogger Me Nam said before the court: 'we each only have one life to live but if given the choice, I would still do it exactly the same... people are only free and happy if they have the right to express themselves, to discuss issues they care about. I hope everyone will soon raise their own voice and fight for their rights so that they can overcome their own fears, and build a better and greater nation.'

VOICE will continue to advocate for the unconditional release of Blogger Me Nam and all other political prisoners of Vietnam. But more importantly, VOICE calls on all Vietnamese to heed Blogger Me Nam's call to continue fighting for their rights, to overcome their own fears, so that one day Vietnam will be a free and democratic country, where no one will be tried and sentenced to imprisonment for merely speaking their minds.

### ***SIGNED:***

1. VOICE
2. VOICE Vietnam
3. VOICE Australia
4. VOICE Canada
5. VOICE Europe
6. VOICE Norway