

**LETTER BY
MR. HOÀNG MINH CHÍNH**

Hanoi, August 18, 1996

Mr. Thierry Oppikofer, Chairman
Mr. Nguyen Tang Luy, Secretary General
The Swiss Vietnamese Committee (COSUNAM)

Dear Gentlemen,

When I was recently released from a 12-month jail sentence on baseless and lawless political charges, I was deeply touched by the Appeal from the Swiss Vietnamese Committee, dated June 11, 1996, to the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to release Hoang Minh Chinh and Do Trung Hieu.

Your appeal had arrived exactly two days before the political trial of the two [already] political prisoners Hoang Minh Chinh and Do Trung Hieu. Your callings were filled with noble humanitarianism, freedom and democracy ideals, and solid legal bases — reflecting the human rights guarantees in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which all member countries must respect.

Regretfully, your rightful appeals fell on deaf ears. And even worse, both courts in Hanoi went back on their own words of holding the trials publicly according to the laws. Only when the trials began, the authorities announced their about-face decision to keep both trials under "utmost secrecy". They violated their own article 131 of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and article 19 of the Civil Laws, which states "Trials must be carried out in public, and everyone has the right to attend."

Nevertheless, beyond these trials, the spirit and the love of justice from the COSUNAM's appeal is expanding and deeply touch the Vietnamese people.

Personally, I hope I had not disappointed your expectation. My last words at the trial were: "Regardless of how long you will keep me in jail, the truth belongs to me! I have fought for freedom and democracy, for my nation and people, for basic rights of human beings. My conscience is at peace! These ideals are sacred to me."

Dear Gentlemen,

Allow me to express the appreciation from the bottom of my heart for your heartfelt and noble appeal.

Respectfully,

Hoang Minh Chinh
26 Ly Thuong Kiet Hanoi, VIETNAM.

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