



## **IPA Condemns the harassment of Freedom to Publish Awardee**

Geneva – 8 June 2011

### **Vietnamese publisher subjected to repeated detention, surveillance and physical attack**

**The International Publishers Association (IPA) has expressed grave concern that Bui Chat leader of Giay Vun Publishing House and winner of the IPA's 2011 Freedom to Publish Award, has been subject to repeated detention and harassment since his return to Vietnam from accepting the award on 30 April. On 8 June this escalated into a physical attack on Bui Chat by a group of assailants.**

Bui Chat was again temporarily detained on 5 and 6 June 2011, the day he was invited to attend the Swedish National Day Celebrations at the invitation of the Swedish Embassy in Vietnam. Sadly, his temporary arrest prevented him from attending this official function. He was detained for 24 hours at 4 Phan Dang Luaa detention centre for interrogation of serious crimes, and was then released. Bui Chat was then ordered to return for a new interrogation session on 7 June 2011. On 8 June this escalated into a physical attack on Bui Chat by a group of assailants. The attack, the series of temporary arrests, the surveillance and the continued interrogation sessions amount to harassment, violate the international rule of law, and clearly contradict Bui Chat's basic human rights. IPA therefore calls on the Vietnamese authorities for his final and permanent release, the return of his Award and Prize certificate, and the assurance that no criminal or administrative charges will be pressed against him.

IPA remains fully mobilized. It continues to liaise with the relevant authorities to facilitate Bui Chat's final and complete release. The IPA continues to call upon governments and advocates for human rights and the freedom of expression to join publishers in calling for Bui Chat's final and complete release, and for the Vietnamese authorities to stop harassing him.

Bjorn Smith-Simonsen, Chair of IPA's Freedom to Publish Committee, declared: "IPA condemns the latest physical attack and temporary detention of Bui Chat the day he was invited to attend the National Day reception at the Swedish Embassy in Vietnam. The physical attack, the various temporary detentions, the surveillance and the continued interrogation sessions the recipient of the 2011 IPA Freedom to Publish Prize has been subjected to since his return to Vietnam on 30 April amount to harassment, violate the international rule of law, and clearly contradict Bui Chat's basic human rights. At a time when the ASEAN Human Rights mechanism is taking shape, we urge the Vietnamese authorities to release Bui Chat definitely and permanently and not to press any criminal charges against him, nor to sue his publishing house *Giay Vun (Scrap paper)* for

publishing without a permit. His IPA prize and award certificate should also be returned to him”.

**More about Bui Chat, the case, and the IPA Freedom to Publish Prize:**

The IPA Freedom to Publish Committee and the Board of the IPA have named Bui Chat, a courageous underground publisher in Vietnam, and the leader of Giay Vun Publishing House, as winner of the 2011 Freedom to Publish Award. Giay Vun is devoted to printing and publishing of the works of Vietnam’s “pavement poets” beyond the reach of censorship authorities. Under Bui Chat’s leadership, Giay Vun has directly assisted in the establishment in Vietnam of other publishing houses that operate independently and freely, publishing the works of banned authors and historians.

Bui Chat was arrested on 30 April 2011 on his return to Vietnam from Buenos Aires, where he was honoured with the 2011 Freedom to Publish award. The Award and Prize certificate were confiscated. After his release on 2 May, he was compelled to return to the police for interrogation on 3 May. A series of other interrogation sessions then took place.

IPA President YoungSuk “Y.S” Chi formally presented this year’s award in a ceremony hosted by the 37th Buenos Aires International Book Fair as part of the Buenos Aires 2011 World Book Capital programme on 25 April 2011. In 2005 IPA created the IPA Freedom to Publish Prize, a prize designed to honour each year a person or an organisation that has made an important contribution to the defence and promotion of freedom to publish anywhere in the world. While the 2006 IPA Freedom to Publish Prize was awarded to Iranian publisher Shalah Lahiji during the Goteborg Book Fair, the 2007 Prize was awarded to Zimbabwean publisher Trevor N’cube at the Cape Town Book Fair. Special Prizes were also given posthumously to Anna Politkovskaya (Russia) and Hrant Dink (Turkey/Armenia). The 2008 IPA Freedom to Publish Prize was awarded to Turkish publisher Ragip Zarakolu during the opening ceremony of an international seminar on neo-censorship co-organised in Amsterdam by IPA and Amsterdam 2008 World Book Capital. The 2009 IPA Freedom to Publish Prize was awarded to Sihem Bensedrine, Neziha Rjiba and Mohamed Talbi, founders of the Observatory for the Freedom of the Press, Publishing and Creation in Tunisia (OLPEC), as part of the Global Forum on Freedom of Expression program, a Forum IPA was partner of. In 2010 the IPA Freedom to Publish Prize was awarded to Israpil Shovkhalov, Editor-in-Chief, and Viktor Kogan-Yasny, publisher of the Dosh Magazine on the occasion of the Istanbul Book Fair. Prize-winners receive the sum of 5000 CHF.

**More about IPA:**

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is an international industry federation representing all aspects of book and journal publishing. Established in 1896, IPA’s mission is to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness for publishing as a force for economic, cultural and political development. Around the world IPA actively fights against censorship and promotes copyright, literacy and freedom to publish.

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