

13 December 2017

H. E. Joko Widodo
President of the Republic of Indonesia
Istana Merdeka
Jakarta Pusat 10110, [Indonesia](#)
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Dear President Joko Widodo,

I am writing to you from the Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN), a network of more than 300 civil society organisations and individuals from 28 countries committed to advancing the rights of refugees across the Asia Pacific region.

As a network committed to refugee rights protection, APRRN urges the Indonesian Government to protect 4 Vietnamese individuals currently seeking asylum in Indonesia and being held at Jakarta's Soekarno–Hatta International Airport. APRRN is alarmed by reports that Indonesia immigration authorities have threatened to imminently return the Vietnamese asylum-seekers back to Vietnam against their will.

Human rights organisations have documented increased persecution of political activists inside Vietnam over the past year. In its 2017 report, Human Rights Watch documented attacks by thugs against activists, including beatings, threats, and intimidation. In July, Amnesty International called for the immediate release of six members of the Brotherhood of Democracy, who were charged under Article 79 of the Vietnamese Penal Code for "*carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration*", and face a prison sentence of up to 20 years or the death penalty. In November 2017, several rights groups including Boat People SOS, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, and Civil Rights Defenders launched a campaign to free 165 prisoners of conscience in Vietnam.

Indonesia's Presidential decree provides that those who declare themselves to be asylum seekers should be afforded protection, be allowed to access UNHCR, and should not face any threat of deportation. Indonesia is also a party to the Convention Against Torture. Under the Convention Against Torture and customary international law, Indonesia has an obligation not to return individuals that might be subject to persecution or torture.

APRRN calls on the President to immediately halt the deportation of the 4 asylum-seekers and to cooperate fully with UNHCR to allow asylum-seekers to access refugee status determination procedures.

Yours sincerely,



Evan Jones

Programme Coordinator
Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)