

## Vietnam - Annual report 2006

One section of the press does its best to push at the limits of censorship imposed by the sole party, at times to its cost. In January an investigative monthly was closed. In July a new law was adopted to bring the online press to heel.

The old guard of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) is unrelenting: it still considers the media to be propaganda organs. The official newspapers praise the party's actions and laud the virtues of socialism. While a more liberal press, including the daily Tuoi Tre (Youth), covers social issues, political self-censorship still holds sways in newsrooms. In 2005, a journalist on Tuoi Tre was accused of divulging state secrets for having copied an official memo about illegal practices in a pharmaceutical company.

At the start of the year, the Culture and Information ministry closed the monthly Nha Bao va Cong Luan, which in its first numbers challenged powerful figures. An article on popular discontent about a tourist development provoked the authorities' particular anger.

But the security apparatus concentrated its crackdown on the Internet, seen as a tool of economic development but also as a means of spreading "reactionary" ideas. At least six cyberdissidents and Internet-users were still imprisoned in the country on 1st January 2006. The government, in July 2005, stepped up its controls of cybercafés.

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