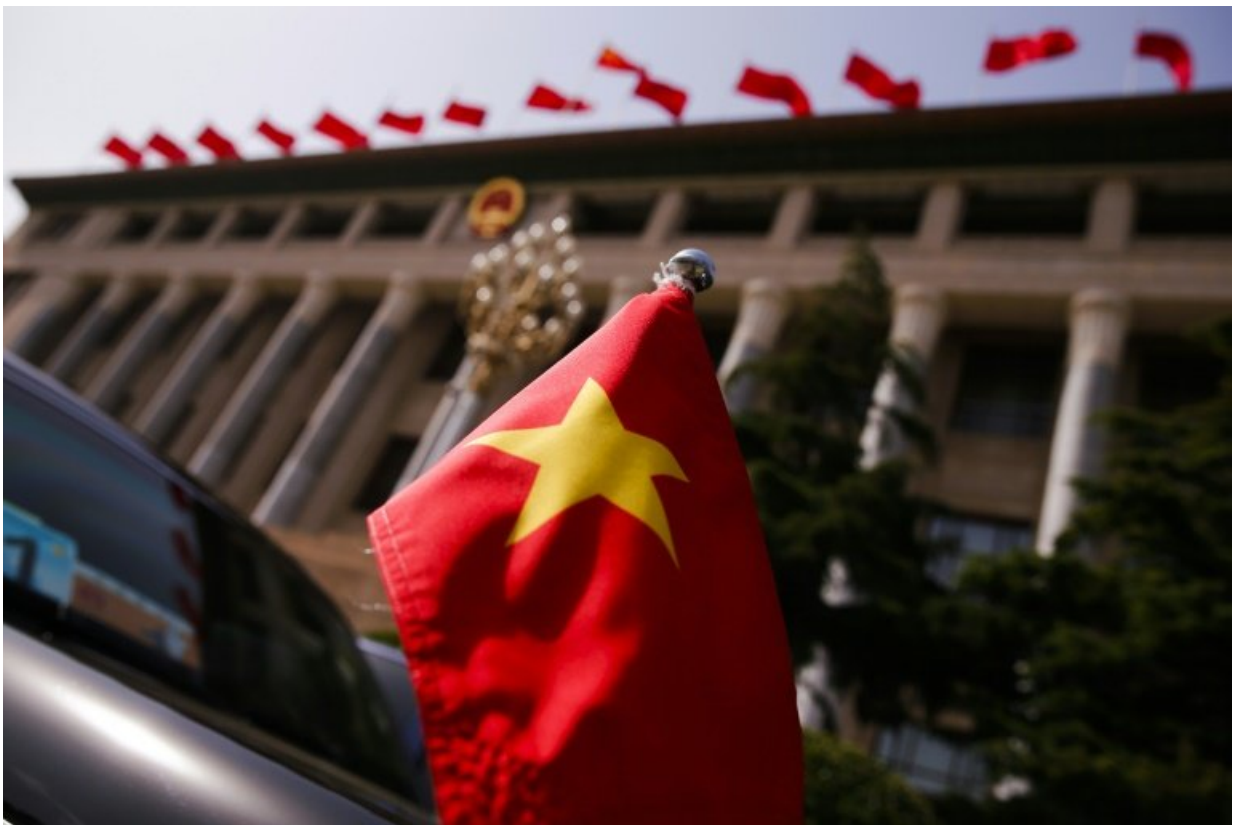


Vietnam's top telecom bosses face arrest over loss-making TV deal

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A crackdown on corruption in Vietnam has gone after executives once thought to be untouchable

Vietnam on Wednesday issued arrest warrants and placed two top telecom bosses under investigation for suspected involvement in a loss-

making private TV deal, authorities said, as a crackdown on graft gathers pace.

A conservative leadership that came to power in the one-party state in 2016 has carried out the sweeping campaign, going after high-rolling executives once thought to be untouchable in Vietnam, one of Asia's most corrupt countries.

State-run Mobifone telecommunications has come under particular scrutiny after an attempted purchase in 2015 of loss-making private TV firm Audio Visual Global (AVG).

The former director general of Mobifone Cao Duy Hai and deputy director general Pham Thi Phuong Anh were accused of "violating regulations on managing and using public investment capital", said a statement on the website of the powerful Ministry of Public Security.

In August Hai was sacked from Mobifone as the communist party blamed him for his role in the proposed deal with AVG—which the government argued would have cost the state hundreds of millions of dollars if the sale had gone through.

Deputy director general Anh was accused of "lack of responsibility in negotiating and directing negotiation with AVG's shareholders", media reports said.

It is not clear if the two are in custody.

Mobifone said it spent around \$385 million for the purchase of 95 percent of AVG shares in 2015 despite the company recording losses of about \$70 million.

The government stepped in to halt the final deal and state media reported

in May that AVG shareholders had refunded all the money.

The two executives were only the latest to get ensnared in the Mobifone clampdown.

Information and Communications Minister Truong Minh Tuan was dismissed from his position in October over the [deal](#).

In a similar move, Mobifone's former head Le Nam Tra and a senior communications ministry official have been put under detention in connection with the case.

Observers say the unprecedented corruption crackdown by Vietnam's communist government shows few signs of slowing, and that the onslaught of cases is more tied to rivalries within the communist party than illegality.

Vietnam is ranked 107 out of 180 on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, among the lowest in the region.

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