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- [SOCIETY](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [LIFESTYLE](#)
- [FEATURES](#)
- [INTERNATIONAL](#)
- [FUN](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
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79 Vietnamese pilot trainees abandoned in US after training center closure

Tuoi Tre News

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Vietnam Airlines pilots are seen posing in this photo illustration.

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**As many as 79 Vietnamese pilot trainees have been abandoned in the U.S. since last October after the Ahart aviation training center in California, which they were attending, closed down and the owner fled.**

Only six of the 79 trainees graduated from the course and were granted certificates as pilots for commercial flights. There is no information on the period of the training course at Ahart.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam contacted the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which is the national aviation authority of the U.S., and was informed that the Ahart center was suspended on October 6, 2014 for its failure to meet flight safety standards.

Ahart has not informed the FAA of any change in the ownership rights of the center, the U.S. aviation administration said.

According to the families of the pilot trainees in Vietnam, each of them paid over US\$80,000 in full as the entire cost of the training course at Ahart. Nguyen Duc Minh, the owner of the center, signed the training contracts with the Vietnamese trainees.

Many of the trainees cannot afford to train at other centers in the U.S.

They have no accommodation because the owner of Ahart did not pay the rent.

Of the 79 trainees, 21 were sent by low-cost carrier VietJet Air, and the remainder covered the cost on their own.

Vietnamese Minister of Transport Dinh La Thang on Thursday recommended that state-run Vietnam Airlines support the abandoned pilot trainees.

Phan Xuan Duc, deputy general director of Vietnam Airlines, said the carrier is willing to sponsor 50 percent of the cost so that the trainees can continue learning at other centers in the U.S. and receive them on returning to Vietnam.

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