

NEWS

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#FreePhamDoanTrang – RSF launches campaign for Vietnamese journalist's release

VIETNAM ASIA - PACIFIC ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD CONDEMNING ABUSES
JUDICIAL HARASSMENT RSF PRIZE

Pham Doan Trang is facing a possible 20-year jail sentence on a charge of “anti-government propaganda” (photo: Think Nguyen / Luat Khoa).



Two months after her arrest, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is launching a campaign for the release of Vietnamese journalist Pham Doan Trang with a petition and a video in which Vietnamese diaspora colleagues voice strong support for this symbol of the fight for the freedom to inform in Vietnam.

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Arrested at her Ho Chi Minh City home

(<https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-condemns-vietnamese-journalist-pham-doan-trangs-arrest>) on the night of 6 October, the co-founder of the *Luat Kuo* and *The Vietnamese* information websites is facing a possible 20-year jail sentence on a charge of “anti-government propaganda.”

In the #FreePhamDoanTrang campaign video released by RSF, Vietnamese journalists, bloggers and friends now based in France, Germany, Taiwan and the United States take advantage of their exile to say what their compatriots still in Vietnam cannot say without risking long prison sentences.

It's with the aim of avoiding a long prison sentence for **Pham Doan Trang** by putting pressure on the Vietnamese government that **RSF is also launching its petition (<https://rsf.org/en/Free-pham-doan-trang>)** for the immediate and unconditional release of this courageous journalist, who was **awarded the RSF Press Freedom Prize for Impact in 2019** (**<https://rsf.org/en/news/journalists-saudi-arabia-vietnam-and-malta-honoured-rsfs-2019-press-freedom-awards>**).

“Because of her bravery and her generosity, Pham Doan Trang has become a symbol of the fight to provide her fellow Vietnamese citizens with reliable, independent journalism,” said Daniel Bastard, the head of RSF's Asia-Pacific desk.

“By signing this petition for her release, you demonstrate a commitment to press freedom in a country where all the media are strictly controlled by the communist party's propaganda bureau. You also express your solidarity with Vietnamese civil society, which is now very active despite state censorship.”

Determination, energy and sacrifices

The RSF video includes interviews with people who are close to Trang, such as her friend **Nguyen Ngoc Anh**, now based in France. “I am very attached to Pham Doan Trang,” she says. “Firstly because we’re friends and went to the same secondary school, and secondly because I respect her determination, her energy and the enormous sacrifices she has made in order to write articles, publish books, and share her knowledge with as many people as possible.”

Trinh Huu Long, a journalist who joined Trang **in founding the Legal Initiatives for Vietnam NGO (<https://www.liv.ngo/>)** and the *Luat Khoa* et *The Vietnamese* news sites, says: “Doan Trang is perhaps one of the most influential journalists, most effective activists and one of the bravest individuals that we have had in Vietnam’s contemporary history, from 1975 to the present-day.”

“Pham Doan Trang is an intellectual who is very committed to her country,” says **Nguyen Van Dai**, a blogger now living in exile in Germany **after being given a 15-year jail sentence (<https://rsf.org/en/news/six-vietnamese-bloggers-get-exceptionally-long-jail-terms>)** in April 2018. “Her work is closely followed by many Vietnamese activists both in Vietnam and abroad. She has written many books promoting human rights and encouraging her fellow citizens to become more aware politically.”

Insult to the idea of humanity

Tranh Thi Nga, a blogger **sentenced to nine years in prison (<https://rsf.org/en/news/nine-year-jail-term-vietnamese-blogger>)** before being **forced into exile in the United States (<https://rsf.org/en/news/vietnamese-blogger-released-forced-exile>)**, was beaten by Vietnamese Communist Party thugs, just as Trang was. She says: “Like me, she was badly beaten on the legs, to the point of causing fractures and lasting damage. And now the Vietnamese government is using a very loosely-worded law to keep Pham Doan Trang in prison. This is a serious violation of human rights, and an insult to morality and the very idea of humanity.” [Accept\(\)](#) |

Le Trung Khoa, the Berlin-based editor of the *ThoiBao.de* news portal, says: “Pham Doan Trang simply used her right to free speech, a right guaranteed by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam’s constitution. The reasons given by the Hanoi regime to justify her arrest are extremely vague and violate the rule of law. This is why she must be freed at once.”

Vietnam has languished for years near the bottom of RSF's World Press Freedom Index and is **ranked 175th out of 180 countries in the 2020 Index (<https://rsf.org/en/ranking>)**.