

VIETNAM

Pham Doan Trang was honored at the award ceremony "International Women of Courage 2022"

March 14, 2022

VOA Vietnamese

On March 14, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken chaired the awarding ceremony of the "International Women of Courage" (IWOC) award to independent journalist Pham Doan Trang in Vietnam along with 11 other women around the world, praising their exceptional courage, strength and leadership in advocating for peace, justice, human rights... despite the danger to their lives.

Foreign Minister Blinken commented on the contribution of independent female journalist Pham Doan Trang being imprisoned in Vietnam:

"In December, Pham Doan Trang was sentenced to 9 years in prison in Vietnam for writing about democracy and human rights. She wrote about the crackdown on protesters and secretly recorded police interrogations. While the media stopped printing her articles, she founded her own website. Despite facing constant threats, she continued to communicate to others about their rights."

// We condemn her unjust imprisonment. We call for her immediate release.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called on the Vietnamese government to release Pham Doan Trang on March 14, 2022.

Secretary of State Blinken added: "We condemn her unjust detention. We call for her immediate release."

US Ambassador to Vietnam Marc Knapper said via video:

“Pham Doan Trang, who fearlessly pursues an inclusive society and a wider space for free speech in Vietnam, has attracted international recognition.”

“Through the Vietnamese press, the United States values our comprehensive partnership with Vietnam. We work to help promote a strong, prosperous and independent Vietnam, and we firmly believe that for this country to thrive it needs openness, transparency and inclusion and respecting the rights of all citizens that Pham Doan Trang has constantly sought out through his writings and advocacy.”

Ambassador Knapper added: “We applaud you, Pham Doan Trang, for your work as a human rights activist. Your bravery continues to inspire people in Vietnam and around the world.”

First Lady Jill Biden, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary of Education and Culture Lee Satterfield attended and delivered speeches at the 16th annual IWOC ceremony held at the Department of Education and Training. US Diplomacy.

First Lady Biden said:

“Today, we honor these 12 women, and we've gone even further, giving them a platform to speak the truth with their voices.

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United States First Lady Jill Biden.

“We recognize the strength they hold to face the most formidable challenges of our time.”

In a message to the honored women, First Lady Biden said: “We will continue to work with passion and persistence, with development and with democracy to stop those who want to be silenced. your mouth. And we will tell your stories even if you can't.”

Independent journalist Pham Doan Trang was arrested by the Vietnamese government on October 6, 2020 and sentenced to 9 years in prison on December 14, 2021, for "Propaganda against the state", related to the her writing and peacefully expressed opinions, said a statement from the US State Department on March 8.

This year's honorees along with Pham Doan Trang come from Bangladesh, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Iraq, Liberia, Libya, Moldova, Nepal, Romania, and South Africa.

Since March 2007, the US State Department has presented this award to more than 170 women from more than 80 countries.

Pham Doan Trang is the third woman in Vietnam to be awarded the IWOC award, after Blogger Me Nam or Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, awarded in 2017, and Blogger Ta Phong Tan, awarded in 2013. The common point of the three people This woman was awarded the award by the US Department of State while they were serving 9-10 years in prison in Vietnam, for the same charge of “conducting propaganda against the State”, under Article 88 of the 1999 Penal Code.

Currently living in Houston, Texas, Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, who was sentenced to 10 years in prison by the Vietnamese government in 2017, commented to VOA about journalist Pham Doan Trang being awarded the IWOC 2022:

“ The nine-year prison sentence handed down by the Hanoi People's Court is the revenge that the Vietnamese government has spent in response to Pham Doan Trang's courage.

Blogger Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, winner of the 2017 International Women of Courage Award.

“Congratulations to Ms. Pham Doan Trang for the title of International Woman of Courage 2022. This is the recognition of the United States in particular and the world in general for Pham Doan Trang personally with her hard-fought and sustained efforts. for human rights and freedom of speech in Vietnam. The 9-year prison sentence that the Hanoi People's Court has pronounced is the revenge that the Vietnamese government has spent in response to Pham Doan Trang's courage.”

“I hope that Ms. Doan Trang's commitment will create positive change in a society full of fear and terror. And most importantly, no more Vietnamese citizens will be convicted for speaking out politically, for resisting oppression and injustice. Not a single Vietnamese citizen has been jailed for showing his courage in front of the authoritarian government,” added Nhu Quynh.

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VOA contacted the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam to ask for advice on the US awarding the IWOC award to Ms. Pham Doan Trang, but has not yet received a response.

Last month, shortly after journalist Pham Doan Trang was honored with the "Press Freedom" award by the United Kingdom and Canada (Media Freedom 2022), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted: "Pham Doan Trang's behavior is dangerous. danger to society. We believe that the awarding of prizes by the Canadian and British Ministry of Foreign Affairs to an individual who violates Vietnamese law is an act of lack of objectivity, inappropriateness and not conducive to the development of bilateral relations with Vietnam. .”

Reaction after Ms. Nhu Quynh was honored with the IWOC award in 2017, the Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that "the US State Department's awarding of an award to an individual who is being detained for investigation for illegal acts Vietnamese law is an unobjective, inappropriate and unprofitable act for the development of relations between the two countries.
