

## Ukraine – Hieu Le and Vietnam – Pham Doan Trang

March 16, 2022

Tran Van

**Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong's words: If there is any conflict, how unstable is the situation now, can we sit here and discuss the organization of the party congress?**

VOA's Vietnamese Language Department reporter has been contacted with Hieu Le (1) - a character mentioned by Vietnamese-language social networks last week as one of the Vietnamese volunteers who went to Ukraine to fight against the Russian invaders. ravaging Ukraine.

Hieu - Vietnamese-American citizen, California resident, was a US soldier, during his service time in the US army, he participated in the war in Afghanistan, after being discharged, returned to Afghanistan to work for an American company that was approved by the US military. The American team selected as a contractor to provide services related to the field of intelligence, then to the city of Medellin, Columbia (a country in Central America) to open a restaurant selling Vietnamese food - decided to suspend business. to go to Ukraine, help Ukrainians defend their territory.

Hieu knew what war was like. In Ukraine, he had not yet faced the Russian invaders, but Hieu had witnessed firsthand how terrible the power of the cruise missile was when the volunteer training camp in Yavoriv was bombed. . That is also the reason why 16/23 volunteers from abroad who came to Ukraine to support Ukrainians against foreign invasion (only counting the number of people sharing a tent with Hieu) changed their mind. Only 7/23 people remained unchanged and Hieu was one of these seven people.

Is Hieu worried? Yes! The Vietnamese-American former soldier, who before February 28, 2022 was also a chef specializing in preparing Vietnamese dishes, said that he stayed because he remembered why he came to Ukraine. The way Ukraine reacted to the disaster made Hieu feel he had to help them...

\*\*\*

The US has just honored Pham Doan Trang – a Vietnamese who is serving a 9-year prison sentence in Vietnam for “ *conducting propaganda against the state* ” (2). Trang is one of 12 women worldwide to be awarded this year's " *International Women of Courage* " Award.

This is not the first time "inmate" Pham Doan Trang has been honored with awards outside of Vietnam. Many international organizations such as *People In Need* in the Czech Republic, *Reporters Without Borders (RSF)*, ... have done it before the US government. Whether the political system, the public system in Vietnam calls the *People In Need* giving Trang the “*Homo Homini*” award (3), or the *RSF* giving Trang the “*Press freedom 2019*” award (4) as...” *farce* ” (5) but some international organizations and some governments like the US are still making that “ *farce* ”...

Mr. Antony Blinken - US Secretary of State explained very seriously why the US did what Vietnam derided as... " *a farce* ": *In December, in Vietnam , Pham Doan Trang was sentenced to 9 years in prison for writing about democracy and human rights. She wrote about the crackdown on protesters , secretly recording 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 .”*

Mr. Marc Knapper - US Ambassador to Vietnam added: *Pham Doan Trang is fearless in pursuit of an inclusive society and a broader space for free speech in Vietnam, which has attracted the recognition of international ... We attach great importance to the comprehensive partnership with Vietnam. We encourage and support a strong, prosperous and independent Vietnam . We believe , for this country to develop, this country needs openness, transparency and inclusion , respecting the rights of all citizens that Trang has been constantly seeking through articles and advocacy. mine. We applaud Trang for her work as a human rights advocate. Your bravery continues to inspire people in Vietnam and around the world ...*

\*\*\*

Why put the story related to Hieu Le and Ukraine next to the story Pham Doan Trang and Vietnam? Because there is something worth thinking about. If Ukraine does not fervently defend the basic values of a country, a people as it is known, people will certainly not support Ukraine as it is now and of course will not be able to move people like Hieu Le – naturally. felt the need to put aside personal plans to do something for foreign countries like Ukraine.

The reason why Volodymyr Zelenskyy – President of Ukraine became an icon is because 40 million Ukrainians stood beside him. The reason 40 million Ukrainians stand by Volodymyr Zelenskyy's side is because he was the one chosen by them to be the President of Ukraine and he put his heart and people first to step forward, not choosing his own interests as well as the interests of Ukraine. own interests of the party "*Servant of the People*" (*Servant of the People*) of which he was both a founder and a member to withdraw and compromise with Russia.

The awards and honors that many international organizations fighting for freedom, democracy, and human rights around the world, as well as the governments of many countries have given, have been given to those... "prisoners" "Like Pham Doan Trang in Vietnam, it is one of the forms of reminders for the generations to remember, what kind of political system and public power system in Vietnam are. Just look at the way people deal with Russia and Ukraine, one can imagine the consequences of disparaging the basic values of human civilization, calling it " *a farce* ".

If Vietnam were in the same situation as Ukraine is today, how many people feel the need to do something to support a political system, the public system has never hesitated to turn so many compatriots of these systems like Pham Doan Trang become... " *inmates* "? How many people of Vietnamese origin will find their way back like Hieu Le when the Vietnamese people have no chance to choose... " *clown* " (6) *as head, when Vietnam only has " adept "* individuals. "In the governance and administration of the country in the communist style, without any tricks to hold on to power, he even casually questioned those who wondered about the territorial sovereignty being controlled by foreigners. challenge, infringe, that: *If there is any conflict, how unstable is the situation now, can we sit here and discuss the organization of the party congress* (7)?

## Note

(1) <https://www.voatiengviet.com/a/6486183.html>

(2) <https://www.voatiengviet.com/a/pham-doang-trang-iwoc-2022/6484630.html>

(3) <https://www.voatiengviet.com/a/nha-bao-pham-doan-trang-duoc-trao-giai-nhan-quyen-homo-homini/4254088.html>

(4) <https://www.bbc.com/vietnamese/vietnam-49655619>

(5) <https://cand.com.vn/Chong-dien-bien-hoa-binh/To-chuc-Phong-vien-khong-bien-gioi-lai-dien-tro-he-i536114/>

(6) <https://www.facebook.com/100062975111538/posts/321149096660925/>

(7) <https://soha.vn/xa-hoi/tong-bi-thu-neu-dung-do-tren-bien-ta-co-ngoi-day-duoc-khong-20151208144743885.htm>

---