

VIETNAM

Young Vietnamese lawyer committed to human rights, the rule of law for Vietnam

April 26, 2019

VOA Vietnamese

Vi Tran, a young Vietnamese-American female lawyer, and her associates founded a non-profit organization to bring the voices of the people in the country to the outside in an authentic way, reflecting the realities of society, and towards a rule of law that respects the law for Vietnam.

Talking to VOA, female lawyer Vi Tran said that the goal of *the Legal Initiative of Vietnam* (LIV), an American NGO registered in California - managing two websites *Law Khoa Magazine* and *The Vietnamese*, is to give readers a fresh and multi-dimensional view of legal and political issues in Vietnam. *The Law on Faculty of Journalism* has also recently voiced that "the state press and public opinion label it as 'reactionary,' 'anti-government,' 'three-stick yellow flag'..."

From his office in Taiwan, Lawyer Vi Tran gives VOA the following interview:

VOA: *Can Ms. Vi Tran introduce a little bit about LIV and LIV's two media websites ?*

Vi Tran: "My name is Vi Tran, one of the proponents of the online newspaper *Luat Khoa Magazine*, a magazine specializing in law, aimed at young people who are interested in law and human rights in the country. We also noticed that there were foreigners interested in politics and human rights in Vietnam and so we founded the English-language newspaper - *The Vietnamese*. These are two journalistic projects that are part of the activity lists of the NGO *Legal Initiative Vietnam* (LIV) established by us to manage our projects."

VOA: *Reflecting on the current social and political situation in Vietnam is a sensitive topic, so do LIV and its collaborators face any obstacles?*

Vi Tran: “As an NGO, finance is always an issue. But that was only a small difficulty. We have a network of collaborators in the country and connecting with friends in the country is not a big obstacle. But because these are two online newspapers, and use social networks (MXH) to spread information. Over the past year, social networks, especially Facebook, have had algorithmic changes, so some posts have been blocked for no apparent reason; there are a number of technical attacks on the network... then these are the biggest obstacles.”

VOA: *What audience do the Faculty of Journalism and The Vietnamese target and why choose that audience?*

Vi Tran: “The core component of the Law Faculty of Journalism is the young generation who study law at home and abroad. We recognize that judicial reform is essential for any country, even in the United States. The justice system in Vietnam of course has problems that need to be resolved. After 5 years of working, we see more and more young people have certain concerns about the law and criminal justice in Vietnam because only problems arise when society speaks out, recently especially in cases of sexual assault on women and children.

“A newspaper that helps to get more information to solve and find its own way for Vietnam is very necessary. We feel very happy that more and more young people are interested and want to do this. That is a good sign for a society.”

Lawyer Vi Tran, co-founder of LIV NGO.

“Currently, there are many young people who want to campaign to change the law in Vietnam. Our newspaper helps you to get more information about experiences in other countries, how they solved it, what other country's laws and case law have done... A newspaper that helps to get more information to Self-solution and finding its own way for Vietnam is very necessary. We feel very happy that more and more young people are interested and want to do this. That is a good sign for a society.”



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VOA: Is LIV's approach different from that of the Vietnamese people of the previous generation? What do you think about this difference?

Vi Tran: “Young people, especially born after the war, grew up abroad, live in peace, go to school... I think we are the lucky ones, have a more optimistic view of life and want to connect with others. more people, especially in the internet age like now. The connection between young people in the country and abroad is also very simple. And when there is a certain connection, our view of the problem is also different because we are more interested in the problems that are happening in the country and want to help our friends...

“That is not to say that I do not appreciate the loss and contributions of previous generations because I am fortunate not to have to live in the period of history that they went through. So I have only gratitude and complete sympathy for their pain and loss.

“As Vietnamese in general, everyone has a wish that their country is progressive, where people feel proud and worth living. Young people use the Internet and social networks and online applications a lot. That is the new approach of young people.

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Lawyer Vi Tran

“Young people also have a very open view about traveling and working; they work hard to go to far places, study in many countries, adventure more. Young people have this luck and opportunity because of the sacrifices of the previous generation.”

VOA: What are the false records in Vietnam that LIV is campaigning on the international front?

Vi Tran: “There are three files of death row inmates who are complaining: Ho Duy Hai, Nguyen Quang Chuong and Le Van Manh. Vi regularly writes articles about them in English, as well as carries out advocacy work at recent UPR, ICCPR... and international front activities for these three profiles. Since I myself studied law, I found the sentences against them to be wrong.

“The biggest dream is to be able to use more time in the future to provide legal and judicial support for similar cases...”

VOA: Can Ms. Vi Tran tell us a little bit about herself and her wishes?

Vi Tran: “Since the 90s, Vi moved to the US to live and attend high school in the US, a Vietnamese-American is quite normal. Previously, Vi lived in California, studied law, became a lawyer, and out of curiosity, regularly monitored the situation in Vietnam. Vi has connections with a number of friends who are Vietnamese activists including Trinh Huu Long and Pham Doan Trang. Vi and her friends founded the Faculty of Law and Journalism and since then, Vi left the US and moved to Southeast Asia, nearly 5 years now. Currently living and working in Taiwan.

“My long-standing dream is to return to work with the people in Vietnam, especially the petitioners who have been wronged in the cases.”

VOA: VOA sincerely thanks Lawyer Vi Tran.
