

Ambassador Van Thong Ta
Embassy of Vietnam to Norway
P.O. Box 6635
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Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the recently imprisoned journalist Ms. Pham Doan Trang who has received a nine-year-long prison sentence. On 7 October 2020, she was arrested by Hanoi police on the grounds of her long history of peacefully advocating for human rights and environmental issues as an independent journalist in Vietnam.

Following her arrest, Ms. Pham Doan Trang was not given permission to meet with her lawyer, Nguyen Van Mieng, until a year later, on 19 October 2021. After delays in her trial due to COVID-19, she received a mere one day's notice of her trial that began on 14 December and lasted for no more than one day. Judge Chu Phuong Ngoc's decision to sentence the journalist to nine years of imprisonment was even longer than the prosecutors' recommendation of seven to eight years.

Pham Doan Trang is convicted of anti-State propaganda under Article 88 of the Criminal Code for allegedly conducting propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. This does not reflect the actual nature of the journalist's peaceful work, expressing her opinion, nor is it consistent with the acts of a democratic society, where her constructive work should be respected, not criminalized.

Doan Trang's imprisonment is not her first experience of being subjected to injustice for exercising her right to freedom of expression. In 2016, Vietnamese authorities rejected her attendance at an activists' forum where she had been invited by former President of the U.S., Mr. Barack Obama. In 2018, the Hanoi police showed up unannounced and without showing a warrant, at Doan Trang's mother's house, where Doan Trang was arrested and sent into house arrest.

These acts of restricting freedom of the rights to complaints and petitions as well as freedom of expression, are not in accordance with the Vietnamese constitution. I am confident that Vietnamese authorities seeks to protect its citizen's freedom and safety. I therefore humbly petition your intervention to ensure that:

- Pham Doan Trang be released immediately, and all charges against her be dropped;
- the fundamental rights of Vietnamese citizens are respected and protected according to the standards of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Vietnam has been a signatory since 1982;
- the Penal Code and other non-human rights-compliant legislation are repealed or significantly revised to avoid wrongful prosecution of innocent individuals.

Sincerely,