

## ***The Observatory: Vietnam: Conviction and sentencing of labour and land rights defender Ms. Tran Thi Nga***

**New information**  
**VNM 001 / 0117 / OBS 011.1**  
Sentencing /  
Arbitrary detention /  
Judicial harassment  
**Vietnam**  
July 27, 2017

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a partnership of FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), has received new information and requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in **Vietnam**.

### **New information:**

The Observatory has been informed by the Vietnam Committee on Human Rights (VCHR) about the conviction and sentencing of labour and land rights defender Ms. **Tran Thi Nga**.

According to the information received, on July 25, 2017, the People's Court in Ha Nam Province sentenced Ms. Tran Thi Nga to nine years' imprisonment followed by an additional five years of house arrest under Article 88 of the Vietnamese Penal Code for "spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam". Her sentence is related to articles and videos she posted online in which she condemned human rights violations committed by Vietnamese authorities.

Her trial, which was held from 8:30am to 5pm, was closed to independent journalists and foreign diplomats. Ms. Tran Thi Nga's partner and young children were not allowed to attend the trial, nor were the activists who came to the court in her support. Police officers and plainclothes agents were deployed around the court premises and supporters reported being physically accosted when they tried to approach the building.

Ms. Tran Thi Nga's health condition has deteriorated over the past few months as a result of a mucosal injury sustained in May 2014, after authorities beat her in reprisal for her work documenting rights violations (see background information). According to her lawyer, she was refused proper medical treatment while detained in Ha Nam Police Detention Centre.

The Observatory strongly condemns the sentencing of Ms. Tran Thi Nga, which only aims at punishing her for her legitimate and peaceful human rights activities and urges Vietnamese authorities to overturn her sentence, immediately and unconditionally release her, and put an end to any form of harassment against her.

**Background information (1):**

On January 21, 2017 Ms. Tran Thi Nga was arrested at her home in Phu Ly, Ha Nam Province, after the police searched her house and confiscated several of her personal belongings. On the same day, Ms. Tran Thi Nga's partner **Luong Dan Ly**, a pro-democracy activist and blogger, was also arrested. He was released the following day. The police subsequently accused Ms. Tran Thi Nga of using the Internet "to spread some propaganda videos and writings that are against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam".

Ms. Tran Thi Nga has suffered repeated intimidation, harassment, detention, interrogation, and physical assaults by security agents because of her human rights activities. In May 2014, a group of five men assaulted her with iron rods, breaking her arm and leg. In the days prior to her arrest in January 2017, Ms. Tran Thi Nga was subjected to increased police intimidation and harassment, including surveillance of her home and the use of physical force to keep her from leaving her house. Police also refused to allow a neighbour to take her two young sons to the city to buy them food.

**Actions requested:**

Please write to the authorities in Vietnam urging them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances Ms. Tran Thi Nga's physical and psychological integrity as well as that of all human rights defenders in Vietnam;
- ii. Immediately and unconditionally release Ms. Tran Thi Nga, as her detention is arbitrary since it only aims at punishing her for her human rights activities, and in the meantime ensure her full and unhindered access to proper medical treatment in adequate medical facilities;
- iii. Put an end to all acts harassment, including at the judicial level, against Ms. Tran Thi Nga, as well as against all human rights defenders in Vietnam;
- iv. Amend Article 88 of the Criminal Code, to bring it in conformity with international human rights standards;
- v. Comply with the provisions of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders,

adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1998, in particular its Articles 1 and 12.2;

vi. More generally, ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Vietnam.

**Addresses:**

- Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, Fax: 84-4-38231872 - 84-4-37992682, Email: [bc.mfa@mofa.gov.vn](mailto:bc.mfa@mofa.gov.vn)
- Mr. Le Vinh Tan, Minister of the Interior of Vietnam, Fax: 84-4-39781005
- Mr. Le Thanh Long, Minister of Justice of Vietnam, Fax: 84-4-38431431
- Mr. To Lam, Minister of Public Security of Vietnam, Fax: 84-4-9420223
- Mr. Mai Tien Dung, Minister, Office of the Government (OOG), Vietnam, Fax: 84-4-80 44130
- Mr. Chi Dung Duong, Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Vietnam to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, Fax: +41 (0) 22-798 07 24, Email: [info@vnmission-ge.gov.vn](mailto:info@vnmission-ge.gov.vn)
- Mr. Vuong Thua Phong, Ambassador, Embassy of Vietnam in Brussels, Belgium. Fax: +32 (0) 2 374 93 76, Email: [vnemb.brussels@skynet.be](mailto:vnemb.brussels@skynet.be) - [unescochau@yahoo.com](mailto:unescochau@yahoo.com)

Please also write to the embassy of Vietnam in your respective country.

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Paris-Geneva, July 27, 2017

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

*The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (the Observatory) was created in 1997 by FIDH and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT). The objective of this programme is to intervene to prevent or remedy situations of repression against human rights defenders. FIDH and OMCT are both members of [ProtectDefenders.eu](http://ProtectDefenders.eu) , the European Union Human Rights Defenders Mechanism implemented by international civil society.*

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

**Quê Me**

Quê Me: Action for democracy in Vietnam & Vietnam Committee on Human Rights  
<http://queme.org/en>

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(1) See also [Observatory-VCHR Joint Press Release, July 21, 2017](#).