

# URGENT ACTION

## JAILED BLOGGER ON HUNGER STRIKE

**Vietnamese blogger Ta Phong Tan, serving a 10-year prison sentence, has been on hunger strike since 13 May in protest at her harsh treatment by prison guards. She is reported to be weak and in poor health. She is a prisoner of conscience.**

**Ta Phong Tan**, a prisoner of conscience, is detained at Prison No 5, Yen Dinh district of Thanh Hao province in north central Viet Nam. This is believed to be her third hunger strike in protest at prison guards' harsh and abusive treatment of her and other political prisoners. During her time in prison she has been held for several months in a solitary confinement cell with no windows and been prevented from speaking with other prisoners. She suffers from arthritis, a stomach complaint and high blood pressure. According to her family, who visited her on 3 June, she is "very weak", and her health has seriously deteriorated.

Ta Phong Tan is a former policewoman and co-founder of the independent Free Journalists' Club of Viet Nam, established in September 2007 to encourage freedom of expression and alternatives to state-controlled media. She is well-known for her blog *Conglysuthat* ("Justice and Truth"), which published articles about a variety of issues including social injustice, human rights abuses and national sovereignty. Arrested in September 2011, Ta Phong Tan was tried on 24 September 2012 with two other bloggers and founders of the Free Journalists' Club, who have since been released: Phan Thanh Hai, known as Anh Ba Sai Gon, and Nguyen Van Hai, known as Dieu Cay. Ta Phong Tan was convicted of "conducting propaganda" against the state, under Article 88 of the Penal Code, and received a 10-year prison sentence with three years' house arrest on release.

### **Please write immediately in English, Vietnamese or your own language:**

- Demanding that the authorities release Ta Phong Tan immediately and unconditionally, as she is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to instruct the prison authorities to take immediate steps to resolve complaints made by Ta Phong Tan about her treatment by prison guards, as this would lead her to end her hunger strike;
- Urging them to ensure that Ta Phong Tan has immediate access to any medical attention she may require and is treated in accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 JULY 2015 TO:**

#### Minister of Public Security

Gen Tran Dai Quang  
Ministry of Public Security  
44 Yet Kieu Street, Hoan Kiem district  
Ha Noi, VIET NAM  
Online contact form:  
[http://www.mps.gov.vn/web/guest/contact\\_english](http://www.mps.gov.vn/web/guest/contact_english)

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

#### Minister of Foreign Affairs

Pham Binh Minh  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
1 Ton That Dam Street, Ba Dinh district  
Ha Noi, VIET NAM  
Fax: + 844 3823 1872  
Email: [bc.mfa@mofa.gov.vn](mailto:bc.mfa@mofa.gov.vn)  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

#### **And copies to:**

Minister of Justice  
Ha Hung Cuong  
Ministry of Justice  
60 Tran Phu Street, Ba Dinh district  
Ha Noi, VIET NAM  
Fax: + 844 627 3959  
Email: [botuphap@moj.gov.vn](mailto:botuphap@moj.gov.vn)

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ta Phong Tan was arrested in September 2011 and detained with infrequent access to her family and lawyer. Her mother, Dang Thi Kim Lieng, died after she set herself on fire in front of the local People's Committee Office on 30 July 2012, in despair at the way the security forces were harassing Ta Phong Tan and her family. Ta Phong Tan was told about her mother's death in prison, and was not allowed to attend her funeral ceremony.

Ta Phong Tan had been detained for 12 months before she was put on trial, at the Ho Chi Minh City People's Court, on 24 September 2012. This was longer than is allowed under national law. The proceedings, which only lasted a few hours, did not meet international fair trial standards. Only three witnesses out of nine summoned were present and the defence lawyers' speeches were cut short, hindering her right to an adequate defence. Friends and supporters of the bloggers, including family members, were harassed, arbitrarily detained and assaulted to prevent them from attending the trial. Extracts of the trial were shown on national television.

The detention facility where Ta Phong Tan is held is 1,700 kilometres from Bac Lieu province, where her family live, making it difficult for them to visit.

Viet Nam is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. However, these rights are severely restricted in law and practice in Viet Nam. Vaguely-worded articles in the national security section of Viet Nam's 1999 Penal Code are frequently used to criminalize peaceful dissenting views or activities. Those at risk include people advocating peaceful political change, criticizing government policies or calling for respect for human rights. Article 88 ("conducting propaganda" against the state) is frequently used to detain, prosecute and imprison dissidents for their peaceful activism, including bloggers, labour rights and land rights activists, political activists, religious followers, human rights defenders and social justice activists, and even songwriters.

Prison conditions in Viet Nam are harsh, with food and health care that fall short of the minimum requirements set out in the UN Standard Minimum Rules and other international standards. Prisoners of conscience have been held in solitary confinement as a punishment or in isolation for lengthy periods. They have also been subjected to ill-treatment, including beatings by other prisoners with no intervention by prison guards. Some prisoners of conscience are frequently moved from one detention facility to another, often without their families being informed.

Name: Ta Phong Tan

Gender m/f: f

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