

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE TA PHONG TAN RELEASED

Vietnamese blogger and prisoner of conscience Ta Phong Tan was released on 19 September after serving four years of a 10-year prison sentence. She was immediately put on a plane to Los Angeles, in the USA, where she is now effectively in exile.

On arrival in Los Angeles on 20 September, **Ta Phong Tan** was met by her co-defendant Nguyen Van Hai, more commonly known by his blogging name, Dieu Cay ("Peasant's pipe"). Nguyen Van Hai had also been released early from his 12-year prison sentence and immediately flown to the USA in October 2014.

A former policewoman, Ta Phong Tan had been arrested in September 2011 and sentenced a year later to 10 years' imprisonment with five years' house arrest on release. She was convicted under Article 88 of Viet Nam's Penal Code of "conducting propaganda" against the state. She and Nguyen Van Hai founded the independent Free Journalists' Club of Viet Nam in 2007 to encourage freedom of expression as an alternative to state-controlled media. Ta Phong Tan is well known for her blog, Conglysthat (Justice and Truth) which included articles on social injustice, human rights abuses and national sovereignty. Ta Phong Tan was a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely because she peacefully exercised her right to freedom of expression.

While Ta Phong Tan was in pre-trial detention, her mother, Dang Thi Kim Lieng, died after setting fire to herself out of despair because of the harassment suffered by her family and her daughter's treatment. Ta Phong Tan was not allowed to attend the funeral.

While in prison, Ta Phong Tan is reported to have insisted on being treated according to the law and refused to confess to the charges brought against her. She went on hunger strike three times to protest against harsh conditions and abusive treatment, most recently for 23 days in May-June. Ta Phong Tan has said that she intends to continue campaigning for human rights in Viet Nam from the USA. She has thanked everyone for their "continuous and tireless advocacy on my case" which resulted in her release.

No further action is requested of the UA network. Amnesty International will continue to call for the release of all prisoners of conscience in Viet Nam. Many thanks to all who took action.

This is the first update of UA 128/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA41/1827/2015/en/>

Name: Ta Phong Tan

Gender m/f: f

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