

Blogger Ta Phong Tan

Member of the Free Journalists Club



Blogger Ta Phong Tan has been recognized as a symbol for government reform and whistleblowing in Vietnam for her work exposing government corruption. Her arrest has sparked outrage by esteemed organizations such as Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights, the US State Department, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International.

Born in 1968, Ms. Ta was a former policewoman and member of the Communist party who made a name for herself by posting articles that were critical of the government and the corruption in the Vietnamese legal system. As a former member of the party, she is able to give a unique perspective on government wrongdoings. In 2004, she started blogging about various government abuses titled *Cong Ly va Su That* (Justice and Truth) that was groundbreaking in terms of commenting on political news and events that were traditionally viewed as off-limits. With over 700 articles written, Tan's blog has exposed a litany of social wrongdoings in Vietnam including corruption, unfair taxation, government overspending, illegal eminent domain, and the maltreatment of children by party officials. Ta Phong Tan is viewed as an inspiration for bloggers, citizens, and journalists who are now empowered and committed to continuing her cause.

From 2009-2011, Ta Phong Tan was actively involved in the Redemptorist Order in which she enthusiastically participated in prayers for justice and truth towards the higher mission of religious freedom. She played an instrumental role in spearheading and participating in many Redemptorist Order activities.

In September 2011, she was arrested as one of three members of the Club of Free Journalists (along with fellow bloggers Nguyen Van Hai and Phan Thanh Hai) and charged with "conducting propaganda against the state". Such charges are equivalent to treason in Vietnam and carry an extremely heavy sentence with a low or negligible burden of proof. In July 2011 Ta's mother, Dang Thi Kim Lieng, immolated herself in front of the Bac Lieu province office to protest the phony charges against her daughter. In October 2012 after a trial of just one day, Ta

was sentenced to 10 years in prison with an additional 5 years of house arrest upon release. Ta refused to plead guilty and serves as a shining beacon of hope for dissident bloggers everywhere.

In March 2013, Ta Phong Tan was honored by Michelle Obama with a 2013 International Women of Courage Award from the US State Department as well as a Hellman/Hammett award from Human Rights Watch. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Tan had helped inspire an awakening of citizen bloggers and journalists in Vietnam, who today are committed to spreading information and alternate opinions to the Vietnamese people. She was arrested in 2011 and sentenced to 10 years in prison for allegedly conducting propaganda against the state. Yet even as state security forces were dragging her away from a rigged verdict, she cried out to all who could hear, ‘Unjust! Unjust!’” She is viewed not only as an advocate for religious freedom, but also for political freedom as well.

Act Now:

- Please help us appeal to Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang to free Ta Phong Tan. An online petition to free her on The Petition Site has already garner more than 25,000 signatures and attests to the public outcry against her imprisonment. Please pass this information to your government and human rights organizations in your country.a