

TRAN HUYNH DUY THUC - blogger TRAN DONG CHAN

Founder of the Viet Nam Path Movement (VPM), Prisoner of Conscience



Brief background

DOB: 29 November 1966
Address: Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam
Marital Status: Married with 2 daughters
Occupation: IT Engineer/General Director of EIS, Inc.
Date of arrest: 24 May 2009
Currently being held at: Xuyen Moc Prison, Section No. 3, Ba Ria-Vung Tau Province

Tran Huynh Duy Thuc was born in Vietnam in a poor family with eight siblings. In 1990, he graduated from the Polytechnic University of HCM City with a degree in Information Technology. After graduation, Thuc ran a number of small businesses of his own in order to gather enough capital for a start-up business in information and communication technologies (ICT). Finally in 1994, he and Le Thang Long, a friend from college, were able to establish EIS, Ltd., which in 2002 was converted to EIS, Inc. and became the parent company of the newly established One Connection, Ltd. During the course of 7 years, both companies rose to the top of the regional market with innovative services that were once seen as a beacon of Vietnam's ICT industry. In May 2009, Thuc was suddenly arrested at his house for his writing activities. He was charged with "activities aimed at overthrowing the government" under article 79 of Vietnam's penal code. On January 20, 2010 he was sentenced to 16 years of imprisonment.

Activism

While running business, Thuc not only witnessed but also experienced first-hand the corruption endemic in Vietnam's economic environment, whereas his observations were plagued with the daily social ills caused by inequality. In 2004, with the founding of Chan Research Group in collaboration with Atty. Le Cong Dinh and Le Thang Long, he set out to seek a better direction in terms of democracy and respect for human rights for his country.

In 2004, on behalf of the group, Thuc sent recommendations to the country's political leaders, voicing serious concerns about an imminent socio-economic crisis. Undeterred by the silence of the authorities, he set up a blog, under his pen name Tran Dong Chan, where the group's findings were publicized with the aim of mobilizing fellow citizens into action. Concurrently, Thuc, Long and Dinh were also co-writing a book named "The Vietnam Path" and preparing for a movement of the same name in order to actualize their ideas therein. For his part, Thuc was self-authoring a book entitled "Hewing Quest for Democracy and Prosperity." Both works were left unfinished as Thuc, Dinh and Long were arrested in May and June 2009.

While in prison, Thuc continued developing an orientation for the establishment of the Vietnam Path Movement with pencil and paper. A week after being released, on 10 June 2012, Le Thang Long on behalf of Tran Huynh Duy Thuc and Le Cong Dinh publicly launched the Vietnam Path Movement. This is a non-partisan movement whose mission is to ensure that "Human rights be respected and protected above all and equally in Vietnam."

Arbitrary Detention

In a statement issued on 23rd November 2012, The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention concluded that "the deprivation of liberty of Le Cong Dinh, Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, Nguyen Tien Trung, and Le Thang Long is arbitrary and in contravention of articles 9, 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Viet Nam is a party", thus requesting the Government of Viet Nam to unconditionally release the aforementioned individuals.



Act Now:

Help advocate for the immediate and unconditional release of Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, a prisoner of conscience, by passing this information to your government and to human rights organizations in your country. Also, please use the social media to inform the public of the on-going persecution against Tran Huynh Duy Thuc and other human rights and pro-democracy champions in Vietnam.