

Tran Vu Anh Binh

Sentenced to 6 years in prison for patriotic songs



In April 2011, Tran Vu Anh Binh co-founded the Patriotic Youth to promote public consciousness on social justice and civic engagement. The Patriotic Youth comprises of college students, young artists, young professionals, and musicians. Some members create blogs and websites to advocate for the respect of human rights, freedom, and free elections. Others pass out fliers calling for democratic reforms and the defense of Vietnam's sovereignty against China's expansionism.

Tran Vu Anh Binh composed music, wrote blogs, and passed out fliers.

He has written songs which deal with social matters, advocating the respect of human rights, denouncing social injustice and abuse of power. His most known songs include: Father, You Gave Me (Your Child) the Future; The Lullaby is Not Fully Sung Yet; Thank You, Mother; Vietnamese Youth; Patriotic Youth; and Homeland's Pain.

He also wrote a song called "Courage in the Dark Prison" (*Nguc Toi Hien Ngang*) in support of an imprisoned blogger, Nguyen Van Hai (aka Dieu Cay), which urges the people of Vietnam to mount nonviolent protests.

In addition to writing songs, he also created a blog called Love Mother Vietnam (*Thuong Me Viet Nam*) where he wrote articles and posted his songs.

Tran Vu Anh Binh is a Catholic and an activist who defends religious freedom. He was also a singing member of the choir from Areas 7 and 8, belonging to the Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, under the guidance of the Fathers of the Redemptorist Church.

In September 2011, under the pen name Hoang Nhat Thong, Tran Vu Anh Binh posted 3 songs that he composed and performed on YouTube. They called out to the courage of youths to love and protect their country, and expressed concerns about the lack of social justice and the dictatorship of the Vietnamese government.

Tran Vu Anh Binh was arrested on September 19, 2011 when authorities became aware of his videos posted on Youtube. Two other Patriotic Youth members were also arrested: Nguyen Thien Thanh and Viet Khang (Vo Minh Tri). After his arrest, Tran Vu Anh Binh's brothers went to the Police Station PA-24 at 4 Phan Dang Luu, Ho Chi Minh City, many times to visit him, but the police did not let his brothers see him; they were only to leave gifts for him with the police.

After his arrest, the police began harassing Tran Vu Anh Binh's family and forbidding them from communicating with overseas media. His family was also threatened that the police will give Binh a hard time in prison if the family disobeys orders.

His arrest, along those of with Nguyen Thien Thanh and Viet Khang, has galvanized Vietnamese youth both inside Vietnam and overseas to become more engaged and take a more active role in advocating for social justice and democratic reforms. His wife and mother, along with many other supporters, are advocating for his release from prison.

On October 30, 2012, Tran Vu Anh Binh was sentenced to 6 years in prison to be followed by 2 years of probationary detention for "conducting anti-state propaganda" under Article 88 of Vietnam's Penal Code. Furthermore, prior to his trial, he had been in continuous pre-trial detention for 13 months, even though Article 120 of the Criminal Procedures Code limits such detention to four months.

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Act now: We plead your support in helping Tran Vu Anh Binh, a defender of human rights for Vietnamese people. Please dispatch and spread the present document to human rights organizations & governments around the world for the purpose of seeking humanitarian aid (medicine and medical care) and financial support for him.

*"O young men, let us stand up and go
O seniors, kids, let us rise up to save our country*

*O Dieu Cay! My heart is pained, hearing that those cruel people cut off your arm
Your body is for your country only
O Dieu Cay! The Vietnamese people have been lamenting for the longest time.
Our ancestors have determined to never give up.
We decide to mirror their footsteps
Stand Up, Vietnam!"*

- Tran Vu Anh Binh, *Courage in the Dark Prison*