

***Doan Huy Chuong – a labor union advocate***  
*Sentenced to 7 years in prison for defending worker’s rights*



Mr Doan Huy Chuong is a human rights activist who defends the rights of workers, and promotes the establishment of independent unions in Vietnam. He is a member of the “Committee to Protect Vietnamese Workers,” a non-government organization founded in late 2006 in Warsaw, Poland. He was joined in the struggle by two others labor organizers, Mr. Nguyen Doan Quoc Hung and Ms. Do Thi Minh Hanh. In early February 2010, he co-organized a strike that brought together 10,000 workers of My Phong shoes factory in Tra Vinh province with the purpose of demanding basic rights for the workers. This prompted the government to arrest him and his friends Hung and Hanh. On October 27, 2010, he was sentenced to seven years in prison by the People’s Court of Tra Vinh. In this first instance’s trial, his family was barred from attending and the attorney, from defending the case. He is currently serving his sentence at Z30A-Xuan Loc prison camp in Dong Nai Province.

Born in 1985 and a resident of Dong Nai, Chuong was labor worker at the industrial park of Cay Tram, Vinh Loc B, Binh Chanh. There he witnessed so much injustice and exploitation against his peers by business owners in plants and factories. In February 2006, Chuong and four representatives of workers wrote an eight-point proposal to the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party imploring them to help stop the exploitation of workers and to allow the establishment of independent labor unions. “... We have the right to: assemble, form associations, raise funds, struggle, strike for legitimate demands such as fair pay and compensation that match our work productivity...” they wrote.

On October 30, 2006, he and other human rights activists founded the “Hiep Hoi Doan Ket Cong Nong” (United Farmers-Workers Association) to fight for the rights of industrial workers. On November 16, 2006, Chuong and three other labor organizers were arrested in Hung Think Village, Trang Bom District, Dong Nai Province while disseminating leaflets on the rights of workers. On December 10, 2006, Chuong was sentenced to 18 months of prison on the charge of “abusing the democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the state, organizations, citizens” according to Article 258 of the penal code. During his stay in the prison, he was subjected to beating, having his feet shackled, and on many occasions being secluded for

protesting against the abuse of human rights by prison wardens. Just before the end of his 18-months prison term, the Vietnamese authorities forced him to write a letter committing himself not to struggle anymore, which he refused.

After his release from prison, he continued to fight for the worker's rights. From January 29 to February 1, 2010, he and two other members of the "Committee to Protect Vietnamese Workers", Nguyen Hoang Quoc Hung and Do Thi Minh Hanh, helped 10,000 workers at My Phong shoes factory in Tieu Can District and its affiliate in Tra Cu District in their strike for fair salaries and a bonus for Tết (Vietnamese New Year) holidays which was taken away from them, for decent treatment, and for benefits that were not paid as stipulated in the contract ... Chuong was apprehended by the police on February 13, 2010 together with Hung and Hanh and charged with "disrupting public order and security against the people's government" according to Article 89 of the penal code. Chuong was sentenced to 7 year in prison.

On May 18, 2011, the Appeal Court upheld the three labor organizers' prison sentences. In both trials, they were not allowed access to legal defense. According to Phil Robertson, Deputy Director of Human Watch, *"All Nguyen Hoang Quoc Hung, Do Thi Minh Hanh and Doan Huy Chuong did is just to confirm the rights of workers to organize, assemble, strike peacefully to demand salary increase and improve working conditions. The fact that the Vietnamese government, a government who always claims to have tight knots with labor workers, decided to condemn them at the first instance trial is already a cruel act."*

In prison Chuong was regularly manhandled and subjected to forced labor. On many occasions, the prison wardens interfered with his family's visitation and food supply sent to him. They pressured him to sign a statement acknowledging that the sentence he received is fair and just. He adamantly refused to sign it. Due to the deplorable prison conditions and the lack of necessities, his health has deteriorated and he suffers chronic headaches. To protest the ill treatment of prisoners, in early February 2014 Chuong started an indefinite hunger strike.



We urge you to help Mr. Doan Huy Chuong, a true fighter for the rights and justice for labor workers and a prisoner of conscience, by passing this document to human rights organizations and governments around and calling on them to demand his immediate and unconditional release. For more information, please contact: [bpsos@bpsos.org](mailto:bpsos@bpsos.org).