

**Case BPSOS-06 -- Blogger Ta Phong Tan**

Prepared by BPSOS, February 25, 2017

**Egregious human rights violations:** Imprisonment, solitary confinement, torture, denial of medical care, inhumane prison conditions

- (1) **Colonel Lê Hồng Hà**, Deputy Commander, Security Investigative Branch of Ho Chi Minh City Public Security Department: He signed the decision to recommend to the People's Procuracy of Ho Chi Minh City to prosecute Ms. Tan.
- (2) **Nguyễn Ngọc Điệp**, Deputy Director, Ho Chi Minh City Procuracy: He approved the arrest and investigation of Ms. Tan.
- (3) **Dương Thị Ngọc Thúy**, Bureau Chief, Ho Chi Minh City Procuracy: She signed the order to extend the detention of Ms. Tan before the trial.
- (4) **Vũ Phi Long**, Presiding Judge, Ho Chi Minh City Criminal Court: He and other judges sentenced Ms. Ta Phong Tan to ten years of imprisonment to punish her for her peaceful advocacy.



Vũ Phi Long - Presiding Judge

- (5) **Lê Thành Văn**, Judge, Appellate Court of the People's Superior Court in Ho Chi Minh City: He was on the panel of judges at her trial at the Appellate Court.



**Case BPSOS-06 -- Blogger Ta Phong Tan**

Prepared by BPSOS, February 25, 2017

Lê Thành Văn – Judge, Appellate Court

- (6) **Huỳnh Ngọc Ánh**, Associate Judge, Ho Chi Minh City Lower Court: He signed another order to further extend the detention of Ms. Tan before the trial.



Huỳnh Ngọc Ánh – Associate Judge

- (7) **Colonel Lương Văn Tuyển** (Superintendent of Prison No. 5, Thanh Hóa)

- (8) **Senior Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Thi Can** - Former Deputy Superintendent of Thanh Hoa Prison No. 5 (Ministry of Public Security), retired in 2014. During her tenure, her staff supervised and oppressed the following female prisoners of conscience: Le Thi Cong Nhan, Ho Thi Bich Khuong, Pham Thi Loc, Dang Ngoc Minh, Nguyen Dang Minh Man, Ta Phong Tan.



**Case BPSOS-06 -- Blogger Ta Phong Tan**

Prepared by BPSOS, February 25, 2017

- (9) **Senior Lieutenant Colonel Nguyen Thi Huong** - Current Deputy Superintendent of Thanh Hoa Prison No. 5 (Ministry of Public Security). Her staff supervised and oppressed the following female prisoners of conscience: Ho Thi Bich Khuong, Pham Thi Loc, Nguyen Dang Minh Man, Ta Phong Tan, Can Thi Theu.



The followings are dedicated accomplices under Colonel Lương Văn Tuyển, Senior Lieutenant Colonels Nguyễn Thị Can and Nguyễn Thị Hương:

- (10) **Lieutenant Colonel Lê Thị Tuyết** - Scout K4 of Thanh Hoa Prison No. 5 (Ministry of Public Security).



**Case BPSOS-06 -- Blogger Ta Phong Tan**

Prepared by BPSOS, February 25, 2017

(11) **Captain Đoàn Thị Ánh Hồng** - Scout K4 of Thanh Hoa Prison No. 5 (Ministry of Public Security)



Captain Đoàn Thị Ánh Hồng

(12) **Major Trịnh Thị Hiền** - Scout K4 of Thanh Hoa Prison No. 5 (Ministry of Public Security)



Major Trịnh Thị Hiền

(13) **Captain Lê Thị Tuyết Mai** - Scout K4 of Thanh Hoa Prison No. 5 (Ministry of Public Security)



Captain Lê Thị Tuyết Mai

**Case BPSOS-06 -- Blogger Ta Phong Tan**

Prepared by BPSOS, February 25, 2017

(14) **Captain Nguyễn Văn Tuyển** - Scout K1 of Thanh Hoa Prison No. 5 (Ministry of Public Security)



(15) **Major Nguyễn Gia Lượng** - Scout K1 of Thanh Hoa Prison No. 5 (Ministry of Public Security)



**International References:**

Press release of Free the 20 campaign (September 1, 2015): US Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power highlighted Ta Phong Tan in the “Women Political Prisoners and Prisoners of Concern Campaign”:

<https://www.humanrights.gov/freethe20/>

Women of Courage Demonstrate Many Ways to Fight Injustice (March 8, 2013):

<https://geneva.usmission.gov/2013/03/11/women-of-courage-demonstrate-many-ways-to-fight-injustice/>

<https://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2015/eap/252813.htm>

## Case BPSOS-06 -- Blogger Ta Phong Tan

Prepared by BPSOS, February 25, 2017

*"Authorities released some prominent political and religious activists from prison. In addition to the early release of three prisoners of conscience under amnesty laws (see section 1.d.), authorities on September 19 suspended the sentence of blogger and activist Ta Phong Tan, who served four years of a 10-year prison sentence for "conducting propaganda against the state" (article 88 of the penal code). Tan departed the country and would likely have to complete her sentence were she to return."*

<https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/defending-freedom-project/prisoners-by-country/Vietnam/Ta%20Phong%20Tan> "She was arrested in September 2011 on anti-state propaganda charges for her blog posts alleging government corruption. On October 4, 2012, Ta Phong Tan was sentenced to ten years in prison after a one-day hearing."

Vietnamese Writers Honored for Commitment to Rights (September 14, 2011):

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2011/09/14/vietnamese-writers-honored-commitment-rights>

### **Background Information:**

Born in 1968, Ms. Ta Phong Tan obtained a law degree and then worked as a forensic investigator in the Bac Lieu province public security force from 1991 to 2001. Then she worked for the Tourism Department of Bac Lieu province from 2001 to 2007. She also freelanced as a reporter to supplement her meager salary. Her public security credentials facilitated her access to newsworthy events. As a front line witness to Communist injustice and corruption, in 2006 she started a blog titled Justice and Truth to criticize the State and the Communist Party's practice and discuss civil society, consumer protection, and politics. The theme of her blog focuses on demanding accountability by government regulators (her publications are still at [www.taphongtan.worldpress.com](http://www.taphongtan.worldpress.com)). After the government found out about her blog in 2007, she was dismissed from her government job at Bac Lieu province.

From 2007 to 2011, the government targeted her with unannounced searches of her residence, and ambushes and physical assaults that injured her. For example, on April 23, 2008, three undercover agents tried to ram Ms. Tan's motorcycle with their motorcycles (she maneuvered quickly out of the way to avoid serious injuries).

Finally, public security arrested her in September 2011, put her in solitary confinement for an entire year (tiny, dark, hot, humid cell with no window), subjecting her to other forms of mistreatment, including enforced poor nutrition (2 cups of water and 2 bowls of rice per day) and withholding all medical care despite Ms. Tan's pre-existing conditions such as high blood pressure,

## **Case BPSOS-06 -- Blogger Ta Phong Tan**

Prepared by BPSOS, February 25, 2017

pharyngitis, clinical sinusitis, and arthritic limbs. She developed a large tumor on her right thigh because of the total lack of medical treatment. No contact with relatives or visit by lawyers or relatives was allowed during solitary confinement. Ms. Tan's mother immolated herself on July 30, 2012 to protest the unjust detention.

In September 2012, a sham trial resulted in a 10-year prison sentence. The inhumane treatment of political prisoners continued in prison, including severe rationing of water and food, intentional shutting off air ventilation to her tiny cell at night, among other measures. Forced labor and exposure to harmful chemicals while working in prison compounded her health problems.

The government also persecuted her relatives, e.g., imprisoned her brother for 3 years, and pressured employers to fire her other relatives.

In 2011 Human Rights Watch awarded her the Hellman/Hammett Award. In 2013 First Lady Michelle Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry awarded her the International Women of Courage Award. In September 2015, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power highlighted Ta Phong Tan in the "Women Political Prisoners and Prisoners of Concern Campaign."

International outcry resulted in her 2015 release and departure for the U.S. She still experiences memory loss, severe arthritis, high blood pressure, and other ailments.