

**Adopting Vietnamese Prisoners of Conscience**  
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*Under the Defending Freedom Project, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International and US Commission for International Religious Freedom jointly recruit members of the House of Representatives to adopt prisoners of conscience worldwide. Since July 2013, BPSOS has participated in this project by encouraging adoption of Vietnamese prisoners of conscience. For 2018, we propose the priority list below.*

**Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh (f)**, best known as Blogger Mother Mushroom, is co-founder and coordinator of the Network of Vietnamese Bloggers. Me Nam is a well-known blogger both in the blogger community in Vietnam and internationally. She has been instrumental in human rights education in Vietnam in the past ten years through her blog posts and through her active participation in human rights promotion events off-line. She has written about politically sensitive issues such as police brutality, corruption, and has openly criticized controversial government's policies such as the bauxite mining in the Central Highlands (for which she was arrested for 10 days in 2009), and, more recently, the government handling of the massive fish deaths in Central Vietnam. She was awarded for her advocacy work "the 2015 Civil Rights Defender of the Year" by Civil Rights Defenders and was selected for the International Women of Courage Award in 2017 by the U.S. State Department, though she was unable to accept it in person. Her mother was barred from visiting her in detention. Arrested on October 10, 2016, she was officially charged under Article 88 of the Penal Code (conducting propaganda against the state) after two months in pre-trial detention, and was sentenced to 10 years in prison in June 2017. Her appeal trial was rejected on Nov. 30, 2017, by the court of Nha Trang; her 10 years' sentence is upheld. She was recently transferred from Khanh Hoa detention centre to Thanh Hoa Prison n°5, between January and February 2018.

**Bui Van Trung (m)** is a Hoa Hao Buddhist leader. In 2006 he built a lecture hall in the yard of his house in An Phu District, An Giang Province, to allow fellow Hoa Hao Buddhist adherents to congregate, study the Church's teachings, pray, and engage in celebrations and other religious rituals. The government ordered Mr Trung to close the lecture hall, and harassed participants of activities held at the lecture hall. Mr Trung was arrested on 30 October 2012. In January 2013 he was sentenced to four years in prison on charges of "opposing officials performing their duty". He has been released in October 2016 after serving full sentence. Mr Trung was arrested again in June 2017 when he and other Buddhist disciples gathered for the commemoration of the death of Bui Van Trung's mother. He was tried on 9 February 2018 along with five other Hoa Hao Buddhists under Article 245 of the 1999 Penal Code, "causing public disorder", and received a six years prison sentence.

**Hoang Duc Binh (a.k.a. Hoang Binh) (m)** is the vice-president of the independent Viet Labor Movement, and a well-known blogger who has covered news on the Formosa environmental disaster in the central coastal provinces of Vietnam. On Monday 15 May 2017, Mr Binh was travelling in a car with Catholic priest Nguyen Dinh Thuc from the Song Ngoc parish in Dien Chau district to Vinh city. Their car was stopped by police in Dien Chau district and police violently removed Binh from the car. According to the arrest order, Mr Binh would face charges of "Resisting persons in the performance of their official duties" under Article 257 and "Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, the legitimate rights and interests of organizations and/or citizens" under Article 258 of the 1999 Penal Code. He was supposed to face trial on 25 January 2018 but the trial was postponed to 6 February 2018. He received a fourteen years sentence: seven years for "abusing democratic freedoms to infringe state interests" and seven years for "opposing officials on duty".

**Pastor A Dao (m)** is a pastor of the *Montagnard* Evangelical Church of Christ. He advocated for religious freedom for his fellow church members in the Central Highlands and elsewhere. In August 2016, he attended a conference on Freedom of Religion and Beliefs in Southeast Asia in Timor-Leste, along with the ASEAN Civil Society Conference and the ASEAN People's Forum. He was arrested shortly after his return to Vietnam. On 28 April 2017 he was sentenced to five years in prison for "helping individuals to escape abroad illegally" under Article 91, a charge he denied.

**Tran Thi Nga (f)**, also known as "Thuy Nga", was arrested in January 21, 2017 for sharing articles and videos online highlighting ongoing rights abuses tied to environmental crises and political corruption. For a decade, Mrs Tran Thi Nga has carried out her fight against injustice despite government intimidation and assault. In May 2014, a targeted attack by five men on the street in Hanoi left her with a broken arm and leg. In August 2015, she was dragged from a bus and beaten by plainclothes police after visiting a recently released political prisoner. Yet, she was obstinate, continuing to speak out against the assaults and broader state violence. Mrs Tran Thi Nga was sentenced by the People's Court of Ha Nam province to nine years in prison followed by five years' house arrest for spreading "anti-State propaganda" under Article 88 of the Penal Code on July 25, 2017. Mrs Nga had her appeal hearing on December 22; her appeal was denied.

**Nguyen Huu Vinh (m)** is best known as blogger Anh Ba Sam (Talking Nonsense). His blog was among the most popular in Vietnam. On May 5, 2014 he was arrested together with his staff member Ms. Nguyen Thi Minh Thuy, on charges of "abusing democratic freedoms" under Article 258 of the 1999 Penal Code for operating a website that provides links to social, political, economic, environmental, and cultural issues in Vietnam. The two were held for almost two years without trial. On March 23, 2016 he was sentenced to five years in prison and Ms. Minh Thuy to three years. Observers, including a German member of Parliament, were denied access to the trial.

**Tran Anh Kim (m)** is a former prisoner of conscience, army officer and writer. It is believed that the first time he was arrested on December 2009 was for his connection with a group that he was about to launch: "Raising the flag of Democracy (*Luc Luong Quoc Dan Dung Co Dan Chu*). Supporter of Bloc 8406 -- an internet based pro-democracy group --, he was previously sentenced to five and half years' imprisonment and three years house arrest on release for his peaceful activities raising awareness of corruption. He was released in January 2015 and re-arrested 8 months later, on September 21, 2015. He was sentenced on December 16, 2016 to thirteen years in prison and four years of probation on release under Article 79 "Plotting to overthrow the government".

**Pastor Y Yich (m)** is an evangelical pastor from the Central Highlands. He was arrested for the first time on 18 December 2006 for "plotting against the government". After serving four years in Xuan Phuoc Prison, he was discharged on 18 September 2011 and put under probation for three years. He resumed proselytizing to his Bahnar ethnic community and was arrested for the second time on 13 May 2013. He was sentenced to twelve years in prison. As a result of being beaten and tortured in prison, his health has deteriorated. He has been denied medical treatment for high blood pressure, rheumatism, and stomach inflammation; prison authorities have refused to deliver medicine to him which was brought to the facility by his family.

**Do Thi Hong (f)** is a member of the An Dan Dai Dao, a Buddhist sect founded in 1969 but outlawed after April 1975. The religious group ran an eco-tourist company at the Da Bia Tourist Resort in Phu Yen Province. They signed a contract with the local authorities to engage in protecting the forest and environment. The group believed in the prophecies of Nguyen Binh Khiem, a 16th century oracle or Vietnamese equivalent of Nostradamus, and dreamed of building a new "Utopia" in which science, nature and humankind would be harmoniously balanced. They organized conferences and produced leaflets to disseminate their beliefs. Mrs Do Thi Hong was arrested in February 14, 2012 along with 22 other members of the sect. Mrs Hong and the other 22 were all charged and convicted under Article 79 of the Penal Code "Plotting to overthrow the government". She was sentenced to thirteen years in prison, followed by a five year probationary period. She is detained in Binh Phuoc prison and reported to be in poor health.

**Dr Ho Van Hai (m)** is an online activist who has used his blog to advocate for transparency and accountability. On the evening of November 2 2016, the Ho Chi Minh City Police Portal reported that the Ho Chi Minh City Police Department had detained him for investigation. On February 1, 2018 he was sentenced to 4 years in prison and 2 years of probation under Article 88 of the Penal Code, "Conducting propaganda against the state".