

URGENT ACTION

FEARS GROW FOR HEALTH OF DETAINED ACTIVIST

There are increasing fears for the health of prisoner of conscience Trần Thị Thúy, who continues to be denied medical treatment, despite repeated requests to the Vietnamese authorities. She has been diagnosed with a tumour on her uterus and is in severe pain, unable to walk without assistance. She has been told she will not receive treatment unless she “confesses” to the crimes she was convicted of.

Trần Thị Thúy is serving an eight year sentence after being convicted of “activities aimed at overthrowing” the state under Article 79 of the Penal Code. She was arrested in August 2010 and tried with six other activists by Bến Tre Provincial People’s Court on 30 May 2011. She is not due for release until August 2018.

She first became ill around April 2015 while detained in a facility at Long Khánh town in Đồng Nai Province. A prison doctor diagnosed a tumour on her uterus, but she was not provided with treatment. A prison officer told her to admit her crimes or “die in prison”. She has difficulty walking, needing a crutch or help. She also has high blood pressure for which she takes medication. Her family have provided her with traditional medicine. Trần Thị Thúy is in severe physical pain and has told her family that she has felt on the verge of death at several points in recent months. The denial of medical treatment in these circumstances, involving the intentional infliction of severe pain and suffering for the purpose of extracting a confession, constitutes torture and is, therefore, a violation of the Convention against Torture, which came into force in Viet Nam in February 2015.

Trần Thị Thúy is a trader, Hoa Hao Buddhist and land rights activist. According to the indictment, she and the six other activists are accused of having joined or been associated with Viet Tan, an overseas-based group which peacefully campaigns for democracy in Viet Nam. She has refused to “confess” to the alleged crimes for which she was convicted, despite the severe hardship she is forced to endure. Trần Thị Thúy is currently detained in An Phước Detention Centre, Bình Dương province, approximately 900 km from where her family lives; it takes them three days to get there and back. Appeals can now be sent to the prison, demanding that she is granted treatment.

Please write immediately in Vietnamese, English or your own language:

- Demand the authorities release Trần Thị Thúy immediately and unconditionally as a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peaceful activities in defending human rights;
- Urge the authorities that while still detained, she should be immediately provided with appropriate medical care, including treatment in hospital if necessary.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 APRIL 2016 TO:

Minister of Public Security

Gen Tran Dai Quang

Ministry of Public Security

44 Yet Kieu Street, Hoan Kiem district

Ha Noi, Viet Nam

Online contact form:

http://www.mps.gov.vn/web/guest/contact_english

t_english

Salutation: Dear Minister

Prison Supervisor

Colonel Phan Đình Hoàn

Phan trai so 2

trai giam An Phước

Bình Dương province, Viet Nam

Salutation: Dear Prison Supervisor

And copies to:

Head of Prisons Department

Major General Phạm Đức Chấn

Ministry of Public Security

44 Yet Kieu Street, Hoan Kiem district

Ha Noi, VIET NAM

Online contact form:

http://www.mps.gov.vn/web/guest/contact_english

t_english

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 284/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa41/3052/2015/en/>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

FEARS GROW FOR HEALTH OF DETAINED ACTIVIST

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In September 2011, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention adopted Opinion No 46/2011 which stated that the detention of Trần Thị Thúy and her six co-defendants is arbitrary and should be remedied by their release and compensation.

Viet Nam is a state party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which guarantees the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. However, these rights are severely restricted in law and practice in Viet Nam. Vaguely worded articles in the national security section of Viet Nam's 1999 Penal Code are frequently used to criminalize peaceful dissenting views or activities. Those at risk include people advocating for peaceful political change, criticizing government policies, or calling for respect for human rights. Article 79 (Carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration) is frequently used to detain, prosecute and imprison dissidents for their peaceful activism, including bloggers, labour rights and land rights activists, political activists, religious followers, human rights defenders and social justice activists, and even song writers.

Prison conditions in Viet Nam are harsh, with inadequate food and health care that falls short of the minimum requirements set out in the UN Standard Minimum Rules and other international standards. Prisoners of conscience have been held in solitary confinement as a punishment or in isolation for lengthy periods. They have also been subjected to ill-treatment, including beatings by other prisoners with no intervention by prison guards. Some prisoners of conscience are frequently moved from one detention facility to another, often without their families being informed. Several prisoners of conscience have undertaken hunger strikes in protest at abusive treatment and poor conditions of detention.

Although Viet Nam has ratified the Convention against Torture, which came into effect in February 2015, insufficient steps have been taken to bring the country into compliance.

Name: Trần Thị Thúy

Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 284/15 Index: ASA 41/3454/2016 Issue Date: 19 February 2016