

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST DETAINED A YEAR WITHOUT TRIAL

Đoàn Thị Hồng was unlawfully arrested in September 2018 and has been detained without trial. Held incommunicado for eleven months, her family were finally able to meet with her on 4 September 2019 and noticed a significant deterioration in her health. A prisoner of conscience, we call on the government to immediately and unconditionally release **Đoàn Thị Hồng** as she has been detained solely for peacefully exercising her human right to freedom of expression.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*The Secretary General of Vietnamese Communist Party and the State President Nguyen Phu Trong
So 1A Hung Vuong, Ba Dinh, Ha Noi, Vietnam*

Dear Secretary General and State President Nguyễn Phú Trọng,

*I am writing to ask you to take steps to bring about the immediate and unconditional release **Đoàn Thị Hồng**, mother of a three-year-old child and a peaceful activist. Charged with “disrupting security” under article 118 of 2015 Penal Code, she has been detained without trial for a year at the Police Detention Center in Ho Chi Minh city.*

*Following her participation in a peaceful protest in June 2018, **Đoàn Thị Hồng** was arbitrarily arrested on 2 September 2018 in Hồ Chí Minh City while meeting friends. No arrest warrant, nor charge sheet, was presented to her at the time of arrest.*

*I further wish to express my concern about **Đoàn Thị Hồng**’s health and access to her family. After eleven months in detention, **Đoàn Thị Hồng** was finally able to see her family on 4 September 2019 for the first time. During the visit, her sister was alarmed to notice obvious signs on **Đoàn Thị Hồng** face and hands that she was unwell but, as there was a police officer in the room, they could not discuss her health. Nevertheless, when they were leaving, the prison guard provided the family with a list of medicines that were needed for stomach, brain, and skin problems. No further explanation was provided. Under international standard, in particular the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), prison authorities must provide adequate medical care to all prisoners, free of charge.*

*I fear for the wellbeing of **Đoàn Thị Hồng** and her young child who is being forced to grow up without her mother. Therefore, I call on you to:*

- *Immediately and unconditionally release **Đoàn Thị Hồng** as she has been detained solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression; and*
- *Pending her release, ensure that **Đoàn Thị Hồng** has regular, unrestricted access to her family, lawyers of her choice and adequate medical care provided by the state.,*

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Đoàn Thị Hồng, born in 1983 in Bình Thuận province, Viet Nam is a member of Constitution Group (Nhóm Hiến Pháp) which advocates for the implementation of the chapter two of the Vietnamese 2013 constitution which guarantees basic human rights of all Vietnamese nationals.

In June 2018, Đoàn Thị Hồng participated in a public demonstration in Hồ Chí Minh city to protest a proposed law that would allow the government to establish special economic zones. This would allow foreign investors to use the land for up to 99 years and enjoy tax incentives, raising fears that it will restrict opportunities for local businesses.

While the family hired a lawyer to represent her case, Đoàn Thị Hồng told her sister in their recent visit that she does not want to have a lawyer as the police told her that her case would progress faster if she did not have a lawyer. Amnesty International has documented a pattern where police in Viet Nam often convince prisoners of conscience to waive their right to access to lawyer, promising to help boost the case if they agree to do so. Access to legal counsel is crucial to defend the rights of detainees and the authorities must facilitate rather than discourage it.

Đoàn Thị Hồng's sister continues to fight for justice and regularly posts updates on her Facebook account and calls on the community to support her sister's case. However, police have reportedly told Đoàn Thị Hồng and her father to stop the sister from reporting her case on Facebook.

Conditions of detention in Viet Nam's police jails and prisons are harsh, especially for prisoners of conscience since they are often subjected to harassment and ill-treatment including poor food condition, assaults from other detainees, solitary confinement and at times torture. Pre-trial detention is dire because prisoners of conscience often face intense interrogation, physical and mental abuse, and limited access to lawyers and family. Authorities also often move prisoners of conscience to facilities which are far away from their hometown, making it difficult for their family to visit and provide supplies.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: [English/Vietnamese]

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 18 October 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: [Đoàn Thị Hồng] (she/her)