

# PEN AMERICA REACTS TO PHAM DOAN TRANG CONVICTION

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(New York, NY) — In response to news that the Hanoi People’s Court sentenced Vietnamese author, blogger, and activist Pham Doan Trang to **nine years in prison on baseless charges of anti-state propaganda** for her writing, PEN America released the following statement:

“The conviction of Pham Doan Trang is an appalling and fundamentally unjust result, following from an unfair trial on politically-motivated charges that treat words as crimes,” said Karin Deutsch Karlekar, director of Free Expression at Risk Programs at PEN America. “This sentence represents a heinous violation of Trang’s fundamental rights and of Vietnamese authorities’ commitments under international law. The result of this sham trial clearly illustrates how Vietnamese officials view public debate and political commentary as a threat to their power. Trang has been a fearless voice for human rights, and with this sentencing, the court has made it clear that they fear the power of her writing. We call upon the Vietnamese government to reverse this shocking injustice by immediately vacating Pham Doan Trang’s sentence.”

A prolific author and a leading voice in Vietnamese civil society, **Pham Doan Trang** has been recognized internationally for her writings on politics and human rights, making her a target of the state for many years. She was **arrested on October 6, 2020**, just hours after the 2020 United States-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue ended, on charges that criminalize “making, storing, distributing, or disseminating information, documents, and items against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.” Trang was held incommunicado from the date of her arrest until October 19, 2021, when she was finally allowed to meet with one of her lawyers. During her detention, Trang was also denied access to adequate medical care, raising several serious health concerns.

According to **PEN America’s 2020 Freedom to Write Index**, Vietnam jailed the seventh-highest number of writers and intellectuals globally during 2020.