

NEWS

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Vietnamese journalist Pham Doan Trang, 2019 RSF Prize, sentenced to nine years in prison

VIETNAM ASIA PACIFIC PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS

IMPRISONED WOMEN FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION RSF PRIZE

Pham Doan Trang was sentenced following a hearing held before the Hanoi People's Court on December 14, 2021 (photo: TTXVN - RSF).



The sentence, pronounced by the Hanoi court against journalist Pham Doan Trang, comes after 434 days of arbitrary detention. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) denounces this sentence, which muzzles an emblematic figure in the fight for press freedom, in Vietnam and around the world.

The hearing was dispatched in a few hours. Journalist Pham Doan Trang , **winner of the 2019 RSF Prize** , was sentenced today, Tuesday December 14, to nine years in prison by the Hanoi People's Court for “propaganda against the state”, on the grounds of Article 117 of the penal code.

The court's verdict went beyond the requisitions of the prosecution, which had asked for seven to eight years in prison. In his recitals, Judge Chu Phuong Ngoc maintained that “the behavior [of the journalist] was dangerous for society”, with the intention of “violating the socialist regime”.

"The pathetic arguments put forward by the Hanoi court to justify its verdict do not deceive anyone," said the head of RSF's Asia-Pacific office, Daniel Bastard. We are dealing with political justice, at the orders of the ruling party, whose sole purpose is to punish a journalist who simply tried to inform her fellow citizens. We call on the international community to

impose targeted sanctions on the Vietnamese dignitaries responsible for the unacceptable fate that befalls Pham Doan Trang, in order to secure his immediate release.”

International mobilization

Arrested at her home in Ho Chi Minh City on the night of October 6 to 7, 2020, the journalist was then placed in **incommunicado** detention for more than a year, until October 19, after more than a year of pre-trial detention. His trial, initially scheduled for November 4, was postponed at the last minute, a few days after the publication, on October 25, of a **joint statement by eight UN experts** calling for his release.

Prior to this appeal, RSF launched an **international campaign** on his behalf as soon as Pham Doan Trang's arrest was announced. As such, the organization had collected **the video testimonies** of several Vietnamese journalists and bloggers in exile, who showed their solidarity.

Another video , published last April, also mobilized the community of winners of the RSF press freedom prize. From Poland to the Philippines, and from India to Turkey, their testimony had made the world aware of the plight of their colleague Pham Doan Trang, and of Vietnamese journalists in general.

According to **the barometer** constantly updated by RSF, Vietnam currently has a record number of 43 journalists and bloggers currently in detention.

The country ranks 175th out of 180 countries in the **World Press Freedom Index** established by RSF in 2021.