

Human Rights Watch

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/12/21/vietnam-drop-charges-against-activist-tran-thi-nga>

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(New York) [Vietnam](#) should immediately release rights activist Tran Thi Nga and the appeals court should drop charges against her when it reviews her case on December 22, 2017, Human Rights Watch said today. Tran Thi Nga, also known as Thuy Nga, was [sentenced in July](#) to nine years in prison followed by five years of house arrest for conducting propaganda against the state.

Tran Thi Nga is one of the latest targets of Vietnams escalating crackdown on activists and critics, said [Brad Adams](#), Asia director. Instead of engaging in discussions with critics, the government is increasingly using harsh sentences and abusive treatment to stifle dissent.

More than 100 political prisoners are currently locked up simply for exercising their basic rights.

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Tran Thi Nga, 40, was [arrested on January 21](#) under article 88 of the penal code, one of Vietnams draconian national security provisions [regularly used](#) to arbitrarily punish critics. According to state media, she was indicted for defaming the administration and spreading reactionary ideas. At her trial, authorities [alleged](#) she had shared videos and articles online that criticized the government by highlighting ongoing rights abuses tied to environmental crises and political corruption.

Tran Thi Nga was [sentenced on July 25](#) in a one-day trial, a swift verdict her lawyer [called](#) predetermined. Security officers barred supporters and independent journalists from the court, along with Tran Thi Ngas husband and children, who have reportedly [not been allowed](#) to meet with her since her arrest. Her appeal hearing comes less than one month after the appeal of fellow rights activist [Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh](#), or Mother Mushroom, [was rejected](#) for her 10-year sentence for the same offense.

Tran Thi Nga is a longtime labor rights activist who has challenged abuses including human trafficking, police brutality, and land confiscation. Vietnamese authorities have responded [by subjecting her](#) to years of intimidation, harassment, and physical assault. In May 2014, she was attacked on the street in Hanoi by a group of five men in civilian clothes who beat her with iron rods, breaking her arm and leg. The assault was filmed, yet police declined to investigate. In August 2015, she was [dragged from a bus](#) and beaten by plainclothes police after visiting a recently released political prisoner.

These attacks are part of a broader pattern of violent assaults against rights campaigners across Vietnam. In a [June 2017 report](#), Human Rights Watch documented 36 cases of bloggers and activists being beaten, threatened, and intimidated, often in the presence of police officers who did nothing to intervene.



June 18, 2017

[No Country for Human Rights Activists](#)

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Despite government intimidation and assault, Tran Thi Nga has continued to [speak out](#) against political injustices and broader [state violence](#). She is part of a growing community of Vietnamese bloggers using Facebook and YouTube to foster political activism and solidarity, many of whom have been detained under vague national security laws as part of the governments [ongoing crackdown](#) on free speech.

More than 100 activists [are currently imprisoned](#) for exercising their basic freedoms of expression, assembly, association, and religion. Vietnam should unconditionally release them and repeal all laws that criminalize peaceful expression.

Tran Thi Nga and other Vietnamese activists put themselves at grave risk to speak out against rights violations happening in their country, Adams said. Vietnams friends and donors need to honor their fight by pushing for their unconditional release.

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Movement Restrictions on Rights Activists in Vietnam

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