Immigrant Rights Groups Mourn the Death of Vietnamese Detainee

Atlanta, Georgia, June 20, 2018 — Mr. Huy Chi Tran, 47, died on June 12, 2018, while in ICE custody at Eloy Detention Center (Eloy) in Arizona. Mr. Tran had been detained at Eloy since May 25, 2018. According to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), he was found unresponsive in his cell on June 5, 2018, and transported later that afternoon to the Banner Casa Grande Medical Center in Casa Grande, Arizona, where he died a week later. ICE has not disclosed the cause of Mr. Tran’s death or any facts or circumstances leading to his hospitalization.

A coalition of immigrant rights organizations release the following statement:

“We offer our heartfelt condolences to the family of Huy Chi Tran and call on ICE to immediately and comprehensively investigate Mr. Tran’s death and release all details related to the investigation, including any reports on the matter from the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) and/or DHS Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL).

Since ICE was created in 2003, 183 individuals have died in immigration detention. Mr. Tran is the seventh detainee to pass away in ICE custody in fiscal year 2018 alone. He is also the sixteenth detainee to pass away at Eloy since 2003. Eloy has the highest number of deaths of any immigration detention facility in the United States. Of the sixteen deaths at Eloy, five were determined to be by suicide, and inadequate medical care was reported as a contributing cause of at least two. Various reports also generally cite concerns about the care and treatment of immigrants in detention facilities, including lack of access to medical care, insufficient hygiene supplies, inadequate nutrition, and poor sanitation.

Mr. Tran’s death comes amidst an onslaught of increasingly aggressive and inhumane immigrant policies implemented under the current administration, including the separation of children from their parents at the border and the indefinite detention of immigrants who are unlikely to be deported.

Mr. Tran, who was admitted to the United States as a lawful permanent resident in 1984, was not deportable under a longstanding agreement between Vietnam and the United States that does not permit the deportation of Vietnamese refugees who arrived in the United States before July 12, 1995. Nonetheless, since March 2017, ICE has incarcerated dozens of pre-1995 Vietnamese refugees for several months, some for over a year.

ICE must be held accountable for the alarming number of deaths that have occurred under its watch. We not only demand a thorough and transparent investigation of Mr. Tran’s death, but also call for a complete end to ICE’s inhumane detention and deportation practices. Our communities’ lives depend on it.”

The statement is made on behalf of the below organizations. This coalition is in the process of contacting Mr. Tran’s family to see what support it may be able to offer them.

Alliance to Mobilize Our Resistance (AMOR)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice (Advancing Justice)
Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW)
Asian Pacific Islander Reentry & Inclusion Through Support & Empowerment (API-RISE)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice is a national affiliation of five leading organizations advocating for the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and other underserved communities to promote a fair and equitable society for all. The affiliation’s members are: Advancing Justice | AAJC (Washington, DC), Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus (San Francisco), Advancing Justice - Los Angeles, Advancing Justice - Atlanta, and Advancing Justice - Chicago.

About Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta

Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Atlanta (formerly Asian American Legal Advocacy Center or AALAC) is the first non-profit law center dedicated to Asian immigrants and refugees (“Asian Americans”) in the Southeast.

Our goal is to engage, educate and empower under-represented Asian Americans to greater civic participation.

We are one of five independent organizations that make up the national Asian Americans Advancing Justice. Together with our affiliates in Chicago, DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco, we bring more than 100 years of collective experience in addressing the civil rights issues faced by Asian Americans and other vulnerable and underserved communities. Visit www.advancingjustice-atlanta.org.