

December 10, 2007: Sanchez Issues Letter to Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung

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Sanchez Calls for Release of Two U.S. Citizens Detained by the Government of Vietnam on International Human Rights Day

Sanchez joins bipartisan group of 11 House Members that issued a letter to Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung calling for the release of two U.S. citizens

WASHINGTON, D.C.- In honor of International Human Rights Day, Representative Loretta Sanchez (D-California) joined a bipartisan group of 11 House Members that issued a letter to Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung calling for the release of two U.S. citizens arrested by the Government of Vietnam. Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan - a mathematician from Sacramento and Mr. Truong Van Ba (Leon) - a restaurateur from Honolulu were arrested in Vietnam on November 17, 2007.

International Human Rights Day is celebrated annually across the world on December 10th in honor of the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Sanchez who opposed granting Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) status to the Government of Vietnam and the Department of State's decision to remove Vietnam from its list of Countries of Particular Concern (CPC), has continued to advocate for binding legislation to hold the Government of Vietnam accountable for its human rights and religious freedom violations.

Below is the full text of the letter. PDF signed copy attached.

December 10, 2007

His Excellency

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung

c/o Embassy of Vietnam

1233 20th Street, NW #400

Washington, DC 20036

Dear Prime Minister Dung:

On the occasion of International Human Rights Day, we are writing to express our serious concerns regarding the Government of Vietnam's arrests and ongoing detentions of two United States citizens, Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan and Mr. Truong Van Ba (Leon).

As you know, Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan and Mr. Truong Van Ba were arrested on November 17, 2007, along with four other peaceful democracy activists. The arrest of this group comes just over a year since the Government of Vietnam arrested another United States citizen, Mr. Cong Thanh Do, on August 14, 2006. Mr. Do was held on unlawful charges in Vietnam until United States Government intervention returned him to his family in the United States.

Before being granted Permanent Normal Trade Relations and ascension into the World Trade Organization in January of 2007, the Government of Vietnam claimed that it had improved its human rights record, and would continue to make progress on the issue of human rights. The Government of Vietnam has also made similar assurances to the world community as it prepares to become a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in January 2008.

The arrests of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan, Mr. Truong Van Ba, and Mr. Cong Thanh Do violate the Government of Vietnam's promise to continue to improve its human rights record. This promise has been further undercut with the Government of Vietnam's arrest and detention of Mr. Le Quoc Quan on March 8, 2007, upon his return to Vietnam after serving as a fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C. In addition, the physical gagging of Father Nguyen Van Ly so he could not speak at his own trial on March 30, 2007, is another example of the Government of Vietnam's blatant disregard for human rights.

We would like to hear from you directly regarding these arrests and the actions at the trial of Father Nguyen Van Ly. It has been nearly a month since the Government of Vietnam arrested peaceful democracy activists Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan and Dr. Truong Van Ba. We would like to know why these United States citizens are being held in Vietnam and when they will be returned to their families in the United States.

Sincerely,

Member of Congress Member of Congress Member of Congress

Madeleine Z. Bordallo

Member of Congress

Michael M. Honda

Member of Congress

Dan Burton

Member of Congress

Thaddeus G. McCotter

Member of Congress

Michael R. McNulty

Member of Congress

Janice D. Schawkowsky

Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith

Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui

Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

The Honorable Michael Michalak, Ambassador

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