

## April 8, 2008: Sanchez Calls on Vietnam to Release Imprisoned Signers of Bloc 8406 Manifesto

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Sanchez Legislation Calls on Vietnam to Release Imprisoned Signers of Bloc 8406 Manifesto and Urges Secretary of State to Add Vietnam as a Country of Particular Concern

Vietnamese citizens who signed the Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam have been imprisoned, detained and harassed by the Communist Government of Vietnam

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Marking the two-year anniversary of the signing of the Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam, commonly referred to as Bloc 8406, Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) introduced a house resolution calling for an end to the imprisonment, detention, and harassment of the Vietnamese signers of the manifesto. The resolution also calls for the Secretary of State to establish a Countries of Particular Concern list which would incorporate nations like Vietnam who engage in gross human rights violations.

"The United States Congress needs to take immediate action to stop these repeated incidents of harassment, imprisonment and detainment from occurring in the future."

"Just last weekend a constituent of mine, Mr. Mai Huu Bao, 38 year-old past Executive Board Member of the Vietnamese Student Association of Southern California, was detained for 48 hours by Vietnamese authorities. This marks the sixth American citizen detained by the Government of Vietnam that has been harassed and falsely accused of crimes within the past 2 years." Mr. Bao traveled to Vietnam on April 3, 2008 to provide humanitarian aid to imprisoned dissidents who have serious health concerns and are in need food and water.

"I'm working hard to rally more of my colleagues to hold the Government of Vietnam accountable for its unacceptable arrests and harassment of U.S. citizens and its own people. It is my hope that the Secretary of State will take human rights violations into account when determining Countries that are of Particular Concern to the United States. ."

On April 8, 2006, 118 Vietnamese citizens signed a Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam, with the objective "to reestablish fundamental rights of the people" of Vietnam, "sacred rights of the Vietnamese nation [which] have been brutally trampled upon the moment the communist government was installed in Vietnam". Since then, the Government of Vietnam has retaliated against the signers of the Manifesto by:

- Sentencing 13 of the signers to a total of 68 years in prison;

- Detaining at least 10 of these democracy advocates for 18 months or more;
- Harassing and placing at least five others under house arrest;
- And detention without trail

Attached is a PDF copy of the house resolution that includes the full list of Manifesto signers.

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