

# May 8, 2008: Sanchez Expresses Concern Regarding the Arrest and Upcoming Trial of Dr. Quan

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 9, 2008

Sanchez Expresses Concern Regarding the Arrest and Upcoming Trial of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan

Sanchez Urges Vietnam to Ensure that Any Trials of Peaceful Democracy Activists Be Fair and Open

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, Co-chair of the Vietnam Caucus, issued a letter to Vietnam Ambassador Le Cong Phung expressing her serious concern regarding the arrest and upcoming trial of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan on May 13. Dr. Quan, an American citizen, was arrested on November 17, 2007 along with other peaceful democracy activists, Somsak Khunmi and Nguyen The Vu for distributing pro-democracy literature.

The letter signed by Vietnam Caucus Co-chairs Sanchez, Lofgren, Davis and Smith expresses concern regarding the arrest of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan and other peaceful democracy activists and urges that any trials of these activists be fair and open, in accordance with international standards on peaceful political expression.

Below is the full text of the letter. A PDF copy is also attached.

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May 9, 2008

Ambassador Le Cong Phung

Embassy of Vietnam

1233 20th Street, NW #400

Washington, DC 20036

Dear Ambassador Phung:

On the occasion of Vietnam Human Rights Day, we are writing to express our serious concern regarding the Government of Vietnam's arrest and detention of United States citizen Nguyen Quoc Quan. Dr. Quoc Quan was arrested on November 17, 2007 along with other peaceful democracy activists, Somsak Khunmi and Nguyen The Vu for distributing pro-democracy literature.

We have been informed by the U.S. State Department that these three activists will be brought to trial on May 13, 2008 and that according to press reports they will be charged with "terrorism." According to international covenants on human rights, to which the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a signatory, political expression is a basic freedom, not an act of terrorism. These men should not have been arrested for promoting democracy through peaceful, non-violent means. Their ongoing imprisonment is a worrisome sign for your government's commitment to human rights.

We are also concerned with the precedent this trial may create for other United States citizens visiting Vietnam, particularly Vietnamese Americans who have experienced increased harassment from Vietnamese authorities in recent years. Since 2006 the Government of Vietnam has detained six American citizens and falsely accused them of crimes.

We hope that the trial on May 13 will be conducted in a fair and open manner, with the presence of friends and relatives of the defendants, the diplomatic community, and foreign media.

We trust that under international standards-and Vietnamese law-peaceful political expression is not a crime.

We look forward to the imminent release of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan, Mr. Nguyen The Vu and Mr. Somsak Khunmi so that they can be reunited with their families.

Sincerely,

Loretta Sanchez

Co-Chair Vietnam Caucus

Zoe Lofgren

Co-Chair Vietnam Caucus

Tom Davis

Co-Chair Vietnam Caucus

Chris Smith

Co-Chair Vietnam Caucus

Cc: The Honorable Michael Michalak, US Ambassador to Vietnam

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