

September 25, 2008: Floor Statement on Human Rights

The Honorable Loretta Sanchez

One minute - September 25, 2008

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to raise awareness of the deteriorating human rights situation in Vietnam.

Most recently, Vietnamese students and bloggers have been harassed and detained for peacefully voicing their concerns about the Vietnamese government's policies and decisions.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the Government of Vietnam is not living up to its commitment to honor and protect human rights.

This month, over 3,000 Vietnamese Catholics were attending a peaceful Thai Ha prayer vigil when Hanoi's police began to harass the crowd with tear gas, electric batons, and other repressive measures.

We are continuing to see more and more activists being detained and imprisoned for exercising their freedom of speech, religion and expression.

I, along with six of my colleagues, sent a letter this week to President Nguyen Minh Triet to express outrage over Vietnam's ongoing violations of human rights, and to urge the Government of Vietnam to stop using violence against their own people who peacefully express themselves.

I encourage my colleagues to continue addressing this serious issue and speaking out for those in Vietnam who are putting their lives in danger in the name of freedom.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.