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Vietnamese Internet Activists

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Representative Loretta Sanchez (D-California), Co-founder of the Caucus on Vietnam issued the following letter to Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung calling for the release of internet activists who were reportedly imprisoned by the Government of Vietnam for "propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam".

Below is the full text of the letter.

November 13, 2008

His Excellency
Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung
c/o Embassy of Vietnam
1233 20th Street, NW #400
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Prime Minister Dung,

I am writing to express my deepest concern regarding the government of Vietnam's continuing disregard for human rights, and to bring your attention to a recent letter that was sent by the wives of internet activists imprisoned in

September.

This letter, dated October 30, 2008, requested that the government of Vietnam safely free the following family members all of whom were apparently arrested for "propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam": Nguyen Xuan Nghia and Pham Van Troi, who are both members of Bloc 8406; Nguyen Van Tuc, Nguyen Kim Nhan and Vu Hung. Also arrested in September were Tran Duc Thach, Ngo Quynh, Nguyen Van Tinh, and Pham Thanh Nghien. According to media reports, all the individuals listed above were peacefully expressing their views regarding Vietnam's territorial claims. I urge you to safely release these individuals immediately.

I am fully aware of the numerous individuals in Vietnam who are denied their fundamental rights on a daily basis. Article 1 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly states that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." I want to emphasize that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a signatory of the International Covenants on Human Rights and has committed to respecting individual freedom of belief, speech, association, freedom of press, right to hold assembly and political expression. I strongly urge the government of Vietnam to become a responsible member state of the United Nations by respecting and honoring the fundamental rights of its people.

As a Member of the United States Congress, I will continue to advocate for the freedoms of speech, expression, and religion that belong to all people, including the citizens of Vietnam. The government of Vietnam has made numerous commitments to improve the human rights situation and I strongly urge the government to honor these commitments.

Respectfully,

Loretta Sanchez

Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State

The Honorable Michael Michalak, Ambassador