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One Hundred and Thirteenth Congress
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

February 10, 2014

His Excellency Truong Tan Sang
President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
c/o Embassy of Vietnam
1233 20th Street NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

Dear President Sang:

We write to express our serious concern about the imprisonment and mistreatment of independent labor activists in Vietnam. Such human rights abuses stand as a continued impediment to improved relations between our countries and are of particular concern in light of the ongoing negotiations regarding the Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement—a document that reportedly includes labor protections.

As you know, ties between the United States and Vietnam have expanded greatly since relations were formalized in 1995. The United States is Vietnam's largest national export market and we continue to cooperate on development priorities and regional security. Despite this cooperation, however, Vietnamese authorities continue to subject peaceful activists to long prison terms on national security charges after trials that fail to satisfy international due process standards. In response to such abuses, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Scott Busby reiterated in November the position that your government must make “demonstrable progress” on human rights for the relationship to deepen further.

Of particular concern is the detention and mistreatment of three labor rights organizers, Do Thi Minh Hanh, Doan Huy Chuong, and Nguyen Doan Quoc Hung. The three activists were arrested in 2010 for attempting to organize striking workers at the My Phong Enterprise Company. After their arrests, the three were repeatedly beaten and subjected to long periods of solitary confinement. The government sentenced them to between seven and nine years in prison on national security charges after a trial that failed to meet basic fair trial standards. Specifically, they were denied access to a lawyer and the court prevented them from speaking during the proceedings. Although the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found their imprisonment a violation of international law, all three remain in government custody.

EJLYSE ANDERSON
Republican Staff Director

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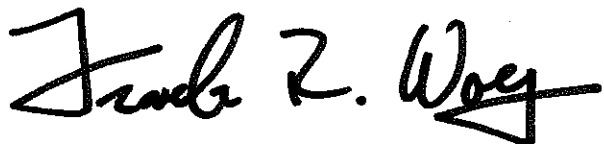
JANICE KAGUYUTAN
Democratic Staff Director

We are also aware of reports indicating that the three activists are suffering from serious health problems as a result of their imprisonment. In particular, the family of Do Thi Minh Hanh believes that she may have breast cancer, but prison authorities have reportedly failed to provide her with the necessary access to medical treatment.

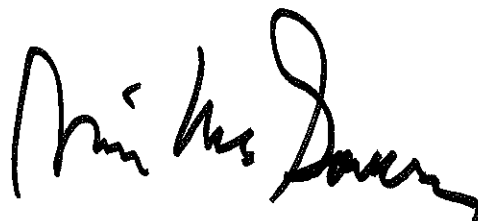
These cases highlight the considerable plight faced by independent labor activists in Vietnam. For there to be any enhanced engagement between the United States and Vietnam--including expanded trade ties--Vietnam must address such cases. The release of these peaceful Vietnamese prisoners of conscience is a critical first step toward greater cooperation between our governments, though many more human rights challenges must also be addressed, including the reported use of torture and mistreatment in Vietnamese detention centers.

We therefore request that you facilitate the immediate release of Do, Doan, and Nguyen.

Sincerely,



Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress
Co-Chairman, TLHRC



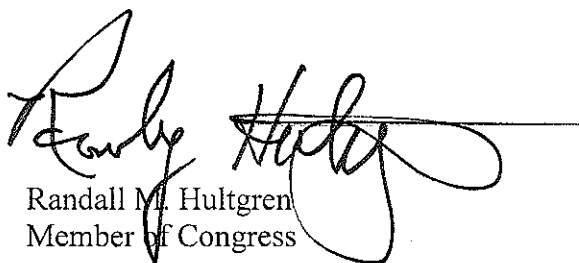
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress
Co-Chairman, TLHRC



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Member of Congress



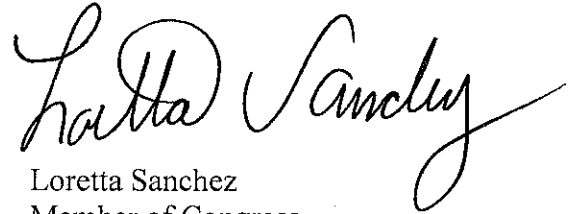
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