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ROBERT F. KENNEDY MEMORIAL

Center for Human Rights • RFK Fellows Program • RFK Book Award • RFK Human Rights Award • RFK Journalism Awards

March 30, 2004

His Excellency Mr. Tran Duc Luong
President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs
1 Ton That Dam
Hanoi, Vietnam

Dear President Luong:

It is an honor to be writing to you. We write to you fully conscious of the history of interference with the Vietnamese people's right to self-determination and with the keen awareness that all human rights – economic, social, cultural, political, and civil - are interrelated and their full recognition and respect give definition to the right to self determination.

We, the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureates, write to express our utmost concern for the well-being of Dr. Nguyen Dan Que, recipient of the 1995 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award, and call for his immediate release based on the fact that international human rights law protects his activities.

Dr. Que has tirelessly exercised his human rights in Viet Nam, often at great personal risk to himself and his family. Over the years, Dr. Que has written and published a number of articles and essays, many of which simply express a point of view distinct from that held by your government. We believe that Dr. Que is being persecuted for the non-violent and peaceful expression of his beliefs, rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, of which Viet Nam is a State Party. Please allow us to remind you that it is legally impermissible to prosecute someone for legitimately exercising their rights. To hold and express ideas as Dr. Que does, that express strong disagreement with your government's policies, presents no security risk to your country. On the other hand, his arrest and arbitrary detention will detrimentally impact Viet Nam's economic development and full citizenship in the international community. It is in your government's interest and responsibility to respect human rights law. Thus, we call upon you to facilitate Dr. Que's immediate release.

Alternatively, we respectfully urge you to immediately release Dr. Que for medical treatment to ensure his physical well-being. He suffers from high blood pressure, kidney problems, and peptic ulcers. His condition has deteriorated since his arrest on March 17, 2003. He is not receiving the medical treatment that he should in accordance with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners of the United Nations. His release for medical treatment would highlight your respect for these important standards.

Thank you for your consideration of our request to release Dr. Que.

Respectfully,

Julia Gabriel

Romeo Ramirez

Lucas Benitez, Julia Gabriel, and Romeo Ramirez (Coalition of Immokalee Workers)
2003 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureates

Loune Viaud
2002 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureate

Darci Frigo
2001 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureate

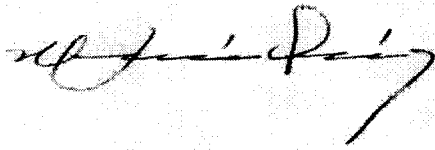
Martin Macwan
2000 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureate

Berenice Celeyta Alayón and Gloria Inés Flórez Schneider
1998 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureates

Sezgin Tanrikulu
1997 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureate

Doan Viet Hoat

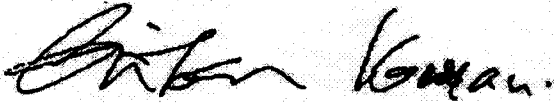
Kailash Satyarthi and Doan Viet Hoat
1995 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureate



Amilcar Méndez Urizar
1990 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureate



Fang Li-Zhi
1989 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureate



Gibson Kamau Kuria
1988 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureate



CoMadres
1984 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award laureate