

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 13, 2010

His Excellency Nguyen Tan Dung
Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Embassy of Vietnam
1233 20th Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Prime Minister Dung:

We are writing to express our serious concerns regarding the Government of Vietnam's continuous efforts to silence dissent, especially in the case of democracy activist/writer Tran Khai Thanh Thuy who was sentenced on February 5th, 2010 to three and a half years in prison and her husband, Mr. Do Ba Tan, who was sentenced to twenty-four months house arrest due to assault charges of "intentionally causing injury".

We were informed by many Vietnamese cyber activists that the photograph used as evidence against that Ms. Thuy allegedly assaulted a police agent was actually taken in 2005, but the date was changed with Photoshop software. We believe that serious measures should be taken immediately by your government to free the innocent and to prove that Vietnam is serious about improving its human rights record.

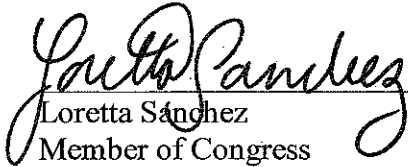
As you know, Ms. Thuy's and her husband's appeals are scheduled for April 16th, 2010. We hope the appeal process will be conducted in a fair and open manner, with the presence of the defendants' friends and relatives, the diplomatic community, and foreign media. We trust that the Government of Vietnam agrees that, under the international covenants on human rights—and even Vietnamese law—peaceful political expression is a basic freedom and not a crime. Vietnam's refusal to uphold basic human rights explicitly contradicts the Government's commitment to respect human rights and the rule of law.

On February 3, 2010, just two days prior to Ms. Thuy's trial, the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam held a press conference on bilateral relations discussing the relations between our two countries. The continuing dialogue about human rights and its central presence in the relationship between our countries was mentioned.

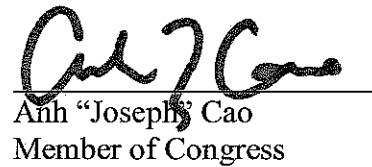
Ms. Thuy is one of many Vietnamese citizens who have been harassed because of their advocacy for democracy and imprisoned more than once. We ask that you unconditionally release both Ms. Thuy and Mr. Tan. We look forward to their swift release along with the release of other activists including Pham Thanh Nghien and Nguyen Hoang Hai (blogger Dieu Cay), who have been unfairly detained for practicing their right to freedom of speech, religion, and expression. On behalf of the countless others who continue to face severe abuse, harsh prison sentences, and uncertainty due to religious, political, and personal convictions, we ask the Government of Vietnam to honor its commitment to international human rights standards and respect the rights and freedoms of the people of Vietnam.

We would appreciate hearing directly from you regarding the assault charges and the outcome of the upcoming appeal trial of Ms. Thuy and Mr. Tan. We are committed to working with you on ways to ensure the full protection of human rights.


Sincerely,




Loretta Sánchez
Member of Congress



Anh "Joseph" Cao
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Daniel Lungren
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State
The Honorable Michael Michalak, Ambassador