



CHRIS HAYES MP

Federal Member for Fowler
Chief Opposition Whip

Ref: RH
24 July 2021

Senator the Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Women
Senate
Parliament House
PO Box 6100
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email: foreign.minister@dfat.gov.au

Dear Minister

Further to my previous correspondence, I write to express my deep concern with regards to the ongoing detention and welfare of Australian national, Mr Van Kham Chau. I thank you and your Department for the continued interest that you have shown in this matter and while I understand the sensitives around this case, it remains an issue of major concern to the Australian Vietnamese diaspora, particularly, in my community of Western Sydney.

Most concerning is that Mr Chau is 71 years of age, his health is declining, and he has been hospitalised a number of times since his detainment in Vietnam. There are also issues that Mr Chau has faced with regards to forced hours of hard labour in the prison, limited food and sustenance, difficulty receiving his regular medication and the lack of appropriate health care. As a consequence, these conditions in detention have no doubt taken a significant mental and physical toll on his well-being.

Apart from a 10-minute call to a local relative once a month, I am advised that Mr Chau remains isolated with ongoing restrictions placed on his communication and visitation rights. Mr Chau's plight has caused distress to his wife and his family, due to the uncertainty with regards to his continued safety and well-being.

Given Australia's significant people to people relationships with the Vietnamese, Australia's overall relationship with Vietnam itself and also Australia's significant role in providing humanitarian aid to Vietnam, most recently, committing to 1.5 million AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine doses in 2021, stronger efforts must be made with the Vietnamese Government to reach a positive outcome in this case.

In light of the above, I reiterate my call for you to take all possible steps to secure Mr Chau's welfare, including all feasible and appropriate action to ensure Mr Chau can safely return to his family in Australia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Chris Hayes'.

Chris Hayes MP