

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 18, 2015

Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung  
c/o Embassy of Vietnam  
1233 20<sup>th</sup> Street NW, Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing to request the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Nguyen Van Dai and the withdrawal of all charges against him. His arrest is the latest example in a series of aggressive state-sponsored actions taken against him, including a severe beating by plain clothes security officials earlier this month and a four year prison term that started almost immediately after Vietnam joined the World Trade Organization with the support of the United States.

Mr. Dai has a long history of working on human rights issues, including on human trafficking and assisting religious groups register with the Vietnamese government. He has also met with a Member of the U.S. Congress, Rep. Chris Smith, prior to his arrest in 2007. The crime he has been charged with under Article 88 of the Penal Code, "conducting propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" does not equate with his actions, which have been peaceful political expression, advocating for universally-recognized human rights, and providing legal assistance. The Vietnamese government's use of Article 88 to arbitrarily silence human rights defenders and hold them without trial for long periods without legal counsel was widely criticized by the United Nations at Vietnam's Universal Periodic Review in 2013.

Vietnam has ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, (ICCPR), which protects the right to freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19), and the right to liberty and security of a person, which includes the right to not be subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention (Article 9).

We hope that a trial will never occur, but in the event Nguyen Van Dai does stand trial, we request that the Vietnamese government and its judiciary respect the rule of law and ensure international fair trial standards be applied, as the ICCPR also guarantees the right to a fair trial (Article 14). This includes being tried as expeditiously as possible, to have free choice of legal representation, an opportunity to prepare and present a defense, and for all proceedings to be held fairly and in public.

American officials have stated repeatedly that in order for there to be an improved relationship between our countries, Vietnam needs to improve its record in the area of human rights. Nguyen Van Dai's arrest, the recent attacks on other human rights defenders, and the continued

imprisonment of the largest number of political prisoners in Southeast Asia remain a serious obstacle to stronger bilateral relations.

We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.

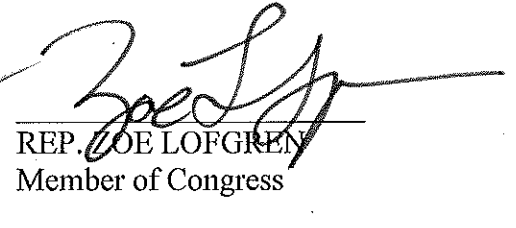
Sincerely,



REP. CHRISTOPHER H.  
SMITH  
Member of Congress



REP. LORETTA SANCHEZ  
Member of Congress



REP. JOE LOFGREN  
Member of Congress