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The President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Copy to:  
The Honourable John Kerry  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of State

23 July 2013

Dear Mr President,

The signatory organisations respectfully request that you raise with the Vietnamese Government the arrest and arbitrary detention of Mr Le Quoc Quan, prominent lawyer, blogger and human rights defender. We understand that President Truong Tan Sang of Vietnam will meet with you on 25 July 2013 and we sincerely hope that you will take this opportunity to discuss Mr Quan's case with him.

Mr Quan is a qualified lawyer and active blogger who is currently detained for exercising his rights to freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly, and for his activities as a human rights defender. Prior to his arrest, Mr Quan exposed human rights abuses commonly ignored by Vietnamese state media on his popular blog. He defended human rights cases in the Vietnamese courts until he was disbarred in 2007, when he was arrested and detained for 100 days upon his return from the United States where he had been a Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C. In April 2011, Mr Quan was arrested again and ultimately released without charges. In August 2012, he was severely injured in a violent attack committed by what he believes were State agents.

On 27 December 2012, Mr Quan was arrested and charged with alleged 'tax evasion.' He was detained incommunicado for the first two months and went on hunger strike for fifteen days. At this moment, Mr Quan is still imprisoned and is not allowed visits from his family. His trial was scheduled to take place on 9 July 2013, but was postponed at the last moment until further notice.

Mr Quan's arrest and detention are in violation of Vietnam's obligations under international law, in particular Articles 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which impose duties on the government to protect Mr Quan's rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. His treatment also contravenes state duties set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, to ensure and protect the rights of human rights defenders. More detailed information about Mr Quan and Vietnam's unlawful interference with his human rights is set forth in the attached Letter of Allegation recently sent to the Special Rapporteurs of the United Nations.

Given the great importance of international attention to the effort to secure Mr Quan's freedom, and to enable him to return to his indispensable human rights work, we hope you will seize the opportunity of President Sang's upcoming visit to request the immediate release of Mr Quan.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our request. Please do not hesitate to have your staff contact us should you have any questions or need any additional information about this important case.

Most respectfully,

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