

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2013

The Honorable David Shear
U.S. Ambassador to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Ambassador Shear,

As we enter the new year, we write to ask for your immediate action to secure the release of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Quan. We were troubled to learn that the Vietnamese state media has labeled Dr. Quan as a “terrorist” for the crime of training grassroots activists in nonviolent advocacy, and are deeply concerned by reports that Dr. Quan is being charged with “subversion against the state,” an offense for which punishment ranges from 12 years in prison to death.

Dr. Quan’s arrest is not an isolated event, but a symptom of the Vietnamese government’s ongoing crackdown on dissent. In an editorial published shortly after Dr. Quan’s arrest, the Wall Street Journal noted, “Hanoi has taken to arresting American citizens for ‘crimes’ that aren’t crimes in any normal country.”

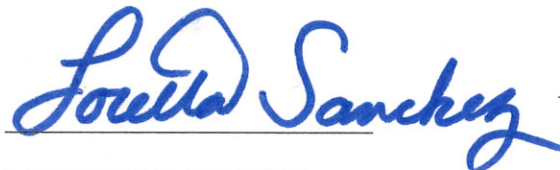
Vietnam has expressed an interest in increasing both economic and military ties with the United States. We have serious concerns about strengthening relations with a regime that continues to defy international standards, using vaguely worded national security provisions to silence voices of disagreement, and we urge you to use your role in Vietnam to push back on this repression and to promote human rights. We understand that you have committed to “speaking up when people peacefully expressing their opinions are detained and imprisoned.” We commend your commitment and encourage you to publicly call for Dr. Quan’s release. We ask, additionally, that you personally visit Dr. Quan in jail and ensure that he is being properly cared for.

Thank you for your time, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



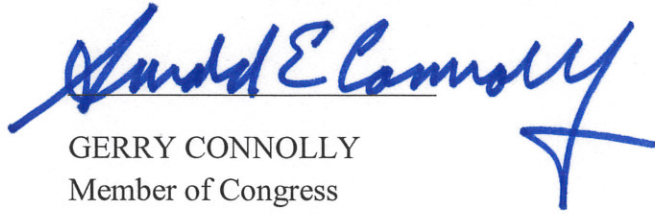
ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress



LORETTA SANCHEZ
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hank Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

HANK JOHNSON
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerry Connolly". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line. There is a large, stylized flourish or mark to the right of the signature.

GERRY CONNOLLY
Member of Congress