



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

28 May 2012

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Robin Walker MP
House of Commons
London
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Mr. Robin

Thank you for your letter of 19 April 2012 to the Foreign Secretary about the ~~detainment and future trial of political activists in Vietnam~~. I am replying as Minister responsible for our relations with Vietnam.

The UK remains concerned about human rights in Vietnam. Vietnam is currently on our list of countries of concern and a section on Vietnam was included in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Human Rights and Democracy Report presented to Parliament in April 2012. A copy of the report and the quarterly updates for 2012 can be viewed at www.fco.gov.uk/en/global-issues/human-rights/around-the-world/human-rights-report.

I note that you make particular reference to a group of seventeen Vietnamese nationals who have been detained and imprisoned in Vietnam. Our Embassy in Hanoi is aware of these detentions. The 17 detainees are also included in a person/detainees of concern (POC) list compiled by the EU Delegation in Vietnam.

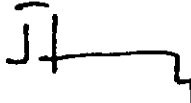
We continue to work closely with our EU partners in Vietnam to highlight our shared human rights concerns. Through the EU we engage with the Vietnamese authorities on the POC list, to seek information about the welfare of the detainees and to request their immediate release. These cases of concern were raised most recently at the EU/Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue on 12 January 2012 in Hanoi.

You also ask if it would be possible for a member of staff from our Embassy in Hanoi to attend any forthcoming trial of these individuals. I have been notified that the EU Delegation attempt to send an observer to the trials of any individuals included in the POC list as a matter of course. Much of this will however depend on the length of prior notice given on these hearings.

Our Ambassador also raises human rights issues with the Vietnamese government bilaterally, including our concerns about the arrest and imprisonment of peaceful activists. Human rights are integral to our Strategic Partnership with Vietnam. The

UK's overarching human rights objectives in Vietnam is to strengthen accountability which would lead to increased freedom of expression, effective oversight mechanisms, a more active role for civil society and the media and a better human rights record.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Browne', written over a horizontal line.

Jeremy Browne MP
Minister of State