

EDWARD R. ROYCE, CALIFORNIA  
CHAIRMAN

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, NEW JERSEY  
ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, FLORIDA  
DANA ROHRBACHER, CALIFORNIA  
STEVE CHABOT, OHIO  
JOE WILSON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
MICHAEL T. McCAUL, TEXAS  
TED POE, TEXAS  
MATT SALMON, ARIZONA  
TOM MARINO, PENNSYLVANIA  
JEFF DUNCAN, SOUTH CAROLINA  
ADAM KINZINGER, ILLINOIS  
MO BROOKS, ALABAMA  
TOM COTTON, ARKANSAS  
PAUL COOK, CALIFORNIA  
GEORGE HOLDING, NORTH CAROLINA  
RANDY K. WEBER SR., TEXAS  
SCOTT PERRY, PENNSYLVANIA  
STEVE STOCKMAN, TEXAS  
RON DeSANTIS, FLORIDA  
TREY RADEL, FLORIDA  
DOUG COLLINS, GEORGIA  
MARK MEADOWS, NORTH CAROLINA  
TED S. YOHO, FLORIDA  
LUKE MESSER, INDIANA

AMY PORTER THOMAS SHEEHY  
CHIEF OF STAFF STAFF DIRECTOR



One Hundred Thirteenth Congress  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Foreign Affairs  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

ELIOT L. ENGEL, NEW YORK  
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER  
ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA, AMERICAN SAMOA  
BRAD SHERMAN, CALIFORNIA  
GREGORY W. MEEKS, NEW YORK  
ALBIO SIREES, NEW JERSEY  
GERALD E. CONNOLLY, VIRGINIA  
THEODORE E. DEUTCH, FLORIDA  
BRIAN HIGGINS, NEW YORK  
KAREN BASS, CALIFORNIA  
WILLIAM KEATING, MASSACHUSETTS  
DAVID CICILLINE, RHODE ISLAND  
ALAN GRAYSON, FLORIDA  
JUAN VARGAS, CALIFORNIA  
BRADLEY S. SCHNEIDER, ILLINOIS  
JOSEPH P. KENNEDY III, MASSACHUSETTS  
AMI BERA, CALIFORNIA  
ALAN S. LOWENTHAL, CALIFORNIA  
GRACE MENG, NEW YORK  
LOIS FRANKEL, FLORIDA  
TULSI GABBARD, HAWAII  
JOAQUIN CASTRO, TEXAS

JASON STEINBAUM  
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

July 18, 2013

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I urge you to make human rights a top priority during the upcoming visit of President Truong Tan Sang of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

As you know, Vietnam has long been as one of the most oppressive societies in Southeast Asia. Democratic aspirations, human rights advocacy, and grassroots mobilization are met with police brutality and result in show trials where defendants are denied their rights to open and fair proceedings as guaranteed by the Vietnamese Constitution.

In addition, the Vietnamese government has intensified its crackdown on free expression by increasing its efforts to censor the Internet, sponsoring cyber attacks, and blocking access to websites. Hanoi has also targeted the country's diverse religious communities by confiscating and destroying church property and imprisoning the faithful for following their religious beliefs—even forcing some to renounce their beliefs.

Over 50 Vietnamese human rights advocates have been held in arbitrary detention this year alone. As one witness testified before the Asia Subcommittee earlier this year, “in the first six weeks of 2013, as many people have been convicted in political trials as in the whole of 2012.” These statistics are deeply troubling, and reflect the current intolerable state of human rights in Vietnam.

This further backslide in the Vietnamese Government's respect for human rights comes as the country is increasing its international engagement. However, if our two countries are to build a strong relationship, Vietnam must honor its citizens' basic rights, including freedom of association and assembly, freedom of opinion, and freedom of religion. This is the basis upon which all aspects of our relationship should be built.

The President  
July 18, 2013  
Page 2

As you host the Vietnamese President, I respectfully urge you take the following steps to press his government to make meaningful changes that will improve the country's human rights record:

- Urge the President to respect true political freedom by repealing two security provisions, Articles 79 & 88 of the penal code, prohibiting freedom of association and expression.
- Call for the release of human rights defenders and all other prisoners of conscience including attorney Le Quoc Quan, singer Viet Khang, and university students Nguyen Phuong Uyen and Dinh Nguyen Kha.
- Insist on the loosening of Internet restrictions including an end to the use of filtering technology, cyber attacks on bloggers, and the policy of blocking access to social media.

Mr. President, President Sang's visit to Washington is a unique opportunity to inspire the Vietnamese people who are yearning for freedom. I respectfully request that you make the most of this chance by vocally supporting a human rights agenda.

Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,



EDWARD R. ROYCE  
Chairman