

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 9, 2018

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to urge you to immediately demand that the Vietnamese government release Michael Phuong Minh Nguyen, an American citizen.

Michael, a resident of Orange, California, was detained on July 7th while touring Vietnam and visiting elderly relatives. He is currently being held at the Phan Dang Luu Detention Center in the Binh Thanh District of Ho Chi Minh City.

Michael is deeply missed by his wife and four daughters. We have been informed that he is under investigation for “engaging in activity against the People’s Government,” a spurious charge that is frequently used by the Vietnamese government in arbitrary detentions. We believe, in fact, that Mr. Nguyen was unfairly caught up in a Vietnamese government crackdown on domestic dissidents. Alarming, it is possible that Michael could be detained for multiple months with no formal charge made against him. This situation is unacceptable.

While U.S.-Vietnam relations have improved in recent years, Vietnam’s human rights record remains deeply troubling. As the State Department’s 2017 human rights report finds, the Vietnamese government is complicit in “arbitrary and unlawful deprivation of life; torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment; arbitrary arrest and detention of persons peacefully expressing dissent; systemic abuses in the legal system, including denial of access to an attorney, visits from family, and fair and expeditious trial; government interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence.” Michael’s case is an egregious example of Vietnam’s troubling history of arbitrary arrest – in this case of an American citizen – and many fear for his safety.

We, again, urge that you make every effort to ensure Michael can return safely to his family without delay. We stand ready to assist you in this effort and appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Mike Pompeo

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EDWARD R. ROYCE
Member of Congress



MIMI WALTERS
Member of Congress



J. LUIS CORREA
Member of Congress



ALAN LOWENTHAL
Member of Congress