

US Congress : Letter of 37 Prominent Members of the U.S. Congress urging Vietnam to release Buddhist dissidents Thich Huyen Quang and Thich Quang Do



“Dear Excellencies,

“We respectfully urge that you facilitate the immediate release of the Most Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, Patriarch of the banned Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and his deputy, Venerable Thich Quang Do.

“These courageous leaders have spent much of the last 25 years detained without charge or trial for their peaceful advocacy of fundamental human rights and religious freedom – rights guaranteed by the Vietnamese Constitution and enshrined in the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which your country has both ratified and pledged to uphold. As a result of these honorable efforts, they have been imprisoned in solitary confinement, released, placed under house arrest, exiled, and arrested again.

“Venerable Thich Huyen Quang, 86, is facing grave health concerns due to harsh detention conditions and lack of medical care. Although he was recently released to pursue cancer treatment, it is our understanding that he will ultimately be returned to confinement.

“Venerable Thich Quang Do, 75, a 2003 Nobel Peace Prize nominee, is detained incommunicado at the Thanh Minh Monastery in Ho Chi Minh City. His alleged “crimes” include launching an appeal for “Democracy in Vietnam” – an eight-point transition plan for democratic change in Vietnam, and organizing a humanitarian effort to rescue flood victims. He likewise faces complications from advancing age and deteriorating health.

“The international community has diligently worked to promote the efforts of the Patriarch and his Deputy and have continually advocated for their release. In the last twenty years, there have been repeated efforts to nominate the Patriarch and his Deputy for the Nobel Peace Prize, including a recent effort by over 60 Members of the

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United States Congress calling for the nomination of the Venerable Thich Quang Do. Furthermore, Nobel Laureates including the Dalai Lama have launched appeals to free these exemplary men.

“Patriarch Thich Huyen Quang and the Venerable Thich Quang Do have suffered long enough for their courageous efforts to improve human rights and religious freedom. We urge you to heed to appeals of leaders around the world and facilitate the immediate release of the Patriarch and his Deputy. Doing so would demonstrate that Vietnam is truly committed to the advancement of human rights and religious freedom”.

Signatures :

Representatives Neil Abercrombie, Frank Ballance, Chris Bell, Timothy Bishop, Dennis Cardoza, Ed Case, Joseph Crowley, Elijah Cummings, Artur Davis, Diana DeGette, Sam Farr, Maurice Hinchey, William Jefferson, Gerald Kleczka, Barbara Lee, Zoe Lofgren, Jim McDermott, James McGovern, Mike McIntyre, Mike McNulty, Michael Michaud, George Miller, Frank Pallone, Dana Rohrabacher, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, Ed Royce, Linda Sanchez, Loretta Sanchez, Brad Sherman, Christopher Smith, Ellen Tauscher, Mike Thompson, Stephanie Tubbs-Jones, Tom Udall, Henry Waxman, Frank R. Wolf, Lynn Woolsey.