

Letter to US Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee from the Tammy Tran Law Firm requesting urgent support for UBCV Patriarch Thich Quang Do

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VIA EMAIL AND HAND DELIVERY
URGENT

October 15, 2018

The Hon. Sheila Jackson Lee
US House of Representatives
2187 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Jackson Lee:

You have always been a dedicated supporter of the Vietnamese American community in Texas since the day my Law Firm has been opened. It has been 21 years and we went through thick and thin together. You have been a strong voice in Congress for freedom and democracy in Vietnam, my mother land. I am therefore asking today for your urgent assistance on behalf of Vietnam's most famous and longest-detained prisoner of conscience, Most Venerable Thich Quang Do.

Nominated 16 times for the Nobel Peace Prize, a laureate of the National Endowment for Democracy's "Democracy Courage Tribute" and Supreme Patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV), Most Venerable Thich Quang Do has spent over thirty years in prison, internal exile and house arrest for his peaceful advocacy of religious freedom, human rights and democracy. He is currently isolated, deprived of communications, in a remote province in northern Vietnam.

His situation is as follows: On September 15, 2018, Most Venerable Thich Quang Do, who is 90 years old and in poor health, was suddenly expelled from the Thanh Minh Zen Monastery in Saigon, Vietnam where he has been held under house arrest for the past 20 years. He left immediately, taking only three monk's robes. When his assistant came to fetch his books and belongings some hours later, the room was locked and his belongings impounded.

In a state of shock, Most Venerable Thich Quang Do accepted an offer from his family to go to his home village in Thai Binh Province, northern Vietnam. He took the train on October 5, 2018. It is now clear that this was a deliberate plan by the Hanoi authorities to place Most Venerable Thich Quang Do under an even stricter form of house arrest and isolate him completely.

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The “family” – in fact his nephew, a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Security Police – *controls all his visits and communications*. He immediately expelled Most Venerable Thich Quang Do’s personal assistant, who came to take care of his master and ensure his access to medical care. Thich Quang Do is now alone, under control of the authorities, with no means of communicating with the outside. I fear that his health and security, even his life may be at risk.

In April 2018, Most Venerable Thich Quang Do was officially adopted as a prisoner of conscience by the US Congress’ Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, and he was visited by the U.S. Ambassador in June 2018. Vietnam is obviously trying to keep Most Venerable Thich Quang Do “out of sight, out of mind” because they fear international pressure for his release.

I respectfully urge you to take action in our quest to release Most Venerable Thich Quang Do and bring him back to Ho Chi Minh City so he can live in the care of his followers. A diplomatic visit by the US Ambassador in Hanoi could be a helpful first step. We would also appreciate any other suggestions you may have. It is heart-breaking to see this exceptional spiritual leader and courageous proponent of human rights, who has devoted his life for the freedom of his people, be so cruelly abused by the communist regime.

Very truly yours,



**THE TAMMY TRAN LAW FIRM
ATTORNEYS AT LAW, L.L.P.**

CC: Honorable Beto O’rourke

1721 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, TX 205150001.

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