

October 2, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo,

We write to express our deep concerns about human rights in Vietnam ahead of the 24th Annual United States and Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue, currently scheduled for October 6, 2020. As you know, the promotion of human rights is a crucial part of United States foreign policy, and it is particularly important to our relationship with Vietnam, as underscored in the United States-Vietnam Comprehensive Partnership.

With these facts in mind, we urge you to raise the case of Nguyen Bac Truyen with Vietnamese leaders during the upcoming Human Rights Dialogue between our two countries. Truyen's imprisonment illustrates Vietnam's shameful disregard for individual rights and freedoms within their borders.

Nguyen Bac Truyen, as you are likely aware, is a Vietnamese citizen, Hoa Hao Buddhist, and religious freedom advocate who is currently serving an eleven-year sentence for "carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration." Truyen founded the Vietnamese Political and Religious Prisoners Friendship Association, which aims to assist other prisoners of conscience and their families. After his arrest in 2017, Truyen was denied access to legal counsel, visits from family, and deliveries of food and medicine, and he was eventually sentenced following a one-day trial.

As a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Vietnam has committed to protecting basic individual freedoms within their country. Further, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of association are all rights enshrined in Vietnam's constitution. While we recognize Vietnam has made some progress towards upholding their commitment to protecting individual rights and freedoms within Vietnam, Nguyen Bac Truyen's case illustrates how far Vietnam has yet to go.

In order to achieve our shared goal of deepened ties and cooperation with Vietnam, the Vietnamese government must show a willingness to improve the conditions for personal freedoms within Vietnam. The release of Nguyen Bac Truyen would represent a key benchmark for human rights improvement in Vietnam and would make clear the Vietnamese government's commitment to improving conditions for personal freedoms within their borders.

The rapidly approaching 24th Annual United States and Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue presents an opportunity to push for meaningful improvements in the situation for human rights within Vietnam. We urge you to raise the case of Nguyen Bac Truyen during this event and push for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience.

We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Harley Rouda
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress