



Re: Arrest of NED fellow Le Quoc Quan

March 14, 2007

Secretary Condoleezza Rice
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rice:

We are deeply concerned that Le Quoc Quan, a Vietnamese lawyer who recently returned from a prestigious fellowship in Washington DC, was detained by the Vietnamese security police reportedly on the 8th of March 2007 in Hanoi. His whereabouts are still unknown.

Quan, aged 36, had been a Reagan-Fascell fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy. He was the first fellow from Vietnam at NED where he did in-depth research on the theories and practices of civil society.

As a close friend and advisor of VOICE, Quan is a man of great humanity and tremendous fervor to serve others, especially those at the bottom of society. Quan loves his wife, Hien, and their 5-year old daughter, An-Ha, dearly, but we must say his heart and mind are divided between his family and underprivileged people in Vietnam. We were moved to hear first hand his passion for social justice and belief in the role of independent associations in national development.

Prior to NED, Quan worked for the past seven years as a local governance consultant to the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, UNDP, and the Swedish International Development Agency. As a law student and later a legal advocate, Quan has spoken out against religious and human rights violations. His writings have appeared on the BBC and various Vietnamese newspapers and websites.

Quan's apparent arrest is troubling. In your meeting with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem this week, we urge you to raise the case of Le Quoc Quan along with other Vietnamese citizens wrongly imprisoned such as Nguyen Van Dai, Le Thi Cong Nhan and Father Nguyen Van Ly and insist on their immediate and unconditional release.

Founded in 2007, VOICE (Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Conscience Empowerment) is a non-profit organization, providing a voice for the overseas Vietnamese community through advocacy for Vietnamese refugees, Vietnamese women and children victims of human trafficking, and other significant issues confronting the conscience of our community.

Sincerely,

Hoi Trinh
President, VOICE

Cc: Members of Congress and human rights organizations.

Vietnamese Overseas Initiative for Conscience Empowerment