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June 26, 2026

Nguyen Quoc Dzung
Ambassador of Vietnam to the United States
Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
1233 20th Street, NW, Suite 400
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Ambassador Nguyen:

Thank you for your April 2026 letter responding to my request to visit prisoners of conscience imprisoned by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and check on their wellbeing. I welcome your commitment to continued dialogue, and I share the view that a U.S.-Vietnam relationship advances the interests and security of both our nations. But I remain deeply concerned by extensive, credible reports of your government's significant human right issues including: arbitrary or unlawful killings; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and punishment; involuntary or coercive medical or psychological practices; arbitrary arrest or detention; transnational repression against individuals in another country; serious restrictions on freedom of expression and media freedom, including unjustified arrests or prosecutions of journalists and censorship; restrictions of religious freedom; and systematic restrictions on workers' freedom of association. Vietnam's refusal to acknowledge these violations could hinder constructive dialogue and cooperation.

Your letter states that the characterizations presented in my correspondence "are inaccurate and do not reflect the legal and factual reality in Vietnam" and that the cases of the individuals I flagged have been handled in accordance with Vietnamese law. However, my understanding of Vietnam's human rights deficiencies is grounded in comprehensive reports from credible human rights organizations, international bodies, and documented cases which illustrated the severity of the violations, including from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. These are not political characterizations, but factual findings documented by credible organizations. Your assertion that Vietnam is merely adhering to its national laws suggests a disregard for the fundamental principle that human rights are universal values. Adhering solely to domestic laws cannot justify practices that violate fundamental human rights as recognized by the global community.

The Vietnamese government's campaign of transnational repression to silence Vietnamese American critics raises red flags about your commitment to our bilateral relationship. On April 28, 2026, the People's Court of Dak Lak Province sentenced Dr. Nguyen Dinh Thang, an American citizen and the CEO and President of Boat People SOS (BPSOS), to eleven years in prison in absentia on terrorism charges. This conviction follows a March 2025 designation from the Ministry of Public Security (MPS)

of BPSOS as an “organization related to terrorism” and a February 2026 international arrest warrant issued against Dr. Thang. BPSOS is an American nonprofit that has spent decades assisting Vietnamese refugees, survivors of human trafficking, and victims of human rights abuses. There is no credible legal basis for calling BPSOS’ or Dr. Nguyen’s work “terrorism.” This form of transnational repression is not the actions of a government committed to promoting and safeguarding human rights dialogue. Sentencing a U.S. citizen in absentia for advocating on behalf of refugees is a direct affront to the United States and to our bilateral relationship.

I am deeply troubled by a series of fast-tracked press and cybersecurity laws passed by Vietnam’s National Assembly in December 2025 that are set to take effect on July 1, 2026. As you know, the amended cybersecurity law grants the MPS sweeping new authority over internet management with no independent review or judicial oversight, including the power to compel domestic and foreign telecommunications providers to remove content and hand over user data. Furthermore, the amended press law allows the government to demand that journalists disclose their sources, imposes traditional media regulations on social media channels run by news organizations, and permits the MPS to order the immediate removal of content with no complaint or appeal process.

These laws do not merely regulate the internet and press activities; they establish the infrastructure for unchecked surveillance and tightened government censorship. When taken alongside Amnesty International’s finding that Vietnamese police [arrested and prosecuted at least 43 people in 2025](#) under broad and vaguely worded Vietnamese penal law, the trajectory of Vietnam’s human rights record is alarming. I urge the Vietnamese government to reconsider these measures and to bring your laws into compliance international human rights law before they take effect.

Your letter notes the progress in the U.S.-Vietnam relationship over the past three decades. Vietnam is indeed a strategic partner and an essential node in the global supply chain, and Southern California businesses rely on trade with Vietnam. As you note, this “trajectory reflects sustained efforts by both sides to build trust [and] leaders of both countries have consistently underscored the fundamental principles guiding Viet Nam-U.S. relations, including respect for the United Nations Charter [and] international law.” The long-term strength of our relationship depends on this foundation of trust and shared commitment to the rules-based international order – including a commitment to human rights. When Vietnam ratified¹ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) nearly 44 years ago, it made a binding commitment to protect human rights, including freedom of expression and religion. When Vietnam was re-elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2026-2028 term, it also accepted additional obligations to safeguard human rights. I urge the Vietnamese government to honor its commitments under international law, not merely in word but in practice. I also strongly encourage open and candid discussions on human rights, which is essential to foster greater stability and progress. U.S.-Vietnam bilateral relationships will be stronger, more reliable, and more productive when the Vietnamese government fully respects the rights and dignities of its own citizens.

I was encouraged to read your statement that Vietnam “welcomes and stands ready to receive U.S. congressional delegations for visits and working engagements.” I look forward to our staff working together to begin planning a visit for United States Congressmembers to check on the wellbeing of prisoners of conscience and the conditions of their detention. As part of that engagement, my staff is prepared to discuss the broader framework of democratic values and trade interests that I believe should underpin U.S.-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

¹<https://unimelb.libguides.com/c.php?g=930183&p=6722028#:~:text=Human%20rights%20treaties%20adherence,is%20a%20signatory%20to%20CRPD.>

I look forward to your prompt response and to a productive dialogue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derek T. Tran". The signature is stylized, with a large "D" and a horizontal line above the "T".

Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress