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August 24, 2009

The Honorable Le Quoc Hung
Consul General
Consulate General of Vietnam
1700 California Street, Suite 430
San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear Honorable Consul General:

I am writing today to bring to your immediate attention a difficult situation in Vietnam and to urge your government to intervene to protect peace-loving young Vietnamese citizens at the Bat Nha Monastery in Lam Dong Province. It has been reported to me by my constituents that a group of 400 young Vietnamese monks and nuns living at the monastery have been cut off from food and water for almost a month. They have been repeatedly threatened and the local government officials have not intervened to protect them. This situation has not resolved itself in several weeks and is worsening.

I respectfully urge the Vietnamese Government to investigate this situation and to intervene and ensure that this community is allowed to live in peace as law abiding Vietnamese citizens and to have safe access to food, water, and electricity--all of which are basic human rights. I trust that when the Central Government is made aware of this provincial situation, they will help bring peace to all of the people of this area.

These young monastics (ages sixteen to twenty-five) have lived at the Bat Nha Monastery, Hamlet 13, Dambri Village, Bao Loc District, and Lam Dong Province since 2005. They are not a political body and seek only to practice mindfulness and to serve others.

The monks and nuns are the sons and daughters of Vietnam. They deserve the protection from their government and the freedom to peacefully meet their basic human needs in safety. I know that the country has steadily improved its record with regards to human and religious rights at the start of this new millennium and

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we are confident that the government will do what is right and dutiful and continue on this path of fairness and openness.

Please let me know if there is any assistance my office can offer to help resolve this situation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BF', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

BOB FILNER
Member of Congress

BF/sm
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