Mr. Barack Obama c/o Obama Foundation Chicago, Illinois

Re: Arrest of Obama Foundation Scholar in Vietnam

Dear Mr. Obama,

We write to request your assistance in calling for the unconditional release from jail of Obama Foundation scholar Hoang Thi Minh Hong. Hong is one of 12 members of the very first cohort of your foundation. She is also the founder of the Center of Hands-on Action and Networking for Growth and Environment (CHANGE), an organization that advocates for action on climate change, the environment, and wildlife protection. CHANGE was a leading organization in the campaign to stop the construction and financing of new coal-fired power plants in Vietnam. Unfortunately, Hong was forced to close CHANGE in October 2022, after being harassed by the government.

Vietnamese police arrested Hong on June 1, 2023. She is being held incommunicado and has been denied access to a lawyer. The government is preparing to prosecute Hong on a false charge of tax evasion. She faces up to seven years behind bars and if found guilty, she may be subjected to a prison system that is known for torture and willful neglect.

Hong is the fifth climate activist to be jailed in the past two years in Vietnam for supposed tax evasion. Dang Dinh Bach, another jailed activist, was sentenced to five years in prison after he successfully advocated for the government to decarbonize the energy sector. A human rights investigation, published in April, documents clear evidence that these prosecutions are politically-driven and designed to criminalize climate activism using false charges of tax evasion.

The United Nations and the U.S. State Department have already made public statements calling for Hong's release. You have met Hong and praised her work, and your foundation continues to use her name and image on its website. Given this, it seems appropriate that you would join the UN and State Department by making your own public statement calling on the Vietnamese government to release her.

We would be happy to provide you more information on this important case. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,































































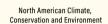


































































- 2. 350Hawaii
- 3. 350 Silicon Valley
- 4. Accelerate Neighborhood Climate Action
- 5. Agency for Turkana Development Initiatives
- 6. Amnesty International
- 7. Animals Are Sentient Beings, Inc.
- 8. Article 19
- 9. Asia Democracy Network
- 10. Asian NGO Coalition
- 11. Asia Pacific Network of Environmental Defenders
- 12. Center for Energy, Ecology and Development
- 13. Center for Environmental Concerns Philippines Inc.
- 14. Center for Human Rights and Environment
- 15. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
- 16. Climate Rights International
- 17. EarthRights International
- 18. Environmental Defender Law Center
- 19. Extinction Rebellion Phoenix
- 20. FIDH International Federation for Human Rights
- 21. Fortify Rights
- 22. FORUM-ASIA

- 23. Freedom House
- 24. Friends of the Earth Japan
- 25. Friends of the Earth US
- 26. Front Line Defenders
- 27. Global Network of Movement Lawyers at Movement Law Lab
- 28. Global Witness
- 29. Grassroots Foundation (Germany)
- 30. Greenpeace UK
- 31. Human Rights Foundation
- 32. Human Rights Watch
- 33. International Accountability Project
- 34. International Commission of Jurists
- 35. International Rivers
- 36. International Service for Human Rights
- 37. Mano River Union Civil Society Natural Resources Rights and Governance Platform
- 38. Manushya Foundation
- 39. Market Forces
- 40. Mekong Watch
- 41. Mighty Earth
- 42. North American Climate Conservation and Environment
- 13. Not1More

- 44. Nuclear Energy Information Service
- 45. Oil Change International
- 46. Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum
- 47. Peace Action WI
- 48. PowerShift e.V.
- 49. Protect Our Water, Heritage, Rights
- 50. Protection International
- 51. Reclaim Finance
- 52. Recourse
- 53. Rivers & Mountains GreenFaith Circle
- 54. Sierra Leone Land Alliance
- 55. Sisters of St. Dominic of Blauvelt, New York
- 56. Social Eco Education
- 57. Terra Advocati
- 58. The 88 Project
- 59. Third Act60. Trend Asia
- 61. Turtle Island Restoration Network
- 62. Unite North Metro Denver
- 63. Urgewald
- 64. Vietnamese Advocates for Changes
- 65. Vietnam Committee on Human Rights