



**TAI SOLIDARITY
INTERNATIONAL**



Khmers Kampuchea Krom Federation

PRESS RELEASE
Spartanburg, June 14, 2005

**INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS DEMONSTRATE FOR FREEDOM AND
DEMOCRACY IN VIETNAM IN WASHINGTON ON TUESDAY JUNE 21**

On Tuesday, June 21, hundreds of demonstrators belonging to four organizations representing indigenous peoples living in Vietnam, will organize a demonstration at Freedom Plaza in Washington, DC, **from 11.30 am to 2.30 pm**, to call for the respect of freedom and democracy in Vietnam, on the occasion of the meeting of the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Phan Van Khai with the President of the United States, George W. Bush.
For further information: Kok Ksor, President of the Montagnard Foundation Tel. +1-864-576-0698; Cell. +1-864-497-1665

Below is the text of the Appeal to the US Government:

**APPEAL TO THE US GOVERNMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF THE PRIME
MINISTER OF VIETNAM TO THE WHITE HOUSE ON JUNE 21, 2005**

Although all Vietnamese citizens have greatly suffered for the lack of freedom and democracy and the unjust social policies, widespread corruption and discrimination in Vietnam, the indigenous peoples we represent have been reserved a brutal and systematic repression by the Vietnamese regime; a regime that has exploited our different ethnicity, culture, customs, and languages to dispossess our peoples of our lands, foster ethnic hatred and racism, and keep us uneducated and in extreme poverty.

We, the representative of the Hmong, Khmer Krom, Montagnard Degar and Tai Dam Peoples: on June 21, 2005, on the occasion of the meeting of the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Phan Van Khai with the President of the United States, George W. Bush, we will gather in Washington at the Freedom Plaza, a couple of blocks from the White House to peacefully demonstrate for freedom and democracy in Vietnam.

We will gather at Freedom Plaza as US citizens or political refugees who have found in the United States a place of comfort for our families and the possibility of exercising and continue to advocate the human freedoms and rights that are still denied to our peoples in our homelands. Most importantly we will gather at Freedom Plaza as individuals belonging to the indigenous peoples who have paid the highest price since the Communist Dictatorship took over South Indochina in 1975.

Since the United States is a country that has put the promotion of Human Rights and Democracy in the world at the centre of its foreign policy, we urge the US Congress and Government to use all its political and economic powers to pressure Vietnam to respect the basic rights of all the citizens of Vietnam. In particular, as representatives of indigenous peoples' organizations we call on the US Government to pay particular attention to the respect of the fundamental rights of the indigenous people of Indochina, namely the Montagnard Degar, The Khmer Krom, the Hmong and the Tai people.

The most critical concerns or the well-being of our people are: the right to own our ancestral lands, the right to religious freedom, freedom of assembly and the right to democracy in order to be able to run the affairs of our communities in accordance with the freely expressed will of our people.

Since Vietnam has recently signed an agreement with the United States to ensure the respect of religious freedom to its citizens, we urge the US Congress and Government to obtain the institution of an international monitoring system of such agreement. The authoritarian and antidemocratic nature of the Vietnamese Government and more than thirty years of violation of religious freedom cannot leave the implementation of any agreement to Hanoi only.

All prisoners of conscience and political dissidents should be released in accordance with the International Covenant on Political Rights ratified by Vietnam. If the final goal of the United States Government is, in the word of President Bush, to put an end to tyranny in this world, the incarceration of worshippers or of advocates of human rights who risk their life to enjoy freedom cannot be accepted.

Since Vietnam is seeking to be in friendly relations, a partner in trade and a strategic ally with the United States, the US should obtain that Vietnam stops considering as its enemy the members of the Montagnard Degar, Hmong, KhmerKrom and Tai people who sided with the United States during the war.

All the above requests are necessary conditions to obtain that the indigenous peoples of Vietnam could coexist in peace, freedom and liberty with the Vietnamese citizens and we call on President Bush to endorse them and not to favor the entrance of Vietnam in the World Trade Organization as soon as the Vietnamese Government does not respect them.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE US GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH VIETNAM

Khmers Kampuchea Krom Federation (KKF):

Vietnam should immediately stop all acts of intimidation against Khmer-Krom people;

Vietnam should allow international monitors into villages where Khmer-Krom people live;

Vietnam should respect fundamental human rights of all Vietnamese citizens;

Vietnam should place a team of WHO professional doctors, scientists and human rights defenders to study and investigate the causes of the deadly disease epidemic that is spreading in the provinces of Soc-Trang and Bac-Lieu;

Vietnam should return all farmlands and property, which the Vietnamese confiscated by force to their rightful owners;

Montagnard Foundation Inc:

The Montagnard Degar refugees in Cambodia must not be repatriated to Vietnam until the credible international monitor system has been established to protect them;

Vietnam should release all of the Montagnard Degar prisoners especially those who have been arrested after our people's peaceful and non-violent demonstration in February 2001 and April 2004;

Vietnam should re-open all churches in Vietnam especially in the Central Highlands without any condition;

Tai Solidarity International:

Vietnam should abandon the Son La Dam project;

Vietnam should bring land and liberty back to the Tai people;

The United States Government should not favor the WTO accession of Vietnam while it violates human rights;

World Hmong People's Congress:

Vietnam should immediately stop all acts of military aggression against the Hmong people in Saisomboun Special Zone, Houaphan province and other restricted areas in Laos;

Vietnam should withdraw all military troops and intelligence officers from Laos;