



THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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Office of the Press Secretary
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Statement Condemning Sentencing of Political Prisoners in Syria and Vietnam

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

Political Prisoners in Syria and Vietnam

The United States condemns the recent sentencings of democracy activists Anwar al-Bunni and Kamal Labwani to long terms of imprisonment and is alarmed by reports that they have been subjected to inhumane prison conditions. These developments demonstrate that the Assad regime in Syria continues to suppress dissent and crack down on those who peacefully seek to defend their rights and bring democratic reform to their country. As the President stated last year, all political prisoners in Syria should be released immediately.

We similarly deplore the increasing incidence of arrest and detention of political activists in Vietnam, such as Nguyen Van Ly, Le Quoc Quan, Nguyen Van Dai and Le Thi Cong Nhan, for activities well within their right to peaceful expression of political thought. We were particularly disturbed by the Vietnamese authorities physically preventing citizens from attending meetings at the U.S. Ambassador's residence with a Member of the U.S. Congress. As Vietnam's economy and society reform and move forward, such repression of individuals for their views is anachronistic and out of keeping with Vietnam's desire to prosper, modernize, and take a more prominent role in world affairs.

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