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Media Release

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Obhrai calls on Vietnam to respect human rights and freedom of expression

(OTTAWA) Deepak Obhrai, M.P. and Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, today made the following statement in the House of Commons:

Over the past few months, Vietnam has been cracking down on peaceful political activists. Since March 30, seven Vietnamese activists have been found guilty in four trials and given jail sentences ranging from three years to eight years for spreading propaganda against the state.

These actions violate the principles of freedom of expression and tolerance for peaceful opposition. Canada calls on the government of Vietnam to release all political prisoners and to respect the international standards for human rights to which it has freely adhered.

Vietnam has a duty as an ASEAN member country and an increasingly engaged member of the international community to respect these fundamental rights.

Canada urges the Vietnamese government to respect an individual's right to a fair trial. The promotion and protection of human rights forms the central part of Canada's relationship with Vietnam. Canada will therefore continue to urge Vietnam to ensure that the right to freedom of expression and due process are fully respected.

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