



Deepak Obhrai, MP
Calgary East
Parliamentary Secretary to the
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Media Advisory

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Obhrai visits relatives of jailed Vietnamese democracy activist; calls on Vietnam to uphold democratic values

(OTTAWA) Deepak Obhrai, M.P. and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, upon the conclusion of his visit to Vietnam, told Parliament today that Canada stood ready to assist Vietnam, but the country needs to show its commitment to uphold human rights. He said:

“From November 16 to November 19, I joined the Governor General on a state visit to Vietnam. This visit was the first ever state visit to Vietnam. This visit was to continue establishing our growing relations in trade, education, and cultural ties.

While these ties are growing, nevertheless our concerns regarding human rights, the rule of law, religious freedom and the promotion of democracy remain. During our bilateral meeting with the President, I emphasized these principles as a major platform of our foreign policy. I also informed him of our plans to open an Office of Religious Freedom.

The next day, on our visit to Ho Chi Minh City, I then paid a call to the parents of Nguyen Tien Trung, who has been sentenced to 16 years for advocating more democracy. I inquired about Nguyen’s well being.

Mr. Speaker, Canada recognizes the desire of Vietnam to be a member of the international community. However, it needs to show it has taken concrete steps to address the shortcomings in human rights, the rule of law, religious freedom and promotion of democracy. Canada is ready to assist.”

Photo shows Parliamentary Secretary Deepak Obhrai with the father of jailed democracy activist Nguyen Tien Trung in Ho Chi Minh City.

-30-

For more information, contact Steven Vo in the Office of Deepak Obhrai, M.P. at (613) 947-4566

Ottawa Office:
Room 426N Centre Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6
Tel: (613) 947-4566
Fax: (613) 947-4569



Constituency Office:
Radisson Centre
Suite 225, 525-28 Street East
Calgary, AB
T2A 6W9
Tel: (403) 207-3030
Fax: (403) 207-3035