



# VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA

## Cộng Đồng Người Việt Tự Do Úc Châu

ABN: 51 934 809 450

26<sup>th</sup> September 2018

The Hon. Scott Morrison, MP  
Prime Minister of Australia  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

***RE: Australia's decision to fly the Australian flag at half-mast to mourn and pay respect to Tran Dai Quang, late President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV)***

We write to express our disappointment at the decision from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet to fly the Australian flag at half-mast to mourn and pay respect to Tran Dai Quang, late President of the SRV.

Tran Dai Quang presided over a regime with worsening track records on many fronts, including one of the worst environmental disasters in Vietnam's contemporary history, the passing of the cyber security legislation and the Special Economic Zones draft legislation that sparked the biggest and most sustained protests from the Vietnamese people.

The human rights and religious oppression track records during his term were shameful.

During his tenure, thugs like tactics proliferated and were widely used on peaceful protestors. These were reported by international bodies, particularly during the Formosa disaster in 2016 and, in recent months, the cyber security legislation.

The number of deaths in custody also increased which attracted concerns from the international community including Australia. Many human rights defenders and activists received some of the harshest jail sentences for speaking up in support of other vulnerable Vietnamese people. Mother Mushroom and Mrs Tran Thi Nga are prime and clear examples of such harsh treatment. They each received 10 and 9 years sentence respectively, including a combined 9 years of house arrest.

During the visit by former US President Obama, representatives of NGOs who were initially granted permission to meet with the US President were at the last minute driven around the country, some threatened, to not proceed with their meeting. He also interfered in another country's sovereignty,

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Trinh Xuan Thanh was kidnapped and repatriated from Germany. Furthermore, he spent millions to insert fear amongst the Vietnamese overseas all over the world including those of Vietnamese heritage in Australia to support their dictatorship regime.

It is a clear mark of disrespect of thousands of Australians of Vietnamese background who risked our lives escaping from this regime in search of the freedom and democracy Australia presents. It is a disregard of our contribution in this country and a display of insensitivity towards the people whose lives have been permanently traumatised by that regime. We are deeply disappointed of such decision.

We, Australians of Vietnamese background, call this country home, and our lived experience speaks volume. We understand what communists are like, we are concerning over the long term strategic infiltration/influence by dictatorship regimes such as Vietnam and China and the types of actions they undertake to achieve their influence. Watch what they do, not what they say.

We trust Australia to take greater care in considering the decision to fly our flag half-mast, the flag that represents freedom and democracy for the Australian people and should only be flown to pay respect to those really deserved it.

Once again, we express deep disappointment that such decision to fly our flag half-mast, on dictators and figures such as Tran Dai Quang.

Sincerely

Bon Nguyen  
President

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