

February 12, 2017

Parlement européen
Bât. Altiero Spinelli
15G205
60, rue Wiertz / Wiertzstraat 60
B-1047 Bruxelles/Brussel

Dear Mr. Pier Antonio PANZERI

I am writing to you on behalf of Thich Quang Do, the Supreme Head and Patriarch of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, and in anticipation of your impending visit to Vietnam as member of the European Parliament's Human Rights Sub-Committee.

For the past 14 years our community near Boston has worked tirelessly in seeking Thich Quang Do's unconditional release from prison (including what Vietnamese government officials euphemistically refer to as "pagoda arrest"). During this time we have written hundreds, if not thousands, of letters to Vietnamese government officials, the former President Obama, the Department of State, our congressional delegation, and to US based corporations doing business in Vietnam. Regrettably, Thich Huyen Quang died while still under pagoda arrest and unless something extraordinary can be accomplished very soon, the same fate is likely to be that of Thich Quang Do – an 88 year-old man in failing health.

Yet despite our lack of success what has sustained our continuing engagement is just who and what kind of person Thich Quang Do is and what he represents. Here is a man that reflects all that is best in human rights and what inspires individuals like myself to continue to seek his freedom. Notwithstanding years of imprisonment, oppression of religious and political beliefs, a highly restrictive physical containment within the pagoda, screening and surveillance of all outside contacts, and limited access to health services, he has nevertheless become an international symbol and inspiration for religious freedom and non-violence.

As part of your mission to Vietnam, I urge you to raise his case with government officials, and to assist our work in gaining his immediate and unconditional release.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,
