



July 16, 2004

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea

Dear Minister Ban Ki-Moon:

We write to seek your government's support for a non-governmental organization affiliated with the United Nations called the Transnational Radical Party (TRP), which last May was recommended for a suspension by the UN Committee on NGOs after the government of Vietnam lodged a formal complaint alleging terrorist ties. We understand that the Republic of Korea intends to abstain on this issue when it comes up for a vote at the ECOSOC session of July 21. We urge you to join with other democratic governments on ECOSOC to vote against the Vietnamese motion.

We have been aware of the work of this group for many years now, and in particular we have had the pleasure to work on several international issues with Member of the European Parliament Emma Bonino, one of the founders of the TRP, and former European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid. Ms. Bonino was also the Head of the Italian Delegation to the Second Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies held in Seoul in 2002.

We can assure you that the TRP is a group dedicated to the promotion of the rule of law and human rights through non-violent means and in full respect of the system of the United Nations and international law. We believe that the Vietnamese request to suspend TRP's Consultative Status for three years is unjust. In fact, the allegations presented are not only unfounded but also contradict the type of contribution that the TRP has been making on the issue of indigenous people in Vietnam's Central Highlands. Such an unsound dossier should not be accepted by governments that abide by the rule of law and that respect human rights. Moreover, should ECOSOC adopt the resolution against TRP, the UN's member states would send a worrying signal to the NGO community on the crucial issue of freedom of speech inside the United Nations system.

As representatives of groups actively involved in the Community of Democracies' process, we commend the work of the Government of the Republic of Korea on this issue, as well as its international commitment on issues pertaining to the promotion of democracy and the protection of human rights. For these reasons, we urge you to reconsider your position and fully support the TRP when its case comes up for a vote in July at the substantive session of the Council.

With our best wishes,

Theodore Piccone,
Executive Director
Democracy Coalition Project

Jennifer Windsor,
Executive Director
Freedom House

Adrian Karatnycky
Counselor
Freedom House

Richard Rowson,
President
Council for a Community of Democracies

Robert LaGamma,
Executive Director
Council for a Community of Democracies

CC: H.E. Mr. Kim Sam-hoon
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

H.E. Mr. Han Sung-Joo
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the United States