

Date _____

Dr H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono
President of the Republic of Indonesia
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Jakarta Indonesia
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Jakarta 10000
Tel: 62 21 3983 8488

Ref: The Memorial at Galang Island, Batam Islands

Dear His Excellency,

We are shocked to learn of the decision to demolish the memorial recently erected at Pulau Galang, the former refugee camp, to commemorate the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese boat people who perished in their quest for freedom as well as to thank the Indonesian people, the Indonesian Red Crescent Society and the Indonesian government for extending a helping hand in their hour of need.

In one simple act, this decision erases the ultimate sacrifice of people for freedom, and, thus, the sacred significance of freedom itself. This decision is wrong and should be detracted.

Further, this decision is a direct attack at freedom-loving people, especially former Vietnamese refugees worldwide, and most particularly more than 250 thousand Vietnamese boat people spending time in Pulau Galang, who have contributed greatly to make the world a better place. This decision is wrong and should be detracted.

Overseas Vietnamese communities worldwide have always acknowledged the much needed help from the Indonesian people and government. Overseas Vietnamese communities worldwide showed that gratitude by helping in every which way, including donating millions of US dollars to the tsunami relief efforts. Overseas Vietnamese communities worldwide consider Pulau Galang a sacred place worthy of visit and the memorial the ultimate expression of freedom and commemoration to hundred thousands of people who had perished. For many years Pulau Galang has been the pride not only to the Indonesians but also to all the overseas Vietnamese and the freedom-loving people around the world.

We respectfully request that the decision to demolish the memorial should be detracted so that freedom may be forever respected as well as the sacrifice of many hundred thousand boat people and the help of the Indonesian people may be forever remembered.

Very truly yours,
