



Community Update

U.S. Signs Repatriation Agreement with Vietnam

On January 22, 2008, the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency announced that the governments of the United States and Vietnam signed a repatriation agreement. According to the ICE press release, this agreement now makes it possible for those Vietnamese nationals who arrived in the United States on or after July 12, 1995, and are considered to be deportable to be deported to Vietnam. Prior to this, the Vietnamese government did not have a formal agreement with the United States to accept deportees from this country.

The ICE press release states that approximately 1,500 people could be affected by this agreement. While this press release has already received a great deal of media attention, it does not provide the full information needed to have an accurate analysis of those who will be affected. SEARAC is currently working to obtain information from ICE to further clarify the scope of this agreement.

We do not have information at this time that indicates that the signing of this agreement could mark the beginning of the deportation of Vietnamese refugees who came to the United States prior to July 12, 1995 and have final orders of removal. In addition, deportation agreements do not apply to legal permanent residents who have not committed any deportable offenses.

SEARAC has been actively involved with community advocates from around the country for years in the struggle to stop the deportation of refugees. We will continue to advocate on this issue and monitor future developments.

As SEARAC receives more information about the agreement that was just signed between the Vietnamese and the United States government, we will share the information on our listserv and website (www.searac.org). If you have additional information or have questions regarding this development, please share them with us. You may contact either Helly Lee at helly@searac.org or Naomi Steinberg at naomi@searac.org. Both may be reached at 202-667-4690.