



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

UNHCR
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Regional Representation in Washington

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Dear Dr. Maxner,

Congratulations on opening the newly processed Families of Vietnamese Political Prisoners Association (FVPPA) Collection for researchers on Wednesday, May 28, 2008. I commend the Vietnam Center and Archive, and the Vietnamese American Heritage Foundation on their work to preserve this collection and make it available to researchers. The FVPPA's documents will give researchers approximately 10,000 primary sources, first hand accounts, of Vietnamese immigrants and their experiences. The information gleaned from the FVPPA Collection will help historians understand the Vietnamese-American immigration experience, and help genealogists and families trace their family trees and understand their ancestors' journey to the U.S. The FVPPA's records preserve the voice of thousands of Vietnamese immigrants for future generations. The UNHCR is happy to have been a part of the Vietnamese-American immigration experience, and the contributions of Vietnamese-Americans to our nation.

Several million (2.5) Vietnamese refugees fled Vietnam by boat after the fall of Saigon in 1975. Many of these refugees perished at sea or were captured by Thai pirates. Alarmed by the high death toll and the dangerous conditions these refugees faced the UNHCR created the Orderly Departure Program (ODP). The UNHCR's ODP saved thousands of lives by creating a systematic, safe, and legal method for Vietnamese refugees to emigrate. In the United States alone, ODP successfully resettled nearly 500,000 Vietnamese refugees.

Sincerely,

With warmest personal regards,

Michel Gabaudan
Regional Representative UNHCR

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