

# Yanks in Saigon: Blue Christmas

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BANGKOK — Seven months ago, Americans left behind in Vietnam joked that because they missed the helicopters out, they might have to wait for Santa's sleigh. They aren't joking anymore.

There are 27 Americans known to remain in South Vietnam, mostly in Saigon. Most have exit visas and want to leave, but they almost certainly will be spending Christmas there.

The reasons are plainly political. Since the United States voted last August to keep Hanoi and Saigon out of the United Nations, only seven U.S. citizens have left South Vietnam.

Four were asked to leave or were expelled. One was allowed to leave because of medical problems and two others — Quakers — were allowed out because officials said their religious organization was "friendly" to the new government.

Diplomats in Bangkok are hopeful that those Americans who want to leave — about 15 have exit visas — will be allowed out before Dec. 25.

"But we are hopeful the South Vietnamese may decide to stage a "spectacular" and release these people before Christmas," said a diplomatic source close to the issue.

That hope appears dim.

Although the Provisional Revolutionary Government has denied holding Americans "hostage," the fact remains that they are not being allowed out.

A contract worker who missed the evacuation has had his exit visa extended four times. "It looks like I will be stuck for some time to come," he said in a recent letter.