



# REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN VIETNAM 2024-2025

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK



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# INTRODUCTION

Unprecedented events in 2024–2025 have fundamentally altered Vietnam’s political climate 80 years into Communist Party rule. Never before has an internal purge at the highest levels been carried out on such a scale, resulting in the departure of seven members of the Politburo, including two State Presidents, a National Assembly Chair, and dozens of the CPV Central Committee members holding various important positions.

Behind the pretext of fighting corruption lies the political ambition of the head of the police force, To Lam, who is now the CPV’s General Secretary.

However, this was more than an internal purge; this event signals To Lam’s broader effort to consolidate personal power and advance the CPV’s totalitarian agenda. By mobilizing an unprecedented police apparatus—comprising approximately 200 generals, more than 300,000 police officers, and 1.5 million paramilitary personnel and local militia forces—he has systematically silenced public dissent.

Under the guise of streamlining the state apparatus, the Ministry of Public Security has seized several essential functions from other ministries. The Ministry of Public Security’s budget for 2025 is projected to exceed 160 trillion VND (equivalent to 6.2 billion US dollars) – an increase of more than 42% compared to 2024- and is comparable to the budgets of 15 other ministries, excluding the Ministry of National Defense.

With its powerful personnel and resources, the Ministry of Public Security has clamped down on voices dissenting from the CPV’s policy. The number of dissidents arrested and prosecuted increased compared to previous years, particularly during the 50th anniversary of the occupation of South Vietnam and during the preparations for the National Congress of the CPV and the 16th National Assembly elections. According to our records, at least 125 dissidents were arrested and prosecuted under the undemocratic and vague provisions of the 2015 Criminal Code, including 56 people charged under Article 331,<sup>1</sup> 22 under Article 117,<sup>2</sup> and 17 under Article 109.<sup>3</sup>

The length of prison sentences for the same crime has doubled compared to previous years.

The Vietnamese people are deprived of fundamental civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, even though in February 2024, in its report to the UN Human Rights Council during the fourth Universal Periodic Review, Vietnam had pledged to “Enhancing measures, policies and resources to better ensure that all human rights, including economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights, are enjoyed in accordance with internationally recognized standards;...”<sup>4</sup>

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1 Article 331. Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, lawful rights, and interests of organizations and/or citizens.

2 Article 117. Making, storing, spreading information, materials, items for the purpose of opposing the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

3 Article 109. Activities against the people’s government.

4 Vietnam’s National Report submitted to Working Group on the Fourth Universal Periodic Review, p. 18 (22 February 2024)

To provide an accurate picture of the gap between Vietnam’s commitments and the reality of the human rights situation in Vietnam during 2024 and 2025, this report will present the situation in various areas based on the criteria of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights:

- The right to life, liberty, and security of person
- The right to a fair trial by an independent and impartial court
- The right to participate in national political life
- The right to freedom of expression and freedom of information
- The right to freedom of religion and belief
- The right to work and enjoy the fruits of one’s labor
- The right to equal treatment without discrimination
- The right to well-being

For further reference, the report also includes three appendices. The first appendix lists dissidents arrested and prosecuted in 2024 and 2025. The second appendix is a list of political and religious prisoners currently held in Vietnamese communist prisons. The third appendix presents brief biographies and achievements of the Vietnam Human Rights Award recipients in 2024 and 2025.

This report was completed through the collaboration of the Vietnam Human Rights Network and many human rights activists in Vietnam. We sincerely thank these individuals who, despite the dangers, selflessly assisted us in completing this meaningful work.

To enhance the transparency of the report’s content, we have supplemented it with open data sources that can be accessed for further research. The electronic edition’s database URLs were verified valid on the publication date.

In addition to presenting the current human rights situation in Vietnam, we also propose feasible measures for the Vietnamese authorities to ensure that the Vietnamese people can soon enjoy the fundamental rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights three-quarters of a century ago.

The Vietnam Human Rights Network also calls on international human rights organizations and governments to encourage and pressure Vietnam to act as a responsible member of the international community, especially as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Governments with diplomatic and economic ties to Vietnam should boldly raise specific cases of human rights violations in their human rights dialogues with the Vietnamese government before addressing more general issues such as trade or other forms of aid.

# VIETNAM COUNTRY PROFILE

**GEOGRAPHY:** The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a country in Southeast Asia, bordered to the North by China, to the west by Laos and Cambodia, to the southwest by the Gulf of Thailand, and to the east and south by the East Sea (the South China Sea). There are more than 2,800 large and small islands and two large archipelagos of Hoang Sa and Truong Sa. The total area is 331,698 km<sup>2</sup>. Vietnam's current population is about 102 million people. It is the 16th most populous country in the world.

**HISTORY:** The 1954 Geneva Accords terminated the French presence in Vietnam. They divided the country into two states with the 17th parallel as their common border: the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) to the South and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) to the North. Shortly after the 1954 Geneva Accords, North Vietnam, under the dominance of the Communist Party of Vietnam, launched the Vietnam War to invade South Vietnam. In April 1975, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's victory resulted in the dissolution of the Republic of Vietnam's government and the unification of the two rival states into the new Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

**POLITICS:** The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a one-party state. It is one of only five remaining communist regimes in the world. The Constitution, amended in 2013, assures the monopoly of the Communists through Article 4.1: "The Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) [...] is the leading force of the State and society." The General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam is Mr. To Lam, formerly a Police General and Minister of Public Security. The government consists of three branches: the Legislative (National Assembly), the Executive (Administration), and the Judiciary (People's Courts). In practice, however, these branches are dominated by the CPV, with about 5.6 million members. The National Assembly and People's Councils are elected by popular vote, yet the CPV must approve candidates. Every political organization unaffiliated with the CPV is prohibited.

**ECONOMY:** Since the Doi Moi (Renovation) policy in the 1980s, Vietnam has pursued a more pragmatic economic strategy than in previous decades, a "socialist-oriented market economy." Vietnam's economic activity has undergone many changes, driven by foreign aid and investment. Many production and trade facilities have sprouted up. However, state intervention in the economy is still very high. In 2025, the Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) showed a relative increase compared to the years following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this increase in the PMI actually reflects the production situation of foreign-invested enterprises, not the entire economy. Vietnam remains a contract manufacturing economy.

**SOCIAL:** Vietnam has 54 ethnic groups, of which the Kinh people make up over 85%. The official language is Vietnamese. The vast majority of people have religious beliefs. Most are practitioners of ancestor worship; many are Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, Bahá'í faithful, and followers of indigenous religions such as Hoa Hao Buddhism and Cao-Daism. A small number describe themselves as atheists, of whom most are CPV members. Although the urban population has grown over the past decade, Vietnam remains an agricultural country, with about 62% of its population still living in rural areas. Although per capita income has increased over the past decade, the gap between the rich and the poor is widening. Countryside residents, especially those living in remote localities, are disadvantaged in many areas, including income, education, and healthcare. Over the past 30 years, fertility in Vietnam has nearly halved. The population is aging rapidly, and the sex imbalance at birth is very high.

# THE RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY, AND SECURITY OF PERSON

## 1. DEATH PENALTY

### 1.1. Death Penalty Statistics Are State Secrets.

As in previous years, the Vietnamese government has not officially announced the number of death sentence executions that the government considers national secrets; those who accidentally or intentionally violate them can be sentenced to up to 15 years in prison (Articles 337, 338 Criminal Law).

However, the indirect sources also partly show the situation of the death penalty in Vietnam in recent years.

In the report sent to the National Assembly on the work of the Procuracy from October 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Procuracy Le Minh Tri said that 338 people were sentenced to death during this period.<sup>1</sup>

According to a report by Harm Reduction International, at least 113 people were sentenced to death for drug crimes in Vietnam in 2024, including at least six women and seven foreigners.<sup>2</sup>

Other government documents also indirectly indicate that the number of people sentenced to death will continue to increase in 2024-2025. According to General Luong Tam Quang, Minister of Public Security, "the number of new and current detainees continues to increase and is at a high level, especially those sentenced to death."<sup>3</sup>

### 1.2. The Situation of Death Row Inmates

In addition to the lack of cells and cramped cells, death row inmates are often shackled while awaiting execution. Circular No. 39/2012/TT-BCA dated July 4, 2012, of the Ministry of Public Security, "the death row inmate cell must be built solidly (according to the uniform form of the Ministry of Public Security), ensuring enough light, with shackles." This shackling provision goes against the UN Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners.

### 1.3. Mass Death Sentence

Another concern is that multiple death sentences from a single court session still happen too

1 Pháp Luật. *VKSND Tối cao trình Chủ tịch nước ân giảm án tử hình với 31 bị án*

2 Harm Reduction International. *The Death Penalty for Drug Offences: Global Overview 2024*

3 Nhân Dân. *Tội phạm về tham nhũng, kinh tế, buôn lậu vẫn diễn biến phức tạp*

frequently. For example:

- On April 26, 2025, the Ho Chi Minh City People’s Court sentenced nine defendants to death for illegal drug trafficking.<sup>4</sup>
- On December 27, 2024, Ho Chi Minh City People’s Court sentenced 35 defendants for drug-related crimes, including 27 death sentences. This trial is a drug case with the largest number of people sentenced to death ever in Ho Chi Minh City.<sup>5</sup>
- On December 14, 2024, Ho Chi Minh City People’s Court sentenced 15 defendants in a drug trafficking and illegal possession ring, including 12 death sentences.<sup>6</sup>
- On January 22, 2024, Nghe An Provincial People’s Court sentenced 11 defendants in a case of illegal drug trafficking and transportation, including nine death sentences.<sup>7</sup>
- On January 5, 2024, the People’s Court of Lang Son province sentenced 11 defendants for drug-related crimes. The result was seven death sentences.<sup>8</sup>

#### 1.4. Methods of Executing the Death Penalty

Since 2013, Vietnam has replaced firing squads with lethal injections using domestically produced poison. Scientifically, there has never been any report on the effectiveness of Vietnam-made poisons for executions, which means that reduced suffering for the condemned is far from guaranteed. In early 2022, the Vietnamese Communist Government proposed to use robots to execute death sentences.<sup>9</sup>

#### 1.5. Irregularities in the Legal Process Led to the Death Penalty.

People have concerns about the continued increase in death sentences, and flaws in criminal proceedings have led to unjust sentences. In recent years, among the unfair cases have been the high-profile death sentences of Hồ Duy Hải, Nguyễn Văn Chương, Lê Văn Mạnh, Đặng Văn Hiến, and two land petitioners of Đồng Tâm Commune, Lê Đình Công and Lê Đình Chức. Lawyers and even government officials considered those cases did not have sufficient evidence and involved reliance on forced confessions under police torture, subsequently contradicted by retractions.

#### 1.6. Reducing the Number of Crimes That Carry the Death Penalty.

During the 2024 Periodic Review of Vietnam, 35 countries made recommendations related to the death penalty. These recommendations include “Consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty; cease immediately all executions and institute a moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its eventual abolition; decrease the number of crimes subject to the death

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4 VnExpress. *9 người bị tuyên tử hình trong vụ chuyển 91 kg ma túy về Việt Nam*

5 Người Lao Động. *27 người bị tuyên án tử hình trong đường dây của kẻ mang bí danh “Colombia”*

6 ANTV. *Tuyên 12 án tử hình trong đường dây mua bán, tàng trữ hơn 200 kg ma túy*

7 Nhân Dân. *Tuyên án tử hình 9 bị cáo trong đường dây ma túy xuyên quốc gia*

8 Kinh tế Đô thị. *Nhiều bị cáo nhận án tử hình khi xét xử đường dây mua bán ma túy*

9 HỒLLTƯ. *Đổi mới, nâng cao hiệu quả công tác thi hành án hình sự, đáp ứng yêu cầu xây dựng, hoàn thiện nhà nước pháp quyền XHCN Việt Nam.*

penalty, and abolish the death penalty for all crimes.”<sup>10</sup>

Although disagreeing with most of those recommendations, due to the need to integrate into the world economy, on June 25, 2025, the Vietnamese National Assembly amended the Criminal Code. It approved the abolition of the death penalty for eight out of 18 crimes. From July 2025, the following crimes will still be subject to the death penalty: treason (Article 108); rioting (Article 112); terrorism against the people’s government (Article 113); murder (Article 123); rape of a person under 16 years of age (Article 142); illegal production of narcotics (Article 248); illegal drug trafficking (Article 251); terrorism (Article 299); crimes against humanity (Article 422); war crimes (Article 423).<sup>11</sup>

### 1.7. Commutation of Death Sentence

Regarding the number of death sentences commuted, in 2024-2025, Presidents Vo Van Thuong and Luong Cuong commuted the death sentences to life imprisonment for 16 death row inmates in 3 amnesty periods.<sup>12</sup> Compared to the previous two years, this number has decreased by more than half (16 vs 38).

## 2. POLICE BRUTALITY

### 2.1. Police Brutality Is Increasing.

Vietnam’s report to the UN on the implementation of the Convention against Torture dated March 25, 2024, stated: “Viet Nam has been and will continue to pay attention to, direct and carry out the work of ensuring human rights, especially in rigorously implementing the UNCAT and the other basic human rights conventions of which Viet Nam is a member.”<sup>13</sup> However, with the rise of the police force and the police state policy in Vietnam in the past two years, police brutality in public places has become increasingly fierce, with more ruthless operative manners.<sup>14</sup>

### 2.2. Deaths in Police Custody

More worrying is the torture that leads to death in detention camps. According to the Ministry of Public Security’s admission, in the four years up to November 13, 2024, there were 86 cases of prisoners dying in detention “not due to illness.”<sup>15</sup> The following are some typical cases of suspects being tortured to death in detention camps recorded in the past two years:

- On December 15, 2025, the police of Tam Ky Ward, Da Nang City, summoned Mr. Nguyen Thanh Trung, born in 1982, to the police station for questioning. That same night, the police informed

10 U.N. General Assembly. *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - Viet Nam*

11 Thư viện Pháp luật. *10 tội danh còn áp dụng án tử hình từ ngày 01/07/2025*

12 Tuổi Trẻ. *Chủ tịch nước quyết định ân giảm hình phạt tử hình xuống tù chung thân cho 10 người bị kết án tử hình tại trại tạm giam Công an tỉnh Lào Cai.*

- Tuổi Trẻ. *Chủ tịch nước Võ Văn Thương đã ký quyết định ân giảm hình phạt tử hình xuống tù chung thân cho 5 bị án.*

- Công Lý. *Quảng Ninh công bố quyết định ân giảm án tử hình 1 người*

13 U.N. Digital Library. *Second periodic report submitted by Viet Nam under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2024: Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*

14 Thanh Niên. *Công an đánh người*

15 Tiền Phong. *Bộ Công an thông tin số lượng phạm nhân ‘chết không do bệnh lý’ trong các trại giam*



*Mr. Vu Hoang Phu and a photo of his older brother Vu Minh Duc with a bruised body. On August 12, 2025, the Dong Nai Provincial People's Court sentenced Luu Quang Trung (a former investigator of the Long Thanh District Police) to 15 years in prison for "using torture" under Article 373 of the Criminal Code. Photo from Phu Tu's Facebook.*

Mr. Trung's family that he had "committed suicide by jumping from a building" at the Tam Ky Ward police station.<sup>16</sup>

- On September 3, 2025, Vinh Hau Commune Police, An Phu District, An Giang Province, informed the family of Mr. Vuong Van Tha, an independent Hoa Hao Buddhist who was serving a 12-year sentence for anti-state propaganda at An Phuoc Prison, that Mr. Tha had died of 'suicide' in prison. However, when the family came to receive the body for burial, the prison refused and did not present an autopsy certificate. The police forced the family to sign a commitment not to post information related to Mr. Tha's death on social media; otherwise, they would "be arrested at any time."<sup>17</sup>
- On May 23, 2025, Mr. Phan Xuan Trang (born in 1991) was found hanging at the Duc Co district police station, Gia Lai province, while being detained for investigation of the crime of organizing illegal drug use.<sup>18</sup>
- On January 5, 2025, while handling a prisoner who violated detention regulations, a group of 5 police officers from Kien Giang Provincial Prison committed acts of violence against prisoner

16 Người Việt. Ông Đà Nẵng, 'gia đình cách mạng,' chết trong đồn công an

17 RFA. Tù nhân chính trị Vương Văn Thà chết khuất tất trong tù, công an cấm gia đình đưa tin

18 Dân Trí. Công an thông tin việc một bị can tử vong khi đang tạm giam

Phung Thai C. Hau (36 years old, residing in Vinh Thanh Van Ward, Rach Gia City, Kien Giang Province). According to the investigation results, the victim died due to the violent acts of the group of 5 police officers above.<sup>19</sup>

- On July 6, 2014, Tan Lap Commune Police, Moc Chau District, Son La Province, took Mr. H.V.X. (31 years old) to the commune police headquarters to investigate a fight with someone in a pub. The next day, Mr. X's relatives went to the police station to ask to see Mr. X, but the police said he had been taken to the hospital and had died.<sup>20</sup>
- On March 22, 2024, Mr. Vu Minh Duc, 31 years old, was invited to Long Thanh District Police for investigation due to his involvement in a case of disturbing public order. He later passed away, and according to the medical records of Cho Ray Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City, Mr. Duc died from acute liver, kidney, and soft tissue damage to the right and left thighs. On September 5, 2024, the Supreme People's Procuracy Investigation Agency initiated a case of torture and identified Mr. Luu Quang Trung, a former lieutenant and investigator of Long Thanh District Police, as the suspect.<sup>21</sup>
- The case of torture causing death that has received special attention from the world public is the murder of a Tibetan monk in Ho Chi Minh City in late March 2024. Tulku Hungkar Dorje Rinpoche, a highly respected Tibetan leader, while avoiding the pursuit of the Chinese authorities, passed away while being detained by Vietnamese police in Ho Chi Minh City. His body was cremated without the consent of his family, and the Vietnamese government did not provide the family with an autopsy certificate. This case was not just a regular case of death by torture by the police, but the result of a cross-border plot between China and Vietnam to destroy the opposition.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. AN INHUMANE PRISON SYSTEM

#### 3.1. Torture in Detention Centers

Corporal punishment and torture have been used to subdue prisoners in Vietnamese communist prisons. First, inmates are forced to work hard all day, yet they are not entitled to the fruits of their labor. The work, which includes stone crushing, timber logging, farming, and brick-making, is both difficult and dangerous. Second, despite strenuous work, prisoners must live in deplorable conditions: shelter, food, sanitation, and health. However, the worst is the harsh punishments prison guards use to demoralize prisoners who dare to demand fair treatment.<sup>23</sup>

#### 3.2. Harsh Treatment of Political Prisoners

Particularly for political prisoners, inhuman treatment is carried out even more systematically. In addition to forced labor, they are usually subject to additional sanctions, such as transfer to faraway prison camps, prohibition of visits, disciplinary isolation, suspension of medical treatment, beatings by the prison police or by criminal prisoners directed by them, etc.

<sup>19</sup> Pháp Luật. *5 cán bộ Trại tạm giam dùng nhục hình khiến phạm nhân tử vong*

<sup>20</sup> Tuổi Trẻ. *Một thanh niên tử vong tại trụ sở công an xã ở Sơn La.*

<sup>21</sup> VnExpress. *Cựu trung úy cảnh sát bị bắt vì 'dùng nhục hình'*

<sup>22</sup> Free Tibet. *Tibet groups condemn cremation of deceased Tibetan Lama in Vietnam without family consent following his death in custody; demand international investigation.*

<sup>23</sup> RFA. *Tình trạng tù nhân trong các trại giam ở Việt Nam.*

Currently, prisoners of conscience with long prison sentences such as Pham Doan Trang and Nguyen Tuong Thuy are detained at An Phuoc prison in Binh Duong province, 1,500 km away from their families; prisoner Truong Minh Duc is in prison No. 6 in Nghe An province, 1,400 km away from his family; prisoner Trinh Ba Phuong is in An Diem prison in Quang Nam, 800 km away from his family.

In 2024-2025, the Mass media disclosed many cases of assault and mistreatment of prisoners of conscience:

- In May 2025, political prisoner Le Dinh Luong was held in solitary confinement for protesting against prison regulations despite his critical health.<sup>24</sup>
- In November 2024, prisoner of conscience Nguyen Doan Quang Vien, serving a 14-year prison sentence for “activities aimed at overthrowing the people’s government,” suffered from severe tuberculosis and was in critical health, but was still not allowed to go to the hospital for treatment.<sup>25</sup>
- On April 30, 2025, prisoner of conscience Bui Tuan Lam was disciplined by being held in solitary confinement with shackles on his feet for 10 days. Previously, Mr. Lam had been shackled twice.<sup>26</sup>
- On February 22, 2025, former prisoner of conscience Vu Van Thuan was released 8 days early, in critical condition in an ambulance. He attributed his current state of health to the harsh disciplinary measures he endured during his detention.<sup>27</sup>
- On June 22, 2024, prisoner of conscience Truong Van Dung was disciplined by being held in a disciplinary cell and shackled on one leg for seven days.<sup>28</sup>
- On May 10, 2024, prisoner of conscience Dang Dang Phuoc was detained in a disciplinary cell for 10 days. He was then returned to his cell and allowed to see his family only once every two months, rather than once a month, until he was “recognized for progressive reform.”<sup>29</sup>
- On March 26, 2024, prisoner of conscience Hoang Duc Binh was disciplined by solitary confinement and shackled.<sup>30</sup>
- On February 16, 2024, prisoner of conscience Phan Tat Thanh told his family that he was tortured in Chi Hoa detention camp.<sup>31</sup>

More worryingly, there are prisoners of conscience serving sentences who are considered missing. According to ICC International Christian Concern, 11 Vietnamese Christians, sentenced to a total of 90 years and 8 months in prison for religious activities, have recently mysteriously disappeared, raising concerns about the government’s treatment of religious minorities in Vietnam.<sup>32</sup>

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24 RFA. *Tù nhân chính trị Lê Đình Lương bị biệt giam vì phản đối trại giam vi phạm quy định*

25 RFA. *Tù nhân chính trị Nguyễn Đoàn Quang Viên bị lao phổi nặng nhưng không được chữa trị đúng mức.*

26 Sài Gòn Nhỏ. *Tù nhân Bùi Tuấn Lâm bị hành hạ cùm chân 10 ngày*

27 RFA. *Cựu tù nhân chính trị tố cáo bị trại giam hành hạ đến suy kiệt sức khỏe Được thả rồi vẫn không thể chữa trị*

28 Đất Việt. *Tù nhân lương tâm Trương Dũng bị cùm chân trong trại giam*

29 RFA. *TNLT Đặng Đăng Phước bị kỷ luật biệt giam 10 ngày*

30 RFA. *Bốn tù nhân lương tâm tố trại giam An Diêm ngược đãi*

31 RFA. *Cựu quân trị viên Fanpage “Nhật Ký Yêu Nước” tố bị tra tấn trong trại tạm giam*

32 ICC. *11 Imprisoned Vietnamese Christians Missing*

On August 5, 2025, the Vietnam Human Rights Network and Defend the Defenders, in a Joint Statement, highlighted the mistreatment that prisoners of conscience are suffering, especially the denial of necessary medical care, and called on the Vietnamese communist government to comply with the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Convention).<sup>33</sup> The following day, Human Rights Watch also called on Vietnam to release activists detained in dangerous health conditions.<sup>34</sup>

Instead of responding to the legitimate demands of human rights organizations, the Vietnamese communist government, in the months leading up to the 14th National Congress of the CPV, has intensified its repression of dissidents even in prison. On September 29, 2025, the People's Court of Da Nang City sentenced prisoner of conscience Trinh Ba Phuong to an additional 11 years in prison on charges of "conducting propaganda against the State."<sup>35</sup> On October 1, 2025, the People's Court of Ninh Binh Province sentenced prisoner of conscience Do Minh Hien to an additional 18 months in prison on charges of "resisting a person on official duty."<sup>36</sup>

## 4. HUMAN TRAFFICKING

### 4.1. Human Trafficking Is Increasing.

On June 24, 2024, the US State Department released its 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report, which raised Vietnam to Tier 2 and removed it from the "Watch List." However, the report also raised concerns about Vietnam's failure to investigate government officials complicit in human trafficking.

The US State Department ranking Vietnam to Tier 2 and removing it from the "Watch List" does not reflect the reality of human trafficking in Vietnam, partly because Vietnam has distorted information that is unfavorable to it, but primarily because of the US's willful ignorance due to its diplomatic strategic needs.<sup>37</sup>

In fact, according to Vietnamese government figures, human trafficking in Vietnam has increased in recent years, although these figures are only the tip of the iceberg.

In 2022, human trafficking increased by 10.26% compared to the previous year, according to a report by Ms. Le Thi Nga, Chairwoman of the Judicial Committee of the National Assembly of Vietnam.<sup>38</sup>

In 2024, the number of human trafficking cases investigated nationwide was 163, involving 455 suspects and 500 victims.

In the first 6 months of 2025 alone, the authorities prosecuted and investigated 120 human trafficking cases with 365 suspects.<sup>39</sup>

33 VNHRN. *Joint Statement by the Vietnam Human Rights Network and Defend The Defenders on August 05, 2025, about the Escalating Repression of Prisoners of Conscience in Vietnam*

34 HRW. *Vietnam: Free Imprisoned Activists at Medical Risk*

35 ABC News. *Vietnamese dissident gets 11 more years for criticizing Communist Party in prison*

36 VNTB. *Tù nhân lương tâm Đỗ Minh Hiền bị thêm một án tù*

37 Project 88. *Is The State Department Helping Vietnam Get Away With Human Trafficking?*

38 Lao động. *Vụ Việt Á đã khởi tố 89 bị can; Tân Hoàng Minh lừa đảo hơn 8.000 tỉ đồng.*

39 VNExpress. *Tội phạm mua bán người gia tăng, công an chỉ cách tránh 'bẫy'*

Not only has the number of human trafficking crimes increased, the situation of human trafficking crimes in Vietnam has also had many new developments since 2021: the number of male victims increased from 16% to 64%; the number of Kinh victims now accounts for the majority, up to 78%; and the number of victims sold to China has decreased to only 12% of the total number of victims, the rest are sent to Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Myanmar.<sup>40</sup>

Human trafficking in Vietnam can be classified into two groups: domestic human trafficking and cross-border human trafficking.

## 4.2. Domestic Human Trafficking

**4.2.1.** The most common victims of domestic human trafficking are poor and uneducated young women in rural areas. Economic development in recent decades has been primarily concentrated in urban areas, widening the gap between the rich and the poor and between urban and rural residents. Many girls from poor families in rural areas, sometimes as young as 14-15 years old, are lured with the promise of working as maids in refreshment shops, but in reality, they are working as waitresses and then as prostitutes. These girls want to quit their jobs but cannot, because they may be home detained and locked up.<sup>41</sup>

**4.2.2.** The trafficking of newborns has also increased alarmingly in recent years. Many networks operate by approaching pregnant women who, due to economic or family circumstances, do not want to raise their children, connecting with people who need children. The babies that are sold are not always raised as promised. There are large-scale organized networks involving many criminals and victims. For example, in August 2024, security agencies discovered a newborn trafficking network disguised as an adoption operation involving 84 cases of newborns showing signs of being trafficked in 32 provinces and cities.<sup>42</sup>

**4.2.3.** Luring young people who need jobs to exploit their labor and torture them on fishing boats is a relatively new form of human trafficking that has appeared in some southern coastal border provinces. Some young men with no previous experience at sea were tricked into working on fishing boats and exploited by the owners. Many were unable to work because they were not used to the living conditions on the ships and were brutally beaten and abused by their owners.<sup>43</sup>

**4.2.4.** Organ trafficking, especially kidneys, has increased in recent years due to the increasing demand for buying and selling kidneys and the growing gap between the rich and poor in society. Many wealthy patients seek to buy kidneys from living people at any price through dishonest intermediaries, and many destitute people are willing to sell a part of their body to survive. In addition, the development of social networks has also made it easier to find kidney sellers and kidney buyers, right under the noses of security agencies.<sup>44</sup>

At the Scientific Conference on Donation Registration and Prevention of Buying and Selling Human Organs, organized by the Ministry of Health in February 2023, a representative from the Criminal Police Department (Ministry of Public Security) stated that the police have discovered hundreds,

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40 Báo Chính Phủ. *Cảnh báo thủ đoạn mua bán người: Nạn nhân bị ép lừa đảo trực tuyến*

41 VOV. *“Gái hát” hay nạn nhân của tội phạm buôn người?*

42 Vietnamnet. *Thủ đoạn tinh vi của đường dây mua bán trẻ sơ sinh tại 32 tỉnh, thành*

43 Biên Phòng. *Giải cứu nhiều lao động bị “lừa đi biển” trong đường dây mua bán người*

44 Tiền Phong. *Triệt phá đường dây mua bán thận giá tiền tỷ*

if not thousands, of people/groups trafficking in organs.<sup>45</sup> According to an analysis by the Harvard International Review, Vietnam is one of three countries classified as “Kidney Valley”; the other two countries are Nepal and Indonesia.<sup>46</sup>

### 4.3 Cross-Border Human Trafficking

Human trafficking from Vietnam to other countries has two primary purposes: sexual exploitation and labor exploitation.

#### 4.3.1. Sexual exploitation abroad

Although the country of destination of transnational human trafficking for forced marriage and sexual exploitation has changed in recent years, China remains at the top of the list from the previous decade. According to a report by the Ministry of Health, of the 8,500 confirmed victims of human trafficking from 2012 to early 2025, 98% were trafficked to China. Of the women trafficked abroad, 80% were for forced marriage and sexual exploitation.<sup>47</sup>

In recent years, security forces have discovered many cases of cross-border trafficking of women to Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, and the Middle East to be forced to serve in brothels.

European Union security agencies have also broken up many trafficking routes of Vietnamese women to several European countries for sexual exploitation. In particular, in the UK, according to statistics from the British government, the number of Vietnamese women reported on the list of sexually exploited victims increased by 177% from 43 victims in 2023 to 119 victims in 2024.<sup>48</sup>

Another form of human trafficking for sexual exploitation is called “foreign brides.” Transnational marriage is normal today. However, in Vietnam, many transnational marriages have the indicators of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. In the past decades, there have been stage performances of young women in some Vietnamese cities for future Korean, Taiwanese, or Chinese grooms to choose their wives, just like the slave markets of ancient times. With the development of mass media, foreign grooms can now select their future wives through pictures provided by brokers. The future bride and groom have never met and have no feelings for each other. They only agree to get married through bargaining. According to statistics, the vast majority (78%) of women who marry foreigners come from poor families, have low education levels, and are unemployed.<sup>49</sup>

It is worth noting that, apart from a few happy exceptions, such arranged marriages often lead to heartbreaking outcomes. For example, in South Korea, where 32.1% of the 15,624 marriages to foreign women in 2024 were from Vietnam,<sup>50</sup> the level of violence against foreign wives was up to 42% according to a survey by the National Human Rights Commission of South Korea.<sup>51</sup>

45 Công Thương. *Cảnh báo loại tội phạm mua, bán, chiếm đoạt nội tạng cơ thể.*

46 Erlisa Demneri. *Harvard International Review. For Sale: The Pervasive Organ Trade in Asia*

47 VNExpress. *80% phụ nữ bị lừa bán để làm cô dâu, bóc lột tình dục*

48 UK Home Office. Official Statistics. *Annex: An analysis of NRM referrals and DtN reports for potential victims of modern slavery, 2023 to 2024*

49 Cổng Thông tin điện tử Chính phủ. *70.000 phụ nữ ĐBSCL lấy chồng nước ngoài.*

50 The Korea Herald. *Divorces between South Korean men and Vietnamese women soar to 13-year high*

51 CNN. *South Korean authorities encourage men to marry foreign women. But their brides often become victims of abuse*

In recent years, many Vietnamese brides in China and South Korea have been tortured, abused, handed over to other men, and eventually run away, living alone in foreign lands, being taken to brothels, murdered, or committing suicide.<sup>52</sup>

#### **4.3.2. Exploitation of Labor Abroad**

Although the Vietnamese economy, according to the Hanoi government, has achieved an impressive average GDP growth rate of 6.37% and has become one of the fastest-growing economies in Southeast Asia,<sup>53</sup> the employment situation in Vietnam's processing economy remains unsatisfactory. Every year, the government continues to prioritize labor export, and the problem of illegal labor export remains a growing concern. According to statistics from state management agencies, approximately 700,000 Vietnamese workers are currently employed in 40 countries and territories. In 2024, Vietnam sent nearly 159,000 workers abroad for employment. Both official and illegal labor export have resulted in labor exploitation to varying degrees and in different forms.

**4.3.2.1.** For working abroad officially, that is, through the intermediary of state-run brokerage companies, candidates must pay a considerable amount of money for brokerage services and other expenses such as foreign language tuition, airfare, visa fees, accommodation fees, health insurance fees, etc. These expenses are always beyond the candidate's affordability, and the family must borrow money, and sometimes mortgage the house. Upon arrival, the contract is canceled or expires unpaid for some reason. Many workers stay behind and become illegal workers, with all the dangers of being undocumented workers in foreign countries, such as being exploited and chased by the police. According to the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs, up to 6% of contract-based workers are in this situation. In South Korea, this figure is 31.07%, according to statistics from the Ministry of Justice.<sup>54</sup>

**4.3.2.2.** Illegal overseas labor migration has continued to increase in recent years, despite the tragic discovery of 39 Vietnamese victims suffocated to death in a refrigerated truck container in the UK in October 2019, which shocked the world.

In the UK, where the tragedy occurred, the number of Vietnamese people crossing the English Channel in small boats from mainland Europe to the UK has skyrocketed since the beginning of 2024, with 1,060 people, accounting for 14% of the total number of arrivals. According to British media, Vietnamese people are now the largest community crossing the English Channel.<sup>55</sup>

According to UK government statistics, in 2024, the number of Vietnamese citizens classified as victims of human trafficking in the UK increased by 118% compared to the previous year, from 988 to 2,153 people, and ranked 3rd, after British citizens and Albanian citizens.<sup>56</sup> In Ireland, according to a report by the Garda National Protection Service, the number of Vietnamese asylum seekers was 36 in 2023, skyrocketing to 251 in 2024, and in 2025 (as of October 2, 2025) reached 520. All

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52 Tuổi Trẻ. *Thêm 1 cô dâu Việt chết trên đất Hàn: “Chồng con đánh nữa rồi, ba ơi!...”*

53 VnEconomy. *Đổi mới kinh tế, tạo đột phá tăng trưởng trong Kỳ nguyên mới*

54 Thanh Niên. *Bảo động tăng lao động bất hợp pháp tại Hàn Quốc*

55 Info Migrants. *Behind the surge in Vietnamese Channel crossings to the UK*

56 UK Home Office. Official Statistics. *Annex: An analysis of NRM referrals and DtN reports for potential victims of modern slavery, 2023 to 2024*



*On February 24, 2025, 40 undocumented Vietnamese workers were handed over to Vietnam by the Cambodian authorities. (Photo: Tạp chí Đông Nam Á)*

are speculated to be victims of human trafficking.<sup>57</sup>

Although the debt to pay off human trafficking rings is very large (such as the debt of Ms. Tra My's family, one of the 39 victims who died in a container truck in the UK, up to 950 million VND, equivalent to \$36,000), illegal workers often face rape, abandonment, starvation, and beatings. If they are lucky enough to reach the destination, most are forced to do jobs they do not want. They only do manual labor such as washing dishes, gardening, babysitting, manicuring, selling smuggled cigarettes, and growing cannabis. Moreover, all of them work secretly and illegally. Because they work illegally and do not dare to contact local authorities, they are always victims of workplace violence.

In 2024-2025, there was an explosion of human trafficking through Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos, and the Philippines to serve in casinos and online fraud centers. Security forces in these countries have broken up a number of these fraud organizations and rescued tens of thousands of victims, including thousands of Vietnamese citizens.<sup>58</sup> These victims were lured by human trafficking rings to these countries for easy jobs with high-paying opportunities. Upon arrival, they were cut off from their families, had their passports confiscated, and were forced to lure customers into depositing money into fake investments through mass media platforms. They were forced to work continuously, sometimes 16 hours a day, and had to meet targets; otherwise, they were beaten, starved, and electrocuted. Many victims were tortured to death.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Ailbhe Conneely (RTÉ). *Trafficking concerns amid rise in Vietnamese seeking international protection*

<sup>58</sup> BBC. *Hàng trăm người Việt trong nhóm nạn nhân được giải cứu khỏi ổ lừa đảo ở Myanmar*

<sup>59</sup> Mạch Sóng Media. *Những câu chuyện kinh hoàng trong ổ lừa đảo ở Campuchia*

#### 4.4. Responsibility of The Vietnamese Government for Cross-Border Human Trafficking

Vietnamese government documents always confirm that “there are complicated developments, increasing compared to the same period last year” when talking about human trafficking.<sup>60</sup>

However, to address this alarming situation, apart from organizing pretentious seminars and creating false reports to lower the number of victims and to promote the government’s efforts, Vietnam has yet to have any concrete responses.

The government still refuses to acknowledge that illegal labor export is human trafficking, even though the actions of brokers meet all the elements of human trafficking under the Vietnamese Criminal Code as well as the Palermo Protocol.

State officials not only ignore but also encourage the illegal actions of government-managed brokerage companies that send people abroad to work, with the consequences being human trafficking.

The government not only does not help but also exploits the victims. For example, Vietnamese citizens tricked into criminal dens in Myanmar must pay 12.2 million VND to the Vietnamese Consular Department to cover the cost of returning home. Those who do not have the advance payment cannot return home.<sup>61</sup>

In the case of organizing the repatriation of workers during the COVID pandemic, Vietnamese officials forced workers to pay money to return home, even though the state nominally covered all costs.<sup>62</sup>

On September 19, 2025, the Ministry of Health, in coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Vietnam, launched a hotline to prevent human trafficking, funded by the UK Home Office.<sup>63</sup> In fact, this 111 hotline is a child protection hotline established in 2013 with funding from the Japanese government, and now has the additional function of anti-human trafficking. The irony is that Vietnam needs foreign financial aid to achieve this. Yet, it remains proud of its economy, which is among the top 20 leading economies in terms of trade, with import-export volume reaching nearly \$ 800 billion by the end of 2024.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Vietnam should:

- Minimize crimes that can be sentenced to the death penalty with a view to its definitive abolition; publish information on the application of the death penalty.
- End arbitrary detention and all forms of torture, in particular for persons in detention; accept the visit of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.
- Implement concrete measures to end human trafficking in all its forms and adequately support victims of human trafficking.

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60 VietnamNet. *Tội phạm mua bán người có chiều hướng gia tăng*

61 VNTB – *Giải cứu công dân: CSVN tranh thủ cơ hội kiểm tiền, kiểm danh*

62 VietnamNet. *Lời khai chia nhau tiền hối lộ trong vụ ‘chuyến bay giải cứu’*

63 Sài Gòn Giải phóng News. *Vietnam launches national hotline 111 to combat human trafficking*

## II THE RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL BY AN INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL COURT

In June 2025, the National Assembly of Vietnam passed several law amendments related to the judicial sector, such as: Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Civil Procedure Law, Administrative Procedure Law, Law on Organization of People’s Courts, Law on Organization of People’s Procuracy, Law on Juvenile Justice, Bankruptcy Law, and Law on Mediation and Dialogue in Court. These are what Vietnam considers achievements in the judicial sector aimed at protecting human rights more effectively.

However, in practice, human rights violations in the judicial field continue to manifest themselves through the following features:

- A judiciary subject to the power of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV),
- Violations of basic principles of the criminal procedure code,
- A corrupt judicial system, and
- The elimination of the lawyer’s right to defense.

### 1. A JUDICIARY SUBJECT TO THE POWER OF THE CPV

#### 1.1. A Politicized Judiciary

Vietnamese communists are very inconsistent when explaining the position of the judiciary in the state apparatus. On the one hand, because of the need for international integration, they promote the idea of an independent judiciary as an essential condition of a socialist rule-of-law state; on the other hand, to protect the absolute leadership role of the Communist Party, they still advocate that “judicial power is political: the CPV is the leading force in judicial power. This is a special characteristic of judicial power in our country.”<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.2. The Organization and Personnel of the Judiciary Are All Subordinate to the CPV.

In reality, from the staff to the organization and management, the entire Vietnamese judicial system depends on the CPV. All judges, prosecutors of the Procuracy, and investigators of the Police Investigation Agency must be members of the CPV. Moreover, the heads of these agencies are also the heads of the party system of the related organization. For instance, in the court

<sup>1</sup> Tòa án Nhân dân Điện tử. *Về quyền tư pháp và chế độ tư pháp ở Việt Nam*

system, Mr. Nguyen Van Quang, Secretary of the Da Nang City Party Committee, was appointed by the CPV to the position of Secretary of the Supreme People’s Court Party Committee on November 4, 2025, and was elected by the National Assembly to the position of Chief Justice of the Supreme People’s Court, even though he has no experience in adjudication. Mr. Nguyen Quoc Doan, Deputy Chief Justice of the Supreme People’s Court, a member of the Party Central Committee, and former Secretary of the Lang Son Provincial Party Committee, is also a person who has never held a position in the judicial field.

In the Procuracy system, Mr. Nguyen Huy Tien, Chief Justice of the Supreme People’s Procuracy of Vietnam, is also Secretary of the Party Committee of the Supreme People’s Procuracy.

As members of the CPV, judges and prosecutors never have independence in the performance of their duties, especially in political cases involving defendants who are opponents of the current regime.

## 2. VIOLATIONS OF BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE CRIMINAL PROCEDURE CODE

In reality, continual violations of the principles of the procedure throughout the criminal proceedings—from arbitrary arrest to the fabrication of evidence, forcible testimony, obstruction of lawyers, and cursory trials with predetermined verdicts—have made a mockery of the procedure. Suspects are often tortured during interrogation and isolated from their families and lawyers.

### 2.1. Arbitrary Arrest

Police searches and arrests, even if they are not in an emergency, are not exceptions. They are not limited to those caught in the act of committing a crime or to those wanted. In most such cases, the local/commune police do not present an arrest warrant issued by the People’s Procuracy or the Investigation Agency. People, on the one hand, do not understand the law; on the other hand, they are too scared to let themselves be taken to the police station.

To suppress dissidents, religious and environmental activists, the Government can create any excuse that the criminal code allows, such as “tax evasion,” “sabotaging solidarity policies,” “abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, the rights and legitimate interests of organizations and individuals,” etc., to legitimize arbitrary arrests.

Temporary detention often exceeds the statutory time limit without charges being filed or evidence and witnesses being presented. Additionally, detainees are prohibited from contacting their families and lawyers.

During 2024-2025, there were at least 125 cases of arbitrary detention of dissidents, minority rights activists, and followers of religions not subject to government control [see Appendix I]. During the same period, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) issued official opinions on six cases of arbitrary detention involving journalist Pham Chi Dũng, President of the Independent Journalists Association of Vietnam;<sup>2</sup> independent media activist

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<sup>2</sup> WGAD. *Opinion No. 39/2024 concerning Phạm Chí Dũng (Viet Nam)*

Nguyen Lan Thang;<sup>3</sup> two Khmer Krom rights activists, To Hoang Chuong and Thach Cuong;<sup>4</sup> and two online human rights activists, Phan Tat Thanh<sup>5</sup> and Nguyen Chi Tuyen.<sup>6</sup>

In the above documents, UN human rights experts said that the Vietnamese Government violated fundamental principles of International Human Rights Law by arresting human rights activists, prosecuting them under vaguely worded articles of the Criminal Code, failing to follow due process, sentencing them disproportionately, and denying access to the outside world.

## 2.2. Interrogational Torture

Unjust sentences are often the result of coercion, extortion, and the use of corporal punishment. In all those cases, the court decided the verdicts before the trials based on confessions obtained through physical and mental torture, disregard of rebuttal evidence, witnesses' persuasive counter-arguments, and the accused's retraction and petitions.

The use of torture to the point of death is not uncommon. According to the report of Lieutenant General Tran Trong Luong, Deputy Director General of the General Department of Crime Prevention and Control, at the meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on March 19, 2025, there were 226 cases of death in detention centers and temporary detention camps from October 1, 2011, to September 30, 2014.<sup>7</sup>

To prevent coercion, torture, and humiliation, the Government has planned to record audio and video during interrogations of suspects starting in 2018. However, in May 2022, the Ministry of Public Security took a step backward in developing audio and video recording procedures during interrogations, proposing amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code to narrow the scope of such recordings during the interrogation of suspects.<sup>8</sup>

Currently, audio and video recordings during criminal investigations are not made automatically. Logistical support for audio and video recording in criminal proceedings remains inconsistent. Many localities still lack equipment for audio and video recording.

The participation of representatives from the Procuracy and lawyers during the arrest of the suspect is almost entirely overlooked by the security investigation agency. On April 15, 2025, the Government issued Resolution 88/NQ-CP abolishing the investigation agency of the Supreme People's Procuracy in the system of criminal investigation agencies. Thus, there are only two criminal investigation agencies: the Investigation Agency of the People's Public Security and the Investigation Agency of the People's Army.<sup>9</sup> The monopoly of investigation by the police and the army makes the transparency and objectivity of the proceedings hypothetical.

In some trials, many defendants have courageously denounced being beaten, tortured, and forced to confess by investigators during their detention and temporary detention, such as the

<sup>3</sup> WGAD. *Opinion No. 51/2024 concerning Nguyễn Lan Thắng (Viet Nam)*

<sup>4</sup> WGAD. *Opinion No. 30/2025 concerning To Hoang Chuong and Thach Cuong (Viet Nam)*

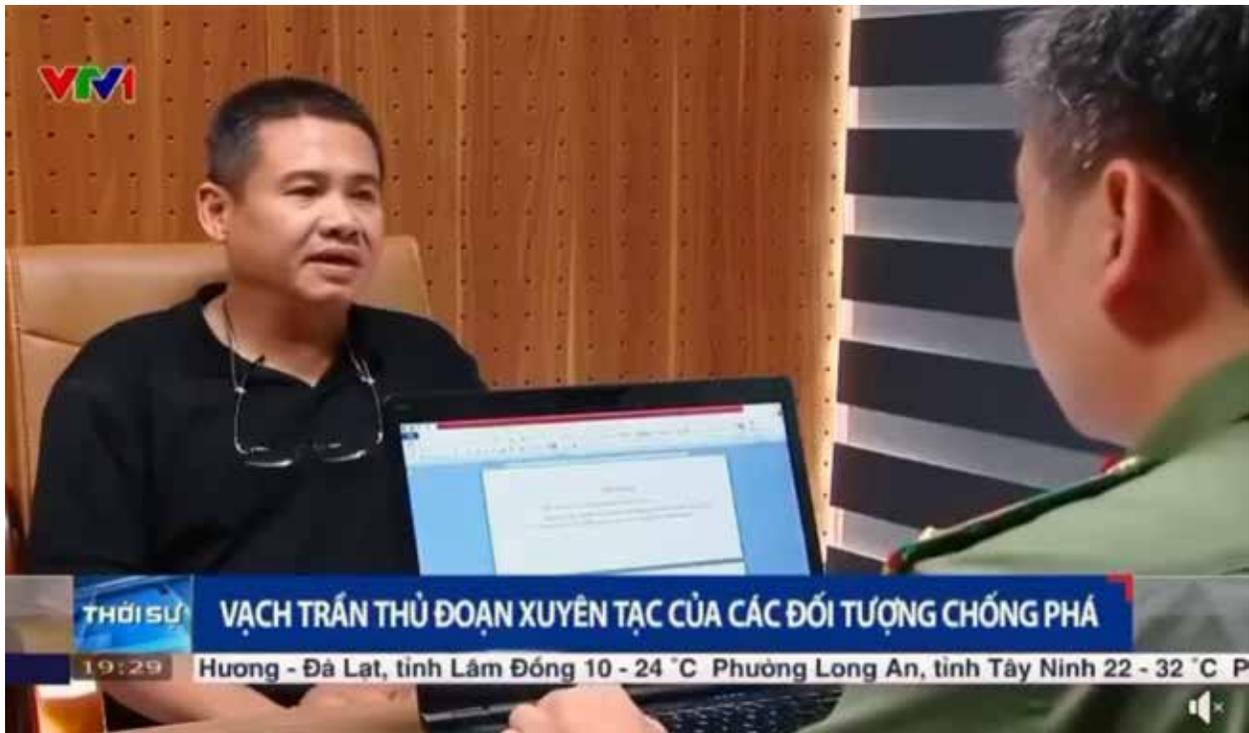
<sup>5</sup> WGAD. *Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its 103rd session, 25–29 August 2025*

<sup>6</sup> WGAD. *Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its 103rd session, 25–29 August 2025*

<sup>7</sup> Người Lao Động. *Nhiều tố cáo bức cung, nhục hình*

<sup>8</sup> Tiền Phong. *Nhận diện những thuận lợi, khó khăn trong thực tiễn triển khai công tác ghi âm hoặc ghi hình có âm thanh trong hỏi cung bị can.*

<sup>9</sup> Thư viện Pháp luật. *Thống nhất bỏ cơ quan điều tra của Viện kiểm sát nhân dân tối cao*



*On December 28, 2025, national television (VTV) broadcast a report showing Mr. Do Van Nga, a democracy activist, confessing to the police during interrogation. (Image captured from VTV)*

case of prisoner of conscience Phan Tat Thanh, in the trial on May 8, 2024, of the People's Court of Ho Chi Minh City. However, the judge sided with the prosecutor and refuted that.

### 2.3. Forced Confessions on Television

Forcing convicted individuals to confess and publicly beg for leniency from the state on television programs is a form of coercion that has long been used by Vietnamese security agencies, particularly for political offenses. In 2024 and 2025, there were two notable cases:

- On December 29, 2025, activist Y Quynh B'Dap, after being extradited to Vietnam from Thailand, confessed on national television (VTV) to "directing" the terrorist attack in Dak Lak in 2023 and stated that he was not tortured by the police.<sup>10</sup>
- On December 28, 2025, Mr. Do Van Nga, a collaborator with the Thoi Bao newspaper run by Mr. Le Trung Khoa in Germany, after being kidnapped, confessed on national television (VTV) that he had written articles slandering the Vietnamese Government solely for financial gain, and asked the state for leniency.<sup>11</sup>

### 2.4. The judgment Was Decided before the Trial.

Most court trials are conducted summarily within one day, sometimes lasting only a few hours. If present, the lawyer's role is likely for embellishment, as the deliberation time is usually shorter than the time required to read the verdict, indicating the court had likely prepared the judgment in advance.

<sup>10</sup> Luật Khoa Tạp Chí. *Y Quỳnh B'đáp thú tội 'chỉ đạo' khủng bố, nói công an 'không đe dọa'*

<sup>11</sup> BBC Tiếng Việt. *'Thủ tội trên truyền hình' trước phiên tòa xét xử ông Lê Trung Khoa, Nguyễn Văn Đài*

The defense of lawyers, if any, is never heard by the judge. Many trials lack lawyers or have limited defenses; family members are not allowed to attend. Trials of dissidents fall into one or both of these cases; for example,

- On October 30, 2024, blogger Duong Van Thai, who was allegedly kidnapped by Vietnam while seeking asylum in Thailand, was sentenced to 12 years in prison for “propaganda against the state” in a closed trial in Hanoi.<sup>12</sup>
- On August 15, 2024, after five months of detention without being allowed to contact his lawyer and family, activist Nguyen Chi Tuyen was tried by the Hanoi People’s Court and sentenced to 5 years in prison on charges of “propaganda against the state”. During the trial, the lawyers and Mr. Tuyen requested that the court summon experts from the Hanoi Department of Information and Communications to testify about the content of the video clips as evidence; however, the experts were on leave.<sup>13</sup>
- On June 27, 2024, a court in Hanoi sentenced environmental activist Ngo Thi To Nhien to three years and six months in prison in a closed trial.<sup>14</sup>
- On January 26, 2024, the People’s Court of Phu Yen province sentenced religious freedom activist Nay Y Blang to four years and six months in prison for “abusing democratic freedoms” in a trial without a defense lawyer.<sup>15</sup>

## 2.5. The Mobile Courts Sessions Continue.

In contrast to the hasty and secret trials mentioned above, the open-air mobile trials, reminiscent of the horrific denunciations during the Land Reform period, continue to be held despite the absence of any legal regulation. On average, the court system conducts about 3,000 mobile trials nationwide each year.<sup>16</sup>

In its National Report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21 on February 22, 2024, Viet Nam stated: “Since 2018, the mandatory requirement for courts to hold mobile trials has ceased, to ensure human rights better, the presumption of innocence, the right to counsel, and the right to a fair trial.”<sup>17</sup>

In fact, mobile courts continued into 2024-2025. For example, in 2024, Hung Yen Province established 52 mobile courts.<sup>18</sup> Ha Tinh Province organized 31 mobile courts in 2014.<sup>19</sup>

Some mobile courts were live-streamed to many places, such as on July 12, 2024, the mobile court in Long Son commune, Anh Son district, Nghe An province was live-streamed to 89 out of 98 communes of 6 districts: Ky Son, Que Phong, Quy Chau, Tuong Duong, Con Cuong, Anh Son.<sup>20</sup>

12 RFA. *Blogger Đường Văn Thái bị kết án 12 năm tù giam trong phiên tòa kín*

13 RFA. *Youtuber Nguyễn Chí Tuyền bị tuyên 5 năm tù vì các video chống tham nhũng*

14 RFA. *Dự án 88: Chuyên gia năng lượng sạch Ngô Thị Tố Nhiên bị kết án 3,5 năm tù giam*

15 RFA. *Nhà hoạt động tôn giáo Nay Y Blang bị tuyên bốn năm sáu tháng tù, không có luật sư bào chữa*

16 Luật sư Việt Nam. *Một góc nhìn về xét xử lưu động vụ án hình sự.*

17 Viet Nam. *National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21*; Viet Nam, p.8.

18 Hung Yên. *Năm 2024, TAND 2 cấp trong tỉnh giải quyết, xét xử 4.716 vụ việc*

19 Tòa Án Nhân Dân. *TAND tỉnh Hà Tĩnh tổ chức Hội nghị tổng kết, triển khai công tác năm 2025*

20 Công Lý. *Xét xử lưu động trực tuyến - bước đổi mới trong công tác tuyên truyền pháp luật*



*On May 11, 2023, the People's Court of Van Quan District, Lang Son Province, held a mobile court session at Luong Van Tri High School to try the defendant Vy Nhat Hoang, born in 2003, for the crime of intentionally causing injury. (Image from Van Quan District Website)*

Several mobile courts were held at schools; for example, on December 13, 2024, the Lang Son City People's Court conducted a mobile trial of two criminal cases at Viet Bac High School, with the participation of 700 students, teachers, and school staff.<sup>21</sup>

In recent years, many people have suggested abolishing mobile trials because they violate the dignity of the defendants, put heavy pressure on their families, and blatantly disregard the principle of innocent presumption. At such mobile court trials, defendants often do not have the opportunity to defend themselves, while the judges are under tremendous pressure from the mob. The courts usually return the verdicts with sentences incommensurate with the offenses after just a few hours of deliberation - even for cases resulting in the death penalty. Defendants are often victims of the court system even before their trials begin.

### 3. A CORRUPT JUDICIAL SYSTEM

Judicial bribery and corruption are prevalent and pervasive evils in the current Vietnamese judicial system. This phenomenon has been increasing, particularly in recent years, when the state's economic reform policy has created conditions conducive to corruption.<sup>22</sup> In its Directive dated November 13, 2024, on strengthening the prevention and control of crimes and law violations in the People's Procuracy sector, the People's Procuracy admitted that "the situation of violations and crimes occurring in judicial activities continues to increase."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Báo Lạng Sơn. *Thành phố: Gần 700 phiên tòa lưu động xét xử hai vụ án hình sự*

<sup>22</sup> Người Đưa Tin. *Chạy án.*

<sup>23</sup> Thư viện Pháp luật. *Viện Kiểm sát Nhân dân Tối Cao. Số:04/CT-VKSTC. Chỉ Thị về tăng cường công tác phòng, chống tội phạm và vi phạm pháp luật trong ngành Kiểm sát nhân dân*

In 2024-2025, social media has exposed numerous instances of court corruption and bribery. The following typical cases are not exceptions, as the Government justifies, but are just the tip of an enormous iceberg.

- On May 31, 2025, the Supreme People’s Procuracy’s Investigation Agency issued an investigation conclusion proposing to prosecute 23 defendants in the cases of “bribery”, “bribery brokerage”, and “bribery acceptance” that occurred at the High People’s Court in Da Nang. Among the defendants proposed for prosecution are judges, prosecutors, and lawyers working at many local courts. Mr. Pham Viet Cuong, in his position as Deputy Chief Justice of the High People’s Court in Da Nang, received bribes totaling more than VND 8.6 billion across multiple cases.<sup>24</sup>
- On February 26, 2025, Mr. Le Van Hong Chinh, a former judge of the People’s Court of Giong Rieng District, Kien Giang Province, was sentenced to 3 years in prison for accepting bribes when resolving a property dispute case.<sup>25</sup>
- On December 13, 2024, the Investigation Agency of the Supreme People’s Procuracy prosecuted and temporarily detained Mr. Nguyen Tan Duc, Chief Justice of the Criminal Court of Dak Lak Province, to investigate the crime of “accepting bribes”, and Mr. Vu Van Tu, judge of the People’s Court of Dak Lak Province, for the crime of “giving bribes.”<sup>26</sup>
- On September 21, 2024, the Investigation Agency of the Supreme People’s Procuracy prosecuted and temporarily detained Nguyen Thi Cam Thu, former Judge and Chief Justice of the Administrative Court of Kien Giang province, for the crime of “Receiving bribes”.<sup>27</sup>
- On August 26, 2024, former Judge Vo Dinh Som was sentenced to 15 years in prison by the Gia Lai Provincial People’s Court for the crime of “receiving bribes” when assigned to try a land dispute case.<sup>28</sup>
- On August 13, 2024, the Investigation Agency of the Supreme People’s Procuracy arrested Mr. Tran Hoang Ty, Judge of the People’s Court of Ngoc Hien District, Ca Mau Province, to investigate the act of accepting bribes.<sup>29</sup>
- On April 12, 2024, the Trial Council of the People’s Court of Quang Ninh Province sentenced the defendant Do Huu Ca, former Director of Hai Phong Police, and 12 defendants in the case of illegal trading of invoices, tax evasion, accepting and running a case.<sup>30</sup>
- On March 14, 2025, the People’s Court of Gia Lai Province sentenced Mr. Bui Viet Minh Quan, former Deputy Chief Justice of the People’s Court of La Pa District, Gia Lai Province, to 15 months in prison for accepting bribes, and Mr. Nguyen Duy Sam to 6 months in jail for giving bribes.<sup>31</sup>

24 Thanh Niên. *Cựu Phó chánh án TAND cấp cao tại Đà Nẵng bị cáo buộc nhận tiền ‘chạy án’*

25 Tiền Phong. *Nhận hối lộ tại nhà riêng, cựu thẩm phán lĩnh 3 năm tù*

26 Tuổi Trẻ. *Bắt chánh tòa hình sự tỉnh Đắk Lắk vì nhận hối lộ*

27 Xây dựng Chính sách, *Pháp luật. Khởi tố cựu Chánh Tòa hành chính, bắt quả tang thẩm phán nhận hối lộ*

28 Tuổi Trẻ. *Cựu thẩm phán nhận hối lộ 500 triệu đồng lãnh án 15 năm tù*

29 Nhân dân. *Bắt một thẩm phán tại Cà Mau vì nhận hối lộ*

30 Tuổi Trẻ Thủ Đô. *Cựu Giám đốc Công an TP Hải Phòng bị tuyên án 10 năm tù*

31 Pháp Luật. *Tuyên án thẩm phán nhận hối lộ và người đưa hối lộ*

## 4. THE RIGHTS OF LAWYERS ARE CONSTANTLY UNDER THREAT

### 4.1. The Vietnam Bar Federation is under the Direction of the CPV

The current Charter of the Vietnam Bar Federation, in its Preamble, affirms: “The Vietnam Bar Federation is a unified national socio-professional organization of Bar Associations and Vietnamese lawyers; under the leadership of the CPV...”

That dependence is reflected in the organization and leadership of the Bar Federation and bar associations nationwide. The current President of the Vietnam Bar Federation is Mr. Do Ngoc Thinh. He is also the Secretary of the Vietnam Bar Federation Party Cell under the Party Committee of the Fatherland Front, and a National Assembly Delegate. The model of Party Secretary cum President of Bar Associations is applied to all bar associations in provinces and cities across the country.

### 4.2. Lack of Morally Upright and Competent Lawyers

In addition to dependence on the CPV, lawyers are generally still inexperienced and lack a high level of professional awareness and solid professional skills. According to data from the Vietnam Bar Federation, as of December 31, 2024, the country had 19,799 members, up from 18,016 in the previous year.<sup>32</sup>

Although the number of lawyers has increased in recent years, the majority are concentrated in big cities, especially Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi (accounting for more than 66% of the country). People in remote areas often lack access to legal services. In mountainous regions of the North and the Central Highlands, the number of law practice organizations is very small (about 3.8% of the total in the country).<sup>33</sup>

Lawyers’ primary activity is litigation; however, the number of cases they represent is relatively small. At the first instance stage, about 7% of cases have defense lawyers; at the appeal level, about 23.4%; and at the final instance level, only about 1.36% of cases have lawyers representing.<sup>34</sup>

### 4.3. Basic Rights of Lawyers Are Disregarded and Violated.

In the current criminal proceedings, the fundamental rights of lawyers, such as the right to participate in the investigation process, the right to access and collect evidence, the right to make requests and complaints, and the right to participate and debate in court, exist only in theory.

In daily business, lawyers in Vietnam today are confronted with obstruction from the investigative police, the Procuracy, and even the Trial Panel. A lawyer must obtain a defense counsel’s certificate from the investigating authority to represent a client. This annoying procedure creates an ask-and-give relationship between the lawyer and the investigating agency. Therefore, the 2015 Criminal Law Procedure Code replaces the defense counsel’s certificate with the defense registration procedure. However, it is merely “old wine in a new bottle” because, in political cases, lawyers can contact clients and access files only after the prosecuting agency has completed its

<sup>32</sup> Liên đoàn Luật sư Việt Nam. *Tổng kết hoạt động năm 2024 và triển khai công tác năm 2025*

<sup>33</sup> Bộ Tư Pháp. *Báo cáo số 339/BC-BTP ngày 16/8/2024 tổng kết thi hành Luật Luật sư.*

<sup>34</sup> Đại Biểu Nhân Dân. *Luật sư tham gia tố tụng góp phần giảm oan, sai*



*On January 10, 2025, the Hanoi People’s Court sentenced lawyer Tran Dinh Trien to 3 years in prison for “abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, the legitimate rights and interests of organizations and individuals,” under Art. 331 of the Criminal Code. (Photo: VNA)*

investigation.

Lawyers are also not free to contact and advise clients, collect evidence, and attend during the investigation period. All these rights are subject to the consent or disapproval of the prosecuting agency at all times. In court, the jury rarely pays attention to the defense presented by the lawyer; on the contrary, the judge often prevents lawyers from speaking on behalf of their clients. The lawyer’s duty in most cases is only to ask for leniency for the client.<sup>35</sup>

Lawyers defending victims of injustice or dissidents often face hostility from the Government. In recent years, many human rights lawyers have been sentenced to long prison terms, such as Le Thi Cong Nhan, Nguyen Van Dai,<sup>36</sup> Le Quoc Quan,<sup>37</sup> and Le Cong Dinh;<sup>38</sup> or have had their licenses revoked, such as Vo An Don;<sup>39</sup> or have been assaulted, such as Tran Thu Nam and Le Van Luan;<sup>40</sup> or have been chased and forced to flee abroad, such as the three human rights lawyers Dang Dinh Manh, Nguyen Van Mieng, and Dao Kim Lan.<sup>41</sup>

Similar cases have continued to occur against lawyers in the past two years:

- On January 10, 2025, lawyer Tran Dinh Trien, former Vice President of the Hanoi Bar Association, was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, the rights and legitimate interests of organizations and individuals.” Lawyer Tran Dinh Trien is a famous lawyer with cases confronting the

35 An Ninh Thủ Đô, *Luật sư chỉ định, có cho đủ... thù tặc*,

36 Người Lao Động. *Nguyễn Văn Đài 5 năm tù, Lê Thị Công Nhân 4 năm tù*

37 Tuổi Trẻ. *Y án sơ thẩm, phạt Lê Quốc Quân 30 tháng tù*

38 VTV Online. *Lê Công Định bị phạt tù 5 năm*

39 RFA. *Luật sư Võ An Đôn và chuyện bị đàn áp vì bảo vệ người yếu thế ở VN*

40 Thanh Niên. *Hai luật sư bảo vệ Đỗ Đăng Dư bị côn đồ hành hung: ‘Nhiều vấn đề chưa được làm rõ’*

41 VOA. *Bộ Ngoại giao Mỹ lên tiếng về việc ba luật sư nhân quyền Việt Nam đến Mỹ*

Government, notably the case of Dr. Cu Huy Ha Vu (2010), who was sentenced to prison on charges of anti-state propaganda, and the famous land repossession case in Tien Lang, Hai Phong (2012), in which the victim was Mr. Doan Van Vuon. Mr. Trien was prosecuted for his opinion about Chief Justice of the Supreme People’s Court Nguyen Hoa Binh, which he posted on his Facebook account under the name “Tran Dinh Trien”.<sup>42</sup>

- On September 4, 2024, Lawyer Bui Van Khang, from the Nam Dinh Provincial Bar Association, was sentenced to 2 years in prison by the An Giang Provincial People’s Court on charges of distorting, slandering, and insulting the Supreme People’s Court’s leadership. According to the indictment, in October 2021, he and Ms. Phan Ngoc Dững, who owns the YouTube channel Voice of the People, participated in online discussions and talks. Mr. Khang’s task was to answer questions and provide legal advice to everyone participating in the debate. The hot topic of the discussions was the wrongful conviction of death row inmate Ho Duy Hai, a case that the public and even many National Assembly deputies voiced their opposition to because of unconvincing investigative evidence. In this case, Ms. Dững was also sentenced to 3 years in prison.<sup>43</sup>

What is more worrying is that on June 11, 2025, the Government issued Decree 121/2025/ND-CP, which regulates the decentralization and delegation of powers in the Ministry of Justice’s state management. Accordingly, starting from July 1, 2025, the Chairman of the Provincial People’s Committee has the right to grant, revoke, and re-issue certificates of practicing law, which were previously under the authority of the Minister of Justice. Lawyers in Vietnam have expressed concerns about irregularities in the new regulation, particularly the risk of conflict of interest in administrative proceedings, where the defendant has the right to revoke the plaintiff lawyer’s practicing certificate.<sup>44</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Vietnam should:

- Respect *the International Criminal Justice Standards*;
- Purge the ranks of judges at all levels with professional competence standards;
- Fully comply with *the UN Fundamental Principles on the Role of Lawyers*.

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42 Vietnam Plus. *Y án hình phạt 3 năm tù đối với bị cáo Trần Đình Triển*

43 VNExpress. *Luật sư bị phạt tù vì xúc phạm lãnh đạo TAND Tối cao*

44 Tạp chí Luật sư Việt Nam. *Bàn về phân quyền cấp, thu hồi Chứng chỉ hành nghề luật sư theo Nghị định 121/2025/ND-CP*

### III

## THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL POLITICAL LIFE

The 1993 Constitution stipulates, “Citizens have the right to participate in the management of state affairs through elections” (Articles 27 and 28), and the rights to freedom of speech, assembly, association, and demonstration” (Article 25). However, Article 4 of this Constitution asserts the Communist Party of Vietnam’s (CPV) absolute leadership over all national activities.<sup>1</sup> The late General Secretary of the CPV, Nguyen Phu Trong, affirmed that the Constitution is “the most important political and legal document after the Party Platform.”<sup>2</sup> Because of this contradiction and the intention to maintain a political monopoly at all costs, all provisions on political rights stated in Articles 20 and 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Vietnam has committed itself to upholding, are nullified.

### 1. ELECTIVE INSTITUTIONS ARE ONLY TOOLS OF THE CPV

#### 1.1. The Election Results Were Predetermined.

Like many countries globally, Vietnam regularly organizes elections for various government posts at all levels. The Constitution specifies that the National Assembly is Vietnam’s highest institution for representing the people, appointing government officials, and making laws. However, with the existing electoral and parliamentary processes, it is merely an instrument of the CPV.

Unlike democratic elections, in which the results depend on the voters’ choices, the results of the 16th National Assembly election scheduled for March 15, 2026, are known in advance. On May 16, 2025, the Politburo issued Directive No. 46-CT/TW emphasizing “Do not include in the candidate list people who show signs of political opportunism, ambition for power, conservatism, factionalism, localism, and regionalism.” To implement this Directive, on April 16, 2025, National Assembly Chairman Tran Thanh Man presented the composition of the next National Assembly, which must include 40% full-time representatives, 10% under 40 years old, 30% re-elected representatives, 35% female representatives, and 18% ethnic minority representatives.<sup>3</sup> In short, although the people have not yet participated in the election, the CPV has predetermined the political ideology and composition of the National Assembly.

1 “The Communist Party of Vietnam - the Vanguard of the working class, concurrently the vanguard of the laboring people and Vietnamese nation, faithfully representing the interests of the working class, laboring people and entire nation, and acting upon the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and Ho Chi Minh Thought, is the force leading the State and society.” (Article 4 of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam 2013)

2 VNExpress. *Tổng bí thư: ‘Đề phòng thế lực muốn xóa bỏ điều 4 Hiến pháp’*.

3 Tuổi trẻ và Pháp luật. *Quốc hội khóa mới dự kiến bầu 500 đại biểu, khoảng 30% tái cử*

## 1.2. Screening Candidates before Elections

In the National Assembly elections, all applicants must be screened by the Fatherland Front, a CPV front organization, through the “Consultative Conference” and the “Voter Conference” at the central and local levels.

For the 2021 National Assembly election, according to the final official list following the third consultation, there are 866 candidates nationwide, of whom nine are self-nominated.<sup>4</sup> Eight of the nine self-nominated candidates are senior party members, of whom four are current members of the National Assembly. The only person who advised against being a Party member is Mr. Luong The Huy. The Government has aggressively advertised him as gay, as if the Government wanted to show the world that gay people would not be discriminated against in Vietnam. Meanwhile, the authorities arrested four dissidents who intended to apply for candidacy: Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh<sup>5</sup> and Mr. Le Trong Hung<sup>6</sup> were detained on charges of “spreading documents aimed at opposing the state”; Mr. Nguyen Quoc Huy<sup>7</sup> and Mr. Nguyen Van Son Trung<sup>8</sup> were released after a few days of interrogation. On October 29, 2021, Mr. Tran Quoc Khanh was sentenced to six years and six months in prison, followed by a two-year probation period.<sup>9</sup> On December 31, 2021, Mr. Le Trong Hung was sentenced to 5 years in jail and five years of probation.<sup>10</sup>

## 1.3. The CPV’s Increasingly Tighter Control over the National Assembly

Although the 14th National Assembly Standing Committee Resolution had intended 25-50 non-Party deputies to the 15th National Assembly, only four self-nominated candidates were elected. They were all members of the CPV, with three of them serving as incumbent members of the National Assembly.

Compared to previous National Assembly terms, the proportion of delegates who are not members of the CPV has been decreasing. The 1st National Assembly (1946-1960) had 333 delegates, of which Viet Minh delegates (the predecessor of the CPV) held 120 seats (36%), the Vietnam Democratic Party had 46 seats, the Vietnam Socialist Party had 24 seats, and 143 non-partisan seats. The 13th National Assembly (2011-2016) had 500 delegates, of whom 42 were not CPV members (8.4%). The 14th National Assembly of Vietnam (2016-2021) had 500 delegates, of whom 21 were not members of the CPV (4.23%). The 15th National Assembly had 14 non-party members among its 500 delegates (2.8%).

According to the 2013 Constitution, the Vietnamese National Assembly has the function of “supreme supervision over the activities of the State.” During the Doi Moi period in the late 1980s, some National Assembly deputies, such as Duong Trung Quoc, Nguyen Quoc Thuoc, Nguyen Ngoc Tran, and Nguyen Minh Thuyet, courageously performed this role, albeit cautiously, during the questioning sessions of some ministers. However, in recent years, especially in 2024 and 2025, dissenting voices in the National Assembly were silenced after the Government prosecuted

4 Báo điện tử Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam. *9 người tự ứng cử đại biểu Quốc hội khóa XV.*

5 VOA. *Việt Nam bắt Facebooker Trần Quốc Khánh sau khi ông tuyên bố tự ứng cử ĐBQH.*

6 Người Việt. *Người thứ hai tự ‘ứng cử đại biểu Quốc Hội’ bị bắt.*

7 RFA. *Công an Bình Thuận thả nhà thơ Đồng Chuông Từ đồng thời câu lưu thêm hai người bạn.*

8 RFA. *Công an Bình Thuận thả ông Nguyễn Văn Sơn Trung sau 5 ngày tạm giữ đề hỏi chuyện “tự ứng cử”.*

9 RFA. *Facebooker Trần Quốc Khánh bị án sáu năm sáu tháng tù với cáo buộc ‘chống Nhà nước’.*

10 BBC. *Án tù 5 năm cho ứng cử viên ĐBQH độc lập Lê Trọng Hùng.*

and imprisoned two deputies who often asked straightforward questions. Mr. Luu Binh Nhuong received a 13-year prison sentence, and Mr. Le Thanh Van received a 7-year prison sentence for the crimes the Government arbitrarily accused them of.<sup>11</sup>

#### 1.4. The Vietnamese Communist Party Replaced the National Assembly.

During the legislative process, the drafting of laws requires direction from the National Assembly Party Committee, a Party organization established to explore and submit to the Politburo the National Assembly's law-making program. In addition, the National Assembly Party Committee has the duty to ensure the consistency of the draft content with the Party's guidelines and policies.<sup>12</sup>

Article 70 of the Constitution stipulates that the National Assembly elects the most important positions in the State apparatus. However, the CPV Central Committee picks the candidates, and the National Assembly only rubberstamps the selections.

In 2024-2025, Vietnam made several changes to its top leadership, including the president, the chairman of the National Assembly, the chief justice of the Supreme People's Court, and dozens of other senior officials. Behind these changes is an internal purge within the CPV led by Minister of Public Security To Lam. The National Assembly only voted to approve these changes unanimously after receiving instructions from the Politburo.

#### 1.5. The policy of "Unifying" the Party and the Government

To consolidate the CPV's power, General Secretary To Lam proposed a policy to streamline the state apparatus. For that purpose, on April 14, 2025, he issued Directive 45-CT/TW on Party Congresses at all levels to prepare for the 14th Congress of the entire Party. This Directive repeats the policy of "unifying" the Party Committee Secretaries and the positions of People's Council Chairmen at all levels of Resolution No. 22/NQ-TW issued by the Politburo in 2008. With this "unification" model, the People's Councils are only tools of the relevant Party Committees at all levels.

Currently, localities across the country are making efforts to implement this Directive. For example, in Hai Duong province, the entire province has 43 Party secretaries who are also chairmen of the People's Committee at the commune level.<sup>13</sup>

Currently, in Lao Cai Province, most Party secretaries are also chairmen of the district-level People's Council. At the commune level, 108 out of 151 communes and wards have secretaries who are also chairmen of the People's Council or the People's Committee.<sup>14</sup>

In short, through legal regulations as well as the actual organization and operation of the National Assembly and People's Councils at all levels, the elected institutions in Vietnam today are only tools to implement the totalitarian policies and guidelines of the CPV. The people have no voice.

## 2. STAMPING OUT THE OPPOSITION

### 2.1. Persecution of Dissident Groups

The Government maintained its intolerance of outside dissent or criticism to protect the Party's political security. Mr. Pham Minh Chinh, Politburo member and Prime Minister repeated the slogan "not allowing the formation of domestic political opposition organizations" in his article

11 BBC. Ông Lưu Bình Nhưỡng bị tuyên 13 năm tù, ông Lê Thanh Vân 7 năm tù

12 Hội Luật Gia Việt Nam. Đảng cầm quyền thông qua quyền lập pháp, hành pháp và tư pháp ở Việt Nam.

13 Báo Hải Phòng. Hải Dương có 43 bí thư đảng ủy đồng thời là chủ tịch UBND cấp xã

14 Báo Lào Cay. Công tác xây dựng tổ chức đảng ở Lào Cai: Tiếp bước hào khí Đại thắng mùa Xuân 1975

“80 years of the Vietnam People’s Public Security with the cause of building and developing the country’s socio-economy” on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the Traditional Day of the Vietnam People’s Public Security (August 19, 1945 - August 19, 2025).<sup>15</sup>

Thus, organizations promoting democracy and human rights, such as Bloc 8406, the People’s Action Party, the Democratic Party of Vietnam, the Vietnam Progress Party, the Populist Party, the High Tide of Humanism Movement, the Committee for Human Rights, the United Workers-Farmers Association, Viet Labor Movement, the Vietnamese Political and Religious Prisoners Friendship Association, the Patriotic Youth, the Vietnam Path Movement, Vietnam Blogger Network, the Brotherhood For Democracy, the Constitution Group, the Vietnam National Self-Determination Coalition, Vietnamese Women for Human Rights, and the Independent Journalists Association continued to be banned and persecuted. Many members of these organizations have been isolated, imprisoned, or forced to seek refuge abroad.

For example, as of October 2025, up to 51 members of Bloc 8406 were arrested and sentenced to prison, of whom six remain incarcerated.

The Brotherhood for Democracy has 10 members in prison, of whom eight were sentenced to terms ranging from 7 to 13 years. Lawyer Nguyen Van Dai, a founder of the association, was exiled abroad.

Dr. Nguyen Dan Que, the founder of the Humanist Movement, and Rev. Nguyen Van Ly, one of Bloc 8406’s founders, have been under house arrest.

Five founding members of the Vietnam National Self-Determination Coalition —Mr. Luu Van Vinh, Nguyen Quoc Hoan, Nguyen Van Duc Do, Tu Cong Nghia, and Phan Trung are still serving sentences ranging from 8 to 15 years. The coalition’s mission, however, is only to demand “the CPV to return the right of national self-determination to the entire people so that they have the full right to choose a political system they want, by their vote, in a system of separation of powers.”

Eight members of the Constitutional Group were sentenced to a total of 40 years and six months in prison for the charge of “disrupting security” under Clause 1, Article 118 of the 2015 Criminal code while they only used their Facebook pages to share, express views and opinions on the current situation of the country, condemn injustice and support democracy, pluralism, and multi-party systems, and participate in peaceful protests against the Special Zones Bill and the Cybersecurity Law. Currently, Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Hanh, who was sentenced to 8 years in prison, is still in detention.

Three key members of the Independent Journalists Association, Pham Chi Dũng, Nguyen Tuong Thuy, and Le Huu Minh Tuan, are serving heavy sentences of 11 to 15 years in prison. Prisoner Le Huu Minh Tuan’s health is seriously declining without proper care.<sup>16</sup>

## 2.2. Increased Repression Ahead of Parliamentary Elections and Party Congress.

Just as before the 15th National Assembly election in 2021, during the preparation for the 16th National Assembly election in 2026, the Vietnamese communist Government has increased its suppression of opposition voices. Many activists and former political prisoners were re-arrested even though they had kept silent, such as former political prisoner Nguyen Vu Binh, former political prisoner Huynh Ngoc Tuan, or famous activists such as blogger Nguyen Chi Tuyen, Pastor

<sup>15</sup> Chính sách & Cuộc sống. *80 năm Công an nhân dân Việt Nam với sự nghiệp xây dựng và phát triển kinh tế - xã hội của đất nước*

<sup>16</sup> Người Việt Online. *CSVN ngược đãi tù nhân chính trị Lê Hữu Minh Tuấn*



*On October 8, 2025, the Security Investigation Agency of the Dak Lak Provincial Police served the arrest warrant against former prisoner of conscience Huynh Ngoc Tuan - Photo of Nhan Dan Newspaper.*

Nguyen Manh Hung, lawyer Tran Dinh Trien, journalist Huy Duc Truong Huy San, and many other activists on charges under two vague articles 117 and 331 of the Criminal Code.

On August 28, 2025, Vietnamese police arrested five activists named Ho Sy Quyet, Tran Quang Trung, Tran Quang Nam, Nguyen Tuan Nghia, and a man named Khanh. Police searched their homes, but did not provide arrest warrants and asked relatives not to provide information about the case to independent media “to keep secret cases related to national security.”<sup>17</sup>

### 2.3. Transnational Repression

Another target of political repression that has received public attention recently is dissidents living outside of Vietnam, especially in Thailand, where many dissidents and ethnic minorities whom Vietnam has repressed are temporarily residing. Two kidnappings of activists outside Vietnam that caused a stir in public opinion in previous years were the case of journalist Truong Duy Nhat in August 2020<sup>18</sup> and the case of blogger Duong Van Thai in April 2023.<sup>19</sup>

In 2024, public opinion closely followed the case of the Vietnamese Government’s request for Thailand to extradite Y Quynh Bdap. Bdap is a human rights activist fighting for the religious freedom of Protestant Montagnards in the Central Highlands and is the co-founder of the civil society organization Montagnards for Justice. The Vietnamese court sentenced Mr. Bdap in absentia to 10 years in prison on charges of “terrorism,” while he had come to Thailand to seek political asylum since 2018. However, on November 26, 2025, the Thai authorities extradited Mr. Bđăp to Vietnam despite protests from international human rights organizations.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Defend the Defenders. *Three weeks after detention, Vietnam police yet to inform five activists’ families about their situations*

<sup>18</sup> BBC. *Vụ Trương Duy Nhất và nạn bắt cóc nhà hoạt động ở Đông Nam Á.*

<sup>19</sup> RFA. *Screams from abducted Vietnamese blogger heard on Thai security camera video.*

<sup>20</sup> HRW. *Thailand: Montagnard Activist Extradited to Vietnam*

### 3. VIOLATION OF BASIC CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

To maintain its political monopoly, the CPV has stifled all civil and political rights of its citizens as recorded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which it has committed, especially the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of information, the rights to freedom of association, the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, and the rights to freedom of residence and movement.

Given the significance of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and the right to information in Vietnam's current context, this report dedicates a separate section to these issues [Chapter IV]. Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information]

#### 3.1. The Right to Freedom of Association

**3.1.1.** Under pressure from international entities and in response to the UN Human Rights Council's recommendations, the Government announced a Draft Law on associations in 2005. Still, as of 2014, and after eleven amendments, the National Assembly had not yet put the draft law up for discussion or vote. Therefore, at the end of 2015, Chairman Nguyen Sinh Hung declared that the National Assembly would postpone the vote on the Draft Law on Associations until the 14th National Assembly.<sup>21</sup>

After numerous submissions and withdrawals, the 14th National Assembly has yet to vote on the Bill on Associations. Therefore, to date, the bill on association has not been included in the 15th National Assembly's legislative agenda.

To fill this gap, on October 8, 2024, the Government issued Decree 126/2024/ND-CP, which regulates the organization, operation, and management of associations, replacing Decrees No. 45/2010/ND-CP and No. 33/2012/ND-CP. Compared to the 2010 and 2012 Decrees on associations, the 2024 Decree remains essentially unchanged. The latter Decree still considers the establishment of associations a privilege that requires those who wish to receive it to accept the supreme leadership of the overarching association, the CPV. Article 5 of the Decree requires that, to be permitted by the State to operate associations, they must "comply with the Party's policies and guidelines."

**3.1.2.** In the current reality, besides the CPV and its peripheral organizations called "socio-political organizations," including the Vietnam Fatherland Front, the Trade Union, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, the Vietnam Women's Union, the Vietnam Farmers' Union, and the Veterans Association of Vietnam; and 30 mass organizations assigned by the Party and the State to perform tasks in specialized fields, no organization that does not share the same political stance as the CPV is allowed to operate. Even specialized civil society organizations, such as mutual aid, professional, and environmental protection organizations, must be approved and subject to the CPV's control.

**3.1.3.** To suppress freedom of association, in recent years, the Government has pursued and arrested leaders and members of many groups that do not share the same political views as the CPV, and even civil society groups with scientific, economic, and environmental characteristics have been severely repressed.

The Vietnamese communist Government also reaches out to prevent and control overseas

<sup>21</sup> BBC. *Luật về Hội - phép thử bị trì hoãn?*

Vietnamese political or civil society organizations by baselessly slandering them as terrorist groups.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, it refuses to realize that the CPV is an organization that was established and holds power through terrorism.<sup>23</sup>

Since Mr. To Lam took over the Ministry of Public Security, the Government's repression of freedom of association has intensified, narrowing the space for civil society in 2024 and 2025 to the point of near elimination.

## 3.2. The Right to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly

**3.2.1.** The Government is very suspicious of crowds beyond its control. However, under international pressure, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung proposed and submitted a draft Law on Demonstrations in November 2011. Nevertheless, by the end of 2015, it had still not been discussed by the National Assembly. In early 2016, Minister of Justice Ha Hung Cuong said, "Because opinions on the content of the draft Law are very different among the cabinet members," the Government has requested that the discussion on the draft Law be postponed until the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 14<sup>th</sup> National Assembly (the end of 2016).<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, as with the draft Law on Associations, the draft Law on Demonstrations has not been included in the legislative agenda of the 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. The reason for this unusual delay is that the Government needs the Politburo's opinion to "prevent hostile forces from taking advantage of the demonstrations to disturb order and oppose our Party and State."<sup>25</sup>

Presently, gatherings to express people's views and aspirations are still regulated by Decree 38/2005 of the Government and Circular No. 09/2005/TT-BCA of the Ministry of Public Security. According to these two legal documents, people must register in advance and obtain permission from the relevant People's Committee to gather 5 or more people. Additionally, they must declare the names of the attendees, the meeting's content, date, and time. Gatherings that do not meet the above conditions are considered illegal.

**3.2.2.** Therefore, in recent years, the Government has brutally suppressed spontaneous demonstrations by people to express patriotism against the threat of territorial and maritime encroachment from the North, rallies to protest the pollution disaster of the Formosa Steel Plant, or protests across the country by people whose land was forcibly confiscated. The Government has criminalized such gatherings under the charge of "disturbing public order," as outlined in Article 245 of the 1999 Criminal Code or Article 318 of the 2015 Criminal Code.

Currently, Vietnamese prisons are still detaining many people who have exercised the right to protest as stated in Article 25 of the 2013 Constitution. In the case of the protest against the Formosa Steel Plant, the following participants are still detained: Bui Tuan Lam, Bui Van Thuan, Can Thi Theu, Dang Dang Phuoc, Dinh Thi Thu Thuy, Dinh Van Hai, Do Nam Trung, Hoang Duc Binh, Le Dinh Luong, Le Trong Hung, Le Van Dũng, Luu Van Vinh, Nguyen Lan Thang, Nguyen Nang Tinh, Nguyen Thi Ngoc Hanh, Nguyen Trung Ton, Nguyen Trung Truc, Nguyen Tuong Thuy, Nguyen Van Duc Do, Pham Chi Dũng, Pham Doan Trang, Tran Van Bang, Trinh Ba Phuong, Trinh Ba Tu, Truong Minh Duc, Truong Van Dũng.

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22 Bộ Công an. *Danh sách tổ chức liên quan đến khủng bố*.

23 Douglas Pike. *The Viet-Cong Strategy of Terror*. Self-published, for U.S. Mission. Saigon. January 1, 1970

24 Tuổi Trẻ Online. *Chính phủ lại xin lùi dự án Luật biểu tình*

25 Báo Thanh Tra. *Chưa bàn Luật Biểu tình, Luật Đặc khu tới hết năm 2021*.



*On March 11, 2025, residents of Thu Thiem held banners demanding justice in front of the headquarters of the Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee. (Image from Fb Nguyen Xuan Thy)*

**3.2.3.** To prevent public protests, since 2022, the Vietnamese Communist Government has established mobile police regiments and battalions in provinces and cities to suppress those accused of “disturbing public order” and “illegally protesting”.<sup>26</sup>

By the end of 2024, 14 provinces and cities will have established Mobile Police at the regimental level, and 49 provinces and cities will have established Mobile Police at the battalion level, totaling over 30,000 police officers.<sup>27</sup>

Despite the ban, numerous mass protests took place in various locations in 2024-2025, with different objectives, particularly worker strikes demanding improved wages and working conditions. [See the section on Labor Rights in Chapter V], and rallies of land-victims demanding justice [See the section on Land Injustice in Chapter VII]

### 3.3. The right to Freedom of Movement and Residence

**3.3.1.** The Constitution of Vietnam recognizes the right to freedom of residence and freedom of movement (Article 23). Those rights, however, are fundamentally restricted by various laws and administrative measures.

As for the right to residence, the most common measure is the household registration system, a form of government control over its citizens still used only in China, North Korea, and Vietnam. Vietnam has used the household registration system since the 1950s and codified it with the 2006 Law on Residence. The household registration system has been used by the Vietnamese Government since the 1950s and was codified in the 2006 Law on Residence and subsequent regulatory documents.

<sup>26</sup> RFA. *Hơn chục tỉnh/thành lập lực lượng trấn áp biểu tình.*

<sup>27</sup> Tiền Phong. *Tiếp tục kiện toàn lực lượng Cảnh sát cơ động dự bị chiến đấu*

In 2020, the National Assembly of Vietnam passed Law No. 68/2020/QH14, amending the Law on Residence 2006. This law took effect on July 1, 2021. A significant change in the new law is the replacement of the Household Registration Book with the Residence Database. This change was officially implemented in 2023. The Law on Residence (amended) replaces the method of residence control using household registration booklets and temporary residence papers with electronic data, facilitated by the application of information technology.<sup>28</sup>

With digitalization, citizens' residence and travel data will be more centralized, making it easier for the Government to control people's lives. Therefore, people's freedom of residence and movement will be more limited, especially with the vague provision of Article 7: Prohibited acts of residence include "8. Misuse the right to freedom of residence to violate state interests or legitimate rights and interests of an organization or individual." The 2020 Law on Residence still maintains cumbersome procedures for temporary residence registration, household registration transfer, and household registration. Additionally, Decree 144/2021/ND-CP stipulates fines for registration and residence management, ranging from 500,000 to 4 million VND, depending on the level of violation.

**3.3.2.** In the final months of 2025, the Ministry of Public Security proposed a Draft Resolution on the development of digital citizenship.<sup>29</sup> According to the Ministry of Public Security's explanation, the purpose of the Resolution is to facilitate citizens' participation in policy-making processes, monitor the activities of government agencies, and promptly report incidents in the digital environment across the economic, social, and security sectors. However, scoring citizens based on their participation in this process will lead to discrimination and violations of their human rights. In reality, the Ministry of Public Security's Draft Resolution on the development of digital citizenship is intended solely to manage society more thoroughly.

**3.3.3.** In 2024-2025, the Government continued to use security forces to prevent, arrest, and confiscate passports under the vague pretext of "protecting national security and public order and safety," according to Decree 136/2007/ND-CP on exit and entry of Vietnamese citizens,<sup>30</sup> especially for those deemed dangerous to the regime, such as the following cases:

- On April 22, 2025, the Investigation Security Agency, Hanoi City Police, sent the first summons and issued a decision to temporarily suspend exit from the country for Hoang Thi Hong Thai, a Facebooker with several posts that were considered anti-government and defamatory.<sup>31</sup>
- On July 9, 2024, the Dak Lak Provincial Police Department's Investigation Security Agency refused to issue a passport to former prisoner of conscience Huynh Thuc Vy, citing "national security" reasons, but did not provide any documents.<sup>32</sup>
- From May to August 2024, Hanoi police issued decisions to "temporarily suspend exit" for Mr. Doan Bao Chau, an influential commentator and critic on social media. In August 2025, Hanoi police issued an arrest warrant for Mr. Chau on charges of "making, storing, disseminating or propagandizing information, documents and items aimed at opposing the state."<sup>33</sup>

28 Sức Khỏe và Đời Sống. *Bỏ sổ hộ khẩu nhưng vẫn duy trì quản lý cư trú đối với người dân.*

29 Bộ Công An. *Dự thảo Nghị quyết về phát triển công dân số*

30 Chinhphu.vn *Nghị định về xuất cảnh, nhập cảnh của công dân Việt Nam.*

31 Tạp chí Đông Nam Á. *Kẻ chống phá cộm cán Hoàng Thị Hồng Thái bị triệu tập điều tra*

32 RFA. *Cựu TNLT Huỳnh Thục Vy bị từ chối cấp hộ chiếu vì lý do "an ninh quốc gia"*

33 Người Việt Online. *Nhà báo tự do Đoàn Bảo Châu bị truy nã với cáo buộc 'chống nhà nước'*

- On April 18, 2024, Ms. Pham Thi Lan, wife of jailed independent journalist Nguyen Tuong Thuy, was banned from leaving the country by border guards at Moc Bai International Border Gate, Tay Ninh province, for reasons of ‘national security’ while she was on her way to Cambodia to travel with her family.<sup>34</sup>
- Before being arrested on February 29, 2024, activist Nguyen Chi Tuyen had received several orders to ban him from leaving the country to serve the investigation from the Security Investigation Agency, Hanoi City Police.<sup>35</sup>

The Government continues to obstruct religious officials and human rights activists when they come into contact with foreign delegations and international human rights organizations, such as:

- On April 21, 2025, Most Venerable Thich Nguyen Ly, Head of the Administrative Department, Supreme Patriarchate of the Unified Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam, and some monks departed for Myanmar to provide relief to earthquake victims. At Tan Son Nhat Airport, security personnel stopped Most Venerable Thich Nguyen Ly. It did not allow him to board the plane “for national defense and security reasons as prescribed in Article 36 of Law No. 49/2019/QH14 regulating cases of temporary suspension of exit.”<sup>36</sup>
- On January 26 and 29, 2025, Tan Son Nhat Airport security agency banned the departure of Venerable Thich Nhat Phuoc, Chair of Parish Executive Committee Nguyen Xuan Mai and Chair of Parish Executive Committee Nguyen Ngoc Dien of the Traditional Cao Dai Church for the reasons of “National defense and security as prescribed in Article 36 of Law No. 49/2019/QH14”. All three were en route to attend the 2025 International Religious Freedom Summit in the United States.<sup>37</sup>
- On June 2, 2024, Thich Minh Tue and the monks who followed him were disbanded by the Thua Thien provincial government while they were on a pilgrimage. He is a Buddhist monk who does not belong to any church but is very influential in the ascetic practice of Theravada Buddhism. He has been begging for alms on foot across the country for several years, earning him many admirers and followers. The Government and the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, a state-recognized branch of Buddhism, did not want Thich Minh Tue’s influence to spread, so they tried every way to prevent him from continuing his pilgrimage.<sup>38</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Vietnam should:

- Abolish Article 4 of the Constitution, which allows the CPV to monopolize the national political leadership;
- Strictly implement Article 25 of the Constitution related to freedom of assembly, association, and demonstration;
- Promulgate the Law on Associations and the Law on Demonstrations as soon as possible;
- Guarantee the right to freedom of association, peaceful protest, and freedom of movement, not only through regulations but, first and foremost, through tangible actions.

34 VOA. *Việt Nam cấm xuất cảnh đối với vợ của nhà báo độc lập Nguyễn Tường Thuy*

35 BBC. *Nhà hoạt động Nguyễn Chí Tuyền bị bắt*

36 Sài Gòn Nhỏ. *Hòa Thượng Thích Nguyên Lý bị CSVN cấm xuất cảnh khi đi cứu trợ*

37 Đề án Dân quyền Việt Nam. *Việt Nam cấm xuất cảnh những người tham dự Hội Nghị Thượng Đỉnh Về Tự Do Tôn Giáo Quốc Tế năm 2025*

38 BBC. *Sư Thích Minh Tuệ ‘tự nguyện dùng đi bộ khất thực’, tại sao?*

## IV

# THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Constitution of Vietnam stipulates, “The citizen shall enjoy the right to freedom of opinion and speech, freedom of the press, access to information, to assemble, form associations, and hold demonstrations. The practice of these rights shall be provided by the law.” (Article 25) In recent years, the Government has issued many laws to implement the above constitutional provisions. However, the legalization of freedom of speech and freedom of information in recent years has not improved, but, on the contrary, has only strengthened the control of the CPV. The Government continues:

- Monopolizing information,
- Blocking information that is unfavorable to the regime,
- Strengthening the apparatus for controlling freedom of expression, and
- Repressing those who have opposing views or dare to tell the truth.

### 1. THE STATE’S MONOPOLY OF SPEECH

On the 100th anniversary of Vietnam Revolutionary Press Day, June 21, 2025, General Secretary of the CPV To Lam declared: “Revolutionary press must be the voice of the Party, the State, socio-political organizations, a trusted forum for the people, a bridge connecting the Party’s will and the people’s hearts; well performing the task of bringing the Party’s and State’s policies and guidelines to the people.”<sup>1</sup>

This policy is also evident in Vietnam’s current press activities. All press agencies, including newspapers, electronic newspapers, radio, and television, are owned or controlled by the State to serve the interests of the CPV.<sup>2</sup>

In 2024- 2025, the CPV Central Committee’s Publicity and Education Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communications and the Vietnam Journalists Association, organized many conferences at central, local, and departmental levels to tighten discipline in

<sup>1</sup> Báo Điện tử Chính phủ. *Tổng thuật: Kỷ niệm trọng thể 100 năm ngày Báo chí cách mạng Việt Nam*

<sup>2</sup> By the end of 2024, the country will have 884 press agencies, including 137 newspapers, 675 magazines, and 72 radio and television stations. (Tập chí Cộng sản. *Hội nghị báo chí toàn quốc tổng kết công tác năm 2024*), triển khai nhiệm vụ năm 2025)

journalism activities and to dissuade the trends of “journalization”<sup>3</sup> and “privatization” of the press.

## 2. GOVERNMENTAL OBSTRUCTION OF ALTERNATIVE INFORMATION INTENSIFIES

During 2024-2025, the Vietnamese Communist Party government increased its suppression of freedom of speech and freedom of information through laws and techniques to block the flow of information.

### 2.1. Amending the Law to Control Freedom of Speech and Information More Effectively

In 2024-2025, the Vietnamese Communist Party Government continued to use current laws such as the 2015 Criminal Code, especially Article 117 “Making, storing, disseminating or propagating information, documents, and items aimed at opposing the Socialist Republic of Vietnam” and Article 331 “Taking advantage of democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, the legitimate rights and interests of organizations and individuals,” the 2016 Press Law, the 2016 Law on Access to Information, the Law on Network Information Security (2015), and the Law on Cyber Security (2018) to suppress people’s freedom of speech and freedom of information.

Furthermore, to suppress people’s freedom of speech and information more thoroughly and effectively, the Government also amended the Press Law, the Cybersecurity Law, and the Law on Information Security. It issued Decree 147/2024 on the management, provision, and use of Internet services and online information.

**2.1.1.** The 2025 Press Law (amended), passed by the Vietnamese National Assembly on December 10, 2025,<sup>4</sup> will come into effect on July 1, 2026. State media outlets claim that the new law will “expand the scope of activity for press agencies.” The reality is quite the opposite. The 2025 Press Law reiterates Article 4 of the 2016 Press Law, defining the duty of the press as: “To propagate, disseminate, and contribute to building and protecting the Party’s guidelines and policies, and the State’s laws and regulations...” (Article 3, b). The press is not allowed to produce “content on political current events, national defense, security, and foreign affairs” (Article 23, 2). And to ensure that journalists are under government control, the law stipulates that, to be granted a professional license, journalists must undergo professional and ethical training and report the source of their information to the police when requested.

**2.1.2.** The Cybersecurity Law 2025 (amended) was passed by the Vietnamese National Assembly on December 10, 2025, and came into effect on July 1, 2026.<sup>5</sup> This was a proposal by the Ministry of Public Security to consolidate the Cybersecurity Information Security Law (2015) and the Cybersecurity Law (2018). According to the new law, the Ministry of Public Security is tasked with monitoring, investigating, and sanctioning all online activities of citizens, in line with its new role and repressive functions in social media and cyberspace.

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<sup>3</sup> The word “journalize” is a jargon used by the Vietnamese Communist Government referring to the phenomenon of some magazines reporting current events, especially news that reflects negative aspects of society, attracting readers’ curiosity.

<sup>4</sup> Thư viện Pháp luật. *Luật Báo Chí 2025*

<sup>5</sup> Thư viện Pháp luật. *Luật An Ninh Mạng 2025*



*The mission of the press must be: “To propagate and disseminate information, contributing to the formulation and protection of the Party’s guidelines and policies, and the State’s laws and regulations...” (Article 3, b of the Press Law 2025).*

**2.1.3.** Decree 147/2024/ND-CP on the Management, Provision, and Use of Internet Services and Information on the Network was issued on November 9, 2024, replacing Decrees No. 72/2013/ND-CP and No. 27/2018/ND-CP, and introducing stricter regulations. For example, social network users in Vietnam must provide personal information, including their full name, date of birth, and mobile phone number. Only licensed social networks are allowed to provide information (write articles, comment, livestream) and share information on social networks. However, they are not allowed to produce content in the form of reports, investigations, or press interviews. Social network users may have their operations suspended or their licenses revoked if they violate permitted content and prescribed procedures.

Regarding content violations, Decree 147, which references the 2018 Law on Cyber Security, repeats vague terms, such as: “Distorting history, denying revolutionary achievements, undermining national solidarity,” and “infringing upon sovereignty, interests, national security, social order and safety, and the legitimate rights and interests of agencies, organizations, and individuals.”

The highlight of Decree 147 is the management of cross-border Internet service provision activities in Vietnam. Foreign Internet service providers, when providing Internet services and renting storage space in Vietnam, must store information of service users in Vietnam upon registration for social network accounts, including their full name, date of birth, and mobile phone number in Vietnam. These companies are required to cooperate with Vietnam’s security authorities to check, monitor, and remove information, services, and applications that violate the law, as prescribed in Article 8 of the Law on Cyber Security and other relevant legal provisions, upon request by the Vietnamese Government. Suppose these companies fail to block or remove prohibited content as requested promptly. In that case, the Government will take technical measures to block all content, services, and applications on the network that violate the law and impose administrative sanctions in accordance with the relevant regulations.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Thư viện Pháp luật. *Nghị định Số 147/2024/NĐ-CP v/v Quản lý, cung cấp, sử dụng dịch vụ Internet và thông tin trên mạng.*

## 2.2. Increasing Measures and Techniques to Block Contradictory Information Flows

Alongside increasing administrative measures to prevent citizens from accessing independent and objective sources of information, such as censoring “harmful” cultural materials at border crossings or through postal services, and forcing foreign-based information platforms to remove information unfavorable to the regime,<sup>7</sup> the Government also continues to employ other blocking techniques such as jamming Vietnamese-language radio broadcasts from overseas, building firewalls, and shutting down websites and Facebook pages of dissidents. The following are some typical examples:

- On May 21, 2025, the Ministry of Public Security’s Cyber Security Department ordered the blocking of the Telegram application in Vietnam because the company did not share user data with the Government when requested, while out of a total of 9,600 Telegram channels and groups existing in Vietnam, 68% were classified as “bad, toxic” with “anti-state” content.<sup>8</sup>
- In May 2025, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism said that the Ministry has used AI to detect violations, maintaining a high rate of blocking and removing harmful content on cross-border platforms (over 92%) for cross-border platforms (Google, Facebook, TikTok...)<sup>9</sup>
- The Cyber Warfare Command (Command 86), in 2024, also removed more than 19,700 malicious posts and videos that opposed the Party, State, and army.<sup>10</sup>

Using hackers to infiltrate computers or install malware on the devices of targeted individuals is still being employed by the authorities. The following are some typical cases recorded in 2024-2025:

- In July 2024, many state propaganda agencies and state-sponsored online commentators, through mass media such as Facebook, TikTok, Threads, and X (Twitter), simultaneously attacked Fulbright University, with accusations of “seeds of color revolution”, “peaceful evolution”, and “hostile forces”. Fulbright University is a private educational institution established through a cooperative effort between the United States and Vietnam.<sup>11</sup>
- In August 2024, the cybersecurity firm Huntress said a group of hackers linked to Vietnamese security called APT32, also known as OceanLotus, had been spreading various types of malware on the computers of a human rights advocacy organization in Vietnam for at least four years.<sup>12</sup>

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7 According to government data, in 2024, Vietnam organized about 20 meetings, exchanges, and negotiations with major cross-border platforms (Facebook, Google, TikTok, Netflix, Apple) to remind and urge compliance with Vietnamese laws. As a result, Facebook blocked and removed 8,981 pieces of content that were anti-Party and anti-State, violating Vietnamese law, including 8,463 articles, 349 accounts, 16 groups and 153 violating pages (94%); Google blocked and removed 6,043 violating contents on YouTube, including 6,007 videos and 36 violating channels (posting more than 39,000 videos) (91%); TikTok blocked and removed 971 violating contents, including 677 videos and 294 accounts (posting more than 94,000 videos) (93%). TTX VN. *Quyết liệt đấu tranh với các nền tảng xuyên biên giới, làm trong sạch không gian mạng xã hội.*

8 BBC. *Thấy gì qua việc Bộ Công an yêu cầu chặn Telegram tại Việt Nam?*

9 Báo Đầu Tư. *Dùng AI để rà quét, phát hiện các nội dung vi phạm trên các nền tảng xuyên biên giới*

10 Lao Động. *Quân đội bóc gỡ, vô hiệu hóa 19.700 bài viết, video xấu độc*

11 BBC. *Đại học Fulbright Việt Nam và cáo buộc 'cách mạng màu'*

12 The Hacker News. *Vietnamese Human Rights Group Targeted in Multi-Year Cyberattack by APT32*

### 3. STRENGTHENING THE APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

On the organizational front, the Government also continued to expand the authority and personnel of the control and propaganda apparatus, including the Steering Committee 35, the Cyber Security Department, and the Cyber Warfare Command.

#### 3.1. The Steering Committee 35

The Steering Committee 35 was established in accordance with the requirements of Resolution No. 35-NQ/TW dated October 22, 2018, of the Politburo (12th tenure) with the task of strengthening the protection of the Party's ideological foundation and fighting against erroneous and hostile views in the new situation. The Steering Committee 35 is organized from the central to the provincial and district levels, conforming to a unified structure, with the Propaganda, Public Security, and Military forces at its core. Currently, Mr. Tran Cam Tu, a member of the Politburo, Standing Member of the Secretariat, and Chairman of the Central Inspection Committee, serves as the Head of the Steering Committee 35.

#### 3.2. The Department of Cyber Security

The Department of Cyber Security and High-Tech Crime Prevention was formed by merging the Department of Cyber Security with the Department of High-Tech Crime Prevention Police, with the task of ensuring network security and safety, and measures to prevent, detect, investigate, and handle high-tech crimes. To date, the Ministry of Public Security has established Departments of Cybersecurity and High-Tech Crime Prevention in the police forces of 63 provinces and cities.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, in the context of policing the people's freedom of speech and freedom of information, on February 28, 2025, the Ministry of Information and Communications transferred the task of ensuring network information security to the Ministry of Public Security.<sup>14</sup>

On July 9, 2025, the Mobile Police Youth Department under the Ministry of Public Security announced that it is building a "Combat Information Front", intending to train 10,000 government-paid online commentators, applying artificial intelligence and real-time reporting to detect and refute destructive and toxic information in cyberspace promptly.<sup>15</sup>

#### 3.3. Force 47 of the Army Academy

Force 47 of the Army Academy, or Regiment 47 - under the General Department of Politics of the Vietnam People's Army, was established in 2017, with the task of fighting against "wrong views" in cyberspace. This force comprises both professional soldiers and non-military collaborators, with a strength equivalent to one regiment (10,000 personnel).<sup>16</sup> To encourage and reward those working in cybersecurity, on July 1, 2025, the Government issued Decree 179/2025/ND-CP, providing an exceptional monthly allowance of 5 million VND per member.

13 Dân Trí. *Bộ Công an đã bố trí lực lượng an ninh mạng ở công an 63 tỉnh, thành*

14 Lao Động. *Bộ Công an nhận nhiệm vụ bảo đảm an toàn thông tin mạng*

15 Thanhgiang.vn. *Ra quân Chiến dịch Thanh niên CSCĐ tình nguyện Hè 2025*

16 Tuổi Trẻ Online. *Hơn 10.000 người trong 'Lực lượng 47' đấu tranh trên mạng.*



*On May 8, 2024, Facebooker Phan Tat Thanh, former administrator of the “Patriotic Diary” Facebook page, was brought to court. (Photo: Tien Phong Newspaper)*

### 3.4. The Cyber Warfare Command

The Cyber Warfare Command - also known as Command 86 - was established in 2018 and is a unit under the Ministry of National Defense of Vietnam tasked with protecting national security and defense in cyberspace; however, the agency’s mission also includes fighting “peaceful evolution” in cyberspace.

## 4. SYSTEMATIC SUPPRESSION OF OPINIONS CONTRARY TO THE POLICIES OF THE CPV

### 4.1. Criminalizing Freedom of Speech

The abuse of vague provisions in the Criminal Code, particularly Article 117 (Making, storing, spreading information, materials, items for the purpose of opposing the State of Socialist Republic of Vietnam) and Article 331 (Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, lawful rights and interests of organizations and/or citizens), to imprison dissenting voices increased in 2024-2025. Of the 125 political and religious prisoners prosecuted in 2024-2025, 22 were charged under Article 117 and 56 under Article 331 (See the complete list in Appendix 1).

The following are some notable cases:

- On September 27, 2025, the People’s Court of Da Nang City sentenced prisoner of conscience Trinh Ba Phuong to 11 years in prison for “propaganda against the State” (Article 117 of the Criminal Code) simply because the police discovered in his cell the slogan “Down with the CPV for Violating Human Rights, Down with the Communist Court for Wrongly Convicting Me”. The trial lasted only 3 hours; the lawyer was not allowed to present a defense; the police gagged Mr. Phuong. Mr. Phuong is serving a 10-year prison sentence for the same crime from a previous trial held on June 24, 2020.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> VNTB – *Trịnh Bá Phương: án chồng án chỉ vì một chuyện “phản đối bất công*



*On Oct 30, 2024, the Hanoi Court sentenced blogger Duong Van Thai to 12 years in prison on charges of “making, storing, disseminating, or propagating information, documents, and items against the State.” Blogger Duong Van Thai was kidnapped from Thailand by Vietnamese agents on April 13, 2023.*

On August 14, 2025, Hanoi City Police issued a special wanted notice for Mr. Doan Bao Chau. Mr. Chau was prosecuted for the charges of Article 117 of the Criminal Code. Mr. Chau is a freelance journalist, martial artist, and novelist, and often speaks out about current social issues on his personal page, which has more than 200,000 followers.<sup>18</sup>

- On June 4, 2025, Ho Chi Minh City Police prosecuted and arrested three people who run the YouTube channel “Nguoi Dua Tin” for allegedly distributing more than 6,700 videos containing content distorting individuals, organizations, and policies of the CPV. The YouTube channel has garnered over 1 billion views.<sup>19</sup>
- On April 28, 2025, the People’s Court of Dak Lak province sentenced Ms. Le Thi Minh Thieu to 6 years in prison on charges under Article 117 of the Criminal Code. According to the indictment, Ms. Thieu used five Facebook accounts and one Zalo account to publicly post and share numerous articles that distorted the policies of the Party and State during the period from 2021 to August 2024.<sup>20</sup>
- On February 27, 2025, the Hanoi People’s Court sentenced Mr. Truong Huy San (pen name Huy Duc) to 30 months in prison for the crime charged under Article 331 of the Criminal Code. Mr. San is a journalist, blogger, and author of the book “The Winning Side” (2012).<sup>21</sup>
- On October 30, 2024, the Hanoi People’s Court sentenced Mr. Duong Van Thai to 12 years in prison on charges under Article 117 of the Criminal Code. Mr. Thai is a blogger who was kidnapped by Vietnamese security forces from Thailand, where he was temporarily residing, to seek asylum in a third country.<sup>22</sup>
- On September 16, 2024, the Hanoi People’s Court sentenced Mr. Phan Van Bach to 5 years in

18 CPJ. *Vietnam issues arrest warrant for journalist in hiding Doan Bao Chau*

19 Pháp Luật. *3 admin trang YouTube ‘Người đưa tin’ bị bắt*

20 Công An Tỉnh Đắk Lắk. *Tuyên án bị cáo Lê Thị Minh Thiều 06 năm tù về tội “Làm, tàng trữ, phát tán thông tin, tài liệu nhằm chống Nhà nước Cộng hòa xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam”*

21 BBC. *Nhà báo Huy Đức bị phạt 30 tháng tù*

22 Tuổi Trẻ. *Tuyên phạt Đường Văn Thái 12 năm tù về tội tuyên truyền chống Nhà nước*

prison on charges under Article 117 of the Criminal Code. Mr. Bach is a former member of the independent television channel CHTV.<sup>23</sup>

- On August 15, 2024, a court in Hanoi sentenced activist Nguyen Chi Tuyen to 5 years in prison on charges under Article 117 of the Criminal Code. Mr. Tuyen is a renowned activist and YouTuber specializing in commentary on Vietnamese politics and society.<sup>24</sup>
- On May 30, 2024, a court in Hanoi sentenced lawyer Tran Dinh Trien to 3 years in prison under Article 331 of the Criminal Code. According to the indictment, lawyer Trien posted three articles on Facebook criticizing Nguyen Hoa Binh, the Chief Justice of the Supreme People's Court, and currently Deputy Prime Minister.<sup>25</sup>
- On May 8, 2024, the People's Court of Ho Chi Minh City sentenced Mr. Phan Tat Thanh to 8 years in prison on charges under Article 117 of the Criminal Code. Mr. Thanh is the former administrator of the Nhat Ky Yeu Nuoc Fanpage, a social networking site with more than 800,000 followers that promotes freedom and democracy in Vietnam.<sup>26</sup>

#### 4.2. Cross-border Repression of Speech

The repression of freedom of speech does not stop within the territory of Vietnam. In 2024-2025, the Vietnamese Communist authorities also reached out beyond the border to pursue, kidnap, and serve arrest warrants on overseas Vietnamese who used social media platforms to express their opinions and convey news that differed from state propaganda. Four notable cases of cross-border repression of freedom of speech in 2024-2025 were:

- On October 30, 2024, the Hanoi People's Court sentenced Mr. Duong Van Thai to 12 years in prison and three years of probation for his social media posts in a closed trial.<sup>27</sup> Mr. Thai is a political refugee in Thailand who often uses Facebook and YouTube to expose corruption in Vietnam. Vietnamese police kidnapped Mr. Thai and brought him back to Vietnam, spreading rumors that he was arrested while trying to enter Vietnam illegally.
- On January 20, 2024, the People's Court of Dak Lak province sentenced Mr. Y Quynh Bdap to 10 years in prison for terrorism while he was still a refugee in Thailand. In 2019, together with several other minority ethnic peoples, Mr. Bdap founded the organization Montagnards for Justice to protect the fundamental rights of the Montagnards in the Central Highlands. This organization often submits reports to the United Nations on human rights violations against ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands. On November 26, 2025, the Thai authorities extradited Mr. Bđắp to Vietnam at the request of Vietnam, despite objections from many international human rights organizations.<sup>28</sup>
- On November 17, 2025, the Security Investigation Agency of the Ministry of Public Security initiated criminal proceedings and issued arrest warrants for Mr. Le Trung Khoa and Mr. Do Van Nga for the crime of "Making, storing, disseminating, and propagating information, documents, and materials against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam."<sup>29</sup> Mr. Khoa resides in

<sup>23</sup> Thevietnamese. *Democracy Activist Phan Van Bach Sentenced to 5 Years*

<sup>24</sup> BBC. *Nhà hoạt động Nguyễn Chí Tuyền bị tuyên 5 năm tù*

<sup>25</sup> Người Lao Động. *Cựu luật sư Trần Đình Triển bị bác kháng cáo kêu oan, tuyên y án 3 năm tù*

<sup>26</sup> Tiền Phong. *Bị phạt 8 năm tù vì tuyên truyền chống phá Nhà nước*

<sup>27</sup> Tuổi Trẻ. *Tuyên phạt Đường Văn Thái 12 năm tù về tội tuyên truyền chống Nhà nước*

<sup>28</sup> HRW. *Thailand: Montagnard Activist Extradited to Vietnam*

<sup>29</sup> VnExpress. *Lê Trung Khoa bị khởi tố*

Germany and is the founder and editor-in-chief of Thoibao.de, an online newspaper that frequently criticizes the Vietnamese Government’s policies. On December 31, 2025, the Hanoi People’s Court sentenced Mr. Khoa in absentia to 17 years’ imprisonment.<sup>30</sup>

- On December 9, 2025, the Supreme People’s Procuracy issued Indictment No. 02/CT-VKSTC-V1 prosecuting activist Nguyen Van Dai, who is currently seeking asylum in Germany, for the crime of “Making, storing, disseminating, and propagating information and documents aimed at opposing the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.” On December 31, 2025, the Hanoi People’s Court sentenced Nguyen Van Dai in absentia to 17 years’ imprisonment. Previously, while still in Vietnam, Mr. Dai had been convicted twice to a total of 19 years in prison and 9 years of house arrest for his human rights activities.<sup>31</sup>

### 4.3. Violence Against Journalists

“Viet Nam had taken bold action to fight cybercrime, scams, misinformation, and disinformation, while also protecting journalists and reporters,” said Vietnam’s national report to the UN Human Rights Council ahead of its 2024 Periodic Review. However, in reality, practicing journalism remains a perilous endeavor. Mainstream journalists were regularly abused in 2024-2025; here are some typical cases:

- On the night of April 23, 2024, two journalists, N.V.C. (reporter for VTV Times) and M.H.M. (reporter for VnExpress electronic newspaper), were assaulted and injured by three subjects while working on a fire in Viet Yen village, Ngu Hiep commune, Thanh Tri, Hanoi.<sup>32</sup>
- On February 18, 2025, while working at the construction site of the National Highway 50 expansion project (Binh Chanh district, Ho Chi Minh City), reporter L.V.Y. of V. Electronic Newspaper was suddenly cursed at and driven straight into by a man with a motorbike.<sup>33</sup>
- On November 6, 2024, reporter Le Van Thanh of the People’s Police newspaper was reporting on the State of public hospitals that had been abandoned for many years, with degraded facilities and causing waste, when he was cursed and attacked by a person claiming to be a security guard.<sup>34</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Vietnamese Government should:

- Fully guarantee the right to freedom of expression and freedom of access to information for all Vietnamese people in the spirit of *the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*;
- Abolish Article 117 and Article 331 of the 2015 Criminal Code; repeal or amend the 2016 Press Law, the 2016 Access to Information Law, and the 2018 Cyber Security Law;
- Implement *The UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity*;
- Release all prisoners convicted for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.

30 Nhân Dân. *Bị cáo Lê Trung Khoa bị tuyên phạt 17 năm tù*

31 VNExpress. *Nguyễn Văn Đài bị tuyên 17 năm tù*

32 Lao Động. *Điều tra việc 2 phóng viên bị hành hung khi tác nghiệp tại vụ cháy xưởng*

33 Tri thức và Cuộc sống. *Phóng viên bị hành hung khi tác nghiệp tại dự án mở rộng Quốc lộ 50*

34 Công an Nhân dân. *Thông tin ban đầu về việc phóng viên Báo CAND bị hành hung khi tác nghiệp*

# V

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF

In its National Report to the United Nations Human Rights Council for the 2024 Periodic Review, Vietnam wrote: “Viet Nam consistently respects and ensures freedom of religion and belief, promotes equality among religions together with their cultural and moral values and contributions to national development.”<sup>1</sup>

To better understand the authenticity of the above statement, the following report will present the situation of religious freedom in Vietnam in 2024-2025 through three main sections:

- Vietnamese laws violate religious freedom.
- The Vietnamese Communist Party government strengthens and increases mechanisms to control and suppress religion.
- The Vietnamese Communist Party government violates religious freedom and belief through repressive actions.

### 1. VIETNAMESE LAWS VIOLATE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

In the current legal framework, religious activities in Vietnam are regulated by the Law on Belief and Religion, issued on November 18, 2016, and Decree No. 95/2023/ND-CP, dated December 29, 2023, which details its implementation.

#### 1.1. Law on Belief and Religion 2016

- First, religious organizations must have government recognition to operate legally (Article 2.12 and Chapter V, Section 1);
- Secondly, religious organizations must register their activities, or more clearly speaking, they must obtain permission, which may or may not be granted (Chapter IV).
- And third, the government continues to have the right to interfere in the internal affairs of religions, especially in the selection, ordination, and appointment of clergy (Chapter V, Sections 2 and 3).

These regulations directly contradict the fundamental principles of religious freedom as outlined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Vietnam has pledged to adhere as a member of the United Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Council - Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review Forty-sixth session. *National report submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21. Viet Nam. P.9*

## 1.2. Decree No. 95/2023/ND-CP

Decree No. 95/2023/ND-CP dated December 29, 2023, and replacing Decree No. 162/2017/ND-CP, became effective from March 30, 2024, and detailed several articles of the Law on Belief and Religion. According to this Decree, the government's control over religious activities increased; specifically:

- The government has the right to “suspend all religious activities of religious organizations and affiliated religious organizations” (Article 12) and “suspend training activities of religious training facilities” (Article 16) when there is a serious violation of one of the cases specified in Clause 4 and Clause 5, Article 5 of the Law on Belief and Religion.” The above two provisions of Decree No. 95 do not define what constitutes a “serious violation,” allowing the government to interpret it at its discretion. The provisions on violations in Clauses 4 and 5 of Article 5 of the Law on Belief and Religion are overly broad and lack clarity.
- The order and procedures for approving the ordination, appointment, election, and nomination involving foreign elements, as stipulated in Article 23 of the Decree, are also the order of the ask-and-give mechanism with stringent conditions. With the ask-give mechanism, the state has the right to refuse for arbitrary reasons. For instance, the government has the right to refuse the Vatican's appointment of a bishop with whom it does not agree.
- The receipt and use of funding from foreign organizations and individuals to support religious activities in Article 26 of the Decree is also regulated in a way that crudely interferes in the internal affairs of religious organizations.
- Religious activities conducted online must comply with the law on information and communications (Article 27), that is, cybersecurity regulations.

To implement the above Decree, on July 10, 2024, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued Decision No. 491/QĐ-BNV, establishing 103 administrative procedures in the field of beliefs and religions —a complex of cumbersome procedures that are controlling and obstructive.<sup>2</sup>

After 7 years of implementation, the Law on Belief and Religion has not improved the activities of religions, which have been restricted since the communists took power. The ask-give mechanism is still the principle in the relationship between the state and religion.

During the 4th Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council in 2024, Vietnam received recommendations to review and amend the 2016 Law on Belief and Religion to align it with the requirements of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However, Vietnam refused to accept this recommendation.

## 1.3. Outlawing Certain Religious Organizations

For the Communist government of Vietnam, controlling religions is a priority for political stability, so the government continues to outlaw large and orthodox religious organizations that are not under the control of the Communist Party.

As of June 2025, 17 religions are recognized or registered by the Vietnamese government. These religions include Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Cao Dai, Hoa Hao Buddhism, Islam, Baha'i Religion, Pure Land Buddhist Lay Association of Vietnam, Tu An Hieu Nghia Religion, Buu Son Ky Huong, Minh Su Religion, Minh Ly Religion - Tam Tong Mieu, Cham Brahmanism, The Church of

<sup>2</sup> Bộ Nội Vụ. *Quyết định Số: 491/QĐ-BNV ngày 10 tháng 7 năm 2024 về Danh mục 103 thủ tục hành chính trong lĩnh vực tín ngưỡng, tôn giáo thuộc phạm vi chức năng quản lý nhà nước của Bộ Nội vụ.*

Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), Hieu Nghia Ta Lon Buddhism, Vietnam Seventh-day Adventist Church, and Dharma-treasury Buddhism of Vietnam.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, among the major religions, the government has divided them into two for the benefit of the ruling party. It only recognizes the group that accepts submission to the government, for example:

As for Buddhism, the government only recognizes the state-run Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam, established in 1981,<sup>4</sup> while outlawing the Unified Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam (which dates back to much earlier times and is the legitimate heir to Vietnam's various traditional Buddhist sects).

In the case of the Orthodox Hoa Hao Buddhist Church, the state banned its leadership. It installed the pro-government Central Administration Board of the Hoa Hao Buddhist sect, as per Official Letter No. 51/TCGP-V3 dated April 8, 1999, of the Government Committee for Religion.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding Cao Dai Church, on May 9, 1997, the government issued Decision No. 10/QD/TGCP, approving the Charter and recognizing the legal status of a new Cao Dai Church, called Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do Cao Dai Tay Ninh, to separate from the orthodox Cao Dai Holy See, namely Dai Dao Tam Ky Pho Do.

As for the Khmer-Krom Buddhists, the government dispersed the Khmer-Krom Theravada Buddhist Association and forced Khmer-Krom Buddhist monks to join the Patriotic United Buddhist Association (PUBC), an organization established in 1991, in the spirit of Directive 68-CT/TW, dated April 18, 1991, of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Party (term VI).<sup>6</sup>

As for Catholics, they try every way to nurture the Catholic Solidarity Committee to put pressure on the Vietnam Catholic Conference of Bishops, priests, and nuns who do not share the same political views.

As for Protestant Churches, the government has recognized only 10 organizations, leaving about 70 others illegal.<sup>7</sup>

The Evangelical Church of Christ, a worldwide religious organization, is labeled "a reactionary organization disguised as a religion to conduct activities infringing upon national security."<sup>8</sup>

The Church of God, also known as the Church of God the Mother, is a religious movement that has been present in 185 countries and has been active in 21 provinces/cities in Vietnam, still being banned and persecuted.<sup>9</sup>

The "Grace to Salvation Assembly" has been attributed as evil, "having extremist doctrines, promoting illegal acts," and the followers continue to suffer persecution.<sup>10</sup>

3 Bộ Dân tộc và Tôn giáo. *17 tôn giáo được công nhận tại Việt Nam, có một số được ít người biết đến*

4 Đỗ Trung Hiếu. *Tiến trình thống nhất Phật Giáo*

5 Ban Tôn giáo Chính phủ. *Phật giáo Hòa Hào 20 năm hoạt động và phát triển.*

6 Bạch Thanh Sang. *Hội Đoàn kết Sư sãi yêu nước vùng Tây Nam Bộ với các hoạt động hướng đến đời sống xã hội và vấn đề đất đai.* Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo, số 12, 2018 tr. 39-58.

7 VOV. *Nhiều tổ chức Tin lành hoạt động bất hợp pháp tại Việt Nam.*

8 Công An Nhân Dân. *Bài 1: Những hoạt động vi phạm pháp luật của tổ chức "Tin lành Đấng Christ".*

9 Công an Nhân dân. *Đằng sau cái gọi là "Hội thánh của Đức Chúa trời Mẹ".*

10 Công an Nhân dân. *Đấu tranh hiệu quả với tổ chức tà giáo "Ân điển cứu rỗi".*

Some ethnic Hmong people who joined Religion Giê Sùa and Religion Cô Dợ, variants of Christianity, were suppressed for allegedly promoting a separatist movement to establish an independent Hmong State.<sup>11</sup>

Duong Van Minh Cult has been labeled a criminal organization disguised as religion to entice the Hmong people to plot against the state.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, the local National Assembly deputy affirmed that the purpose of Duong Van Minh's Cult was only to improve the Hmong people's customs and habits.<sup>13</sup>

Fitting the Chinese Communist Party's mold of propaganda and suppression against Falun Gong, the Vietnamese government has pursued and arrested Falun Gong practitioners in many localities, such as in Yen Bai,<sup>14</sup> Lao Cai,<sup>15</sup> and Thai Nguyen.<sup>16</sup>

For sanctioned religious organizations, the government has two ways of control. The first approach involves external control by the state apparatus. In contrast, the second involves internal control from within the religions, achieved through infiltration that manipulates their internal organization.

## 2. STRENGTHENING AND INCREASING MECHANISMS OF CONTROL AND REPRESSION OF RELIGIONS

In addition to using the security force to monitor and suppress religious organizations that do not follow the state's guidelines and policies, the government also creates mechanisms within the state apparatus and organizations installed within religions to control religions.

### 2.1. External Control Mechanisms

To implement external control, the CPV, in its plan to reform the government system in 2025, has reorganized two specialized agencies at the central level: the Government Committee for Religious Affairs under the Ministry of Ethnic Minorities and Religions and the Department of Ethnic Minorities and Religions under the Central Commission for Propaganda and Education under the Party system. Both of these agencies have subordinate organizations at the local level.

The Government Committee for Religious Affairs, established in 1955, is currently under the Ministry of Ethnic Minorities and Religions and serves to advise the Minister of Ethnic Minorities and Religions on state management of beliefs and religions, and to organize nationwide implementation of policies and laws on these matters.

The current head of the Government Committee for Religious Affairs is Mr. Vu Hoai Bac, formerly a police major general and Director of the Department of Security Investigation at the Ministry of Public Security. The Deputy Minister of Ethnic Minorities and Religions, in charge of the Government Committee for Religious Affairs, is Police Lieutenant General Nguyen Hai Trung, a former Director of the Hanoi City Police Department. With leadership personnel originating from

11 Báo Công an nhân dân. *Làm rõ bộ mặt thật của tà đạo “Giê Sùa” và “Bà Cô Dợ”*.

12 Công an Nhân dân. *Ngăn chặn, xóa bỏ tổ chức bất hợp pháp Dương Văn Minh*.

13 Youtube. *Đại biểu Quốc hội Sùng Thìn Cò ý kiến về cán bộ thiếu trách nhiệm, không sâu sát tình hình người dân*.

14 Lao Động. *Ngăn chặn các đối tượng phát tán tài liệu Pháp luân công tại vùng cao Yên Bái*

15 Sức khỏe & Đời sống. *Ngăn chặn đối tượng phát tán tài liệu ‘Pháp luân công’*

16 Báo Thái Nguyên. *Phát hiện 2 vụ việc tuyên truyền, phát tán tài liệu Pháp luân công*

the police force, the Vietnamese Communist Party government has increased the policeization of the religious control system.

At the local level, every province, city, commune, ward, and town has a Religious Committee at the same level.

The second agency is the Department of Ethnic and Religious Affairs under the Central Propaganda and Mass Mobilization Commission of the CPV, which is responsible for monitoring and advising the Party Central Committee on religious policy.

With these influential organizations in place, in 2024-2025, the government continued to control religion through the procedures prescribed by the 2016 Law on Religion and Belief, especially Decree 41/2025/ND-CP.

## 2.2. Control Mechanisms within Religious Organizations

The government exercises internal control through the Vietnam Fatherland Front, an organization established and led by the CPV, which brings together approximately 70 political and social organizations, including most state-recognized religious organizations.

As members of the Fatherland Front, religions have the duty to propagate and mobilize religious compatriots to comply with the Party and State's guidelines, policies, and laws, and actively implement the state's religious policies.

In addition, the government also secretly arranges personnel to infiltrate religious organizations. To date, the Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam has issued 32 Decisions on the list of state secrets in the fields of state operations and the CPV.<sup>17</sup> Decision 1722/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister on the list of state secrets of the Party shows that the CPV inserts agents into religious organizations (Article 3, Clause 7, Point b-d). The list of state secrets of the Ministry of Home Affairs (Decision No. 960/QĐ-TTg, Article 3, Clause 8, Point c), and of the Women's Union (Decision No. 1222/QĐ-TTg, Article 1, Clause 4) also have similar content.

The communist government has trained "police officers disguised as monks", especially Buddhist monks, to infiltrate pagodas and monasteries in the country as well as overseas,<sup>18</sup> according to Resolution 36 on Work with Overseas Vietnamese (36-NQ/TW).

That is also the case with Cao Daiism, where the government sent members of the Cao Dai organization, established by the Vietnamese government in 1997, to infiltrate and subjugate Cao Dai organizations overseas and to establish the Cao Dai Overseas Representative of the Sacerdotal Council.<sup>19</sup>

The Vietnamese Communist government also used some dignitaries of recognized Protestant organizations to incite, condemn, and persuade believers of unrecognized Protestant organizations to abandon their religious organizations and join Protestant organizations controlled by the Vietnamese Communist Party.<sup>20</sup>

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17 Ban Cơ Yếu Chính Phủ. *Tổng hợp Danh mục bí mật nhà nước trong các lĩnh vực do Thủ tướng Chính phủ ban hành.*

18 The Epoch Times. *Vietnam's Covert War Against Overseas Buddhists.*

19 Mạch Sống News. *[Đẩy Lùi NQ36] Cộng đồng Cao Đài và Phật Giáo ở Hoa Kỳ bị xâm nhập nghiêm trọng*

20 Mạch Sống. *Hội Thánh Tin Lành Việt Nam – Miền Nam: một trợ cụ cho đàn áp tôn giáo*

### 3. VIOLATION OF THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM RIGHT THROUGH REPRESSIVE ACTIONS

The communist government of Vietnam has suppressed its citizens' freedom of religion in various ways, from pursuing and imprisoning church adherents to preventing travel and gatherings, vandalizing church facilities, confiscating church property, and compelling abandonment of faith.

#### 3.1. Repression Through Criminalizing Religious Activities

The criminalization of religious activities not following the state's policy with alleged crimes such as "sabotaging the implementation of solidarity policies" (Article 116 of the Criminal Law), "making, storing, and spreading information, materials, and items to oppose the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" (Art 117), "disturbing public order" (Article 318)... are apparent abuses of the Criminal Law to suppress the right to freedom of religion.

The Vietnamese government continues to imprison several religious freedom activists for vague alleged crimes under the Criminal Law 2015. Among them, some have received hefty sentences, including members of An Dan Dai Dao,<sup>21</sup> Pastor Nguyen Trung Ton,<sup>22</sup> missionary Y Kréčh Byă, and Hoa Hao Buddhist Nguyen Hoang Nam (please see the complete list of prisoners for religious reasons in Appendix II).

In 2024-2025, the Vietnamese government continued to use vague provisions of the 2015 Criminal Law to prosecute and imprison religious activists:

- On October 8, 2025, the Dak Lak Provincial Police Department's Security Investigation Agency issued a decision to prosecute and order the temporary detention of Mr. Y Nuen Ayũn, Head of the Executive Board of the Evangelical Church of Christ in the Central Highlands, on charges of "Undermining the solidarity policy."<sup>23</sup>
- On July 9, 2025, the People's Court of An Giang province sentenced Ho Trong Phuc (17 years old) to 1 year in prison on charges of "Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, the rights and legitimate interests of organizations" for using social networks to reshare the content of articles on the page "Quangminh Tu". Phuc is a follower of the Hoa Hao sect in Quang Minh Tu, founded by former religious prisoner Vo Van Thanh Liem.<sup>24</sup>
- On May 23, 2025, the Dak Lak Provincial People's Court sentenced Mr. Y Thinh Nie to 9 years in prison for "Undermining the solidarity policy." Mr. Y Thinh Nie refused to dissolve his house church to join the state-controlled Evangelical Church of Vietnam - South (ECVN-South or ECVS).<sup>25</sup>
- On May 21, 2025, the People's Court of Duc Hoa district sentenced Mr. Le Tung Van to 3 years in prison for Incest in a closed trial. This trial is the second case against the founder and operator of Tinh That Bong Lai, a Buddhist organization not affiliated with the government-recognized Vietnam Buddhist Sangha.<sup>26</sup>

21 VOV. *Việt Nam tuyên án 22 người về tội 'hoạt động nhằm lật đổ chính quyền'*

22 RFA. *Sức khoẻ TNLN Nguyễn Trung Tôn nguy kịch, trại giam từ chối điều trị y tế.*

23 VTV Online. *Bắt trưởng ban điều hành một tổ chức phản động ở Đắk Lắk.*

24 Dân Việt. *Thanh niên 17 tuổi lãnh án vì lợi dụng các quyền tự do dân chủ xâm phạm lợi ích của Nhà nước*

25 Lao Động. *Đối tượng phá hoại chính sách đoàn kết ở Đắk Lắk lãnh án 9 năm tù*

26 Lao Động. *Tuyên án Lê Tùng Vân 3 năm tù về tội Loạn luân*



*On March 6, 2025, the People’s Court of Gia Lai province sentenced Mr. Rơ Châm Grông, the head deacon of the Chu Păh area of the Degar Protestant Church, to 7 years in prison for the crime of undermining national unity policies. (Photo: Báo Văn Hóa)*

- On May 6, 2025, the People’s Court of Dak Lak province held a first-instance trial. It sentenced Mr. Y Po Mlo, an independent Protestant, to 7 years and 6 months in prison and an additional 3 years of probation for the crime of undermining the solidarity policy.<sup>27</sup>
- On March 6, 2025, the People’s Court of Gia Lai province sentenced Mr. Ro Cham Grong, Chief Deacon of the Chu Pah area of the De Ga Protestant Church, to 7 years in prison for “Undermining the solidarity policy.”<sup>28</sup>
- On January 16, 2025, Pastor Nguyen Manh Hung was arrested under Article 117 for criticizing the regime on Facebook. Pastor Hung is a member of the independent Mennonite Church and serves on the Vietnam Interfaith Council, which advocates for religious freedom.<sup>29</sup>
- On November 26, 2024, a court in Vinh Long province sentenced five monks and four Khmer Krom Buddhists to a total of 27 years and 9 months in prison on charges of “abusing democratic freedoms.” These individuals were arrested while constructing a lecture hall at a pagoda, but their work was halted by the government, which claimed that the project was unlicensed.<sup>30</sup>
- On March 28, 2024, the Dak Lak provincial government sentenced Mr. Y Krec Byă, a Central Highlands Protestant Christian, to 13 years in prison and five years of probation for the crime of “Undermining the policy of national unity” under Article 116 of the Criminal Code.<sup>31</sup>
- On January 26, 2024, the People’s Court of Phu Yen province sentenced Nay Y Blang, a member of the Central Highlands Evangelical Church, to 4 years and 6 months in prison for “Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the legitimate interests of organizations and citizens.” In 2005, he was sentenced by the People’s Court of Phu Yen province to 5 years and 6 months in prison for “undermining the solidarity policy.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Dân Trí. *7 năm 6 tháng tù cho kẻ phá hoại chính sách đoàn kết dân tộc*

<sup>28</sup> Công Lý. *Đối tượng phá hoại chính sách đoàn kết lĩnh 7 năm tù*

<sup>29</sup> VOA. *Việt Nam bắt giữ mục sư Nguyễn Mạnh Hùng với cáo buộc ‘tuyên truyền chống nhà nước*

<sup>30</sup> VOA. *Việt Nam phạt tù 9 nhà sư, nhà hoạt động Khmer Krom*

<sup>31</sup> RFA. *Kết án ông Y Kréc Byă 13 năm tù vì cáo buộc ‘phá hoại chính sách đoàn kết’*

<sup>32</sup> RFA. *Vietnam sentences ethnic minority man to 4½ years for religious activities*

## 3.2. Repression with Administrative Orders

### 3.2.1. Preventing the Freedom of Movement of Religious Officials

At the same time, by executive order, authorities in many localities continue to prevent the movement of religious officials and the holding of spiritual gatherings. Here are some cases recorded through the media:

- On April 21, 2025, Tan Son Nhat Airport security stopped Most Venerable Thich Nguyen Ly, Head of the Executive Office of the Supreme Sangha of the Unified Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam. It informed him that he was temporarily banned from traveling for national defense and security reasons, in accordance with Article 36 of the Law on Temporary Travel Ban (49/2019/QH14). Most Venerable Thich Nguyen Ly was en route to provide relief to earthquake victims in Myanmar.<sup>33</sup>
- On January 28, 2025, two Cao Dai officials of the Orthodox Cao Dai Church, Ms. Nguyen Xuan Mai and Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Dien, were banned from leaving the country at Tan Son Nhat airport when they were on their way to attend an international religious freedom conference in the United States.<sup>34</sup>
- On January 26, 2025, Tan Son Nhat International Airport security prevented Venerable Thich Nhat Phuoc, of the Unified Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam, from leaving the country to attend an international religious freedom conference in the United States.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.2.2. Preventing and Disrupting Religious Activities

- On the evening of August 11, 2025, local authorities prevented the celebration of Mass at a private home in Binh Khang hamlet, Dai Tu commune, Thai Nguyen province by cutting off the electricity and requesting the Mass to be stopped. Three parishioners were taken by security to the police headquarters for questioning.<sup>36</sup>
- On June 10, 2025, three days before the grand ceremony to celebrate the 86th anniversary of the founding of Hoa Hao Buddhism by Master Huynh, the government required Mr. Ha Van Duy Ho, President of the Orthodox Hoa Hao Buddhist Association, to remove all banners celebrating the grand ceremony with the name of Orthodox Hoa Hao Buddhism and banned him and everyone from going to the temporary headquarters of the Orthodox Hoa Hao Buddhist Association in Long Giang commune, Cho Moi district, An Giang province.<sup>37</sup>
- On May 15, 2024, the 2568th Buddha's Birthday and the Memorial Ceremony for the Patriarchs at Quoc An Temple (Hue City), organized by the Unified Buddhist Sangha of Vietnam, were vandalized. Banners were painted, and many unknown individuals intervened to prevent photography; the live broadcast was also disrupted.<sup>38</sup>

The case of preventing religious activities that stirred up concerns of many people in 2024-2025 was the government's attempt to obstruct Thich Minh Tue's alms-seeking journey. This monk practiced asceticism by walking and begging for alms throughout the country. During the first months of 2024, Thich Minh Tue's practice attracted thousands of admirers. The government and

33 Người Việt. *Hòa Thượng Thích Nguyên Lý bị CSVN cấm xuất cảnh khi đi cứu trợ*

34 RFA. *Ba nhân chứng được mời dự hội nghị tự do tôn giáo ở Mỹ bị cấm xuất cảnh*

35 RFA. *Một nhà sư bị cấm xuất cảnh đi Mỹ dự hội nghị tự do tôn giáo*

36 Thái Nguyên: *Thành lễ tại gia bị cắt điện, ba người bị đưa về trụ sở công an*

37 Sài Gòn Nhỏ. *CSVN gia tăng đàn áp Phật giáo Hòa Hảo Thuận túy, ngăn chặn hành lễ*

38 RFA. *Huế: Đại lễ Phật đản của Tăng đoàn GHPGVNTN bị phá, băng-rôn bị xịt sơn*



*Tháng 6 năm 2025, Các nữ tu Tu Hội Nữ Tử Bác Ái Thánh Vinh Sơn tọa kháng đòi lại mảnh đất trường tiểu học Bế Văn Đàn đang bị chính quyền đập phá để xây dựng cơ sở mới mà không có sự đồng ý của nhà dòng. Ảnh Facebook Hà Trung Kiên*

the government-sanctioned Vietnam Buddhist Sangha feared that his reputation would harm the state's religious policy, so they attempted to prevent it through both actions and propaganda.<sup>39</sup>

### 3.2.3. Infringement on Religious Organizations' Properties

Furthermore, to limit the activities and influence of religious organizations, the government resorted to the 2013 Land Law, amended several times, to legalize the robbery of church properties, including schools, infirmaries, and social service facilities.

After taking control of South Vietnam, the Communist government confiscated most landholdings, educational, social, and healthcare facilities, and some monasteries and seminaries. For example, in the Archdiocese of Saigon alone, 400 facilities were confiscated after 1975,<sup>40</sup> and the Archdiocese of Hanoi currently has 95 facilities under state ownership.<sup>41</sup> A handful of the confiscated facilities are still used for educational purposes. However, many are exploited by the government through profit-making services, including discos, hotels, and apartments for government officials.

The confiscation of religious facilities to limit religious activities continued in 2024-2025. In addition to the well-known unresolved cases in recent years, such as the Cao Dai Holy See in Tay Ninh, Lien Tri Pagoda in Thu Thiem, and the Benedictine Monastery of Thien An in Hue,<sup>42</sup> the Vietnamese government also conducted several new cases of forced occupation, such as:

39 RFA. *Thực hư việc Ban Tôn giáo Chính phủ nói sư Minh Tuệ “tự nguyện dâng bộ hành khát thực”*

40 123doc. *Các cơ sở công giáo mà nhà nước Việt Nam đã chuyển quyền sử dụng.*

41 RFI. *Giáo hội Công giáo Việt Nam phản đối chính quyền phá tu viện Camêlô.*

42 Thông Tin 24h. *Giáo Xứ Thị Nghè Sài Gòn bị chính quyền chiếm đoạt tài sản.*

- On September 1, 2025, Hue City authorities fenced off the L'Accueil land, which is owned by the Redemptorists, to prepare for a demolition project for construction without the consent of the order.<sup>43</sup>
- In May 2025, the authorities of Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City, demolished Be Van Dan Primary School (campus 2) at 10 Phan Dang Luu, Ward 7, Binh Thanh District, built by the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul to serve educational work and charitable activities without the consent of the congregation.<sup>44</sup>
- On March 25, 2025, the Kon Tum Bishop's Office announced that the government had demolished the building on the Yao Phu Kuenot school campus owned by the Kon Tum Diocese before 1975.<sup>45</sup>
- On November 18, 2024, dozens of believers of the Evangelical Church of Vietnam - Gia Dinh Branch gathered at the yard of the Phu Nhuan District Continuing Education Center, which is a private Gia Dinh Evangelical school owned by the Gia Dinh Evangelical Church since 1950, to prevent the government from taking land to build a new school.<sup>46</sup>
- On May 8, 2024, Phan Thiet City authorities carried out construction on land within the church grounds of Thanh Hai Parish in Phan Thiet City, but faced protests from parishioners.<sup>47</sup>
- On April 1, 2024, the Tam Binh District Police, Vinh Long Province, sent security forces and equipment to destroy the lecture hall of Dai Tho Pagoda, a Khmer Krom pagoda, after arresting abbot Thach Chanh Da Ra on March 26, 2024.<sup>48</sup>

In parallel with the land appropriation and destruction of religious establishments not under the control of the CPV, the government has used its power to grant land as a reward to religious organizations that follow the Party's guidelines. A notable example is the government's recent provision of numerous large plots of land in beautiful locations to the state-controlled Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, enabling the construction of numerous temples that hold the record for being the most beautiful and largest.<sup>49</sup> For example, in Ninh Binh province, Bai Dinh Pagoda was granted over 1,000 hectares of land;<sup>50</sup> Tam Chuc Pagoda, in Ha Nam Province, is given over 5,000 hectares and is considered the largest pagoda in the world. Ironically, the project to build the Tam Chuc spiritual tourism area also includes a casino.<sup>51</sup>

### 3.2.4. Forced Renunciation of Religion

Forced renunciation of religion is the most radical form of repression, and has been recognized by the Vietnamese Communist Party government. On November 9, 2021, the Prime Minister signed Decision No. 78/QĐ-TTg approving the Project "Fighting, preventing, and eventually eliminating the illegal organization Duong Van Minh in the provinces of Tuyen Quang, Cao Bang, Thai Nguyen, Bac Kan, and Lao Cai," referred to as Project 78.

43 Dòng Chúa Cứu Thế Việt Nam. *Xin hiệp lời cầu nguyện cho Dòng Chúa Cứu Thế Việt Nam - Nhà Huế*

44 Saigon Nhỏ. *Dòng nữ tu Thánh Vinh Sơn ở Sài Gòn kêu cứu vì bị cướp đất*

45 Luật Khoa Tạp chí. *Chính quyền phá bỏ tòa nhà của giáo phận Kon Tum*

46 RFA. *TPHCM: Hội Thánh Tin Lành Gia Định biểu tình đòi chính quyền trả ngôi trường mượn gần 50 năm*

47 RFA. *Giáo dân xứ Thanh Hải phản đối chính quyền xây trường trên đất mượn của nhà thờ*

48 RFA. *Vụ sư Thạch Chanh Đa Ra: Công an phá hủy giảng đường của chùa Đại Thọ*

49 Luật Khoa. *Nhà nước vẫn giữ quyền ban phát đất đai như một công cụ kiểm soát tôn giáo.*

50 Báo Ninh Bình. *Ninh Bình: Công bố quy hoạch điều chỉnh, mở rộng khu núi chùa Bái Đính*

51 VietnamNet. *Nhập nhèm phía sau ngôi chùa lớn nhất thế giới*

On September 15, 2023, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs Vu Chien Thang signed and issued Document No. 5254/BNV-TGCP on some tasks regarding the “Church of God the Mother” to the People’s Committees of provinces and cities. The document instructed authorities at all levels to “timely detect and resolutely fight and eliminate the Church of God the Mother in Vietnam.”<sup>52</sup>

In 2024-2025, the central and local governments carried out many campaigns to eradicate religious groups that they called “evil and strange religions”; for example:

- According to a report by Gia Lai Provincial Police, from 2022 to May 2024, the government has persuaded 575 cases of “Dega Protestants” to return to religions recognized by the government.<sup>53</sup>
- According to Phu Yen Provincial Police, by September 2024, the police had eliminated the activities of the Central Highlands Evangelical Church of Christ in 6 villages in 4 communes and three illegal gathering places in Song Hinh district.<sup>54</sup>
- According to Tuyen Quang Provincial Police, by November 2024, the provincial government had eliminated 12/12 types of heretical and strange religions in the province.<sup>55</sup>
- On June 22, 2024, Quang Nam Provincial Police discovered 11 people (five men, four women, two children) studying the Bible of the “Church of God the Mother” in Nam Phuoc town (Duy Xuyen district). Immediately afterwards, the police made a record, seized documents related to the “Church of God the Mother”, and instructed the subjects to handle them in accordance with regulations.<sup>56</sup>

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Vietnam should:

- Immediately and unconditionally release those arbitrarily arrested for peacefully expressing their religious beliefs;
- Review the Law on Belief and Religion and all regulations on religion, in compliance with international standards guaranteed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- Eliminate all forms of restrictions on the freedom of religion; do not interfere in the internal activities of religions, and return confiscated church properties.

The US government should:

- Put Vietnam back on the List of Countries of Particular Concern, which the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, many NGOs, and many US Congressmen have repeatedly requested.

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52 Bộ Nội Vụ. *Văn bản số 5254/BNV-TGCP V/v một số công tác đối với “Hội thánh của Đức Chúa Trời Mẹ”*.

53 Nhân Dân. *Gia Lai: Tiếp tục nhân rộng mô hình “Trở về đức tin giữ bình yên thôn, làng”*

54 Công an Nhân dân. *Xóa bỏ “Tin Lành Đấng Christ Tây Nguyên” ở Sông Hinh*

55 Vietnam Plus. *Tuyên Quang đấu tranh xóa bỏ hoàn toàn các loại hình tà đạo, đạo lạ*

56 VietnamNet. *Triệt xóa điểm sinh hoạt ‘Hội thánh Đức chúa trời mẹ’ ở Quảng Nam*

# VI

## THE RIGHT TO WORK AND ENJOY THE FRUITS OF ONE'S LABOR

To participate in two Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) —the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the European Union-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) —Vietnam has committed to respecting workers' rights in accordance with the ILO's provisions. That commitment has opened up many hopes for Vietnamese workers' rights. During the negotiations, many who had supported the agreements believed that workers' rights would be better promoted if Vietnam implemented the commitments, and that the world, especially the European Union, was ready to impose necessary sanctions to force Vietnam to fully and strictly enforce them.

### 1. AMENDMENTS OF LABOR LAWS TO PASS THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS (FTAS)

One of the basic requirements of the EVFTA is that Vietnam, as a member of the ILO, commits to respect, promote, and implement the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, including the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Fundamental Conventions (Article 13 of EVFTA).

So far, Vietnam has ratified and joined 25 ILO conventions, including 7 of the eight fundamental conventions. Vietnam promised to ratify Convention 87 on Freedom of Association by 2023, but has so far failed to do so.

Due to inconsistencies between Vietnam's current labor laws and ILO Conventions 98, 87, and 105, the Vietnamese government has revised the 2012 Labor Law and the 2012 Trade Union Law in recent years.

#### 1.1. The Labor Law 2019

On November 20, 2019, the Vietnam National Assembly passed Labor Law No. 45/2019/QH14, which took effect on January 1, 2021. In addition to technical modifications, such as the legal validity of electronic employment contracts and salary payment into an employee's bank account, the Labor Law 2019 has a few new and positive items compared to the old law, such as unilateral termination of a contract for workers in some cases (Article 34), additional forms of dialogue between workers and business owners (Article 63), and no direct state intervention in wage-setting (Article 93).

**1.1.1.** However, the most noticeable addition in the Labor Law 2019 is "The right to establish, join and participate in representative organizations of employees" (Art 170). Under this clause are two types of "grassroots level employee representative organizations"; the first type is a grassroots

trade union under the Vietnam Trade Union system. The second type is “Labor organization within the company.”

Based on the permission to establish this type of employee organization, some people hastily concluded that the Vietnamese communist government “allows for the formation of independent trade unions at the grassroots level.”<sup>1</sup>

A re-reading of the 2019 Labor Law does not reveal the term “independent union” in any provision. Furthermore, given the constraints imposed by other legal provisions, the “Labor organization within the company” referred to is not a full-fledged union organization as defined by ILO Convention No. 87.

Moreover, like all new laws enacted in recent years, the Labor Law 2019 contains provisions that could completely change the nature of the law by tying its implementation to other laws’ very vague provisions (Article 178.8 Labor Law 2019)

So far, the Vietnamese government has not issued any regulatory document specifying how to implement this provision regarding “Labor organization within the company,” nor is any such organization allowed to be established under that model.

**1.1.2.** Meanwhile, the Politburo of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) issued Resolution No. 02-NQ/TU, dated June 12, 2021, on Renovating the organization and operation of the Vietnam Trade Union in the new situation to prevent the formation of independent trade unions. Although listed at the end of the Resolution, one of the most significant parts is “Strengthening propaganda so that employers, workers, and employees can identify acts of abusing the establishment and operation of the Labor organization within the company to infringe upon national security and cause insecurity and disorder.” (Resolution No. 02-NQ/TU, III, 6)

In July 2020, an organization called the Vietnam Independent Union (VIU) was established in cyberspace without government recognition. According to its website, VIU is a “non-political and non-profit organization, founded from practical needs and pursuing the mission of protecting the legitimate rights of Vietnamese workers in the context of international integration. The working principle of the union is Solidarity - Mutuality – Development.” Government media have been quick to condemn this as a scheme “to form opposing political forces and organizations in the country towards implementing the ‘color revolution’ and ‘street revolution’ to overthrow the Communist Party and abolish the political system of Vietnam.”<sup>2</sup>

By mid-2022, the VIU website had disappeared and was no longer accessible.

In 2024-2025, although no “Labor organization within the company” has been allowed to be established, the state propaganda apparatus continues to issue warnings that “political opportunists will use many plots and tricks to entice and incite workers and laborers to increase non-cooperative activities with employers, demanding the establishment of so-called “independent unions” to form an opposition political organization to oppose the Party and the State, causing social insecurity and dividing the great national unity bloc.”<sup>3</sup>

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1 BBC. *Thực hư chuyện ‘công đoàn’ độc lập được thừa nhận ở VN?*

2 An Ninh Thủ Đô. *Lật tẩy mưu đồ đen tối dưới vỏ bọc tổ chức “Công đoàn độc lập Việt Nam”*

3 Nhân Dân. *Nhận diện mưu đồ chống phá đất nước núp bóng “công đoàn độc lập”*

## 1.2. Law on Unions

Vietnam initiated the process of amending the 2012 Trade Union Law concurrently with the 2019 Labor Law. However, it was not until November 27, 2024, that the amended Trade Union Law was promulgated, and took effect from July 1, 2025. Although it went through a complex legislative process because it “contained many complicated and sensitive aspects,” as President of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor Nguyen Dinh Khang admitted,<sup>4</sup> the 2024 Trade Union Law has no significant changes in substance, except for two notable points:

Firstly, it includes the concept of “Labor organization within the company” stipulated in Article 170 of the 2019 Labor Code; at the same time, it provides for the merger of these non-existent organizations into the state trade union system (Article 6).

Secondly, it repeats Article 331 of the 2015 Criminal Code at the collective level when stipulating “It is prohibited to take advantage of trade union rights to violate the law, infringe on the interests of the state, legitimate rights and interests of agencies, organizations, units, enterprises, individuals.” (Article 10, Clause 7).

The core nature of trade unions remains the same: they are “socio-political organizations” within the political system led by the CPV (Article 1).

## 2. INCREASED CONTROL OVER TRADE UNIONS AND REPRESSION OF LABOR ACTIVISTS

### 2.1. Increasing the Control over Trade Union Activities

The Vietnam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL), the only legal labor union organization in Vietnam today, was established by the CPV in 1929, at the Party’s founding, to unite workers in support of its policies and programs of action. As a member of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, a peripheral organization of the CPV, the VGCL has not changed its purpose and modus operandi. The dependence of the VGCL on the CPV is clearly stated in the 2013 Constitution.<sup>5</sup>

By the end of 2024, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor had more than 127,000 grassroots trade unions, with more than 11.8 million union members.<sup>6</sup>

On May 23, 2025, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor issued Document 4133/TLĐ-ToC on the organization of the trade union apparatus in accordance with Resolution 60-NQ/TW. Accordingly, there will be no trade unions in administrative agencies that receive 100% of the state budget salary, nor in the armed forces. Trade unions in the above agencies will be dissolved.

4 Đại Đoàn kết. *Sửa Luật Công đoàn rất khó, phức tạp, nhạy cảm.*

5 Article 10 of the 2013 Constitution: “*The Trade Union is the socio-political organization of the working class and laborers, established voluntarily that represents the workers, looks after and protects the legitimate and legal rights and interests of the workers; participates in state administration and socio-economic management; participates in the control, inspection, and supervision of the activity of state bodies, organizations, units and enterprises with respects to the matters concerning the rights and duties of the workers; propagandizes, mobilizes learning, development of abilities and professional skills, conformity of law, and construction and defense of the Fatherland among the workers.*”

6 Công Đoàn Việt Nam. *Phát triển đoàn viên, xây dựng tổ chức Công đoàn.*

Therefore, by mid-2025, approximately 52,000 grassroots trade unions had been dissolved, affecting 2.2 million union members.<sup>7</sup>

The core members of the VGCL must be Party members, from the General Confederation level to grassroots unions. The VGCL President, Mr. Nguyen Dinh Khang, is a member of the Party Central Committee and party secretary of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor. “The governmental model of the party secretary serving simultaneously as the chairman of the People’s Committee” at different levels has been expanded to the field of trade unions because that “ensures the trade union, workers develop under the direction of the Party and State...”<sup>8</sup>

To hold workers’ activities under the Party’s line, the trade unions’ executive committees at all levels must “implement the policies, resolutions, and regulations of the Party and superior trade unions.” They must also “direct, control, and guide all activities of trade unions of lower levels.”<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, trade unions serve as a training ground for candidates for the VCP. According to the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, in 2024, trade unions at all levels nominated 158,813 outstanding union members for the Party to consider for training and admission.<sup>10</sup>

## 2.2. Suppression of Activists Working for the Benefit of Workers.

- The case of Nguyen Van Binh, Director of the Legal Department - Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)

On May 9, 2024, the Hanoi City Police Department of Security Investigation issued a Decision to prosecute a criminal case, a Decision to prosecute the accused, and an Order to temporarily detain Mr. Nguyen Van Binh on the charge of “Intentionally disclosing State secrets” under Article 337 of the Criminal Code. Before working for the MOLISA, Mr. Binh worked with the ILO – Hanoi Office as an Officer in charge of Labor Law and Labor Relations. In his position as Director of the Legal Department - MOLISA, Mr. Binh has made many contributions to the rights of Vietnamese workers, such as promoting Vietnam to ratify several core conventions of the ILO, including Convention No. 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining, Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labor. His many connections with ILOs in the goal of reforming labor policies and laws were considered by the government to be a threat to the CPV’s policies, and therefore needed to be eliminated.<sup>11</sup>

- Vu Minh Tien case. On April 20, 2024, Hanoi police arrested Vu Minh Tien, Head of the Policy and Law Department of the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor and Director of the Institute of Workers and Trade Unions (IWTU), on charges of “intentionally disclosing state secrets” under Article 337 of the Criminal Code. At the time of his arrest, Mr. Tien was leading efforts to bring Vietnam’s labor laws into line with international standards, including amendments to the Trade Union Law and ratification of the ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Lao Động. *Kết thúc hoạt động khoảng 52.000 công đoàn cơ sở*

<sup>8</sup> Minh Ngọc, (Tạp chí Cộng sản). *Cấp ủy viên là chủ tịch công đoàn trong các doanh nghiệp ngoài khu vực nhà nước: Mô hình cần nhân rộng trong thực tiễn.*

<sup>9</sup> *The Regulations of Trade Unions of Vietnam issued on February 3, 2020*

<sup>10</sup> Đại Biểu Nhân Dân. *Tổng Liên đoàn Lao động VN sẽ biểu dương 95 công nhân lao động tiêu biểu là đảng viên.*

<sup>11</sup> BBC. *Vụ trưởng Nguyễn Văn Bình là ai mà bị bắt trước phiên điều trần của Mỹ với Việt Nam?*

<sup>12</sup> Project 88. *Vietnam Arrests Second Trade Unionist in a Month as Minister of Public Security Named President.*

## 3. WORKERS CONTINUE TO ENDURE DIFFICULT LIVING CONDITIONS

### 3.1. Joining the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor is a Burden for Workers.

In addition to fulfilling their duties to the unions at all levels, workers are required to contribute to their monthly trade union fund and pay mandatory union dues. Businesses deduct 2% of the employee's salary from employees' wages for the trade union fund. The obligation applies to all companies, regardless of whether they have a grassroots trade union. Enterprises that do not pay into the trade union fund are fined 12%- 15% of the amount payable. Additionally, union member employees are required to pay an extra 0.5% of their wages to the union, known as mandatory union dues.

Despite receiving workers' financial resources, the VGCL system has never participated in or supported workers' efforts to claim their legitimate rights. On the contrary, trade union officials often sided with the government and employers to suppress strikes, punish individuals or organizations that protected workers' rights, and quell strikes. Trade union leaders are not only government officials but also, in many cases, represent employers. According to a recent survey, up to 30% of surveyed enterprises have senior managers who are also union leaders.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2 Insufficient Wages to Live On

The Vietnamese government has always taken pride in its economic growth rate, which is twice the average of developing countries. In fact, the GDP growth of a manufacturing economy like Vietnam does not guarantee that people's lives, especially those who directly produce the products, will improve.

A 2025 survey by the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor on nearly 3,000 workers in 10 provinces and cities showed that only 54.9% said their salary was enough for basic expenses, 26.3% lived a miserable life, and 7.9% did not have enough to live on and had to do other jobs to earn extra income to cover their living expenses.

More than 53.3% of workers reported that their salaries only partially met (over 50%) their children's educational needs. 44.1% of workers reported that their income only covered basic healthcare and medical needs.

The survey also found that low salaries have a significant impact on even single people's decision to start a family.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.3. Lack of Workplace Safety

Additionally, workers often have to work in unsafe conditions. According to the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids, and Social Affairs, in 2024, there were 8,286 occupational accidents nationwide, resulting in 8,472 casualties. The number of fatal accidents was 675, an increase of 13, equivalent to 1.96% compared to 2023. The number of deaths from occupational accidents was 727, an increase of 28 (4.81%) compared to 2023.<sup>15</sup>

13 Lê Quang Cảnh & Đinh Lê Hải Hà. *Các tình huống thực tế tại Việt Nam về thực hành kinh doanh có trách nhiệm*. Nhà xuất bản Đại học Kinh tế Quốc dân, 2023, tr. 16

14 Lao Động. *Bất ngờ với kết quả khảo sát liên quan đến tiền lương của người lao động*

15 Lao Động. *Tai nạn lao động năm 2024 khiến hàng trăm người tử vong, thiệt hại hàng chục nghìn tỉ đồng*.



*On April 22, 2024, a workplace accident at Yen Bai Cement and Mineral Joint Stock Company resulted in 7 deaths and 3 injuries (social media image).*

The primary reasons for accidents were the employer's negligence in establishing operating procedures, inadequate worker training, and unsafe equipment (46.91% of total cases and 47.12% of total deaths), while worker-caused causes accounted for only 22.88% of total cases and 20.55% of total deaths.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.4. Unsanitary Working Conditions

Workers have to worry not only about insufficient wages and occupational safety but also about the factory's hygienic conditions and lunch safety. Many manufacturing facilities prioritize profit over workers' lives. In 2024-2025, there were many cases of food poisoning from collective meals in factories, for example:

- On December 6, 2024, 63 workers of a garment company located in WHA Industrial Park (Nghị Loc District, Nghe An).<sup>17</sup>
- On August 12, 2024, 247 workers of Bo Hsing Company, in Hoa Phu Industrial Park, Long Ho District, Vinh Long.<sup>18</sup>
- On June 27, 2024, 178 workers of Song Cam Shipyard, Hai Phong.<sup>19</sup>
- On May 15, 2024, 89 workers of Dechang Vietnam Co., Ltd. (Giang Dien Industrial Park, Trang Bom District, Dong Nai Province).<sup>20</sup>
- On May 14, 2024, 438 workers of Shinwon Ebenezer Vietnam Co., Ltd., Vinh Phuc province.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Lao động Thủ đô. *Số vụ tai nạn lao động vẫn tăng.*

<sup>17</sup> Thanh Niên. *Hàng loạt công nhân nhập viện sau bữa ăn trưa*

<sup>18</sup> Thanh Niên. *Vụ hàng trăm công nhân nghi bị ngộ độc thực phẩm: Đã có 168 người xuất viện*

<sup>19</sup> Công lý. *Vụ hơn 100 công nhân nghi ngộ độc thực phẩm: Đình chỉ hoạt động bếp ăn*

<sup>20</sup> UBND Tỉnh Đồng Nai. *89 công nhân Công ty TNHH Dechang Việt Nam nghi bị ngộ độc thực phẩm*

<sup>21</sup> Pháp luật & Cuộc sống. *Vụ 438 công nhân ngộ độc tại Vĩnh Phúc: Nguyên nhân từ món canh chua*

The primary reason for the above poisoning cases is the presence of bacteria and histamine in cheap, contaminated food sources on the market that contractors have used to process meals, aiming to reduce costs to suit workers' budgets. Currently, the price of a full meal for workers ranges from 25,000 VND to 40,000 VND, while poor workers can afford only 18,000 VND to 20,000 VND for lunch.<sup>22</sup>

### 3.5. Peaceful and Justified Protests Remain Illegal.

Faced with pressure from factory owners and the helplessness and indifference of trade unions, workers have to turn to strikes to fight for equitable wages and working conditions. Until now, although all the strikes have had good reasons, they are utterly illegal because unions do not organize them and do not follow the collective bargaining and worker consultation procedures as outlined in the Labor Law 2019.

According to a report by the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, in 2024, there were 76 collective work stoppages nationwide, an increase of 18 from the same period in 2023.<sup>23</sup>

In the first five months of 2025, there were 37 collective work stoppages nationwide, an increase of 8 compared to the same period last year.<sup>24</sup>

In those illegal strikes initiated by workers, there were cases where up to thousands of workers participated; for example:

- From March 1 to March 7, 2025, in Thanh Hoa province, more than 25,000 workers stopped working at 10 enterprises to demand benefits regarding policies and wages.<sup>25</sup>
- On March 7, 2025, the majority of the 11,000 workers at Amara Vietnam Shoe Company in Co Le town, Truc Ninh district, Nam Dinh province, went on strike demanding higher wages.<sup>26</sup>
- On August 22, 2024, more than 1,000 workers at Alena Vietnam Shoe Company Limited, Yen Dinh District, Thanh Hoa Province, collectively stopped working to demand that the business owner pay additional overtime.<sup>27</sup>
- On August 2, 2024, about 1,600 workers of KD Sports Vietnam Co., Ltd. (Thang town, Hiep Hoa district, Bac Giang province) stopped working collectively to request the company to increase the basic salary by 260,000 VND/month without increasing production, to resolve some problems regarding shift wages, shift meal allowances...<sup>28</sup>
- On March 6, 2024, in Bien Hoa, Dong Nai, more than 1,700 workers of Timber Industries Co., Ltd. stopped working collectively, asking the company to discuss working hours, consider improving working conditions, and lunch.<sup>29</sup>

All strikes in 2024 and 2025 stemmed from reasons directly related to the workers' living conditions, as the enterprise owners failed to fulfill their social responsibilities towards workers,

22 Pháp Luật. *Hạ giá suất ăn để cạnh tranh: Tiềm ẩn nguy cơ mất an toàn thực phẩm*

23 Công Thương. *Năm 2024, cả nước xảy ra 76 cuộc ngừng việc tập thể*

24 Lao Động. *5 tháng đầu năm 2025, cả nước xảy ra 37 cuộc ngừng việc tập thể*

25 Vietnam Plus. *Chấm dứt tình trạng ngừng việc tập thể hàng loạt tại Thanh Hóa*

26 Thanh Tra. *Nam Định: Ngừng việc tại công ty có hơn 11.000 công nhân*

27 Người Lao Động. *Hơn 1.000 công nhân ngừng việc tập thể đòi quyền lợi*

28 SaiGon Giải Phóng. *1.600 công nhân may ngừng việc, doanh nghiệp đồng ý tăng 250.000 đồng/tháng*

29 Lao Động. *1.700 công nhân công ty gỗ ở Đồng Nai ngừng việc tập thể*



*On March 7, 2025, workers of Amara Vietnam Footwear Co., Ltd. in Co Le town, Truc Ninh district, Nam Dinh province, went on strike demanding higher wages. (Photo: Government Inspector Newspaper)*

including wages, bonuses, working hours, breaks, occupational safety, and health. It is worth noting that the majority of strikes occurred at foreign-invested enterprises (FDI).

In response to the workers' legitimate demands, the government stated that these were illegal mass gatherings that disrupted security and order and threatened to "deal with them severely."<sup>30</sup>

## 4. FORCED LABOR AND CHILD LABOR CONTINUE.

Vietnam ratified Convention 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor in 1999. Still, the National Assembly of Vietnam ratified ILO Convention 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour on June 8, 2020. These are critical legal developments; however, implementing the conventions' provisions is another matter.

### 4.1. Exploitation of Labor in Prisons and Rehabilitation Centers

The use of prisoners in prisons, patients in rehabilitation centers, drug addiction camps, and students in reform schools for labor is widespread in Vietnam. In 2012, twelve United Nations agencies, including the ILO, the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), issued a joint statement calling for the closing of compulsory drug rehabilitation centers, citing the use of forced labor and no evidence of medical treatment.<sup>31</sup>

Until now, the patient labor organization in drug rehabilitation centers has remained unchanged. By March 2025, the management of drug rehabilitation facilities, currently under the Department of Labor, War Invalids, and Social Affairs, will be transferred to the police of provinces and centrally run cities.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Công lý. *Nam Định: Sẽ xử lý nghiêm việc lợi dụng ngừng việc, đình công để gây rối*

<sup>31</sup> ILRF. *Forced labor in Vietnam.*

<sup>32</sup> Học viện Cảnh sát Nhân dân. *Tiếp nhận nhiệm vụ để nâng cao hiệu quả cai nghiện ma túy và quản lý sau cai nghiện*

In the process of joining the ILO Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labor in 2020, the Vietnamese government did not deny the fact that prisoners had to work. However, they claimed that forcing prisoners to work was for educational purposes. Moreover, this does not violate Convention 105 because it falls under one of the five exceptions stipulated in Convention 29 on forced labor, which Vietnam joined in 2007. With this exception, according to the explanation of the Vietnamese Communist government, the labor of prisoners in prisons is carried out according to the Law on Enforcement of Criminal Judgments; under the management of the prison, not transferred and placed under the use of private individuals, so it is not bound by Convention 105.<sup>33</sup>

However, in March 2022, at the Ministry of Public Security's proposal, the National Assembly Standing Committee issued Resolution No. 54/202, allowing prisoners to work at construction sites managed by private enterprises.<sup>34</sup> On March 13, 2023, the government issued Decree No. 09/2023 detailing the implementation of the above Resolution by the National Assembly.

On November 9, 2020, the Government of Vietnam issued Decree No. 133/2020/ND-CP detailing the implementation of some articles of the 2019 Law on Execution of Criminal Judgments. The Decree sets the amount of money labor prisoners shall be entitled to at only 10% of the proceeds from labor revenue, after deducting "reasonable expenses in the work organization process." With this regulation, most labor prisoners are forced to work for free. This Decree applies not only to prisoners but also to students of reformatory schools.

By the end of 2024, 06 prisons (Hong Ca, Suoi Hai, Ninh Khanh, Thanh Phong, Xuan Ha, Tong Le Chan) had cooperated with business partners to establish 11 labor, career guidance, and vocational training areas outside of prison, organizing labor for 388 prisoners.<sup>35</sup>

## 4.2. Forms of Forced Labor in Enterprises

In factories, the most common form of forced labor is being required to work overtime under the threat of being fired.<sup>36</sup>

The current Labor Law stipulates that if an employee does not agree to work overtime under normal circumstances, the employer cannot use this as grounds for terminating their employment. However, in reality, faced with the prospect of losing their job in a difficult economic situation, employees have no choice but to accept overtime. This condition is also a form of psychological coercion.

## 4.3. Labor Export: The Trap of Forced Labor

A massive portion of 650,000 Vietnamese export workers in 40 countries and territories, notably in Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, Japan, and the Middle East, are victims of forced labor. Many of these workers, mainly underground export laborers, are victims of human trafficking and have been exploited by brokerage services. Typically, recruiting agents visit impoverished villages and promise job seekers with little education good overseas employment contracts. Once workers arrive at their destination, the agents confiscate their passports and hand them over to the

33 Dân Sinh. *Lao động của phạm nhân không thuộc phạm vi điều chỉnh của Công ước 105.*

34 Vietnam Plus. *Thí điểm mô hình tổ chức dạy nghề cho phạm nhân ngoài trại giam.*

35 Thanh Niên. *Gần 400 phạm nhân được học nghề ngoài trại giam*

36 Fair Labor Association. *Forced Labor in Supply Chains: Addressing Risks and Safeguarding Workers' Freedoms.*

employers. Then the workers discover that the conditions described in the contracts were not satisfactory and were lies or misrepresentations. As a result, they have neither a passport nor money to return to their country.

In 2024-2025, the issue of forced labor among export workers is of particular concern. There were numerous reports of workers being promised good jobs in Cambodia and the Philippines, only to find themselves engaged in unscrupulous practices, such as those in casinos and Internet fraud [see Chapter I, Section 3.2, Exploitation of Export Workers].

#### 4.4. Child Forced Labor Continues.

Another aspect of forced labor is the abuse of children and the dangerous conditions in which they are forced to work. According to a UNICEF report, there are currently about 1 million child laborers in Vietnam.<sup>37</sup>

The US Department of Labor's 2024 report on products made by child labor or forced labor lists 17 products that use child labor in Vietnam, as follows: Bricks, Cashews, Coffee, Fish, Footwear, Garments, Furniture, Leather, Pepper, Rice, Rubber, Sugarcane, Tea, Textiles, Timber, and Tobacco. Two product industries that both use child labor and forced labor are the garment and cotton industries.<sup>38</sup>

However, the most common "occupations" for children in Vietnam are working as domestic workers for wealthy families, selling small items and lottery tickets in public places, and shining shoes. Worse still, many children have to play disabled to attract the compassion of passersby, serving professional beggar organizations. Reports on child labor in Vietnam do not include those kinds of "occupations."

Despite its commitment to respect workers' rights through compliance with ILO international labor conventions and international trade treaties, Vietnam continues to violate workers' fundamental rights.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Vietnam should:

- Amend the 2019 Labor Law and the 2012 Trade Union Law, practically ensuring the freedom to establish independent unions;
- Ratify and implement the ILO's Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and the Protection of the Right to Organize, and strictly implement signed international conventions on workers' rights;
- Improve the living and working conditions of workers, specifically in the fields of employment, wages, social insurance, and occupational safety and health;
- Eliminate all forms of forced labor; strictly prohibit the exploitation of child labor.

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<sup>37</sup> UNICEF USA. *Support Children in Vietnam with UNICEF*

<sup>38</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. *2024 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*.

## VII THE RIGHT TO EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The 2013 Constitution of Vietnam clearly stipulates that “all citizens are equal before the law” and that “no one shall be discriminated against based on his or her political, civic, economic, cultural or social life” (Article 16). In addition, the National Assembly of Vietnam has also passed many laws prohibiting discriminatory treatment in specific areas such as the Law on Prevention and Control of Domestic Violence (2007, amended 2022), Law on Persons with Disabilities (2010), Law on Marriage and Family (2014), Law on Children (2016), Law on Education (2019), and Law on Gender Equality (2006).

However, the above legal documents are not sufficient to demonstrate the Government’s goodwill and ability to address inequality and discrimination. The factual reporting of relationships in Vietnamese society today, especially during 2024-2025, in the areas below, shows that the Government is still far from adhering to the laws it has set.

- Discrimination against supporters of the Republic of Vietnam
- Discrimination against non-communist party citizens
- Discrimination against religious believers
- Discrimination against ethnic minorities
- Discrimination against women

### 1. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SUPPORTERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

On the 50th anniversary of North Vietnam’s victory (1975-2025), General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Tô Lâm reiterated the “policy of national harmony and reconciliation” saying, “All Vietnamese people are Vietnamese citizens, have the right to live, work, and freely pursue happiness and love on their homeland, and have the right and responsibility to contribute to building the Fatherland.”<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1. The Fate of the Wounded and Disabled Soldiers of the Republic of Vietnam

However, if we examine the current government treatment of those who served the Republic of Vietnam, we see no significant change over the past fifty years. The distinction between one

<sup>1</sup> Báo Điện Tử Chính Phủ. *Diễn văn của Tổng Bí thư Tô Lâm tại Lễ kỷ niệm 50 năm Ngày Giải phóng miền nam, thống nhất đất nước*

“deserving” side and the other “puppet” side remains unchanged since the post-war period.

Although the “re-education camps” were closed nearly three decades ago, the profiling policy still creates great educational, political, and economic inequality, dividing people who supported the previous Government and those associated with the victors.<sup>2</sup>

Among those who were associated with the former Republic of Vietnam government, the ones who suffered the worst discrimination by the current regime were disabled veterans and their families. After 1975, about 200,000 disabled veterans of the Republic of Vietnam<sup>3</sup> had to accept the mistreatment of the victors. They lived in extreme poverty, without any source of income. Many were pushed to the New Economic Zone. Some became beggars on the streets. Since 2014, with the help of their compatriots worldwide, some ARVN disabled veterans came together and told the world how their Government had stigmatized, discriminated against, and marginalized them.

Some religious organizations in the country, including the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam, the Redemptorist Order (38 Ky Dong, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City), and the Disabled Veterans and Widows Relief Association, organized a charity program to assist invalids from the Republic of Vietnam who were in need.<sup>4</sup>

Since 2014, through the Gratitude to the Republic of Vietnam War Invalids Program, the Redemptorist Congregation in Saigon has provided disabled vets of the former ARVN with medical examinations and necessary items such as push-pull and regular wheelchairs and crutches. However, the Government has repressed this charitable work in recent years. In April 2024, under pressure from the Government, this charity program was forced to terminate itself.<sup>5</sup>

However, in the first National Report on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Vietnam did not mention the status of disabled veterans of the Republic of Vietnam. On March 7, 2025, during the review session of this report, the Vice President of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Ms. Amalia Gamio, raised the issue of the treatment of disabled veterans of the Republic of Vietnam with the Vietnamese delegation, and did not receive a satisfactory explanation.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.2. Preferential Policies for People Who Contributed to the Revolution

Meanwhile, the Government has adopted an opposite policy towards Communist cadres, veterans, and their families. As reported by the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, more than 9.2 million “meritorious” people (about 10% of the country’s population) enjoy preferential policies due to their service to the Revolution, of which nearly 1.4 million people are enjoying the monthly preferential regime.

On July 1, 2024, the Government issued Decree No. 77/2024, which adjusted the standard level of the preferential allowance for people with revolutionary contributions from VND 2,055,000 to

2 RFA. *Ngược đãi sau 30/4 là bi kịch lịch sử.*

3 Hội HO Cứu Trợ TPB & QP. *Chuyện người thương binh.*

4 RFA. *Tết với Thương phế binh Việt Nam Cộng Hoà và mong ước tuổi xế chiều.*

5 Người Việt. *Sự thật về chương trình Tri ân TPB-VNCH bị buộc chấm dứt.*

6 RFA. *Liên Hợp Quốc chất vấn Việt Nam về thương phế binh VNCH*

VND 2,789,000 (an increase of 35.7%).<sup>7</sup>

On April 23, 2025, the Government spent VND 834 billion as gifts for people with revolutionary contributions, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Liberation of the South and National Reunification (April 30, 1975 - April 30, 2025) and the 80th anniversary of the founding of the communist regime (September 2, 1945 - September 2, 2025).<sup>8</sup>

In addition, meritorious individuals are entitled to various other benefits and incentives, such as exemptions or reductions in land-use fees, health insurance, priority in school enrollment, job opportunities, preferential business loans, and tax exemptions or reductions as prescribed by law.

According to Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, with these preferential measures, 99% of households with meritorious service now have a living standard equal to or higher than that of households in their area, and there are no longer any households with meritorious service in the poor household category.<sup>9</sup>

## 2. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NON-COMMUNIST PARTY CITIZENS

The CPV has approximately 5.6 million members in a country with a population of around 101 million. Under the current Constitution, the only permitted political party is the CPV, whose members are afforded greater privileges than outsiders. Discrimination between Party and non-Party members is not limited to the public domain (see Chapter III – Right to Participate in National Political Life). However, it extends to all social activities, from the economy to education and social security.

### 2.2. Discrimination in Economic Activities

In the economy, under the current regulations of the CPV government, in addition to being awarded 12 types of party badges based on the number of years in the Party, party members also receive bonuses based on their seniority in the Party, ranging from 3.5 to 35 million VND.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, when party members are elected or appointed to the Party's Executive Committee, Party cells at all levels, from the central to grassroots levels, will be entitled to a responsibility allowance. For example, in July 2025, the Ministry of Finance proposed adjusting the monthly service allowance for officials, including the Heads of Party Committees at the central level and Secretaries of Provincial and City Party Committees, from 400,000 VND to 2.7 million VND (a 6.75-fold increase).<sup>11</sup> The national budget is funding the compensation of the CPV members.

### 2.3. Discrimination in Education

In terms of education, especially for entrance exams, excluding schools in the security and military sectors where the mandatory condition is to be a party member or a member of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union,<sup>12</sup> other colleges and universities also rely on the personal and family

<sup>7</sup> VnEconomy. *Chính sách ưu đãi người có công với cách mạng luôn được Bổ sung và Hoàn thiện.*

<sup>8</sup> Báo Điện tử Chính phủ. *Dành 834 tỷ đồng tặng quà người có công với cách mạng nhân dịp 30/4 và 2/9*

<sup>9</sup> VnEconomy. *Thủ tướng: Bảo đảm người có công và gia đình có mức sống từ trung bình khá*

<sup>10</sup> Công Đoàn Việt Nam. *Chi tiết mức tiền thưởng huy hiệu Đảng năm 2025*

<sup>11</sup> VNExpress. *Đề xuất tăng phụ cấp cho bộ trưởng, bí thư tỉnh ủy lên 2,7 triệu đồng*

<sup>12</sup> Tuổi Trẻ Online. *3 điểm mới khi xét tuyển vào trường quân đội.*

background of the candidate as a decisive condition for selection.

## 2.4. Discrimination in Social Security

In terms of social security, the current preferential treatment policy determines the delivery of services, such as housing and healthcare, based on the recipient's position within the Party.

For example, in the health sector, while most hospitals across the country are under-resourced, affecting the quality of public healthcare in general, each province, city, and district has its own hospital, or a separate area of the hospital dedicated to healthcare for senior officials and party members. The Central Committee for Healthcare and Protection provides medical care for central cadres. At the provincial, district, town, and city levels, healthcare committees offer medical care for local party members. Support and care regimes are not based on health conditions; instead, they are divided into multiple levels depending on one's position within the Party, from the highest to the lowest. For example, in Khanh Hoa province, party members holding high positions are entitled to annual medical examination expenses of up to 20 million VND/person; lower-ranking officials receive a maximum of 5 million VND/person.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, it was not until July 2025 that the Government considered providing free regular health check-ups to people at least once a year starting in 2026.<sup>14</sup> However, there are many reasons for skeptics to doubt that this promise can be fulfilled.

## 3. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS

The Law on Belief and Religion explicitly forbids “discrimination and stigmatization against Beliefs and Religion” (Article 5); however, religious believers have continued to experience discrimination and stigmatization in 2024-2025. The Communist Government still regards religion as a threat to the regime. Therefore, besides banning and suppressing some religions [see Chapter IV of this Report], they treat religious followers as second-class citizens in all social areas, especially in public services and education.

### 3. 1. Inequality in Public Life

For elected positions, the Vietnamese Government often sets quotas for elected religious representatives, who are selected for their loyalty to the CPV. For example, in the 15th National Assembly election of 2021, the Government selected six religious dignitaries for this 500-member body.<sup>15</sup> However, this theatrical performance could not conceal the discriminatory way people of religious faith are generally treated. For example, religious followers are not eligible to sit for the entrance examination to military or police schools due to the three-generation background check system.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, military and police officers, as well as their spouses, are prohibited from professing Catholicism, Protestantism, or Islam.<sup>17</sup>

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13 Khánh Hòa Online. *Sửa đổi mức chi khám sức khỏe hàng năm cho cán bộ thuộc diện Ban Thường vụ Tỉnh ủy quản lý và một số đối tượng chính sách khác*

14 VNExpress. *Toàn dân được khám sức khỏe định kỳ miễn phí từ năm 2026*

15 Tin Tức. *Dự kiến số lượng, cơ cấu, thành phần đại biểu Quốc hội khóa XV.*

16 Luật sư X. *Người theo tôn giáo có thể trở thành công an được không?*

17 Dân Luật. *Theo đạo thiên chúa có được lấy sĩ quan quân đội không?*

In 2021, the Government of Vietnam introduced new citizen identification cards with electronic chips for all citizens aged 14 and above. There is a religious affiliation field on the application form, which police officers of the Administrative Management Police Department arbitrarily mark as ‘no religion’ if applicants cannot provide a religious certification issued by their church. This practice violates religious freedom and demonstrates discrimination based on citizens’ religious backgrounds.<sup>18</sup>

In reality, nationwide and locally, no religious follower is allowed to hold a position of significant power in state agencies, including those in specialized fields such as health, education, and finance.

### 3. 2. Inequality in Educational Opportunities

As in the case of children of former South Vietnamese officials, profiling is also employed against religious believers who apply for higher college entrance exams. The current standard curriculum vitae form for students in Vietnam always includes questions about religion. Similar to the Communist Ho Chi Minh Youth Union and VCP affiliation, as well as family history before 1975, religion is also a crucial factor in determining students’ educational paths and future career choices.<sup>19</sup> Students who declare a religious affiliation will not be favored when selecting curricula, scholarships, or other benefits, even if they score higher on aptitude tests.

## 4. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST ETHNIC MINORITIES

Vietnam’s population comprises 54 ethnic groups, of which the Lowlanders (the Kinh) account for 85% and the minority groups for 15%. Except for the Chinese, who are primarily entrepreneurs in metropolitan areas, the rest of the ethnic groups reside in remote, mountainous regions of the Central Highlands and the northwestern parts of Vietnam. Many ethnic groups have their own languages and customs. The policy prohibiting discrimination and divisive acts between the races is stipulated in Article 5 of the 2013 Constitution: “All ethnicities are equal and shall unite, respect and assist one another for mutual development; all acts of discrimination and division of ethnicities are prohibited.” However, racial discrimination is still a grave concern for ethnic minorities. Discrimination against ethnic minorities is particularly prominent in the economy, education, and politics.

### 4. 1. Economic Inequality

“Hunger Elimination and Poverty Reduction Programs,” established after the Economic Reforms, have helped increase average per capita income. The increase was primarily dependent on foreign investment, aid, and remittances. Economic growth, however, only brings wealth to a few people — mostly in urban areas — and widens the rich-poor gap, exacerbating tensions among social strata. This disparity leaves most people, especially farmers and ethnic minorities, on the sidelines.

According to a 2023 study by United Nations experts, while making up only about 15% of the population, ethnic minorities account for 90% of the country’s extreme poverty and more

<sup>18</sup> Việt Nam Thời Báo. *Vì phạm quyền tự do tôn giáo qua việc cấp căn cước công dân.*

<sup>19</sup> Thư viện Bản án. *Cách ghi sơ yếu lý lịch học sinh, sinh viên 2024 đầy đủ, chi tiết*



*In-need belongings of a poor Mày ethnic minority family. Image cropped from YouTube Chao Vlog (June 16, 2025)*

than 50% of the multidimensionally poor. Their average income is only 40-50% of the national average.<sup>20</sup>

An independent study published in late 2024 found that while economic growth has helped reduce poverty, the poor, especially in provinces with higher ethnic minority populations, have higher poverty rates. Moreover, this inequality gap is widening over time.<sup>21</sup>

There are several reasons for this disparity, including geographical location, educational level, and cultural background. However, the most crucial reason is still the policy of unfair treatment towards these ethnic minority groups, especially the policy on land ownership.

The vast majority of ethnic minorities rely on farming as their primary source of livelihood. The land is their primary, if not the only, source of life. After 1975, with the population relocation and deforestation policies favoring industrial plantations, the highlanders' living space dwindled. Official figures show that the number of people with political power, money, and guns in the Central Highlands increased from 1 million in 1975 to about 6 million by 2021.<sup>22</sup>

Most of the new settlers come from the North, creating cultural and political conflicts. Illegal logging, state-led incentives for large-scale cultivation of agricultural products for export, such as rubber, and the construction of infrastructure—including hydroelectric power plants, irrigation systems, and golf courses—have pushed villages deeper into less fertile lands. According to the National Assembly's Council on Ethnic Minorities, ethnic minorities and mountainous areas remain "poor" due to a lack of land and means of production.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, since 1975, the areas where ethnic minorities are concentrated (Northwest Highlands and Central Highlands) have often experienced significant instability due to the Government's

20 Ramla Khalidi, UNDP in Viet Nam. *Digital solutions empower ethnic minority women in Vietnam*. (Asia Times on 25 March, 2023.)

21 Hai-Anh H. Dang, Shatakshee Dhongde, Minh N. N. Do, Cuong Viet Nguyen, Obert Pimhidzai *Rapid Economic Growth but Rising Poverty Segregation: Will Vietnam Meet the SDGs for Equitable Development?*

22 Quản lý Nhà nước. *Tác động của di cư tự do đến sự phát triển kinh tế – xã hội ở khu vực Tây Nguyên hiện nay*.

23 Vietnam Plus. *Cần bố trí nguồn lực giải quyết đất đai cho đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số*.

violation of land rights and religious freedom of ethnic minorities.

The most recent major incident was the attack on the headquarters of two communes' people's committees' offices in Cu Kuin district, Dak Lak province, on June 11, 2023, resulting in 9 government officials' deaths and more than 90 people arrested and charged with domestic terrorism.<sup>24</sup> Many ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands risked their lives to leave their villages and flee to Cambodia and Thailand to find a place to live.

## 4. 2. Healthcare and Education Inequalities

**4.2.1.** According to a World Bank report, the stunting rate among ethnic minority children is more than twice that of Kinh children (31.4% vs. 15%), and the rate of underweight ethnic minority children is also 2.25 times larger than that of Kinh children (21.9% vs. 9.7%).<sup>25</sup>

This disparity has not improved in recent times. According to UNICEF's 2024 report, ethnic minority children continue to face higher health risks due to limited access to health care and preventive services.<sup>26</sup>

**4.2.2.** Another inevitable consequence of poverty is the lack of access to education. Several studies on ethnic minority children in Vietnam have concluded that ethnic minorities are the least likely to receive an education, have higher dropout rates, and experience later school enrollment. Remote villages often lack school buildings, ethnic minority teachers, and bilingual education programs.

Students of ethnic minorities are excluded from educational institutions, especially from secondary school and above. According to UNICEF's 2024 update report, only one in five students from ethnic minority backgrounds completes high school or higher.<sup>27</sup>

## 4. 3. Discrimination against Ethnic Minorities: Political Inequalities

**4.3.1.** In the 15th National Assembly, the VCP arranged for 89 people from ethnic minorities to be elected to the National Assembly (17.84% of the total MPs). The Government actually decided this rate before the results were out.<sup>28</sup> The so-called ethnic representatives are individuals selected by the central Government solely to convey orders from above.

**4.3.2.** Ethnic minorities in villages and communes have no self-government mechanism to represent their interests. The only means left for them to express their aspirations are holding rallies, fleeing abroad, or engaging in other forms of protest. That is the reason for the collective repression or individual arrests that ethnic minorities have had to endure since 1975. Currently, the Montagnards who fled to Thailand to avoid arrest by the Vietnamese Government are also living in difficult circumstances; they can be arrested and deported back to Vietnam at any time.<sup>29</sup>

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24 RFA. *Đắc Lắc: Công an nói đã thu hồi hơn 4.500 loại vũ khí từ người dân sau vụ nổ súng chết người tháng trước.*

25 The World Bank. *Persistent Malnutrition in Ethnic Minority Communities of Vietnam : Issues and Options for Policy and Interventions.*

26 United Nations Children's Fund, *UNICEF Vietnam Annual Report 2024*, UNICEF, New York, February 2025

27 UNICEF USA. *Support Children in Vietnam with UNICEF*

28 Chinhphu.vn. *Nghị quyết số 1185/NQ-UBTVQH14 của ỦY BAN THƯỜNG VỤ QUỐC HỘI: Dự kiến số lượng, cơ cấu, thành phần đại biểu Quốc hội khóa XV.*

29 Luật Khoa Tạp Chí. *Khi Tây Nguyên không còn là nhà.*



*On November 26, 2024, a court in Vinh Long province sentenced nine people to a total of more than 26 years in prison for speaking out in defense of the Khmer Krom people's rights. (Photo: Vinh Long Newspaper)*

**4.3.3.** The continued persecution and mistreatment of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands region of Vietnam stems from the suspicion of their loyalty to the current regime. Before 1975, these ethnic groups fought alongside the South Vietnamese Government and the US military. After 1975, the Communist Government always considered the conversion of ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands to Protestantism as a political threat to the regime.

**4.3.4.** In some provinces in the Mekong Delta, the Government has gone even further in the name of “national unity” to deny the rights of the Khmer Krom minority.<sup>30</sup> In 2024-2025, the Vietnamese Government arrested and sentenced at least nine Khmer Krom people to harsh sentences based on vague provisions of the Criminal Code, when in fact they only wanted to practice their traditional religion.<sup>31</sup>

On August 25, 2025, United Nations experts expressed deep concern over reports of escalating repression against the Khmer Krom indigenous people in Viet Nam, including human rights defenders, Theravada Buddhist monks and followers, and cultural rights advocates.<sup>32</sup>

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30 UNPO. *Vietnam admits arrests for possession of UN Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples.*

31 RFA. *Tòa Vĩnh Long kết án tù các nhà sư và phật tử người Khmer Krom*

32 UN. *Viet Nam: UN experts alarmed by ongoing repression of Khmer Krom Indigenous Peoples and Theravada Buddhist monks*

## 5. DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Discrimination against women in Vietnam today appears in many forms, but the most common are victims of domestic violence, pay disparities, and sexual abuse in the workplace.

### 5.1. Violence Against Women

According to a relatively large-scale study published by the General Statistics Office, the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in 2020, nearly 2 in every three women. (62.9%) experienced one or more forms of physical, sexual, emotional, and economic violence controlled by their husband in their lifetime, and 31.6% currently experienced violence (in the last 12 months).<sup>33</sup>

**5.1.1.** During a discussion on the draft Law on Prevention of and Control over Domestic Violence (amended) in June 2022, National Assembly Deputy Ha Thi Nga, President of the Vietnam Women's Union, admitted that domestic violence "tends to be more severe, more diverse, more complex, has been and is leaving tragic and painful consequences for many families."<sup>34</sup>

Especially in recent years, news of domestic violence has reached its peak of intensity, with husbands killing their wives appearing daily on social media.<sup>35</sup>

**5.1.2.** Outside the family setting, women are also subjected to societal violence, especially in the workplace. According to a 2023 poll by NÓI, a media company committed to telling the stories of Vietnamese women, nearly 90% of women polled shared that they had been sexually harassed. Most (63%) do not seek help because they do not fully understand that it is harassment. Only 20% of victims who seek help are satisfied with the support they receive. More importantly, up to 84% of victims said sexual harassment often happens in public places (office, gym, street, online).<sup>36</sup>

### 5.2. Gender Inequality in Employment

Vietnam has ratified numerous International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions related to employment equality. However, the current reality, through surveys, shows that women still suffer many disadvantages and inequalities compared to men in the workplace.

**5.2.1.** A female worker's average salary and income are consistently lower than those of a male employee. According to statistics from the General Statistics Office, the labor and employment situation in the first quarter of 2025 shows that the average monthly income of female workers is 7.1 million VND/month, and that of male workers is 9.3 million VND/month, equivalent to 76%.<sup>37</sup>

**5.2.2.** Female workers also frequently face workplace risks such as sexual harassment, work pressure, and unsafe working conditions, which adversely affect their physical and mental health.<sup>38</sup>

**5.2.3.** The percentage of women holding leadership positions in all sectors of the economy

<sup>33</sup> GSO, MOLISA, and UNFPA in Viet Nam. 2020. *The National Study on Violence against Women in Viet Nam 2019*.

<sup>34</sup> Quốc hội Việt Nam. *ĐBQH Hà Thị Nga: Bạo lực gia đình là nguyên nhân chính củatrên 76% số vụ ly hôn trong 10 năm qua*.

<sup>35</sup> Lao Động. *Tag: chồng giết vợ*

<sup>36</sup> Angélique Masse-Nguyen (NOI). *What Vietnamese women told us on sexual harassment?*

<sup>37</sup> Tuổi Trẻ. *Thu nhập của nam giới hay phụ nữ cao hơn?*

<sup>38</sup> UN Women. (2024). *Women in the garment industry: Empowerment and equity in Viet Nam*.

is deficient. According to the latest studies, only 11% of CEOs in Vietnam are female, a lower percentage than in ASEAN countries (27%).<sup>39</sup>

**5.2.4.** The most tragic gender discrimination and inequality in employment is the fate of young women who migrate to work because of their family's economic circumstances. In recent years, alongside the momentum of economic development, the number of people moving from rural to urban areas has increased sharply. Female workers account for a large proportion (78%),<sup>40</sup> mainly in the garment, leather, footwear, electronics, and food processing sectors. However, they frequently face challenges such as unequal pay, job insecurity, and occupational safety risks, and even worse, they are often victims of violence.

### 5.3. Gender Inequality in Public Services

Vietnam often takes pride in the number of women working in the Government. In the 15th National Assembly, elected in 2021, there are 151 women, accounting for 30.26% of the total number of deputies. These figures, however, cannot accurately represent women's participation because the VCP predetermines the appointment of members to the National Assembly.<sup>41</sup>

Furthermore, in the Vietnamese current political system, the representative mechanisms have no power at all; the Party Committees make all decisions; and in fact, among the 16 members of the Politburo, there is only one woman (as of the end of 2025), and among the 34 province-city Party Secretaries after the reorganization of the state apparatus this year, there is not a single woman. These are the most powerful positions in the current Vietnamese government system, so the lack of representation of women is deplorable.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government of Vietnam should:

- Strengthen efforts to address discrimination based on political background, religious belief, ethnic origin, and sexual differences, not only with legislation and promises but also with concrete actions;
- Immediately end political and religious background screening, or profiling, for education and career purposes;
- Immediately stop violating the ethnic minorities' natural resources;
- Establish an independent mechanism involving international human rights organizations to investigate violations of international anti-discrimination conventions to which Vietnam is a signatory.

<sup>39</sup> TheLEADER. *Gỡ rào cản vô hình trên con đường thăng tiến của nữ lãnh đạo.*

<sup>40</sup> Tran Thi Ngat and Nguyen Thi Lan Huong. *Gender equality in Vietnam's garment industry: Current situation, challenges, and policy directions.* (International Journal of Management Studies and Social Science Research), January 2025, 07(03):246-248

<sup>41</sup> Nghị quyết số 1185/NQ-UBTVQH14 của Ủy ban Thường vụ Quốc hội ngày 11/1/2021, dự kiến tổng số đại biểu Quốc hội khóa XV là 500 đại biểu.

## VIII

# THE RIGHT TO WELL-BEING

With the Doi Moi (Renovation) policy in the late 1980s, Vietnam has achieved significant growth in its gross domestic product (GDP) and income per capita (GDP Per Capita) in recent years. These achievements are mainly due to foreign direct investment (FDI), Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs, remittances, and, in particular, the process of deregulation and market liberalization following the country's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the signing of Free Trade Agreements (FTA).

However, the impressive figures on the growth of gross domestic product (GDP) and income per capita (GDP Per Capita) do not accurately reflect the actual situation regarding the well-being of the majority of the people. Income inequality, limited access to social services for migrants and ethnic minorities, regional disparities, unsustainable economic activities, environmental degradation, and corruption are still problems that restrict the right to a peaceful life of the majority of people.

### 1. WEALTH CONCENTRATED IN THE HANDS OF A FEW

#### 1.1. Poverty is a Concern for the Vast Majority.

According to data collected from the World Inequality Database, despite improvements over the years, the level of wealth inequality in Vietnam in 2025 remains concerning. The poorest half of the population owns only 4% of the country's wealth, while the wealthiest 1% owns 25% of the country's wealth.<sup>1</sup>

According to the Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) research results in Vietnam in 2024, poverty/hunger are the second-largest concerns among the 10 major problems facing the people, despite their perception that the country's economy is better than last year.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.2. The Gap between the Rich and the Poor Is Widening.

Meanwhile, Knight Frank's Wealth Report found that the number of ultra-high net worth

<sup>1</sup> World Inequality Database. *Vietnam*.

<sup>2</sup> CECODES, RTA and UNDP (2025). *The 2024 Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI 2024): Measuring Citizens' Experiences*. A Joint Policy Research Paper by the Centre for Community Support and Development Studies (CECODES), Real-Time Analytics (RTA), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

individuals (UHWNI), those with \$30 million or more, was 752. This change was up 2.4% from the previous year. Knight Frank also predicted that this number would increase to 978 by 2028, representing a 30% rise over the next five years.<sup>3</sup>

Most of the new rich obtained their wealth through illicit means, such as sanctioned tax evasion, the privatization of state-owned assets, privileged access to land-planning information, and corruption, rather than through enterprising skills. According to Dr. Le Dang Doanh, former head of the Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM), this group of the super-rich can only emerge as “a product of the existing regime and an unbridled capitalism.”<sup>4</sup>

Thus, economic growth primarily benefits a small number of people favored by the government. The component that does not enjoy the fruits of economic development is the vast majority of people living in the countryside, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities. Particularly for ethnic minority groups, although they are limited to 15% of the total population, they account for 47% of the whole poor in Vietnam and 68% of the extremely poor.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

Speaking at the Launching Ceremony of the Month of Action for Children 2025 on May 31, 2025, Minister of Health Dao Hong Lan said, “Child protection, care, and education have achieved many important and comprehensive results. The system of policies and laws on children continues to be improved, in accordance with international conventions and practical requirements; many national programs and action plans for children have been and are being implemented agreeably.”<sup>6</sup>

However, in reality, children’s well-being is anything but rosy, as painted by Vietnam’s legislation and reports. Many Vietnamese children still face many dangers: starvation, lack of education, abuse, hard labor, and human trafficking.

### 2.1. Malnutrition

A new UNICEF report in Viet Nam shows that 1.8 million children under five years of age and more than one-third of ethnic minority children of the same age are classified as stunted and undernourished. Malnutrition remains the cause of nearly half of the 100 preventable deaths of children under five every day.<sup>7</sup>

An on-site study of 3,055 children aged 5-19 this year concluded that up to 40% of Vietnamese adolescents are struggling with malnutrition.<sup>8</sup>

Under the current health insurance law, all children under six are entitled to free medical care. However, rampant corruption has made the law ineffective. Poor children whose parents cannot bribe doctors and hospital staff are pushed aside as care and treatment are primarily provided to

<sup>3</sup> Knight Frank. *The Wealth Report 2025*.

<sup>4</sup> Người Săn Tin. *Tỷ phú VN chỉ “khôn vặt,” không đóng góp cho nhân loại như Bill Gates, Elon Musk*.

<sup>5</sup> Tạp chí Mặt Trận. *Thực tiễn Vai trò của hệ thống chính trị trong thực hiện giảm nghèo đa chiều ở vùng dân tộc thiểu số*.

<sup>6</sup> Phụ nữ Việt Nam. *Ngày Quốc tế Thiếu nhi 1/6: Vì một tương lai an toàn và hạnh phúc cho trẻ em*

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF- *Viet Nam*.

<sup>8</sup> Hoang, N.T.D.; Hoang, N.T.T.; Tran, D.T.; Le, H.A.; Le, T.D.; Szymlek-Gay, E.A.; Le, H.N.; Le, H.T.; Dang, D.T.D.; Phung, H. *Prevalence of and Socio-Demographic Factors of Malnutrition Among Vietnamese Children and Adolescents: A Cross-Sectional Study*. *Healthcare* 2025, 13, 612.

those whose parents are capable of bribing. As a result, more needy children only receive a cold reception and inadequate treatment.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.2. Poor Children Have Fewer Opportunities to Go to School.

In terms of education, poor children in Vietnam, especially those from rural areas and ethnic minorities, have fewer educational opportunities than other children. According to the latest UNICEF data, the rate of children entering school for the first time has improved over the past two years; however, less than half of children in rural areas and a third of children from the poorest households complete upper secondary school.

An inexplicable paradox is that, despite being called “socialist,” public schools in Vietnam today collect tuition fees from kindergarten, which is entirely different from the tuition-free education program under the Republic of Vietnam regime before 1975.

It was not until June 26, 2025, that the National Assembly passed a Resolution on tuition exemption and support, applicable to preschool and primary school students from the 2025-2026 school year.<sup>10</sup>

However, this progress is only theoretical, as in reality, parents still have to pay additional fees. These include school fund, class fund, desk and chair fees, equipment fees, uniforms, health insurance (mandatory), and accident insurance (voluntary). It is worth noting that many fees are considered “voluntary,” but in reality, parents often find it difficult to refuse them. These fees pose significant obstacles that poor families struggle to overcome.

## 2.3. Children Are Being Indoctrinated with Marxism-Leninism.

A critical aspect of children’s educational rights in Vietnam that is rarely mentioned in research is the politicization of education through the policy of indoctrinating communism in schools. According to Directive No. 42-CT / TW, dated March 24, 2015, of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPV on strengthening the CPV’s leadership in the education of revolutionary ideals, ethics, cultural lifestyles for the young generation period 2015-2030, the government forces children to learn and accept the values of communism and to swear blind obedience to the Party and the State. The indoctrination of Marxism-Leninism, class struggle, history of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), and the idol of Ho Chi Minh are hidden under the euphemism of Civic Education, a compulsory subject from the first grade of primary school all the way to university.

The CPV views schools as venues for training and recruiting members for both the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union and the CPV. This policy is a top priority in developing the Party. Currently, the whole country has 3.4 million members of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union in the school area, out of a total of 4.7 million, accounting for more than 72%. Many ceremonies to admit student party members have been solemnly held in schools.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> RFA. *Thực tế chương trình bảo hiểm y tế trẻ em ở vùng núi.*

<sup>10</sup> VNExpress. *Học sinh công lập toàn quốc được miễn học phí từ năm học 2025-2026*

<sup>11</sup> Nhân Dân. *Đoàn viên khối trường học chiếm hơn 72% đoàn viên cả nước*



*Many children are forced to wander the streets selling lottery tickets to make a living. (Image cropped from YouTube Cuoc Song Sai Gon TV- Dec 7, 2024)*

#### 2.4. Child Labor Remains Widespread.

Regarding child labor, in early 2025, the General Statistics Office and the International Labor Organization announced the results of a 2023 study that found the rate of children aged 5-17 participating in labor was 3.5%. Compared to the research results of these two organizations in 2018, in 5 years, the number of working children aged 5-17 has decreased by 1.9%<sup>12</sup>

However, compared to other Asia-Pacific countries, Vietnam's reduction of child labor is still lagging, despite having a higher GDP growth rate than many in the East Asia-Pacific region.<sup>13</sup> According to a 2025 ILO and UNICEF report, over 4 years (2020-2024), the number of child laborers aged 5-17 in Asia-Pacific countries decreased by 2.5% (from 5.6% to 3.1%).<sup>14</sup>

The uneven distribution of child labor among population groups and regions remains a concern. In rural and ethnic minority areas, the number of child laborers is over 7%, while in rich regions such as the Red River Delta, the rate is less than 1%.

The number of children doing work that can be harmful to children accounts for 35.0% of the total number of child laborers. According to the 2024 report of the US Department of Labor, child laborers in Vietnam are used in the production of Bricks, Cashews, Coffee, Fish, Footwear, Garments, Furniture, Leather, Pepper, Rice, Rubber, Sugarcane, Tea, Textiles, Timber, and Tobacco.<sup>15</sup>

#### 2.5. Violence Against Children Is on the Rise.

Crimes against children, such as violence, sexual abuse, and human trafficking, remain a burning social wound. According to a report by the Department of Children (Ministry of Labor, Invalids

<sup>12</sup> GSO và ILO. *Kết quả chủ yếu về thực trạng trẻ em tham gia lao động và Lao động trẻ em của Việt Nam năm 2023*

<sup>13</sup> Vietnam.vn. *WB: Việt Nam có mức tăng trưởng GDP cao hơn so với nhiều nước ở Đông Á - Thái Bình Dương*

<sup>14</sup> International Labour Organization and United Nations Children's Fund. *Child Labour: Global estimates 2024, trends and the road forward*, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2025. License: CC BY 4.0.

<sup>15</sup> US Department of Labor, The Bureau of International Labor Affairs. *2024 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor*

and Social Affairs), in 2024, child violence tends to increase, with each year being higher than the previous year in both the number of cases and the level of violations.<sup>16</sup>

A recent point of concern is the more frequent occurrence of violence against children in daycare centers and preschools, with the perpetrators being those entrusted with the care of the children.<sup>17</sup>

According to a report by the Ministry of Public Security, in the first 8 months of 2024, nationwide, 1,198 cases of child abuse were investigated and prosecuted, with 1,419 defendants involved in acts of child abuse and violence, many of which resulted in death.<sup>18</sup>

Even more troubling is the sexual abuse of children, many of whom are not yet of school age. According to state statistics, in 2024, nearly 1,900 cases of child sexual abuse were prosecuted nationwide, with the perpetrators mostly being family members.<sup>19</sup>

According to UNICEF Vietnam data updated in February 2025, 1 in 20 women and girls are sexually abused before the age of 15 (4.4%).<sup>20</sup>

At school, in addition to violence, sexual abuse is also a matter of great concern and worry for parents. A 2023 study of 754 students at three high schools in Ho Chi Minh City showed that 54.5% of students had been sexually harassed since entering high school. The rate of sexual harassment victims was 40.2% by staff and 30.2% by students.<sup>21</sup>

In addition to lifelong psychological trauma, victims of sexual abuse also suffer physical consequences. According to a report by Hung Vuong Hospital, from March 2023 to March 2024, 194 children under 16 years old became pregnant and gave birth there. Additionally, 798 similar cases were refused support for various reasons.<sup>22</sup>

## 2.6. Child Trafficking Is Escalating

Trafficking in children and minors has also increased steadily in various forms and is becoming more and more organized. Many cases of trafficking in infants involving multiple victims and criminals were discovered in 2024-2025. For example, in May 2024, the People's Court of Binh Duong Province held a first-instance trial of 15 defendants involved in the trafficking of 9 infants. The defendants created a virtual "Adoption Group" on social networks to act as intermediaries to carry out the trafficking of infants.<sup>23</sup>

In August 2024, security agencies discovered a baby trafficking ring involving 16 babies aged 3 days to 3 months. They found 84 cases of babies showing signs of being bought and sold in 32 provinces and cities across the country.<sup>24</sup>

16 VOV. *Bạo hành phụ nữ và trẻ em: Tội ác cần lên án*

17 Đại Đoàn Kết. *Vì sao trẻ mầm non liên tiếp bị bạo hành?*

18 Đại Biểu Nhân Dân. *Bảo vệ trẻ em trước vấn nạn bạo hành, xâm hại*

19 Báo Mới. *Nạn xâm hại tình dục trẻ em: Thống kê không phản ánh hết nỗi đau*

20 UNICEF Viet Nam. *Children in Viet Nam*.

21 Kim Tu Tran<sup>1</sup>, Ruschelle M. Leone, Kevin M Swartout, Minh Hung Tran, Oanh Trinh<sup>1</sup>, and Kathryn M. Yount. *Sexual Misconduct Among High School Students In Vietnam*

22 Báo Sức khỏe & Đời sống. *Gần 1.000 trường hợp 'trẻ em sinh ra trẻ em' ở TPHCM*

23 Pháp Luật. *Bình Dương: Xét xử 15 bị cáo trong đường dây mua bán trẻ sơ sinh*

24 Tuổi Trẻ. *Chặt đứt đường dây mua bán trẻ sơ sinh: Vạch trần thủ đoạn núp bóng nhận con nuôi*



*On August 28, 2024, the Ho Chi Minh City Police held a press conference to provide information about a child trafficking ring involving 32 provinces and cities with 16 defendants. (Photo: VOV)*

Cross-border child trafficking in 2024-2025 has undergone many changes. Mainly, the trickery and trafficking of ethnic minority women from the northern border to China for forced marriage or forced sex in disguised entertainment establishments continues. However, human trafficking, including minors, across the boundaries of the Western and Central Highlands provinces to Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar accounts for a larger number, and the majority of victims are male. These victims were coerced into participating in fraudulent online activities. In 2024-2025, thousands of victims, including minors aged 15 and 16, were rescued from these illegal businesses.<sup>25</sup>

Among the victims of human trafficking through European countries, especially the UK, the number of minor victims is also significant. According to UK government data, in the first 9 months of 2024, there were 450 people under 18 years old out of a total of 4,532 Vietnamese asylum seekers; most of them were unaccompanied.<sup>26</sup>

### 3. THE RIGHT TO A CLEAN, HEALTHY, AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

According to the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2024 report, released in June 2024, Vietnam ranked 180th out of 180 countries, with a combined score of 24.5/100, down two places from 2022 and 39 places from 2020.<sup>27</sup>

That scientific ranking honestly reflects the increasingly serious environmental problems Vietnam is facing now and in the future, particularly air, water, and soil pollution, and deforestation.

#### 3.1. Air Pollution

Along with the policy of economic reform and market opening, air pollution in Vietnam has consistently increased over recent years, and this trend is expected to continue. According to IQAir's air pollution ranking from 2018 to 2022, Vietnam ranks 30th out of 131 countries and territories studied. According to this agency, Vietnam ranked 23rd out of 138 countries studied

<sup>25</sup> VTV Online. *Giải cứu, tiếp nhận hàng loạt nạn nhân bị mua bán từ Campuchia về Việt Nam*

<sup>26</sup> GOV UK. *Country Policy and Information Note: trafficking, Vietnam, February 2025*

<sup>27</sup> EPI. *Environmental Performance Index. Vietnam.*

in 2024.<sup>28</sup>

Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, was ranked among the world's most polluted cities in 2025.<sup>29</sup> According to the World Bank, PM2.5 concentrations in Hanoi are expected to increase from now until 2030 under current air quality management policies.

### 3.2. Water Pollution

Nowadays, water in lakes, canals, and rivers in cities and provinces contains many toxic substances from untreated industrial waste and daily human activities. Additionally, the uncontrolled use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in agriculture, as well as oil spills, has contributed to the pollution of water sources in rural areas.

Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Dang Quoc Khanh also had to admit that, institutionally, Vietnam has regulations on river basin management; however, in reality, rivers are increasingly polluted due to domestic wastewater, industrial clusters, and craft villages, among other factors.<sup>30</sup>

Water pollution has generally affected the quality of people's drinking water. Global Rescue, a travel company, ranked Vietnam among the five countries where tourists should use bottled water rather than tap water.<sup>31</sup>

According to a global ranking by The Wall Street Journal, Vietnam ranks fourth among the countries that pollute the oceans the most, after China, Indonesia, and the Philippines.<sup>32</sup>

The marine environmental crisis caused by the Formosa steel plant in 2016 is the most notable case, whose consequences for people's lives in Vietnam's central provinces have yet to be resolved.<sup>33</sup>

### 3.3. Soil Pollution

In addition to industrial wastewater, various other sources contribute to land degradation and pollution, including the misuse of fertilizers, pesticides, non-biodegradable household waste, and unprocessed industrial solid waste.

Another important reason contributing to the degradation of the ground is deforestation. Deforestation can profoundly contribute to ecological imbalance, climate change, and habitat degradation. The area of natural forests in Vietnam is rapidly declining. Over the past decade, Vietnam has lost approximately 2,500 hectares of forest each year. About 50% of the remaining natural forest area is classified as deficient or depleted.<sup>34</sup> Deforestation has been increasing in recent years and shows no signs of stopping. The government cannot completely prevent the situation of loggers and plunderers. In just the first four months of 2025, the total damaged forest

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28 IQAir. *Air quality in Vietnam*.

29 NBC News. *Rapid growth fuels smog in Hanoi, one of the world's most polluted cities*

30 Tiền Phong. *'Dòng sông chết' do xả thải, trách nhiệm Bộ Tài nguyên và Môi trường ra sao?*

31 Global Rescue. *Where in the World Is Tap Water Safe To Drink?*

32 Statista. *The Countries Polluting The Oceans The Most*

33 Công Lý Cho Nạn Nhân Formosa. *Tổng Kết Hoạt Động Đấu Tranh Vì Công Lý Cho Nạn Nhân Formosa Năm 2024*

34 Nhân Dân Cuối tuần. *Cần những hành động quyết liệt*.



*Authorities discovered nearly 600 types of counterfeit milk products in registration documents that require food safety test results. (Photo: Tuoi Tre Newspaper)*

area nationwide reached 475.4 hectares, an increase of 22.4% over the same period last year.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.4. Food Contamination

In addition to air, water, and soil pollution, contaminated food is a constant concern for all Vietnamese families. Experts say dirty food is the leading cause of cancer, accounting for about 35%.<sup>36</sup>

Many causes contaminate foods, primarily through the use of toxic chemicals to preserve, restore, and enhance their flavor. The trade of these chemicals has existed for a long time, in places known to everyone or openly advertised on e-commerce platforms and social networks.<sup>37</sup>

The use of toxic chemicals is not limited to food but is also widespread in nutritional and pharmaceutical products. In 2024-2025, the police discovered numerous facilities producing counterfeit milk powder and pharmaceuticals with a commercial value of up to hundreds of billions of VND.<sup>38</sup>

Those cases are not isolated but part of a planned, general business practice, covered up by the competent authority at the highest level of the state organization system. On July 10, 2025, the Investigation Police Agency of the Ministry of Public Security prosecuted and detained 15 senior officials of the Food Safety Department and the Disease Prevention Department, Ministry of Health, and three business owners in the case of receiving and giving bribes during the process of reviewing documents and issuing certificates of advertising content for health protection foods.<sup>39</sup>

### 3.5. Suppression of Environmental Activists

Air pollution, water pollution, soil pollution, and toxic food have severely impacted the health

<sup>35</sup> Tạp chí Doanh nghiệp và Kinh tế xanh. *Diện tích rừng bị thiệt hại tăng 22,4% trong 4 tháng đầu năm 2025*

<sup>36</sup> Ancan. *Thực phẩm bẩn - nguyên nhân làm gia tăng tỷ lệ mắc ung thư ở Việt Nam.*

<sup>37</sup> Hà Nội Mới. *Siết kiểm soát hóa chất “phù phép” thực phẩm*

<sup>38</sup> Hội Bảo vệ người tiêu dùng Việt Nam. *Hàng giả, thực phẩm bẩn tràn lan: Hồi chuông cảnh tỉnh về đạo đức kinh doanh*

<sup>39</sup> Công an Nhân dân. *Khởi tố 18 bị can đưa và nhận hối lộ tại Cục An toàn thực phẩm, Bộ Y tế và các công ty liên quan*

and quality of life of people, not only for the present generation but also for future generations. Apart from natural causes such as storms and floods, the primary reason for the degradation of the living environment is poor, short-sighted economic development planning, the government's pursuit of short-term profits, poor management of natural resources, and corruption within the public apparatus.

Meanwhile, the government continues to stifle dissent in the environmental field. It continues to imprison and torture ecological activists such as Hoang Duc Binh, Dinh Thi Thu Thuy, Ngo Thi To Nhien, and Dang Dinh Bach.

#### 4. VICTIMS OF INJUSTICE: UNFAIR LAND EXPROPRIATION AND VIOLATION OF OWNERSHIP RIGHT

After 1975, the government implemented numerous programs to develop infrastructure, including roads, industrial parks, eco-tourism zones, and other public facilities. Land was a critical factor in the economic plan. Over the past decade, the land acquired from farmers has totaled approximately one million hectares, surpassing the acreage distributed to farmers during the Socialist Land Reform Campaign in the 1950s (810,000 hectares).<sup>40</sup>

It is worth noting that during land expropriation, government cadres often deliberately exaggerate the planned requirements to acquire as much land as possible. They then take the extra land and resell it to developers willing to pay the highest price (usually 100 times or more than the compensation rates) and pocket the difference.<sup>41</sup>

In the face of losing land and homes without adequate compensation, petitioners have continuously protested for justice in various localities across the country in recent years.

In 2024-2025, protests against land acquisition by victims of injustice continued to occur at various times, including in Thu Thiem,<sup>42</sup> Ca Mau,<sup>43</sup> Ba Ria,<sup>44</sup> and An Giang.<sup>45</sup>

#### 5. CORRUPTION VIOLATES THE SOCIAL WELL-BEING RIGHTS

##### 5.1. Corruption Is A Top Concern for the People.

Corruption affects both the political and economic spheres, making human rights violations possible in almost all aspects of life, particularly in the right to social well-being. The degree of social well-being rights violations is directly proportional to government corruption, as the majority of the national budget and foreign aid intended to benefit citizens has ultimately ended up in the pockets of government officials.

40 East Asia Forum. *Vietnam's land law reforms: radical changes or minor tinkering?*

41 For example, during the initial planning stages of the Thu Thiem new urban area, compensation ranged from 1.95 to 25 million VND per square meter, depending on the location. Compensation for agricultural land for many residents in An Loi Dong ward ranged from 150,000 to 200,000 VND per square meter. In December 2021, a portion of that land was auctioned off for up to 2.45 billion VND per square meter (nearly 2,000 times more).

42 RFA. *Người dân Thủ Thiêm tiếp tục xuống đường, kỳ vọng vào ông Nguyễn Thanh Nghị*

43 Sai Gòn Nhỏ. *Cướp đất, phá nhà kinh hoàng đang diễn ra ở U Minh, Cà Mau*

44 Bà Rịa - Vũng Tàu. *Cưỡng chế thu hồi đất hai trường hợp cuối cùng của dự án công viên Bà Rịa*

45 Lao Động. *Tấn công lực lượng chức năng cưỡng chế thu hồi đất làm đường*

Corruption has surpassed poverty to become the top concern of Vietnamese people, with a record 22.58% of respondents identifying it as a top priority for government action, according to the 2024 Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) study.<sup>46</sup>

## 5.2. Institutional Corruption

In addition to the ongoing daily corruption among low-level officials across all public sectors, public opinion in 2024-2025 will be particularly concerned about the dismissal of many top leaders of the CPV and the government for alleged corruption, as well as major corruption cases brought to court.

Among the leaders removed from power were President Nguyen Xuan Phuc, President Vo Van Thuong, National Assembly Chairman Vuong Dinh Hue, and four other Politburo members: Pham Binh Minh, Tran Tuan Anh, Dinh Tien Dung, and Truong Thi Mai. This purge is unprecedented in the CPV's history. Public opinion suggested that the removal was not an anti-corruption campaign, but rather the result of infighting within the CPV. However, corruption remains a real issue.

Many massive corruption and bribery cases involving billions of dollars involving many high-ranking officials have been uncovered, especially:

- The Phuc Son Company case resulted in losses to the state amounting to 7,000 billion VND (266 million USD).<sup>47</sup>
- The case of Viet A Company illegally profiting 1,235 billion VND (48.6 million USD).<sup>48</sup>
- Van Thinh Phat case with a loss of up to 764,000 billion VND (30.08 billion USD).<sup>49</sup>
- FLC Group case with illegal profits of 2,469 billion VND (97.28 million USD).<sup>50</sup>
- The Xuyen Viet Oil case with a total loss of about 1,463 billion VND (57.6 million USD).<sup>51</sup>

## 5.3. Totalitarianism Is the Root Cause of Corruption.

It has been 12 years since its establishment by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, but the Central Steering Committee on Anti-Corruption has not seen a reduction in corruption. The reasons are:

- Independent non-government organizations are not allowed to participate in eliminating corruption.
- The media cannot play the role of exposing corruption. The Vietnamese government continues stifling freedom of the press, banning and criminalizing critics of the Party and government

46 CECODES, RTA and UNDP (2025). The 2024 Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI 2024): Measuring Citizens' Experiences. A Joint Policy Research Paper by the Centre for Community Support and Development Studies (CECODES), Real-Time Analytics (RTA), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

47 Tuổi Trẻ. *Hai cựu chủ tịch tỉnh Khánh Hòa bị truy tố trong vụ án liên quan Tập đoàn Phúc Sơn*

48 Tạp chí Tòa án Nhân dân. *Xét xử 3 cựu Ủy viên Trung ương cùng 35 bị cáo trong đại án Việt Á*

49 Đầu tư Chứng khoán. *Xét xử "đại án lịch sử" Vạn Thịnh Phát: SCB nói thiệt hại 764.000 tỷ đồng*

50 VietnamNet. *Toàn cảnh vụ Chủ tịch FLC Trịnh Văn Quyết bị bắt*

51 Thanh Niên. *Vụ biển thủ nghìn tỉ của Chủ tịch Xuyên Việt Oil*

leaders (Article 331 of the 2015 Criminal Law). Many licensed journalists have been assaulted while investigating corruption cases.

Most of all, the totalitarian communist regime of Vietnam is the source of the current evil corruption. Totalitarianism not only stifles critical voices needed for a clean government, but, moreover, to maintain power, the totalitarian ruling Party uses corruption to buy loyalty.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Vietnamese government should:

- Increase national budget allocations for public services in the poorest regions and for the most marginalized groups.
- Re-establish the right to own land for the people through the amendment of the Land Law, immediately stop forcibly seizing the land from rightful owners, and return the properties confiscated by the state to their legitimate owners.
- Establish a free education and health insurance program for children at least until the end of elementary school.
- Take urgent measures to protect people's living environments and integrate environmental policies into economic decision-making.

**APPENDIX I**  
**LIST OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS PRISONERS ARRESTED**  
**IN 2024 AND 2025**

(RECENT ARRESTS FIRST)

NO.	NAME	BIRTH YEAR	BACKGROUND	ARREST DATE	TRIAL DATE	CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE	PRISON TIME	HOUSE ARREST TIME
1	Phạm Quang Thiện	1978	Government official	2025-12-04	2025-12-31	117	5.6	
2	Thạch Thị Hoa Ri	1971	Indigenous activist	2025-11-18	Pretrial detention	331		
3	Đỗ Văn Ngà	1977	Freelance writer	2025-11-17	2025-12-31	117	7	
4	Huỳnh Bảo Đức	1984	Freelance writer	2025-11-17	2025-12-31	117	6.6	
5	Nguyễn Thị Biểu	1961	Social activist	2025-11-12	Pretrial detention	331		
6	Nguyễn Thanh Sơn	1969	Facebooker	2025-11-10	Pretrial detention	331		
7	Lê Thị Thúy	1980	Facebooker	2025-10-30	Pretrial detention	331		
8	Y Quynh Bdap	1982	Montagnard Christian	2025-10-28	2024-01-20	113	10	
9	Nguyễn Thị Oanh	1971	Land rights activist	2025-10-21	Pretrial detention	331		
10	Nguyễn Duy Niệm	1968	Facebooker	2025-10-10	Pretrial detention	117		
11	Y Nuen Ayün	1967	Montagnard Christian	2025-10-08	Pretrial detention	116		
12	Huỳnh Ngọc Tuấn	1963	Facebooker	2025-10-07	Pretrial detention	117		
13	Nguyễn Văn Tòng	1969	Land petitioner	2025-10-07	Pretrial detention	331		
14	Võ Thị Phụng	1979	Facebooker	2025-10-06	Pretrial detention	331		
15	Ngô Trí Cường	1966	Facebooker	2025-09-26	Pretrial detention	331		
16	Hà Trường Xuân	1955	Political activist	2025-09-22	Pretrial detention	109		
17	Nguyễn Công Hợp	1950	Facebooker	2025-09-22	Pretrial detention	331		
18	Nguyễn Văn Trường	1976	Facebooker	2025-09-21	Pretrial detention	331		
19	Nguyễn Văn Tú	1995	HR activist	2025-09-01	Pretrial detention	N/A		
20	Trần Quang Trung	1991	Facebooker	2025-08-28	Pretrial detention	117		
21	Hồ Sỹ Quyết	1988	Environmental activist	2025-08-28	Pretrial detention	117, 109		
22	Nguyễn Tuấn Nghĩa	N/A	Facebooker	2025-08-28	Pretrial detention	117		
23	Trần Quang Nam	1986	Environmental activist	2025-08-28	Pretrial detention	117		
24	Phạm Viết Công	1957	Facebooker	2025-07-15	Pretrial detention	331		
25	Mai Thị Hạ	1961	Facebooker	2025-07-02	Pretrial detention	331		
26	Ngô Sơn Hà	1974	TikToker	2025-06-11	Pretrial detention	331		
27	Trần Như Phước	1987	TikToker	2025-06-11	Pretrial detention	331		
28	Lê Văn Càn	1966	YouTuber	2025-06-04	Pretrial detention	331		

29	Nguyễn Đức Minh	2001	YouTube	2025-06-04	Pretrial detention	331		
30	Nguyễn Hoàng Tân	1998	YouTube	2025-06-04	Pretrial detention	331		
31	Mai Văn Dương	1986	TikTok user	2025-04-10	On bail	331		
32	Lê Thị Mai	1984	Facebooker	2025-03-29	Pretrial detention	331		
33	Nguyễn Xuân Bình	1976	Political activist	2025-03-28	Pretrial detention	109		
34	Đặng Ngọc Thanh	1993	Facebooker	2025-03-27	2025-09-29	331	3.6	
35	Kim Som Rinh	1979	Khmer Krom monk	2025-03-27	2025-11-18	331	3.6	
36	Thạch Nga	1990	Facebooker	2025-03-27	2025-11-18	331	3.6	
37	Thạch Xuân Đồng	1987	Facebooker	2025-03-27	2025-11-18	331	3.6	
38	Trần Đình Toan	1958	Facebooker	2025-03-22	Pretrial detention	331		
39	Quách Gia Khang	1997	Political activist	2025-03-18	Pretrial detention	109		
40	Đoàn Minh Tuấn	1976	Facebooker	2025-02-27	Pretrial detention	117		
41	Lê Thị Minh Thiều	1974	Facebooker	2025-01-30	2025-04-28	117	6	
42	Phan Minh Tuấn	1981	Facebooker	2025-01-25	Pretrial detention	117		
43	Nguyễn Thị Hiền	1973	Land petitioner	2025-01-24	On bail	331		
44	Đậu Thị Tâm	1980	Facebooker	2025-01-23	2025-05-27	331	10/12	
45	Dương Thị Du	1959	Facebooker	2025-01-23	Pretrial detention	331		
46	Đào Công Hiến	1968	Facebooker	2025-01-17	Pretrial detention	331		
47	Phạm Xuân Thời	1969	Facebooker	2025-01-17	Pretrial detention	331		
48	Nguyễn Mạnh Hùng	1954	Protestant Pastor	2025-01-16	2025-10-30	117	6	5
49	Hồ Trọng Phúc	2008	Facebooker	2025-01-01	2025-07-09	331	1	
50	Cao Thị Đợi	1962	Land petitioner	2024-12-31	Pretrial detention	318		
51	Lê Thị Thuận	1986	Land petitioner	2024-12-31	Pretrial detention	318		
52	Nguyễn Trần Khánh Huy	2000	Facebooker	2024-12-31	Pretrial detention	331		
53	Nguyễn Thanh Huy	1966	Facebooker	2024-12-20	Pretrial detention	331		
54	Vương Tấn Minh Khoa	1983	Phone message user	2024-12-19	Pretrial detention	156		
55	Trần Cao Long	1988	Phone message user	2024-12-07	Pretrial detention	156		
56	Lê Công Triết	1983	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
57	Lê Phước Hoàng	1999	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
58	Lê Phước Sang	1991	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
59	Lê Thị Ngọc Nhan	1971	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
60	Lê Văn Điền	1972	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
61	Nguyễn Văn Lộc	1982	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
62	Bùi Tiến Lợi	1968	Facebooker	2024-11-20	Pretrial detention	331		
63	Nguyễn Thị Bích Thủy	1980	Land petitioner	2024-11-18	Pretrial detention	330		
64	Huỳnh Nhật Phương	1982	Political activist	2024-11-13	Pretrial detention	109		
65	Trần Khắc Đức	1995	Web manager	2024-11-09	Pretrial detention	117		
66	Bùi Văn Tuấn	1983	Facebooker	2024-11-04	Pretrial detention	331		
67	Lê Mạnh	1951	Facebooker	2024-10-31	Pretrial detention	331		
68	Lê Thị Thu Trâm	1986	Social activist	2024-10-08	Pretrial detention	331		

69	Nguyễn Việt Tú	1973	Political activist	2024-09-30	Pretrial detention	109		
70	Trịnh Bá Hạnh	1987	Political activist	2024-09-30	Pretrial detention	109		
71	Bùi Thị Ánh Ngọc	1958	Political activist	2024-09-27	Pretrial detention	109		
72	Trần Thị Hồng Duyên	1984	Political activist	2024-09-27	Pretrial detention	109		
73	Nguyễn Ngọc Châu	1961	Political activist	2024-09-22	Pretrial detention	109		
74	Trần Văn Linh	1957	Political activist	2024-09-20	Pretrial detention	109		
75	Y Thịnh Niê	1979	Montagnard Christian	2024-09-05	2025-05-23	116	9	4
76	Trần Văn Quyết	1959	Social activist	2024-09-01	2025-04-16	331	2.6	
77	Vương Văn Hồng Nam	1963	Political activist	2024-08-31	Pretrial detention	109		
78	Nguyễn Thị Hường	1968	Political activist	2024-08-29	Pretrial detention	109		
79	Phạm Hoàng	1958	Political activist	2024-08-29	Pretrial detention	109		
80	Lê Vũ Đài	1975	Facebooker	2024-08-28	Pretrial detention	331		
81	Y Pô Miô	1961	Indigenous activist	2024-08-15	2025-05-06	116	7.6	
82	Nguyễn Đình Trung	1958	Social activist	2024-08-02	2025-01-20	331	3	
83	Nguyễn Văn Trung	1975	Political activist	2024-07-31	Pretrial detention	109		
84	Đinh Thị Ngọc Ánh	1975	Facebooker	2024-07-24	2024-12-27	331	1.6	
85	Trần Thiện Châu Lãm	1991	Facebooker	2024-07-23	2025-01-16	109	12	
86	Trần Đình Triển	1959	Lawyer	2024-06-01	2025-01-09	331	3	
87	Nhật Kim Bình	1977	Political activist	2024-05-20	2024-06-19	109	8	
88	Vũ Minh Tiến	N/A	Gov Official	2024-05-20	Pretrial detention	337		
89	Nguyễn Văn Minh	1959	Facebooker	2024-05-15	2024-10-18	331	2.6	
90	Rơ Châm Grông	1961	Montagnard Christian	2024-05-10	2025-03-06	116	7	
91	Nguyễn Văn Bình	1973	Gov official	2024-05-09	Pretrial detention	337		
92	Dương Minh Cường	1996	Facebooker	2024-04-28	Pretrial detention	331		
93	Bùi Thị Linh	1989	Facebooker	2024-04-27	Pretrial detention	331		
94	Dương Hồng Hiếu	1978	Facebooker	2024-04-26	2025-02-20	331	2	
95	Lê Hoàng Trung	1977	Facebooker	2024-04-15	2025-04-23	117	6	
96	Lê Quốc Hùng	1967	Facebooker	2024-04-12	Pretrial detention	117		
97	Lê Phú Tuấn	1972	Facebooker	2024-03-29	2024-08-22	331	4.8	
98	Dương Khải	1994	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	331- 157	5.9	
99	Kim Khu	1959	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
100	Kim Sa Rương	1987	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
101	Nguyễn Đức Dự	1976	Facebooker	2024-03-28	Pretrial detention	331		
102	Thạch Chóp	2003	Khmer Krom monk	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
103	Thạch Nha	1997	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
104	Thạch Quý Lầy	1986	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
105	Thạch Ve Sanal	1987	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2.6	
106	Đặng Minh Dũng	1979	Political activist	2024-03-27	2025-02-18	113	2	2
107	Hồ Văn Việt	1975	Political activist	2024-03-27	2025-02-18	113	3	2
108	Hoàng Quốc Việt	1978	Facebooker	2024-03-27	Pretrial detention	331		

109	Kim Khiêm	1978	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-26	2024-11-26	331	3	
110	Thạch Chanh Đa Ra	1990	Khmer Krom monk	2024-03-26	2024-11-26	331-157	6	
111	Phan Đình Sang	1967	Facebooker	2024-03-12	2024-08-26	117	6	2
112	Lê Thị Hòa	1972	Land petitioner	2024-03-10	2025-07-29	331	2	
113	Nguyễn Văn Trong	1970	Land petitioner	2024-03-10	2025-07-29	331	2	
114	Hoàng Đình Tuấn	1984	TikToker	2024-03-05	Pretrial detention	321-322		
115	Hoàng Việt Khánh	1983	Facebooker	2024-03-01	2024-09-24	117	8	3
116	Nguyễn Chí Tuyến	1974	Facebooker	2024-02-29	2024-08-15	117	5	
117	Nguyễn Vũ Bình	1968	independent journalist	2024-02-29	2024-09-10	117	7	
118	Trần Văn Khanh	1962	Facebooker	2024-02-02	2024-09-04	117	7	
119	Trương Huy San	1961	Independent journalist	2024-02-02	2025-02-27	331	2.6	
120	Phạm Văn Chờ	1964	Facebooker	2024-01-30	2024-07-11	117	7	2
121	Bùi Văn Khang	1949	Lawyer	2024-01-22	2024-09-04	331	2	
122	Phan Ngọc Dung	1955	YouTuber	2024-01-22	2024-09-04	331	3	
123	Nguyễn Đức Thanh	1968	Political activist	2024-01-19	2024-06-19	109	16	
124	Hoàng Tùng Thiện	1978	Facebooker	2024-01-17	2024-09-10	117	6	
125	Dương Mạnh Tiến	1982	Land petitioner	2024-01-10	2024-05-22	331	2	

## Provisions of the Criminal Code Used to Prosecute Political and Religious Prisoners in those appendices

### Criminal Code 2015

Article 109. Activities against the people's government

Article 113. Terrorism to oppose the people's government

Article 116. Sabotaging implementation of solidarity policies

Article 117. Making, storing, spreading information, materials, items for the purpose of opposing the State of Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Article 156. Slander

Article 157. Illegal arrest, detention, or imprisonment of a person

Article 318. Disturbance or public order

Article 321. Illegal gambling

Article 322. Organizing gambling or running gambling-dens

Article 330. Resisting a law enforcement officer in performance of his/her official duties

Article 331. Abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, lawful rights and interests of organizations and/or citizens

Article 337. Deliberate disclosure of classified information; appropriation, trading, destruction of classified documents

### Criminal Code 1999 (in parentheses)

- Article (79). Carrying out activities aimed at overthrowing the people's administration

- Article (87). Undermining the unity policy

- Article (88). Conducting propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

## APPENDIX II

### LIST OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS PRISONERS CURRENTLY IN JAILS

(AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2025 / SORTED BY LAST NAME)

NO.	NAME	BIRTH YEAR	BACKGROUND	ARREST DATE	TRIAL DATE	CRIMINAL LAW ARTICLE	PRISON TIME	HOUSE ARREST TIME
1	A Jen	1984	Hà Môn Christian	2015-07-09	2016-04-26		9	3
2	Bạch Văn Hiền	1987	Facebooker	2021-06-30	Pretrial detention	331		
3	Bùi Thị Ánh Ngọc	1958	Political activist	2024-09-27	Pretrial detention	109		
4	Bùi Thị Khánh Phương	N/A	Former CPV member	2023-04-19	2024-10-30	117	2.6	
5	Bùi Thị Linh	1989	Facebooker	2024-04-27	Pretrial detention	331		
6	Bùi Tiến Lợi	1968	Facebooker	2024-11-20	Pretrial detention	331		
7	Bùi Tuấn Lâm	1984	Facebooker	2022-09-08	2023-08-30	117	5.6	4
8	Bùi Văn Khang	1949	Lawyer	2024-01-22	2024-09-04	331	2	
9	Bùi Văn Thuận	1981	Facebooker	2021-08-30	2022-11-18	117	8	5
10	Bùi Văn Tuấn	1983	Facebooker	2024-11-04	Pretrial detention	331		
11	Bùi Viết Hiếu	1943	Land petitioner	2020-01-09	2020-09-14	123	16	
12	Cần Thị Thêu	1962	Land rights activist	2020-06-24	2021-05-05	117	8	3
13	Cao Thị Đợi	1962	Land petitioner	2024-12-31	Pretrial detention	318		
14	Cao Văn Dũng	1968	Facebooker	2020-11-21	2021-06-09	117	9	3
15	Chang A Súa	1987	Political activist	2019-03-01	2020-03-18	109	8	2
16	Đặng Đăng Phước	1963	Facebooker	2022-09-08	2023-09-26	117	8	4
17	Đặng Đình Bách	1978	Environmental activist	2021-06-24	2022-08-11	200	5	
18	Đặng Hoàng Minh	1993	Facebooker	2020-12-05	2021-06-02	117	7	2
19	Đặng Minh Dũng	1979	Political activist	2024-03-27	2025-02-18	113	2	2
20	Đặng Ngọc Tấn	2000	Political activist	2018-06-11	2019-05-21	318-178	24	
21	Đặng Ngọc Thanh	1993	Facebooker	2025-03-27	2025-09-29	331	3.6	
22	Đặng Như Quỳnh	1980	Facebooker	2022-04-12	2023-02-14	331	2	
23	Danh Minh Quang	1987	Khmer Krom activist	2023-07-31	2024-02-07	331	3.1/2	
24	Đào Công Hiến	1968	Facebooker	2025-01-17	Pretrial detention	331		
25	Đậu Thị Tâm	1980	Facebooker	2025-01-23	2025-05-27	331	10 m	
26	Đình Kử	1972	Hà Môn Christian	2015-07-07	2016-04-26	(87)	7	3
27	Đình Thị Ngọc Ánh	1975	Facebooker	2024-07-24	2024-12-27	331	1.6	

28	Đinh Thị Thu Thủy	1982	Environmental activist	2020-04-18	2021-01-20	117	7	
29	Đinh Văn Hải	1983	Political activist	2021-12-10	2022-10-28	109	13.6	
30	Đinh Văn Phong	1984	Political activist	2021-12-10	2022-10-28	109	13	
31	Đinh Văn Phú	1973	Facebooker	2020-01-09	N/A	117	7	
32	Dinh Yum	1963	Montagnard Christian	2013-07-05	2014-07-06	(87)	11	3.5
33	Đỗ Minh Hiền	1957	Email user	2023-07-14	2024-03-11	117	6	
34	Đỗ Nam Trung	1981	Facebooker	2021-07-06	2022-03-24	117	10	4
35	Đỗ Quốc Bảo	1996	Political activist	2017-04-16	2018-08-22	(79)	9	
36	Đỗ Tài Nhân	1992	Political activist	2017-04-16	2018-08-22	(79)	10	
37	Đỗ Văn Ngà	1977	Freelance writer	2025-11-17	2025-12-31	117	7	
38	Đoàn Minh Tuấn	1976	Facebooker	2025-02-27	Pretrial detention	117		
39	Đoàn Từ Tấn	1982	Journalist	2022-02-05	2022-08-15	331	6	
40	Đoàn Văn Cư	1962	Ân Đan Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-12	2013-02-04	(79)	14	5
41	Dương Hồng Hiếu	1978	Facebooker	2024-04-26	2025-02-20	331	2	
42	Dương Khải	1994	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	331-157	5.9	
43	Dương Mạnh Tiến	1982	Land petitioner	2024-01-10	2024-05-22	331	2	
44	Dương Minh Cường	1996	Facebooker	2024-04-28	Pretrial detention	331		
45	Dương Thị Bé	1982	Political activist	2022-06-23	2023-03-28	109	5	
46	Dương Thị Du	1959	Facebooker	2025-01-23	Pretrial detention	331		
47	Dương Thị Xuân	1966	Facebooker	2023-09-06	2024-10-18	331	4.6	
48	Dương Tuấn Ngọc	1985	Facebooker	2023-07-20	2024-04-24	117	7	3
49	Dương Văn Lành	N/A	Dương Văn Minh Sect	2021-12-12	2022-05-24	295	3.9	
50	Đường Văn Thái	1982	Blogger	2023-04-13	2024-10-30	117	12	3
51	Dương Văn Tu	1967	Dương Văn Minh Sect	2021-12-12	2022-05-24	295	4	
52	Giàng A Dia	1993	Political activist	2019-03-01	2020-03-18	109	8	2
53	Giàng A Sinh	1981	Political activist	2019-03-01	2020-03-18	109	8	2
54	Giàng A Và	1990	Political activist	2019-03-01	2020-03-18	109	8	2
55	Hà Hải Ninh	1988	Political activist	2018-06	2019-07-23	109	8	
56	Hà Trường Xuân	1955	Political activist	2025-09-22	Pretrial detention	109		
57	Hà Văn Thành	1982	Environmental activist	2019-10-21	Pretrial detention	349		
58	Hờ A Hù	1988	Political activist	2019-03-01	2020-03-18	109	8	2
59	Hồ Sỹ Quyết	1988	Environmental activist	2025-08-28	Pretrial detention	117, 109		
60	Hồ Thị Xuân Hương	1968	Political activist	2020-04-01	2022-04-18	109	10	3
61	Hồ Trọng Phúc	2008	Facebooker	2025-01-01	2025-07-09	331	1	
62	Hồ Văn Việt	1975	Political activist	2024-03-27	2025-02-18	113	3	2
63	Hoàng Đình Tuấn	1984	TikToker	2024-03-05	Pretrial detention	322		
64	Hoàng Đức Bình	1983	Environmental activist	2017-05-15	2018-04-24	330-331	14	
65	Hoàng Khương	1982	Facebooker	2023-03-01	2023-09-15	331	6.6	
66	Hoàng Quốc Việt	1978	Facebooker	2024-03-27	Pretrial detention	331		
67	Hoàng Tùng Thiện	1978	Facebooker	2024-01-17	2024-09-10	117	6	

68	Hoàng Văn Chơ	1979	Political activist	2019-03-01	2020-03-18	109	8	2
69	Hoàng Văn Luân	1988	Social activist	2023-08-23	Pretrial detention	331		
70	Hoàng Văn Páo	1982	Hmong Political activist	2019-03-01	2020-03-18	109	20	5
71	Hoàng Văn Vương	1978	Democracy activist	2023-03-01	2023-04-18	331	5	
72	Hoàng Việt Khánh	1983	Facebooker	2024-03-01	2024-09-24	117	8	3
73	Huỳnh Bảo Đức	1984	Freelance writer	2025-11-17	2025-12-31	117	6.6	
74	Huỳnh Đức Thanh Bình	1996	Political activist	2018-07-07	2019-06-24	109	10	3
75	Huỳnh Minh Tâm	1978	Facebooker	2019-01-26	2019-11-28	117	9	
76	Huỳnh Ngọc Tuấn	1963	Facebooker	2025-10-07	Pretrial detention	117		
77	Huỳnh Nhật Phương	1982	Political activist	2024-11-13	Pretrial detention	109		
78	Huỳnh Tài	1968	Political activist	2022-04-01	2023-06-19	109	6	
79	Kim Khiêm	1978	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-26	2024-11-26	331	3	
80	Kim Khu	1959	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
81	Kim Sa Rương	1987	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
82	Kim Som Rinh	1979	Khmer Krom monk	2025-03-27	2025-11-18	331	3.6	
83	Kpuih Khuong	1962	Montagnard Christian	2013-11-26	2014-09-30	(87)	11	3.5
84	Ksor Kam (Ama H'Trum)	1965	Montagnard Christian	2016-09	2017-04-07	(87)	9	
85	Ksor Phit	1970	Montagnard Christian	2015-07-08	2016-08-30	(87)	11	3.5
86	Ksor Pup	1962	Montagnard Christian	2015-07-08	2016-08-30	(87)	8	3.5
87	Ksor Ruk	1975	Montagnard Christian	2018-10-30	2019-03-15	(87)	10	
88	Lầu A Lềnh	1970	Hmong Political activist	2011-06-29	2020-03-18	109	Life	
89	Lê Công Triết	1983	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
90	Lê Đình Chức	1980	Land petitioner	2020-01-09	2020-09-14	123	Death	
91	Lê Đình Công	1964	Land petitioner	2020-01-09	2020-09-14	123	Death	
92	Lê Đình Doanh	1988	Land petitioner	2020-01-09	2020-09-14	123	Life	
93	Lê Đình Lượng	1965	Political activist	2017-07-24	2018-08-16	(79)	20	5
94	Lê Duy Lộc	1956	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-05	2013-02-04	(79)	17	5
95	Lê Hoàng Trung	1977	Facebooker	2024-04-15	2025-04-23	117	6	
96	Lê Hữu Minh Tuấn	1989	Freelance journalist	2020-06-12	2021-01-05	117	11	3
97	Lê Mạnh	1951	Facebooker	2024-10-31	Pretrial detention	331		
98	Lê Mạnh Hà	1970	Facebooker	2022-01-12	2022-10-25	117	8	5
99	Lê Ngọc Thành	1972	Political activist	2020-04-25	2022-04-18	109	9	3
100	Lê Phú Tuấn	1972	Facebooker	2024-03-29	2024-08-22	331	4.8	
101	Lê Phúc	1951	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-05	2013-02-04	(79)	15	5
102	Lê Phước Hoàng	1999	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
103	Lê Phước Sang	1991	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
104	Lê Quốc Hùng	1967	Facebooker	2024-04-12	Pretrial detention	117		
105	Lê Thạch Giang	1957	Facebooker	2023-06-29	Pretrial detention	331		
106	Lê Thanh Nhất Nguyên	1991	Buddhist	2022-01-07	2022-11-03	331	4	
107	Lê Thanh Tùng	1968	Civil rights activist	2015-12-14	2016-12-16	(88)	12	4

108	Lê Thị Hòa	1972	Land petitioner	2024-03-10	2025-07-29	331	2	
109	Lê Thị Kim Phi	1959	Political activist	2021-09-10	2022-03-16	109	6	
110	Lê Thị Mai	1984	Facebooker	2025-03-29	Pretrial detention	331		
111	Lê Thị Minh Thiều	1974	Facebooker	2025-01-30	2025-04-28	117	6	
112	Lê Thị Ngọc Nhan	1971	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
113	Lê Thị Thu Trâm	1986	Social activist	2024-10-08	Pretrial detention	331		
114	Lê Thị Thuận	1986	Land petitioner	2024-12-31	Pretrial detention	318		
115	Lê Thị Thúy	1980	Facebooker	2025-10-30	Pretrial detention	331		
116	Lê Trọng Cư	1966	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-05	2013-02-04	(79)	12	5
117	Lê Trọng Hùng	1979	Facebooker	2021-03-27	2022-04-19	117	5	5
118	Lê Trung Thu	1980	Facebooker	2021-06-30	Pretrial detention	331		
119	Lê Tùng Vân	1932	Buddhist	2022-01-07	2022-11-03	331	5	
120	Lê Văn Cần	1966	YouTuber	2025-06-04	Pretrial detention	331		
121	Lê Văn Điền	1972	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
122	Lê Văn Dũng	1970	Facebooker	2021-06-30	2022-08-16	(88)	5	5
123	Lê Văn Hải	1966	Facebooker	2020-09-18	2021-03-31	331	4	
124	Lê Văn Lạc	1966	Political activist	2020-02-01	2021-03-11	109	7	2
125	Lê Văn Quân	1989	Facebooker	2021-10-24	2022-04-14	117	10	
126	Lê Văn sang	1962	Political activist	N/A	2021-03-11	109	5	2
127	Lê Viết Hòa	1962	Facebooker	2020-06-24	2021-03-30	117	5	
128	Lê Vũ Đài	1975	Facebooker	2024-08-28	Pretrial detention	331		
129	Lương Nhật Quang	1987	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-10	2013-02-04	(79)	12	5
130	Lương Thị Thu Hiền	1968	Political activist	2020-04-08	2022-04-18	109	11	3
131	Lưu Văn Vịnh	1967	Political activist	2016-11-06	2018-10-05	(79)	15	3
132	Lý Văn Dũng	1986	Dương Văn Minh Sect	2021-12-12	2022-05-18	330	4	
133	Mai Thị Hạ	1961	Facebooker	2025-07-02	Pretrial detention	331		
134	Mai Văn Dưỡng	1986	TikTok user	2025-04-10	On bail	331		
135	Nay Y Blang	1976	Montagnard Christian	2023 -5-18	2024-01-26	331	4.6	
136	Ngô Công Trứ	1988	Political activist	2021-02-04	2021-08-25	109	10	
137	Ngô Sơn Hà	1974	TikToker	2025-06-11	Pretrial detention	331		
138	Ngô Thị Hà Phương	1996	Facebooker	2020-06-24	2001-03-30	117	7	
139	Ngô Thị Tố Nhiên	N/A	Environmental activist	2023-09-15	2024-06-27	342	3.6	
140	Ngô Trí Cường	1966	Facebooker	2025-09-26	Pretrial detention	331		
141	Nguyễn Anh Hùng	1950	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-19	109	6	
142	Nguyễn Bá Mạnh	1987	Facebooker	2019-03-19	Pretrial detention	(288)		
143	Nguyễn Bảo Tiên	1986	Book distributor	2021-05-05	2022-01-21	117	6.6	
144	Nguyễn Chí Tuyển	1974	Facebooker	2024-02-29	2024-08-15	117	5	
145	Nguyễn Chí Vững	1981	Facebooker	2019-04-23	2019-11-26	117	6	2
146	Nguyễn Công Hợp	1950	Facebooker	2025-09-22	Pretrial detention	331		
147	Nguyễn Đình	1968	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-10	2013-02-04	(79)	14	5

148	Nguyễn Đình Trung	1958	Social activist	2024-08-02	2025-01-20	331	3	
149	Nguyễn Đoàn Quang Viên	1982	Political activist	2021-10-15	2023-01-13	109	14	
150	Nguyễn Đức Dự	1976	Facebooker	2024-03-28	Pretrial detention	331		
151	Nguyễn Đức Hùng	1991	Facebooker	2022-01-06	2022-07-13	117	5.6	2
152	Nguyễn Đức Minh	2001	YouTubeur	2025-06-04	Pretrial detention	331		
153	Nguyễn Đức Thanh	1968	Political activist	2024-01-19	2024-06-19	109	16	
154	Nguyễn Duy Hường	1987	facebooker	2021-03-22	Pretrial detention	117		
155	Nguyễn Duy Linh	1976	Facebooker	2021-09-14	2022-06-09	117	5	
156	Nguyễn Duy Niệm	1968	Facebooker	2025-10-10	Pretrial detention	117		
157	Nguyễn Hoàng Nam	1982	Hoa Hao Buddhist	2023-07-24	2023-12-11	117	8	
158	Nguyễn Hoàng Phương	1970	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-19	109	14	
159	Nguyễn Hoàng Tân	1998	YouTubeur	2025-06-04	Pretrial detention	331		
160	Nguyễn Hùng Anh	1963	Political activist	N/A	2018-08-22	109	10	
161	Nguyễn Kỳ Lạc	1951	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-06	2013-02-04	(79)	16	5
162	Nguyễn Lâm Thắng	1975	Blogger	2022-07-05	2023-04-12	117	6	2
163	Nguyễn Mạnh Hùng	1954	Protestant Pastor	2025-01-16	2025-10-30	117	6	5
164	Nguyễn Minh Quang	1960	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-18	109	9	3
165	Nguyễn Minh Sơn	1962	Facebooker	2022-09-28	2023-09-29	117	6	
166	Nguyễn Năng Tĩnh	1976	Facebooker	2019-05-29	2019-11-15	117	11	5
167	Nguyễn Ngọc Châu	1961	Political activist	2024-09-22	Pretrial detention	109		
168	Nguyễn Như Phương	1991	Facebooker	2021-10-09	2022-12-26	117	5	3
169	Nguyễn Quang Khải	1969	Facebooker	2020-10-20	Pretrial detention	337		
170	Nguyễn Quang Thanh	1983	Political activist	2017-02-16	2017-12-27	(79)	14	3
171	Nguyễn Quang Vinh	1981	Facebooker	2020-06-27	Pretrial detention	331		
172	Nguyễn Quốc Đức Vượng	1991	Facebooker	2019-09-23	2020-07-07	117	8	
173	Nguyễn Quốc Hoàn	1977	Political activist	2016-06-11	2018-10-05	(79)	13	3
174	Nguyễn Quốc Tiến	1980	Land petitioner	2020-01-09	2020-09-14	123	13	
175	Nguyễn Sơn Lộ	1948	Democracy activist	2023-02-02	2023-07-26	331-356	5	
176	Nguyễn Thanh Huy	1966	Facebooker	2024-12-20	Pretrial detention	331		
177	Nguyễn Thanh Sơn	1969	Facebooker	2025-11-10	Pretrial detention	331		
178	Nguyễn Thanh Tùng	1983	Former CPV member	2023-04-19	2024-10-30	117	3.6	
179	Nguyễn Thanh Xoan	1972	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-18	109	12	3
180	Nguyễn Thị Bạch Huệ	1964	Political activist	2023-04-01	2024-04-15	109	12	
181	Nguyễn Thị Bích Thủy	1980	Land petitioner	2024-11-18	Pretrial detention	330		
182	Nguyễn Thị Biểu	1961	Social activist	2025-11-12	Pretrial detention	331		
183	Nguyễn Thị Cẩm Thúy	1976	Facebooker	2020-06-24	2021-03-30	117	9	3
184	Nguyễn Thị Chính	1955	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-19	109	8	
185	Nguyễn Thị Hiền	1973	Land petitioner	2025-01-24	On bail	331		
186	Nguyễn Thị Hường	1968	Political activist	2024-08-29	Pretrial detention	109		
187	Nguyễn Thị Kim Duyên	1978	Political activist	N/A	2021-03-11	109	6	2

188	Nguyễn Thị Kim Phượng	1967	Political activist	2020-04-02	2022-04-18	109	10	3
189	Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Hạnh	1976	Political activist	2018-09-03	2020-07-31	118	8	3
190	Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Tiên	1976	Political activist	2022-02-16	2022-09-30	109	12	4
191	Nguyễn Thị Oanh	1971	Land rights activist	2025-10-21	Pretrial detention	331		
192	Nguyễn Thị Rành	1953	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-19	109	16	
193	Nguyễn Thị Xuyên	1974	Facebooker	2023-12-13	2024-05-15	331	2.6	
194	Nguyễn Thiết Hùng	N/A	Facebooker	2023-04-19	2024-10-30	117	4	
195	Nguyễn Trần Khánh Huy	2000	Facebooker	2024-12-31	Pretrial detention	331		
196	Nguyễn Trí Gioãn	1979	Facebooker	2023-07-11	2021-11-15	117	7	3
197	Nguyễn Trung Tôn	1971	Political activist	2017-07-30	2018-04-05	(79)	12	3
198	Nguyễn Trung Trực	1963	Political activist	2017-08-04	2018-12-26	(79)	12	5
199	Nguyễn Tuấn Nghĩa	N/A	Facebooker	2025-08-28	Pretrial detention	117		
200	Nguyễn Tường Thụy	1952	Freelance journalist	2020-05-23	2021-01-05	117	11	3
201	Nguyễn Văn Bình	1973	Gov official	2024-05-09	Pretrial detention	337		
202	Nguyễn Văn Bình	1973	Gov official	2024-05-09	Pretrial detention	337		
203	Nguyễn Văn Đức Độ	1975	Political activist	2016-11-06	2018-10-05	(79)	11	
204	Nguyễn Văn Lâm	1989	Facebooker	2023-07-07	2024-03-26	117	8	
205	Nguyễn Văn Lâm	1970	Facebooker	2020-11-06	2021-07-20	117	9	3
206	Nguyễn Văn Lộc	1982	Land petitioner	2024-11-22	Pretrial detention	330		
207	Nguyễn Văn Minh	1959	Facebooker	2024-05-15	2024-10-18	331	2.6	
208	Nguyễn Văn Nghĩa	1975	Political activist	2022-06-23	2022-10-06	109	7	
209	Nguyễn Văn Nghĩa	1978	Political activist	2017-02-16	2017-12-27	(79)	12	3
210	Nguyễn Văn Nghiêm	1963	Facebooker	2019-11-05	2020-06-23	117	6	
211	Nguyễn Văn Nhon	1956	Facebooker	2004-08-03	2024-11-13	331	2.6	
212	Nguyễn Văn Tông	1969	Land petitioner	2025-10-07	Pretrial detention	331		
213	Nguyễn Văn Trọng	1970	Land petitioner	2024-03-10	2025-07-29	331	2	
214	Nguyễn Văn Trung	1975	Political activist	2024-07-31	Pretrial detention	109		
215	Nguyễn Văn Trường	1976	Facebooker	2025-09-21	Pretrial detention	331		
216	Nguyễn Văn Tú	1995	HR activist	2025-09-01	Pretrial detention	N/A		
217	Nguyễn Văn Tuấn	1984	Political activist	2017-02-16	2017-12-27	(79)	12	3
218	Nguyễn Văn Túc	1964	Political activist	2017-09-01	2018-09-14	(79)	13	5
219	Nguyễn Văn Tuyển	1974	Land petitioner	2020-01-09	2020-09-14	123	12	
220	Nguyễn Văn Ướt	1992	Political activist	2022-12-16	2024-01-18	109	14	3
221	Nguyễn Văn Văn	N/A	Former CPV member	2023-04-19	2024-10-30	117	5.6	
222	Nguyễn Văn Viễn	1971	Political activist	2019-01-13	2019-11-11	113	11	
223	Nguyễn Viết Tú	1973	Political activist	2024-09-30	Pretrial detention	109		
224	Nguyễn Vũ Bình	1968	independent journalist	2024-02-29	2024-09-10	117	7	
225	Nguyễn Xuân Bình	1976	Political activist	2025-03-28	Pretrial detention	109		
226	Nguyễn Xuân Tĩnh	1972	Political activist	N/A	2022-03-15	109	9	3
227	Nhật Kim Bình	1977	Political activist	2024-05-20	2024-06-19	109	8	

228	P.V.L.	2002	Facebooker	2023-07-11	Pretrial detention	117		
229	Phạm Anh Tiến	1974	Facebooker	2023-09-06	2024-10-18	331	3.6	
230	Phạm Chí Dũng	1966	independent journalist	2019-11-21	2021-01-05	117	15	3
231	Phạm Đoàn Trang	1978	Independent journalist	2020-10-06	2022-08-25	(88) 117	9	
232	Phạm Hoàng	1958	Political activist	2024-08-29	Pretrial detention	109		
233	Phạm Quang Thiện	1978	Government official	2025-12-04	2025-12-31	117	5.6	
234	Phạm Thanh	1987	Political activist	2018-06-11	2019-05-21	178	15.6	
235	Phạm Văn Chờ	1964	Facebooker	2024-01-30	2024-07-11	117	7	2
236	Phạm Văn Điệp	1965	Civil rights Facebooker	2019-06-29	2019-11-26	117	9	5
237	Phạm Viết Công	1957	Facebooker	2025-07-15	Pretrial detention	331		
238	Phạm Xuân Thân	1958	Political activist	1996-06-12	1905-06-18	-84	Life	
239	Phạm Xuân Thời	1969	Facebooker	2025-01-17	Pretrial detention	331		
240	Phan Đình Sang	1967	Facebooker	2024-03-12	2024-08-26	117	6	2
241	Phan Minh Tuấn	1981	Facebooker	2025-01-25	Pretrial detention	117		
242	Phan Ngọc Dung	1955	YouTubeur	2024-01-22	2024-09-04	331	3	
243	Phan Sơn Tùng	1984	YouTubeur	2022-08-31	2023-07-03	117	6	
244	Phan Tất Thành	1986	Facebooker	2023-07-05	2024-05-08	117	8	
245	Phan Thị Thanh Hồng	1969	social activist	2020-06-24	Pretrial detention	318		
246	Phan Thị Thanh Nhã	1984	Facebooker	2023-03-17	Pretrial detention	109		
247	Phan Văn Bách	1974	YouTubeur	2023-12-29	2024-09-16	117	5	
248	Phan Văn Bình	1972	Political activist	2018-02-08	2019-01-22	109	14	
249	Phang A Vang	1988	H'mong Christian	2012-10-16	N/A	(87)	15	
250	Puih Bop (Ama Phun)	1959	Montagnard Christian	2016-09	2017-04-07	(87)	9	
251	Quách Gia Khang	1997	Political activist	2025-03-18	Pretrial detention	109		
252	Rah Lan Hip	1981	Montagnard Christian	2019-05-15	2019-08-09	116	7	3
253	Rlan Thih (Ama Philip)	1980	Montagnard Christian	2022-12-19	2023-09-28	116	5	3
254	Rơ Châm Grông	1961	Montagnard Christian	2024-05-10	2025-03-06	116	7	
255	Ro Ma Đaih (Ama Pôn)	1989	Montagnard Christian	2016-9	2017-04-07	(87)	10	
256	Siu Chon	1975	Montagnard Christian	2020-12-12	2021-08-13	(87)	6	3
257	Siu Dik	1970	Montagnard Christian	2016-04-08	2016-11-30	(87)	8	3.5
258	Siu Doang	1987	Montagnard Christian	2016-04-08	2016-07-30	(87)	8	3.5
259	Sùng A Dơ	1996	Hmong Political activist	N/A	2020-03-18	109	8	2
260	Sùng A Sinh	1982	Hmong Political activist	N/A	2020-03-18	109	Life	
261	Sùng A Sinh	1986	Hmong Political activist	N/A	2020-03-18	109	8	2
262	Tạ Khu	1947	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-06	2013-02-04	(79)	16	5
263	Tạ Miên Linh	1945	YouTubeur	2023-05-04	2023-09-15	331	2.6	
264	Tạ Tấn Lộc	1975	Political activist	2017-02-16	2017-12-27	(79)	14	3
265	Thạch Chanh Đa Ra	1990	Khmer Krom monk	2024-03-26	2024-11-26	331- 157	6	
266	Thạch Chóp	2003	Khmer Krom monk	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
267	Thạch Cương	1987	Khmer Krom activist	2023-07-31	2024-05-23	331	4	

268	Thạch Nga	1990	Facebooker	2025-03-27	2025-11-18	331	3.6	
269	Thạch Nha	1997	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
270	Thạch Quý Lầy	1986	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2	
271	Thạch Thị Hoa Ri	1971	Indigenous activist	2025-11-18	Pretrial detention	331		
272	Thạch Ve Sanal	1987	Khmer Krom activist	2024-03-28	2024-11-26	157	2.6	
273	Thạch Xuân Đồng	1987	Facebooker	2025-03-27	2025-11-18	331	3.6	
274	Thao A Vang	1986	H'mong Christian	2012-10-16	N/A	(87)	20	
275	Tô Hoàng Chương	1986	Khmer Krom activist	2023-07-31	2024-05-23	331	3.6	
276	Tôn Nữ Thê Trang	1962	Political activist	N/A	2022-03-15	109	12	
277	Trần Anh Kim	1949	Political activist	2015-09-21	2016-12-16	(79)	13	5
278	Trần Cao Long	1988	Phone message user	2024-12-07	Pretrial detention	156		
279	Trần Công Khải	1963	Political activist	2017-11-01	2019-06-27	109	8	
280	Trần Đắc Thắng	1980	Facebooker	2023-09-29	Pretrial detention	331		
281	Trần Đình Toan	1958	Facebooker	2025-03-22	Pretrial detention	331		
282	Trần Đình Triển	1959	Lawyer	2024-06-01	2025-01-09	331	3	
283	Trần Đức Thạch	1952	Writer	2020-04-23	2020-12-15	109	12	3
284	Trần Hoàng Huấn	1988	Facebooker	2021-08-10	2022-05-05	117	8	3
285	Trần Hoàng Minh	1990	Facebooker	2020-09-01	2021-07-20	331	5	
286	Trần Khắc Đức	1995	Web manager	2024-11-09	Pretrial detention	117		
287	Trần Minh Lợi	1968	Facebooker	2023-12-01	2024-08-16	331	5	
288	Trần Nguyên Chuân	1967	Political activist	2020-09-01	2021-03-19	109	6.6	
289	Trần Như Phước	1987	TikToker	2025-06-11	Pretrial detention	331		
290	Trần Quang Nam	1986	Environmental activist	2025-08-28	Pretrial detention	117		
291	Trần Quang Trung	1991	Facebooker	2025-08-28	Pretrial detention	117		
292	Trần Quốc Khánh	1960	businessman	2021-03-09	2022-02-17	117	6.6	6
293	Trần Thanh Giang	1971	Hoa Hao Buddhist	2019-04-23	2019-11-27	117	8	
294	Trần Thị Hồng Duyên	1984	Political activist	2024-09-27	Pretrial detention	109		
295	Trần Thị Ngọc Xuân	1969	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-18	109	13	3
296	Trần Thị Tuyết Diệu	1988	Journalist	2020-08-21	2021-09-29	117	8	
297	Trần Thiện Châu Lãm	1991	Facebooker	2024-07-23	2025-01-16	109	12	
298	Trần Tuấn Tài	1967	Political activist	N/A	2018-08-22	(79)	10	
299	Trần Văn Bang	1961	Facebooker	2022-03-01	2023-08-29	117	8	3
300	Trần Văn Khanh	1962	Facebooker	2024-02-02	2024-09-04	117	7	
301	Trần Văn Linh	1957	Political activist	2024-09-20	Pretrial detention	109		
302	Trần Văn Long	1955	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-18	109	10	3
303	Trần Văn Quyển	1999	Political activist	2019-01-23	2019-11-11	113	10	
304	Trần Văn Quyết	1959	Social activist	2024-09-01	2025-04-16	331	2.6	
305	Trần Văn Tứ	1992	Facebooker	1905-07-12	Pretrial detention	331		
306	Trần Văn Vinh	1976	Political activist	N/A	2018-08-22	(79)	8	
307	Trịnh Bá Hạnh	1987	Political activist	2024-09-30	Pretrial detention	109		

308	Trịnh Bá Phương	1985	Social activist	2020-06-24	2025-09-29	117	21	5
309	Trịnh Bá Tư	1989	Land rights activist	2020-06-24	2021-05-05	117	8	3
310	Trịnh Viết Bằng	1959	Anti-corruption activist	2019-05-14	Pretrial detention	331		
311	Trương Công Đại	N/A	Former CPV member	2023-04-19	2024-10-30	117	4.6	
312	Trương Duy Nhất	1964	Independent journalist	2019-01-28	2020-03-09	355	10	
313	Trương Huy San	1961	Independent journalist	2024-02-02	2025-02-27	331	2.6	
314	Trương Minh Đức	1960	Political activist	2017-07-30	2018-04-05	(79)	12	3
315	Trương Nguyễn Minh Trí	1987	Political activist	N/A	2018-08-22	79	11	
316	Trương Văn Dũng	1958	Facebooker	2022-05-21	2023-07-13	(88)	6	
317	Từ Công Nghĩa	1993	Political activist	2016-11-05	2018-10-05	(79)	10	3
318	Từ Thiện Lương	1950	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-10	2013-02-04	(79)	16	5
319	Vang A De	1990	H'mong Christian	2012-10-16	N/A	(87)	20	
320	Vang A Phu	1977	H'mong Christian	2012-10-16	N/A	(87)	20	
321	Văng Bá Cảnh	1948	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-19	109	5	
322	Võ Hoàng Ngọc	N/A	Political activist	N/A	2018-08-22	(79)	9	
323	Võ Hoàng Thơ	1985	Facebooker	2021-10-06	Pretrial detention	331		
324	Võ Ngọc Cư	1951	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-06	2013-02-04	(79)	16	5
325	Võ Thành Lê	1955	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-05	2013-02-04	(79)	16	5
326	Võ Thanh Thời	1989	Facebooker	2022-09-22	Pretrial detention	331		
327	Võ Thị Phụng	1979	Facebooker	2025-10-06	Pretrial detention	331		
328	Võ Tiết	1952	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-05	2013-02-04	(79)	16	5
329	Vũ Bích Vân	1971	Social activist	2022-03-10	2023-09-15	331	5	
330	Vũ Minh Tiến	N/A	Gov Official	2024-05-20	Pretrial detention	337		
331	Vũ Thị Kim Phượng	1970	Political activist	N/A	2021-03-11	109	13	5
332	Vũ Tiến Chi	1966	Facebooker	2020-06-24	2021-03-30	117	10	3
333	Vũ Tuấn Anh	N/A	Former govern official	2023-06-28	2024-10-30	117	2.6	
334	Vương Tấn Minh Khoa	1983	Phone message user	2024-12-19	Pretrial detention	156		
335	Vương Tấn Sơn	1953	Ân Đàn Đại Đạo Cult	2012-02-12	2013-02-04	(79)	17	5
336	Vương Văn Hồng Nam	1963	Political activist	2024-08-31	Pretrial detention	109		
337	Y Hon Ênuôi	1988	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-18	109	4	2
338	Y Kréch Byă	1975	Montagnard Christian	2023-04-08	2024-03-28	116	13	5
339	Y Min Ksor	1958	Montagnard Christian	2018-07-10	2019-01-30	(87)	9	3.5
340	Y Nuen Ayũn	1967	Montagnard Christian	2025-10-08	Pretrial detention	116		
341	Y Phương Ding Riêh	1978	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-18	109	8	3
342	Y Pô Mlô	1961	Indigenous activist	2024-08-15	2025-05-06	116	7.6	
343	Y Pum Bya	1964	Montagnard Christian	2018-04-10	2019-01-30	(87)	14	3.5
344	Y Pum Nie	1964	Montagnard Christian	2018-04-10	Pretrial detention	116		
345	Y Quynh Bđap	1982	Montagnard Christian	2025-10-28	2024-01-20	113	10	
346	Y Thịnh Niê	1979	Montagnard Christian	2024-09-05	2025-05-23	116	9	4
347	Y Tũp Knul	1970	Political activist	N/A	2022-04-18	109	9	3

## APPENDIX III

### VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS 2024 AND 2025

Since 2002, the Vietnam Human Rights Network (VNHRN) has annually presented the Vietnam Human Rights Award to the prominent human rights and democracy activists in Vietnam who have made their mark in the inexorable march toward freedom, human rights, and democracy of the Vietnamese people. So far, these Vietnam Human Rights Awards have gone to a constellation of names easily recognized by their distinctive courage and commitment to human rights cause:

- 2002: *The Most Ven. Thich Quang Do and Fr. Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly*
- 2003: *Messrs. Nguyen Vu Binh, Le Chi Quang, Nguyen Khac Toan, and Dr. Pham Hong Son*
- 2004: *Mr. Pham Que Duong and Dr. Nguyen Dan Que*
- 2005: *Mr. Le Quang Liem, Fr. Peter Phan Van Loi, and Ven. Thich Tue Sy*
- 2006: *Messrs. Do Nam Hai and Nguyen Chinh Ket*
- 2007: *Mr. Hoang Minh Chinh, Lawyer Nguyen Van Dai, and Lawyer Le Thi Cong Nhan*
- 2008: *Ven. Thich Thien Minh, Blogger “Dieu Cay” Nguyen Van Hai, and Tu Do Ngon Luan Magazine*
- 2009: *Writer Tran Khai Thanh Thuy and Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh*
- 2010: *Journalist Truong Minh Duc and Labor activist Doan Huy Chuong*
- 2011: *Dr. Cu Huy Ha Vu and Labor activist Do Thi Minh Hanh*
- 2012: *Ms. Pham Thanh Nghien, Blogger Ta Phong Tan, and Ms. Huynh Thuc Vy*
- 2013: *Lawyer Le Quoc Quan, Mr. Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, and Mr. Nguyen Hoang Quoc Hung*
- 2014: *The Vietnam Redemptorist Province, Mr. Nguyen Bac Truyen, and Musicians Vo Minh Tri (Viet Khang) and Tran Vu Anh Binh.*
- 2015: *The Most Venerable Thich Khong Tanh, Ms. Ho Thi Bich Khuong, and Ms. Bui Thi Minh Hang.*
- 2016: *The Vietnamese Bloggers’ Network, Lawyer Vo An Don, and activists for victims of injustice Ms. Tran Ngoc Anh and Ms. Can Thi Theu*
- 2017: *The Brotherhood for Democracy, Blogger Ba Sam Nguyen Huu Vinh, Blogger Nguyen Ngoc Nhu Quynh, and Pastor Y Yich*
- 2018: *Mr. Hoang Duc Binh, Ms. Tran Thi Nga, and Blogger Pham Doan Trang*
- 2019: *Pastor Nguyen Trung Ton, Ms. Nguyen Dang Minh Man, and Lawyer Le Cong Dinh*
- 2020: *The Independent Journalists Association of Vietnam (IJAVN), Mr. Nguyen Nang Tinh, and Mr. Nguyen Van Hoa*
- 2021: *Mrs Can Thi Theu’s Family, Ms. Dinh Thi Thu Thuy, and Mr. Nguyen Van Tuc*
- 2022: *Poet Tran Duc Thach, Journalist Nguyen Tuong Thuy, and Activist Luu Van Vinh with the Vietnam National Self-Determination Coalition*
- 2023: *Mr. Tran Van Bang, Mr. Y Wô Niê, and Mr. Le Trong Hung*
- 2024: *Mr. Bui Van Thuan, Mr. Dang Dang Pghuoc, and Mr. Do Nam Trung*
- 2025: *Mr. Phan Tat Thanh, Ms. Nguyen Thi Ngoc Hanh, and Mr. Nguyen Chi Tuyen*

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE BUI VAN THUAN

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD 2024



Human rights activist Bui Van Thuan, born in 1981 in Yen Thuy district, Hoa Binh province, is of the Muong ethnic group. After graduating from Hanoi College of Commerce and Hanoi National University of Education, he taught at several private high schools in Hanoi. During this time, he participated in several protests against China's expansionist ambitions and against the environmental disaster caused by the Formosa Steel Company in Ha Tinh province in 2016.

On social media, he frequently spoke out in support of human rights activists and political prisoners, and in defense of victims of injustice. He openly criticized the government's shortcomings in handling the COVID-19 pandemic and called for boycotting the undemocratic national elections in 2016 and 2021. He also participated in the Brotherhood for Democracy and the "Institutional Studies" group with other activists to research and transform Vietnam's political system from totalitarianism to a democratic rule of law.

Due to his human rights and democracy activism, Bui Van Thuan and his family were constantly monitored and harassed by the police. Finally, on August 30, 2021, he was arrested on charges of "making, storing, distributing, or disseminating information, documents, and materials aimed at opposing the Socialist Republic of Vietnam."

On November 18, 2022, the Thanh Hoa Provincial Court sentenced Mr. Bui Van Thuan to eight years in prison and five years of probation. Throughout the investigation and trial, Mr. Thuan consistently declared his innocence and rejected all charges in the indictment. In his final statement to the court, he declared: *"Regardless of the outcome of the trial, I still want to thank the three lawyers who defended me. I can say that I am a victim of a flawed legal system... I waive my right to appeal because I have no faith in the judicial system."* Mr. Thuan is currently being held at Prison No. 6 in Thanh Chuong District, Nghe An Province.

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE DANG DANG PHUOC

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD 2024



Teacher Dang Dang Phuoc was born in 1963 in Thua Thien Hue province. After graduating from the Hue Academy of Music, he worked as a music lecturer at Dak Lak Pedagogical College. He served in the Vietnam People's Army for four years. After leaving the military, he returned to teaching music and became involved in human rights and democracy activism.

His main tools of activism were the internet and music, through which he advocated for land rights for ethnic minority groups in the Central Highlands, denounced corruption, fought for people's civil and political rights, and supported the activities of dissident groups.

He participated in several petitions supporting democracy, such as Petition 72 in January 2013, which called for constitutional changes to allow multi-party elections, and the Declaration of Citizen Freedoms in February 2013, which aimed to abolish Article 4 of the Vietnamese Constitution, which established the Communist Party of Vietnam's leadership monopoly.

Because of his human rights and democracy activism, he repeatedly faced pressure from the school, the education department, and state security agencies. On September 8, 2022, the Dak Lak police arrested him on charges of propaganda against the state, under Article 117 of the penal code.

On June 6, 2023, the People's Court of Dak Lak province held a first-instance trial and sentenced Dang Dang Phuoc to 8 years in prison and 4 years of probation for the aforementioned charges. On September 26, 2023, the High People's Court in Da Nang upheld the sentence in an appeal hearing that lasted only two hours. In both trials, Mr. Phuoc protested the sentence and declared his innocence.

Currently, Mr. Phuoc is being held at Xuan Phuoc Prison in Phu Yen province.

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE DO NAM TRUNG

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD 2024



Mr. Do Nam Trung was born in 1981 in Nam Dinh province. After finishing high school, he worked as a bus driver for Hoang Long transportation company on the North-South route.

He participated in many social movements, including “protesting against BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) toll booths,” a form of peaceful protest against toll stations on highways that were improperly located or charged excessive fees, and protesting against the authorities for cutting down trees without justifiable reasons. He also used Facebook to express his views on socio-political issues and to report on protests against China’s encroachment into Vietnam’s territorial waters. On May 15, 2014, while recording images of a protest against China in Dong Nai province, he and two friends were arrested, and all three were sentenced to more than a year in prison for “abusing democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the State, the legitimate interests of organizations and citizens.”

After completing his prison sentence, Mr. Trung resumed his activism. He joined the Brotherhood for Democracy and actively participated in human rights and civil liberties campaigns, including protests against Formosa in 2016 and against the Cybersecurity Law and the Special Economic Zones Law in 2018. In October 2019, Do Nam Trung attended a human rights conference in Ireland at the invitation of Frontline Defenders. At this forum, he presented on the human rights violations committed by the Vietnamese state.

On July 6, 2021, Do Nam Trung was arrested in Hanoi and sentenced to 10 years in prison and 4 years of probation on charges of “making, storing, disseminating, or propagating information, documents, and items against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.” During the trial, Mr. Trung consistently maintained that his statements in the videos and articles were an exercise of his right to freedom of expression as stipulated in the Constitution and, therefore, considered the guilty verdict unjust. Currently, Do Nam Trung is being held at Prison No. 5 in Thanh Hoa province.

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE PHAN TAT THANH

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD 2025



Prisoner of conscience Phan Tat Thanh, born in 1986, was formerly the administrator of the Facebook page “Patriotic Diary,” where he frequently wrote commentary on human rights violations, environmental pollution, corruption, and China’s encroachment on Vietnam’s territory and maritime areas. The “Patriotic Diary” page once had over 200,000 registered members.

Vietnamese communist authorities arrested Mr. Thanh on July 13, 2023, on charges of “propagandizing against the State” under Article 117 of the Vietnamese Penal Code. During his detention, police investigators used brutal torture to extract a confession.

In a swift trial on May 8, 2024, Mr. Thanh was sentenced to 8 years in prison and 3 years of probation.

Before the trial, Mr. Thanh pleaded not guilty and demanded his immediate release. He asserted that he had only done what the Vietnamese Constitution and the United Nations Human Rights Conventions, to which Vietnam is a signatory, stipulate.

After the judge’s verdict, Mr. Thanh shouted: “*I do not recognize this trial. This trial is merely a form of imposition and repression against a citizen like me!*” He then informed his family that he refused to appeal because he did not trust the Vietnamese communist judicial system.

Currently, political prisoner Phan Chi Thanh is being held at Xuan Loc prison in Dong Nai province. On August 27, 2025, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention stated that the detention of prisoner of conscience Phan Tat Thanh was arbitrary and demanded that the Vietnamese authorities immediately release him.

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE NGUYEN THI NGOC HANH

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD 2025



Prisoner of conscience Nguyen Thi Ngoc Hanh, born in 1976, was formerly a mathematics teacher at the Canadian International School in Saigon. In 2018, along with several associates across the country, she founded an independent civil society group to promote the implementation of the civil rights enshrined in the Vietnamese Constitution, particularly the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and the right to participate in state management.

The group's primary means of operation is social media, through which they speak out about constitutional and legal violations committed by officials in many localities of Vietnam, causing harm to the people. They also participated in protests against the Special Economic Zones Law and the Cybersecurity Law in June 2018.

Police abducted Ms. Hanh on the street on the evening of September 3, 2018. After 11 months of detention, her family was finally allowed to visit her for the first time. During that time, she was held in solitary confinement and tortured to force a confession.

Nearly two years after their arrest, the Vietnamese authorities brought the group to trial on July 31, 2020. The group of eight was sentenced to a total of 40 and a half years in prison on charges of “disrupting security,” with Ms. Hanh receiving the harshest sentence of 8 years, as the Vietnamese authorities considered her to be the mastermind.

Political prisoner Nguyen Thi Ngoc Hanh is currently being held at An Phuoc prison in Phu Giao district, Binh Duong province.

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE NGUYEN CHI TUYEN

VIETNAM HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD 2025



Human rights activist Nguyen Chi Tuyen, born in 1974, is one of the founders of the “No U” group, established in 2007, which campaigns against China's expansionist ambitions and its claim to a U-shaped maritime boundary encompassing most of the South China Sea. In addition to participating in anti-China and environmental protests, Tuyen and other members of the “No-U” group have also engaged in social activities, helping victims of injustice and impoverished children in mountainous regions.

Mr. Nguyen Chi Tuyen is also a very active communicator on social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, where he speaks out in defense of persecuted human rights activists and criticizes the Vietnamese government on social, environmental, and economic issues.

He has been repeatedly assaulted and injured by plainclothes police officers.

On February 29, 2024, Vietnamese police raided his home and arrested him. On August 15, 2024, the Hanoi People's Court sentenced activist Nguyen Chi Tuyen to 5 years in prison on charges of “propagandizing against the State” under Article 117 of the Penal Code.

One of Tuyen's defense lawyers recounted that at a meeting before the trial, Tuyen said: “I could have easily chosen personal safety by ignoring the social problems. But as a citizen, I cannot shirk my responsibility to my country.”

Currently, Nguyen Chi Tuyen is being held at Prison No. 6 in Nghe An province.





The Vietnam Human Rights Network was established in 1997 as a consortium of individuals and organizations committed to the defense and promotion of human rights and civil liberties entitled to all Vietnamese citizens set forth by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent international human rights instruments.

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