

# VIETNAM 2022 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is an authoritarian state ruled by a single party, the Communist Party of Vietnam, led by General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, President Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, and Chairman of the National Assembly Vuong Dinh Hue. National Assembly elections in May 2021 were neither free nor fair; there was limited competition among Communist Party-vetted candidates.

The Ministry of Public Security is responsible for internal security and controls the national police, a special national security investigative agency, and other internal security units. Civilian authorities maintained effective control over the security forces. There were credible reports that members of the security forces committed numerous abuses.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: unlawful or arbitrary killings by the government; torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and punishment by government agents; arbitrary arrest and detention; political prisoners; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy; serious restrictions on free expression and media, including arbitrary arrest and prosecution of government critics, censorship, and the use of criminal libel laws; serious restrictions on internet freedom; substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; restrictions on freedom of movement, including exit bans on activists; inability of citizens to change their government peacefully through free and fair elections; serious restrictions on political participation; serious government corruption; trafficking in persons; significant restrictions on workers' freedom of association; and use of compulsory child labor.

The government occasionally took corrective action, including prosecutions against officials who abused human rights or engaged in corruption, but police officers and state officials frequently acted with impunity.





























































































**Wage, Hour, and OSH Enforcement:** The Ministry of Labor, War Invalids, and Social Affairs is the principal labor authority. The Labor Inspections Department is responsible for workplace inspections to confirm compliance with labor laws, including OSH standards.

Inspectors have the authority to make unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions. Inspectors may use sanctions, fines, withdrawal of operating licenses or registrations, closures of enterprises, and mandatory training in response to labor law violations. Inspectors may take immediate measures where they have reason to believe there is imminent danger to the health or safety of workers, and can temporarily suspend operations, although such measures were rarely used.

The government did not effectively enforce labor laws, particularly in the informal economy. The number of inspectors was not sufficient to enforce compliance. Labor inspectors accounted for fewer than one third of the labor inspectorate's staff, and of these, only a small number were OSH specialists. Most worksites went uninspected for years at a time. Penalties for wage, hour and occupational safety and health violations were commensurate with those for similar crimes, such as fraud, but penalties were rarely applied against violators.

**Informal Sector:** The informal sector includes small household businesses; individual vendors in traditional markets, street side, or online; and gig workers for transportation and delivery. Fifty-five percent of the country's workforce worked in the informal economy.

Members of ethnic minority groups often worked in the informal economy and, according to the ILO, informal workers typically had low and irregular incomes, endured long working hours, and lacked protection by labor market institutions. Additionally, workers in the informal sector were only eligible to pay into a voluntary social insurance fund covering only retirement and survivors' allowances. Workers in the formal sector and their employers contributed to a system that covers sickness, maternity, labor accidents, and occupational disease as well as retirement and survivors' allowances.