



Press Release 3 January 2019

On 22 January 2019 during Vietnam's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of its human rights by the UN Human Rights Council, hundreds of Vietnamese will attend a large-scale demonstration in Geneva, Switzerland.

The demonstration will take place at the Broken Chair from 10am to 12pm where there will be speeches from prominent speakers from across Europe, as well as from civil societies and other leaders.

The protest aims to emphasize and to condemn the alarmingly worsening human rights situations in Vietnam as the arbitrary restrictions on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly continue:

- A crackdown on dissent intensified, causing activists to flee the country.
- Human rights defenders, peaceful political activists and religious followers are subjected to a range of human rights violations, including arbitrary detention, prosecution on national security and other "vaguely worded" charges in unfair trials, and long-term imprisonment.
- Prominent activists faced restrictions on movement and are subjected to surveillance, harassment and violent assaults.
- Prisoners of conscience are tortured and ill-treated.
- Suspicious deaths in police custody are reported, and the death penalty is retained.

During the assessment of Vietnam's human rights record under the UN's UPR process, the government stated that by February 2014, it had implemented 129 out of 182 recommendations made during the 2014 Vietnam's UPR review. No amendments were made to "vaguely worded" national security legislation used against peaceful dissidents to bring it into line with international law and standards.

Vietnam is identified as one of Southeast Asia's most prolific jailers of peaceful activists – a shameful title no one should aspire to.

Over 2017 and early 2018, Vietnamese communist authorities intensified crackdowns on the peaceful exercise of the human rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association as well as thought, conscience and religion. There were 97 known prisoners of conscience, all of whom have only resorted to peaceful means. Many have been handed lengthy jail sentences after farcical trials in Vietnam's judiciary. This constitutes a total increase from previous years despite some releases due to completed sentences.

These prisoners of conscience are all brave women and men including lawyers, bloggers, human rights defenders, environmental activists and pro-democracy campaigners who have been robbed of their freedom for nothing but promoting human rights. What is worse is that this number is likely an underestimation. It is impossible to



know the exact figure, given the shroud of secrecy the Vietnamese communist authorities operate under.

Vietnam's UPR is a very important occasion to raise our voice on the continuous and serious human rights violations to the world stage. There is no place for these evil practices in this world and the International Community needs to know and act promptly and accordingly.

We call upon all those who are concerned with the current human rights situation in Vietnam to support us and/or join us for this important occasion on 22 January from 10 am to 12pm in Geneva.

The organisers urge on the UN and the International Community to:

- 1. Demand that Vietnamese Communist Government to immediately and unconditionally release all those prisoners of conscience held in detention.***
- 2. Demand Vietnamese Government to cease adopting Chinese Communist policies of forced cultural assimilation and social re-engineering focused on the Vietnamese and other ethnic minorities throughout Vietnam.***
- 3. Hold Vietnam communist Government accountable for its abhorrent human rights record and demand that the basic rights of all people under Vietnamese control be respected.***
- 4. Stop applying the Cyber Security Law immediately as exercising the freedom of expression is the most basic rights for all humans.***
- 5. Apply applicable Treaty measures including stripping of its human rights council membership if UN's recommendations continue to be ignored or disrespected.***

The Organising Committee:

International Youth Movement For Human Rights
Viet-Hung Movement for the Renaissance of Vietnam
Vietnam Democratic Alliance
Anti-China Expansion Movement