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REPORT ON VIET NAM'S IMPLEMENTATION OF OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR)¹

The Viet Nam Peace and Development Foundation (VPDF) is a Vietnamese non-governmental organization (NGO) found in 2003 with the mission to promote values of peace, justice, equality, progress and humanity, a democratic, just and prosperous society. VPDF is an NGO with specialized consultative status with ECOSOC.

In this report, VPDF provides an assessment of Viet Nam's implementation of recommendations made by the Human Rights Committee in its Concluding Observations on the 3rd periodic report of Viet Nam (CCPR/C/VNM/CO/3). The focus is on Viet Nam's progress made during the 4th cycle (CCPR/C/VNM/4) in improving its national legal framework *and law enforcement practices* to enhance human rights protection and ensure compatibility with international legal standards, particularly the ICCPR.

The report focuses on the following groups of rights:

- The right to life (under Article 6 of the Covenant)
- The rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of association (under Article 22 of the Covenant)
- Non-discrimination (under Articles 2, 19, 20, and 26 of the Covenant)
- The rights of minorities (under Articles 1, 14, and 27)

1. The Right to Life (under Article 6 of the Covenant)

Viet Nam is significantly affected by climate change,² with sudden natural disasters³ and environmental degradation⁴ being two key challenges. According

¹ Refer to the List of issues relevant to Viet Nam's fourth periodic report dated 28 May 2024 (CCPR/C/VNM/Q/4)

² Minh Hung, "Vietnam is one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change", Vietnam National Assembly Electronic Information Portal, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://quochoi.vn/pages/tim-kiem.aspx?ItemID=80335#:~:text=B%C3%B9i%20Quang%20Tu%E1%BA%A5n%20cho%20r%E1%BA%B1ng,h%E1%BA%ADu%20To%C3%A0n%20c%E1%BA%A7u%20Germanwatch%20giai>

³ N/A, "Environmental Migration", IOM, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/environmental-migration>

⁴ Department of Climate Change, "Impacts of climate change in Vietnam", Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, accessed April 11, 2025, <https://pilot.dcc.gov.vn/%E1%BA%A2nh-h%C6%B0%E1%BB%9Fng->

to the 2020 updated Climate Change Scenario, Viet Nam will face increased hydrometeorological phenomena like storms, tropical depressions, heavy rainfall, floods, landslides, and coastal erosion, exacerbated by climate change. Sea-level rise is also severely affecting the Mekong Delta, Red River Delta, Quang Ninh, central coastal provinces, Ho Chi Minh City, and Ba Ria–Vung Tau.⁵ With 70% of its 65 million people living in low-lying coastal and delta regions, Viet Nam is experiencing waves of post-disaster displacement and long-term migration due to climate change. From 2008 to 2022, 5.4 million people were displaced by natural disasters (IDMC);⁶ the Mekong Delta may see 3.3–6.3 million migrations from 2021 to 2050 (World Bank).⁷

Viet Nam considers environmental protection and the human right to a healthy environment as national priorities. Since joining the United Nations in 1977, this has been embedded in the Constitution: Article 36 (1980), Article 29 (1992), and Article 43 (2013), which recognizes the right to live in a healthy environment as a human right. The State has enacted numerous environmental protection laws with a human rights-based approach, notably the 2020 Law on Environmental Protection, which connects environmental protection with social welfare, children's rights, gender equality, and the right to a healthy environment⁸.

In addition to efforts to develop a legal framework centered on human rights in environmental protection and climate change adaptation, Viet Nam has demonstrated a proactive and responsible role in the global response to climate change. The commitments made at COP27⁹ reflect Viet Nam's strong determination to transition towards a sustainable, low-emission development model. Notably, the establishment of the National Steering Committee for the Implementation of COP Commitments, along with the issuance of specific strategies and action plans,¹⁰ demonstrates a high level of political commitment and a comprehensive, coordinated approach to realizing the goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

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⁵ Citation 4

⁶ N/A, “Viet Nam”, Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 11/04/2025, <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/viet-nam/>

⁷ Clement Viviane et al (2021), “Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration”, World Bank Publisher, 2021.

⁸ Article 4.3

⁹ At COP27, Vietnam committed to: (i) Achieving net-zero emissions by 2050; (ii) Not building new coal-fired power plants from 2030 and gradually phasing out coal power by 2040; (iii) Joining the Declaration on Forests and Land Use; (iv) Joining the Global Adaptation Alliance; (v) Committing to a 30% reduction in methane emissions by 2030 compared to 2020 levels.

¹⁰ Several important documents have been issued, including: (i) The National Action Plan on Green Growth for the period 2021–2030; (ii) The National Climate Change Strategy to 2050; (iii) The roadmap for completing the legal framework to implement climate commitments.

In particular, in 2022, Viet Nam and the International Partners Group (IPG)¹¹ adopted a Political Declaration establishing the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), which serves as a key foundation for mobilizing international resources and promoting a sustainable energy transition tailored to domestic conditions.¹²

Viet Nam places special emphasis on *protecting the rights of vulnerable groups affected by climate change and natural disasters* by integrating social welfare and equality goals into climate policies. The implementation of specific programs has helped enhance adaptive capacity and improve the quality of life for disadvantaged communities, while also demonstrating a humane and inclusive approach to climate action. Notably, the issuance of the National Action Plan (NAP) for the period 2021–2030, with a vision to 2050, marks an important step in institutionalizing inclusive development goals.¹³ The plan lays the foundation for concrete actions to protect people in high-risk areas.¹⁴ *The timely implementation of response measures during Super Typhoon Yagi in 2024 clearly illustrates the effectiveness of inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms and the priority given to the safety of vulnerable groups in emergency situations.*¹⁵

Viet Nam is also actively cooperating with the international community to enhance disaster resilience, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children and ethnic minorities.¹⁶ Through long-term programs, Viet Nam not only receives material support but also prioritizes the integration of education, psychological care, and community capacity building.¹⁷ These initiatives clearly demonstrate

¹¹ Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States, the European Union, Denmark, and Norway.

¹² Chu Thanh Huong, “Reviewing Two Years of Vietnam’s Implementation of COP26 Commitments,” Natural Resources and Environment Newspaper, November 28, 2023. Accessed April 11, 2025.

<https://baotainguyenmoitruong.vn/nhin-lai-2-nam-viet-nam-hien-thuc-cam-ket-cop-26-366323.html>

¹³ The NAP (issued under Decision No. 1422/QĐ-TTg dated November 19, 2024) identifies three main tasks: (i) Enhancing adaptive capacity and environmental protection; (ii) Investing in adaptation projects and sustainable agricultural development; (iii) Forest protection and improving quality of life.

¹⁴ Task 2.c of the NAP clearly addresses the planning, investment, and relocation of residential areas in climate-affected regions, contributing to the development of policies that support people after natural disasters.

¹⁵ Government, “Prime Minister Issues Urgent Directive in Response to Typhoon No. 3 (Yagi) and Post-Storm Flooding,” Policy and Law Development News, September 7, 2024. Accessed April 11, 2025.

<https://xaydungchinh sach.chinhphu.vn/thu-tuong-chi-dao-khan-cap-ung-pho-sieu-bao-yagi-bao-so-3-119240905123234075.htm>

¹⁶ The project “Strengthening Climate and Disaster Resilience for Children” (2021–2026), valued at USD 5.7 million and funded by the Government of Japan through UNICEF Vietnam, aims to enhance institutional capacity and support policies targeting 27 million children under the age of 18. See also: Duc Anh, “Signing of the Project on Strengthening Disaster and Climate Change Resilience for Children,” *People’s Army Newspaper*, Accessed May 9, 2025. <https://www.qdnd.vn/xa-hoi/tin-tuc/ky-ket-du-an-ve-tang-cuong-kha-nang-chong-chiu-rui-ro-thien-tai-va-bien-doi-khi-hau-cho-tre-em-677714>.

¹⁷ The IREM project (funded by the German Relief Alliance – ADH with over VND 17 billion and implemented by World Vision) in Dien Bien Province has supported more than 66,700 people, including over 33,400 children, in enhancing their capacity to cope with natural disasters such as flash floods, landslides, forest fires, droughts, and severe cold spells. Key focus groups include poor households, single parents, and persons with disabilities. See also: Nguyen Ngan, “Summary of the Project on Strengthening Disaster Risk Resilience for Ethnic Minority

Viet Nam's commitment to sustainable, people-centered development, especially in the face of increasingly severe climate change.

In addition to efforts in climate response and environmental protection, the Vietnamese Government is also implementing a nationwide program to eliminate temporary and dilapidated housing, with the determined goal of basic completion by October 31, 2025. This program is identified by the Government, the Viet Nam Fatherland Front, and the entire political system as a critical political task to *ensure minimum safe living conditions for vulnerable groups such as poor and near-poor households and people working in meritorious and hardship services*. As of the first quarter of 2025, more than 16,000 houses have been handed over to poor people and over 18,000 new houses have been inaugurated; more than 48,000 households celebrated the Lunar New Year 2025 in their new homes. The implementation is closely monitored, with clear assignment of responsibilities, while encouraging local innovation in designing culturally and regionally appropriate housing models. Another remarkable pledge was made earlier this year by the Government of Viet Nam, *“One million apartments for low-income households nation-wide”*, of which 100,000 apartments will be provided to low-income families by end of 2025.

These policies and programs not only reflect a substantive and comprehensive commitment to the right to adequate housing, but also affirms efforts toward social equity and a steadfast example of “leave no one behind in the development process” pledge of the Government of Viet Nam.¹⁸

These efforts demonstrate that Viet Nam has been making continuous progress in human rights protection in the context of climate change, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups through the development of appropriate policies and the promotion of both bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

2. The Right to Freedom of Association (within the framework of Article 22 of the Covenant)

Viet Nam's efforts are demonstrated in the process of codifying the freedom of association right and in the drafting process of the Law on Associations. Throughout the constitutional development process, the right to “freedom of organization and assembly” has consistently been recognized as an important expression of democratic rights. To concretize this right, the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam promulgated Decree No. 102/SL/L004 dated May 20, 1957, on the right to form associations. Although rudimentary, this

Communities,” People’s Deputies Newspaper, Accessed May 9, 2025. <https://daibieunhandan.vn/tong-ket-du-an-tang-cuong-kha-nang-chong-chiu-rui-ro-thien-tai-cho-dong-bao-dan-toc-thieu-so-10352668.html>

¹⁸Minh Hien, “Determined to Basically Complete the Elimination of Temporary and Dilapidated Houses Nationwide by October 31, 2025,” Accessed May 8, 2025, [Quyết tâm đến 31/10/2025 cơ bản hoàn thành xóa nhà tạm, nhà dột nát trên cả nước](#)

decree laid the foundation for formalizing the right to association and assembly for the people. This right has been reaffirmed in the Constitutions of 1959, 1980, 1992, and 2013, reflecting the State's consistent commitment to ensuring democratic rights for its citizens, particularly the rights to form and join associations. To this day, Decree 102 remains in effect, and over the years, the Government has issued guiding documents in accordance with practical developments.

In practical terms, before 1986, there were only about 30 nationwide associations operating in Viet Nam. By 1990, there were approximately 100 nationwide associations and 300 associations operating at the provincial and municipal levels. In 2002, there were 240 nationwide associations and 1,450 provincial and municipal associations. As of December 2014, the country had 52,565 associations (483 at the national level and 52,082 at the local level), including 8,792 associations with special characteristics (28 national and 8,764 local). In recent years, more than 10 associations or federations with national scope have been granted establishment licenses annually.¹⁹ As a result, by 2023, there were a total of 70,000 associations across the country, of which 587 operated at the national or inter-provincial level.²⁰

The ever-rising number of associations founded shows that the people find no barriers in exercising their rights to form association.

In addition to domestic associations, Viet Nam also supports the establishment of branches, organizations, and meetings of foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs). By 2023, there were 381 foreign NGOs operating in Viet Nam, including 118 from North America, 143 from Europe, and 118 from Asia, with total aid value reaching USD 228.8 million.²¹ The three main areas of aid include addressing social issues, socio-economic development, and healthcare, focusing on disadvantaged areas such as the North Central Region, the Red River Delta, and the Northern mountainous region. These activities have produced tangible results, particularly for ethnic minority communities and those in remote and difficult areas.²² Statistics also show that all NGOs operating in Viet Nam have legal status, legitimate funding sources, and adhere to principles of

¹⁹ Nguyen Minh Phuong, "Some Issues Regarding Associations and State Management of Associations in Our Country Today," Journal of State Organization, Accessed April 11, 2025. <https://tcnn.vn/news/detail/36724/Mot-so-van-de-ve-hoi-va-quan-ly-nha-nuoc-doi-voi-hoi-o-nuoc-ta-hien-nayall.html>

²⁰ Duc Minh, "Proposal to Develop a Law on Associations," Ho Chi Minh City Law Newspaper, December 19, 2023. Accessed April 11, 2025. <https://plo.vn/de-xuat-xay-dung-luat-ve-hoi-post767564.html>

²¹ Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations, "Information Sharing Conference on Foreign Non-Governmental Work in 2024", accessed May 9, 2025, <https://vufo.org.vn/Hoi-ngghi-chia-se-thong-tin-ve-cong-tac-phi-chinh-phu-nuoc-ngoai-nam-2024-10-109239.html?lang=vn>

²² Citation 21

being non-political, non-religious, and non-profit. Over the years, NGOs have operated in alignment with the policies and guidelines of the Party and State. They have become an integral part of Viet Nam's people-to-people diplomacy, contributing to greater international understanding of the country, its people, and its policies, while also helping to counter false narratives concerning Viet Nam's democracy, human rights, ethnicity, and religion.²³

These figures clearly reflect Viet Nam's increasing efforts to ensure and safeguard the right to freedom of association.

3. Non-discrimination (within the framework of Articles 2, 19, 20, and 26 of the Covenant)

Taking care of and paying attention to vulnerable groups in society, ensuring and realizing equal rights, and preventing discrimination is always the responsibility of each individual, organization, and the broader community in Viet Nam. It is also a fond reflection of Viet Nam's humanitarian spirit and its goal of "building a democratic, just, and civilized society."²⁴

Provisions on equality in employment have been institutionalized in the 2019 Labor Code, emphasizing the responsibilities of the State, employers, and society in ensuring equal job opportunities and preventing all forms of labor discrimination.²⁵ At the same time, mechanisms for handling violations and promoting gender equality have been strongly implemented.²⁶ In practice, specialized agencies on gender equality have recorded clear progress in capacity building and financial investment in this work.²⁷

In addition to protecting labor rights, Viet Nam places special emphasis on ensuring *non-discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals* in the health sector. In August 2022, the Ministry of Health affirmed that homosexuality is not a disease and thus cannot and should not be "cured," and only psychological support should be provided. The Ministry clearly stated: "Homosexuality, bisexuality, and transgender identity are not diseases, so they cannot be intervened in or forced to

²³ Nguyen Tien Vinh, "Vietnam Encourages and Facilitates Effective Operations of Non-Governmental Organizations," Vietnam News Agency Newspaper, November 27, 2024. Accessed May 9, 2025.

<https://chinhsachcuocsong.vn/viet-nam-khuyen-khich-tao-dieu-kien-thuan-loi-de-cac-to-chuc-phi-chinh-phu-hoat-dong-hieu-qua/51639.html>

²⁴ Nguyen Thi Phuong Thanh, "Law on Prevention and Combat of Discrimination in Vietnam Today," Democracy and Law Journal, August 25, 2015. Accessed April 12, 2025. <https://danchuphapluat.vn/phap-luat-ve-phong-chong-phan-biet-doi-xu-o-viet-nam-hien-nay>

²⁵ Clause 2, Article 9 and Clause 7, Article 3 of the Vietnam 2019 Labor Code

²⁶ Clause 2, Article 7 of Decree 28/2020/ND-CP

²⁷ Data from the Gender Equality Department (Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs): In 2021, 1,796 legal document drafters received gender knowledge training; budget was VND 22.3 billion; In 2022, 983 people were trained with a budget of VND 550 million; Leaders at various levels accessed the gender equality program (2021: 18,782 people; 2022: 5,648 people). See also: Le Hong Hanh, Vu Van Anh, Pham Thi Khang Anh, and Nguyen Thi My Phuong, "Ensuring the Rights of the LGBTQ+ Community in Lawmaking in Vietnam," Vietnam Lawyer Journal, Accessed April 12, 2025, <https://lsvn.vn/bao-dam-quyen-cua-cong-dong-lgbtq-trong-xay-dung-luat-o-viet-nam-1683389648-a130105.html>

be treated, and support should only be psychological and provided by those knowledgeable about gender identity.” It also instructed medical facilities to ensure equality and respect for gender identity, and to avoid discrimination or stigmatization. It emphasized the need to strengthen inspections and supervision of medical practitioners to ensure compliance with ethical principles and legal regulations.²⁸

On the other hand, Viet Nam used to have a high rate of HIV/AIDS prevalence. Nevertheless, Viet Nam is recognized as one of the few countries with one of the best HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programs in the world. This is achievable thanks to the active involvement of the entire political system, related agencies, and active participation from community organizations and international support.^{29 30} Notably, the Viet Nam Network of People Living with HIV (VNP+), a non-governmental organization established in 2009, now has over 300 member clubs nationwide. These clubs serve as networks for support, technical assistance, and policy advocacy for people living with HIV at the local level. This collaboration has helped enhance HIV testing counseling capacity, peer support, and expanded outreach to high-risk populations, thereby contributing significantly to the success of Viet Nam’s national HIV/AIDS prevention program.³¹ It is also an example of people’s participation in supporting and promoting the rights of non-discrimination and equal access to health services of vulnerable groups.

Viet Nam has not only demonstrated its commitment to equality through legislation but also via the *practical policies implementation to reduce inequality, especially in social welfare and housing—areas where discrimination is often most visible*. An example is the implementation of the social housing policy under the 2023 Housing Law, Decree No. 100/2024/ND-CP, and Circular No. 05/2024/TT-BXD. This policy aims to ensure minimum living conditions for

²⁸ D. Thu, “Ministry of Health: Homosexuality, Bisexuality, and Transgender Identity Are Not Considered Illnesses,” *Nguoi Lao Dong Newspaper*, August 8, 2022. Accessed April 12, 2025. <https://nld.com.vn/suc-khoe/bo-y-te-khong-coi-dong-tinh-song-tinh-chuyen-gioi-la-benh>.

²⁹ Duong Lieu, “HIV Becoming More Prevalent Among Younger People, Rapidly Increasing in the Group of Men Who Have Sex with Men,” **Tuoi Tre Newspaper**, Accessed April 12, 2025. <https://tuoi-tre.vn/hiv-tre-hoa-tang-nhanh-trong-nhom-nam-quan-he-tinh-duc-dong-gioi-20241118145040002.htm>

³⁰ Over the past 10 years, the international community has continued to provide financial and technical support for HIV/AIDS prevention, especially from organizations like the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), USAID, U.S. CDC, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, WHO, UNAIDS, and many others. Tung Hieu, “The Contribution of International Organizations to HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control,” *Information Portal of the Vietnam Administration for HIV/AIDS Control – Ministry of Health*, November 25, 2022. Accessed April 12, 2025. <https://vaac.gov.vn/10-nam-dam-bao-tai-chinh-trong-cong-tac-phong-chong-hiv-aids-qua-anh-voi-su-dong-gop-cua-cac-to-chuc-quoc-te>

³¹ Thanh Mai, “Network of Community Organizations – A ‘Pillar’ in HIV Epidemic Control,” *Nhan Dan Newspaper*, June 16, 2024. Accessed April 12, 2025. <https://nhandan.vn/mang-luoi-to-chuc-cong-dong-diem-tua-kiem-soat-dich-hiv-post814536.html>

vulnerable groups. It defines 12 eligible groups, including people with meritorious service to the revolution, poor and near-poor households in rural and urban areas and climate-affected regions, low-income earners, workers, public employees, students, and households whose land has been reclaimed without proper compensation. Housing eligibility criteria are based on clearly defined income thresholds and housing status verified by local authorities or employers. Income limits are capped at 15 million VND/month for single individuals and 30 million VND/month for couples to ensure targeted support. Importantly, the policy allows people without formal labor contracts—who are often excluded from social welfare policies—to verify income through commune-level People’s Committees. By categorizing application forms by group, applying a nationwide standard, and ensuring a transparent and flexible verification mechanism, the risk of discrimination in social housing approval and distribution has been minimized. This is concrete evidence of Viet Nam's efforts to ensure all citizens—regardless of income, social background, or employment type—can access adequate housing, thereby effectively implementing Article 26 of the Covenant and the recommendations of the Human Rights Committee.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the above analysis and data, it is clear to see Viet Nam’s significant efforts, from policy formulation and implementation to specific solutions, in promoting and protecting human rights—especially in areas of preventing and mitigating the impacts of climate change and environmental degradation on the right to life of individuals and communities; protecting vulnerable groups from the negative effects of natural disasters and climate change; ensuring the right to freedom of assembly and participation in policy and legal development; and measures to guarantee equitable access to social welfare services, non-discrimination, and protection of vulnerable groups, particularly women, children, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, and the LGBTQ+ community.

The report acknowledges effective coordination among the State, international organizations, specialized agencies, social organizations, and communities in protecting human rights and gradually realizing the goal of building a just, democratic, and civilized society in Viet Nam.

Based on the information presented in this report, VPDF offers the following recommendations to support Viet Nam in fulfilling its obligations to respect and protect human rights under the Convention. Specifically:

- Continue to implement and further improve existing policies while enhancing the effectiveness of coordination among domestic and international agencies to expand the coverage of human rights action programs in Viet Nam,

similar to the nationwide Joint Program to Eliminate Temporary and Dilapidated Housing by 2025.

- Supplement measures to enable public participation and people's organizations engagement in monitoring, assessing the impact, and effectiveness of mechanisms, policies, and programs that have been issued and implemented.

- Consolidate and make available to the public the best practices, lessons learnt in promoting and protecting human rights; and the results of programs, projects, and campaigns that have been or are being implemented nationwide.