



## **ỦY BAN HÒA BÌNH VIỆT NAM / VIETNAM PEACE COMMITTEE**

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### **Report by the Viet Nam Peace Committee on the implementation of Civil and Political Rights in Viet Nam**

The Viet Nam Peace Committee (VPC) is a people's organization, founded in 1950, working on peace issues in Viet Nam. As a people's organization, founded during wartime in response to the urgent call of the country and its people to fight for peace, national sovereignty and independence, then the reconstruction and development of the country, VPC has contributed greatly to the realization of these noble causes and has witness the remarkable changes of the nation in the past decades. VPC pays special attention on how the state mechanisms have improved themselves for the benefit of the people, especially in the implementation and guarantee of civil and political rights.

In the scope of this Report VPC underline the following rights and issues:

1. Right to life, right to privacy, Liberty and security of persons, and freedom of movement;
2. Freedom of expression;
3. Freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association.

The 4<sup>th</sup> ICCPR Circle covered two years of COVID-19 Pandemic, which has left Viet Nam and other countries with severe impacts and difficulties, particularly on the efforts of the Government to ensure human rights for the people as well as significant strain on the socio-economic development. The society had to cope with 3.98% unemployment, around 70,000 businesses bankrupted, affecting livelihoods, travel and education of the entire population. In such challenging context, Viet Nam was recorded as one of the countries, which carried out the most effective strategies in fighting epidemics, noted with the largest vaccination program in history with over 204.73 million doses administered, resulting in about 97% coverage for people over 18 years old and about 90% coverage for children over 12 years old. Policies and schemes to support lives of people, especially the most vulnerable groups, business post-covid recovery were implemented effectively, making Viet Nam amongst the highest GDP growth in the region in this period.

Furthermore, Viet Nam continued to make strong commitments to the 2030 Agenda that was institutionalized in the National Action Plan. All 17 SDGs have been mainstreamed

in socio-economic development strategies, plans, and sectoral policies at national and local levels. The whole political system and society have strived to accomplish the SDGs to Leave No One Behind. The country has gained remarkable progress on eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality and positively empowering women; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; reducing unemployment rate and support all walks of life in overcoming the impacts of Covid-19. The most recently published data of the Voluntary National Report of Viet Nam highlighted 47% of targets are achievable in 2030.

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## **1. Right to Life, Privacy, Liberty and Security of Person, and Freedom of Movement**

We grouped these rights together to provide a clearer, more comprehensive view of fundamental rights relating to daily life.

All these rights are clearly and strictly enshrined in the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. Article 19 affirms that everyone has the right to life, and human life is protected by law. One contentious issue raised by some international organizations is the death penalty in Viet Nam. However, based on our research through various sources, we find that the current laws and practices on the death penalty in Viet Nam are consistent with Article 6(2) of the ICCPR, which permits the application of the death penalty for the most serious crimes under strict conditions. Especially, Vietnam is expected to reduce the application of the death penalty for certain offenses, particularly those not involving serious violent acts. This is a positive step in the reform of criminal law and demonstrates Vietnam's commitment to international human rights standards.

The death penalty process follows strict procedures—from investigation, prosecution, trial, to enforcement—under the close supervision of the Supreme People's Procuracy and relevant authorities. There are no extra-judicial executions in Viet Nam. Article 367 of the Criminal Procedure Code clearly outlines the procedure for reviewing death sentences; the condemned has seven days to appeal for clemency to the President. Every year, the President grants amnesties, including sentence reductions, for many inmates, including death row inmates.

We believe that the right to life also ensures protection of related rights. The Constitution and legal documents guarantee the right to private life, personal and family secrets, and prohibit arbitrary surveillance, including against political activists, journalists, and human rights defenders. Privacy in correspondence and all private communication is protected. Personal data can only be processed without consent in emergencies, such as to protect someone's life or health, as specified in Article 17 of Decree No. 13/2023/ND-CP.

Regarding liberty, security, and freedom of movement, we affirm that Vietnamese citizens have the right to free movement and residence, which is clearly stated in the Constitution and related laws. The National Assembly amended the Law on Exit and Entry of Vietnamese Citizens to allow online passport applications and reduce paperwork. It also removed the requirement that passports be valid for more than six months to exit the country—especially for those with valid visas or permanent residency abroad. Exit/entry bans are applied in cases of legal violation.

We observe that there are no arbitrary arrests or solitary detentions, as claimed by some organizations. All arrests and trials are based on legitimate charges.

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## **2. Freedom of Expression**

We observe that freedom of speech and the press are among the most closely watched rights in human rights forums and treaties. As a Vietnamese people's organization, we pay close attention to this issue.

The 2013 Constitution affirms: “Citizens have the right to freedom of speech and freedom of the press, and have the right of access to information, the right to assembly, the right to association, and the right to demonstrate” (Article 25).

By the end of September 2023, Viet Nam had 6 major multimedia communication agencies and 798 press agencies, including including 127 newspapers and 671 magazines. There are 72 licensed radio and TV broadcasters, 79 domestic radio channels, 198 domestic TV channels, 45 foreign TV channels licensed in Viet Nam, and 9,792 grassroots radio stations.

One very positive thing we recognize is that journalists and reporters in Viet Nam are protected from discrimination and violence under various laws and regulations.

We also observe that citizens are free to voice opinions on government policies through many channels, including social media. There have been numerous policy changes based on public feedback. Moreover, Social media and the press in Vietnam have played an active role in uncovering and reporting numerous cases of corruption and misconduct. Information shared by citizens spreads quickly on digital platforms, enabling authorities to promptly investigate and take action. This highlights the growing role of the media and the public in social oversight.

Vietnamese citizens have the right to access and use social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) to post content, share information, and express personal views on social, cultural, economic, and political issues. These activities are permitted by law within the framework of respecting the

lawful rights and interests of other individuals and organizations, as well as ensuring national security and public order. Social media now plays an increasingly important role in promoting information exchange and facilitating communication between citizens and government authorities.

We applaud Viet Nam's efforts to ensure broad access to information, especially for disadvantaged groups. Internet, telecommunications, and social media are accessible to the majority of people. Viet Nam has about 70 million internet users (over 70% of the population), ranking 12th globally and 6th in Asia. Social media accounts increased by 10 million in one year to reach 76 million (about 74% of the population), and 94% use the internet daily. Mobile network coverage reaches 99.7%, and 3G/4G covers 98% of the population.

We recognize that any country in the world has its own measures to mitigate the risk of cyber threats. The Cybersecurity Law of 2019 provides a framework for relevant ministries to manage online violations and protect individuals and organizations.

We note that in August 2020, Viet Nam launched the National Data Portal to share open government data and improve public access to data.

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### **3. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association**

As one of Viet Nam's people's organizations, we view the right to peaceful assembly and association as extremely important and that it must be guaranteed by the Constitution and other legal provisions. The State has measures in place to protect the safe conduct of such activities.

In 2024, the Government issued Decree No. 126/2024/NĐ-CP on the establishment, organization, operation, and state management of associations. The procedures are publicly available and processed through the National Public Service Portal. As of December 2023, Viet Nam had 71,891 associations, including 603 operating at the local level.

The Constitution guarantees the right to legal association and assembly and prohibits the use or threat of force to prevent or coerce others from exercising these rights.

We acknowledge that the use of force is legally permitted only in law enforcement and crime prevention, as stated in Clause 2, Article 14 of the Constitution. Any use of force outside the law resulting in injury is subject to criminal prosecution.

#### 4. Participation in Public Affairs

VPC and other people organizations, citizen groups face no barriers to exercise the right to participate in public affairs. The most significant example is the ability of people's organizations to vote in national elections under principles of universal suffrage, equality, direct voting, and secret ballots.

People are proud to participate in elections and are allowed to run for office if qualified. The central role of the people is affirmed.

We also contribute to national policy and legal reform by participating in public consultations—especially in the drafting of revised laws and the Constitution. ***For the upcoming 2026 National Congress, the State created a digital platform (VNeID app) to collect citizen's feedback easily.***

Regarding Viet Nam's human rights reporting (UPR, ICCPR, etc.), we observe that State agencies conduct consultations with people's organizations and encourage people's organizations, social organizations to involve in the development of national and sectoral/provincial action plans to implement the UN Human Rights Committee's recommendations.

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#### Final Remarks and Recommendations

The Vietnam Peace Committee recognizes significant progress in ensuring civil and political rights in Viet Nam. However, we offer the following recommendations for further improvement:

1. **Expand and simplify access** to human rights mechanisms that Viet Nam participates in, enabling more people's organizations to engage and provide feedback on national reports and contribute to the follow-up efforts.
2. **Launch more educational campaigns** on human rights, especially targeting youth and underserved communities, to increase awareness and strengthen implementation of human rights protections.
3. **Increase channels for feedback** from people's organizations to ensure that citizen input is received and considered in major national decisions.

We highly appreciate Viet Nam's progress and effort in promoting and protecting civil human rights since the 3rd ICCPR Cycle amid the challenges of the multiple crisis including Covid-19 pandemic, global economic down-turn and local natural disasters. We believe that the government and people of Viet Nam will continue promoting and protecting human rights in the future reporting cycles.