

H.E. Ambassador Dr. Le Hong Lam
Embassy of Vietnam in Oslo
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NORWAY

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern about the situation for ethnic and religious minorities in Vietnam.

Disturbing reports have been published about religious groups such as Buddhists from the ethnic Khmer-Krom people experiencing violations and unlawful restrictions on their freedom of religion, as their members have been arrested and sentenced to prison on unfounded charges of “abusing democratic freedoms”.

In addition, Buddhist places of worship have been destroyed by Vietnamese authorities, for instance, the Khmer-Krom Theravada Buddhist center in Tong Hung, Loan My village in Vinh Long province which was demolished by government officials on 1 April 2024. Such actions by the government, preventing freedom of worship, are in contravention with both the Constitution of Vietnam and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Vietnam is a signatory.

International observers are reporting that Vietnamese human right groups in exile have been wrongfully labeled “terror organizations” by the government. Reports especially mention that minority groups like the Montagnard ethnic group have been subject to unfounded charges of terrorism-related activity; these charges reportedly have been based on confessions made under duress.

I humbly request Your Excellency’s intervention to ensure that:

- No person or group face the risk of harassment or arrest for peacefully exercising their religion or belief, as expressed in Article 24 of the Constitution of Vietnam, stating the right to freedom of religion and belief for all;
- All harassment of ethnic minority groups across the country ceases, in accordance with Article 5 of the Constitution of Vietnam, prohibiting by law any act of “national discrimination”, thus ensuring the right of all nationalities, ethnic and religious groups in Vietnam to practice and promote their culture, traditions and beliefs;
- The Government of Vietnam recognizes and respects all groups and individuals working on behalf of its citizens to promote human rights in the Vietnamese society;
- The judicial body of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam conducts its practices in accordance with Article 12 in the Vietnamese Constitution, expressing that the state conforms to the Charter of the United Nations. This includes Article 18 in the ICCPR, stating every individual’s right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Sincerely,