**Country Report: Vietnam**

**July 2024**

The Vietnam War (otherwise known as the U.S. War of Aggression), spanning from 1955 to 1975, was a multifaceted conflict that had a major influence on Vietnam, the United States, and the global community.

In particular, many ethnic minorities within Vietnam, such as the [Montagnards](https://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/vietnam/viet0402-03.htm) “[Dega](https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/special-report-persecution-of-the-dega-montagnard-peoples-of-vietnam-february-2022)” people and the Hmong Christians have faced persecution and displacement pre and post war. These groups face land confiscation, targeted killings, cultural assimilation and suppression, and persecution. The Central Highlands is strategically important for Vietnam’s economy and security, bordering Laos and Cambodia. [It features 5 million acres of fertile soil for cash crops like coffee and cocoa, and contains vast bauxite reserves, crucial for aluminum production](https://worldwithoutgenocide.org/genocides-and-conflicts/vietnam-persecution-of-ethnic-montagnard-minorities). By the early 2000s, tensions erupted due to religious persecution, land disputes, and economic issues related to fluctuating coffee prices. In response to mass protests in 2001 and subsequent years demanding land rights and religious freedom, the Vietnamese government conducted harsh crackdowns, imprisoning and torturing protesters, and targeting independent Christian house churches. The government also used propaganda to denounce Montagnard Christianity as a front for separatism and forced protest participants to publicly renounce their faith.

In 2024, Y Quynh Bdap [faces possible extradition to Vietnam,](https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/07/experts-alarmed-possible-extradition-refugee-and-human-rights-defender-y) Bdap, a co-founder of Montagnards Stand for Justice, an organization that advocates for indigenous rights in Vietnam is scheduled to appear in an extradition trial before a Bangkok criminal court on July 15. UN Independent experts July 2024 expressed grave concern about Vietnam’s request to Thailand to extradite refugee and human rights defender Y Quynh Bdap and call on Thailand to respect domestic law, international treaty obligations and the principle of non-refoulment.

The Vietnamese government severely [restricts civil and political rights such as free expression,](https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2023/country-chapters/vietnam#:~:text=Vietnam%20systematically%20suppresses%20basic%20civil,assembly%2C%20movement%2C%20and%20religion.) association, peaceful assembly, mobility, and religious practice. Independent labor unions, human rights organizations, and political parties are illegal, and individuals attempt to establish groups such as intimidation, harassment, movement restrictions, arbitrary arrest, incarceration, and imprisonment. In addition, international NGOs are also prohibited by authorities from acting in ways that violate Vietnam's national interests, laws, defense, security, social order, or social ethics. In 2023, at least 28 rights activists were convicted and sentenced to lengthy prison terms within the first ten months of the year, and the government continues to imprison o[ver 160 people for peacefully expressing their rights.](https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/interactive/2024/07/11/free-vietnams-political-prisoners)

The Vietnamese government continues to [suppress freedom of speech, particularly online](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/05/vietnam-new-wave-arrests-critics). Activists using social media to express dissenting opinions face harassment, arbitrary detention, and prosecution. Nguyen Vu Binh, a former political prisoner, Dang Dinh Bách, an environmental human rights defender, [and Hoang Viet Khanh, a social media activist, were among those recently arrested for their criticisms](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/05/vietnam-new-wave-arrests-critics) of the government. The government regulates media outlets, radio, television, and print publications, prohibiting access to websites, shutting down blogs, and compelling internet service providers to remove politically opposing content.

Genocide Watch characterizes the Vietnamese government discrimination, persecution, and oppression of human rights activists, as well as indigenous groups such as the Dega people and Hmong Christians as **Stage 3: Discrimination**, **Stage 4: Organization,** **Stage 7: Polarization**, and **Stage 8: Persecution**.

**Genocide Watch recommends** the US, EU, and all members of ASEAN to,

* Refuse extradition and any other requests to forcibly repatriate Montagnards seeking protection in the country
* Demand the unconditional release of all political prisoners, opposition leaders, journalists, religious and human rights activists.
* [Reconsider its bilateral human rights dialogue](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/03/vietnam-eu-should-better-address-intensifying-repression) with [Vietnam](https://www.hrw.org/asia/vietnam) and adopt more effective measures to address the Vietnamese government’s intensifying repression
* The State party establish a national human rights institution for the promotion and protection of human rights, in line with the Paris Principles