

Vietnam given failing grades by UN human rights body

PARIS, 18 November 2022 (VCHR & FIDH) - FIDH and VCHR welcome the assessment by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Committee (CCPR), which gave Vietnam's government poor grades concerning the implementation of the committee's recommendations on the death penalty, freedom of expression, and human rights defenders.

On 11 November 2022, the CCPR released [its report](#) on the follow-up to the Concluding Observations it had adopted on 25 March 2019, upon completion of the review of Vietnam's third periodic report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)[\[1\]](#) The CCPR had asked the Vietnamese government to provide information on the implementation of recommendations concerning the three above-mentioned priority issues.[\[2\]](#)

In its follow-up report, the CCPR rated 'E' - the lowest possible grade[\[3\]](#) - the government's

implementation

of the committee's recommendations related to freedom of expression. The CCPR expressed concern over the adoption of decrees that further limited the right to freedom of expression and regretted the failure to provide information on steps taken to promote pluralistic media, free from state interference.

With regard to the death penalty, the CCPR gave 'E' to the government as a result of its failure to: respect fair trial procedures in death penalty cases; provide information on the commutation of death sentences; and make official data on death sentences available to the public. The increase in the number of death sentences and death row prisoners in recent years, and the lack of information on any measures taken to ensure that capital punishment is only imposed for crimes of extreme gravity involving intentional killing earned the government a 'C'.

The CCPR assigned 'C' to the government's implementation of the committee's recommendation on human rights defenders (HRDs). The CCPR regretted the lack of specific information on measures taken to ensure the protection of HRDs and civil society actors, and requested further information on the cases involving imprisoned environmental rights defenders [Mai Phan Lợi](#), [Bạch Hùng Dương](#), [Đặng Đình Bách](#), and [Nguyễn Thị Khanh](#).

The CCPR requested the government to provide information on the three above-mentioned issues as part of its next periodic report to the committee, due in March 2023.

The CCPR's assessment reflects the findings contained in the [follow-up submission](#) that FIDH and VCHR made to the committee in July 2022. The joint FIDH-VCHR submission detailed the government's failure to take any steps towards the implementation of the recommendations made by the CCPR on all three key priority issues.

FIDH and VCHR reiterate their calls on Vietnam's government to:

- amend or repeal laws and decrees that are inconsistent with the ICCPR's provisions;
- take concrete steps towards the full abolition of capital punishment;
- implement measures for the protection of HRDs;
- and immediately and unconditionally release all those detained for the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of religion or belief.

[\[1\]](#) The CCPR monitors state parties' compliance with the provisions of the ICCPR. Vietnam acceded to the ICCPR in 1982.

[\[2\]](#) The Vietnamese government's submission was received by the CCPR on 29 March 2021.

[\[3\]](#) The follow-up assessment criteria of the Human Rights Committee are as follows:

A - Reply/action

largely satisfactory: The State party has provided evidence of significant action taken towards the implementation of the recommendation made by the Committee.

B -

Reply/action partially satisfactory: The State party has taken steps towards the implementation of the recommendation, but additional information or action remains necessary.

C - Reply/action

not satisfactory: A response has been received, but action taken or information provided by the State party is not relevant or does not implement the recommendation.

D - No cooperation

with the Committee: No follow-up report has been received after the reminder(s).

E -

Information or measures taken are contrary to or reflect rejection of the recommendation