

## **On behalf of the International Office of Champa (IOC):**

The IOC, is an organization that promotes the preservation of the Kingdom of Champa's history and culture. The Champa people are an indigenous group of people that have existed in Vietnam since the 7<sup>th</sup> century. It remained in its glory days until its fall in the 10<sup>th</sup> century to its northern neighbor, Dai Viet (present day Vietnam). In 1653, Champa became a vassal state of Vietnam until, in 1832, Emperor Minh Menh annexed its remaining territories. This caused the erasure of the Kingdom of Champa from the map. Today all that remains of the Kingdom of Champa are its archaeological sites and the survivors of Emperor Minh Menh's ethnic cleansing policies.

After 1975, when Saigon fell to the communist government of North Vietnam, the Cham lost their farms, land and properties, because they were confiscated by the government. They have been prohibited to worship and practice their religions. Practicing Hindu Cham had several ancient temples that were used for worship; they have been confiscated and converted into tourist destinations by the Vietnamese government for their own financial benefit, violating the Cham Hindu beliefs.

About 130,000 Cham people in Vietnam currently exist in Binh Thuan and Ninh Thuan provinces (central Vietnam); Chau Doc, Ho Chi Minh City, and Tay Ninh (Southern Vietnam). The rest have fled seeking refuge in the U.S., Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, and across Europe.

The Cham people are currently recognized by the Vietnamese government as minority group, even though they are indeed and in fact, indigenous. They meet all requirements by the UN standards and criteria, to be considered indigenous, however the Vietnamese government refuses to acknowledge this.

Recent human rights violations by the Vietnamese government against the Cham people:

- In 2012, the local police used their power to bust into a local Mosque and took away a generator that provided electricity to over 40 families in the village of Chau Giang, and not long after that they came and kidnapped young village girls at their discretion to rape and sexually abuse them, and later released them.
- On 2012, a farm land owned by 13 Cham families was confiscated. When they tried to stand up for their ownership, they were apprehended by the police and discarded in an undisclosed, remote location in the jungle.
- In 2012, two young Cham college students on vacation took a walk from their village to the city. They were stopped and beaten to death. The Vietnamese police did not bother to investigate.
- In March 2013, a poor Cham college student took out a loan for school. Upon graduation he was unable to get a job and sought the help of staffing agency to place him in a position, so he could pay back his student loans. The agency had promised to staff him within weeks. After a few months, he was still unemployed,

- and when he approached the agency about a refund, they set him on fire, and he was burned to death. The Vietnamese police did not initiate any investigation.
- Cham people who have escaped Vietnam and have become U.S. citizens have tried to return to their native land of Vietnam to visit family and friends. Each time they return to Vietnam they are discriminated against, harassed, and even imprisoned. Mr. Musa Porome, who went to Vietnam in 1989, was kept at a hotel for 5 days while being interrogated by police agents and was eventually deported out of the country. Mr. Qasim Tu went to Vietnam in 2004 and was harassed and subjected to intimidation by Vietnamese plain-clothed agent over several days, and unable to visit his family. When Mrs. Man Jone tried to visit her home, she was arrested and imprisoned under the accusations that she was trying to introduce a new religion to the community.
  - The Vietnamese government is currently building a nuclear power plant in a Cham village, with old and used technology from old North Korean power plants. Many people have fought against it, including Vietnamese politicians and scientists, citing the long term adverse effects it would have on the local villages, effects that would eventually extend further into the major cities of Vietnam. People that have spoken out publicly or post anything on social media sites are immediately approached by and harassed by the Vietnam government. A prime example is when Mr. Musa Porome, a U.S. citizen, wrote a letter questioning the reasoning for the development of the nuclear power plant in a currently populated area, and speaking out about it, the government immediately fired back by threatening and intimidating him and his remaining family that still resides in Vietnam. They later tried to retract the statement, when he did not back down. But, he was unable to go back to Vietnam back in November 2012, for fear that they would do something to him if he went to visit.
  - There are ancient Cham towers that still remain in original territories of the indigenous Cham communities. These towers are currently being funded by UNICEF for upkeep and maintenance to benefit the tourism industry. These towers are highly visited by tourist all over the world. The profit received does not benefit any of the Cham people, nor the villages in which the towers exist. It is a direct violation of the terms of agreement for the UNICEF funding.

These are just a few of the incidents of discriminatory policies against the Cham people, that have recently been documented. Many other incidents have gone undocumented because most people are in fear for their lives and their loved ones if they speak out and protest the wrongful actions of the government.

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