

STATEMENT FOR THE UNIFIED BUDDHIST CHURCH OF VIETNAM (UBCV)

Messieurs and Mesdames of the UN Human Rights Committee,

First of all, please accept our sincere appreciation for having these review meetings.

Secondly, I would like to introduce the Most Venerable Thich Nhu Dien, the Venerable Thich Vien Giac, and my associates: Dr. Hung Tran, and Mrs Linh Nguyen. We are all members of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (or UBCV).

After 1975, the Government under the Vietnamese Communist party has been systematically decimating the UBCV. To achieve its objective, the government took the following measures:

1. Unlawful detention, torture (even deaths), imprisonment and house arrests of many UBCV leaders, notably Most Venerable Thich Quang Do, as most of you probably know.
2. Shutting down and taking over of many of the UBCV's institutions including schools, orphanages, administrative buildings, and publishing company.
3. In 1981, the Government created a new Buddhist organization under its control: the Vietnam Buddhist Church (VBC), and has since coerced UBCV members and clerics to join the VBC, such as:
 - a. Harassing abbots, monks and nuns of various Buddhist congregations to coerce them to join VBC.
 - b. Using the police and/or their hired thugs to impede religious activities or prevent local Buddhists from entering their local temples, particularly when they need to celebrate important days, with the objective of subjugating them to VBC.
 - c. Forcible expropriation of UBCV temples without fair compensation, the latest incident is An Cu temple in Danang in November 2018.

We are here to advocate on behalf of all religious affiliates in their struggle to remain independent from the Vietnamese communist party. We sincerely hope

that you will support our cause in recommending the Vietnamese government to:

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- 1) recognize the legitimate status of the UBCV and all other “non-recognized” religious communities and allow them full freedom of religious activities.
- 2) release all UBCV clergy and followers from house arrest or in prison
- 3) cease harassment and intimidation of UBCV followers, including members of the Buddhist Youth Movement
- 4) restore all UBCV properties that were illegally confiscated
- 5) amend the new Law on Belief and Religion to align with Article 18 of the ICCPR;
- 6) guarantee the fundamental rights to freedom of conscience, expression, assembly and association as guaranteed in the UN’s ICCPR, to which Vietnam is a State Party of.

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