

41st Regular Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Oral Statement
Adoption of the UPR report of Viet Nam
4 July 2019
Delivered by Lisa Majumdar

Thank you, Mr President.

Mr President, VOICE, CIVICUS and FORUM-ASIA welcome the government of Vietnam's engagement with the UPR process including its decision to accept 241 recommendations on a range of human rights issues.

We welcome the commitment of the government of Vietnam to extend cooperation with UN Special Procedures¹ and in the spirit of such cooperation we urge the authorities to extend an invitation to the Special Rapporteurs on the situation of human rights defenders, the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

We note that Vietnam accepted recommendations to guarantee² and lift³ restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression. However, we regret that since the review activists have been arrested or convicted for online posts including Le Minh The, and Nguyen Ngoc Anh. We are also disappointed that the recommendations pertaining to the release of political prisoners including Tran Thi Nga and Hoang Duc Binh were not accepted by the government. According to human rights groups an estimated 264 political prisoners remain in jail. Many have been ill-treated in prison and detained thousands of kilometers from their families.

We note that Vietnam accepted recommendations to guarantee⁴ and improve protection⁵ of freedom of peaceful assembly. Despite these commitments, over a hundred protesters who participated in the nationwide demonstrations against bills on Special Economic Zones and Cybersecurity in June 2018 have been convicted and jailed, or are at risk of physical attacks, since the review. We remain concerned about the restrictive legal framework used to suppress the formation of independent CSOs.⁶

Mr President, VOICE, CIVICUS and FORUM-ASIA call on the Government of Vietnam to take proactive measures to address these concerns and implement recommendations to create and maintain, in law and in practice, an enabling environment for civil society.

We thank you.

¹ 38.8

² 38.168

³ 38.184

⁴ 38.203

⁵ 38.205

⁶ 38.215