

Vietnam Under the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV):

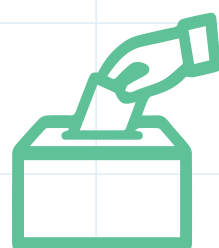
Political Control,
Restrictions on
Civil Liberties,
and Suppression
of Dissent



Vietnam: One-Party Rule



One-party state: Vietnam is governed by the **Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV)**.



Limited political competition: Independent candidates can technically run in legislative elections.



In practice: Most independent candidates are **excluded or prevented from running**.



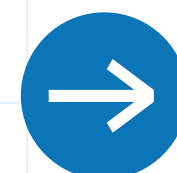
Political system: The CPV has dominated Vietnam's political system for decades.



Ethnic minorities remain underrepresented in senior political leadership despite their presence within the CPV.



Women remain underrepresented in government despite policies aimed at increasing political participation.



Political Prisoners & Restrictions on Dissent

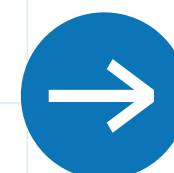
As of September 2024, Vietnam reportedly held **at least 171 political prisoners** and **21 political detainees** awaiting trial.

Authorities frequently use **Article 117** ("spreading information against the state") and **Article 331** ("abusing democratic freedoms") to prosecute critics.

During the first nine months of 2024, **at least 28 people** were convicted under these provisions.

Vietnam rejected recommendations calling for the release of imprisoned human rights defenders.

Article 331 has been used against people raising concerns about **religious freedom, land rights, Indigenous rights, and corruption.**

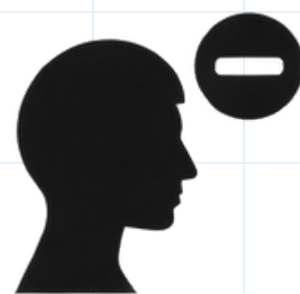


Religious Freedom Restrictions



Limited recognition

Vietnam reportedly does not recognize approximately **140 religious organizations**.



Pressure to renounce beliefs

Authorities have been accused of pressuring individuals to abandon beliefs associated with groups labeled as “**evil religions**” (tà đạo).



Harassment and arrests

Members of some unrecognized religious groups reportedly face **surveillance, harassment, arrest, and imprisonment**.



Forced renunciation concerns

Vietnam has rejected recommendations to end reported cases of forced renunciation of faith.



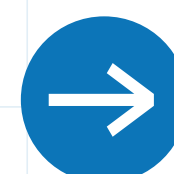
State restrictions

Religious groups and clergy generally must register with state-approved organizations and obtain permission for many activities.

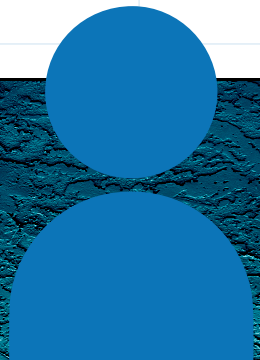


2022 crackdown

Six members of the Peng Lei Buddhist House were sentenced to a combined 23 years and 6 months in prison after refusing to register with the official Buddhist organization.

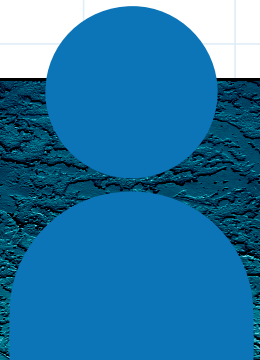


Cases of Repression Against Activists, Journalists, and Critics



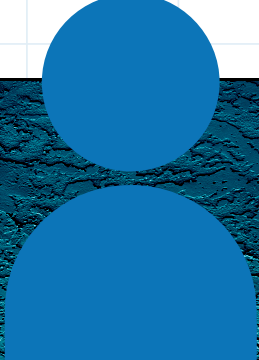
Sep 2025
Trinh Ba Phuong

Additional **11-year sentence** for criticizing the Communist Party.



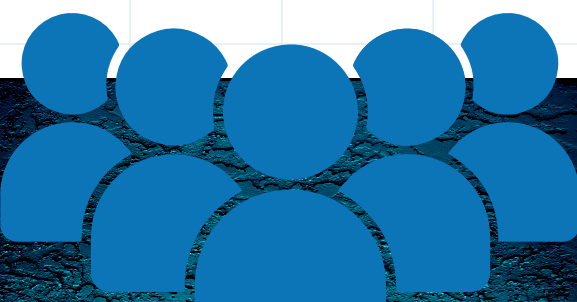
Oct 2025
Huynh Ngoc Tuan

Arrested over political writings on social media.



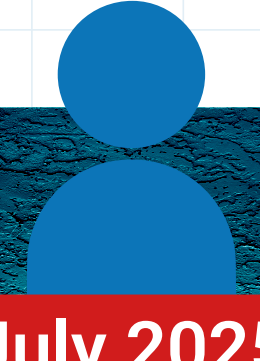
Sep 2025
Vuong Van Tha

A political prisoner died in prison while serving a **12-year sentence** for criticizing authorities.



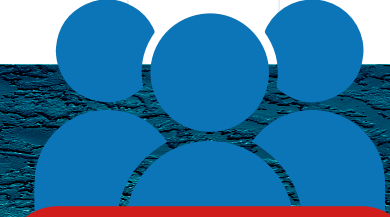
Dec 2025
Five journalists & dissidents

Convicted under **Article 117** and given lengthy prison sentences.



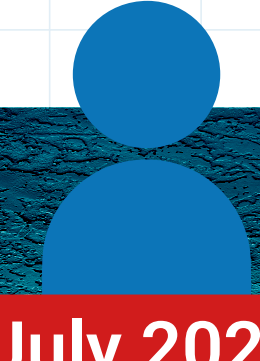
July 2025
Ho Trong Phuc

17-year-old sentenced to **one year** for affiliation with an independent Hoa Hao Buddhist group and sharing criticism of the Communist Party.



Jan 2025
Nguyen Xuan Mai, Nguyen Ngoc Dien & Thich Nhat Phuoc

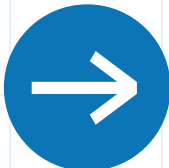
Barred from traveling to the US for the International Religious Freedom Summit.



July 2025
Hua Phi

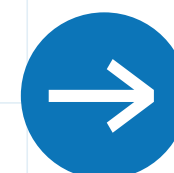
Cao Dai activist prevented from meeting a US diplomat in Ho Chi Minh City.

Vietnam ranked 174th out of 180 countries in the 2026 World Press Freedom Index.



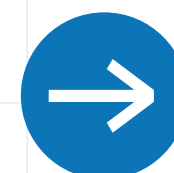
Transnational Repression Concerns

- Critics allege that Vietnamese authorities are extending repression beyond the country's borders.
- Human rights groups have raised concerns about increased Vietnam–Thailand security cooperation.
- Exiled Vietnamese activists and journalists in Thailand report surveillance, harassment, and intimidation.
- Several dissidents and journalists who sought refuge in Thailand were later detained or returned to Vietnam.



Digital Surveillance & Online Censorship

- In 2025, at least 43 people were arrested or prosecuted under Articles 109, 116, 117, and 331 for peaceful expression.
- Proposed amendments to the Cyber Security Law would require internet providers to share users' IP addresses with police and remove content within 24 hours of a request.
- Authorities fined social media users VND 5–10 million (US\$190–380) for allegedly spreading “illegal content” or “disinformation.”
- In Đắk Lắk province, police reportedly handled at least 52 cases related to online posts about the 2025 floods and government relief efforts.

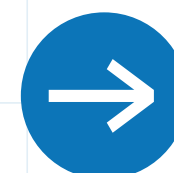


Treatment of Prisoners and Activists

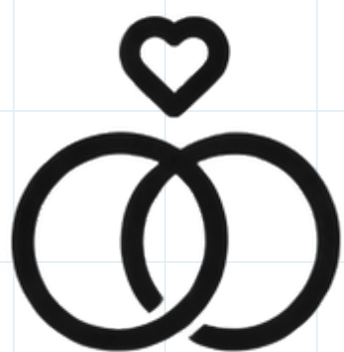
Rights groups reported concerns over the health and treatment of imprisoned activists.

Imprisoned activists reportedly faced solitary confinement, leg shackling for up to 10 days, and restrictions on family visits.

Dissident **Vương Văn Thả** died in prison on September 2, 2025, while serving a 12-year sentence for “propaganda against the state”.



LGBTI+ Rights



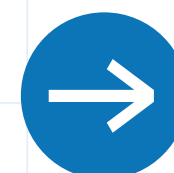
Same-sex marriage is not legally recognized in Vietnam.



A law on legal gender recognition for transgender people remains delayed for the 10th year.

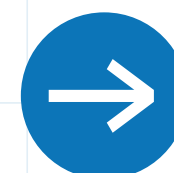


The Viet Pride parade in Ho Chi Minh City was cancelled for the first time in 13 years.



Internet & Information Control

- **All media outlets are state-controlled:** By law, the state is the majority shareholder of Vietnamese media outlets.
- The Communist Party's **central propaganda department meets weekly** to direct media coverage and reprimand or praise editors.
- Vietnam's military operates **Force 47**, a unit of around **10,000 cyber-soldiers** tasked with defending the Communist Party's positions and targeting online dissent.
- Authorities proposed a law that could require journalists to **disclose confidential sources to police**.
- Government-backed initiatives aimed at combating "misinformation" have been criticized by civil society as tools to suppress dissent.

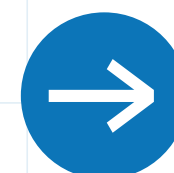


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Independent Journalism

Independent journalism initiatives such as the Independent Journalists Association of Vietnam (IJAVN) and Bao Sach have faced government repression.

Journalist Pham Doan Trang, an RSF Press Freedom Prize laureate, was sentenced to nine years in prison.



Academic Freedom & Civil Liberties

1

Academic freedom:

Professors can face punishment for criticizing government policies or party views.

2

Freedom of assembly:

Demonstrations generally require official permission, and unauthorized protests may be dispersed by force.

3

Civil society:

Activists and NGO workers can face arrest or imprisonment for advocacy considered hostile to the government.

4

Labor rights:

The only legally recognized labor federation is controlled by the CPV, while independent unions face major barriers.

5

Judicial independence:

The CPV controls the judiciary, with due process protections often limited in politically sensitive cases.

