



26th session of the
Human Rights Council
Item 6

General Debate on UPR
23 June 2014

Thank you Mr. President

CIVICUS presents this statement together with 10 civil society organizations from Vietnam. We can assure you that we place great expectation in the UPR process and sincerely hope that the Government will adhere and commit to the solemn declaration it delivered here on Friday to implement rapidly the recommendations received and all human rights guaranteed in its new constitution, and we look forward to a real people centered development.. But it has not been easy for us to come to this session. Some colleagues were stopped from attending this session. Others were warned not to attend.

Specifically, members of our delegation who attended the last session in February have been subjected to harassment and interrogation since their return to Vietnam. Their passports have been confiscated and one member was severely beaten. **Reprisals are therefore real and continuing in Vietnam.**

Worse, the Vietnamese government continues to arrest and imprison voices of conscience. Voices like that of Tran Huynh Duy Thuc who was sentenced to 16 years imprisonment for daring to challenge the one-party rule. Human rights lawyer Le Quoc Quan who was sentenced to 30 months imprisonment and ordered to pay a fine of \$100,000 US dollars on the false charge of 'tax evasion'.

Last month, Blogger Anh Ba Sam was arrested for the crime of 'abusing freedom and democracy' while most significantly, Vietnam continues to detain Activist Bui Thi Minh Hang without trial, 6 days after Vietnam's glowing report to this very Council on February 5.

There are, in fact, hundreds of prisoners of conscience in Vietnam right now.

Mr. President: Despite Vietnam's joining the Council and its laudable cooperation in the present UPR, the truth remains that Vietnam continues to violate international laws and in many instances, its own domestic laws.

We therefore urge you and the Council to pay more attention to the ongoing abuses in Vietnam and to assist independent civil society and human rights defenders to do our work without harassment.

Thank you very much.