



Submission No 10

**Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Dialogues with China  
and Vietnam**

**Name:** Duy Quang Nguyen

**Organisation:** Bloc 8406 - Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam

## BLOC 8406

# FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY FOR VIETNAM



Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
Human Rights Sub Committee  
Hon Laurie Ferguson MP  
Hon Philip Ruddock MP

Dear Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Ruddock,

**We, 8406 Bloc, are pleased to present our submission to the Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Dialogues with China and Vietnam**

The Bloc 8406 was formed on 8 April 2006, it is also the day the Manifesto on Democracy and Freedom for Vietnam was released throughout the world. Bloc 8406 started with 118 members living inside Vietnam. It has been expanded throughout the world including Australia. Please see the Declaration marking 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Bloc 8406 (8<sup>th</sup> April 2006 – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010) for more information, see attached below.

Currently, 29 members of Bloc 8406 are held in Communist prisons. 19 members arrested and released, but as many others, have been under house arrest, isolation, harassment, and surveillance to silence dissent. Please refer to Appendix for a brief profile of them.

We humbly and sincerely ask that the Committee give special consideration in requesting the Australian Government to urge Hanoi to release, immediately and unconditionally, the following Vietnamese “prisoners of Conscience”:

Both are suffering extremely bad health and in need medical assistance.

Our submission is based on the request for submission issued on 23rd June 2011 by the Human Rights Sub Committee's Media Release regarding an inquiry into Australia's human rights dialogues with China and Vietnam.

Our submission is structured as follows:

1. Recommendations

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2. Preambles

3. Detailed cases

4. Offer of Co-operation.

5. Conclusions

## **1. Recommendations.**

We recommend the following approach in dealing with the issues:

1.1 Establishing a human rights working committee comprised of 50-50 of Vietnamese Australians and MP's.

1.2 The Australian Government, make it a condition for the Vietnamese Authorities to improve on its human rights record before granting any further foreign aid to Vietnam.

1.3 Establish a local visiting team to periodically visiting our target cases and file appropriate reports. This local visiting team consists of NGO's staff, local Diplomatic Post's staff and Vietnamese Australians if possible. The local visiting team if possible, should have a direct dialogue with the Vietnamese authorities.

## **2. Preambles**

The violation of the Human Rights in Vietnam is a well document phenomenon. It takes all shapes and forms. Prisoners of conscience (over 200 in custody as of now), death in custody, abusing 11-year-old child, beating up people in the street, arresting demonstrators and repressing religious people.

Please find references links for the following papers on the subject:

- a. USCIRF 2011 Annual Report on Vietnam
- b. US States Department Annual Report on Vietnam in 2010
- c. Bill Introduced by US Congressman Chris Smith was passed in the US Lower house
- d. A speech was made by the MP Mr. Luke Simpkins on 04th Jul 2011 very critical of the Vietnamese Government in handling the Human Rights and Prisoners of Conscience issues

Besides these papers, hundreds and hundreds of documents in Vietnamese and English telling the same situations about Human Rights abuses in Vietnam, Religious Persecutions etc....

We believe that the Parliament is very well informed with an amount of reliable information but we would like to see even better communication between the Vietnamese Community and the Australian Parliament and the Department of Foreign Affairs regarding true state of the abuses. The next step now is how to effectively apply pressures to gain the desired outcome for the people of Vietnam.

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- d. Over the last 8 weeks, there have been 7 protests (in Hanoi and Saigon) against the attempted annexations of the Spratley islands and the Paracels islands. The Communist authorities used excessive force to put down the protests as some following pictures attest.

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These recent incidents clearly demonstrate a deterioration of the situation in Vietnam highlighting the fact that the Vietnamese Communist Party has continually and arrogantly ignored the international community's invitation to improve its human rights violation records.

### **4. Offer of Co-operation.**

We are offering to set-up a restricted website in which we can post all the relevant information concerning human rights abuses, to be viewed only by approved persons.

### **5. Conclusions**

We are of the view that to have a successful outcome for the process, the Australian Vietnamese community should be involved. This is because there is a lot of deceit on the part of the Vietnamese Communist authorities in dealing with these issues.

Also, please find attached our list of Bloc 8406 members - Prisoners of conscience.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on \_\_\_\_\_, should there be any query regarding the submission. We are willing to testify before the Parliamentary Enquiry into the issues relevant to this submission.

Kindly Regards,

Duy Quang Nguyen

### **References:**

1. The USCIRF 2011 Annual Report on Viet Nam  
<http://namvietnews.wordpress.com/2011/04/30/uscirf-2011-annual-report-on-vietnam/>
2. US States Department annual Report on VN in 2010 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/160484.pdf>
3. Bill Introduced by Representative Chris Smith was passed in the US Lower house  
<http://chrissmith.house.gov/News/DocumentSingle.aspx?DocumentID=74152>
4. A speech was made by the MP Mr. Luke Simpkins on 04 - 7 - 2011 very critical of the Vietnamese Government in handling the Human Rights and Prisoners of Conscience issues  
[http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=\\_fragment\\_number\\_doc\\_date-rev;query=Dataset%3Ahansardr,hansardr80%20Decade%3A%222010s%22%20Year%3A%222011%22%20Month%3A%2207%22%20Day%3A%2204%22%20Speaker\\_Phrase%3A%22mr%20simpkins%22;rec=2;resCount=Default](http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;adv=yes;orderBy=_fragment_number_doc_date-rev;query=Dataset%3Ahansardr,hansardr80%20Decade%3A%222010s%22%20Year%3A%222011%22%20Month%3A%2207%22%20Day%3A%2204%22%20Speaker_Phrase%3A%22mr%20simpkins%22;rec=2;resCount=Default)

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## BLOC 8406

# FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY FOR VIETNAM



### Declaration marking 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Bloc 8406

(8<sup>th</sup> April 2006 – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010)

Dear Vietnamese fellows living in Vietnam and abroad;

Governments and national assemblies, international communities and human rights organization throughout the world,

The Bloc 8406 was formed on 8 April 2006, is also the day Manifesto on Democracy and Freedom for Vietnam (hereby called The 8406 Manifesto) was released throughout the world. At a humble start with 118 members living inside Vietnam, the Block received enormous support from Vietnamese living inside and outside Vietnam, and was quickly expanded with many thousands of members.

The 8406 Manifesto has received warm support from many political, religious and human rights activists, non-governmental organizations and friends from many countries in the world such as UK, Poland, Germany, Canada, United of America, Japan, France, Czechoslovakia, Australia. The Block members were praised for their effort and courage in confronting the totalitarianism, and determination in fighting for freedom and democracy for Vietnam.

Prominent members of the Charter 77 had written an open letter to the Block 8406 on 23/05/2006 , which states *"We are aware of The Declaration of Democracy and Human Rights for Vietnam. We highly praise your courage in such a political environment, which is similar to what we had experienced in our own country when Charter 77 was first announced*

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*in 1977. We are aware that you are constantly subject to the risks of abduction by authority and we hope that expression of unity shall aid great encouragement and strength to you. (...) We are not ignorant to the future of Vietnam. We strongly believe that your voice can not be suppressed. Although Charter 77 had officially come to an end after November 1989, however we are very pleased to express support to you on our personal capacity. We wish that your effort will result in leading to the establishment of a democracy quicker than what we had achieved through movements under Charter 77”.*

The Open letter signed by 50 US Congressional members on 30 May 2006 pointed out that: *“We hope that this letter will further serve as a reminder to those who silence voices of freedom that any act of repression or intimidation against citizens peacefully expressing their beliefs is a gross violation of human rights - wholly inconsistent with the image of stability and progress that the Government of Vietnam is currently pursuing. The world is watching.*

*To those living in Vietnam who have given their signatures to these historic documents your courage and dedication in advocating for human liberty through peaceful and non-violent means serves as an inspiration to your fellow citizens, to us, and to the world. We stand with you in your struggle”.*

In the same spirit, on 6 December 2006 at the Australian Federal Parliament in Canberra, 36 Members of Parliament and Senators had together signed an open letter which states: *“We, the undersigned members of the House of Representatives and Senate of Australia, would like to express our support and admiration for 118 courageous Vietnamese citizens, known as Bloc 8406, who signed the Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam on the 8th April 2006, calling for a peaceful political transition toward a multi-party democratic Vietnam,... The presence of this pro-democracy movement proves that the aspiration for freedom and democracy is universal for all the people of the world, and is consistent with principles upheld by the Australian Parliament. As representatives who have been elected in a democracy, there is an obligation on us to speak out on behalf of those who have had their democratic rights taken from them.*

*We call on the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to listen to the voice of its people, and take appropriate steps to change toward a free and democratic society, in order to fully integrate into the international community and the global market place. The whole world is watching over the situation in Vietnam ,...”*

On the 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Block 8406 (8<sup>th</sup> April 2006 – 8<sup>th</sup> April 2010), we express our deep appreciation to the support from Vietnamese and our friends from around the world. To be worthy of your trust and love, together with our people and the whole world we are determined to engage in the fight for freedom and democracy for Vietnam.

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On this occasion, Block 8406 solemnly declares that:

### **1/. Absolute binding to the spirit and terms of 8406 Manifesto as follow:**

**Goals:** Maintain fighting toward a pluralist multi-party political system and democracy.

**Methodology:** Any method of non-violent struggle that had been practiced by many people in the past such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, the democracy movements in Eastern Europe during 1981 – 1991 and democracy movements in Vietnam in recent years.

**Driving Force:** Are the majority of Vietnamese people living in Vietnam and abroad, which include intellectuals, employees, writers, artists, merchants, workers, farmers, veterans, students members, students,... and also members of the People's Army and Police force, along side with the world community. Altogether a unity will create a power that surpasses everything.

**Motivations:** pioneers in the mass struggle are those intellectuals and religious clerics who have been ignorant in the past.

**The opponents:** are Vietnamese communist dictators and their mutual benefactors. These people govern and try to maintain their wicked and ruthless rules on majority of Vietnamese people. Despite the fact that Vietnam is lagging behind other countries in the region, the ruling communist party still ignore people's thirst for a real democratization. There is an existence of a growing class-conflict between the slavery working classes and the new "red" bourgeoisies, who enjoy a lavish life.

**Sense:** It is a struggle between the Just and the Unjust; progression and backward and kindness against brutality.

### **2/. A Conclusion based on what have been happening in Vietnam:**

A democratic and modern Vietnam and a fair society can not exist as long as the communist government is still in power. This regime does not have the capability to maintain social morals and values while the uncontrolled corruption is on the rise; Safety of individuals can not be guaranteed, and our sovereignty is under increased threat.

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Moreover, this regime is pushing our country to the verge of being colonised by the thousand years-long enemy from the North. In this regard, we believe that the risk of being invaded by Chinese troop in a modern day is very low. However, the Chinese Communists have been finding ways to exert their control and influence onto Vietnamese Communist leadership by bribes and political dominations. Eventually, it is part of their "Vietnamisation" Strategy in which Hanoi shall have to implement policies as per instructions from Beijing. In another word, it is suggested that the Chinese Communist plan to implement a similar strategy which was carried out in Cambodia under Khmer Rouge regime during 1975 – 1979, in the so-called "a Democratic Cambodia", and the "Killing Field" was a result of this.

What has been happening in recent years is the solid proof for that suggestion. China has claimed and overtaken thousands of square kilometres on land and several hundred thousands square kilometres on Eastern Sea. On many occasions, Vietnamese fishing boats working in Vietnam's EEZ were brutally attacked, shot and sunk by Chinese Navy. The Bauxite mining on Central Highland and many other sub-standard projects by Chinese from all over the country have potentially posed a great environmental and security threat to Vietnam. More than 300,000 hectares of the highly classified forest (watershed forestry) along the border with China was given a 50 years Lease that is virtually free to Chinese companies. Many illegal immigrant settlements have mushroomed from north to south alongside with Chinese worksites. A huge amount of sub-standard and bad Chinese quality goods floating freely in Vietnam have caused a great concern to consumers' health. All of this has happened with the aids from Vietnamese authorities. Many Vietnamese compatriots have warned authorities about the risks from the North, but their voice were silenced and suppressed.

### **3/. Request that the Vietnamese communist government must:**

- Respect all the fundamental freedoms and the rights of people to self-determination.
- Release immediately and unconditionally all political prisoners in Vietnam (the incomplete list provided herewith in the attached appendices).
- Stop all human rights violations and breaches to their own constitutions and Laws against Vietnamese such as illegal detention and house-arrest, forceful interrogation, illegal taping and monitoring of phones and mails, ransacking and illegal confiscation of private properties, economic siege and sanction and using thugs to humiliate freedom fighters in public, falsification of court records and documents. All these evil actions were carried out by the Police force and the "People's Courts" system in the name of "protecting national security and stability of social order".

### **4/. Welcome the "conditional" release of two 8406 Block members:**

Many other freedom fighters currently imprisoned in Communist prisons are also remembered for their efforts and sacrifice.

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**5/. Deeply appreciate the warm support and countless efforts from** Vietnamese compatriots and friends from all over the world to our prisoners of conscience, especially the recent statements from PEN International, Amnesty International and Vietnamese communities throughout the world demanding the conditional release of Father Nguyen Van Ly and condemning the suppression, threats and continuous harassment on Le Thi Cong Nhan.

**6/. Highly praise the courage, diligence, intelligence and indomitable spirit** of Block 8406 members. Your sacrifice is highly valued by Block 8406 and Vietnam pro-democracy movement, in general.

**7/. On the assumption of “White Shirt” Movement** to support Democracy in Vietnam on every 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of every month, we call for a widespread support and participation from our compatriots living in Vietnam and other parts of the world.

And finally, we call on the governments of the world and the international communities to do more and better for the cause of democratization in Vietnam.

*Prepared in Vietnam on 3<sup>rd</sup> April, 2010 by*

**Representatives of the Provisional Committee of Block 8406**

*In communion with \_\_\_\_\_, an army veteran and \_\_\_\_\_, a writer; and many other political prisoners, who are still imprisoned in communist penitentiary.*