

Jan. 10, 2024

President Joe Biden

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW

Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I am writing to urgently bring your attention to the critical aftermath of the environmental disaster caused by the "Formosa Ha Tinh Steel Corporation" in Vietnam, urging your diplomatic intervention to aid 7,874 victims in their quest for justice.

Formosa, a Taiwanese subsidiary of Formosa Plastics, has acknowledged its responsibility for releasing toxic chemicals into the Vietnamese coastline, resulting in the most severe environmental disaster in Vietnam's history. While Formosa Ha Tinh Steel Corporation committed to paying 500 million USD in compensation, the funds were incorrectly directed to the Vietnamese Government.

Over the past seven years, victims, primarily Vietnamese fishermen, have faced inadequate compensation, leading to heightened unemployment, increased poverty, and a severe human rights crisis. Desperate for employment, many victims have resorted to traveling to Southern provinces or leveraging their homes to work abroad, often leaving children behind without proper care. Numerous children are forced to terminate their education due to their parents' inability to cover the tuition costs.

Tragic incidents, such as the deaths of 39 workers in a frozen truck at the border of England in 2019, underscore the dire situation faced by those affected by the Formosa Disaster in 2016. Efforts to demand an independent investigation and transparency have been met with suppression, including intimidation and imprisonment.

Despite these obstacles, with backing from overseas Vietnamese and groups like the Justice for Formosa's Victims Association in the United States, 7,874 victims initiated legal action against the Formosa Plastic Group in a Taiwanese Court in June 2019. Unfortunately, the Vietnamese Government persists in retaliating against both victims and advocates. The victims face challenges completing the necessary paperwork for the court due to threats of arrest and intimidation, living in constant fear. Advocates who spoke out to safeguard the victims have been unjustly arrested and handed sentences of up to 20 years, falsely accused of plotting to overthrow the government.

We urgently appeal for your diplomatic pressure on the Vietnamese Government to cease retaliation against victims seeking justice. This intervention would allow individuals to complete necessary documentation for Taiwanese and U.S. courts freely. Additionally, we implore your intervention to secure the release of all prisoners detained solely for advocating on behalf of the victims.

Your dedication to justice and human rights is widely acknowledged, and your involvement in this matter holds the potential for positive change in the lives of the affected individuals and their communities. We express gratitude for your careful consideration of the accompanying supporting documents, which encompass letters from Taiwan lawyers representing the victims in Taiwan Court, a testimony from a Human Rights Lawyer, and supporting letters from both the Federation of Vietnamese Community of the USA and the Vietnamese-American community of Washington DC, Maryland, and Virginia.

Sincerely,

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