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KHMERS KAMPUCHEA-KROM FEDERATION

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Remembrance Day
June 4, 1949 – June 4, 2022

Open Letter to the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

On September 20, 1977, the 32nd General Assembly approved the admission of Vietnam to the United Nations. As a member state, Vietnam has signed seven out of nine treaties with the United Nations to guarantee that the fundamental rights as enshrined in those treaties are respected:

- **CCPR** – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ratified in 1982)
- **CESCR** – International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ratified in 1982)
- **CEDAW** – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (ratified in 1982)
- **CERD** – International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified in 1982)
- **CRC** – Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified in 1990)
- **CRPD** – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified in 2015)
- **CAT** – Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified in 2015)

On September 13, 2007, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the UN DRIP – United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As a member state, Vietnam signed to adopt this crucial and historical declaration.

Vietnam has been a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2020-2021 tenure. This country has announced its bid to join the UN Human Rights Council for the 2023-2025 term.

While Vietnam is polishing its regime at the U.N., the record of the human rights violations against the Khmer-Krom is seriously concerning.

As an organization advocating for the fundamental rights for the voiceless Khmer-Krom in the Mekong Delta (Kampuchea-Krom), the Khmers Kampuchea-Krom Federation (KKF) publicly demands that the Vietnamese government honors its commitment to implement the treaties and declaration that Vietnam signed.

The KKF proclaims that:

As the peoples, the Khmer-Krom must have the right to self-determination as enshrined in Article 1 of the CCPR and CESCR: “*All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.*”

As the Indigenous peoples of the Mekong Delta, the Khmer-Krom must have the right to self-identification as enshrined in Article 33 of the UN DRIP: “*Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity or membership in accordance with their customs and traditions. This does not impair the right of indigenous individuals to obtain citizenship of the States in which they live; 2. Indigenous peoples have the right to determine the structures and to select the membership of their institutions in accordance with their own procedures.*”

On this 73rd anniversary of the transfer without the free, prior, and informed consent of the people of Khmer-Krom in Kampuchea-Krom, the KKF demands that:

1. The Khmer-Krom must have the right to be self-identified on the legal document as “Khmer-Krom,” not “Khmer Nam Bo” nor just abbreviated as “Khmer.” The Khmer-Krom’s mother tongue language is Khmer which should be used in a bilingual program for the Khmer-Krom students to study in public schools.
2. The Khmer-Krom must have the right to call their villages, districts, provinces in the Khmer names.
3. The Khmer-Krom must have the right to have an independent Theravada Buddhism organization, not under the control of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha.
4. The Khmer-Krom must have the right to have independent institutions, such as Human Rights institutions, and organizations, such as Labor Union, to protect and promote their fundamental rights.
5. The Khmer-Krom must have the right to have the opportunity to continue their higher education and have equal rights to find jobs without needing connections with government officers.
6. The Khmer-Krom farmers have the right to be compensated for the loss of their farmlands.
7. The Khmer-Krom must have the right to be included in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals to avoid being left behind.
8. Article 16 of the UNDRIP stipulates that Indigenous Peoples have the right to full freedom of expression, including the right to establish their own media in their own language. We urge the Government of Vietnam (GVN) to protect the rights of Khmer-Krom indigenous communicators speaking the Khmer language.
9. Furthermore, we urge the GVN to start the discussions and dialogues with the KKF as the sole representative of the Khmer-Krom indigenous people during the International Decade to safeguard and protect the best interests of Khmer-Kroms in Kampuchea-Krom.