

THE COMMITTEE FOR SOLIDARITY OF VIETNAMESE CATHOLICS

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Report on the protection and promotion of human rights in Viet Nam under the 3rd cycle of Universal Periodic Review of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Overview of the Committee

As the successor of the Liaison Committee of Patriotic and Peace-Loving Vietnamese Catholics (1955 – 1983), the Committee for Solidarity of Vietnamese Catholics (CSVC), founded on November 10, 1983, has so far served 6 terms.

The Charter of CSVC adopted at its 6th National Congress of 2013 provided that the social organization CSVC is a member of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front and operates in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam as well as the guiding principle of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Viet Nam "*living the gospel of life for the greater good of compatriots and the country*".

Notable Achievements

The CSVC has been holding a number of educational workshops for Catholic dignitaries, members of the clergy and religious followers on the guideline of the Communist Party of Viet Nam (CPV) as well as on the policy and legal framework of the State such as the Constitution of 2013, the Law on Belief and Religion and related implementing legal documents.

The CSVC also holds annual conferences to honor outstanding individuals of the patriotic emulation movement and major contributions of the Vietnamese Catholic community in the CSVC-advocated movement "*Total unity for a new rural, a refined urban environment, a life of gospel for the greater good*". These annual conferences help encourage Vietnamese Catholics to expand greater efforts on the cause of national defense and development for a strong, prosperous, democratic, fair and cultured Viet Nam.

The CSVC at all levels has taken part in a number of areas that the Catholic community historically has been making a positive difference such as socio-economic and cultural development, charity, humanitarian assistance, education,

health care, social protection and vocational training. Besides, the CSVC has been in close coordination with the Standing Committee of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in environmental protection and adaptation to climate change. The CSVC has launched a number of campaigns to disseminate information to its members at all levels, including district level, on the guideline of the Party, the policy and legal framework of the State as well as on the ongoing anti-corruption and anti-wastefulness drive.

The CSVC regularly seeks and compiles public and voters inputs for forwarding to relevant authorities for further consideration. Priest Nguyễn Văn Riễn, who is a member of the 14th National Assembly of Viet Nam, attended its 5th meeting. Members of the CSVC who are representatives of People's Council for the term 2016-2021 at provincial and district levels take part in the meetings of local People's Councils and weigh in on the decision-making process.

Over the years, the CSVC has grown substantially. Its 6th National Congress held on 19-20th November 2013 were attended by 450 delegates, including 123 priests, 23 clergymen and 304 religious followers, electing 139 delegates to national leadership positions, 30 to the Presidium, 9 to the National Standing Committee as well as the President, Vice-President cum Secretary-General and Vice-Presidents of CSVC. At provincial levels, the CSVC has affiliates in 42 provinces and cities, with 2,499 members in leadership positions, including 402 priests, 136 clergymen and 282 in Provincial Standing Committees. At district levels, the CSVC has 286 affiliates, with 3,250 members in leadership positions. The 7th National Congress of CSVC is expected to nominate 150 members to national leadership positions, 30 to the Presidium and 9 to the National Standing Committee. Since 2017, the CSVC has presented nearly 1,000 orders of merit and commendations to Catholic members who have made significant contributions to the patriotic movement.

Recently, there has been some disputes and lawsuits with regard to land and properties. In times of international integration and market mechanism, these are complex social issues that are often taken advantage of by certain people with malicious intent of provoking the public. However, the majority of Vietnamese Catholics still have high respect for and confidence on the people's administration and expect that their needs would be properly taken care of in accordance with the laws. On the other hand, it reflects the evolving democratization of the society at large. As mandated by the CSVC's Charter and by-laws, leadership members of CSVC in their capacities as delegates in the National Assembly, Provincial and District People's Councils and the Viet Nam Fatherland Front have been active in outreaching activities to CSVC community, closely listening to their needs and working with both the people's administration and the Roman Catholic Church of

Viet Nam to resolve issues when they arise.

Proposals and Requests

The CSVC urges the people's administration at all levels, ministries, agencies and the Viet Nam Fatherland Front to continue their support, coordination and assistance to the CSVC and its affiliate organizations as well as to leadership members of CSVC in the discharge of their duty in the new era.

The CSVC urges relevant authorities such as the Party's Central Commission of Organization, Central Commission for Mass Mobilization, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Central Committee of Viet Nam Fatherland Front to continue provide assistance in terms of policy, mechanism and compensations to CSVC members so that they could have an enabling working environment in the long term./.