

The Formosa environmental disaster in Vietnam

2016

The environmental disaster occurs

An underground pipe near the Formosa (a Taiwanese enterprise) steel mill spewing dark yellow water.

Masses of dead fish begin to wash ashore on beaches in Ha Tinh province.



4-6 April

Denying responsibility

Formosa refuses to take responsibility for the disaster.

The Government argues that the causes of the environmental disaster could have been natural.



24-27 April

Human rights at stake

Health:

Formosa workers are hospitalised after diving near the mill, one of them dies.

Work:

Fishermen and people in tourism lose their income and jobs.

Cultural identity:

The culture of the people in Ha Tinh province are linked to their environment.

April - May

The civil society protests

First protest in Quang Binh marked the beginning of multiple marches and protests in which thousands of people in Vietnam called for a clean environment, government transparency and the disengagement of Formosa.

Bigger demonstrations take place in Hanoi and Saigon on the 1st of May.

April 28 / May 1

The government takes action?

After the Ministry of Environment apologised for confusion and mishandling, 7 ministries started to investigate Formosa Co., Ltd.

However, the government still denies its responsibility in the fish deaths.



May 4

Ongoing violations of human rights

The UN expresses concern with human rights violations.

People denounce violations to their rights to:

Freedom of expression

Adequate compensation, and legal remedies

Freedom of association

Access to independent judges and courts

May-June

Formosa admits responsibility

Formosa admits its responsibility in the wrongful discharge of toxic chemicals in the ocean.

It offered US\$500 million in compensation.

The government received the payments but the victims have not received their compensation



June 30

The legal battle

The Committee for justice and peace, Catholic priests and parishioners from Vinh Diocese Working Group (VDWG) submit petitions to state agents. These are not answered.

Hundreds of affected individuals lawsuits against Formosa, demanding to clean the environment and compensate the victims.

Local courts refuse to admit the lawsuits.

July-Sept

The defense of human rights

Hundreds of people protest in Ha Tinh and Quang Binh, demanding a prosecution against Formosa and adequate compensation.

VDWG meet with Taiwanese elected representatives to express the victim's suggestions



Sept-Dec

Human rights defenders at risk

Hundreds of people continue to march, protest, and file lawsuits against Formosa.

Reverend Nguyen Dinh Thuc, a leader of one of the marches, was **physically attacked**.

Individuals denouncing lack of transparency by the Government have been **criminalised**.



2017

On May 10, 2017, the VINH DIOCESE WORKING GROUP presented a petition, signed by thousands of people around the world, to various international organisations, INGOs, and European States in Geneva. To read more please go to:



ENVIRONMENT-RIGHTS.ORG
resource portal for environmental human rights defenders