



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: December 1, 2023

MEDIA CONTACT: V4climateleaders@gmail.com

standwithbach.org #StandWithBach #FreeHongFreeThemAll

Vietnam Prime Minister Today Announces Implementation Plan for \$15.5 Billion Just Energy Transition While Climate Leaders Remain in Jail

Human Rights and Climate Justice Experts Available For Interviews

(COP 28, Dubai) - Today the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Pham Minh Chinh, [announced the plan](#) for how the country will use the \$15.5 billion Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) funds, without mention of the [six climate leaders who have been imprisoned](#) for seeking greater accountability in the country's climate change and energy investments.

"There will be nothing 'just' about this energy transition while climate leaders remain in jail and civil society remains silenced," said Guneet Kaur, International Rivers' Environmental Defenders Campaign Coordinator. "Those financing this project, including the governments as well as the international banks, should be very concerned about how their money will actually be spent."

Vietnam's JETP was announced in December 2022 [by the UK Government](#), the U.S., the EU, other G7 countries plus Denmark and Norway (together known as the International Partners Group). Additional financing partners include multilateral development banks such as the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"We urge multilateral development banks and donor governments not to bulldoze ahead with the JETP or associated projects," said Tanya Lee Roberts Davis, NGO Forum on ADB's Just Transitions Advocacy Coordinator. "Doing so would mean acting as complicit bystanders in the silencing and reprisals faced by community rights, workers', environmental, and climate advocates."

Learn more on Wednesday, December 6 at 11am in Dubai when leaders of the Vietnam Climate Defenders Coalition will hold a press conference at COP in Press Conference Room 2, Building 6 (live-streamed on the UNFCCC website). Spokespeople will include: International Rivers' Environmental Defenders Campaign Coordinator, Guneet Kaur; 350.org's Associate

Director of Global Campaigns, Cansin Leylim; Shruti Suresh, Interim Co-Director of Campaigns at Global Witness; and Gerry Arances, founder and executive director of the Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED).

Those who have been arrested and imprisoned in Vietnam include environmental justice lawyer [Mr. Dang Dinh Bach](#) (Bach); founder of the environmental group CHANGE VN, Ms. Hoang Thi Minh Hong (Hong); Executive Director of the independent think tank, Vietnam Initiative for Energy Transition, Ms. Ngo Thi To Nhien (Nhien); Goldman environmental prize winner [Nguy Thi Khanh](#); and the Center for Media in Educating Community's Mai Phan Loi and [Bach Hung Duong](#).

On August 11, 2023, the UNDP Resident Representative in Vietnam, Ms. Ramla Khalidi, delivered [a speech](#) about the draft RMP, stating “the importance of not losing focus on the ‘just’ elements of the energy transition.” However, there was no mention of the country’s imprisoned climate leaders.

Coalition demands

In order to have a just energy transition in Vietnam, the Vietnam Climate Defenders Coalition - consisting of dozens of international and regional environmental, climate, and human rights organizations - calls on the International Partners Group and JETP financiers to:

- Seek the urgent release of Mr. Dang Dinh Bach, Ms. Hoang Thi Minh Hong, and other unjustly imprisoned civil society leaders in Vietnam.
- Conduct rigorous due diligence on threats to environmental and human rights defenders and restrictions on environmental activism and civic engagement in Vietnam, in accordance with the environmental and social safeguard standards of various JETP stakeholders, as they relate to the financing and implementation of the JETP.
- Ensure strict adherence to the reprisal policies and public participation commitments of JETP stakeholders, including the IFC, the ADB, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and develop specific protocols to proactively respond to reprisals should they occur.
- Require that JETP financing and implementation is contingent upon explicit protections against retaliation and reprisals for environmental and human rights defenders, together with policy frameworks for free and safe participation of civil society in JETP design, decision-making, monitoring, and implementation.
- Promote enabling conditions for civil society provided for by international standards and treaties aimed at creating and maintaining, in law and in practice, [a safe enabling environment](#) for civil society to freely operate, including [reform of laws and policies related to registration and tax requirements for civil society](#) associations that are overly burdensome and incompatible with fundamental rights, including freedom of assembly, association, and expression.

#