

Washington D.C. - Michael Cromartie, vice-chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, gave the following testimony on March 23, 2010 regarding religious freedom conditions in Vietnam .

The following is an excerpt from Mr. Cromartie's testimony.

I testified nine months ago before this Commission about religious freedom in Vietnam. Sadly, I cannot say that conditions have improved in that time. Vietnam continues to backslide on human rights and there remain too many religious freedom violations, too many individuals detained for independent religious activity or peaceful religious freedom advocacy, too many cases of discrimination and forced renunciations of faith targeting new converts to Protestantism, and too many stories of government approved violence targeting Buddhists and Catholics. These abuses occur despite the protections found in Vietnam's Constitution and despite Vietnam's international obligations under the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

I want to make one point about the work of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). We have traveled to Vietnam four times since 2003 and have visited every region of Vietnam. We have detailed the abuses experienced by Vietnam's sizable Christian population (10%-12%). But we have also tried to document the severe religious freedom restrictions experienced by Buddhists, including the ethnic Khmer and indigenous groups such as Hoa Hao and Cao Dai. Vietnam is primarily a Buddhist country. Severe religious freedom restrictions touch every religious community in Vietnam, not only the religious minorities.

[Click here to view the entire testimony.](#)

USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission. USCIRF Commissioners are appointed by the President and the leadership of both political parties in the Senate and the House of Representatives. USCIRF's principal responsibilities are to review the facts and circumstances of violations of religious freedom internationally and to make policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress.

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