

# JOINT OPEN LETTER



**#STANDWITHBACH**

**VIETNAM: ENVIRONMENTAL  
LAWYER DANG DINH BACH  
MUST BE RELEASED**

# Organizational Sign-On Letter Calling for the Release of Dang Dinh Bach and Support of Civil Society in Vietnam's Just Energy Transition

May 24, 2023

Dear Supporters of a Just Energy Transition and Sustainable Development in Vietnam,

The undersigned climate justice and human rights advocates worldwide call for the immediate release of prominent environmental lawyer, Dang Dinh Bach, who is serving a five year prison sentence in Vietnam on trumped-up tax evasion charges after advocating for the country's movement away from coal.

Bach has declared that on 24 June 2023 - the two-year anniversary of his arrest - he will go on a hunger strike to the death in defense of his innocence. In his own spirit of nonviolent and peaceful protest, we are launching in solidarity with him a relay hunger strike joining him in solidarity in a relay hunger strike from 24 May through 24 June, to raise awareness about this extreme injustice and call for his release.

We are running out of time to address the climate crisis. Action is urgent, and across the world, steps are being taken to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and mitigate the impacts of climate change for future generations. The Vietnamese government itself has committed to net zero emissions by 2050 and accepted a \$15.5 billion deal to support a just transition to clean energy. But this cannot succeed with climate leaders like Bach in jail.

Bach is one of four members of the Vietnam Sustainable Energy Alliance who were imprisoned in Vietnam, despite playing an instrumental role in the country's ambitious climate commitments, indicating an ongoing and highly concerning trend.

Bach has dedicated his life to improving the health and well-being of marginalised communities throughout Vietnam and worked tirelessly to limit pollutants such as plastic, asbestos, and coal. "I have witnessed so many painful stories of poverty and terrible diseases that weigh on abused communities in Vietnam," said Bach in a recent statement from prison. "They are deprived of their land and livelihoods and do not have opportunities to speak out for justice and the right to be human in the face of environmental pollution, especially in places with coal-fired power plants across the country. In order to conceal the truth and threaten the voices of people, the Vietnamese authorities have arrested, convicted and unjustly detained environmental and human rights activists in defiance of national and international law."

This is why we, the global community, stand in solidarity with Bach through peaceful protest and call for his release, as well as an end to retaliation against government and civil society actors in Vietnam and around the world pushing for human rights and environmental justice.

The signatories urge all governments, multilateral institutions and others invested in a just energy transition for Vietnam to:

insist on Bach's release; demand that civil society in Vietnam is welcome to participate meaningfully in this process that is so crucial for the future of the region and the planet.

Action must be taken now to safeguard Bach's life, as well as Vietnam's ability to successfully transition away from coal and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Sincerely,

## Co-signatories:

ACAT Germany (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture)  
Accountability Counsel  
Abibinsroma Foundation  
Africa Coal Network  
Agency for Turkana Development Initiatives (ATUDIS)  
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)  
Alliance for Empowering Rural Communities  
ACAT Belgium (Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture)  
Asian Peoples Movement on Debt and Development  
Both ENDS  
Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association  
The Bretton Woods Project  
BALKANKA  
Building and Wood Workers International (BWI)  
Community Resource Centre  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Climate Action Network Australia  
Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ)  
Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)  
Clean Air Action Network of Glens Falls  
CIVICUS  
Center for Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED)  
Climate Action Network Southeast Asia  
Environmental Defender Law Center  
EarthRights International  
Equitable Cambodia  
ENLAWTHAI Foundation (EnLAW)  
Ecosistemas  
EcoAlbania  
Earthlife Africa  
Friends Against Dictatorship (FAD)  
Forum Umwelt und Entwicklung  
FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders  
Federal Association of Vietnamese Refugees in the Federal Republic of Germany  
Friends of the Earth Japan  
Friends of the Earth United States  
Friends of the Earth Asia Pacific  
Focus on the Global South  
GongGam Human Rights Law Foundation  
Grassroots Foundation (Germany)  
GegenStrömung  
groundWork, Friends of the Earth, SA  
Global Witness  
Global Network of Movement Lawyers at Movement Law Lab

Indonesia Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI)  
International Rivers  
Inclusive Development International  
International Service for Human Rights  
Indigenous and Local Communities for the Sustainable Management of Forest Ecosystems in Central Africa (REPALEAC)  
Indigenous Peoples Partnership  
International Accountability Project  
Indigenous Women Legal Awareness Group (INWOLAG)  
Indus Consortium for Human Environment and Development Initiatives  
Jamaa Resource Initiatives  
Just Ground  
Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society (JACSES)  
Kiko Network  
KRuHA  
Manushya Foundation  
Mekong Watch  
Market Forces  
Malaysian Youth Delegation  
NGO Forum on ADB  
Not1More  
Oil Change International  
Oyu Tolgoi Watch  
Observatori DESC  
PowerShift e.V.  
Protection International (PI)  
policy research institute for Equitable Development  
Programme Intégré pour le Développement du Peuple Pygmée au Kivu (PIPD)  
Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research (PODER)  
Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum  
Pro Public  
Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network PENGON-Friends of the Earth Palestine  
Quê Me: Vietnam Committee for Human Rights (VCHR)  
Rivers without Boundaries Coalition  
Reality of Aid-Asia Pacific  
Recourse  
Rivers without Boundaries Mongolia  
RAPEN environment protection associations and nature network  
Sierra Leone Land Alliance  
Sustainable Development Institute  
Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG)  
The Bretton Woods Project  
Urgewald  
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders