

has led to a reported increase of trafficking of minors domestically and internationally as prostitutes. Disabled persons have a very difficult life in Vietnam, although traditional family structures continue to serve the needs of individuals with mild disabilities.

The cumulative impact of ten years of "doi moi" or "renovation" has been most evident in the expansion of economic rights. There is a palpable sense of improvement as Vietnam's economy becomes based on market principles. The introduction of a Civil Code is meant in part to address the lack of protection for the individual in the economic sphere, but it is too soon to judge its effects. Nevertheless, Vietnam has seen the growth of discontent and violence by rural inhabitants over the growing disparity in the distribution of economic benefits and over the growing corruption of party and government officials. There have been numerous government statements deploring corruption but no evidence of any action to control it.

Political and religious persecution is still the most obvious area in Vietnam where international concern is warranted. Many prisoners remain incarcerated for the expression of their political and religious beliefs and have become symbolic of Vietnam's lack of respect for human rights. Among the most prominent are Dr. Nguyen Dan Que, Doan Viet Hoat and religious leaders such as Thich Quang Do. A number of other prominent writers, poets and journalists also remain imprisoned and are a focus of attention.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada continues to have concerns with the human rights situation in Vietnam. Vietnam has come under scrutiny in the Official Development Assistance (ODA), human rights and democratic development review process and these considerations have been taken into account in the development of the ODA program. The current orientation is to work with the Government of Vietnam to support administrative and legal reform.

We have continued to make regular high-level representations to Vietnamese authorities on appropriate occasions to encourage greater respect for human rights and about specific cases of interest to us, though without positive results in the case of prisoners of conscience.

There has been no action on Vietnam in recent years at the Commission on Human Rights, and there is no likelihood of a resolution in the foreseeable future. Canada has, where appropriate, continued to voice its concern about the human rights situation in Vietnam in relevant international fora.