



**MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY WITH VICTIMS OF LAND SEIZURE BY  
THE VIETNAMESE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT**

**To the Victims of the forced land seizure at Loc Hung Parish, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam,  
Concerned Citizens, Civil Society, Human Rights Groups and Religious Organisations.**

11 January, 2019  
Parramatta, Australia

My Dear People,

Through various news outlets, many of our compatriots and I learned with great sorrow of the destruction of your beloved homes and properties by the authorities in Ho Chi Minh City.

This area, attached to the Catholic Parish of Loc Hung, has been the home and work centre of many families. Generations of people migrated from the communist North at the partitioning of Vietnam in 1954. They are mostly low-income families, students, former prisoners of conscience and amputee-veterans of the South Vietnamese Army.

The authorities often resort to the use of force to seize properties and land in places which have potential commercial value. This has been a pattern of behavior on the part of the communist government in Vietnam ironically since the so-called “doi moi” (reform) era, as demonstrated in many incidents throughout the country.

For example, in 2008, the authorities attempted to turn the former Papal Nunciature in Hanoi into a bar and night club, prompting popular protest by Catholic citizens.

In 2011, attempts were made also by the government to seize property attached to a Redemptorist Monastery in Thai Ha Parish. In more recent times, similar attempts were made to grab the land owned by the Sisters of the Lovers of the Cross at Thu Thiem.

The latest land grabbing exercise on the part of the Communist Government has caused extensive damage, destruction and hurt to hundreds of families. Many have been left homeless, their livelihoods ruined and their lives irreparably damaged. All this has happened on the eve of the Lunar New Year, “Tet”, which is considered the most sacred celebration in Vietnam.

The reporting of the incident by the state-owned media does not accord with what happened on the ground as testified by the victims. Many of them are left at the mercy of the elements and the support of religious groups such as the Redemptorist Fathers and fellow parishioners.

**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL**

Bishop of Parramatta



Dear compatriots,

As a Vietnamese, and a Bishop Chair of the Commission for Social Justice attached to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, I would like to express my deep solidarity with you and add my support to your struggle for dignity in the midst of the incredible ordeal that has been forced on you. I pray that you remain committed in your faith and your search for justice.

I also urge the authorities to refrain from acts of violence, terror and repression against the people towards whom they have a duty to protect and assist. I call on the Vietnamese Government at all levels to respect the human rights of its own Citizens, to promote the common good and to ensure justice and dignity for the people affected.

I call on the people of good will, both inside and outside Vietnam to support the victims of the land seizure in their struggle for justice and dignity.

I remain, yours in Christ,

**Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL**  
**Bishop of Parramatta, Australia**  
**Chair of Bishops Commission for Social Justice - Mission and Service**  
**Australian Catholic Bishops Conference**

Cc:

Vietnamese Catholic Bishops Conference  
Vatican Dicastery for Integral Human Development  
Australian Department of Foreign Affairs  
Australian Embassy in Vietnam

Some images of the destruction at the Catholic Parish of Loc Hung, Vietnam follow.

**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL**  
Bishop of Parramatta



**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv DD STL**  
Bishop of Parramatta

Level 2, 12 Victoria Rd, Parramatta NSW 2150 | PO Box 3066, North Parramatta, NSW 1750  
T: 02 8838 3400 F: 02 9630 4813 E: [bishop@parra.catholic.org.au](mailto:bishop@parra.catholic.org.au) W: [www.parracatholic.org](http://www.parracatholic.org)