



VIETNAM AGENT ORANGE RELIEF & RESPONSIBILITY CAMPAIGN

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PRESS STATEMENT

DISMISSAL OF VIETNAMESE VICTIMS SUIT AGAINST AGENT ORANGE MANUFACTURERS VIOLATES HUMAN RIGHTS U.S. CAMPAIGN CONTINUES FIGHT FOR JUSTICE!

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The decision of the U.S. Court of Appeals affirming the District Court's dismissal of the lawsuit of the Vietnam's Agent Orange victims and their representative, the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) is an affront to the principles of justice and human rights as is the companion decision denying compensation to U.S. veterans who continue to suffer from their exposure to Agent Orange.

The most basic of human rights – the right to life – is being violated for more than 3 million Vietnamese victims who continue to die on a daily basis from cancers and other illnesses caused by their exposure to the toxic, dioxin laden Agent Orange. Many children live with tragic and debilitating birth defects and disabilities or die in utero. Agent Orange contaminated “hot spots” continue to poison Vietnamese born more than 30 years after the end of the war.

Yet the chemical manufacturers and the U.S. government refuse to compensate the Vietnamese people. And the chemical companies are trying to evade responsibility to the many U.S. veterans and their families who have sickened and died since the 1984 settlement.

The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign pledges to turn our outrage over this unjust and offensive decision into a citizen's campaign to achieve justice and compensation for Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange. We will pursue justice from the chemical companies and our government -- in the court of public opinion, through our elected representatives and through economic pressure against the corporate wrongdoers. We will work together with the U.S. veteran's movement to assure that **all** vets receive redress.

The U.S. government recognizes, *de facto*, that Agent Orange causes life threatening diseases by providing at least \$1.52 billion in disability payments and \$56 million in medical costs per year to Agent Orange exposed U.S. veterans. The chemical manufacturers also tacitly acknowledged their liability by paying \$180 million in a settlement with affected U.S. veterans.

The scientific and public health community is on record in calling for compensation for both Vietnamese and U.S. veteran Agent Orange victims. A recent American Public Health Association Policy Statement recognized the relationship between Agent Orange exposure and severe consequences to public health and recommended that, “*the US government and involved chemical companies provide resources for services for the disabled in areas where dioxin victims are concentrated... for American and Vietnamese people harmed...[and] be responsible to remediate or attempt to clean up those areas in Vietnam that still contain high levels of dioxin.*”

BACKGROUND:

More than 30 years after the end of the U.S. war that killed more than 58,000 Americans and 3 million Vietnamese, U.S. veterans are demanding compensation for their Vietnamese counterparts. U.S. veterans received partial compensation for their injuries from the chemical companies and the U.S. government but Vietnamese veterans received **not one penny** in compensation from the U.S. government which sprayed them with Agent Orange.

- More than three million Vietnamese and tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers are affected by Agent Orange caused cancers and other life threatening diseases.
- Agent Orange causes tragic birth defects in several generations of children of those exposed.
- Agent Orange continues to poison the natural environment of Vietnam in the “hot spots”.

The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign, (www.vn-agentorange.org) is a grass roots organization of veterans, Vietnamese Americans, people of faith, workers, scientists, environmentalists and others who support the lawsuit of Agent Orange victims against U.S. chemical manufacturers and bring citizen pressure on the U.S. government to provide compensation for Vietnamese Agent Orange survivors.

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