

Le courrier du Vietnam:

Agent orange : une décision injuste de la Cour suprême américaine - 04/03/2009

Le combat continuera jusqu'à ce que la justice soit rendue à toutes les victimes de la campagne de "guerre chimique" menée par le gouvernement américain au Vietnam.

C'est ce qu'a souligné l'avocat Jonathan Moore, conseiller de l'Association des victimes de l'agent orange/dioxine du Vietnam (VAVA), pour le procès intenté par les victimes vietnamiennes de l'agent orange/dioxine contre 37 compagnies américaines des produits chimiques ayant fabriqué ce toxique déversé au Vietnam par l'Armée américaine pendant la guerre, après la décision rendue publique le 2 mars par la Cour suprême américaine de ne pas examiner la plainte des victimes vietnamiennes.

La Cour n'a donné aucun commentaire sur sa décision, prise le 27 février dernier, rejetant ainsi la plainte des victimes vietnamiennes et 2 autres plaintes des vétérans américains contre les fabricants de produits chimiques américains pour leur demander d'indemniser les dommages.

Auparavant, la pétition des victimes vietnamiennes avait été rejetée par la Cour d'appel fédérale de New York, bien que plusieurs recherches scientifiques comme les réalités prouvent un lien direct entre ces défoliants, les cancers, le diabète et les malformations congénitales.

De son côté, Merle Ratner, coordinatrice de Vietnam agent orange relief and responsibility campaign (VAORRC), s'est déclarée indignée, en tant qu'une citoyenne américaine, que la Cour suprême américaine avait refusé la justice à plus de 3 millions de victimes vietnamiennes de l'agent orange/dioxine ainsi qu'aux vétérans américains affectés par ce produit nocif.

Elle a annoncé que ce procès de la VAVA avait bénéficié d'un soutien public sans précédent tant aux États-Unis que dans le monde pour demander la justice et la compensation aux victimes vietnamiennes. "Les Américains continuerons de lutter pour demander la justice et la compensation aux victimes et pour nettoyer les points chauds au Vietnam", souligne-t-elle.

Les procès liés à l'agent orange/ dioxine sont une longue lutte pour la justice lancée depuis la fin de la guerre par les vétérans américains conduisant à un arrangement en 1984 selon laquelle les compagnies chimiques américaines, dont Dow Chemical et Monsanto, ont accepté de verser 180 millions de dollars à un fonds de compensation.

Outre le procès en cours de la VAVA, 2 vétérans américains ont déposé une pétition pour demander leur droit dans cette somme.

Lors de son interview accordée hier au journal en ligne VietNamNet, le secrétaire général de la VAVA, Trần Xuân Thu, affirme que cette décision de la Cour suprême américaine "ne met pas fin" à la lutte pour la justice des victimes vietnamiennes. "Nous poursuivrons le combat par d'autres voies. Cette décision ne peut mettre un terme à tous les aspects touchant à la situation des victimes vietnamiennes de l'agent orange/dioxine", souligne-t-il.

La VAVA affirme que la décision de la Cour suprême américaine "va à l'encontre de la réalité", celle de l'extrême gravité des séquelles de la dioxine pour des millions de Vietnamiens.

M. Thu rappelle aussi que parallèlement à ce combat pour la justice, la VAVA continue de constituer des dossiers collectifs de victimes vietnamiennes dont 2, d'ores et déjà achevés, concernent les femmes des provinces de Ninh Binh et Thai Binh (Nord) qui étaient présentes sur la piste de Truong Son pendant la guerre.

Giang Ngân/CVN (04/03/2009)

Nhân Dân:

Justice trampled upon by the us supreme court's decision

The US Supreme Court on March 2, 2009 announced its decision to refuse a review of petitions lodged by Vietnamese Agent Orange victims against US chemical manufacturing companies for their producing the toxic chemical used by the US Army during the Vietnam war. Once again, equality and justice reserved for the Agent Orange/Dioxin victims in Vietnam are not respected.

The US chemical warfare coded the “Ranch Hand Campaign” against Vietnam began from 1961 to 1971. This is the longest, cruelest war, causing the heaviest losses to humans, nature and environment in Vietnam. The effects and consequences of Agent Orange have still been passed from generation to generation. Nature and the environment continue to be destroyed. Within those ten years, the US Army had carried out 19,905 sorties, spraying about 80 million litres of herbicides and as a result, over three million people had been victimised. On the other hand, many American and international scientists had proved that the Agent Orange/Dioxin was the toxic chemical, not merely the herbicide.

At present, millions of Vietnamese Agent Orange victims are wrestling with their daily lives because of the effects of the US toxic chemical, whereas their eco-environment has been badly destroyed. Pains, poverty and diseases are constantly tormenting their lives. Many of them have died without having received any assistance from those who had been the cause of their misery. It is because of this that Vietnamese Agent-Orange victims lodged the lawsuit against 37 US chemical producers to the US Supreme Court. But they have received only the wrong and regrettable decisions so far. On the contrary, the Vietnamese Government has done everything it can to give its material and spiritual help to their Agent Orange victims so that they could overcome by themselves their own difficulties and improve their lives. On the other hand, the Vietnamese Government has issued a lot of policies to assist these victims, while other Vietnamese social and humanitarian organisations have held a wide range of practical activities to support these victims.

Only a few hours after the US Supreme Court’s decision on the above-said issue, American lawyer Jonathan Moore who is lead counsel for the Vietnam Association of Victims of Agent Orange (VAVA) in the lawsuit against 37 US companies that produced the toxic chemical said he was very sad to hear this decision, further confirming that the struggle must continue until justice for all those who were victimised by the US Government’s campaign of chemical warfare during the Vietnam War is achieved. Ms Merle Ratner, co-ordinator of the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign said: “As a US citizen, I am outraged that the Supreme Court has refused justice for the more than 3 million Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange as well as to Agent Orange affected by US veterans whose suit was also denied review”.

“However, the VAVA lawsuit has produced unprecedented public support both in the US and internationally for justice and compensation for Vietnam’s Agent Orange victims. Americans will keep on fighting for justice and for full compensation for the victims and clean up of the hot spots” – Ms Merle Ratner further said.

On May 15, 2008, for the first time the Agent Orange issue was brought to the hearing at the Asia Pacific and the Global Environment Subcommittee of the US House of Representatives. So what the USA should and must do is to give back the right to live, equality and justice to the Vietnamese Agent Orange victims!

*By **Tran Dinh Chinh***

4.3.2009

VAVA vows to fight for AO victims

The Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/dioxin (VAVA) says that it will continue to struggle for Agent Orange (AO)/dioxin victims in various forms until justice is achieved.

In a statement issued on March 4, VAVA expressed great resentment regarding the US Supreme Court's decision on March 2 to reject VAVA's petition, saying that it completely denies the fact about the consequence of AO/dioxin in Vietnam that has been confirmed by many Vietnamese and international scientists.

VAVA also called on all Vietnamese and people with conscience in the world to stand by Vietnam in demanding the US side to take legal and moral responsibility for resolving the aftermath of AO/dioxin in Vietnam.

Tran Xuan Thu, VAVA Deputy President and General Secretary, said the US Supreme Court's dismissal of the suit is only valid within the states under the jurisdiction of the Court of Appeals No2. According to the US law, Vietnam can still file its suit at the remaining 11 courts of appeals in the US.

In addition to the legal battle, Mr Thu said that it would also continue to step up the struggle at public forums aimed at garnering support for the victims. He said that a number of individuals and foreign organisations had declared their support for Vietnamese AO victims, including the Britain-Vietnam Friendship Society, the France-Vietnam Friendship Association, and the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign of the US.

Len Aldis, Secretary of Britain-Vietnam Friendship Society, said that the US Supreme Court's rejection of the appeal by both US and Vietnamese victims without giving any reasons clearly showed that their ruling was based on political reasons rather than legal ones. He affirmed that the struggle would continue until justice prevails for the victims.

The Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign said that it would be stepping up its corporate campaign with VAVA aimed at bringing public support for the victims. The France-Vietnam Friendship Association said it would hold a seminar on the effects of AO in Montreuil on March 9.

Also on March 4, the Vietnam Fatherland Front issued a statement calling on international organizations, governments, non-governmental organizations, scientists and people in the world to take practical action to support the Vietnamese AO victims and their lawsuit.

According to VAVA, between 1961 - 1971, the US army used about 80- million litres of toxic chemicals, mainly Agent Orange that contained nearly 336 kilograms of dioxin. Consequently, about 4.8 million Vietnamese people were exposed to this deadly toxic chemicals and more than 3 million of them have suffered from the effects of Agent Orange.

(VNS/VOV)

5.3.2009

Friendship societies protest US court's AO decision

Vietnamese friendship societies issued a joint statement on March 6, voicing their protest against the US Supreme Court's decision to reject a Vietnamese Agent Orange /dioxin victims' petition against the US companies responsible for the production of AO/dioxin chemicals that were used in Vietnam during the war between the two nations.

Among the signatories of the statement were the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organisations, the Vietnam-US Society, the Vietnam Peace Committee, the Vietnam Fund for Peace and Development, and organisations representing solidarity and friendship between the Vietnamese and overseas groups.

They described the US Supreme Court's March 2 decision as "an erroneous, unjust and amoral one", while demonstrating their support for the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/dioxin (VAVA)'s statement denouncing the US Supreme Court's irrational and inhumane decision.

"We wholeheartedly support the determination of the Vietnamese AO victims to maintain their struggle for justice, in both the courts and the public opinion front," said the statement.

They called on all organisations and pacifists across the world to voice their solidarity, support and assistance to lend more weight to the Vietnamese AO victims' battle for justice.

"We call on the US administration to accept its responsibility to resolve the consequences of war in Vietnam, including the residual effects of toxic chemicals sprayed by the US troops," they said, noting that "justice must be granted to Vietnamese AO victims."

Between 1961 and 1971, the US army sprayed about 80 million litres of toxic chemicals, mainly Agent Orange, containing almost 336 kilograms of dioxins, over Vietnam. Consequently, approximately 4.8 million Vietnamese people were exposed to the deadly toxic chemical, and more than 3 million of them still suffer from the effects of Agent Orange.

The US chemical manufacturers accepted the deadly effects of Agent Orange/dioxin in 1984 and paid US war veterans US\$180 million in compensation for their exposure to AO/dioxins.

In 1996, the US Government acknowledged the harmful effects of AO/dioxins, sending apologies and granting subsidies worth billions of US\$ to US war veterans who had been exposed to AO/dioxins.

Scientific research by Vietnamese, American and international scientists has proved that the toxic chemicals used by the US troop have had a detrimental effect on the health of not only those who were directly exposed to these chemicals, but their offspring too.

According to several epidemiological studies on the consequences of dioxins, jointly conducted by Vietnamese and Japanese scientists, dioxin-related diseases identified by the US National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine have also been discovered in Vietnamese AO/dioxin victims.

(VNA) 7.3.2009