



EMBASSY
THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

**Fact and views concerning
the Vietnamese Boat People's Monument and Memorial in Oslo**

(In response to questions given by Mr. Joe Ekker, Utrop – Norway's multicultural newspaper)

The Embassy takes this opportunity to clarify some fact and its views concerning the Vietnamese boat people's Monument "Sjoblomst"/ or Sea Flower and memorial on the shore at Bygdøy in front of the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo.

I. Some fact concerning the Monument and memorial can be found on the website of the Norwegian Maritime Museum and at the site of the Monument and memorial.

1. First of all, the Embassy of Viet Nam to Norway would like to express sincere thanks to the Norwegian Government and the Norwegian people who assisted the Vietnamese immigrants, the oversea Vietnamese for their successful integration into the Norwegian society.

2. The Monument as stated by the initiators is designed to express gratitude to the Norwegian, particularly the Norwegian sailors, ships and shipping companies who rescued the Vietnamese boat people at sea. It is understandable from the humanitarian points of views.

However, it should also be noted that the boat people illegally left Viet Nam to seek for economic opportunities and that they had never been badly treated by the Government of Viet Nam.

3. Information relating to the Monument and memorial can be found in the agreement reached between the initiators, and the Norwegian Maritime Museum and the City of Oslo (the Planning and Building Services and Arts in Oslo) which, *inter alia*, requires that the Monument "Sjoblomst"/ or Sea Flower as designed by Norwegian artist Thor Sand Borg shall be an art work in the City of Oslo and the Monument must be given a politically neutral design and either in the design phase or later use, i.e. not use for political manifestations or other political purposes, as made public in 2013 on the website of the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo (accessible at the following links: http://www.marmuseum.no/no/forside_i_media/Konflikt+rundt+kommende+monument+p%C3%A5+Bygd%C3%B8ynes.d25-TgZDUWf.ips and http://www.marmuseum.no/no/forside_siste_nyheter/Thor+Sandborg+vant+konkurransen.d25-SwJzG4N.ips).

4. The actual memorial set up early 2013 near the Monument Sea Flower on the shore at Bygdøy in front of the Norwegian Maritime Museum shows that the Vietnamese wordings which include the word "cộng sản" (which means

"communist" in the English language) are not consistent with both the Norwegian wordings and the English wordings, thus constituting a mistake, a trick, and a political manifestation.

The Embassy of Viet Nam in Oslo has made communications to the Oslo City and relevant authorities concerning the Monument and memorial.

It should be noted that such inconsistent wordings with apparent political manifestation on the memorial and any activities for political purposes around the memorial and Monument Sea Flower are degrading the Monument which was designed to be an art work of Oslo City.

At the same time, such kind of wordings and its political manifestation on an art work of the City of Oslo or the use of such Monument and memorial for any political purposes by any people in Norway against the interests of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam are not welcome by the Governments of Viet Nam and Norway who have maintained friendly and good cooperation.

Furthermore such wordings on the memorial also hurt those Norwegian who have went on marches and extended strong support to the Vietnamese people and Government against the *Vietnam War* during the 1960s and early 1970s which contributed to bringing an end to the war in April 1975, and all hurt those Norwegian people who have supported Viet Nam during the past years for peace and delopment.

The Embassy therefore reiterate its views and request that the wordings on the memorial have to be corrected by removing the word "cộng sản" and thus to ensure the Monument "Sjoblomst"/ or Sea Flower and memorial be an art work in the City of Oslo, politically neutral in its design or use, i.e. not use for political manifestations or other political purposes, as agreed upon between the initiators, and the Norwegian Maritime Museum and the City of Oslo.



(The image of the memorial on the shore at Bygdøy, near to the Monument Sea Flower, in front of the Norwegian Maritime Museum in Oslo shows the following wordings on top of the memorial including:

*The Vietnamese wordings: TRI ÂN NA UY ĐÃ CỨU GIÚP CHÚNG TÔI ĐẾN ĐẤT TỰ DO, THUYỀN NHÂN VIỆT NAM TỰ NẠN **CỘNG SẢN** VÀ THÂN NHÂN*

The Norwegian wordings: TAK NORGE FOR FRIHETEN, FRA VIETNAMESISKE BATFLYKTNINGER OG DERES FAMILIER

The English wordings: THANK FOR NORWAY FOR THE FREEDOM, FROM VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES.)

II. There are many ways for former Vietnamese boat people to express their gratitude to those who help them on humanitarian basis, not just by making something that distort the fact and harm the good relationship between Viet Nam and Norway.

III. Viet Nam and Norway and peoples of the two countries are working together and looking forward to the strengthening of good friendship and cooperation that have long existed between the two countries. This has been best demonstrated by the recent official visit of Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg to Viet Nam last April and the joint communique of the two Prime Ministers. Viet Nam and Norway therefore should not allow any distort of the fact and any activities to hurt the good bilateral relationship and cooperation and the feelings of those who work so hard to further strengthen the cooperation for the benefit of both countries.

IV. The Vietnamese Government and the Embassy of Viet Nam are working hard to make all what we can to facilitate the visits back to Viet Nam by the Vietnamese living overseas, who are parts of the Vietnamese nation. We also encourage them to make as much contribution as they could to rebuild Viet Nam, to make Viet Nam a united, prosperous, strong and democratic country, for the sake of happiness of the people. This consistent policy has been implemented regardless when, why and how they had left the country and as long as they remain patriotic oversea Vietnamese, they are all welcome back to Viet Nam. It should be noted that a great number among the oversea Vietnamese have made visits back to Viet Nam for visiting relatives, making investment, doing business in Viet Nam, and

many of them have even chosen to come back and live permanently in Viet Nam now.

V. There are many creative and innovative ways for the former Vietnamese boat people to express their gratitude. The best and most pragmatic ways for them to do are: (i) to successfully integrate into the Norwegian society; (ii) to help contributing to the course of development of Viet Nam as mentioned above; and (iii) to help strengthening good friendship and cooperation between Viet Nam and Norway, between the Vietnamese and the Norwegian people, for the sake of peace and prosperity of all the people. This can be seen as the most solid and long-lasting monument, devoting to the Norwegian who have assisted them./.