

Vietnam Marks 61 Years Since U.S. Military's Agent Orange Attacks

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On the evening of Aug. 10, 2022, the Vietnamese Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) and Vietnamese Military TV held a special event marking the 61st year since the United States military first [dropped the chemical weapon known as “Agent Orange”](#) on the people of Vietnam. People's World was invited to attend this important event. The goal was to raise awareness and funds for Agent Orange clean up and for resources to care for the victims.

The program opened with remarks from Senior Lt. General Nguyen Van Trinh, director of VAVA. The program then shared some success stories, such as the clearing of Da Nang International Airport of the remaining dioxin. Examples of other places still in the process of being cleared were also shared. The program featured interviews with victims, their families, and their caregivers.

The program ended with thanking various people from across Vietnam that have raised funds, donated, or volunteered to help those suffering the ill effects of the toxins. This aid came from across the social and economic spectrum. Philanthropists, students, youth groups, and other grassroots initiatives were all well represented.

Starting in August 1961, until the end of the war in 1973, the U.S. military dropped Agent Orange and similar chemical weapons on 5.6 million acres of Vietnamese land. Over 90% of these lands were poisoned at least twice. By the end of the war, an estimated five million Vietnamese people were poisoned by these illegal weapons.

But the crime didn't end with the U.S. retreat from Vietnam. The awful effects of Agent Orange have been passed down from parent to child and from child to grandchild. This means that every year there are new victims born. Every year there are new victims that suffer the horrible disabilities and deformities caused by the toxins in Agent Orange and other dioxin weapons. Today, there are nearly 4.8 million Vietnamese still suffering from the

toxins first dropped on Vietnam 61 years ago.

Despite many promises made by the U.S. government to help the Vietnamese government and people with the aftermath of the U.S.' illegal warfare, aid has been lacking. To date, 61 years later, the U.S. government has only ever helped with environmental cleanup and has never provided any help for the millions of people that suffered and continue to suffer from dioxin poisoning.

Today, Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., remains the only consistent voice calling for the U.S. government to take responsibility for its past crimes in Vietnam. Year after year, Lee proposes legislation to help care for the victims of Agent Orange. She is joined by the [Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign](#) (VAORRC) and other advocacy groups that try and lobby for funding for the victims. Unfortunately, year after year, the rest of Congress fails to give the initiative enough support, leading to its failure.

It is important to note that the victims of Agent Orange were not exclusively those bombed by the U.S. military. Many U.S. veterans who handled and managed the containers of the chemicals and their decedents fell ill due to their handling of the toxins. While some veterans did receive [minimal compensation](#), the chemical companies that made the toxins have been protected by the U.S. courts from having to take any responsibility for their crimes.

Earlier this year, it was revealed that the U.S. government was running [biological labs in Ukraine](#). This horrifying revelation suggests the lessons from history have not been learned. While other countries seek to ban the use of unconventional weapons and create safeguards to deter their use, the U.S. military still goes in the other direction.

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