



The World Health Organization  
Regional Office for the Western Pacific  
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Wädenswil, June 29, 2016

### **Concerns about Food safety in Vietnam**

Dear Dr. Shin Young-soo,

We bring to your attention serious concerns about a serious food safety problem in Vietnam.

Late last month (May) we received a request for support from a group of NGOs from Vietnam who reported a massive fish die-off along the country's central coastal provinces of Ha Tinh, Quang Tri, Quang Binh and Hue. The estimated weight of the mass-die off has been reported to be about 100 tons. This may be only the tip of the iceberg. Divers have reported significant layers of dead or dying fish below the sea surface, which are not included in the estimate.

It would appear that some unethical people have been trading with the fish from the die-off, as our contact tells us the fish have been collected to produce the region's famous fish sauce.

Although the government of Vietnam has communicated that they are investigating the reason for the mass die-off for which there are several theories – among them toxic algae bloom or pollution from the Formosa Steel plant, the government has not warned civil society about the serious risks of consuming the dead fish.

For this reason we are contacting you and encourage the WHO to inform the Vietnamese public about the possible health risk.



I refer you to the following four news articles for further information:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/apr/21/vietnam-investigates-mass-fish-deaths-pollution>
2. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-36181575>
3. <https://news.mongabay.com/2016/05/taiwanese-chemical-spill-thought-cause-mass-fish-die-off-vietnam/>
4. <http://atimes.com/2016/05/vietnams-mass-fish-kill-isnt-simply-an-environmental-disaster/>

I would be pleased to forward the information from the Vietnamese NGOs if you would like this as well.

I thank you for your time and dedication for the health of the world's citizen in general and the health of the Vietnamese citizens in particular.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sigrid Lueber". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sigrid Lueber  
President OceanCare