

The Theoretical and Practical Significance of Citizens' Freedom of Residence in Ho Chi Minh's Thought and Its Contemporary Application in Vietnam

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Abstract: This article examines the theoretical and practical significance of citizens' freedom of residence in Ho Chi Minh's thought and its contemporary application in Vietnam. Drawing on a documentary and legal-analytical approach, the study analyzes Ho Chi Minh's early views on fundamental human freedoms, particularly the right to residence and movement, and traces their institutionalization in Vietnam's constitutional and legal framework. The article argues that freedom of residence, in Ho Chi Minh's thought, is not merely an individual civil right but is closely associated with national independence, human dignity, social justice, and the State's responsibility to ensure stable and lawful living conditions for citizens. In contemporary Vietnam, this principle has been concretized through constitutional provisions, the Law on Residence 2020, the Housing Law 2023, and a range of housing policies for low-income groups, workers, poor households, and ethnic minorities. The study also identifies persistent challenges, including limited land resources, rising housing costs, complicated administrative procedures, insufficient social housing supply, unequal access to housing finance, and pressures generated by rapid urbanization. On this basis, the article proposes several policy orientations, including legal and administrative reform, expansion of social housing, improved access to preferential credit, sustainable urban planning, and stronger support for vulnerable groups. The article contributes to clarifying the enduring value of Ho Chi Minh's humanistic and rights-based thought in guiding Vietnam's current efforts to protect citizens' lawful residence and promote inclusive social development.

Keywords: Ho Chi Minh's thought; freedom of residence; citizens' rights; lawful housing; social housing; Vietnam; human rights; constitutional law.

I. Introduction

Freedom of residence is a fundamental civil right and an essential condition for human dignity, social equality, and inclusive development. It is not limited to the legal right of citizens to choose where to live, but is also closely connected with access to housing, employment, education, healthcare, public services, and social protection. In this sense, the protection of freedom of residence requires both constitutional recognition and practical policy mechanisms that enable citizens to enjoy stable, lawful, and secure living conditions. In Vietnam, this right has particular theoretical and practical significance because it is deeply associated with the country's constitutional development, people-centred governance, and the humanistic values of Ho Chi Minh's thought.

Ho Chi Minh's thought provides an important foundation for understanding the relationship between national independence, individual freedom, and citizens' social rights. From the early period of his revolutionary activities, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the fundamental freedoms of the Vietnamese people, including freedom of residence and movement. His demand for "freedom of residence abroad and freedom to travel abroad" in the Claims of the Annamite People in 1919 reflected an early recognition of residence and movement as essential human freedoms. After the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, this principle was institutionalized in the 1960 Constitution, which recognized citizens' freedom of residence, movement within the country, and travel abroad. Thus, in Ho Chi Minh's thought, freedom of residence was not merely a private legal entitlement; it was closely linked to national independence, human dignity, social justice, and the State's responsibility to ensure a stable life for the people.

In contemporary Vietnam, the application of this thought has been reflected in the continuous development of the constitutional and legal system. The 2013 Constitution recognizes citizens' right to a lawful place of residence, the inviolability of the home, and the right to housing ownership, while also affirming the State's responsibility to develop housing policies and create conditions for all people to have a place to live. These constitutional principles have been further concretized through the Law on Residence 2020, the Housing Law 2023, and various policies on social housing, housing for workers, low-income people, poor households, and ethnic minorities. These legal and policy frameworks demonstrate Vietnam's effort to transform the

humanistic and rights-based values of Ho Chi Minh's thought into practical mechanisms for protecting citizens' lawful residence.

However, the effective realization of freedom of residence in Vietnam still faces several challenges. Rapid urbanization has increased pressure on land, infrastructure, and housing markets, especially in large cities and industrial zones. The shortage of affordable and social housing makes it difficult for low-income people, migrant workers, and disadvantaged groups to access stable and lawful accommodation. In addition, complicated administrative procedures, limited access to housing credit, uneven regional development, and legal difficulties related to land and housing documentation continue to affect the practical enjoyment of this right.

Against this background, this article aims to clarify the theoretical and practical values of citizens' freedom of residence in Ho Chi Minh's thought and examine its application in Vietnam today. Using a documentary and legal-analytical approach, the article analyzes Ho Chi Minh's views, relevant constitutional and legal provisions, achievements, challenges, and policy orientations. It argues that ensuring citizens' lawful residence is not only a legal requirement but also a key condition for promoting social justice, national stability, and sustainable development in contemporary Vietnam.

II. Ho Chi Minh's Thought on the Human Right to Freedom of Residence and Its Application in the Development and Improvement of Vietnam's Legal System

The struggle for fundamental human rights and freedoms constitutes one of the core elements of Ho Chi Minh's constitutional thought. Throughout his revolutionary career, Ho Chi Minh consistently pursued the ultimate goal of national independence, people's freedom, and human happiness. His aspiration was not limited to liberating the nation from colonial domination but also extended to building a society in which every citizen could enjoy adequate food, clothing, education, dignity, and a stable life. Within this broader humanistic vision, the right to freedom of residence should be understood not merely as a civil liberty but also as an important expression of human rights, citizenship rights, and the responsibility of the State to secure safe and lawful living conditions for the people.

From the early period of his revolutionary activities in France, Ho Chi Minh had already emphasized the importance of freedom of residence as part of the basic freedoms of the Vietnamese people. In the *Claims of the Annamite People* in 1919, he explicitly demanded "freedom of residence abroad and freedom to travel abroad" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011a, p. 441). This demand can be seen as one of the earliest expressions of Ho Chi Minh's awareness of the right to residence, movement, and the choice of living space. His view did not approach freedom of residence as a purely formal legal entitlement. Rather, it was associated with the broader aspiration to build a society in which all citizens could have a stable and safe place to live and could freely choose where to reside, study, and work.

After the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, this idea was further institutionalized in the process of building the new State. Ho Chi Minh paid particular attention to policies that enabled citizens to choose their place of residence, livelihood, and work. He was also concerned with housing and land issues, especially for poor people, peasants, and socially vulnerable groups. The 1946 Constitution constitutionalized many principles that had been raised in the *Claims of the Annamite People*. Article 10 of the 1946 Constitution provided that Vietnamese citizens had the rights to "freedom of speech; freedom of the press; freedom of organization and assembly; freedom of belief; freedom of residence and movement within the country and abroad" (National Assembly of Vietnam, 1946). This provision demonstrates that freedom of residence was recognized very early as a constitutional right in the newly established Vietnamese State.

In the context of the struggle for national independence, Ho Chi Minh clearly recognized that the freedoms of the people, including freedom of residence, could only be substantively guaranteed when the country achieved genuine independence. He famously affirmed that "if the country is independent but the people do not enjoy freedom and happiness, then independence has no meaning" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011b, p. 64). From this perspective, freedom of residence is not only an individual right but also closely connected with national independence, people's freedom, and the construction of a humane society. A lawful, safe, and appropriate place of residence is a fundamental condition for comprehensive human development and for the effective enjoyment of other rights, including the rights to education, employment, healthcare, and participation in social life.

To ensure freedom of residence, the development and protection of housing for the people are of particular importance. This is not only the responsibility of the State but also a shared responsibility of society as a whole. Through the Constitution and the legal system, the State recognizes the right to a lawful place of residence and establishes mechanisms for the management, support, and development of housing in order to secure stable living conditions for citizens. In this sense, freedom of residence is concretized not only through the right to choose one's place of residence but also through the right to lawful, safe, and appropriate housing.

Inheriting the spirit of the 1946 Constitution, subsequent Vietnamese constitutions continued to affirm and further clarify citizens' housing rights. The 1980 Constitution stated in Article 62 that "citizens have the right to housing" (National Assembly of Vietnam, 1980). The 1992 Constitution, also in Article 62, provided that "citizens have the right to build houses in accordance with planning and the law" (National Assembly of Vietnam, 1992). Notably, the 2013 Constitution marked an important development by addressing housing rights from two dimensions: the recognition of citizens' rights and the State's responsibility to ensure the realization of those rights. Regarding rights, Article 22 provides that "citizens have the right to a lawful place of residence" and that "everyone has the right to the inviolability of his or her home"; Article 32 recognizes that "everyone has the right to ownership of housing" (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2013). Regarding the guarantee of rights, Article 59 affirms the State's responsibility to develop "housing development policies and create conditions for everyone to have a place to live" (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2013). These provisions illustrate the inheritance and application of the theoretical and practical values of Ho Chi Minh's thought on freedom of residence in the constitutional development of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The constitutional recognition of the right to a lawful place of residence has laid an important foundation for the protection of citizenship rights and for defining the State's responsibility to recognize, protect, and guarantee such rights. To concretize these constitutional principles, freedom of residence and the right to lawful housing have been further regulated in the Law on Residence 2020, the Housing Law 2023, and related implementing documents. These legal instruments affirm citizens' rights to lawful residence and housing ownership while also defining the responsibility of the State to protect lawful housing ownership and ensure conditions for citizens' residence.

The Law on Residence 2020 provides detailed regulations on the exercise of Vietnamese citizens' freedom of residence within the territory of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. It also regulates residence registration and management, as well as the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of citizens, agencies, and organizations in relation to residence registration and administration (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2020). At the same time, the law emphasizes the need to harmonize the lawful rights and interests of citizens with the interests of the State, community, and society. This reflects a balanced approach between individual rights and social management requirements. The Law on Residence 2020 also defines the scope of the exercise of freedom of residence and the circumstances in which this right may be restricted in accordance with the law. It therefore serves as a key legal basis for concretizing constitutional principles concerning citizens' residence in contemporary Vietnam.

Together with the Law on Residence 2020, the Housing Law 2023 plays an important role in ensuring lawful residence for citizens. This law focuses on two central issues: housing ownership and the management and development of housing. Regarding housing ownership, it identifies the subjects entitled to own houses in Vietnam, defines their rights and responsibilities, and provides procedures for the recognition of housing ownership. Regarding housing management and development, it establishes rules on the management, use, and development of housing and devotes a separate chapter to social housing policy (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2023). This indicates that freedom of residence is guaranteed not only by legal recognition but also through concrete policies designed to help citizens, especially economically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, access lawful housing.

In addition to these laws, the Government has issued a number of resolutions, decisions, and decrees to improve the legal and policy framework on housing. Important documents include Decision No. 338/QĐ-TTg approving the project on investing in the construction of at least one million social housing apartments for low-income people and workers in industrial zones during the 2021–2030 period; Resolution No. 18/NQ-CP on housing development for students and workers in industrial zones; Decision No. 33/2015/QĐ-TTg on housing support policies for poor households; Decree No. 95/2024/ND-CP and Decree No. 100/2024/ND-CP detailing several provisions of the Housing Law 2023 (Government of Vietnam, 2015, 2023, 2024a, 2024b). These documents have contributed to improving access to housing, meeting essential residential needs, and promoting social justice, particularly for vulnerable groups such as poor households, near-poor households, workers, low-income labourers, and those facing difficulties in securing lawful residence.

From the above analysis, it can be argued that Vietnam's legal institutions concerning freedom of residence have been concretized through policies guaranteeing housing, lawful residence, and housing ownership. These institutions reveal several fundamental characteristics.

First, ensuring the right to lawful housing is a concrete manifestation of the implementation of citizens' freedom of residence. This is a basic right recognized by law and respected, protected, and guaranteed by the State. The right to housing is not only a necessary condition for comprehensive human development but also an important factor in human resource development and national development.

Second, ensuring freedom of residence, particularly the right to housing, is a shared responsibility of the State, society, and citizens. The State plays the leading role through institution-building, policymaking,

resource allocation, and the regulation of social relations related to housing. At the same time, social resources should be effectively mobilized to develop housing and better meet the residential needs of the people.

Third, housing development for the purpose of ensuring freedom of residence must be linked with the synchronous development of technical and social infrastructure. Housing cannot be separated from quality of life, the residential environment, transportation systems, education, healthcare, public services, and socio-economic development planning. Therefore, housing development must comply with planning, housing development programs, and local development plans in each period while also ensuring construction quality and living standards.

Fourth, to effectively implement freedom of residence, it is necessary to improve citizens' access to housing finance. Appropriate credit mechanisms, interest support, and financial policies are important for enabling citizens, especially policy beneficiaries, low-income people, workers, and vulnerable groups, to build, rent, purchase, or own lawful housing.

Fifth, housing management associated with the protection of freedom of residence must be carried out consistently from the central to the local levels. It is necessary to strengthen unified state management while ensuring reasonable decentralization and enhancing the responsibility of local authorities in housing development and management. This process should be transparent, accountable, and capable of harmonizing the interests of the State, citizens, enterprises, and other stakeholders. Only in this way can citizens' freedom of residence be effectively realized in practice.

These principles form an important legal and policy foundation for housing development, the protection of lawful residence, and the implementation of citizens' freedom of residence. They also contribute to the development of legal institutions concerning human rights and citizens' rights in Vietnam, in accordance with Ho Chi Minh's thought on national independence, freedom, people's happiness, and the construction of a just, democratic, and civilized society.

III. Achievements and Challenges in Ensuring Citizens' Right to Lawful Residence in Vietnam

To concretize constitutional and legal provisions on citizens' right to a lawful place of residence, Vietnam has implemented a range of housing development strategies and social housing policies. These include the National Housing Development Strategy to 2020, with a vision to 2030, and Decision No. 338/QĐ-TTg approving the project on the construction of at least one million social housing apartments for low-income people and workers in industrial zones during the 2021–2030 period. These policies have produced important outcomes in expanding housing supply, improving housing quality, and creating better conditions for citizens, particularly vulnerable groups, to access lawful and stable accommodation.

One of the most notable achievements is the improvement in both the quantity and quality of housing nationwide. According to the report on the implementation of the National Housing Development Strategy for the 2011–2020 period, the average housing area per capita reached 24.4 square metres after nearly ten years of implementation. In urban areas, the figure reached 25.1 square metres per person, an increase of 3.8 square metres compared with 2011. In rural areas, it reached 24.0 square metres per person, an increase of 6.2 square metres compared with 2011. In addition, the proportion of households living in permanent or semi-permanent houses increased to 93.1 per cent of all households with housing (Nguyen Trung Thanh & Vu Thi Huyen, 2023). These results indicate that Vietnam has made significant progress in improving the material conditions necessary for the realization of the right to lawful residence.

In relation to social housing for low-income people and workers, Vietnam has also achieved certain positive results. According to data presented by the Ministry of Construction at the conference on social housing development for workers and low-income people held on 1 August 2022, the country had completed 301 social housing projects in urban areas and workers' housing zones, providing approximately 156,000 apartments with a total floor area of nearly 7.8 million square metres. In addition, 401 projects were under implementation, expected to provide around 455,000 apartments with a total area of nearly 23 million square metres. These figures demonstrate the State's growing commitment to transforming the right to lawful residence into concrete housing programs for those with urgent residential needs.

However, the development of social housing has not yet met actual demand. Although affordable and social housing accounts for approximately 70–80 per cent of housing demand, the implementation of social housing projects has reached only about 41.7 per cent of the target set in the National Housing Development Strategy for 2011–2020. Specifically, only more than 5.21 million square metres of social housing floor area had been completed, compared with the target of 12.5 million square metres (Ho Chi Minh City Real Estate Association, 2022). This gap shows that while the policy framework has been established, implementation capacity remains limited, especially in large cities and industrial regions where housing demand is particularly high.

Housing for workers in industrial zones is another important area in ensuring lawful residence. Vietnam currently has around seven million workers employed in approximately 370 industrial zones. However, only about 5 per cent of these workers live in rental housing facilities developed by enterprises, local authorities, or socio-political organizations. The remaining 95 per cent, especially migrant workers from other provinces, mainly rent private rooms, with an average living space of only 3–4 square metres per person. According to the Ministry of Construction, 122 workers' housing projects had been completed, providing around 54,400 apartments, while 119 additional projects were being implemented, expected to provide approximately 154,000 apartments. Nevertheless, existing social housing for workers meets only about 40 per cent of national demand (Ministry of Construction, 2021). This situation reveals a significant gap between legal recognition of the right to lawful residence and the actual living conditions of many workers.

In response to these challenges, the political system has taken more active steps to promote social housing and workers' housing. Regarding land allocation for workers' housing, the objective of reserving land for workers in industrial zones has basically been implemented. By the time of reporting, the country had 253 workers' housing projects, covering approximately 600 hectares of land. Among them, 112 projects had been completed on more than 250 hectares, while another 112 projects were being implemented on more than 350 hectares. Approximately 41 per cent of the allocated land had been invested in and put into use (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2023). These results show that the State has increasingly recognized the importance of land policy in ensuring the right to lawful residence.

In terms of investment in social housing projects in urban areas and industrial zones, national statistics show that 301 projects had been completed, providing approximately 155,800 apartments with a total floor area of more than 7.79 million square metres. In addition, 401 projects were under implementation, with an expected scale of about 454,360 apartments and a total area of approximately 22.72 million square metres. Among these, 245 projects with around 300,000 apartments were completing investment procedures, while 156 projects with around 156,700 apartments were under construction (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2023). These figures reflect an expansion in policy implementation, although the pace remains insufficient compared with the scale of demand.

The development of trade union institutions has also contributed to improving housing conditions for workers. The Vietnam General Confederation of Labour has piloted two trade union institutional projects in Ha Nam and Tien Giang provinces. The project in Dong Van II Industrial Zone in Ha Nam covers 4.04 hectares and is designed to provide 976 apartments, of which more than 300 apartments had been completed in the first phase. The project in My Tho Industrial Zone–Trung An Industrial Cluster in Tien Giang covers 3.05 hectares and is designed to provide 998 apartments. In addition, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labour has coordinated with local authorities to promote investment in trade union institutions. Twelve projects had been approved in twelve localities, while dossiers for ten additional projects in ten other localities were being completed. Forty localities had allocated land for such projects, with an average area of 3–5 hectares for each site (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2023). These efforts contribute to creating more stable living conditions for workers and strengthening the social dimension of housing policy.

Vietnam has also made important progress in ensuring lawful housing for ethnic minority groups. Vietnam has more than 14.1 million ethnic minority people, accounting for 14.7 per cent of the national population. Over the years, the Party and the State have paid close attention to the protection and promotion of ethnic minority rights, including the right to housing. To concretize constitutional and legal provisions, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 1557/QĐ-TTg on 10 September 2015, approving indicators for the implementation of Millennium Development Goals for ethnic minorities in connection with post-2015 sustainable development goals and housing support policies for poor ethnic minority households.

According to the 2019 survey on 53 ethnic minority groups, almost all ethnic minority households had housing, reaching 99.8 per cent. Among them, 95 per cent owned their own houses, while only 5 per cent lived in rented or borrowed accommodation. More than 79 per cent of ethnic minority households lived in permanent or semi-permanent houses, while 26.2 per cent lived in traditional houses. The regions with the highest proportions of ethnic minority households living in traditional houses included the Northern Midlands and Mountains, at 38.9 per cent; the North Central and Central Coast region, at 26.6 per cent; and the Central Highlands, at 17.9 per cent. The Northern Midlands and Mountains also recorded the highest average housing area per capita among ethnic minority regions, reaching 18.4 square metres per person. Among ethnic groups, the La Ha and Khang had the highest proportions of households living in traditional houses, at 82.3 per cent and 81 per cent, respectively (Tran Quynh, 2023).

For poor ethnic minority households and policy beneficiary families, Vietnam has implemented preferential credit programs to support housing construction. Social policy credit has been extended to communes, wards, and townships nationwide, with priority given to remote, border, and extremely disadvantaged areas. Poor ethnic minority households have been able to access preferential loans at interest rates approximately half of those offered by commercial banks. By August 2019, social policy credit had supported

poor ethnic minority households in building more than 215,000 houses. In addition, preferential loans for production and livelihood development helped many households improve income and accumulate resources for housing improvement. Survey results from researchers at the Banking Academy in Yen Bai, Lam Dong, and Tra Vinh showed that 82 per cent of surveyed households had acquired sufficient conditions to renovate their homes. In 2016, the number of housing projects for ethnic minority households reached its highest level during the 2014–2017 period, with nearly 4,500 houses built in the Northwest and between 500 and 1,500 houses completed in the Central Highlands and Southwest regions through social policy credit (Tran Quynh, 2023).

Housing support for poor households nationwide has also been strengthened through social policy credit and social mobilization. During the 2021–2023 period, policy credit supported the construction of more than 3,200 houses for poor households and nearly 21,000 social housing units for low-income people. These activities contributed to poverty reduction, new rural development, social security, political stability, and socio-economic development. In addition to policy credit, the national movement “The whole country joins hands for the poor—leaving no one behind” has mobilized the participation of the political system, enterprises, benefactors, and social organizations in supporting housing for poor people. The Vietnam Fatherland Front at all levels has organized annual campaigns during the peak month “For the Poor” from 17 October to 18 November, encouraging contributions to the Fund for the Poor and local social security programs. A significant part of these resources has been used to build solidarity houses for poor households, including poor ethnic minority households.

Other ministries and agencies have also participated in housing support programs for disadvantaged groups. The Ministry of Public Security has supported the construction of more than 10,000 houses and several boarding school facilities in provinces such as Son La, Dien Bien, Cao Bang, Lai Chau, Tuyen Quang, Thanh Hoa, Lang Son, and Hoa Binh. The Ministry of National Defence, through housing support programs for people with meritorious service, poor veterans, and poor households, supported the construction of 6,700 houses in Ha Giang province, including houses for policy beneficiary families, people with meritorious service, poor veterans, poor households in border communes, and poor households in inland communes. The Vietnam Fatherland Front also launched a campaign to build solidarity houses for poor households in Dien Bien province on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Dien Bien Phu Victory. The program aimed to mobilize resources to build 7,000–8,000 solidarity houses for poor and near-poor households in Dien Bien and the Northwest region between 7 May 2023 and 7 May 2024, including 5,000 houses in Dien Bien.

Despite these achievements, Vietnam continues to face several challenges in ensuring citizens' right to lawful residence. First, limited land resources and rising land prices create major barriers to housing access, particularly in large cities and urbanized areas. Demand for residential land has increased rapidly, while land allocated for housing development remains constrained. High land and housing prices make it difficult for poor and low-income households to own lawful housing.

Second, legal and administrative procedures remain complicated. Some citizens, especially those in rural, remote, and mountainous areas, face difficulties in legalizing land and housing ownership because of insufficient documentation or complex land administration procedures. This situation may result in households living in houses without full legal papers or on land without proper certificates of land-use rights.

Third, the shortage of social housing continues to be a serious problem. Although Vietnam has adopted many policies to promote social housing, the supply of affordable housing and housing for low-income people remains far below demand. As a result, many people still cannot access lawful housing at an affordable cost.

Fourth, social security mechanisms and the allocation of social housing are not always equitable or effective. In some cases, social housing distribution may fail to reach the most vulnerable groups, including poor households, ethnic minority people, workers, veterans, and other priority groups. This weakens the redistributive and social justice functions of housing policy.

Fifth, relocation and resettlement associated with infrastructure projects, urban development, and public works also create challenges. Some resettled households may not receive adequate housing support or may find it difficult to stabilize their lives in new residential areas. If not properly managed, resettlement can negatively affect the practical enjoyment of the right to lawful residence.

Sixth, access to housing finance remains limited. Poor and low-income households often face difficulties in obtaining bank loans to purchase or build houses because of limited collateral, unstable income, and complex borrowing procedures. Although preferential credit policies exist, their coverage and accessibility remain insufficient.

Finally, weaknesses in urban planning and development create further barriers to lawful residence. In some areas, urban planning lacks coordination, while uncontrolled development leads to overloaded infrastructure, inadequate public services, and a shortage of affordable housing. These problems may contribute to the emergence of informal settlements, poor urban areas, and unequal access to safe and lawful living environments.

Overall, Vietnam has achieved important progress in developing legal, institutional, and policy mechanisms to ensure citizens' right to lawful residence. Improvements in housing quality, the expansion of social housing programs, support for workers, ethnic minorities, and poor households, and the mobilization of social resources all demonstrate the State's commitment to protecting this right. However, persistent challenges related to land, finance, administration, social housing supply, urbanization, and resettlement show that the realization of lawful residence requires more comprehensive and coordinated policy solutions. Ensuring citizens' lawful residence is therefore not only a legal obligation but also a central condition for social justice, inclusive development, and the effective protection of human rights in contemporary Vietnam.

IV. 3. Policy Solutions for Ensuring Citizens' Right to Lawful Residence in Vietnam

To address the existing challenges in ensuring citizens' right to a lawful place of residence, Vietnam needs to implement a set of comprehensive and coordinated policy solutions. These solutions should not only focus on legal recognition but also strengthen the practical conditions through which citizens, especially vulnerable groups, can access lawful, stable, and affordable housing. In this regard, ensuring lawful residence should be approached as both a civil right and a social policy objective closely related to housing, land administration, urban governance, social security, and inclusive development.

First, it is necessary to reform legal procedures and administrative processes related to land and housing. Complicated procedures, unclear documentation requirements, and lengthy administrative processes remain major barriers for citizens seeking to legalize land-use rights and housing ownership, particularly in rural, remote, and disadvantaged areas. Therefore, administrative reform should focus on simplifying procedures for residence registration, housing ownership recognition, and land-related documentation. At the same time, Vietnam should further develop digital administrative systems and electronic land databases to improve transparency, reduce disputes, and facilitate citizens' access to legal procedures. This direction is consistent with the broader legal framework on residence management, which emphasizes the protection of citizens' lawful rights while improving the effectiveness of state administration (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2020). In addition, legal communication and consultation should be strengthened so that citizens, especially those in remote and ethnic minority areas, can better understand their rights and obligations concerning lawful residence and housing ownership.

Second, Vietnam should increase public investment and develop more accessible preferential housing credit policies for poor and low-income households. Although preferential credit programs have been implemented, many poor and low-income citizens still face difficulties in accessing housing loans because they lack collateral, have unstable income, or cannot satisfy conventional lending conditions. Therefore, credit policies should be adjusted in a more flexible and inclusive manner. The State should expand the eligible groups for preferential housing loans, reduce collateral requirements, extend repayment periods, and provide long-term interest rate support. Particular attention should be paid to workers and low-income labourers in industrial zones and urban areas, where housing prices are high and lawful housing ownership remains difficult. Preferential housing finance is therefore essential not only for improving living conditions but also for ensuring the substantive realization of citizens' freedom of residence and right to lawful housing (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2023).

Third, the development of social housing should be accelerated, especially in large cities, industrial zones, and areas with high population density. Although the Government has made considerable efforts to promote social housing, the current supply remains insufficient compared with the demand of low-income households, migrant workers, and urban labourers. Therefore, the State should continue to support enterprises and local authorities in developing social housing projects at affordable prices. Incentives related to land allocation, taxation, credit access, and administrative procedures should be applied more effectively to attract investment in social housing. In addition to ownership-based housing models, Vietnam should also promote long-term affordable rental housing. This model is particularly suitable for workers, young families, migrants, and people who do not yet have sufficient financial capacity to purchase housing. Expanding affordable rental housing would reduce financial pressure on low-income groups and provide them with more stable and lawful living conditions. This approach is consistent with the orientation of the Housing Law 2023, which places strong emphasis on social housing development and the responsibility of the State in creating conditions for citizens to have a place to live (National Assembly of Vietnam, 2023).

Fourth, support and training programs should be developed for households in remote, mountainous, ethnic minority, and disadvantaged areas. In many cases, people in these areas face difficulties not only because of economic hardship but also because of limited access to legal information, administrative services, and housing support policies. Therefore, local authorities and relevant agencies should organize legal consultation programs on land-use rights, housing ownership, residence registration, preferential credit, and administrative procedures. These programs should be designed in accessible language and implemented through community-

based channels so that citizens can understand and apply the law in practice. In addition, support programs for voluntary migration and livelihood stabilization should be considered for households living in areas with poor infrastructure, unsafe housing conditions, or limited development opportunities. Such programs should combine housing support with employment, vocational training, and access to basic services, thereby helping people establish lawful and stable residence in better living environments.

Fifth, sustainable urban planning and infrastructure development should be strengthened. In many urban areas, rapid population growth and uncoordinated development have led to infrastructure overload, a shortage of affordable housing, and unequal access to public services. Therefore, urban planning must be more integrated, transparent, and people-centred. Housing development should be closely linked with transport systems, water supply, electricity, schools, healthcare facilities, public spaces, and other essential services. The participation of local communities and social organizations in urban planning should also be encouraged to ensure that housing policies respond to real residential needs. At the same time, Vietnam should promote the development of satellite urban areas with adequate infrastructure and public services. This would help reduce pressure on major cities, expand lawful residential space, and create more balanced regional development. Sustainable urban planning is therefore a necessary condition for ensuring that citizens' right to lawful residence is realized not only in legal terms but also in everyday social life.

Overall, these solutions show that the protection of citizens' right to lawful residence requires a comprehensive governance approach. Legal reform, administrative simplification, housing finance, social housing development, legal education, and sustainable urban planning must be implemented in a coordinated manner. More importantly, these policies should prioritize vulnerable groups, including poor households, low-income workers, ethnic minorities, migrants, and people affected by relocation or resettlement. Ensuring lawful residence is not only a matter of housing policy but also a fundamental requirement for protecting human rights, promoting social justice, and advancing sustainable development in Vietnam.

This article has clarified the theoretical and practical significance of citizens' freedom of residence in Ho Chi Minh's thought and its application in contemporary Vietnam. In Ho Chi Minh's view, freedom of residence is not only a civil right but also a fundamental condition for human dignity, social justice, and people's happiness. This value has been progressively institutionalized in Vietnam's constitutional and legal system, especially through the 2013 Constitution, the Law on Residence 2020, the Housing Law 2023, and policies on social housing and housing support for vulnerable groups.

The analysis shows that Vietnam has achieved important progress in improving housing conditions, expanding social housing programs, and supporting workers, poor households, and ethnic minority communities. However, challenges remain, including high housing prices, limited land resources, insufficient social housing supply, complicated administrative procedures, unequal access to housing finance, and pressure from rapid urbanization. Therefore, Vietnam should continue to reform housing and land procedures, expand preferential credit, accelerate social housing development, strengthen support for disadvantaged groups, and promote sustainable urban planning.

Overall, ensuring citizens' lawful residence is both a legal responsibility and a practical expression of Vietnam's people-centred development orientation. It contributes to protecting human rights, promoting social equity, and realizing Ho Chi Minh's vision of a society based on independence, freedom, happiness, and human dignity.

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