

# Vietnam maintains ban on deep-water fishing in polluted area

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In this April 28, 2016, file photo, villagers bury dead fish on a beach in Quang Binh, Vietnam. Vietnam on Thursday, May 18, 2017, said it is maintaining the ban on deep-water fishing in four central provinces one year after Formosa Plastics Group, a Taiwanese-owned steel plant, discharged toxins into the sea and caused the country's worst environmental disaster. (Vo Thi Dung/VNA via AP, File)

Vietnam is maintaining a ban on deep-water fishing in four central provinces one year after a Taiwanese-owned steel plant discharged toxins into the sea and caused the country's worst environmental disaster.

The state-run Tuoi Tre newspaper on Thursday quoted Deputy Prime Minister Truong Hoa Binh as saying fishermen should not fish for seafood in deep water within 20 nautical miles (23 miles) from the coast in the four provinces until the Ministry of Health finds it safe to eat and maritime resources are restored.

The \$10.6 billion steel complex owned by Formosa Plastics Group, which includes a steel plant, a power plant and a deep sea port in Ha Tinh province, discharged toxins such as cyanide and phenol during a test run in April last year.

It caused massive deaths of fish and other sea life along more than 200 kilometers (125 miles) of coastline, devastating fishing communities and tourism in the four provinces. The plant owner was ordered to pay \$500 million in compensation.

In September, the Ministry of Health said tests on samples of sea life in shallow water such as tunas and mackerels in the four provinces showed they were safe to eat, while 132 out of 1,040 samples tested from sea life in deep water such as shrimp, crabs and squid were found to contain phenol.

Several senior officials have been disciplined for their roles in the disaster, including Vo Kim Cu, former Communist Party chief and governor of Ha Tinh province.

The Standing Committee of the National Assembly on Monday accepted Cu's resignation as a deputy of the assembly.

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