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New finds this week

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VIETNAM STEPS UP IP ENFORCEMENT IN A NEW NATIONWIDE CAMPAIGN

Overview

Vietnam is entering a new phase of intellectual property enforcement with the launch of a nationwide campaign targeting IP infringement from May 07 to May 30, 2026. This campaign reflects the Government's increasingly strict approach toward counterfeit goods, online piracy, unlicensed software use, and other forms of IP violations that have affected both domestic and foreign rights holders.

The campaign was introduced under Official Telegram No. 38/CD-TTg, issued by the Prime Minister on 5 May 2026. Under this directive, ministries, sectors, and local authorities are required to conduct coordinated and simultaneous enforcement actions across the country. The instruction is clear: IP infringement must be handled firmly and without exception.

This is not a routine inspection program. The campaign is designed as a peak enforcement period, with a specific target to increase the number of handled cases by at least 20% compared with May 2025. This shows that Vietnam is seeking not only to strengthen enforcement in principle, but also to produce measurable results within a short and focused timeframe.



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Strategic Importance of the Campaign

The timing of the campaign is especially important. It follows the United States Trade Representative's 2026 Special 301 Report, in which Vietnam was designated as a Priority Foreign Country due to serious concerns over IP protection and enforcement. This designation places significant pressure on Vietnam to demonstrate stronger and more effective action.

The concerns raised include online piracy, counterfeiting, weak border enforcement, unlicensed software use, and insufficient criminal penalties in certain copyright-related cases. Although Vietnam has taken several enforcement actions in recent years, including against major online piracy platforms, international stakeholders have continued to question whether existing penalties are strong enough to deter repeated violations.

Against this background, the May 2026 campaign can be seen as a direct and practical response. It allows Vietnam to show that it is willing to take coordinated action across multiple enforcement channels, including market surveillance, customs, police, local authorities, and technical IP agencies.

The campaign also comes shortly after the 2025 Amended IP Law took effect on April 01, 2026. Together with its implementing regulations, the amended law provides a stronger legal foundation for improving IP protection and enforcement. The May campaign therefore serves as an early test of how these legal changes may be applied in practice.



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Focus on Online Piracy and Counterfeiting

One of the most notable features of the campaign is its focus on copyright piracy, especially in the digital environment. Pirated films, music, mobile games, and television programs are among the high-priority targets. Enforcement authorities are expected to focus on high-traffic infringing websites and organizations operating or supporting such platforms.

This focus is important because online piracy has long been one of the most difficult enforcement areas in Vietnam. Digital infringement can spread quickly, involve anonymous operators, and affect rights holders across many jurisdictions. Stronger action against online piracy may therefore help Vietnam respond to international concerns while also protecting legitimate creative industries.

At the same time, the campaign continues to address traditional IP violations, including trademark counterfeiting and infringement of geographical indications. Market surveillance forces, local People's Committees, customs authorities, and other competent bodies are expected to increase inspections and seizures of suspected infringing goods.

The role of customs is also significant. Proactive border enforcement can help prevent counterfeit goods from entering or leaving the market. For rights holders, this may create a useful opportunity to work more closely with customs authorities by recording IP rights, providing product identification guidance, and supporting enforcement actions where necessary.



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Stronger Coordination Among Authorities

The campaign requires a high level of coordination among Vietnamese authorities. The Ministry of Science and Technology is expected to act as the lead technical authority for industrial property matters, especially in providing expert opinions and conclusions in infringement cases.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism is responsible for strengthening enforcement in copyright-related areas, including software licensing compliance, films, music, mobile games, and television programs. Public awareness activities are also expected to be intensified, which may help reduce the demand for pirated content and counterfeit products.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade, local People's Committees, and market surveillance authorities will focus on industrial property infringement and trademark counterfeiting. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance, through customs authorities, will play an important role in inspecting and seizing suspected infringing goods at the border.

Another notable point is the involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This ministry is tasked with communicating Vietnam's enforcement outcomes to international stakeholders. This shows that the campaign is not only a domestic enforcement measure, but also part of Vietnam's broader effort to improve its international image and demonstrate progress in IP protection.

Practical Implications for Rights Holders

For rights holders, the May 2026 campaign presents an important opportunity. Businesses with registered IP rights in Vietnam should consider reviewing their portfolios to ensure that registrations, ownership records, renewals, and licensing arrangements are accurate and up to date.

Rights holders should also monitor the market more actively during this period. If infringement is detected, this may be a suitable time to coordinate with enforcement authorities, submit complaints, provide evidence, and request appropriate action. The campaign's strict timeline and enforcement targets may increase the willingness of authorities to act quickly on well-prepared cases.

For companies affected by online piracy, evidence collection will be especially important. Screenshots, website traffic information, payment details, domain information, and records showing ownership of copyrighted works may help support enforcement requests. For trademark owners, product comparison materials, genuine and counterfeit samples, registration certificates, and market investigation reports may be useful.

The campaign also reminds businesses that IP enforcement should not be treated as a one-time reaction. A strong enforcement strategy usually requires a combination of registration, monitoring, evidence collection, authority engagement, and follow-up action.



Conclusion

The nationwide enforcement campaign from 7 to 30 May 2026 may become one of the most significant IP enforcement efforts Vietnam has launched in recent years. Its scope is broad, its timeline is urgent, and its targets are measurable. More importantly, it reflects Vietnam's intention to respond seriously to both domestic enforcement needs and international concerns.

While the long-term impact will depend on the actual results and follow-up actions after the campaign ends, this initiative sends a clear message that IP infringement is receiving higher-level attention from the Government. If implemented effectively, the campaign may help improve deterrence, strengthen market confidence, and create a more reliable environment for innovation, creativity, and brand protection in Vietnam.

For rights holders, the message is equally clear. This is a timely moment to review IP assets, monitor infringement risks, and engage with the relevant authorities where enforcement action is needed. The campaign may not solve every enforcement challenge immediately, but it represents a meaningful step toward stronger and more coordinated IP protection in Vietnam.

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