

Viet Nam**Father Nguyen Van Ly****dissident priest/publisher jailed again**

(2010 photo courtesy of Radio Free Asia)

Since the 1970s, Father Nguyen Van Ly, now 64, has spent almost two decades in prison — in harsh conditions and often in solitary confinement — for calling on Vietnamese authorities to respect freedom of expression and other human rights.

Father Ly, a Catholic priest, is one of dozens of activists serving long jail terms for their peaceful criticism of the government. He is in very poor health and should never have been arrested in the first place. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

Please call for the immediate & unconditional release of prisoner of conscience Nguyen Van Ly and for assurances that he has full access to any medical attention he may require as well as access to his family and a lawyer of his choice.

Lieutenant General Tran Dai Quang
Minister of Public Security
Ministry of Public Security
44 Yet Kieu Street
Ha Noi
Vietnam

Ambassador Nguyen Quoc Cuong
Embassy of Vietnam
1233 20th St, NW #400
Washington, DC 20036

Father Nguyen Van Ly was re-arrested in the central diocese of Hue and taken back to prison in an ambulance on 25 July 2011 while on parole to treat serious health problems. Authorities claim he was returned to prison for distributing anti-government leaflets during his medical leave.

He had been serving an 8-year prison term (to be followed by 5 years of house arrest) for “conducting propaganda against the state” when a stroke and evidence of a brain tumour led to a “temporary suspension” of his sentence in March 2010.

Until his latest arrest he had been living under surveillance at a house for retired priests in the diocese of the Archbishop of Hue.

When he was in Ba Sao prison in northern Viet Nam, Father Ly was held mainly in solitary confinement. When he suffered a stroke there in November 2009, he did not receive proper diagnosis or adequate medical treatment and was only transferred to a prison hospital in Ha Noi some two weeks later. Despite being partially paralysed, he was returned to his prison cell on 11 December 2009.

Father Ly is one of the founders of the internet-based pro-democracy movement Bloc 8406, and has helped to set up other political groups, which are banned by the Vietnamese authorities. He also published a dissident journal, *To Do Ngon Luan* (Freedom and Democracy). His “Call for Freedom of Speech” (15 April 2006) is accessible in English online at <http://www.vietnamreview.net/Call_for_Freedom_of_Speech.html>. It apparently is one of the reasons he was sent to prison in March 2007.

Viet Nam is a 1988 signatory to the International Covenant on Civil & Political Rights, which states that governments will not penalize critical expression.

Salutation: *Dear Minister*

Airmail postage abroad: 98¢

Salutation: *Dear Ambassador*



Amnesty International
focuses on preventing and ending
grave abuses of the rights
to physical & mental integrity,
freedom of conscience
& expression,
and freedom from discrimination,
while promoting all human rights.

Our particular concern during Banned Books Week is to draw attention to writers, editors, librarians, publishers and readers who suffer human rights violations because of their work.

from the
**Universal Declaration
of Human Rights**

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience . . .

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information & ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 27

. . . Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. . . .

All of these letters and signatures were extremely important in keeping Tissa's case alive and finally bringing about his release. We urge all of you to continue your good work so that others who are wrongly held will be able to survive.

Ronnate Tissainayagam,
wife of former Sri Lanka prisoner of conscience J.S. ("Tissa") Tissainayagam,
freed in June 2010

**Banned Books Week 2011
IMPORTANT NOTES:**

Please do not attempt to write directly to a prisoner; in some countries there might be reprisals. Experience shows that the rarity of replies from governments does not mean our letters are being ignored. If someone does receive a reply, please send a copy to the AI address on the other side (top) of this page.