

URGENT ACTION

PRIEST RETURNED TO PRISON FROM SICK LEAVE

Human rights activist Father Nguyen Van Ly, a Catholic priest, was arrested by police in the diocese of Hue, central Viet Nam, on the afternoon of 25 July and taken back to prison by ambulance. He had been allowed out for medical treatment in March 2010, after he suffered a stroke and was diagnosed with a brain tumour.

Father Nguyen Van Ly, who is 64, was serving an eight-year prison term in Ba Sao prison, Nam Ha province in northern Viet Nam when he had a stroke in November 2009. He received neither a proper diagnosis nor adequate medical care. The authorities sent him to Prison Hospital 198 in Ha Noi two weeks later, but returned him to prison on 11 December, though he was still partially paralyzed.

On 15 March 2010, Father Ly was granted a 12-month "temporary suspension" of his prison sentence so that he could receive medical treatment. Until his recent arrest he had been living under surveillance at a house for retired priests in the diocese of the Archbishop of Hue.

The authorities have claimed that Father Ly has been returned to prison because he had distributed documents critical of government policies and incited demonstrations. He is said to be in poor health.

Father Ly had been sentenced to eight years' imprisonment in March 2007 for "conducting propaganda" against the state, with five years' house arrest on release. He 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 secretly published a dissident journal, *To Do Ngon Luan* (Freedom and Democracy). Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience. He has spent around 17 years in prison since the 1970s on account of his calls for respect for human rights and freedom of expression.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to release Father Nguyen Van Ly immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience;
- Urging them to reveal where he is, and allow him immediate access to his family and a lawyer of his choice;
- Asking them to ensure that Father Ly has full access to any medical attention he may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 SEPTEMBER 2011 TO:

Minister of Public Security
Lt Gen Tran Dai Quang
Ministry of Public Security
44 Yet Kieu Street
Ha Noi
Viet Nam

Fax: +8443 942 0223

Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs
Pham Binh Manh
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
1 Ton That Dam Street
Ba Dinh district, Ha Noi
Viet Nam

Fax: + 8443 823 1872

Email: bc.mfa@mofa.gov.vn

Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 313/09. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA41/011/2009/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

When he was in Ba Sao prison, Father Ly was held mainly in solitary confinement and had several health problems, including high blood pressure and injuries from[?] a serious fall, in the seven months before he had a stroke. He did not receive adequate medical treatment. He was later diagnosed with a brain tumour.

Freedom of expression, association and assembly are severely restricted in Viet Nam. The authorities routinely harass and imprison peaceful activists critical of government policies and advocating greater freedoms in order to silence them. Dozens of prisoners of conscience, including bloggers, lawyers, writers, labour activists, business people, and supporters of opposition groups, are serving long prison terms under legislation which criminalizes peaceful dissent.

Prison conditions are harsh, with inadequate provision of food and medical care. Prisoners are reliant on families to support their needs.

Name: Father Nguyen Van Ly

Gender m/f: m

Affiliation: Human rights activist

Further information on UA: 313/09 Index: ASA 41/003/2011 Issue Date: 26 July 2011