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<http://www.rsf.org/vietnam-ailing-dissident-catholic-priest-28-07-2011,40711.html>

Asia - Vietnam

Cruel imprisonment

Ailing dissident Catholic priest sent back to prison

28 July 2011

Reporters Without Borders strongly condemns the re-arrest of Father **Nguyen Van Ly**, a human rights activist and editor of the underground publication Tu Do Ngon Luan. Ly was returned to prison this week to resume serving the eight-year jail sentence for anti-government propaganda he received in 2007. He had been on medical parole since March 2010 (read [more](#)).

"Sending a 64-year-old Catholic priest in very poor health back to prison is very cruel," Reporters Without Borders said. "Ly had three strokes while in prison and had a brain tumour at the time of his release. The conditions in which he is now being held, like those of prisoners of conscience in general in Vietnam, are a matter of great concern. We call for his immediate release and for him to be allowed access to the medical treatment he needs."

Speaking on condition of anonymity, a prison official told the Associated Press on 26 July that Ly had been incarcerated the previous day in Ba Sao prison, 500 km from his home. A prominent dissident and member of Block 8406, a movement created in 2006 that advocates a multi-party democracy, Ly has had several spells in prison and his health was declining rapidly when he was released last year.

Prison conditions are so bad in Vietnam that they constitute a form of psychological and physical torture. Visiting rights are denied, there is no access to medical care, and it is even hard to obtain adequate food on regular basis.

Reporters Without Borders is also very concerned about **Nguyen Van Hai**, a blogger known by the pen-name of **Dieu Cay** and founder of the Free Vietnamese Journalists Club, who is still being held although he should have been released in October 2010. He has been denied any contact with his family for months and cannot see his lawyer. According to the latest reports, he has lost the use of an arm while in prison. We also call for his immediate release.

Amid an apparent deterioration in the situation of netizens in Vietnam Reporters Without Borders urges the authorities to be lenient with two other bloggers, **Cu Huy Ha Vu**, whose case is due to be heard on appeal on 2 August, and **Pham Minh Hoang** (www.pkquoc.multiply.com), who is about to complete his first year in "preventive custody."

Under Vietnamese law, the authorities can hold a political detainee for an initial period of four months that can be renewed three times without a court hearing and without the detainee being allowed access to a lawyer. Reporters Without Borders calls for this blogger's immediate release.

Vu was [sentenced](#) on 4 April to seven years in prison for anti-government propaganda. Hoang, who has French as well as Vietnamese nationality, as been [held](#) since 13 August 2010 for "activities aimed at overthrowing the government" under article 79 of the criminal code.

Vietnam is ranked 165th out of 178 countries in the 2010 Reporters Without Borders press freedom [index](#) and is on the Reporters Without Borders list of "[Enemies of the Internet](#)."
