



## **FREEDOM NOW**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **FREEDOM NOW HAILS CALL OF 37 MEMBERS OF U.S. SENATE TO VIETNAM PRESIDENT TO RELEASE RENOWNED HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE FATHER NGUYEN VAN LY**

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Today, a bipartisan group of 37 members of the United States Senate, led by Sens. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Sam Brownback (R-KS) requested President Nguyễn Minh Triết to release longtime human-rights advocate Father Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly. In the letter, attached, the Senators declared:

Given [the] serious flaws in relation to his arrest, trial, and imprisonment, we request that you facilitate Father Ly's immediate and unconditional release from prison, and allow him to return to his home and work without restrictions on his internationally guaranteed freedom of expression, association, or movement.

Other signatories to the letter included Assistant Majority Leader Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL), Assistant Minority Leader Sen. Jon Kyl (R-AZ), and Chairman of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT).

Freedom Now President Jared Genser stated: "We are strongly encouraged by these Senators' efforts. It is our hope that the Government of Vietnam will heed their call and bring to an end the continued and unjust imprisonment of Father Ly."

Father Ly is a 63-year-old Catholic priest and a prominent advocate for religious freedom, democracy, and human rights in Vietnam, for which he has suffered repeated harassment and imprisonment. In a four-hour trial on March 30, 2007, he was accused and convicted of disseminating anti-government propaganda and sentenced to eight years in prison and five years house arrest. During the trial, Father Ly was physically restrained, gagged, and prohibited from putting forth a defense. Father Ly is an inspirational symbol among Vietnamese activists and human rights defenders everywhere.

As in the case of Father Ly's earlier detention, where both the Senate and the House of Representatives introduced resolutions calling for Father Ly's release, his detention is viewed by many as a bellwether for human rights in Vietnam. Freedom Now welcomes the support of these Senators and joins them in calling on President Triết to release Father Ly and comply with its commitments under international law and its own constitution.

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