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## **Press Release**

### **Demonstration against Persecution of Political Dissents in Vietnam Ottawa, March 11, 2007**

The Vietnamese Canadian Federation, in collaboration with the Ontario Association for Human Rights in Vietnam and the Vietnamese communities in Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa will hold a demonstration on Sunday, March 11, 2007, in front of the Embassy of the Vietnamese Communist government, 470 Wilbrod St., Ottawa, to protest against the recent arrest of Father Nguyen Van Ly, an internationally-known religious leader in Vietnam, and other political dissidents.

According to Reuters and AFP, Father Ly was arrested by the Vietnamese security police on February 19, 2007, for “making anti-government propaganda” and for “contacts with several political reactionary opportunists at home and abroad to fight against the state, denying the leading role of the (Vietnamese Communist) Party”.

Over the last 30 years, Father Ly has been arrested and imprisoned several times for calling for freedoms of expression and worship. Most recently, he joined a group of other political dissidents in issuing the Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam on April 8, 2006.

Since his recent arrest, due to the lack of medical care and the harsh detention conditions, his health is fast deteriorating.

In addition to Father Ly, two dissident lawyers – Nguyen Van Dai and Le Thi Cong Nhan – were also taken into custody as recently as today, March 6.

The arrest of Father Ly and other political dissidents is yet another sign that the Vietnamese Communist government still does not tolerate political dissidence – even expressed through non-violent ways -- and has only resorted to harsh measures to suppress calls for reform of the political dictatorship that has been imposed on the whole of Vietnam following the fall of South Vietnam in April 1975. This is a clear contravention of the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which Vietnam is one of the signatories.

In the spirit of international collaboration and good will towards the Vietnamese people, as evidenced by the APEC Summit held in Hanoi last November, the Vietnamese Canadian Federation calls upon the Government of Canada to demand Vietnamese Communist authorities to release Father Ly and other political dissidents immediately and unconditionally.

The Federation was joined by the following organization in its appeal:

World Vietnamese Buddhist Order

Free World Vietnamese Physicians Association

Alliance for Democracy in Vietnam

Vietnamese Human Rights Association of Ontario

Canada Committee for Religious Freedom in Vietnam

Assembly of Veterans of the Republic of Vietnam - Canada Coordination Centre, and  
Vietnam Reform Party.

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For immediate release

March 6, 2007

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