



*Pierre Lemieux,
Député / Member of Parliament
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell*

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Mr. Pierre Lemieux (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw the attention of the House to a disturbing development in the Social Republic of Vietnam where an innocent man is about to face prosecution for exercising his basic religious and political freedoms.

Father Nguyen Van Ly, a Vietnamese Roman Catholic priest, was previously sentenced to more than a decade in prison for giving candid testimony to a subcommittee of the United States Congress on the dire human rights situation in Vietnam. Later this month he will again stand in the dock on yet more fabricated charges.

The situation for political reformers and dissidents in Vietnam is dire, with opponents of the regime being routinely rounded up, imprisoned and denied the basic right of due process. Religious minorities are being persecuted for their beliefs. Father Ly is the latest victim of this.

I call upon the Vietnamese government to allow independent foreign observers to monitor Father Ly's trial and to allow Father Ly to choose his own attorney.

The government in Saigon needs to respect fundamental freedoms. Canada's new government will always stand on the side of human rights and freedoms, and it will do so proudly.