

dictatorship. Since 1977, the government has repeatedly harassed him, repeatedly arrested him, and repeatedly jailed him for his advocacy of religious freedom.

So the Congress today calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Father Ly. But we also recognize that he is not alone. He represents the struggle of all of those citizens of Vietnam who are fighting for freedom and for democracy.

Another piece of legislation to address that struggle is the Vietnam Human Rights Act, H.R. 1587, which I hope the House will soon consider. This legislation will prohibit nonhumanitarian assistance to the government of Vietnam, it will support the efforts of human rights and democracy advocates there, and it will help us work to overcome the government's jamming of Radio Free Asia and their Vietnamese broadcast. It will help resettle refugees and require an annual State Department report on the progress towards freedom and democracy in Vietnam, or the lack of it.

This resolution that is before us today, of which I am an initial cosponsor, is, therefore, a call to action. It is a call, of course, upon the Vietnamese Government to act; but it is also our call to action. The Vietnamese Government and other dictatorships around the globe must come to realize that oppression does not go unnoticed, that the Congress and the President will continue to fight for those like Father Ly who seek meaningful change in their country.

Mr. Speaker, I am very, very proud to join the gentleman from New Jersey (Chairman SMITH) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) in supporting this resolution, and I am very proud of the stands for human rights that this Congress will soon take.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 2 minutes to my good friend and distinguished colleague, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ), a champion of human rights.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 378, a resolution which calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Catholic Father and human rights champion Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly. I thank my colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH), for bringing this resolution to the floor. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the bill, and I am proud to work with him on the bipartisan Vietnam Caucus.

On this day, the 10th anniversary of Vietnam Human Rights Day and the 14th anniversary of the Vietnamese Manifesto of Nonviolent Movement For Human Rights, there can be nothing more appropriate action for this Congress than to pass this resolution about Father Ly. Why would that be? Well, we as Members of the United States Congress have a special responsibility, for, you see, it was testimony to this

Congress, to this Nation, that Father Ly gave us that put him behind bars.

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In fact, we brought forward that testimony in a human rights caucus hearing on religious freedoms in Vietnam, or, should I say, the lack of religious freedom in Vietnam. So we have a particular responsibility to let the world know and to put pressure on the Vietnamese Government with respect to Father Ly's incarceration.

In reaction to Father Ly's defense of human rights and his pronouncements on the need for religious freedom and nonviolent resistance, the Government of Vietnam branded him a traitor, a traitor, and prohibited him from carrying out his religious duties as a priest and sentenced him to 10 years of prison for "damaging the government's unit policy."

The imprisonment of Father Ly is not only a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it is a direct attack on each and every one of us who value human rights.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New Jersey, and I thank the gentleman from California for being such a strong supporter of human rights in the world, and I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. AKIN), and I thank him for his support on human rights in general and human rights in Vietnam in particular.

Mr. AKIN. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to be able to join my colleagues today and to add my support for House Concurrent Resolution 378 calling for the immediate and unconditional release of father Thaddeus Nguyen Van Ly.

Father Ly has peacefully campaigned for more than 30 years for religious freedom in his country, and he has called on the officials of that nation of Vietnam to allow churches to appoint their own leadership and to stop listing people's religious affiliation on their I.D. card, and to return property that was confiscated from the churches to those particular denominations and faiths.

Now, recently, Father Ly, as we have heard, has been sentenced to 15 years of solitary confinement, a very serious sentence, for merely advocating people having the right for free religious expression. That sentence has been mitigated by 5 years, still a 10-year sentence. In the brief time that he had to speak to his own family, he made the following statement: "My duty and my conscience required me to fight for the freedom of our church. If I had realized those terrifying situations for our church and had not done anything, I would have been guilty before God. Now I think I have accomplished my duty, I do not feel sorry for myself."

Father Ly, though he lives on the other side of the world, is in a sense a brother of each of ours. This is a personal affront that the Government of Vietnam has stood against those people who have the courage to allow people to express their own personal consciences.

It is particularly appropriate in this Chamber and at this time for us to recall the words of Madison on the subject of property. When property was discussed by our founders, they did not think so much of a piece of land or even of possession, but they thought of the property first and foremost and closest to the heart of all true lovers of freedom: It was the property of our own convictions, the property of our own soul, the property to be able to express our opinion and our devotion to whichever God it is that we would worship. And it is this fundamental, fundamental, heartfelt core of American belief which binds us to freedom-fighters all over the world and which calls us to strong condemnation of the Government of Vietnam, that they would trample people's right to worship and freedom under their feet with total disregard, and would lock a champion of freedom like this away for 10 years, away from his family, and harassing his family.

So I strongly add my support to the gentleman and his resolution, H. Con. Res. 378.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, we have no additional requests for time, and I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HAYES). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 378, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 378, the concurrent resolution just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.