

DEFENDING FREEDOMS PROJECT

Highlighting the Plight of Prisoners of Conscience Around the World

HEARING

BEFORE THE

TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

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WITNESSES

Dr. Robert P. George

Dr. George is the McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University. He has served on the President's Council on Bioethics and as a presidential appointee to the United States Commission on Civil Rights. He has also served on UNESCO's World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST), of which he remains a corresponding member. A graduate of Swarthmore College and Harvard Law School, Professor George also earned a master's degree in theology from Harvard and a doctorate in philosophy of law from Oxford University, which he attended on a Knox Scholarship from Harvard. He holds honorary doctorates of law, letters, science, ethics, humane letters, civil law, and juridical science.

He is the author of *Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality* and *In Defense of Natural Law*, among other books. His articles and review essays have appeared in the *Harvard Law Review*, the *Yale Law Journal*, the *Columbia Law Review*, the *Review of Politics*, the *Review of Metaphysics*, the *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, and *Law and Philosophy*. He has also written for the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, *First Things* magazine, *National Review*, the *Boston Review*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*.

Professor George is a former Judicial Fellow at the Supreme Court of the United States, where he received the Justice Tom C. Clark Award. His other honors include the United States Presidential Citizens Medal, the Honorific Medal for the Defense of Human Rights of the Republic of Poland, the Bradley Prize for Intellectual and Civic Achievement, the Phillip Merrill Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Liberal Arts of the American Council of Trustees and Alumni, a Silver Gavel Award of the American Bar Association, and the Paul Bator Award of the Federalist Society for Law and Public Policy.

He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and is Of Counsel to the law firm of Robinson & McElwee.

Ms. Geng He

Geng He is the wife of the renowned Chinese lawyer and prisoner of conscience Gao Zhisheng, who has been repeatedly detained and tortured in response to his peaceful legal advocacy on behalf numerous clients facing persecution by the Chinese government. Under constant surveillance and harassment in China, Geng He and her two children sought asylum in the United States in 2009 after a harrowing escape through Thailand. Since arriving in the United States, Geng He has continued to advocate for her husband's release. She has testified before the US House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations and the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. Her opinion pieces have appeared in publications such as the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*.

Mr. Jared Genser

Jared Genser is Founder of Freedom Now, a non-governmental organization that works to free prisoners of conscience worldwide. Previously, Genser was a partner in the government affairs practice of DLA Piper LLP and a management consultant with McKinsey & Company. In addition to Gao Zhisheng, his pro bono clients have included former Czech Republic President Václav Havel and Nobel Peace Prize Laureates Aung San Suu Kyi, Liu Xiaobo, Desmond Tutu, and Elie Wiesel. Genser holds a B.S. from Cornell University, an M.P.P. from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, where he was an Alumni Public Service Fellow, and a J.D. *cum laude* from the University of Michigan Law School. He is author of *The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention: Commentary and Guide to Practice* (Cambridge University Press, Forthcoming 2014). In addition, he is co-editor of *The UN Security Council in the Age of Human Rights* (Cambridge University Press, Forthcoming April 2014) and *The Responsibility to Protect: The Promise of Stopping Mass Atrocities in Our Times* (Oxford University Press, 2011). Genser is a recipient of the American Bar Association's International Human Rights Award and is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Mr. Joshua Colangelo-Bryan

Joshua Colangelo-Bryan is a Senior Attorney at Dorsey & Whitney LLP in New York, where he specializes in complex civil litigation and white-collar criminal defense. Further, Joshua devotes a substantial portion of his practice to pro bono matters, including as a consultant to Human Rights Watch. Prior to Dorsey, Joshua served with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo, where he was involved in the prosecution of criminal cases involving war crimes and terrorism. Joshua has provided commentary regarding national security and international law issues for Good Morning America, ABC World News Tonight, BBC World News, CBS Radio, NPR, and other media outlets. He has authored op-eds on such issues, including for *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Miami Herald*.

Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc Minh

Prior to the communist takeover of the Republic of Vietnam in 1975, Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc Minh was a public servant in rural development in Khanh Hoa Province and then served at the Air Force Training Center in Nha Trang. After 1975 she worked in the re-forestation program. After retirement in 2007, she has volunteered with the Vietnam Red Cross in Lam Dong Province.

Mr. Natan Sharansky

Natan Sharansky was born in 1948 in Donetsk, Ukraine. He graduated from the Physical Technical Institute in Moscow with a degree in computer science. After graduating, he applied for an exit visa to Israel, which he was denied for "security reasons". Very quickly he became involved in the struggle of Soviet Jewry to earn their

freedom and emigrate to Israel. At the same time, he joined the human rights movement in the Soviet Union led by Andrei Sakharov. He became one of the founding members of the Moscow Helsinki Group which united Soviet dissidents of all types. Natan Sharansky soon became an unofficial spokesperson for both movements.

In 1977, a Soviet newspaper alleged that Mr. Sharansky was collaborating with the CIA. Despite denials from every level of the U.S. Government, Mr. Sharansky was found guilty and sentenced to thirteen years in prison including solitary confinement and hard labor. In the courtroom prior to the announcement of his verdict, Mr. Sharansky in a public statement said: "To the court I have nothing to say – to my wife and the Jewish people I say "Next Year in Jerusalem". After nine years of imprisonment, due to intense international pressure and a campaign led by his wife, Avital Sharansky, Mr. Sharansky was released on February 11, 1986, emigrated to Israel, and arrived in Jerusalem on that very day.

Upon his arrival to Israel he continued the struggle for opening the gates of the Soviet Union. The final chapter of this historic struggle for the release of Soviet Jews was the momentous rally of over 250,000 people on December 7th, 1987, of which Natan Sharansky was the initiator and driving force. The rally coincided with Soviet President Gorbachev's first visit in Washington and was influential in pressuring the Soviet Union to ease its restrictions on emigration.

Ten years after arriving in Israel, Sharansky founded the political party Yisrael B'Aliyah which means both "Israel on the Rise" and "Israel for Immigration."

From 1996-2005 Natan Sharansky served as Minister as well as Deputy Prime Minister in four successive Israeli governments. In November 2006 Natan Sharansky resigned from the Israeli Knesset and assumed the position of Chairman of the newly established Adelson Institute for Strategic Studies at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem. He is also the Chairman of One Jerusalem and Beth Hatefutsoth, the Jewish Diaspora Museum in Tel Aviv.

In June 2009, Natan Sharansky was elected Chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel. Natan Sharansky was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1986 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2006. He has continued to lead human rights efforts both through his writings as well as public activities. His memoir, *Fear No Evil*, was published in the United States in 1988 and has been translated into nine languages. His *New York Times* bestseller, *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Freedom and Terror* attracted wide-spread attention. After reading the book, President George Bush was quoted saying: "If you want to understand my political DNA, read this book." His latest book, *Defending Identity: Its Indispensable Role in Protecting Democracy* published by Public Affairs was released in June 2008. Natan Sharansky is married to Avital. They reside in Jerusalem and have two daughters, Rachel and Hanna, and two grandchildren.

Mr. Gal Beckerman

Gal Beckerman is the opinion editor at *The Forward*. He was a longtime editor and staff writer at the *Columbia Journalism Review* and has also written for the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, and *The Wall Street Journal*, among other publications. He was a Fellow at the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation in Berlin and the recipient of a

Pulitzer Traveling Fellowship from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. His first book, *When They Come for Us, We'll Be Gone*, was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in September 2010. It was named was one of the best books of the year by *The New Yorker* and the *Washington Post*, and received both the 2010 National Jewish Book Award and the 2012 Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature.

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2014

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Commission met, pursuant to call, at 10:00 a.m., in Room HVC-210, U.S. Capitol Building, Hon. Frank R. Wolf, Co-Chairman of the Commission, presiding.

Mr. WOLF. I want to thank all of you for joining us at this morning's hearing on the plight of prisoners of conscience worldwide with a specific focus on how the U.S. Government can more effectively--and not only the government, all of us as individuals--advocate for those whose voices have been silenced.

I want to offer a special word of thanks to our distinguished witnesses, many of whom have traveled great distances at their own expense to be here today and to tell their story, and in some cases the stories of their loved ones who unjustly languish in prison.

In December 2012, the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, in conjunction with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and Amnesty International USA, launched the Defending Freedoms Project with the aim of supporting human rights and religious freedom throughout the world with a particular focus on prisoners of conscience.

This initiative involves members of Congress adopting prisoners and committing to advocating on their behalf. I was pleased to adopt Chinese dissident Gao, Gao Zhisheng, who has suffered greatly at the hands of his own government solely for proclaiming his Christian faith and defending other marginalized and persecuted people in China. We will soon hear testimony from his wife, who has committed herself to ensuring that her husband is not forgotten.

In October, I wrote Secretary Kerry and urged him to meet with Gao's wife, and this is my second request in eight months. In both instances, this simple request fell on deaf ears. To date, Secretary Kerry has not agreed to meet with her.

With history as our guide, we know that such meetings, symbolic as they may be, send powerful messages to a watching world and can often be the catalyst for better treatment in prison and even freedom. I think this point will become clear as today's hearing unfolds.

In Geng He's devotion to her husband's cause, I am reminded of Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky's wife Avital who famously left no stone unturned in her campaign to secure his freedom. President Reagan's Secretary of State George Shultz once said, and I quote, "If the cause is right, never give up. Never give up. We didn't give up, and thankfully neither did Avital." A rallying cry, if ever there was one, for those committed to securing basic human rights, including religious freedom for repressed people, wherever they may be.

I would venture that Mr. Sharansky would share this sentiment, and I am honored that he has taken the time to join us today.

I was first elected to Congress in 1980 on President Ronald Reagan's coattails and have long sought to model his approach to human rights advocacy, especially with regard to the Soviet Union. Even at the height of the Cold War when there were a host of bilateral issues on the agenda with Russia, Reagan consistently and publicly raised human rights concerns, along with people like Scoop Jackson and others, not simply in generic terms, but, rather, he raised and they raised specific cases, individual cases, advocating for the release of people by name.

Among those people was Natan Sharansky. In 1989, Congressman Chris Smith, my good friend, and I visited Perm Camp 35 where Mr. Sharansky had spent nearly a decade. We took video footage of his cell. It was brutal--brutal. It is in the middle of the Ural Mountains. He may mention it today. There is a torture chamber called the shizo. I asked Mr. Sharansky if he had been in the shizo, and he said he spent almost three years in the shizo.

We returned, Chris and I, and sought to remind our own foreign policy establishment that political prisoners were not simply a relic of the past. The Iron Curtain may have fallen, but that message still has resonance today.

While political prisoners and prisoners of conscience are still very much a reality, too often their stories are not known. Their cases are rarely highlighted in high-level diplomatic talks. And, ultimately, little progress is made in pursuit of their release and eventual freedom. The need for clear-eyed, committed advocacy, which speaks truth to power, must be a central element of U.S. foreign policy, whether it be a Republican administration or a Democratic administration, the same way--as I look out and see Tom Lantos' daughter, the same way that Tom Lantos did. If you ever traveled with Tom Lantos anywhere around the world, he always spoke truth to power.

In a Constitution Day speech, President Ronald Reagan famously described the United States Constitution as "a covenant we have made not only with ourselves but with all of mankind"--not simply a covenant with those gathered on a hot summer day in Philadelphia in 1787, but a covenant with the student protestors in Tiananmen, with imprisoned people in Vietnam, labor activists, and with imperiled Coptic Christians.

We have an obligation to keep that covenant. Where political leaders falter, those who care deeply about these most cherished national values must appeal then directly to the American people. If the political process doesn't do it, then the American people have to be motivated enough to motivate this institution and government, for there is a powerful case to be made, and I think we will find a reservoir of goodwill.

In an August 25, 1989 New York Times piece by the late A.M. Rosenthal, profiling Natan Sharansky, among other Soviet Refuseniks, Rosenthal wrote the following. He said, "Many Americans have shown they care, and it has helped bring down the number of prisoners."

In many respects, the movement that coalesced around Soviet Jewry is a remarkable historic phenomenon and one worthy of our consideration, as there are undoubtedly lessons to be learned for today. America must, once again, show that we care about the Geng Hs of the world, like the Avitals before her, that they can be reunited with the ones they love, secure in the knowledge that the persecution has ended. So I appreciate, you know, the witnesses coming from so far.

Mr. WOLF. With that, I will turn to Jim McGovern, the ranking member or the co-chairman of this committee.

Mr. McGOVERN. Well, thank you very much, and I want to wish everybody a good morning and welcome everybody to this hearing on Defending Freedoms Project - Highlighting the Plight of Prisoners of Conscience around the World.

I want to thank the staff of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission for organizing this hearing. I want to especially thank my co-chair Frank Wolf for his leadership on this hearing. And this is the first hearing that we have had since Frank announced that he was not going to run for reelection, and I told him on the way over here that I am sad about that. You know, I am a Democrat, so I am supposed to want Democrats to win all the elections.

But I will tell you, if I lived in Northern Virginia, I would be proud to cast a vote for Frank Wolf. He is a man very much like Tom Lantos, who is guided by principle, and whose unwavering voice on human rights is appreciated all around the world by those who are oppressed. So I wanted to make that public statement about my friend Frank Wolf.

I also want to extend a very special welcome to all the panelists today. Thank you for your courage and for your advocacy on behalf of prisoners of conscience and for your tireless efforts to highlight their plight. I would like to specifically acknowledge the presence of Natan Sharansky, a prominent defender of human rights for Soviet Jewry, who has experienced, as Frank mentioned, the cruelty of the Soviet state-led opposition firsthand.

And, further, I know that in this audience today we have several relatives of currently imprisoned activists from all around the world. They came here hoping to hear us state our commitment to help them fight for the release of their loved ones.

I thank you for your presence here today, for your courage and resolve to see your family members freed. We could not have chosen a better topic for the first Commission hearing of 2014. In every nation or region facing violations of human rights, behind every issue the Commission has sought to highlight over the years, stand individuals who risk their lives and freedom to fight for truth, justice, and transparency in their countries, for freedom and equality for all, for simple human dignity.

They dare to stand up to brutal regimes that do not tolerate dissent and often pay a heavy price for their work to promote and defend human rights. These individuals go to great lengths to have their voices heard, and it is very important that they are not forgotten behind the bars of oppression, that they are not left to suffer alone for the sacrifices that they had made for many.

Today we are just able to highlight a few of these cases in the ocean of many. Just as they were and are untiring in their work, so we should be now in our advocacy on their behalf and our efforts for their release. Those in the world who prefer silence should hear our united voices loud and clear.

So today, like many times before, I raise my voice on behalf of Nabeel Rajab, a prominent Bahraini human rights activist, who is currently serving two years in jail simply for engaging in non-violent political protest. As I have repeatedly indicated since his conviction, it is my belief that the charges against him were politically motivated to

thwart Mr. Rajab's non-violent advocacy for political reform in Bahrain, and that his conviction has violated his internationally recognized right to freedom of expression and assembly.

Nabeel provides a critical voice to those working peacefully for democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law in Bahrain. Releasing him would send an important signal that the Bahrain government is serious about political stability and reform. Therefore, I strongly urge the government of Bahrain to unconditionally release Nabeel and to cease further threats against all non-violent human rights activists and leaders of Bahrain's peaceful opposition.

Now, the U.S. Congress has a long history of standing up for the disenfranchised and abused. It stood on the side of immigrants and championed the rights of those whose governments forbid them to emigrate. It has worked on behalf of the disappeared and tortured in Chile and in the gulags of the Soviet Union. It has stood up for the rights of workers, journalists, and other human rights defenders.

I hope that this Congress and future Congresses will not abandon that history but will continue to stand up in a bipartisan way--this is a non-partisan issue--but to continue to stand up for the rights of the disenfranchised, both at home and abroad. And that is why this project, the Defending Freedoms Project, is so important.

This is a collaborative bipartisan initiative spearheaded by the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission that invites members of Congress to adopt cases of individual prisoners of conscience around the world, take an active stance on their behalf, generate attention to their plight, and raise support for human rights.

With the adoption of a prisoner, members of Congress could contribute to the release or reduction of their prison sentence, or at the very least raise awareness about the unjust laws and policies of the countries where these prisoners are detained.

So today I invite all my colleagues to take part in this effort. Only action and courage and the ability to see outside the prescribed narrative, and the inability to stay passive in the face of injustice, can lead humanity toward a positive change. You know, the hope for a better future rests on the shoulders of those who dare to challenge the status quo, to break out of the chains of fear imposed by repressive societies, to accept immense risks for exercising their basic human rights.

So let us not leave them alone in their struggle. Let us make their names a part of every conversation with the governments that restrict their freedom. And let us send these prisoners of conscience a message that you are not alone, that we stand with you, and we are fighting for your freedom.

And I, again, want to thank Congressman Wolf for his leadership on this, and appreciate it very much to be part of this gathering.

Mr. WOLF. Great. Thank you, Jim. I appreciate that very much.

I am going to introduce Mr. Smith, Mr. Duncan, and Mr. Hultgren, who have opening comments, and then we will call on Robbie George to begin.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, both chairs, for calling this extraordinarily important hearing. And I would ask unanimous consent that my opening statement be made a part of the record--

Mr. WOLF. Yes. Without objection.

Mr. SMITH. --and I will just say a couple of points. First of all, the idea of political prisoners or prisoners of conscience, they really are the barometer of a nation's health or lack of health when it comes to human rights, democracy, fundamental freedoms. And over the years it has been both my and I know Chairman Wolf's distinct privilege to meet political prisoners both in prisons and throughout the world, at embassies, at venues that sometimes are very clandestine, to speak out on their behalf and to let them know that we stand in solidarity with them.

I will never forget a trip in 1982 in my first term to Moscow and Leningrad on behalf of the Soviet Jewry with the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. We met with Natan Sharansky's mother, who made an impassioned plea to us to speak out. He was very sick and said, "If you don't, I am fearful"--that is his mom talking--"that he will die and he will die a very painful death." We all did and he got the medicines at that time that he was so desperately in need of.

A few years later Frank Wolf and I were in Zeeland, Holland at a human rights conference, and while we were there the Procurator General for all of the Soviet Union was there bragging about how open they were and had nothing to hide. So our hands went up and we said, "Well, we would like to go to Perm Camp 35 and visit Natan Sharansky."

He hesitated for a moment and then said, "But of course you can go." Two years later, and it took two years of ongoing negotiations, we got into Moscow and then made our way to Perm Oblast, a thousand miles outside of Moscow in the Ural Mountains.

They tried so hard to discourage us, even while we were there, and said, "Oh, there are some technical problems; you can't get in to see the prisoners," because Natan Sharansky had just been released a few months before that. And we said, "Okay. We will have a press conference. See ya." Frank pounded the floor or the table, and he said, "We are marching out of here and we are going to have a press conference." All of a sudden, the trip was back on, a plane was available, and we made our way to Perm Camp 35.

We videotaped the entire thing. We were told--and this shows you the Potemkin village mentality of torturers and dictators. We were told that they had so much to eat in Perm Camp 35, and we were taken into the cafeteria--and Frank will remember this so well--they actually had a menu with the caloric content of every food, and every single table had a piece of half-eaten bread on it. And yet when we met with every one of the prisoners there, and videotaped them, every one of them looked totally emaciated, heads were shaved, and it was just a terrible, terrible big lie. And we said, "Look, we are not buying it."

We were told that they had expert medical care, so we went to the medical clinic. I leaned up against the wall and I had the whitewash all over my jacket, and we were told by the prisoners that "What? We have a health clinic here?" I mean, so nobody bought their big lie.

And, unfortunately, this kind of disinformation is replicated around the world each and every day. In China--and we will be hearing from Gao Zhisheng's wife, Geng He, just recently--and Frank was a part of this--we had a hearing where we heard from five daughters, all of whose dads are suffering torture in that gulag state called the

People's Republic of China. Every one of them appealed to the Chinese government, but they equally appealed to the United States Government to step up to the plate and initiate a more robust defense of political prisoners in China and everywhere else.

We sent a letter to President Obama asking that he meet with the five daughters, and I reiterate that request here again. We still haven't heard back. So while it is bipartisan here in this meeting room, we have not even gotten a response back. And Geng He's daughter was one of those who testified and did so eloquently.

We also have, you know, just--Vietnam, I see several people who are very concerned about, including Dr. Thang, about the ongoing oppression in Vietnam, which is in a race to the bottom with the People's Republic of China and North Korea. Vietnam is in a death spiral. Everywhere you look the political prisoners from Father Ly, the venerable Thich Quang Do, and all of the others, rounded up, under house arrest, or being tortured in that gulag state, all the while members of Congress and many in the administration say, "Oh, we are cooperating with them." Cooperate on human rights. That is the barometer of how well or poorly and how healthy or unhealthy a country is.

And, of course, I could go on and on, whether it be in places like Syria, the Middle East where political prisoners are proliferating, Saeed Abedini, as Frank Wolf did in this Commission, and then we did it in my committee several months later, Naghmeh is desperately asking for a more aggressive engagement by the United States and by the West on behalf of her husband, who is now in a hell hole prison in Iran.

So I just will finally say this. The political prisoners are the ones who push back. They are the ones who refuse to be coward or compromise. They are the ones who selflessly suffer torture, deprivations of every kind, even until death. And they are the ones that if we listen to them they show the way to peace, to reconciliation, endurable respect for fundamental human rights.

Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Chris.

Mr. Duncan?

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Chris, thank you for your passion for human rights issues, and you are definitely a leader on this. I want to begin by thanking Mr.s Wolf and McGovern. Frank Wolf, you are going to be missed, and thank you so much for your leadership. And you have been an inspiration to a lot of us to get involved with human rights issues, and you are going to be missed. And I know you are going to still be engaged, and I look forward to your continued leadership with regard to the Defending Freedoms Project.

We are supporting prisoners of conscience, and I am honored to be able to take part in today's hearing and listen to the valuable testimony of our distinguished witnesses. And I hope that we will able to raise enough public awareness of the plight of these individuals, and ultimately resulting in more vigorous U.S. State Department action on their behalf, and eventual freedom for those that are oppressed.

And I realize the witnesses today may focus on the violations of individual liberty in China and Bahrain and Vietnam, but I would also like to highlight the deliberate and intentional targeting of religious minorities in Iran. I chose to adopt a prisoner of conscience, Iranian pastor Farshid Fathi. And I have got a letter here that I sent to

Secretary Kerry on January 15 on Pastor Fathi's behalf. I would like to enter that into the record.

Mr. WOLF. Without objection.

Mr. DUNCAN. He has been imprisoned since December 2010. He was accused of being a Christian, having Bibles printed, and running a network of house churches in Tehran. Formerly detained with American Iranian Saeed Abedini, Pastor Fathi has been serving a six-year prison sentence simply for his faith in Jesus Christ. Pastor Fathi's wife and two children fled Iran and were resettled in Canada where they have been offered refuge.

The Iranians have labeled Pastor Fathi's believe in Jesus and desire to share his faith political offenses. Political offenses, equivalent to actions against national security. Yet Pastor Fathi is not alone in suffering persecution in Iran. Since June 2010, more than 300 Christians have been arbitrarily arrested and detained throughout that country. As part of this, this past Christmas at least a dozen Christians remain in prison.

Iran's appalling violations of individual liberty have no place in today's world, and I am deeply concerned about the state of religious freedom today. And I would like to submit into the record the letter, and I pray for his freedom. And hopefully this letter and hearings such as this will spur the Department of State into action on behalf of not only this pastor but all of these that you see behind us and all of those that will be talked about in this hearing today, because it is the right thing. It is the right thing for us as members of the United States Congress to do.

Unfortunately, the Natural Resources Committee will have a markup and votes around 10:30, so I will have to leave at some point in time. But I am going to stay as long as possible. Again, I will reiterate my thanks to you two gentlemen for this project and for this hearing, and I yield back.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Duncan.
Mr. Hultgren?

Mr. HULTGREN. I want to thank you so much. I want to thank all of the members for allowing me to join you today and have just a moment, but I especially want to thank Commission Mr. Frank Wolf and Jim McGovern for convening this important hearing.

I want to just take a moment to say thank you, especially to Mr. Wolf, who has been truly a mentor and hero on so many issues. I worked up here 25 years ago, and even then looked up to you greatly and see you as someone that I would love to have a little bit of following in your footsteps of the work that you have done here. So thank you. We appreciate you so much.

I also want to commend each of the panelists testifying here today and the organizations that they represent for their tireless efforts on behalf of prisoners of conscience everywhere. I wholeheartedly support your work.

This hearing presents the ideal opportunity for me to bring attention to the plight of one prisoner of conscience in particular, Zhu Yufu. Today, as I speak, Zhu Yufu is

spending his 696th day behind the walls of the overcrowded Zhejiang Prison Number 4 in China.

An advocate for democracy, Christian dissident, and poet, Zhu Yufu started the May 4 Monthly, a pro-democracy publication, and was elected head of the magazine. Subsequently, he was often summoned by authorities and his house was frequently searched. Zhu actively supported the students' democracy movement and was one of the founders of the China Democracy Party.

For this, Zhu was arrested on the false charge of inciting subversion to state power, sentenced to prison, and deprived of his political rights. He is a prisoner of conscience, unable to enjoy the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the universal declaration of human rights.

Today, Zhu Yufu languishes in prison. He suffers from many diseases and his health is extremely poor. Prison authorities refuse to let him seek treatment or medication. According to Zhu's wife, prison regulations to relieve overcrowding permit Zhu to be eligible for community supervision or medical parole, yet prison authorities refuse to transfer him. In fact, they have explicitly denied Zhu's release on the basis that he is a political prisoner who opposes the state. Zhu is the only eligible prisoner in the entire prison who is being denied release.

Zhu Yufu cannot speak for himself, so others, including myself, must advocate on his behalf. Last year, as part of the Defending Freedoms Project of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I adopted Zhu Yufu as a prisoner of conscience. Through this and similar adoptions by my colleagues in Congress, we seek to pierce the darkness and shatter the silence that has enveloped Zhu Yufu and others like him.

Silence is not an option. Silence means Zhu Yufu likely will remain in prison, and the government of China will elude accountability for its deplorable human rights violations.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to shine a light on the plight of Zhu Yufu and for the efforts of everyone here who are raising their voices on behalf of prisoners of conscience.

Thank you, Chairmen.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you, Mr. Hultgren. I appreciate it very much.

Our first witness will be Dr. George, Robbie George. Dr. George is Chair of the Bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, is a McCormick Professor of Jurisprudence and Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University. He is a prolific writer and thinker with a deep personal commitment to America's first freedom, religious freedom.

Dr. George, we appreciate your being here. Your full statement will be put in the record. You may summarize as you think appropriate. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF DR. ROBERT P. GEORGE:

Dr. GEORGE. My thanks to all the members of the Commission, and particularly to Chairmen Wolf and McGovern for holding today's hearing and inviting me to testify in my role as Chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

I commend this Commission for launching the Defending Freedoms Project and the Commission's Representatives Wolf and McGovern in particular, for their longstanding leadership in the struggle for human rights.

Representative Wolf, I want to echo the lovely statement that Mr. Chairman McGovern made. All of us who work for human rights, I must say, felt our hearts sink when we heard the news that you would not be seeking reelection. You have been a great leader in this Congress and in this country in the cause of human rights. And we console ourselves with the knowledge that you will continue to be a leader in the struggle, although occupying a different role.

I also want to say what a great honor it is for me to be testifying at a hearing at which you will also be hearing from so many distinguished advocates of human rights people who are advocating on behalf of their own relatives in some instances, and many, many others who are the subjects of human rights abuses.

In particular, I want to say what a great honor it is to be in the presence of one of my heroes, Natan Sharansky. In my earliest days as a human rights activist, it was his example of courage in the face of human rights abuses that inspired me and so many other young people when he was in prison and then recently out of prison in the Soviet Union. Any human rights advocate, any organization that regards itself as a human rights organization, should be proud to stand alongside Natan Sharansky to advocate for human rights.

I am also delighted to be here with my principal co-conspirator on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in the cause of human rights, Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett, herself of course a very distinguished human rights advocate and the daughter of one of our nation's most distinguished human rights advocate, Tom Lantos, for whom this Commission is named.

The Defending Freedoms Project works with members of Congress to advocate on behalf of prisoners of conscience across the globe. Members stand in solidarity with them, as we have heard this morning from the members who are here, raising the cases of these victims, these prisoners, at the highest level of international and national affairs. All of us want these prisoners to know that they are not forgotten and they are not alone.

We want to draw attention to the laws and policies that led to their imprisonment, and we want to hold their governments accountable. We want them to be freed.

Now, while quiet diplomacy certainly has a role to play, public inattention to the plight of these victims can lead to more persecution not less. We are so often told stay quiet, don't antagonize the oppressors. It will make the situation worse. And yet the situation gets worse in that silence, and, at its worst, that silence, that so-called private diplomacy, can be perceived by the oppressors as a license for oppression.

Governments need to be publicly prodded, publicly called out through hearings such as the hearing today, to honor the human rights of their people and to fulfill their obligations to protect the rights of all of their citizens, including members of religious and other minorities.

Now, the Defending Freedoms Project basically boils down to people. People too often are detained for who they are, for what they believe, and how they have chosen to express their convictions. These prisoners of conscience have been unjustly prevented from enjoying fundamental human rights enshrined in landmark human rights instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, or the

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as other international conventions and instruments.

To help ensure that these brave souls are not forgotten, I request that the project's prisoners list be included together with my testimony in the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Now, USCIRF's Chairman, let me make a special point about religious freedom and its importance. Enshrined with other human rights and international treaties and understandings, freedom of religion or belief is vitally connected with other basic civil liberties, including the basic liberties the freedoms of expression, association, and assembly. They come as a package.

It is often religious freedom that is the first right taken away. Religious freedom serves as that proverbial canary in the coal mine warning us that other liberties will be denied. Once religious liberty goes, it will be a short space of time before the others are also jeopardized.

Supporting religious freedom abroad is a key component of our foreign and diplomatic policy, and it is a legal and moral duty. But it is also a practical necessity, crucial for the security of this country and of the world. Research confirms that religious freedom in countries that honor and protect this human right is associated with democratization, with rising economic and social well-being, and with diminished tensions and violence.

Nations whose governments trample on religious freedom are substantially more likely to be, and to remain, mired in poverty, in insecurity, war and terror, and violent radical extremism. People so often fail to see that one of the most important things we can do to promote democracy abroad, and to fight against terrorism abroad, and at home, is to promote religious liberty.

Numbers also reinforce the importance of religious freedom abroad, with a recent study finding that one-third of all nations, comprising 75 percent of the world's population, severely restrict religion through governments or societal actors' actions. In these countries, many of which top the U.S. foreign policy agenda, religion constitutes their core narratives, and religious freedom violations are among the catalysts for their problems.

The U.S. signaled its intention to strengthen its support for religious liberty overseas with the signing into law in 1998 by President Clinton of the International Religious Freedom Act, IRFA, which also of course created our commission, the Commission on Religious Freedom.

The Act, in addition, created an Ambassador-At-Large for International Religious Freedom within the State Department, a position that is currently vacant and we urge to be filled immediately. The IRFA Act also created the category of countries of particular concern, a status for countries engaged in or tolerating systematic ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom.

Now, neither Democratic nor Republican administrations alas have issued this designation--Countries of Particular Concern--on an annual basis as they are required to do under the Act. We urge this administration and all future administrations--and, as it was said, this is not a partisan issue. Democrat and Republican administrations need to stick to the law here and make these designations on an annual basis, so that they can have the good effect that Congress wanted them to have. So we urge them to do it.

Now, IRFA also demanded or mandated that the State Department compile a list of prisoners, prisoners of conscience. While the Department has advocated for individual prisoners, and we applaud that and has done a good job in many cases, as far as we at USCIRF can determine the Department has not created that comprehensive list. It is time to do that. So we urge the Department to rectify this situation by doing this, by creating that list as promptly as possible.

The Defending Freedoms Project has compiled and maintains a list of prisoners of conscience itself, with unfortunately no shortage of names on it. We commend those Members of Congress, some of whom of course are with us today, who have adopted prisoners. And we urge other Members to join this campaign, because many countries continue to arrest and hold prisoners of conscience, including the following.

Bahrain--the Bahraini people in 2011 began protests for greater freedoms to which the government responded with a crackdown that led to a human rights crisis and abuses committed against the Shia community. Nabeel Rajab, whose pro bono attorney Josh Colangelo-Bryan is with us today, languishes in prison along with others.

Representative McGovern, to his very great credit and we thank him, has adopted Nabeel Rajab, as he mentioned. This is Nabeel Rajab. People like him must not be forgotten. They must not be regarded as--or allow them to be thought to be alone.

China--the Chinese government commits widespread human rights violations. Congressman Smith spoke all too truly alas when he called it a gulag state. Hundreds of thousands of people are currently detained without charges and without trials. Religious freedom conditions for Tibetan Buddhists and Uighar Muslims, among others, remain particularly dire.

The government also harasses, detains, intimidates, disbars, and imprisons attorneys who have the temerity to defend members of vulnerable religious groups. Gao Zhisheng is one of these attorneys. This is Gao. He is one of the most respected human rights lawyers in China, for which the Chinese government disbarred him and tortured him, concealing his whereabouts for nearly 20 months and imprisoned him in northwest China.

With us today is Gao's wife, Geng He, who along with her children has been granted asylum in the United States. Accompanying her is Jared Genser, founder of Freedom Now and pro bono counsel for Gao.

Representative Wolf, and we thank you, has adopted Gao Zhisheng.

Iran--the Islamic Republic of Iran's severe human rights and religious freedom abuses include the following--arbitrarily and unlawfully arresting and torturing people, imprisoning people, some of whom are in life-threatening conditions, and killing people. Moreover, the regime severely restricts the freedoms of assembly, speech, press, and religion, and denies the Iranian people the right to free and fair elections.

Pastor Saeed Abedini, a United States citizen, has been serving an eight-year prison sentence since January 2012 for "threatening national security" due to his involvement in Iran's Christian house church movement. This is Pastor Abedini. After holding him in solitary confinement and in prison, the Tehran regime transferred him last November to the forbiddingly harsh Gohardasht Prison. Representative Trent Franks, and we thank him, has adopted Pastor Abedini.

Pakistan--serious human rights problems in Pakistan include extra judicial and targeted killings, forced disappearances and torture, and the government engaging in and

tolerating systematic ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom. Pakistan's repressive blasphemy laws and other religiously discriminatory measures, including anti-Ahmadi laws, have created an atmosphere of violent extremism and vigilantism.

Asia Bibi, whom Representative Pitts has adopted, and we thank Representative Pitts, is one of 40 cases of Pakistanis jailed under the blasphemy laws that USCIRF has documented. Asia Bibi.

Now, these people should not remain invisible with their names unknown. It is our job to make their names known until that regime relents.

I request, Mr. Chairman, that this list be submitted for the record.

Mr. WOLF. Without objection.

Dr. GEORGE. Russia--given the upcoming Sochi Olympic Games, I would be remiss if Russia was not brought up today for restricting civil liberties by, among other measures, adopting laws that impose harsh fines for unsanctioned meetings, targeting NGOs as "foreign agents" for receiving foreign funds, denying detainees due process, and not bringing to justice those responsible for the deaths of prominent journalists, activists, and whistleblowers, including Sergei Magnitsky.

Russia recently released some prisoners of conscience--of course, we are glad for them--but did so because President Putin, not an independent judiciary, so determined. These actions signal not a change in policy alas, but a quest for positive publicity prior to the games. We are happy, as I say, that those who have been released have been released, but let us not forget the others and let us not be lulled into believing that this represents a fundamental change. As long as those other prisoners are detained in Russia, we need to stand with them.

And I am honored to be here today with Mr. Sharansky, a former Soviet prisoner of conscience and human rights advocate, who will of course testify in a few minutes.

Saudi Arabia--the Saudi government continues to ban most forms of public religious expression other than that of the government's own interpretation of one particular school of Sunni Islam. The government also continues to prosecute, convict, and imprison individuals charged with crimes such as apostasy, blasphemy, and sorcery, and sporadically detains Shia Muslim dissidents.

Now, in May of 2012, the Saudi government detained two Saudis, Sultan Hamid al-Anzi and Saudh Faleh Award al-Anzi, for the crime of becoming members of the Ahmadi community. These blank pages are all that we have available, all that I have, to call attention to these victims of oppression and prisoners of conscience. We cannot even obtain pictures.

While they are facing the death penalty for apostasy, they have been disappeared. Their current whereabouts and status are unknown. So I today call, and I hope you will join me, in calling on the government of the kingdom to release these men who are guilty of no crime other than to exercise their right as human beings to religious freedom.

And I call on our own government--and I hope you will join me in this as well, to press the Saudi government for the release of these Ahmadi prisoners, and to cease and desist the harassment and oppression of this and other minorities.

Vietnam--the government of Vietnam commits significant human rights violations, including severely limiting the freedoms of speech, press, association, and

religion. Congressman Smith was again all too accurate alas in referring to Vietnam as a gulag state. It arbitrarily arrests and detains people and mistreats them and denies their right, the other fundamental right that is worth mentioning here today--that is, a right to a fair and expeditious trial.

Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc Minh, mother of imprisoned Vietnamese labor activist Do Thi Minh Hanh, will be testifying today.

Father Ly, whom Representative Smith has adopted, and we are so grateful, is someone whose cause USCIRF has followed for years.

A moment ago I mentioned Do Thi Minh Hanh, and Do Thi--yes, Do Thi Minh Hanh should make her face known to us here today as well.

Now, Father Ly--Father Ly, this clergyman, attempting nothing more than to serve his people, has spent more than a decade and a half in prison for the causes of religious freedom, democracy, and human rights. Let us all join together in calling for his immediate release and the immediate release of all other prisoners of conscience in Vietnam and in oppressing states across the globe.

While the world has undergone some positive changes in the last decades, grave challenges remain, making it incumbent on all of us to stand up for religious freedom and other human rights, and for these and other prisoners of conscience. It has been said that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, in my view, that arc will bend towards justice if, but only if, people of conscience like ourselves who enjoy, as we in the United States do, the blessings of freedom, are prepared to stand up and speak out on behalf of those prisoners of conscience whose freedoms are being denied. Let us make the use of our freedom to stand up and speak out for their freedom. Let us make our freedom worth something.

The arc may be bending toward justice, but it won't bend on its own. It depends on our choices and actions. The fate of prisoners of conscience will be determined by our willingness to use our precious freedom to defend their precious freedom.

Again, Congressmen, Chairmen, thank you very much for this opportunity. And God bless you for all the wonderful work that this Commission does.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. George, thank you for your testimony.
Mr. McGovern?

Mr. McGOVERN. Well, you have given us a bunch of assignments in your testimony. So I have been jotting down all the things that we need to do to and press the administration to do, including dealing with the issue of appointing a U.S. Ambassador for International Religious Freedom and the importance of--you know, of being more forthright in raising these issues.

I mean, look, and this is kind of the predicament we always find ourselves in. It doesn't matter who is in the White House. But it seems that it is always easy to highlight human rights abuses in countries that we have no economic ties to or no military ties to, and then it becomes more complicated when we are dealing with countries like China, Russia, even Bahrain, because of our military presence there.

And, you know, you mentioned that--you know, that there are multiple ways to raise these issues publicly and privately. But I guess--is there ever an instance where, you know, it serves the--it serves any good for our government to be quiet? I mean, you

know, I understand the importance of backdoor diplomacy, but, you know, even in Russia, I mean, Frank and I worked very closely together, along with Chris Smith, on the Magnitsky Act, talking and trying to highlight the human rights abuses in Russia, and those who are guilty of corruption. And we were expecting a second Magnitsky list to come out, and then we have the Olympics, and Khodorkovsky gets released not by--you know, through the judicial process because Putin says so, you know, and a few others get released, and then we get nothing.

And, you know, it is frustrating because, you know, it seems that economic and military issues kind of take precedence over human rights. You know, and I think you kind of commented on it, but I don't know if you have anything else to say about how we kind of resolve this dilemma that we constantly find ourselves in.

Dr. GEORGE. Well, I want to thank you and Mr. Smith and all the members of this Commission and the Commission staff for keeping the heat on not only the regimes that are oppressing people and violating their human rights, but also our own administrations, whether they are Republican or Democrat, to keep the heat on those others.

I think clearly you are right, there are so many incentives to look the other way, to tone down the advocacy of human rights because of our legitimate economic and military concerns. But let me make a point that I think isn't made often enough. The defense of human rights and the elevation of human rights, and especially the right to religious freedom, in our foreign and diplomatic policy is not just a good moral idea. Under the Act passed by this Congress and signed into law, it is the law. It is the law. Designations must be made when certain criteria set forth in the law are met. This is not optional.

Now, I am a lawyer and a professor of jurisprudence. I believe in the rule of law. I am sure the members of this Commission do. I am sure the members of this Congress do. I am sure that the people in the administration do. But we need to remind ourselves, if we believe in the law and the rule of law, then it is our duty to carry it out, and the law really does require these things.

That law elevates religious freedom, in particular, to a very high level of priority in our foreign and diplomatic policy, and we have to remember that. We have a legal obligation here. The administration has a legal obligation here. We have got to live by that.

Now, you raise this issue of private--or quiet diplomacy, which I mentioned early in my prepared remarks. I think there are some times and places where that is the way to go. But in most times--at times and in most places, we need public advocacy. Even oppressive regimes, in most cases, care about their public relations in the world. They often care about economic matters or military matters. They often need us as much as we need them when we are dealing with them on economic and military matters. And so it is very, very important to speak out.

And if something is being done by quiet diplomacy, let us make sure it is being done and quiet diplomacy doesn't become an excuse for standing aside and doing nothing or going--becoming inattentive to what is going on because we have bigger fish to fry.

And, above all, Congressman McGovern, above all--and I am not trying to preach to you because I know you know this as well as I do--above all, we can never allow ourselves to fall into the trap of imagining that we can sacrifice human rights here and

now for a greater good sometime later. Human rights is an imperative that always is making its demand in the form of concrete people, human beings, who are being oppressed here and now. They can never be sacrificed for a greater future. We mustn't fall into that trap.

Mr. McGOVERN. Well, thank you very much. Again, it is kind of a comprehensive list of to-do's that we are going to have to follow up on.

Let me just close with this. In addition to being inspired by people like Frank Wolf and Chris Smith and Tom Lantos, when it comes to human rights, the thing that I always keep in the back of my mind is several years ago I tried to go to Sudan. And I couldn't get a visa to go into the country, so I went to Chad and went to the border and visited some of the refugee camps.

And this was at the time the International Criminal Court was gathering evidence against President Bashir. And I remember observing one of the interviews with the people from the International Criminal Court, and this young woman, you know, who had experienced this terrible atrocity, she saw her entire family murdered before her very eyes. And I remember she sat there very calmly and in very--in excruciating detail recounted the tragedy that unfolded before her.

And when it was over with I--you know, they asked me if I wanted to meet her and I--you know, I didn't know what to say. I just said, you know, "I appreciate your courage and being able to do this." And, you know, I don't know how she could have done it. And she said to me that the only reason why she was able to give that testimony, and the only reason why she even wants to be alive and not end her life, is because she thinks by telling the story people will care, that it will matter, that no one else will have to go through this.

And I am always haunted by that one visit because, you know, I don't know why through fate I was born here. You know, and I can say whatever I want to and not have to be thrown in jail. But, you know, people should have the same freedoms and rights that I do. But I will never forget that visit in that refugee camp.

And so these are all very personal issues to us, because as we meet with the families and those who have been harassed it takes on a whole new dimension. I mean, this is real life. It is not abstract. And so I thank you for your work, and please be assured that we are going to take your recommendations very seriously and we are going to follow up.

Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Smith?

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I will be very brief.

Dr. George, thank you for your very eloquent testimony, for the details, which, you know, the International Religious Freedom Act, as we all know, was authored by Chairman Frank Wolf in 1998. It was vigorously opposed by the State Department and by the administration. Vigorously. I held hearings on it.

The only part of the Act that is working, and I think working extraordinarily well, even beyond expectations, is your Commission. Your recommendations on CPC, which I hope someday will be listened to and absorbed by the State Department, is a road map.

You lay out in clear detail which countries ought to be elevated to CPC, and you do so with great specificity. And I think that you do an enormous and valuable service for the dissidents and for all believers, and even non-believers, because religious freedom is a held right and everyone benefits when it is respected.

Dr. GEORGE. Well, let me thank you for that kind vote of confidence, Congressman Smith. And I want to thank you on behalf of everyone associated with USCIRF. It is a team effort over there. We have been blessed with a magnificent staff of incredibly dedicated, hardworking, knowledgeable people. And it is really an honor to be able to do this human rights work. And thank you for reminding us of who the driving force was behind the Religious Freedom Act.

Mr. SMITH. Without a doubt. And the prisoners list, I think your point is very well taken. You know, that was included, as well as the teaching of foreign--and instruction of foreign service officers, FSOs, as to religious freedom issues. I am amazed at the deficit that exists throughout the State Department on all things related to religion.

And, finally, you made a very profound statement. Public inattention leads to more persecution, not less. Quiet diplomacy may have--that ought to be the exception, not the rule.

Dr. GEORGE. Exactly.

Mr. SMITH. Regrettably, it is the rule and not the exception. And Natan Sharansky, who is a giant with almost no equal in the world; Shultz, Secretary Shultz; Ronald Reagan, and every Member of Congress, both sides of the aisle, who cared about human rights, always talked about Sharansky. So there was nothing quiet about that advocacy, and certainly President Reagan--and when Secretary Shultz would visit Moscow he would meet with the dissidents. They would flock to the Embassy, and it was right--you know, we would risk nuclear super power confrontation, because obviously both the Soviet Union and the United States had missiles lined up against each other, and yet human rights was at the top of the list, not somewhere on page 5 or 6 or as an asterisk.

So thank you again for what the commission does. And, again, it is an honor just to be in the presence of Natan Sharansky.

Dr. GEORGE. Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you. Just briefly, if you have any thoughts how--what Senator Jackson did--I read his book over the holiday, what Senator Scoop Jackson did on making this the issue, any ideas you have as you can think about it, or the Commission, of what we can do to make this a national issue, so by--it is on the lips of all the American leadership and members of the House and Senate and both sides. But as we go on, if you can think of, I mean, how do we--how do we move this process? I mean, how do we get every Member of Congress to adopt a prisoner of conscience? How do we do all of this?

And if you have any thoughts now, or if you can think about it, maybe you can have some of your top people come by to see us to see if there are some things that we can do. I think it is really going to have to be done outside of this institution in some respects.

In the book that I read, and the author is going to be here today I think, he lays out how it was done. It would seem like it is almost a model, and I am glad he wrote the book--maybe others have, too--but to sort of lay it out. But do you have any thoughts how we can do what Jackson and Mr. Lantos did in the early--in the '70s and '80s? How we can do that in 2015, 2016, 2017?

Dr. GEORGE. Well, I have a few thoughts, and Chairman McGovern has noticed I am good at giving assignments. So we will be back to you from the Commission with some more assignments. But just sort of off the top of my head, holding a hearing like the hearing today is a very important thing to do. And this shouldn't be a one-off thing. I know that you are--alas you are going to be retiring, but Chairman McGovern will be here, Congressman Smith will be here.

Let us keep the Lantos Commission going very strong on the religious freedom issue, holding hearings like this that call the public's attention to the problems and what we as a nation can do to fulfill our responsibilities, both moral and legal, to come to the assistance of those who are being oppressed.

I think you need to--in looking back at the experience of Senator Jackson, the leadership of Senator Jackson, and President Reagan and the role that was played by dissidents themselves, like Natan Sharansky, engage the diaspora communities, the Vietnamese-American community, the Korean-American community, the Chinese, the Iranian-American community. They are, of course, deeply concerned about those who are being victimized in their native or ancestral homelands. And they can be very powerful allies as well as sources of information.

We at USCIRF really treasure those relationships we have with the diaspora communities, in part because they keep us informed. We get information that is otherwise not available through those communities. Get the religious communities activated. You know, invite them in to work with you, to testify before you, be in touch with them. This is a deeply--this remains a very religious country, and we have all the great religions of the world now represented in this country.

And religious leadership can play a very important role here I think. So religious leaders from across the spectrum--Christian-Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Hindu, Bahai--they should all be friends of the Lantos Commission, who are involved with the work that you are doing in the same way that the diaspora communities should be. They can also help to get the word out.

I don't think it should be forgotten that American Jews and American evangelical Christians, to their very great credit, were leaders in the fight to make the oppression of Soviet Jews a real issue in our domestic politics. Well, let us look at how that model worked, and let us do that with Vietnam and with Iran and with Pakistan and with Egypt and down the line.

So there is I think one thing concretely that this Commission can do, building on the hearing that you have held today to launch this.

Mr. WOLF. Well, we will, and I appreciate that. I notice, too, as I look around there are a lot of young people in the audience, which is very good, too.

Thank you very much for your testimony. Appreciate it.

Dr. GEORGE. My very great honor, and thank you and congratulations and God bless you.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you.

The next panel, the last panel that we have, first, we will hear from Geng He, the wife of a Chinese lawyer and prisoner of conscience, Gao. Under constant surveillance and harassment in China, she and her two children sought asylum in the United States, in 2009, after a harrowing escape through Thailand. She has been a passionate advocate for her husband.

She is joined by Jared Genser, founder of Freedom Now, a non-governmental organization that works to free prisoners of conscience worldwide. Mr. Genser provides pro bono legal representation for Gao and has done so for several other notable individuals, including an imprisoned Chinese Nobel Prize winner, Liu Xiaobo. And I appreciate, too, you guys who are lawyers doing pro bono for that. I won't ask you how much you bill an hour, but I know it is good. No, I really do appreciate it, because--and it is nice to see that that is being done.

Next, we will hear from Josh Colangelo-Bryan, a senior attorney at Dorsey & Whitney, LLP, in New York. He is a pro bono attorney on behalf of imprisoned Bahraini human rights activist Nabeel Rajab, who Mr., Mr. McGovern, has adopted. And I appreciate you putting your time and effort in coming down here.

The next witness is Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc Minh, mother of imprisoned Vietnamese labor activist Do Thi Minh Hanh. She journeyed from Austria--from Austria. Sometimes you can't get the administration of either party to journey from 20th and Constitution Avenue here. She journeyed from Austria to plead for her daughter's case.

And as I already mentioned, we will have the unique opportunity to hear from Mr. Natan Sharansky. Katrina Lantos Swett, whose father, the late Tom Lantos, is the namesake of this Commission, will formally introduce Mr. Sharansky at that time, given her family's personal advocacy on his behalf while he was in prison.

And, finally, we will hear from Gal Beckerman, journalist and author of the book *When They Come for Us We'll be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry*, which on a personal note I recently enjoyed reading over the break and found very inspirational. I thought there are some ideas here that you could take to rekindle--before the flame goes out to rekindle and do that.

But I want to thank all of you for being here, so we will go in that order. And when we get to Mr. Sharansky, we will have--Katrina can come up and introduce him.

STATEMENT OF MS. GENG HE, ACCOMPANIED BY MR. JARED GENSER:

[The following statement was delivered through an interpreter.]

Ms. GENG. Respected Chairmen Wolf and McGovern, and members of the committee, and Chairman Smith, and ladies and gentlemen, I am very concerned about

my husband's well-being, attorney Gao Zhisheng, which has become part of my daily life. And having come to the United States almost five years ago, these kind of desperate, helpless, and hopeless feelings remain in my heart day and night. I am deeply worried about whether he has been, you know, severely tortured, abused, or even killed, perhaps out of anyone's knowledge.

Moreover, I worry about that he may be forgotten by the international community, because the persecution to our family was done by comprehensive state-run machinery in China, and I am personally powerless to do anything to help him. Only the international community represented by the United States can speak with a voice that can provide help to my husband. And, therefore, I am particularly grateful to you all for holding this hearing, which gives me and my husband, Gao Zhisheng, the strength and hope to continue our journey on the road to justice.

My husband, Gao Zhisheng, is a Chinese lawyer with a great reputation for his work to protect the interest of the vulnerable groups and the individuals. And he does his best to provide free legal services for the poor and the voiceless, and through his profession as a lawyer he has disseminated the concept and the practice of justice and human rights to the general public.

His legal knowledge and skills and eloquence in the courts of course have brought justice to victims many times. So, as a result, he has won the respect of the Chinese people.

Back in 2005, my husband Gao began to handle cases of persecuted Christians and persecuted Falun Gong practitioners and the other victimized groups in China. And the authorities began to target him for his work, and the government shut down his law firm and revoked his legal license as an attorney in practice.

In August 2006, police illegally kidnapped him. On December 22, 2006, he was charged with the crime of inciting subversion of the state power and was sentenced to three years in prison, suspended, for five-year probation. During the five-year probation, he was disappeared more than six times, and the longest disappearing was about 20 months without any knowledge of his whereabouts. And every disappearing was accompanied by various types of torture and abuses.

And four days before the end of his probation, the state controlled Xinhua News Agency reported that Gao Zhisheng would spend the next three years in prison. At the end of 2011, he was secretly transferred to an extremely remote harsh condition prison in Sheng Zhang, the northwest province of China.

I remember that back in September 2007 my husband wrote an open letter to U.S. Congress exposing the human rights abuses by the Chinese communist regime for the construction of 2008 Olympic games. And for this activity, the Chinese police had kidnapped him again, and he was disappeared from the public for more than 50 days.

And on that same day, he was kidnapped and they brought him to a dark room and took off all his clothes and beat him and used electrical, police, to beat him all over the body, including his private part, and used a cigarette butt to target his eye, and he lost consciousness.

And it was really everywhere--all over the body there was skin and scars because of the abuse and torture. And so the policemen often told him that "If we want to, we can let you disappear any time."

By the end of the probation, that the official Xinhua News Agency made an announcement, said that "Gao Zhisheng will spend the next--the coming three years in prison." And by the end of 2011, he was secretly moved to a remote prison in northwest part of Sheng Zhang, on the border.

And the latest news that we learned about him was January 12, 2013, and the family member was permitted to meet him, but was forbidden to talk about anything about his condition in prison. And in case the family wants to learn something about it, such a meeting would be stopped immediately.

And by today--today, and it is more than a year now, we have never never had a chance to meet him again, including the family attorney. The police department used all kind of excuses to stop such a kind of meeting possible. And I hope that with the new leadership in China that should be a hope, but the actual--the reality was very grim, and we hope--there must be something done about it.

My family has been subjected to brutal persecution for eight years. And during these periods the police had forcefully lived in my house and watched over me and my children and prevented my daughter from going to school. And all of this has caused me and my children severe mental and psychological trauma, and ultimately forced us to flee China.

To me and my children, the crime of the communist regime in China is an unforgettable nightmare, and the government is ruled there by terror and deception. And the law has simply become a tool for their violence and a lie to the Chinese people. And shame on the Chinese police and shame on the communist party in China.

And today I stand here in the U.S. Congress, and I ask Mr. President Obama and the Secretary of State, John Kerry, to publicly express their concern about Mr. Gao Zhisheng, and your voices of justice will not only shine in the dark prison of Gao Zhisheng, but also light up and inspire all of those who suffer in China for the freedom and human rights they all long deserve.

I also want to urge the Congress Members, Members of--Democratic and Republican leaders, and the Members of European Parliament as well, to use your efforts and to rescue Mr. Gao Zhisheng, whether you write a letter supporting him or you express your concern publicly, and all these efforts provide support, encouragement, and protection to Gao Zhisheng.

And, further, every word, deed, and action to help Gao Zhisheng will be very much appreciated, and in support of the pursuit of democracy and freedom for all the Chinese there.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to all the individuals and groups that care about my husband and expressed their support to rescue Gao Zhisheng. I especially want to thank the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and the Congressmen that--Mr. Wolf and Mr. McGovern and Mr. Chris Smith, and for selecting Gao Zhisheng on the list of first defending freedom prisoners.

I would like to close by citing a paragraph of Congressman Wolf's letter to my husband, quoting Martin Luther King, Jr. "Ultimately, we remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." I hope that at this critical moment President Obama and Secretary John Kerry will not be on the list as Mr. Gao Zhisheng's silent friends.

Thank you, all.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you very much.

Mr. Genser, do you want to make any comments?

Mr. GENSER. Sure. I will just say a few things briefly. First, let me just thank the Commission and, well, all of the people here today for their stalwart support on Gao Zhisheng's case. I think what we need right now on his case is a special level of vigilance, because he is supposed to be released according to Chinese law in August of 2014.

And, you know, we have repeatedly requested high level meetings for Geng He with the administration, and sadly have been repeatedly denied those meetings. This time around, we requested meetings with Dr. Susan Rice and Secretary Kerry. Neither of those meetings are going to be happening, and we are having yet another low level meeting over at the State Department with the Acting Assistant Secretary for DRL, which of course I am always happy to see our friends in DRL, but, practically speaking, the low level attention given to this case speaks volumes about whether or not it is a priority for the administration.

And one way or another, we hope of course Gao is still alive, but he will be coming out of prison we hope in August, and we desperately need the administration and the Congress to make clear to the Chinese government now that not only do we expect him to be freed in August or, of course, sooner, which we have demanded over and over again, but that also he will be allowed to leave China and to be united with his family in the United States, which is something that they have desperately been waiting for and desperately deserve.

Let me just, lastly, say that with respect to the Defending Freedoms Project, I am very grateful for its existence and for the hard work that all of you are putting forward. I have spent my career as a lawyer advocating on behalf of prisoners of conscience. In many respects, I see the freedom to be free from arbitrary detention as, in certain respects, the first freedom, because ultimately unless one is free from arbitrary detention one cannot exercise, really, any freedom except perhaps freedom of thought in one's own brain and one's own prison cell. But beyond that, you can't do anything, and so your work is exceptionally important.

And I would just, lastly, note that my NGO, Freedom Now, has prepared some draft legislation, which we will be happy to share with all of you, about how the U.S. Government could be much more effectively focused on the plight of prisoners of conscience more broadly, including creating an Ambassador-At-Large for prisoners of conscience to be based at the State Department to be the never-ending clarion call for every time a U.S. Government official meets with foreign government leaders to ensure that there is a list, when it is a repressive country, of people who should be free.

But there are a whole range of actions, I believe, that the U.S. Government could be doing to prioritize freedom for prisoners of conscience around the world. And I look forward to working with all of you and your staff on that, sir.

Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you very much.

STATEMENT OF MR. JOSH COLANGELO-BRYAN:

Mr. COLANGELO-BRYAN. Thank you, Representative Wolf. I am honored to speak today on behalf of Nabeel Rajab, a Bahraini human rights activist who has been imprisoned since July 2012. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be here, and it goes without saying that we are immensely thankful to Representative McGovern for the manner in which he has taken up Nabeel's case.

There actually was a time when no one could have imagined that Nabeel was to be a prisoner of conscience, a victim of the Bahraini government's determination to suppress all dissent. Nabeel was born in 1964 to a prosperous family that enjoyed good relations with Bahrain's ruling family. In his young adulthood, Nabeel was essentially an entrepreneur, operating small businesses while also marrying and having two children.

Ultimately, though, the pursuit of profits was not Nabeel's true calling. In the 1990s, he began to focus on human rights matters, inspired by political unrest and significant human rights abuses that were prevalent in Bahrain at the time.

When King Hamod announced reforms that allowed civil society groups to form, Nabeel co-founded the Bahrain Center for Human Rights in 2002, which focuses on issues such as torture, extrajudicial killing, and the abuse of migrant workers. Displeased ultimately with the Center's work, the Bahraini government officially disbanded it in 2004.

I take it that isn't a commentary on my remarks? So far.

Mr. WOLF. That is a vote.

Mr. COLANGELO-BRYAN. Thank you. Despite that official disbanding of the Center, Nabeel has ensured that it continues to function, most critically since February 2011. Of course, in February 2011, massive pro-democracy demonstrations erupted in Bahrain. The Bahraini government responded to those demonstrations by shooting and killing unarmed peaceful protestors, beating detainees to death, and engaging in large-scale political prosecutions.

Those crimes were detailed in the report of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, which was created by the king to investigate such matters. Since 2011, Nabeel and the Center have continued to investigate and report on human rights abuses, providing essential information for the international community whose representatives too often have been denied entry into Bahrain.

The Center has lobbied the European Union, the United Nations, and national governments. Nabeel himself has come to Congress to speak with Members about the situation in Bahrain. We should note, though, that Nabeel's focus has never been parochial. He has long worked on human rights matters outside of Bahrain, advocating for people regardless of their sect, their nationality, their citizenship, or their background.

Simply by way of example, Nabeel championed basic due process rights for those detained at Guantanamo Bay. That work, which was on behalf of people perceived to be Sunni extremists, or Nabeel as a secular Shia, some ill will from people in his community in Bahrain, given that Bahrain has suffered from sectarian polarization over the years.

Nonetheless, from Nabeel's perspective, that work was simply a matter of principle, and it did not matter the sector, the religion of those for whom he was

speaking. In a similar vein, he was a founder of the Gulf Center for Human Rights, an NGO that works to protect human rights defenders of all stripes throughout the Gulf region. He serves on an Advisory Committee for Human Rights Watch and was the Deputy Secretary General for the International Federation of Human Rights.

Unfortunately, Nabeel's advocacy on behalf of those in his own country has led him to pay a very heavy and very personal price. In the early morning, on April 18, 2011, assailants lobbed tear gas canisters over a garden wall surrounding Nabeel's home and the home of his elderly mother. She suffered from respiratory illness, suffered significant distress as a result of that attack. Then, in January 2012, riot police beat Nabeel as he was leaving a pro-democracy protest and beat him so severely that he needed hospital care.

Beginning in the summer of 2012, the government took a slightly different tack and started subjecting Nabeel to political prosecutions. In June, a court fined him after he Tweeted that police had failed to protect civilians from an attack by an armed group. Another court sentenced him to three months' imprisonment, again, based on a Tweet, this one which said that Bahrain's prime minister no longer enjoyed support in a particular town in Bahrain.

According to prosecutors, that Tweet was offensive, and in fact criminal, because the sensibilities of residents of the town were offended. Following that conviction, mass security forces arrived at Nabeel's home and roughly seized him, taking him from his two young children who watched the entire episode, and bringing him to prison.

When Nabeel's lawyers attended an appeal in that case, on the very same day and at the very same time, authorities brought Nabeel from prison to yet another courtroom. There the judge convicted him in three separate proceedings for attending unapproved pro-democracy demonstrations. The court sentenced him to a three-year term, which was later reduced to a two-year term.

Nabeel is currently serving that sentence, and it was only in December that he was denied an early good behavior release--a finding that certainly seems contrary even to Bahraini law as it is written.

Of course, Nabeel is not unique in being subjected to these sorts of injustices in Bahrain. We have seen a Bahraini court sentence opposition activists to life imprisonment simply for peacefully protesting in favor of the creation of a republic in Bahrain. We have seen a Bahraini court sentence a nurse to prison after she allegedly stepped on a photograph of Bahrain's prime minister.

Conversely, Bahraini courts have convicted security personnel of shooting or beating people to death, and issued sentences of as little as six months when those personnel have been convicted at all.

Nabeel recently called me from prison. He didn't really want to talk about his own circumstances, perhaps in part because the call was being monitored. But in point of fact, Nabeel has never been overly concerned with himself. His focus has steadfastly been on the well-being of others. So he asked about my family, and he requested that I pass his thanks on to Representative McGovern.

For years Nabeel has spoken out on behalf of people who are unable to speak out for themselves. Now that he is in prison, it is my privilege to speak out on his behalf. Hopefully, by bringing attention to the injustices that have been visited upon Nabeel, we can remind Bahraini authorities that Nabeel has not been forgotten, but, rather, that we

will continue to press the government to treat him in accordance with international laws and standards and in fact to release him promptly.

Thank you very much.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you very much. We are going to change the hearing slightly. There is a vote. So Mr. McGovern and Mr. Smith will go. I am going to stay here so the hearing continues, because people have come from so far.

Mr. Sharansky has an airplane--he has to leave no later than 12:00. So what we are going to do is we are--I am staying. The hearing will continue. But we will go here, and we will jump back, and then we will come.

Katrina, do you want to introduce Mr. Sharansky? I would appreciate it.

Ms. LANTOS SWETT. Yes. It is my great privilege and honor to be here today with all of you, and it is a particular joy for me to have the privilege of introducing Natan Sharansky.

I come to today's hearing on the Defending Freedoms Project and prisoners of conscience wearing really a few hats. I am Vice-Chair of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and I serve as President of The Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice. But as has also been mentioned, I am the daughter of Tom Lantos.

And I just can't fully put into words how much it would mean to him to know that his old friend and someone he cared incredibly deeply about, someone he had adopted--we think of that word "adoption" as implying that you are family. Once you are adopted, you are family, and that is how he felt about Natan Sharansky. So it is very special for me to be with him here today.

When I think of the extraordinary man I am about to introduce to you today, his story does speak to my heart in profound and indelible ways. First, for years Natan bravely endured a Soviet gulag for the crime of daring to demand his right to live in the land of his forefathers.

Second, it was my father who, along with many others, including his distinguished colleagues who are before me now, and above all Natan's remarkable wife Avital, just a tower of inspirational strength and love and dedication, who worked day and night to secure his freedom and that of others like him. Finally, against all odds, freedom came.

But what is significant I think to realize is that it came not just to Natan Sharansky, but ultimately to hundreds of millions of others. Why? Because he and others took a stand, and those of us here in this country with them. And by taking that stand, a tyrannical regime lost its legitimacy, and we ultimately saw it crumble before our eyes, something that very few of us could have anticipated.

And now, of course, today Natan Sharansky remains an advocate for liberty against every forum of oppression and enslavement. He was, before he became an icon of international democracy and human rights activism, a champion at chess and math, which I think is an interesting little tidbit about his history, something that I envy and admire greatly. And, of course, he has gone on to embody the ultimate in what it means to be a human rights activist.

And Natan Sharansky is living proof that we can change our world, but we can do so only if we heed Winston Churchill's simple but unforgettable advice about life, and I quote, "Never ever ever ever ever give up." If we apply these words each day to freedom's cause, we will see more miracles like the miracle that happened for Natan Sharansky, for the family members of those gathered at this table and countless more that they represent.

And so it is my true honor, privilege, and joy to introduce to you today Natan Sharansky.

Mr. McGOVERN. Thank you, Katrina.
Mr. Sharansky, welcome. We are honored.

STATEMENT OF MR. NATAN SHARANSKY:

Mr. SHARANSKY. Thank you. Thank you, Katrina. I think there is no better way to keep memory about Tom Lantos but to have this committee going, working, and I am glad to welcome here also, too, Congressmen who were together with me in prison, Chris and Frank and James McGovern.

I will try to be very brief, because I believe the most important thing is to hear the stories which you just now started hearing, like the rather dramatic story of Chinese dissidents, of Bahrain dissidents, and we will hear more. And when you listen to these stories and you think it is the same brutal physical force which tries to keep under the controls and minds of the people, and then you think, but what stops the leaders of the world to speak proudly and powerfully against it? What prevents them from putting it at the top of the administrations with China, with other countries? And it is so clear what it stops, and we know all of these arguments, and we know this explanation, that China is so extremely important to America and its future economic--mutual economical future.

And in view of these tremendous challenges which we have with China, with all our sympathy to the story of this woman of the Chinese lawyer who suffers at this moment, but this is only a story of one person and we are speaking about millions and hundreds of millions of people.

So we have--we, the leaders, have to take into account their fate and, in spite of all of our sympathy, don't be silent. And then, with all of--for those who stick to this logic, I want to remind that there was Soviet Union, which was a super power, which was believed to be equal to America. America believed that Soviet Union can destroy it in one day, and that is why America thought that Soviet Union, which here exists forever, we have to take it seriously.

And at the same time, there was a very small group of dissidents in the Soviet Union who believed that Soviet Union is due to disappear very quickly. Read some of the books of my friends, dissidents, Andre Manrique, Rene Socca, and others, who were predicting in the '60s and '70s the Soviet Union will disappear because it is so weak from inside because it simply tries to control--spends all of its super power to control the minds of 200 million people.

And if only the West will stop feeding it, it will fall apart. And this small group of dissidents will keep alive the spark of freedom, which gave hope to hundreds of millions. And that is what, in the end, defines the future of the world. But this small

group of dissidents--we never could survive even one day in the Soviet Union, if our struggle was not the struggle of the free world.

First of all, at the public level, the moment we had a demonstration of 10 people and went to prison, there were hundreds of thousands who went to demonstrations, and hundreds of thousands of letters which were sent every day to prison when we were in prison. Until this day, I meet people who say that as school children they were sending to me letters and did I receive them.

And I told them, frankly, I never received them, but it is so good that you sent, because KGB received--every day KGB received thousands of letters, and they knew what--and, of that, that from the very beginning it became the struggle of this House, of Capitol Hill. I had a long list of my accomplices, officials, in KGB files. They were beginning from Senator Jackson, and then Senators Kennedy and Humphrey, Javits, and Father Drinan.

When we created our human rights watch here on Capitol Hill, Congressman Frederick and Father Drinan created their human rights watch. And that was a real partnership, and that is what kept us alive.

I remember when I was arrested. Just now we heard the wife of Chinese dissident who--that he was told, "If you want, you will disappear anytime." I don't know exact translation from Chinese of what they said, but that is exactly what I heard in Russian from them. They said, "You are in our hands. You will disappear and nobody will know about you."

What do you hope? You hope that the West is now keeping your name at the top. How long your name will be mentioned in the press? Seeing for ourselves, America, free world, has so many problems and so many challenges. So they will talk about you one month, two months, three months. That is--and we are here forever. So you will disappear. And they sincerely believe that that will happen.

And the fact that year after year American legislators not only spoke but put it in legislation made a direct linkage between my fate, the fate of Andrei Sakharov, Yuri Orlov, Alexander Ginzburg, Refuseniks, and the most important, the interest of Soviet Union. That is what they find--that they didn't kill me, they didn't kill--one after another they started releasing us, and the more they started releasing us, the moment they stopped--lost control over the brains of the people, Soviet Union simply could not survive and the world became a much more safe place.

And that is what is very important to remember when we are speaking today about dissidents in China or in Bahrain or in Korea or in Iran. And when people say, "But there are only a few people who--600 political prisoners in Iran," but 600--there are tens of millions who are supporting the regime, and Iran is such an important threat for the world.

So we have to take it seriously. We have to negotiate how to appease them, if we will not make as a part of our negotiations, part of our policy towards Iran, the fate of these 600 political prisoners, the weight of everyone who led this revolution in 2009, the world will be much less secure place.

So if I am really upset with something, it is--we will discuss do sanctions, not to do sanctions, around the threat of Iran, human rights is not there. If you want to make sure that the Iranian threat will not be real threat to the West, you have to make sure that the voices of human rights activism are protected.

And the fact that practically there was not one meeting of any serious Congressman or Senator with Soviet officials when there was not presented the list of people who are imprisoned, the people who want to leave Soviet Union, the list of Pentecostals who want to teach their children their faith and that is why they arrest them. Not one meeting.

How many lists of prisoners from China, from Iran, from Bahrain, from Korea, from many other countries, dictatorships in the world? How many of these lists are on the table of the negotiations between the United States of America and all of these countries?

And here is also present my friend, David Keyes, who is running the organization wanting human rights. I think, among other things, they came with great idea. In the past, there was a square in Washington in front of Soviet Embassy, what is called Sakharov Plaza. So each time when they had to write something at Soviet Embassy, they had to mention Sakharov. Why not to do it in front of Bahrainian Embassy, in front of every embassy of every dictatorship in the world, to name the streets in America and in other free countries of the world.

And that will be the best reminder that the world cares, the world remembers, and we will not permit how they said, "If we want, you will disappear." If we want, they will not disappear. That is what is important.

Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. Well, that was very powerful. We don't--and they have votes. And if they miss their votes, I will acknowledge that they were here. But we are going to get your statement, and I know you have a plane, and put it in the Congressional Record. We are also going to send it down to Fred Hiatt and others at The Washington Post and others to say, you know, this is just from the heart, if you will.

And, thirdly, I just looked at Mr. McGovern. And if we can get a list of five embassies, we can have the Rebel Square in front of the Bahrainian Embassy, and we will do it in front of the Chinese Embassy. We will ask the D.C. City Council to do this, but that is a great idea. And we will do it and get those letters off.

Thank you for taking the time, and God bless you. Thank you. And I know you have a plane, so you don't, you know--

Mr. SHARANSKY. I want to listen to the story.

Mr. WOLF. Okay. Again, I apologize.

Why don't you go ahead, so he can hear. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF MRS. TRAN THI NGOC MINH:

[The following statement was delivered through an interpreter.]

Mrs. TRAN. Members of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I am Tran Thi Ngoc Minh. I am grateful to be here today to speak about my daughter, our youngest child, Do Thi Minh Hanh, 28 years old, who is also a prisoner of conscience. And she became prisoner of conscience simply because she was helping the poor factory workers

and assisting farmers whose lands and homes were wrongly expropriated by the Vietnamese communist government.

Perhaps as you sit here in the United States of America you do not know fully the conditions of the factory workers in Vietnam, those who created wealth, including commodities such as shoes, gloves, and other merchandises, which were sold to America. They have to work in abysmal conditions and live in slums and unsanitary housing.

There have been hundreds of cases of food poisoning as the employers provided factory workers with spoiled food. They work 12 to 15 hours per day and only get paid \$70 per month on average. In many instances, they do not get paid, have no health or social security insurance, are fired for getting sick, and receive insufficient compensation if injured at work. They do not have the right to found independent labor unions to protect themselves.

My daughter, Do Thi Minh Hanh, and her two friends, Nguyen Hoang Quoc Hung and Doan Huy Chuong, along with others who sympathize with the desperate situation of these factory workers, help the workers defend their basic rights, but all three were arrested, beaten, and given severe sentences.

Before them, Attorney Le Thi Cong Nhan and those attempting to form independent labor unions had been sentenced to long prison terms. Particularly, Le Tri Tue had to flee to Cambodia to seek the protection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, but he was reportedly abducted by the Vietnamese police and has disappeared for the past six years.

My daughter was arrested on February 23, 2010, in Di Linh, Lam Dong Province, and I witnessed the police beat her, causing serious injuries to her mouth and bleeding all over her face. She was later put in solitary confinement for eight months at a facility belonging to the Department of Public Security before being brought to trial.

At the first instance trial by the Provincial Court of Tra Vinh on October 26, 2010, my daughter and her two fellow activists had no defense lawyer, and I saw the police beat her again brutally in the court's yard. They received heavy sentences--Hung, nine years; Chuong and my daughter each seven years of imprisonment.

In March 2011, the Tra Vinh Province police let common criminals beat my daughter up badly. In April 2011, while being transferred to Long An, she was handcuffed, her legs shackled, and her mouth gagged. She was beaten during the journey. On May 6, 2011, she was transferred to Binh Thuan and moved through different camps. There my daughter repeatedly opposed forced labor imposed on her.

At the end of April 2013, my daughter was transferred to Dong Nai Province where she was forced to process cashew nuts, and she opposed that as well. When she protested against forced labor and mistreatment of other prisoners, the police let a number of criminal inmates physically assault her. Once she was beaten while taking a shower and being all naked. Due to those beatings, she suffered nervous pain. In addition, her left breast became atrophied and the pain was severe, but the prison administration did not allow her to see specialists for medical treatment.

To intimidate my daughter and our family, on October 2, 2013, the government transferred my daughter and a religious prisoner, Mrs. Mai Thi Dung, from Dong Nai to Thanh Xuan, Hanoi. On this long journey of more than 1,700 kilometers, both of them, despite being seriously ill, were handcuffed and shackled in the van like animals. They lost consciousness several times.

Since her arrest, the police has pressured my daughter to admit to having committed crimes as condition for leniency, but she has refused.

Ladies and gentlemen, for all these years, the Vietnamese Communist Party has deceived the world, deceived the United Nations, and also the United States, about workers and labor unions in my country. Vietnam General Confederation of Labor, VGCL, was established by the Vietnamese Communist Party. Its entire leadership is composed of communist members. Its president, Mr. Dang Ngoc Tung, is a member of the Vietnamese Communist Party's Central Committee. VGCL's purpose is to monitor and control the workers and help the party to take advantage of them and exploit them.

Since 1995, there has been close to 5,000 strikes by workers. These strikes were organized by the workers themselves with the guidance of labor organizers who operate secretly. The labor union set up by the government has never been on their side; on the contrary, they provided information to the public security police to crack down and arrest the leaders or workers who organized the strikes.

Presently in Vietnam, there are hundreds of prisoners of conscience who live in hell on earth--that is what prisons in Vietnam truly are--like my daughter. They are United Farmers and Workers Organization member Doan Huy Chuong, college student Nguyen Hoang Quoc Hung, Reverend Nguyen Van Ly, Pastor Nguyen Cong Chinh, journalist Nguyen Van Hai, Dr. Cu Huy Ha Vu, businessman Tran Huynh Duy Thuc, attorney Le Quoc Quan, college student Dinh Nguyen Kha, person of faith Nguyen Van Lia, journalist Ta Phong Tan, South Vietnamese veteran Nguyen Huu Cau, victim of social justice Mai Thi Dung, on and on.

I would like to present to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission the list of some 600 political and religious prisoners as attachments. This list has been compiled by advocates in Vietnam and family members of those prisoners themselves. And with that list, I hope that this Commission will mobilize the world to work on getting them--set them free unconditionally.

I know that there are many international organizations coming to Vietnam to inspect the living conditions of workers and the detention conditions of prisoners. These organizations have been deceived by the Vietnamese government, which prepared some nice and comfortable living compounds for workers and some clean cells for prisoners, just for show, and trained a number of workers and inmates to speak highly, but deceitfully, about the workplace or prison conditions in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Few people are aware that behind the beautifully decorated walls is the living hell that prisoners must face. Hundreds of prisons spreading throughout the country have factories producing goods for export, including cashew nuts and handicraft products. Prisoners who do not meet the quota are sent to solitary confinement or punished. Prison wardens and authorities have become increasingly wealthy by exploiting detainees.

I am very surprised and feel bitter when hearing statements by politicians, reports by a number of governments and organizations that laud the Vietnamese government for its progress on human rights, its policies towards religions, and labor conditions.

Ladies and gentlemen, I understand that economic interests are of top priority for the United States. However, in my eyes, the United States is also the role model in the fight for human rights. That is exactly why I am present here today.

I respectfully pray to you that, from your vantage point, please use all means to pressure the communist government of Vietnam to unconditionally release my daughter and all prisoners of conscience, especially as the U.S. is negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership, TPP, with the communist government of Vietnam.

I also respectfully request your intervention to get the Vietnamese government to allow my daughter to be released for medical treatments, because she got diagnosed with breast cancer.

Thank you. And may God bless the United States of America and all of you.

Mr. WOLF. Just out of curiosity, is there anybody here from the administration or the State Department here? Have you been observing all of this? Okay. And we will make sure that we get all of the testimony to you, so you can share it with the Secretary. If you can--I don't need your name now, but if you can just give your name to a member of my staff, so we can get it to you, and the transcript.

Thank you.

Finally is Gal Beckerman, a journalist who wrote the book *When They Come for Us We'll Be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry*. As I said, I read it over the Christmas break, and it was very powerful and so I want to hear what you have to say. But I think a lot of the ideas--and I wrote a lot of notes--could almost be applied to all of these cases here.

So you might--I don't know what you are going to tell us, but as you explain how you built this movement, this movement was built up, leading to the release of Sharansky, and all, but if you have not read the book, I would encourage you to go out and get the book.

But why don't you go ahead.

STATEMENT OF MR. GAL BECKERMAN:

Mr. BECKERMAN. Well, thank you so much. It is such a great honor to have been invited by the Commission, and I want to thank Congressman Wolf in particular for taking such a great interest in the book and thinking that I would have something to contribute here today.

On a spring day in Manhattan, in 1964, 50 years ago this coming May, the very first protest on behalf of Soviet Jewry took place. A group of about 1,000 well-dressed college students, the boys in black suits and thin dark ties, and the girls in dresses, lined up in two rows in front of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations and began marching and chanting.

In their seriousness, one could feel an echo of the protest then taking place for civil rights down south. But the cause they were supporting was in many ways an abstract one, not one roiling their own society. They were demanding of the Soviet Union to allow its Jews to be allowed to have some kind of Jewish identity and, if that was not possible, to let them emigrate, emigrate from a country that normally did not give its citizens any right to freely leave.

So what motivated them to argue for the rights of these distant Jews, far away on the other side of the Iron Curtain, people who they had never met and at that point could not even communicate with? Two factors. First, these protestors were young people

whose parents were racked with guilt for not having done enough to stop the Holocaust, then just two decades past.

This inherited feeling of shame motivated the children. The student group who planned that first march--they were called the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry--had a simple chant for that day's events in 1964, "History shall not repeat." So at one level this protest emerged out of a feeling of obligation to one's brethren. Jews who felt they needed to help other Jews for the most tribal of reasons.

But there was another motivating factor. These students were offended by the Soviet Union's violation of basic human rights, its abrogation of the right to religious freedom, and the right to leave one's country, which are both enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And they were tapping into a generational desire to make change.

Some of these protestors, some of these students, would soon leave the streets of Manhattan that summer of 1964 and try to register African-American voters in Mississippi. So the particular and the universal, these were the two intertwined factors that pushed these students to take up the cause, and it was the engine that I think propelled this movement forward--the tribal motivation to help one's own overlapping with the fundamental desire for freedom shared by all humanity, the particular and the universal.

And this wonderful overlap is what made the Soviet Jewry movement one of the most effective human rights struggles in history. That small protest of students eventually became a mass struggle. It led to the ground-breaking Jackson-Vanik Amendment passed in 1974, the first real piece of American legislation that directly linked our foreign policy to a country's human rights record. Broadly supported by Congress, the amendment forced the Soviets to allow for the free immigration of Jews if they wanted Most Favored Nation trading status with the United States.

By the 1980s, as other people have mentioned, no summit meeting between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev could take place without President Reagan first presenting a list of Soviet Jews who have been waiting sometimes two decades to get out, stuck in limbo--Refusniks as they were known--not allowed to work and yet ostracized and branded "parasites" by Soviet society.

And, by 1987, as some of you might know, when Gorbachev made his first visit to the United States, that small protest that had turned into a quarter of a million people who stood on the mall, including most of the Soviet Jewry leaders, Soviet Jewish leaders like Mr. Sharansky, who by that point had been allowed to leave.

The struggle was successful because it was fought at these two different registers. It was a personal emotional endeavor for American Jews, eager to redeem themselves from their perceived passivity to erase the stain. But they also knew how to embed this tribal motivation within a much larger frame, to speak in the language of American values of freedom and human dignity, and to believe that they were not only fighting for their own but also for universal principles of how people everywhere should be treated.

And I think this is the central lesson of the movement for human rights struggles today. American Jews were, of course, not unique in their desire to get their countrymen to care about the plight of their brethren. There are Korean-Americans who worry that the hunger and oppression of relatives trapped in North Korea is being ignored, Iranian-

Americans who want a foreign policy that includes more support for dissident groups, Syrian-Americans who want U.S. arms to support the resistance to Bashar al-Assad.

For these groups, and many others, trapped by what might seem to some like the parochialism of their individual causes, whether they be ethnic, religious, or national, the Soviet Jewry movement should be an example that the small interest of these groups can be elevated when they voice their concerns in an American tongue, using the language of self-evident freedoms that resonate with all of us.

This will often mean negotiating the tension between tribal imperatives and common ones and finding that overlap. It is not easy or obvious, but that is where the power exists to move public opinion, to move governments, and to amplify a community's concerns until they are shared by as wide a circle as possible.

Looking for this overlap also forces activists to present their cases and build grassroots support by appealing to the most elemental human impulse to relate to other people in trouble. One of the great innovations of the Soviet Jewry movement was its ability to personalize and individualize the struggle. My own first contact with the movement was as a 13-year-old when I was twinned by a Soviet Jewry organization with a young boy from Leningrad whose family had been trying to emigrate for eight years without success.

I was given a brief synopsis of his story, a photograph, and an address. At that point, the movement stopped being large and impersonal, but about my sense of connection with this one young boy. That same spirit of humanizing the struggle extended to all its activism from the focus on individual prisoners like Mr. Sharansky to letter-writing and wearing bracelets with the names of Refuseniks, and, for the most committed, actual visits to the Soviet Union to meet the dissidents.

From those early days in the 1960s, there was always a sense that the movement was sustained by a grassroots of activists, thousands of people who were willing to volunteer their time and energy for the cause, as if their own identities depended on it. This, too, is an important lesson for human rights campaigners. It is not enough to write reports and issue press releases about abuses, unless a cause is made concrete. Unless it finds a way to animate people not just intellectually but also emotionally, it can never move into the realm of actuality.

What was so powerful about the Soviet Jewry movement is that it made this leap. It was never just an abstraction. Americans were made to understand, as any successful human rights movement must make people see that these violations affected all of us in some way.

The story of a political prisoner locked up for her beliefs has to be framed as a personal affront to a set of values in order for her cause to ignite others. That is what I saw in those letters from that young boy in Leningrad, a personal affront to my growing sense, then, of the basic freedoms that any human being should enjoy. It seemed preposterous to me that he and his family couldn't just leave if they wanted to.

So creating those small moments of sympathy I believe have to be at the heart of any struggle. Then, the job of transforming that sentiment into action can begin. No amount of lobbying can be effective before that happens, intertwining of the particular and the universal. Having examined closely the Soviet Jewry movement, this was the formula that accounts for its success, its redemptive power for those individuals who

made up its activist ranks combined with the appeal to larger principles that were impossible for Americans to turn away from.

It is a formula that I believe still very much has relevance today, for those human rights activists frustrated at being ignored and eager to find a way to be heard.

Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. Thank you. I am going to go to Mr. Smith and then Mr. Lowenthal. I just wanted to say I think you are exactly right. And for all of the different groups, this place is downstream from what is going on out here. This place will--if you think that Congress and the administration will save you, you are mistaken, unless we have a rare individual like Ronald Reagan, who had this in every fiber of him.

But Senator Jackson, if you read the book, went out and developed this and then they--Washington began to hear. And so I think this is really a model for how we go back and capture. And working together, if you will, the gulags in Korea, in North Korea, when this government in North Korea falls, America will feel guilty if it doesn't do something for what has taken place, in Vietnam, and we can just around.

But I think--I urge those who are interested, just read this book, because it sort of lays out a history which I had experienced, but I never sort of quite saw it.

Well, I am going to go to Mr. Smith and Mr. Lowenthal. Before I do that, if I can--someone just said there are parents of several Vietnamese prisoners in the audience. If they could just stand up, if they are here, and give me the name of their child. If you can interpret--doctor, could you interpret? Just so--

The INTERPRETER. Yes.

Mr. WOLF. --if they can give us their name, and their child.

The INTERPRETER. I am Mrs. Tram, the mother of Attorney Le Quoc Quan. I am here to ask for help to get my son out of prison.

Mr. WOLF. Any other--is there--

[Statement from unmiked location.]

Mr. WOLF. If we could get both of their names to the staff, so we are able to--and I would just urge you, you ought to just give this cable to the American Ambassador in Vietnam. I mean, if this does not move him and the story of this mother, he should be gone, just like that if it does not. So if you can maybe stay so you can take the names of both of these parents back.

In any case, with that, Mr. Smith, and then Mr. Lowenthal.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I think the witnesses today have just eloquently summed up the plight of dissidents. They spoke about individuals and did so I think so passionately, but it is a tip of the iceberg. For everyone who we spoke about, or they spoke about today, there are thousands of others who are suffering an equal fate of harassment, torture, and gross mistreatment.

So the time really has come for a reevaluation at the White House. I would say with all due respect to the President of the United States, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, it remains unbelievable to me, and I think many others, that in meeting after meeting he does not publicly speak out on behalf of Liu Xiabo, Gao Zhisheng, and all of the other individuals in China who are being beaten and tortured as Geng He just went through and explained to us afresh the gross mistreatment, the barbaric mistreatment.

People who do those things against innocent and totally idealistic attorneys like Gao Zhisheng, the people who do it and order it are deranged. They are the kind of people--I mean, there is a pathology there that is sickening. We saw it in the Soviet Union, the people who mistreated Natan Sharansky and so many others during the worst days of the gulag state there.

So the ineffective and inadequate attention to political dissidents, again, as the means of reform--if we pay attention to them, the other reforms will follow, and it is not the other way around, enabling--and that is what we are doing now so callously. Maybe it is done naively, but I would suggest it might even be to the point of being callous. How many times do you have to hear these stories and not change your modus operandi?

You know, the Vietnam Human Rights Act, I think as many of you know, has passed the House. It has passed overwhelmingly. It was totally bipartisan. It is the third time in three different congresses we have been able to get that legislation passed. It does provide a road map with specific benchmarks for human rights reform, and yet it is languishing right nearby in the Senate, and I will bet maybe my salary it will not come up for a vote again in the United States Senate.

So to Harry Reid I make an appeal--put the bill up to Senator Menendez, put the bill up for a vote. Its conditionality is so modest. Freezing the foreign aid, which is U.S. grant money to the government of Vietnam at the last year's levels is modest indeed, but it lays out a road map for reform.

Vietnam, at least the people who are behind Block A406, and all of the other human rights activists and Dr. Thang, and I would publicly who helped us draft that bill, this--it is an idea whose time has come. So we can talk about human rights, and my good friend and colleague from California, one of the co-sponsors of course, Mr. Frank Wolf, a co-sponsor. All of us are saying let us be serious about this.

So the Vietnam Human Rights Act, Mrs. Tran, needs to pass. It will help. It will help daughters, it will help husbands, wives, and family members. And let me just say, Ms. Grace Gao, as you know so well, who testified on December 5 at a hearing that was focused on the five daughters, who spoke out to Beijing, but equally spoke out to the White House, I mean, we are the legislative branch. We are not the face of foreign policy. That is an executive branch function, as we all know.

We write the laws. We put the money or don't put money into certain accounts. But when it comes to the interface with foreign governments, we can be advocates and we are. But it is the White House, it is the diplomats, who carry the burden or drop that burden for the dissidents.

And I would respectfully submit we wrote a letter to the President of the United States asking that your daughter and the other four daughters be allowed to meet with the President to make their case on behalf of their fathers. We haven't even gotten a response back from the White House. That is unconscionable to me.

Let me also say that Grace summed up something that I think we often miss, and that is it is not just the prisoner of conscience who suffers so horrifically, but it is all of the circle of family and friends who are in anguish over their daily mistreatment, as you are, and as you have stated so eloquently in the past, as you have done so today.

As Grace pointed out, when she would go to school when folks were still in China, six or seven policemen would escort her to school, mock her, mock her father in the car, make life absolutely miserable for her as well as for the rest of the family. She says, "All of my relatives, such as grandma, grandpa, three aunts, and his brother and sisters, are blacklisted. They are deprived of basic rights." And then she goes on, "Eight years have passed. The persecution of my father is not only still continuing, but also extends to all of our family members."

So they are in the gulag, too, suffering that anguish. And I think we have to be much more attentive to that than we have been. And she, too, she goes, "I wish the staff of the U.S. Embassy in China would at least go and visit my father in prison. Hop in a car and go see him. And if you are rebuffed and turned down, make a big deal about it."

It is the indifference, as was mentioned by Robbie George earlier, it is enabling to dictatorships, and we need to speak out much more effectively.

Let me just say, too, and it was mentioned by the Mr. earlier, Mr. McGovern, you know, Frank Wolf has been a champion, a leader. The Religious Freedom Act is the law of our land, although it is not being implemented by this administration, but it was written by this man right here.

And I have to tell you, the pushback--we were told it would create a hierarchy of human rights by the Assistant Secretary for Democracy and Human Rights. John Shadduck, when he testified before my committee against the Wolf bill, here is the point person in human rights saying, "We don't want the law. We don't want the bill."

And, thankfully, when it was finally presented with overwhelming bipartisan support in the House and the Senate, because of Mr. Frank Wolf's lead, it was signed by President Clinton, even though he opposed it throughout the entire process. So we are glad to get the signature.

But then it has not been effectively implemented, and I think that is why we have to redouble our efforts. We are going to miss you, Frank. I still hope you will reconsider. He has been a stalwart in combating religious persecution and for speaking out on behalf of prisoners of conscience.

Today's hearing is another iteration of that concern and that compassion and that empathy, and we need to redouble our efforts on behalf of all of you, and all of the others that you speak for today, including in countries that are not here today. We all know which countries they are, and they, too, will get their place at the witness panel. But we have got to redouble our efforts.

And this administration has to stop, however unwittingly that it is doing it, its enabling of dictatorship.

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Well, again, thank you, Mr. Chair, for holding this hearing, and, Congressman Smith, for your leadership in especially highlighting the human rights violations in Vietnam.

I want to thank all of the members of the panel for coming today and sharing their stories and their advocacy on behalf of prisoners of conscience who are unable to speak for themselves. It is through your voice that we in the Congress can begin to act.

It is deeply troubling to hear all of the human rights abuses from all around the world, but I believe it is our opportunity, as Members of Congress, to renew our commitment to shining a spotlight wherever there are prisoners of conscience, wherever they are, and where they are being held without cause and losing their rights and their individual liberties.

I want to especially thank Mrs. Tran for her brave testimony. Through the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I have adopted Mr. Nguyen Tien Trung, who, much like your daughter, has been imprisoned by the Vietnamese government solely--solely for expressing her beliefs.

Thank you again for reminding us of the ongoing unacceptable violation of human rights in Vietnam. And for myself, I want to thank you for reminding us that as this Congress addresses the Trans-Pacific Partnership we should not be rewarding nations that trample on human rights by providing them enhanced privileges.

I thank you for bringing that up. It is something that we must continue to address. And I appreciate all of you for being here.

Thank you.

Mr. WOLF. We are going to end with showing--where is the film going--there is going to be a film, but it is very short. I think it is a five-minute film.

[Video played.]

Mr. WOLF. With that, we will--again, I want to thank all of the--

[Video played.]

Mr. WOLF. Everyone on the videos was adopted by Members and is part of the Defending Freedoms Project. Secondly, Mr. Smith and Dr. Thang wanted me to announce that they are going to have a press conference at 1:45 in Rayburn 2255, whereby they will release a report on torture in Vietnam.

And with that, let me just thank everybody. I think it was one of the better hearings I have attended since I have been here. And I want to thank the witnesses for coming so far, and I think we can commit that all of the members of the committee will work on these. And I think we will adopt a project, which was a great idea from Mr. Sharansky, of picking three or four or five places that we can name the streets in front of the embassies and see what we can do to sort of move that process.

Again, hearing adjourned. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 12:37 p.m., the Commission was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR CONGRESSIONAL HEARING RECORD

Statement of the Honorable Randy Hultgren (IL-14)
Highlighting the Case of Prisoner of Conscience Zhu Yufu
The Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
Defending Freedoms Hearing On the Plight of Prisoners of Conscience around the World
January 16, 2014
HVC-210

- Good morning. I would like to thank my colleagues and Commission Co-chairmen Frank Wolf and Jim McGovern for convening this important hearing.
- I also want to commend each of the panelists testifying here today and the organizations they represent for their tireless efforts on behalf of prisoners of conscience everywhere. I wholeheartedly support your work.
- This hearing presents the ideal opportunity for me to bring attention to the plight of one prisoner of conscience in particular – Zhu Yufu.
- Today, as I speak, Zhu Yufu is spending his 696th day behind the walls of the overcrowded Zhejiang Prison Number 4 in China.
- An advocate for democracy, Christian dissident, and poet, Zhu Yufu started the “May 4 Monthly,” a pro-democracy publication and was elected head of the magazine.
- Subsequently, he was often summoned by authorities and his house was frequently searched.
- Zhu actively supported the students’ democracy movement and was one of the founders of the China Democracy Party.
- For this, Zhu was arrested on the false charge of “inciting subversion of state power,” sentenced to prison, and deprived of his political rights.
- He is a prisoner of conscience, unable to enjoy the fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Today, Zhu Yufu languishes in prison. He suffers from many diseases and his health is extremely poor. Prison authorities refuse to let him seek treatment or medication.
- According to Zhu’s wife, prison regulations to relieve overcrowding permit Zhu to be eligible for community supervision or medical parole.
- Yet prison authorities refuse to transfer him. In fact, they have explicitly denied Zhu’s release on the basis that he is a political prisoner who opposes the state. Zhu is the only eligible prisoner in the entire prison who is being denied release.

- Zhu Yufu cannot speak for himself, so others, including myself, must advocate on his behalf.
- Last year, as part of the Defending Freedoms Project of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I “adopted” Zhu Yufu as a prisoner of conscience.
- Through this and similar “adoptions” by my colleagues in Congress, we seek to pierce the darkness and shatter the silence that has enveloped Zhu Yufu and others like him.
- Silence is not an option. Silence means Zhu Yufu likely will remain in prison and the government of China will elude accountability for its deplorable human rights violations.
- Thank you for this opportunity to shine a light on the plight of Zhu Yufu and for the efforts of everyone here who are raising their voices on behalf of prisoners of conscience.

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Testimony of Dr. Robert P. George before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on Defending Freedoms: Highlighting the Plight of Prisoners of Conscience around the World
January 16, 2014

I want to thank the Co-Chairs and Members of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission for holding this hearing and inviting me to testify today on behalf of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). With your approval, I would like to submit my written testimony for the record.

I commend the Commission for its support for the Defending Freedoms Project and spotlighting the project at today's hearing. I also want to commend Representatives Wolf and McGovern, not only for their sponsoring of this effort, but also for their longstanding leadership and support for human rights around the world.

What is the Defending Freedoms Project? Through this effort, Members of Congress advocate on behalf of prisoners of conscience from around the world. Through these actions, Members stand in solidarity with these imprisoned individuals, raising their cases at the highest levels. USCIRF, and our partner in this effort, Amnesty International USA, is proud to work on this project with the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission. All of us want these prisoners of conscience to know that they are neither forgotten nor alone. We also want to shine a light on the laws and policies that led to their imprisonment, and we want to hold their governments accountable. Ultimately, we want to see these prisoners freed.

While quiet diplomacy has a key role to play, public inattention can lead to more persecution, not more freedom. In fact, at its worst, private diplomacy can be interpreted as a lack of serious interest and therefore a license to continue to oppress. And while most countries want to be viewed as fulfilling their international obligations, international human rights mechanisms cannot force compliance. Oppressive nations oftentimes need to be reminded and prodded publicly, through hearings such as this one today, about their obligations to protect their own people from serious abuses, including violations of their human rights.

And, that is what the Defending Freedoms Project is about: people. Sadly, today it is almost impossible to read the newspaper, listen to the radio, or go online and not find a report about someone being detained for who they are, what they believe, and how they have chosen to express their convictions. These prisoners of conscience have been unjustly prevented from enjoying the most fundamental human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other international human rights instruments and standards. To help ensure these brave souls are not forgotten, along with my testimony, I request that the list of prisoners of conscience created for the Defending Freedoms Project be included in the record.

It is important that we shine a light on these prisoners of conscience until they are free – and until the countries that have imprisoned them have implemented needed reforms that

reflect the internationally approved standards that many of them have agreed to in writing but violate in practice.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM:

In 1948, only three short years after the horrors of World War II, the United Nations adopted the landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR delineated fundamental rights that form the basis for a democratic society including the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association, as well as freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. These basic rights also include not being subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile, and a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) made these rights legally binding on the nations who acceded to the treaty. This covenant, which 167 countries including the U.S. have joined, commits its parties to respect individuals' civil and political rights, including the freedoms of speech, assembly, and religion, as well as electoral rights and rights to due process and a fair trial.

Given my position as Chairman of the U.S. Commission on International religious Freedom (USCIRF), I want to focus on one specific human right, religious freedom, which is enshrined with the other rights in international treaties and understandings. Freedom of religion or belief also encompasses other freedoms, including expression, association, and assembly. As it often is the first right taken away, religious freedom serves as the proverbial canary in the coal mine, warning us that denial of other liberties almost surely will follow.

Supporting religious freedom abroad is not just a legal or moral duty, but a practical necessity crucial to the security of the United States and the world as it builds a foundation for progress and stability. Research confirms that religious freedom in countries that honor and protect this right is associated with vibrant political democracy, rising economic and social well-being, and diminished tension and violence. In contrast, nations that trample on religious freedom are more likely to be mired in poverty and insecurity, war and terror, and violent, radical extremism. Simply put, violations of religious freedom lead to violent religious extremism, with too many governments either perpetrating or tolerating religious freedom abuses. The human victims of these abuses are among the prisoners of conscience that we highlight today.

The fate of individual prisoners of conscience join the legal, moral and security concerns that make a compelling case to rigorously support religious freedom. Numbers do so as well. A recent study found that one-third of all nations, comprising 75% of the world's population, severely restrict religion through the actions of governments or societal actors. In these countries, many of which top the U.S. foreign policy agenda, religion constitutes their core narratives and religious freedom violations often are the catalyst for their divisions and problems.

THE INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT (IRFA)

The U.S. signaled its intent to strengthen its championing of religious freedom overseas with the passage in 1998 of the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), which created the commission on which I serve. IRFA mandated the promotion and protection of religious freedom around the world as a central element of American foreign policy. The Act was a response to the growing concern about religious persecution worldwide and the perception that religious freedom was an orphan human right on which the U.S. government was inadequately focused.

IRFA put into place three mechanisms to counter religious persecution abroad: An Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom within the Department of State; the bipartisan and independent U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (or USCIRF) on which I serve; and to give teeth to this new effort, the creation of a “country of particular concern” status for countries engaged in or tolerating “systematic, ongoing and egregious” violations.

Department of State: IRFA created the International Religious Freedom Office in the State Department with an Ambassador-at-Large as a principal adviser; authorized a director-level position at the NSC to coordinate efforts; mandated that the State Department establish prisoner lists; called for American diplomats to receive training on how to promote religious freedom effectively around the world; and barred the entry of aliens who are responsible for or directly carried out “particularly severe violations of religious freedom.”

The position of the Ambassador-at-Large is now vacant. USCIRF urges the Administration to speedily fill and Congress to confirm this important position. The Ambassador-at-Large is supposed to be the key official inside the U.S. government for coordinating and developing U.S. international religious freedom policy. However, according to a report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) dramatically reduced the rank of the Ambassador-at-Large. This reduction in the Ambassador-at-Large’s rank constitutes a major change in the structure IRFA established and a thwarting of congressional intent. USCIRF recommends the Obama Administration fulfill IRFA’s intent that the Ambassador-at-Large be a “principal adviser to the President and the Secretary of State regarding matters affecting religious freedom abroad” by ensuring he or she has direct access to the President and the Secretary of State.

USCIRF repeatedly has raised the importance of annually designating “countries of particular concern” (CPCs). Unfortunately, neither Republican nor Democratic Administrations have fully utilized the CPC mechanism as the key foreign policy tool it was intended to be. Neither have designated CPCs in a timely manner nor issued specific Presidential actions based on these designations. For instance, the Obama Administration issued CPC designations only once during its first term; and while the Bush Administration issued several designations, it also allowed the annual designation process to fall off track. However, IRFA requires a CPC designation annually. Such

designations enable the United States to raise concerns about systematic, ongoing and egregious violations of religious freedom at the highest levels with foreign governments and seek improvements in human rights conditions.

USCIRF also wants to draw the Commission's attention to the need for the State Department to compile a list of prisoners. IRFA mandated that the Secretary of State establish monitoring mechanisms "consisting of lists of persons believed to be imprisoned, detained, or placed under house arrest for their religious faith, together with brief evaluations and critiques of the policies of the respective country restricting religious freedom." In compiling this list, the State Department was directed to use the resources of the various bureaus and embassies and consult with NGOs and religious groups. While the State Department has advocated for individual prisoner cases, USCIRF is unaware of the Department ever establishing or maintaining a comprehensive prisoner list. However, USCIRF has compiled an informal list of prisoners that reflects only a small number of those detained, jailed, or disappeared, and longer lists of prisoners in Iran, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan are included in the 2013 Annual Report's appendices. In addition, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China maintains a comprehensive, searchable database of prisoners in China. The ability of both commissions to track prisoners, even while operating with substantially fewer resources and less access to international information than the State Department, demonstrates that the State Department can fulfill this statutory mandate.

USCIRF: USCIRF was created by IRFA as an entity separate and distinct from the State Department which would be an independent, bipartisan U.S. government advisory body to monitor religious freedom worldwide and make policy recommendations to the President, Secretary of State, and Congress. USCIRF bases its recommendations on the standards found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international documents.

USCIRF's work is accomplished through the leadership of its Commissioners, who serve in a voluntary capacity without pay, and the engagement of its professional staff. Far from duplicating the work of the State Department and its Office of International Religious Freedom, USCIRF's independence gives it the freedom to speak publicly about violations of this fundamental right and ways the United States can engage positively. To perform this function, USCIRF issues written analyses, including its Annual Report, as well as periodic policy briefs and frequent press statements and op-eds. USCIRF also has released major reports on a variety of issues, highlighting specific actions the U.S. government should take to improve religious freedom.

USCIRF also works with Congress on a range of issues. Commissioners and USCIRF staff serve as a resource to Members of the House and Senate and their offices on a range of countries and issues, including testifying before Congressional committees about USCIRF's independent findings and recommendations. USCIRF also engages with religious groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), seeking their insights and benefiting from their information. Commissioners and staff meet with representatives of

religious communities and institutions, victims of religious persecution and their families, human rights groups, academics, and policy experts.

USCIRF also engages with the State Department, National Security Council, USAID, the Defense Department, and other executive branch entities to help promote international religious freedom as a key foreign policy priority, as IRFA mandated. The Commission meets with high-ranking officials from foreign governments and international organizations, participates in U.S. delegations to international meetings, and helps provide training to Foreign Service Officers and other U.S. officials. The Commission travels internationally to examine conditions firsthand. In fact, USCIRF delegations just returned from Egypt and Bahrain and soon will travel to Turkey, Burma, and Nigeria.

OVERARCHING TRENDS

Along with relentlessly advocating on behalf of prisoners of conscience, we can more effectively support those individuals who have been imprisoned for who they are, what they believe, and how they have chosen to express their convictions if we understand some of the reasons that nations violate the human rights of their citizens.

- Regimes that fear religion as an alternate source of authority imprison members of religious communities they view as unwelcome competitors. These authoritarian governments crack down on members of civil society that dare to challenge the status quo, including members of religious minority and majority communities, through repressive legal systems and laws and also brute force. The challenges raised by the relative ease of communication in the Internet age further threaten their grip on power.
- Government inaction to prevent or punish religious freedom violations coupled with efforts to sponsor violent ideologies is a proven recipe for human rights abuses. Instead of enforcing the law and protecting vulnerable populations, an increasing number of countries are turning a blind eye to repression, thereby creating climates of impunity. Just look at Nigeria and Pakistan to see what happens when authorities do not enforce the law: violence and death result. Hate-filled ideologies add fuel to this fire. For example, there continue to be reports that funding originating in Saudi Arabia is used globally to finance religious schools, mosques, hate literature, and other activities that support religious intolerance and, in some cases, violence toward non-Muslims and disfavored Muslims.
- Nations in turmoil, such as Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, represent another dire situation, as religious minorities face the twin threats from governmental and non-governmental oppression, imprisonment, and violence. Christians are of special concern, both in the Middle East and elsewhere, including Nigeria and Pakistan. In some countries, persecution and the resultant flight of the persecuted clouds the very future of these communities, some of which have existed for nearly two millennia. Even communities that do not face persecution confront difficult challenges as they try to live out their faiths in conflict-ridden environments.

It is my fervent hope that the history of Jews in Iraq does not foreshadow the fates of Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East. 130,000 Jews lived in Iraq in 1948. After facing discrimination, harsh laws and quotas, being stripped of their property, and some being imprisoned and tortured, most members of the community were forced to flee. Today, fewer than 10 Jews remain.

BENDING TOWARD JUSTICE

When it comes to promoting religious freedom and combating the rise of violent religious extremism, religious freedom abuses not only offend human rights, but pose a grave threat to the security and stability of countries. And unfortunately, this instability and violence often spills beyond national borders into neighboring countries, threatening entire regions.

While the world has undergone some positive changes in the last decades, challenges remain today that make it incumbent on us to stand up for human rights. Paraphrasing the reforming minister of the Unitarian church and abolitionist Theodore Parker, Martin Luther King Jr. said that “the arc of the Moral Universe is long, but it bends toward Justice.” We have to be vigilant to make sure it keeps on bending in the right direction, especially given the challenges that are taking place around the globe, including in the following areas:

AFRICA:

Eritrea: Eritrea has been called the North Korea of Africa, and for good reason. Brutal religious freedom violations routinely take place, including torture or other ill-treatment of thousands of religious prisoners; arbitrary arrests and detentions without charges of members of unregistered religious groups; a prolonged ban on public religious activities; revocation of citizenship rights of Jehovah’s Witnesses; interference in the internal affairs of registered religious groups; and inordinate delays in responding to registration applications from religious groups. USCIRF, when interviewing Eritrean refugees in late 2012, heard credible reports that many of the 2,000 to 3,000 religious prisoners have experienced torture and other inhumane treatment. The situation is particularly dire for Jehovah’s Witnesses and members of other small, disfavored religious groups, such as Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians. The government dominates the internal affairs of the four recognized religious (the Eritrean Orthodox Church, Sunni Islam, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Eritrea). The government has appointed, over community objections, the heads of both the Orthodox and Muslim communities.

The government-deposed Eritrean Orthodox Patriarch Abune Antonios has been detained under house arrest since 2007. He is denied family visits and, despite suffering from severe diabetes, also is denied access to medical care. He is one of the prisoners of conscience included on the list of prisoners whom Members of Congress are encouraged to adopt.

In light of these particularly severe violations, USCIRF recommended in 2013 that Eritrea be designated as a CPC. Since 2004, the Commission has recommended, and the State Department has designated, Eritrea as a CPC. The State Department most recently re-designated Eritrea as a CPC in September 2011.

Ethiopia: In the summer of 2011, the Ethiopian government instituted what it called a “religious training” program for its Muslim community. In reality, the program imposed a little-known Islamic theology, al-Ahbash, on all Ethiopian Muslims. Throughout 2012, Ethiopian Muslims protested government interference in their internal religious affairs, holding almost weekly peaceful demonstrations following Friday prayers.

The government harshly put down these peaceful protests in July 2012, beating and arresting almost a thousand demonstrators. Some witnesses alleged police use of teargas and live ammunition against protestors. Almost all those arrested later were released; however 29 were charged in October 2012 under the Anti-Terror Proclamation, accused of “intending to advance a political, religious or ideological cause” by force and the “planning, preparation, conspiracy, incitement and attempt of terrorist acts.” The Anti-Terror Proclamation is routinely used against journalists and political opponents. Among those targeted were nine members of the protestors’ Arbitration Committee who were tasked by the demonstrators to negotiate with the government on their demands that the government respect the Ethiopian constitution’s protection of separation of religion and state. In December 2012, a USCIRF delegation travelled to Ethiopia and met with the lawyers for those charged. The delegation was informed that their clients were being subjected to torture while imprisoned and that the lawyers were not being granted adequate access to their clients. The next day, the delegation was informed that the charges against the 29 were increased to engaging in acts of terrorism. USCIRF is concerned that the Ethiopian government’s efforts to deal with Islamic extremism and its recent harassment of its Muslim community will radicalize the population

In a positive development, in late December 2013, 10 of the 29 arrested for terrorism, including two members of the Arbitration Committee, were released after a court found that the government did not have a strong enough case against them. However, the remaining 19 prisoners continue to be prosecuted for planning terrorist activities and their trials are being held in secret. Peaceful protests, which continued in the summer of 2013, were met with violence by the Ethiopian government.

Nigeria: The government of Nigeria continues to tolerate systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom affecting all Nigerians, both Christian and Muslim. Since 1999, the government’s failure to bring those responsible for sectarian violence to justice has resulted in more than 16,000 Nigerians being killed in Muslim and Christian communal clashes. Despite thousands of deaths in religion-related violence, USCIRF is aware of fewer than 200 people being convicted for perpetrating such violence. While other causes factor into the violence in areas of conflict, religion is a significant catalyst and is often misused by politicians, religious leaders, or others for political gain. Other religious freedom concerns in Nigeria include the application of a strict interpretation of Shari’ah (Islamic law) in the criminal codes of several northern

Nigerian states and discrimination against local minority communities of Christians and Muslims.

The Nigerian government's failure to address chronic religion-related violence contrasts with its commitment to stop Boko Haram. Boko Haram ("Western education is a sin") has committed serious human rights abuses during the past year, conducting killings, bombings, kidnappings, and other attacks that have resulted in numerous deaths, injuries, and widespread property destruction. In three years, the Nigerian government has convicted six Boko Haram suspects of terrorism and murder, including Kabiru Sokoto, the man responsible for the 2011 Christmas bombing outside of Abuja that killed 44. In December 2013, the Nigerian government announced it plans to prosecute 500 suspected Boko Haram members for terrorism and murder. In addition, the Nigerian government has taken positive steps to prevent Boko Haram attacks on houses of worship, such as posting police officers at churches or shutting down streets in front of churches, during services or Christian holidays. By contrast, the government has not taken similar preventative actions, like posting of police at houses of worship, when Muslim-Christian tensions start to rise, such as before and after elections. However, the government's security services also have committed abuses with impunity in their fight against Boko Haram, including extrajudicial killings, beatings, arbitrary detention, inhuman and degrading treatment of prisoners, and destruction of property; and societal violence. USCIRF has recommended that Nigeria be designated a "Country of Particular Concern" since 2009 because of the Nigerian government's toleration of sectarian violence and the lack of effective prosecution of perpetrators.

ASIA

Burma: Ongoing political reforms have produced mixed results. While the Burmese government continues to release political and religious prisoners, has revised laws on media censorship and freedom of assembly, and allowed Aung San Suu Kyi's National Democracy Party (NLD) to assume its seats in parliament, Burma's overall human rights record remains poor. The government either is unable or unwilling to curtail security forces or social actors who have engaged in serious abuses against religious minorities and others during armed conflicts in Kachin State and sectarian violence in Rakhine (Arakan) State. Such impunity is deeply problematic, since issues of religion and ethnicity will shape the trajectory of Burma's political reforms before the planned 2015 elections.

Dr. Tun Aung, the Chair of the Islamic Religious Affairs Council in Maungdaw, is a Burmese prisoner of conscience waiting to be advocated for by a Member of Congress.

Rohingya Muslims, who are denied Burmese citizenship, experience widespread discrimination, strict controls over their religious activities and ceremonies, and societal violence that Buddhist monks often incite and mobs and local militias, including police in Rakhine (Arakan) State, carry out with impunity. In the past year, over 1,000 Rohingya have been killed, their villages and religious structures destroyed, and women raped during attacks. In Kachin and northern Shan states, home to large Christian minority

populations, the military conducted extensive operations beginning in January 2013. The military reportedly continues to limit religious worship and forcibly promote Buddhism as a means of pacification in these areas, and targets Christians for forced labor, rape, intimidation, and destruction of religious sites. The government also continues to censor religious publications and prohibits the import of Bibles and Qur'ans in indigenous languages. Released prisoners face harassment and restrictions, including U Gambria, the head of the All-Burma Monks Alliance.

In light of these systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of freedom of religion and belief, USCIRF has recommended that Burma again be designated as a CPC in 2013. The State Department has designated Burma as a CPC since 1999.

China: The Chinese government commits widespread human rights violations, including the arbitrary detention of dissidents without charges, legal representation, or trials. Human rights defenders face harassment, surveillance, house arrest, and imprisonment, and the censorship of the Internet and other media has grown. Falun Gong practitioners and land petitioners are often held in “black jails” and “transformation centers” where there are credible reports or severe abuses, including torture, psychiatric experimentation, and the possible harvesting of organs.

The Chinese government continues to perpetrate particularly severe violations of the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief. Religious groups and individuals considered to threaten national security or social harmony, or whose practices are deemed beyond the vague legal definition of “normal religious activities,” are illegal and face severe restrictions, harassment, detention, imprisonment, and other abuses. Religious freedom conditions for Tibetan Buddhists and Uighur Muslims remain particularly acute, as the government has broadened its efforts to discredit and imprison religious leaders, control the selection of clergy, ban certain religious gatherings, and control the distribution of religious literature by members of these groups. The government also detained unregistered Protestants leader, closed “illegal” meeting points, and prohibited public worship activities. Unregistered Catholic clergy remain in detention or disappeared. Falun Gong face some of the most intense and violent forms of persecution. Adherents are tortured and mistreated in detention and are pursued by an extralegal security force chartered to stamp out “evil cults.” The Chinese government continues to harass, detain, intimidate, and disbar attorneys who defend members of vulnerable religious groups and restricts online access to religious information and the authority of religious communities to choose their own leadership, and parents to teach their children religion, particularly in Uighur and Tibetan areas.

Gao Zhisheng, one of the most respected human rights lawyers in China, defended activists and religious minorities and documented human rights abuses. In reaction to his efforts, the Chinese government disbarred and tortured him, concealed his whereabouts for nearly 20 months, and has imprisoned him in northwest China. With us today is Gao's wife, Geng He. Along with her children, she was forced to flee China and now lives in the U.S. where they have been granted asylum. Representative Wolf has adopted Gao Zhisheng.

Representative Hultgren has adopted another prisoner, Zhu Yufu, a democracy advocate who reportedly is suffering ill-treatment, and Representative Chabot has adopted Peng Ming, another human rights advocate. Representative Kerry Bentivolio has adopted Wang Bingzhang, a political activist and pro-democracy movement founder. Representative Lynn Jenkins has adopted Alimujiang Yimit, a Uyghur house church leader. These are just five of the many Chinese citizens detained or imprisoned for exercising their human rights under international law.

Because of these systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, USCIRF recommends in 2013 that China again be designated as a CPC. USCIRF has recommended and the State Department has designated China as a CPC since 1999.

Vietnam: The government of Vietnam commits egregious human rights violations against its citizens including by severely limiting the freedoms of speech, press, and association; arbitrarily arresting and detaining people and mistreating them during their arrest and detention; and denying people the right to a fair and expeditious trial. The government also prohibits independent human rights organizations, and restricts internet freedom, attacks web sites critical of the government, and spies on dissident bloggers. Groups and individuals viewed as hostile to the Communist Party or that refuse government oversight were arrested, detained, and harassed.

Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc Minh, mother of imprisoned Vietnamese Labor Activist Do Thi Minh Hanh, will be testifying today. Tran is waiting to be adopted by a Member of Congress, as are other Vietnamese prisoners of conscience. Representative Alan Lowenthal has adopted blogger and activist Nguyen Tien Trung. Representative David Price has adopted Cu Huy Ha Vu, a prominent human rights lawyer and critic of the Vietnamese government. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee has adopted dissident blogger Ta Phong Tan. Representative Chris Smith has adopted Father Nguyen Van Ly. Father Ly, a case USCIRF has followed for years, has spent over fifteen years in prison for the causes of religious freedom, democracy and human rights.

The government of Vietnam continues to expand control over all religious activities, severely restrict independent religious practice, and repress individuals and religious groups it views as challenging its authority. Authorities continue to imprison or detain individuals for reasons related to their religious activity or religious freedom advocacy; independent religious activity remains repressed; the government maintains a specialized police for dealing with religious groups; legal protections for government-approved religious organizations are subject to arbitrary or discriminatory interpretations based on political factors; and converts to ethnic-minority Protestantism and Catholicism face discrimination, intimidation, and pressure to renounce their faith.

Vietnam also issued a revised decree on religion that expanded control over religious affairs. Government officials continued to target Catholic communities, including with destruction of properties, detentions, and arrests. Police used force against Catholic clergy engaged in religious activities and continue to restrict members of the Redemptorist Order. Independent Protestants and Catholics in the Central Highlands

were detained, beaten, and arrested in an ongoing campaign to repress their activities. Hoa Hao activists were sentenced for documenting religious freedom violations. Independent Hoa congregations, Cao Dai and Khmer Buddhist temples, and United Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV) pagodas faced harassment and restrictions. Human rights defender Le Quoc Quan was arrested and is being held without charge.

Given these systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations, USCIRF recommends that Vietnam be designated as a CPC. The Commission has recommended that Vietnam be named a CPC since 2001. The State Department did so in 2004 and 2005, but removed the designation in 2006 because of progress toward fulfilling a binding agreement.

EUROPE AND EURASIA

Russia: Russia restricts civil liberties by, among other measures, adopting laws that impose harsh fines for unsanctioned meetings, target nongovernmental organizations as “foreign agents” if they receive foreign funds, and allow authorities to block websites without a court order. The government also has denied due process to detainees, and has not brought to justice those responsible for the deaths of prominent journalists, activists and whistleblowers, including Sergey Magnitsky, nor has it adequately prosecuted or punished officials who have committed abuses, thereby encouraging a climate of impunity. Other problems include: interference in the judiciary and the right to a fair trial; intimidation of civil society and labor activists; limitations on the rights of workers; trafficking in persons; and attacks on migrants and select religious and ethnic minorities. Rule of law is particularly deficient in the North Caucasus, leading to numerous human rights abuses.

Religious freedom conditions in Russia continued to deteriorate in 2013, especially for religious minorities. The government increased its application of an anti-extremism law against religious groups and individuals not known to use or advocate violence. National and local government officials regularly applied other laws to harass Muslims and religious groups they view as non-traditional. High levels of xenophobia and intolerance, including anti-Semitism, have resulted in violent and sometimes lethal hate crimes. Increasingly, readers of the works of Turkish theologian Said Nursi and Jehovah’s Witnesses are being charged with extremism-related offenses. Muslims and several minority religious groups continued to experience denials of registration, and delays and refusals to permit construction of or grant permits to rent places of worship, and their members often were harassed and detained.

While Russia recently released some prisoners of conscience, including Mikhail Khodorkovsky and Pussy Rioters Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alyokhina, their release -- which was decided by President Putin, not an independent court -- signals not a change in policy but a quest for positive publicity prior to the Sochi Olympic Games. Other prisoners of conscience remain detained in Russia.

Uzbekistan: Since Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991, its government has systematically and egregiously violated freedom of religion or belief, as well as other

human rights. The Uzbek government harshly penalizes individuals for independent religious activity regardless of their religious affiliation. A restrictive religion law facilitates state control over all religious communities, particularly the majority Muslim community. Uzbek police and security forces continue to raid and detain members of unregistered, and sometimes registered, religious groups for peaceful religious activity. The government arrests Muslims and represses individuals, groups, and mosques that do not conform to officially-prescribed practices or that it claims are associated with extremist political programs.

Thousands of individuals remain imprisoned as alleged extremists, including many who reportedly are denied due process and subjected to torture. Over the past decade, the Uzbek government reportedly has sentenced or imprisoned -- sometimes in psychiatric hospitals -- as many as 10,000 individuals for terms of up to 20 years for their non-violent Islamic religious affiliations or beliefs in trials that fall far short of international standards.

Prisoners include Gaybullo Jalilov, a member of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, who was sentenced to more than 11 years in prison on religious extremism charges; Hairulla Khamidov, a young Uzbek Muslim journalist who was charged with membership in an alleged extremist group and in May 2010 received a six-year prison camp sentence; and Akzam Turgunov a human rights activist and political opposition leader who has been detained in Uzbekistan since 2008 on extortion charges. Mr. Turgunov founded and served as Chairman of Mazlum (“The Oppressed”), a human rights organization in Tashkent that advocates on behalf of prisoners of conscience and protests against the use of torture.

Based on these systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations, USCIRF continues to recommend in 2013 that Uzbekistan be designated as a CPC. Since 2006, the State Department has so designated Uzbekistan, but since 2009 it placed a waiver on taking any action as a consequence of the CPC designation.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Bahrain: The Bahraini people in 2011 began protests for greater civil and political rights. Among their grievances were the abuses committed by the government, and ongoing lack of accountability for these abuses, against the Shi’a community. The government responded with a crackdown that has led to a continuing human rights crisis, with the use of excessive force, people killed, and others imprisoned, reportedly tortured, and tried before military courts. The government has inadequately implemented recommendations of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), including related to the rebuilding of Shi’a mosques and religious structures the government destroyed in 2011. USCIRF remains concerned by the government’s ongoing lack of accountability for abuses against the Shi’a community since 2011.

Nabeel Rajab, whose lawyer is with us today, languishes in prison in Bahrain along with other prisoners of conscience, with his appeal recently having been denied.

Representative McGovern has adopted Nabeel Rajab. Representative Hank Johnson has adopted another Bahraini prisoner, Mahdi ‘Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb.

Egypt: Under former President Mubarak, Egyptians experienced the widespread use of torture, unfair trials of civilians before military and emergency courts, and restrictions on the peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, association, assembly, and religion. Since then, the military, the Morsi-led government, and the current transitional government all engaged in and tolerate systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief. Despite some progress during a turbulent political transition, the Egyptian government has failed or been slow to protect from violence religious minorities, particularly Coptic Orthodox Christians. The high level of violence and the failure to convict those responsible continue to foster a climate of impunity, making further violence more likely. The government continues to prosecute, convict, and imprison Egyptian citizens, including Copts and dissenting Muslims, for “contempt” or “defamation” of religion. Implementation of previous court rulings—related to granting official identity documents to Baha’is and changing religious affiliation on identity documents for converts to Christianity—has seen some progress but continues to lag, particularly for Baha’is. In addition, the government has not responded adequately to combat widespread and virulent anti-Semitism in the government-controlled media.

Based on these concerns, USCIRF recommended in 2013 that Egypt be designated as a CPC for systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom. In 2011, USCIRF, for the first time, recommended that Egypt be designated a CPC. Before that, Egypt had been on USCIRF’s Watch List since 2002.

Iran: The Islamic Republic of Iran severely limits the human rights and religious freedoms of its citizens. The most egregious violations include the government’s severe limitations on free and fair elections; restrictions on the freedoms of assembly, speech, press, and religion; and the government’s arbitrarily and unlawfully killing, torturing and imprisoning people; cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment or punishment; and life-threatening conditions in detention and prison facilities; arbitrary arrest and lengthy pretrial detention, and executions without due process.

The government of Iran continues to engage in systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, including prolonged detention, torture, and executions based primarily or entirely upon the religion of the accused. Iran is a constitutional, theocratic republic that discriminates against its citizens on the basis of religion or belief. The already poor religious freedom conditions continue to deteriorate, especially for religious minorities, in particular for Baha’is as well as Christians and Sufi Muslims. Physical attacks, harassment, detention, arrests, and imprisonment intensified. Even some of the recognized non-Muslim religious minorities protected under Iran’s constitution—Jews, Armenian and Assyrian Christians, and Zoroastrians—face harassment, intimidation, discrimination, arrests, and imprisonment. Majority Shi’a and minority Sunni Muslims, including clerics who dissent, were intimidated, harassed, and detained. Dissidents and human rights defenders were increasingly subject to abuse and

several were sentenced to death and even executed for the capital crime of “waging war against God.” Heightened anti-Semitism and repeated Holocaust denials by senior government officials and clerics continue to foster a climate of fear among Iran’s Jewish community. Since the 1979 revolution, members of minority religious communities have fled Iran in significant numbers for fear of persecution.

Pastor Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen, remains jailed in Iran. His eight-year prison sentence, issued in January 2012, was upheld in September of that year. His crime was “threatening national security” due to his involvement in Iran’s house church movement. After holding Pastor Abedini in solitary confinement in Evin prison, Tehran compounded the injustice, transferring him last November to the forbiddingly harsh Gohardasht prison. Representative Trent Franks has adopted Pastor Abedini. Representative Jeff Duncan has adopted Pastor Farshid Fathi, a prisoner of conscience, who currently is serving a six-year term in Iran’s notorious Evin prison. Three members of the Baha’i Seven, Fariba Kamalbadi, Mahvesh Sabet, and Saeid Rezaie have been adopted by Representatives Bonamici, Schakowsky and Jenkins respectively.

Since 1999, the State Department has designated Iran as a CPC under IRFA. USCIRF recommended in 2013 that Iran again be designated as a CPC.

Saudi Arabia: The Saudi government continues to ban most forms of public religious expression other than that of the government’s own interpretation of one school of Sunni Islam; prohibits any public non-Muslim places of worship; and periodically interferes with the private religious practice of non-Muslim expatriate workers in the country. There continue to be sporadic arrests and detentions of Shi’a Muslim dissidents, partly as a result of more frequent protests and demonstrations since early 2011. Saudi officials often cite national security concerns as a pretext for cracking down on religious minorities and Muslim dissidents. The Saudi government also continues to prosecute, convict, and imprison individuals charged with apostasy, blasphemy, and sorcery. The Saudi government uses these charges to suppress discussion and debate and silence dissidents. Promoters of political and human rights reforms, as well as those seeking to debate the role of religion in relation to the state, its laws, and society, are typically the target of such charges.

In May 2012, the Saudi government detained two Saudis, Sultan Hamid Marzooq al-Enezi and Saud Falih Awad al-Enezi, for the crime of becoming members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Saudi clerics consider the Ahmadiyya to be non-Muslims. They are facing the death penalty for apostasy, and their current whereabouts and status are unknown. Saudi clerics had visited them in jail, putting pressure on them to recant their faith. They have been given neither access to legal advice nor an official charge sheet. The case can be referred to a judge for a ruling at any point and both of them reportedly have been threatened by officials from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs that failure to recant will result in the death penalty. They are still being detained more than 18 months after their arrest, despite a law stating that six months is the maximum period of detention without trial.

In June 2012, Raif Badawi, the founder and editor of the *Free Saudi Liberals* website which encourages religious and political debate, was arrested in Jeddah and charged with apostasy, “insulting Islam through electronic channels,” and “parental disobedience.” In January 2013, a Saudi court elected not to pursue the apostasy charge, which carries the death penalty in the Kingdom. On July 29, 2013 Badawi was sentenced by the court to 600 lashes and seven years in prison, and his website was ordered closed. Badawi received five years for insulting Islam and violating provisions of Saudi Arabia’s 2007 anti-cybercrime law through his liberal website and for promoting “unbelief; two years for insulting both Islam and the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (CPVPV), or religious police, in comments during television interviews; and three months for “parental disobedience,” apparently because of Badawi’s numerous public confrontations with his father over the years.

Despite progress by the Saudi government on certain policies and practices, USCIRF again recommended in 2013 that Saudi Arabia be designated as a CPC for systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom. Although so designated by the State Department since 2004, an indefinite waiver on taking any action in consequence of the CPC designation has been in place since 2006.

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Pakistan: Serious human rights problems in Pakistan include extrajudicial and targeted killings, forced disappearances, and torture, which affected thousands of citizens in nearly all parts of the country. The government of Pakistan also engages in and tolerates systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of freedom of religion or belief. USCIRF documented during 2013 that there was little or no government response to the alarming spike in targeted attacks against religious communities that resulted in over 700 deaths.

Sectarian and religiously motivated violence is endemic, with the government failing to protect members of the majority faith and religious minorities. Chronic conditions remain, including the poor social and legal status of non-Muslim religious minorities and the severe obstacles to free discussion of sensitive religious and social issues faced by the majority Muslim community. Pakistan’s repressive blasphemy laws and other religiously discriminatory legislation, such as the anti-Ahmadi laws, have created an atmosphere of violent extremism and vigilantism. Aasia Bibi, whom Representative Pitts has adopted, is one of the 40 cases of Pakistanis jailed under the blasphemy laws that USCIRF has documented. They should not remain invisible, their names unknown. I request that this list be submitted for the record.

The blasphemy law, along with anti-Ahmadi laws that effectively criminalize various practices of their faith, has created a climate of vigilante violence. Hindus have suffered from this climate and hundreds have fled Pakistan for India. Human rights and religious freedom are increasingly under assault, particularly for women, members of religious minority communities, and those in the majority Muslim community whose views are deemed “un-Islamic.”

The government has proven unwilling or unable to confront militants perpetrating acts of violence against other Muslims and religious minorities. Pakistani authorities have not consistently brought perpetrators to justice or taken action against societal leaders who incite violence. Growing religious extremism threatens the freedoms of religion and expression and other human rights for everyone in Pakistan, particularly women, members of religious minorities, and those in the majority Muslim community who hold views deemed “un-Islamic” by extremists. This extremism also threatens Pakistan’s security and stability.

In light of these particularly severe violations, USCIRF again recommended in 2013 that Pakistan be designated a CPC. Since 2002, USCIRF has recommended Pakistan be named a CPC, but the State Department has not followed that recommendation. Pakistan represents the worst situation in the world for religious freedom for countries not currently designated as “countries of particular concern” by the U.S. government.

Individuals with pending death sentences or in the process of appeal

Name(s)	Religion	Sex	Location	Date of Accusation, Arrest or Sentence	Section	Allegation	Sentence
Hazrat Ali Shah	*	Male	Barenis Village, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa	12/15/2012	295	Blasphemy	Death and 10 years in prison
Sufi Ishaque	*	*	Lahore	2/01/2012	*	Blasphemy	Death
Soofi Mohammad Ishaq	Muslim	Male	Talagang/Chakwal	1/20/2012	295-A, C	Claiming to be a prophet	Death and Fined Rs. 200,000
Abdul Sattar	*	Male	Larkana	6/22/11	*	Blasphemy	Death & fined Rs. 50,000
Rafiq	*	Male	Jalalpur Peerwala	2/2/11	*	Blasphemy	Death
Wajihul Hassan	*	*	*	9/29/10	*	Blasphemy	Death / Appeal Pending in SC
Malik Muhammad Ashraf	Muslim	Male	Central Jail (Adiala) Rawalpindi	2/17/10	295-C, 298-A	Derogatory remarks against the Prophet	Death sentence pending
Malik Ashraf	Muslim	Male	Pind Dadan Khan (Punjab)	3/9/10	*	Blasphemy	Death
Abdul Sattar	Muslim	Male	District Jail Jhelum	2/5/10	295-A, B, C	Sending derogatory text messages	Death sentence and fine pending

Ms. Aasia Noreen (Bibi)	Christian	Female	District Jail Sheikhpura	6/19/09	295-C	Derogatory remarks against the Prophet	Death, Rs. 100,000 fine, appeal pending
Muhammad Shafeeq Latif	*	Male	Sialkot, Punjab	6/18/08	*	Blasphemy	Death
Liaqat	Muslim	Male	District Jail Faisalabad	3/21/06	295-C	Blasphemy	Death & life imprisonment , confined in central jail Faisalabad
Muhammad Shafiq	Muslim	Male	District Jail Sahiwal	3/17/06	295-B, C	Passing derogatory remarks about Prophet and burning Quran	Death, 6 months jail, fine Rs. 500,000 - appeal pending
Abdul Hameed	Muslim	Male	District Jail Sahiwal	3/3/06	295-A,B&C	Proclaimed himself a prophet of Islam, built model of Kaaba in yard	Death & 35 years, fined Rs. 80,000
Anwar Kenneth	Christian	Male	New Central Jail Multan (Multan Jail)	6/15/01	295-C	Distributing pamphlet containing Bible verses	Death and Rs. 500K fine,
Wajihul Hassan aka Murshid Masih	Christian - convert	Male	District Jail Sheikhpura	3/3/99	295-A, C, 298 & 298-A	Writing/passing derogatory remarks	Death, appeal pending

Individuals sentenced to life in prison for violation of blasphemy laws

Name(s)	Religion	Sex	Location	Date of Accusation, Arrest or Sentence	Section	Allegation	Sentence
Sajjad Masih	Christian	Male	Station City Gojra	07/13/2013	295-C	Blasphemy	Life - appeal pending
Manzarul Haq Shah Jahan	*	Male	Kasur	03/17/2012	295-C	Blasphemy	Life and Fined 200,000
Muhammad Mushtaq alias Masta	Muslim	Male	New Central Jail Multan	8/1/11	295-B	Disgracing Quran	Life - appeal pending
Muhammad Yousaf	Muslim	Male	New Central Jail Multan	8/1/11	295-B	Blasphemy	Life - appeal pending
Imran Ghafoor	Christian	Male	District Jail Faisalabad	7/1/11	295-A, B	Burning pages of Quran in front of his shop	Life
Muhammad Ishaq	*	Male	Uch Sharif, Mohallah Qadirabad	1/5/11	*	Blasphemy	Life
Mohammad Shafi	Muslim	Male	*	1/1/2011	*	Blasphemy	Life and Fined 200,000
Muhammad Safdar	Muslim	Male	New Central Jail Multan	10/1/10	295-B	Blasphemy	Life - appeal pending

Muhammad Shafi	Muslim	Male	New Central Jail Multan	4/8/10	*	Vandalizing poster with Quran verses on it	Life, Rs. 200,000 fine, appealed
Muhammad Aslam (son)	*	Male	New Central Jail Multan	4/8/10	*	Vandalizing poster with Quran verses on it	Life, Rs. 200,000 fine, appeal pending
Imran Masih	Christian	Male	District Jail Faisalabad	1/1/10	295-A, B	Blasphemy	10 years rigorous, life and fined 100,000/appeal pending
Abdul Kareem	Muslim	Male	District Jail Sahiwal	6/21/07	295-B	Blasphemy	Life - appeal pending
Inayat Rasool	Muslim	Male	District Jail Sahiwal	6/23/06	295-B	Putting Quran in canal water	Life - appeal pending
Asif	Muslim	Male	District Jail Sahiwal	6/18/06	295-B	Burning the Quran	Life - appeal pending
Arif Mahdi	Muslim	Male	New Central Jail Multan	4/18/06	295-B	Disgracing Islamic booklets.	Life - appeal pending
Imran	Muslim	Male	District Jail Faisalabad	7/1/05	295-B	Blasphemy - after property dispute	Life imprisonment
Shamas ud Din	Muslim	Male	District Jail	7/1/05	295-A, C	Writing blasphemous letter	Life and 150,000 Rs

			Sahiwal				fine - appeal pending
Maqsood Ahmad	Muslim	Male	District Jail Sahiwal	6/28/05	295-C	Put Quran on floor	Life, fined Rs. 20,000 - appeal pending
Muhammad Shahzad	Muslim	Male	District Jail Sahiwal	3/24/03	295-B	Assisting Muhammad Yousaf - burning Quran	Life - appeal pending
Muhammad Yousaf	Muslim	Male	District Jail Sahiwal	3/24/03	295-B	Burning the Quran	Life - appeal pending
Rehmat Ali	Muslim	Male	District Jail Faisalabad	*	295-A, B	Blasphemy	Life

**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
Defending Freedoms Hearing Highlighting the Plight of Prisoners of Conscience around the World
Thursday, January 16, 2014
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
HVC 210, US Congress, Washington, DC
Testimony of Geng He, Wife of Gao Zhisheng**

尊敬的沃尔夫议员、各位先生们，女士们，大家好！

对我先生的日夜忧心，已经成了我日常生活中的一部分。来美国近五年了，那种绝望无助的感觉仍时时涌上心头。我担心高智晟遭酷刑、甚至虐待致死，更担心国际社会遗忘了他。因为这是一个国家对一个家庭的迫害，我个人根本无能为力，只有以美国为代表的国际社会发出正义的声音，才能对我的丈夫提供实质性的帮助。所以我格外感谢各位沃尔夫议员举办的这次听证会，你们支持着我和高智晟在寻求正义的路上继续走下去。

高智晟是一名中国律师。他始终为弱势群体维护权益，尽其所能地为穷人免费服务。依靠律师职业的方便之处向大众传播公义和人权的理念。他以自己娴熟的法律知识和雄辩的口才为受害人讨回公道，因此而赢得很高的声望和民意。

自2005年起，他开始为受迫害的基督徒、法轮功及其它受迫害团体办案，中国当局也公开对他进行打压和迫害，政府关闭了他的律师事务所，吊销了他的律师执照，2006年8月，警方非法绑架他，并2006年12月22日，以“煽动颠覆国家政权罪”给高智晟判刑三年，缓刑五年，缓刑五年期间，就有6次以上强制失踪，其中最長一次失踪达二十个月，每次失踪都伴有各种酷刑，就在缓刑到期的前四天，中共新华社对外报道：“未来三年高智晟在监狱”。并在2011年底秘密地把高智晟律师转移到异常边远的新疆阿克苏地区沙雅县监狱关押。

自高智晟被关押在新疆监狱，第二次见面与第一见面次相隔十个月，终于得到警方允许家人与他的见面，但警方禁止家人在见面时询问他的任何情况，从上次家人见到高智晟到现在又有一年了，他们以各种理由拒绝家人探视。新一届领导人的上任，丝毫没有改善高智晟的任何境遇。如果这样一位在国际、国内都有很高知名度的律师都在遭受迫害，中国普遍的人权状况也就可想而知。

由此可知，直到现在，高智晟仍旧是中共官方严密控制的政治犯。因此，国际社会对高智晟持续不断的关注就是对他最大的保护。

高智晟遭受残酷迫害已第八年了，在过去的八年里，警察住过我家、警察监视着我和孩子、不让女儿上学等，给我和孩子造成极大的精神及心理创伤，最终不得不逃离中国。我和孩子对中共专制政权的无法无天的劣行可谓刻骨铭心，他们以谎言和暴力维持他们的专制统治，法律也成了他们施行暴力和谎言工具，真是无耻至极。

今天我在这里，殷切希望奥巴马总统和Kerry国务卿能公开表达对高智晟的关切。你们的声音不仅会给身处黑暗监狱中的高智晟以光明和鼓舞，也会给国内那些渴望自由和人权的中国人民以光明和鼓舞。

我也希望美国的议员、欧洲的议员、各国的政府官员都能通过你们方便的方式对

高智晟提供帮助。每当你们写给他的一封信、每当你们提及他名字的每一个讲话、每当你们要求会见高智晟的一个申请，都对他是莫大的支持和保护。你们对高智晟的帮助，也是对所有追求民主和自由的中国人的帮助。

最后，我向那些为高智晟呼吁的人们表达我心中的谢意，感谢汤姆-兰托斯人权委员会将高智晟列为“捍卫自由”项目的第一人选。我还感谢要沃尔夫(Wolf) 议员，您在给高智晟的信中引述马丁路德金的话：“最终我们记住的，不是我们的敌人所说的话，而是我们朋友的沉默”。我希望在这个关键时刻，高智晟沉默朋友的名单上没有奥巴马总统和Kerry国务卿的名字。

谢谢。耿和 1/16/2014

BẢN ĐIỀU TRẦN TẠI QUỐC HỘI HOA KỲ

Trần Thị Ngọc Minh

Washington, ngày 16 tháng 01 năm 2014

Kính thưa quý vị,

Tôi là Trần Thị Ngọc Minh, hôm nay tôi được có mặt ở đây để trình bày câu chuyện về người con gái út của tôi là Đỗ Thị Minh Hạnh, 28 tuổi một tù nhân lương tâm tại Việt Nam, chỉ vì giúp đỡ những công nhân khổ khổ, những nông dân bị cộng sản Việt Nam cướp đất, cướp nhà mà nhà nước cộng sản bắt con tôi giam vào tù.

Có lẽ quý vị ngồi đây, tại nước Mỹ này, quý vị không thể biết hết tình cảnh của công nhân tại Việt Nam, những người trực tiếp làm ra của cải, trong đó có những hàng hóa do họ làm ra được bán sang Hoa Kỳ. Họ đã sống và làm việc trong những điều kiện hết sức tồi tệ, họ cư trú trong những khu nhà thiếu tiện nghi, mất vệ sinh, chật chội. Có hàng trăm vụ công nhân bị ngộ độc thực phẩm từ bữa ăn do công ty xí nghiệp cung cấp. Họ phải làm việc từ 12 đến 15 giờ mỗi ngày nhưng chỉ được trả lương bình quân 70 đôla mỗi tháng. Nhiều trường hợp bị chủ không trả lương, không đóng bảo hiểm, sa thải khi ốm đau, gặp tai nạn lao động thì không bồi thường đầy đủ. Họ không được quyền thành lập công đoàn riêng để bảo vệ cho mình.

Con gái tôi cùng Nguyễn Hoàng Quốc Hùng, Đoàn Huy Chương và nhiều người khác đã đến giúp đỡ công nhân đấu tranh với giới chủ bảo vệ các quyền tối thiểu của họ, nhưng cả ba người đều đã bị nhà nước cộng sản Việt Nam bắt, đánh đập và kết án nặng nề.

Trước đây, luật sư Lê Thị Công Nhân và nhiều người khác tham gia thành lập nghiệp đoàn độc lập đã bị kết án nhiều năm tù, riêng Lê Trí Tuệ đã trốn chạy sang Campuchia xin Cao ủy Ty nạn Liên Hợp Quốc che chở vẫn bị công an Việt Nam sang bắt đi mất tích đến nay đã 6 năm.

Con tôi bị bắt vào ngày 23/02/2010 tại Di linh-Lâm Đồng. Tại đây, tôi đã chứng kiến công an bắt và đánh con tôi bẻ miệng, chảy máu đầy mặt. Sau đó đưa đi biệt giam 8 tháng tại bộ công an rồi mới đem ra xét xử.

Phiên tòa lần thứ nhất vào ngày 26-10-2010 tại Trà Vinh, con tôi cùng hai người bạn không có luật sư bào chữa và công an đánh đập tàn nhẫn con tôi trước sân tòa. Cả ba bạn trẻ bị kết án: Hùng 9 năm tù giam, Chương và Hạnh mỗi người 7 năm tù giam.

Giữa tháng 3/2011, công an trại giam Trà Vinh đã cho tù nhân hình sự đánh đập con tôi tại phòng giam.

Tháng 4/2011, khi chuyển trại giam từ Trà Vinh về Long An, con tôi đã bị còng tay, xích chân, bịt miệng và bị đánh đập trong thùng xe chở tù.

Ngày 6/05/2011, con tôi lại bị chuyển về Bình Thuận. Tại đây con tôi bị chuyển qua nhiều phân trại giam, công an cưỡng con tôi lao động nhưng con tôi liên tục phản đối cưỡng bức lao động trong nhà tù.

Cuối tháng 4/2013, con tôi bị chuyển đến trại giam Đồng Nai. Tại đây, con tôi bị cưỡng bức làm hạt điều xuất khẩu, con tôi phản đối việc cưỡng bức lao động và ngược đãi tù nhân thì bị công an cho nhiều tù nhân hình sự đánh con tôi cùng một lúc, trong đó một lần bị đánh khi đang tắm không mảnh vải che thân. Hậu quả là con tôi đã bị đau thần

kinh đầu. Con tôi bị teo và đau nhức và có khối U ở trong một ngực trái nhưng nhà tù không cho đến bệnh viện để điều trị chuyên khoa.

Để uy hiếp tinh thần của con tôi và gia đình tôi, ngày 02-10-2013, công an chuyển con tôi cùng với nữ tù nhân tôn giáo Mai Thị Dung từ Đồng Nai đến Thanh Xuân - Hà Nội. Trên đoạn đường dài hơn 1700km, cả hai đang bị bệnh vẫn bị trói tay, xích chân trong thùng xe như những con vật và họ đã bị ngắt xiu nhiều lần.

Từ khi con tôi bị bắt giam cho đến nay, công an luôn ép buộc con tôi nhận tội để được khoan hồng, nhưng con tôi không chấp thuận.

Thưa quý vị,

Bao năm nay, đảng cộng sản Việt Nam đã lừa dối cả thế giới, lừa dối Liên Hiệp Quốc và cả chính phủ Mỹ về vấn đề công nhân và lao động tại nước chúng tôi. Tổng Liên đoàn Lao động Việt Nam hiện nay là do đảng cộng sản thành lập, tất cả các cấp lãnh đạo đều là đảng viên cộng sản. Chủ tịch là ông Đặng Ngọc Tùng, uỷ viên Trung ương đảng cộng sản. Mục đích của họ là để giám sát và kiểm toả công nhân, giúp đảng khai thác và bóc lột công nhân.

Từ năm 1995 đến nay đã có gần 5 ngàn cuộc đình công của công nhân. Những cuộc đình công đó do công nhân tự tổ chức, dưới sự hướng dẫn và giúp đỡ của những người hoạt động nghiệp đoàn bí mật. Công đoàn của nhà nước Việt Nam không bao giờ đứng về phía họ, ngược lại còn chỉ điểm cho công an đàn áp và bắt bỏ tù những người tổ chức đình công.

Hiện nay, có hàng trăm tù nhân lương tâm đang sống trong địa ngục trần gian tại các nhà tù cộng sản Việt Nam như con gái tôi, như nhà sáng lập Công Nông Đoàn Kết Đoàn Huy Chương, sinh viên Nguyễn Hoàng Quốc Hùng, linh mục Nguyễn Văn Lý, mục sư Nguyễn Công Chính, blogger Nguyễn Văn Hải, Ts. Cù Huy Hà Vũ, doanh nhân Trần Huỳnh Duy Thức, luật sư Lê Quốc Quân, sinh viên Đinh Nguyên Kha, tín đồ Mai Thị Dung, tín đồ Nguyễn Văn Lúa, nhà báo Tạ Phong Tần, cựu chiến binh Nguyễn Hữu Cầu, dân oan Trần Thị Thúy, v.v... Tôi xin cung cấp cho Uỷ hội Nhân quyền Tom Lantos danh sách gần 600 tù nhân chính trị và tôn giáo kèm theo. Danh sách tù nhân này do các cựu tù nhân chính trị và thân nhân, bạn bè các tù nhân cung cấp thông tin. Với danh sách các tù nhân này, tôi mong được quý vị và các tổ chức nhân quyền trên thế giới quan tâm đến họ cũng giống như quan tâm đến con tôi vậy.

Tôi biết đã có nhiều tổ chức quốc tế đến Việt Nam để thị sát cuộc sống của giới công nhân, nơi giam giữ tù nhân. Các tổ chức ấy đã bị nhà nước Việt Nam lừa gạt bằng cách chuẩn bị sẵn một số nhà trọ của công nhân, nhà ngục của tù nhân rất tiện nghi và sạch sẽ, huấn luyện một số công nhân và tù nhân nói với phái đoàn các nước những lời tốt đẹp (nhưng dối trá) về điều kiện ăn ở, làm việc tại nước cộng hòa xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam.

Ít ai biết rằng, đằng sau bức tường được trang trí xinh đẹp là địa ngục khủng khiếp của tù nhân. Hàng trăm nhà tù to lớn trải dài khắp trên đất nước Việt Nam là những công xưởng sản xuất hàng hoá xuất khẩu như hạt điều, hàng thủ công mỹ nghệ. Người tù làm việc không được đạt chỉ tiêu sẽ bị biệt giam hay bị trừng phạt. Cai tù và nhà tù ngày càng giàu thêm nhờ việc bóc lột những người bị giam giữ.

Tôi rất ngạc nhiên và cảm thấy chua chát khi nghe các phát biểu của nhiều chính khách, các bản điều trần của một số chính phủ, một số tổ chức ca ngợi nhà cầm quyền

cộng sản Việt Nam đang có tiến bộ về nhân quyền, về chính sách tôn giáo, về chế độ lao động.

Kính thưa quý vị,

Tôi hiểu quyền lợi kinh tế quốc gia đối với nước Mỹ là tối thượng, nhưng đối với chúng tôi nước Mỹ cũng là tấm gương tranh đấu cho nhân quyền. Chính vì vậy mà tôi được có mặt tại nơi đây hôm nay.

Tôi thỉnh cầu quý vị, bằng vị thế của mình, xin hãy dùng mọi cách để áp lực nhà nước cộng sản Việt Nam trả tự do vô điều kiện cho con tôi và tất cả những tù nhân lương tâm, nhất là trong khi Hoa Kỳ đang thương thảo hiệp ước đối tác Xuyên Thái Bình Dương (TPP) với nhà cầm quyền cộng sản Việt Nam.

Tôi cũng tha thiết thỉnh cầu quý vị giúp đỡ tôi kịp thời can thiệp với nhà nước cộng sản Việt Nam cho gia đình tôi bảo lãnh con tôi ra ngoài để đến bệnh viện điều trị căn bệnh mà chúng tôi nghi ngờ với triệu chứng ung thư vì đã phát hiện có khối U trong ngực trái của con tôi.

Xin cảm ơn Quý vị. Nguyên cầu Thượng Đế chúc lành cho Hoa Kỳ và cho Quý vị.

Montagnard Prisoners

Partial list As of February 2012

(Primary sources: BPSOS and Montagnard Human Rights Organization)

Synopsis:

Montagnards have long been subjected to harsh treatment by the government of Viet Nam for a number of reasons including traditional prejudice against ethnic minorities; distrust of the Montagnards' fervent Christianity, which many in the government consider a subversive “American” religion; hostility on account of the close association of many Montagnards with the United States war effort prior to 1975; and an ongoing policy by the government to resettle ethnic Vietnamese from the North in the Central Highlands on lands confiscated from Montagnards.

In recent years this mistreatment has intensified. Between 2001 and 2004, the Vietnamese government shut down or destroyed over four thousand Montagnard house churches in the Central Highlands, and vigorously seized the ancestral lands of the Montagnards, hence in most cases depriving them of their only means of livelihood and further disrupting their religious lives. This repressive policy prompted mass demonstrations by the Montagnards in 2001, 2002, 2004 and 2008.

“...in February 2001, unprecedented mass protests broke out in all four provinces of the Central Highlands. Thousands of Montagnards marched on the provincial towns to demand the return of ancestral lands and religious freedom.

In response, the government launched an aggressive crackdown, dispatching military and police units to seal off the region and arresting dozens of Montagnards, sometimes using torture to elicit confessions and public statements of remorse.

...In April 2004 thousands of Montagnards again took to the streets, with smaller protests taking place in September 2002 and April 2008.

...Elite security units have hunted down and arrested Montagnard activists in hiding and sealed off the border with Cambodia to prevent asylum seekers from fleeing the country.

During these crackdowns, authorities have committed clear-cut violations of fundamental rights, including arbitrary arrest, imprisonment, and torture. Officials have employed coercion to pressure Montagnards to renounce their religion and pledge their loyalty to the government and the Communist Party of Vietnam. Police have used excessive force to dispel largely peaceful protests, resulting in the deaths of as many as eight Montagnards during demonstrations in April 2004 as well as injuries and deaths of others during arrest and in police custody... ” (“Montagnard Christians in Vietnam, A Case Study in Religious Repression,” Human Rights Watch, 2011)

In 2004 the United States designated Vietnam as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) but removed the designation two years later despite the continued imprisonment of

Montagnards who were involved in the peaceful demonstrations of 2001, 2002 and 2004. The Vietnamese government again cracked down on the 2008 demonstration and arrested numerous participating Montagnards. Since 2009, the state news media has reported that at least 15 Montagnards had been tried and sentenced to up to 12 years imprisonment for “undermining national unity.” The government has recently increased repression of the Montagnards, closing house churches, compelling public renunciations of faith and arresting worshipers.

Below is a partial list of Montagnards imprisoned for taking part in the demonstrations in 2001-2008. Most of them were charged according to the following articles in the Vietnamese Criminal Code (VCC):

- § 87: Undermining the national unity
- § 89: Causing public disorder
- § 91: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People’s Government
- § 257: Resisting officers in the performance of their duties

Note: Information on the sentence may vary in some cases. The alternative information is placed in square brackets.

No	Full Name	Year of arrest	Province	Sentence (Years)	Prison last known
1	Y Thuan Nie	2001	Dak Lak	10	Ha nam
2	Y Tuan Bya	2001	Dak Lak	11	Ha nam
3	Y Wang Nie kdam	2001	Dak Lak	4	Ha Nam
4	Y Rin Kpa	2001	Dak Lak	10	Ha Nam
5	Y Nuen Buonya	2001	Dak Lak	11	Ha Nam
6	Y Mriu Eban	2001	Dak Lak	6	Ha Nam
7	Y Muk Nie	2001	Dak Lak	5	Ha Nam
8	Y Nuen Nie	2001	Dak Lak	2	Ha Nam
9	Y Bhiot Ayun	2001	Dak Lak	3	Ha nam
10	Ksor Sun	2001	Dak Lak	2	Ha Nam
11	Y Nok Mlo	2001	Dak Lak	8	Ha nam
12	Y Bhiet Nie	2001	Dak Lak	6	Ha Nam
13	Y Druk Nie	2001	Dak Lak	7	Ha Nam
14	Y Phen Ksor	2001	Dak Lak	7	Ha Nam
15	Siu Sop	2001	Dak Lak	6	Ha nam
16	Y Khu Nie	2001	Dak Lak	5	Ha Nam
17	Y Tum Mlo	2001	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
18	Y Suan	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	Died in prison
19	Y Kao Buonya	2001	Dak lak	7	Ha Nam
20	Y Tim Eban	2001	Dak lak	8	Ha nam
21	Y Are Nie	2001	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
22	Y Boh Nie	2001	Dak Lak	8	Ha nam
23	Y Tien Nie	2001	Dak Lak	8	Ha nam

24	Y Nai Mlo	2001	Dak Lak	8	Ha nam
25	Y Pum Bya	2001	Dak lak	8	Ha nam
26	Y Thomas Eya	2001	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
27	Y Coi B.Krong	2001	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
28	Y Lem B.Krong	2001	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
29	Rahlan Loa	2001	Dak Lak	9	Ha nam
30	Y Thim Bya	2001	Dak lak	10	Ha nam
31	Y Ju Nie	2001	Dak Lak	8	unknown
32	Y Klah Bya	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	Phu Yen
33	H' Boc Eban	2001	Dak Lak	3	Ha Nam
34	Y Grong	2001	Dak Lak	3	Ha nam
35	Y Ngul	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
36	Y Bri Enuol Released	2001	Dak lak	10	Ha Nam
37	Y Kro Nie	2001	Dak Lak	5	Ha Nam
38	Y He Eban	2001	Dak Lak	12	Ha Nam
39	Y Bhi Bya	2001	Dak Lak	7	unknown
40	Y Dham Knul	2001	Dak Lak	5	unknown
41	Y Cuan Rcam	2001	Dak Lak	5	unknown
42	Lat	2001	Dak Lak	7	Ha Nam
43	Y Kroi B.krong	2001	Dak Lak	7	unknown
44	Y Kua Bya	2001	Dak Lak	13	Ha Nam
45	Y Hoen	2001	Dak Lak	7	unknown
46	Y Oal Nie	2001	Dak Lak	5	Ha Nam
47	Y Kim Enuol	2001	Dak Lak	7	unknown
48	Jon Enuol Released	2001	Dak Lak	11	Ha Nam
49	Y Lia Nie	2001	Dak Lak	7	Ha Nam
50	Y Ku Nie	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
51	Siu Je	2001	Dak Lak	7	unknown
52	Ksor Phom	2001	Dak lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
53	Y Su	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
54	Y Brik Bya	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
55	Y Kao Nie	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
56	Ama Phi	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
57	Ksor Y Hoi	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
58	Ksor Y Lak	2001	Dak lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
59	Y Nguyen kdoh	2001	Dak Lak	8	unknown
60	Y Som Hmok	2001	Dak Lak	6	Ha nam
61	YBllet Ayun	2001	Dak Lak	5	Ha Nam
62	Ama Gam	2001	Dak Lak	5	Ha Nam
63	Ama Hngem	2001	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
64	Dieu Rais	2001	Dak Nong	Unknown	Dak Nong

65	Rmah Djoan	2001	Gia Lai	5	Ha nam
66	Siu Un	2001	Gia Lai	16	Ha Nam
67	Y Glu	2001	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
68	Siu Seo	2001	Gia Lai	5	Ha nam
69	Siu Tel Released	2001	Gia Lai	5	Ha nam
70	Ksor Poi	2001	Gia Lai	10	Ha Nam
71	Siu Yui	2001	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
72	Siu Boch	2001	Gia Lai	8	Ha nam
73	Ksor Kroih	2001	Gia Lai	11	Ha Nam
74	Siu Tinh	2001	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
75	Ksor Blung	2001	Gia Lai	5	Ha Nam
76	Siu Ning	2001	Gia lai	5	Ha Nam
77	Siu Beng	2001	Gia lai	7	Ha Nam
78	Prom	2001	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
79	Rmah Anhur	2001	Gia Lai	8	Ha nam
80	Kpa Hling	2001	Gia lai	5	Ha nam
81	Puih Em	2001	Gia Lai	7	Ha nam
82	Nay Pham	2001	Gia lai	5	Ha nam
83	Klong	2001	Gia lai	5	Ha Nam
84	Ksor Dar	2001	Gia lai	3	Ha nam
85	Siu Be	2001	Gia Lai	3	Unknown
86	Y Hnoch	2001	Gia lai	6	Ha Nam
87	Siu Grih	2001	Gia Lai	6	Ha Nam
88	Ksor Hnel	2001	Gia Lai	6	Thanh Hoa
89	Goih	2001	Gia Lai	6	unknown
90	Bah	2001	Gia Lai	6	unknown
91	Rmah Teng	2001	Gia Lai	8	Thanh Hoa
92	Rmah Nul	2001	Gia Lai	5	Ha Nam
93	Ksor Blip	2001	Gia Lai	5	Ha Nam
94	Ksor Doai	2001	Gia Lai	11	Ha Nam
95	Y Yung	2001	Gia Lai	6	Ha Nam
96	Treo	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	Ha Nam
97	Dinh Giam	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	Ha Nam
98	Ksor Buh	2001	Gia Lai	6	Ha Nam
99	Y Teo	2001	Gia Lai	5	Ha nam
100	Ban	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
101	Bro	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
102	Khoi	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	unknown
103	Nau Guh	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	Ha Nam
104	Hyun	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
105	Bum	2001	Gia lai	Unknown	Ha nam

106	Siu Mat	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	unknown
107	Rcom Huong	2001	Gia lai	5	unknown
108	Nai nay	2001	Gia lai	Unknown	Ha nam
109	Krek	2001	Gia Lai	5	unknown
110	Bru	2001	Gia lai	6	T-20
111	Ksor Ong	2001	Gia Lai	5	unknown
112	Y Tum	2001	Gia lai	13	Ha Nam
113	Rcom Due	2001	Gia lai	5	unknown
114	Ksor Kroi	2001	Gia Lai	2	unknown
115	Rahlan Hir	2001	Gia Lai	3	unknown
116	Ama Ngoan	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	T-20
117	Y Gru	2001	Gia lai	Unknown	Ha Nam
118	Nay Djong	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	Ha nam
119	Siu Bhung	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	unknown
120	Rmah Hyuh	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	T-20
121	Rmah Thuk	2001	Gia lai	Unknown	Ha nam
122	Ksor Nom	2001	Gia Lai	Unknown	unknown
123	Bom Jana	2001	Gia Lak	12	Ha Nam
124	Nay Klong	2001	Gia Lak	5	unknown
125	Y Longme	2001	Phu Yen	Unknown	unknown
126	Y Het Nie Kdam Released	2002	Dak Lak	10	Ha Nam
127	Y Tan Nie	2002	Dak Lak	8	Ha nam
128	Y Hoang BKrong	2002	Dak Lak	10	Ha Nam
129	Y Ben Nie	2002	Dak Lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
130	Y Do Mlo	2002	Dak Lak	10	Ha Nam
131	Y Kuo Bya	2002	Dak Lak	13 [12]	Ha Nam
132	Y Tlup Adrong	2003	Dak Lak	12 [11]	Ha Nam
133	Y Bem Nie	2003	Dak Lak	5	Ha Nam
134	Y Kuang Ecam	2003	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
135	Siu Bor	2003	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
136	Rmah Kuet	2003	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
137	Y Jon Enuol	2003	Dak Lak	11	Ha Nam
138	Y Krec Bya Released	2003	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
139	Y Yuan Bya	2003	Dak Lak	11	Ha Nam
140	Rahlan Glel	2003	Gia Lai	5	Ha Nam
141	Romah Phing	2003	Gia Lai	5	T-20
142	Rahlan Khol	2003	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
143	Kpuih Gyan	2003	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
144	Rahlan Tuan	2003	Gia Lai	7	unknown
145	Puih Huy	2003	Gia Lai	6	Ha Nam
146	Ama Rap	2003	Gia Lai	Unknown	Ha Nam

147	Jum, Ama Koi	2003	Gia Lai	Unknown	unknown
148	Rahlan Sang	2003	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
149	Noh	2003	Gia Lai	Unknown	unknown
150	Siu Ron	2003	Gia Lai	Unknown	unknown
151	Kpa Thil	2003	Gia Lai	Unknown	T-20
152	Blit	2003	Gia Lai	Unknown	Ha Nam
153	Rcom Glam	2003	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
154	Rahlan Sam	2003	Gia Lai	Unknown	Thanh Hoa
155	Croc	2003	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
156	KPuih Tin	2003	Gia Lai	13	Ha Nam
157	Y Tui Enoul	2004	`Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
158	Siu Jun	2004	Ayun Pah	6	Ha Nam
159	Y Thot	2004	Dac Nong	10	Ha Nam
160	Hung	2004	Dak Doa	12	T-20
161	Rmah san	2004	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
162	Y Phen Nie	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Phu Yen
163	Y Suom Hmok	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
164	Y Tlo Kbuor	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
165	Y Gin Hmok	2004	Dak Lak	3	unknown
166	Y Hlu Hmok	2004	Dak Lak	6	unknown
167	Y Boi Nie	2004	Dak Lak	3	unknown
168	Y Dhoeng Knul	2004	Dak Lak	8	unknown
169	Y Din Nie	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
170	Y OAE Nie	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
171	Y Goi Nie	2004	Dak Lak	3	unknown
172	Y Jim Eban	2004	Dak Lak	13	Ha Nam
173	Y Jim Eban	2004	Dak Lak	13	Unknown
174	Y Tuan HDok	2004	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
175	Y Jim Eban (Group 1 of 7 UN-Named)	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
176	Y Jim Eban (Group 2, of 7 UN-Named)	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
177	Y Jim Eban (Group 3, of 7 UN-Named)	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
178	Y Jim Eban (Group, 4 of 7 UN-Named)	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
179	Y Jim Eban (Group,5 of 7 UN-Named)	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
180	Y Jim Eban (Group, 6 of 7 UN-Named)	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
181	Y Ruih (Ruh Eban)	2004	Dak Lak	10	Unknown
182	Y Senat, Ksor Nie	2004	Dak Lak	7	Unknown
183	Y Suan Mlo	2004	Dak Lak	10	Unknown

184	Y Mun Nie	2004	Dak Lak	7	Dai Phat Thanh
185	Y Kur Buon Dap	2004	Dak Lak	17	Unknown
186	Y Ngun Knul	2004	Dak Lak	18	Ha Nam
187	Y Rit Nie	2004	Dak Lak	12 [10]	Ha Nam
188	YNgun Knu	2004	Dak lak	5-10	Ha Nam
189	Y Ang Knul	2004	Dak Lak	11	Ha Nam
190	Y Yoan Hmok	2004	Dak Lak	9	Unknown
191	Y Hiu Eban	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
192	Y Nging Nie	2004	Dak Lak	11 [9]	Ha Nam
193	YRit Nie	2004	Dak Lak	5-10	Ha Nam
194	Y Dec Nie	2004	Dak Lak	6	Unknown
195	Dieu Xam	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
196	Y Bout B'Krong	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
197	Y Net Bya	2004	Dak Lak	10	Ha Nam
198	Yang Knul	2004	Dak Lak	11	Unknown
199	YBuot Bkrong	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
200	Y Tho Eban	2004	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
201	Y Krong HDok	2004	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
202	YRankBour	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
203	YSe Nie	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Dak Lak
204	YSamoel Mlo	2004	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
205	Y Thomas Nie	2004	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
206	Nay Het	2004	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
207	Thomas Nie	2004	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
208	Nay Het	2004	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
209	Y Suan Bya	2004	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
210	Y Soan Mlo	2004	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
211	Y BHEm KPor	2004	Dak Lak	10	Ha Nam
212	Y DHam Eban	2004	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
213	Y Ixio	2004	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
214	Y Jup E Ban	2004	Dak Lak	11	Ha Nam
215	Y Kur BDap	2004	Dak Lak	17	Ha Nam
216	Y Pher HDRuc	2004	Dak Lak	12	Ha Nam
217	Y Phu Ksor	2004	Dak Lak	9 [8]	Ha Nam
218	Y Samuel MLo Released	2004	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
219	Y Suon BYa	2004	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
220	Y Tuan Hmok	2004	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
221	Y Jim Eban (Group 7, of 7 UN- Named)	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
222	Y Niem Eban	2004	Dak lak	10	Ha Nam
223	Y Don Bya	2004	Dak lak	15 [10]	Ha Nam
224	Y Jut Eban	2004	Dak lak	10	Unknown

225	Y Jem Hwing	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
226	Y Se Nie	2004	Dak Lak	Unknown	Dak Lak
227	Y Nguyet Nie	2004	Dak Lak	7	Thanh Hoa
228	Y Ben Nie	2004	Dak Lak	14	Ha Nam
229	Y Blec Nie	2004	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
230	Y Krat	2004	Dak Mil	3	Unknown
231	Y Nguk	2004	Dak Mil	4.5	Unknown
232	Tuan Rla	2004	Dak Nong	Unknown	Dak Nong
233	YPi	2004	Dak Nong	5	Unknown
234	Y Srun Butrang	2004	Dak Nong	5 [6]	Ha Nam
235	Dieu Minh	2004	Dak Nong	Unknown	Ha Nam
236	Dieu Lon	2004	Dak Nong	Unknown	Ha Nam
237	Dieu Bet	2004	Dak Nong	Unknown	Ha Nam
238	Dieu Blung	2004	Dak Nong	Unknown	Ha Nam
239	Rmah Daih	2004	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam or Ha Tay
240	Siu Hmrek	2004	Gia Lai	9	unknown
241	Kpa Dok	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
242	Ksor Krok	2004	Gia Lai	7	Unknown
243	Ksor Thieu/Thiu	2004	Gia Lai	7 [8]	Ha Nam
244	Ksor TO NI (INO,	2004	Gia Lai	7 [8]	Ha Nam
245	Siu Panh	2004	Gia Lai	4 [5]	Unknown
246	Siu Yun	2004	Gia Lai	4 [5]	Ha Nam
247	Kpuih Chonh	2004	Gia Lai	5	Unknown
248	Ksor Dro	2004	Gia Lai	6	Unknown
249	Rolan Hloe	2004	Gia Lai	7	unknown
250	Ksor Hlun	2004	Gia Lai	11	Ha Nam
251	Ksor Vung	2004	Gia Lai	10	Ha Nam
252	Rmah Alik	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
253	Ksor Thup	2004	Gia Lai	10	Unknown
254	Siu Djing	2004	Gia Lai	4 [5]	Ha Nam
255	Ksor Jon/Siu Jon	2004	Gia Lai	4 [5]	Unknown
256	Rahlan Ber	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
257	Siu Bop	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
258	Byun	2004	Gia Lai	8	Unknown
259	Siu Thuan	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Ha Nam
260	Siu Hyek (Hyet)	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	T-20
261	Kpa Thanh	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
262	Rahlan Klao	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
263	Rahlan Then	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
264	Rmah Xuan [Kuon]	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	T-20
265	Bum	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Han Nam

266	Kpa Hit	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Thanh Hoa
267	Rahlan Del	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
268	Kpa Gai	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
269	Ksor Har	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Nghe Tinh Prison
270	Ksor Jak	2004	Gia Lai	7	Nghe Tinh Prison
271	Nay Liem	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknow
272	Kpa Ring	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
273	Kpa Hit	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Thanh Hoa
274	Rahlan Lien	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
275	Siu Bok	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
276	Kpuih Cheng	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
277	Rahlan Hloi/Hlo	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Tuy Hoa
278	Rahlan [Siu] Kun	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
279	Rahlan Del	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	T-20
280	Rahlan Ban	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
281	Siu H'Don F	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
282	Rmah Hieu	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
283	Kpuih Theng	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
284	Nay Liem	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
285	Rmah Yoh	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
286	Kpa Chul	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
287	Rcom Thul	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
288	Siu Krip	2004	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
289	Siu Lu	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Ha Nam
290	Rahlan Loi	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Tuy Hoa
291	Siu Lol	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
292	Kpuih Non	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
293	Siu Klen	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
294	Siu Yot	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
295	Siu Noai	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
296	Kpuih Phe	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	T-20 Plei Ku
297	Rmah Amrot	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
298	Ksor Ngot	2004	Gia lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
299	Siu Thanh	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
300	Rahlan Thit	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
301	Kpuih Plem	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	T-20 Pleiku
302	Siu Anen	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
303	Ksor Arat	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
304	Ksor Phuoc	2004	Gia Lai	9	Ha Nam
305	Siu Yot	2004	Gia Lai	2	Ha Nam
306	Siu Anem	2004	Gia Lai	Fled to Thailand	Phu Yen

307	Rmah Amrot	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
308	Ksor Ngot	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
309	Rahlan Tin	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
310	Kpuih Hrong	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
311	Kpa Wit	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
312	Kpa Wit Plus 1	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
313	Rahlan Hlup	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
314	Rahlan Lue	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
315	Rmah Cher	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
316	Hiao Nem	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Tuy Hoa
317	Kpuih Cur	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
318	Nay Ko	2004	Gia Lai	Unknown	Unknown
319	Siu Bler	2004	Gia Lai	17	Ha Nam
320	Bung	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
321	DJrot	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
322	Har	2004	Gia Lai	11	Ha Nam
323	Hun	2004	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
324	Kpa Hung	2004	Gia Lai	12	Ha Nam
325	Khe	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
326	Kleh	2004	Gia Lai	9	Ha Nam
327	Ksor Kla (Pastor)	2004	Gia Lai	9	Ha Nam
328	Ksor Suin	2004	Gia Lai	9	Ha Nam
329	Ksor Wung	2004	Gia Lai	10	Ha Nam
330	Na Y Phe	2004	Gia Lai	14	Ha Nam
331	Num	2004	Gia Lai	12	Ha Nam
332	Ran Blok	2004	Gia Lai	9	Ha Nam
333	Rocom Doanh	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
334	Rocom Mrin	2004	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
335	Rolan Ban	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
336	Rolan Hiyt	2004	Gia Lai	9	Ha Nam
337	Rolan Thit	2004	Gia Lai	14	Ha Nam
338	Romah BLor	2004	Gia Lai	10	Ha Nam
339	Romah Hiat	2004	Gia Lai	12	Ha Nam
340	Romah Nhang	2004	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
341	Romah Phong	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
342	Romah Ty	2004	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
343	Romah Zit	2004	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
344	Siu Boch	2004	Gia Lai	13	Ha Nam
345	A Aoh's GRP, #6 of 14 (First 5 are named)	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
346	(A Aoh's Group)	2004	Kon Tum	3 [4]	Kon Tum C9, Ha Phu

347	A Chuan	2004	Kon Tum	Unknown	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
348	A Lah	2004	Kon Tum	Unknown	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
349	A Nhuih	2004	Kon Tum	Unknown	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
350	AChuh	2004	Kon Tum	4 [5]	Unknown
351	A Aoh	2004	Kon Tum	5	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
352	A Aoh's Group	2004	Kon Tum	3 [4]	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
353	A Aoh's Group	2004	Kon Tum	3 [4]	Kon Tum
354	A Ao	2004	Kon Tum	Unknown	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
355	A Duc	2004	Kon Tum	3 [4]	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
356	A Aoh's Group #10 of 14	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
357	A Aoah's GRP, # 11 of 14	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
358	A Aoh's GRP, #12 of 14	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
359	A Aoh's GRP, #13 of 14	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum, C9, Hoa Phu
360	A Aoh's GRP, #14 of 14	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
361	A Aoh's GRP, #7 of 14	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
362	A Aoh's GRP, #8 of 14	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
363	A Ao's GRP, #9 of 14	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
364	A Aoh's GRP	2004	Kon Tum	2	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
365	A Duc	2004	Kon Tum	3	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
366	A Aoh's Group	2004	Kon Tum	Unknown	Kon Tum C9, Hoa Phu
367	Ksor Y Pu	2004	Phu Yen	Unknown	unknown
368	Y Chok Rmah	10.14.2011	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
369	Yson Nie	2005	Dak Lak	Unknown	Ha Nam
370	Ksor Sen	2005	Gia Lai	4	unknown
371	Rmah Jit	2005	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
372	Kpuih Grit	2005	Gia Lai	Unknown	Phu Yen
373	Don Son	2005	Gia Lai	10	Ha Nam
374	Kpa Anuit	2005	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam

375	Kpa Thil	2005	Gia Lai	9	Ha Nam
376	KPuih Phe	2005	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
377	KPuih Phin	2005	Gia Lai	9	Ha Nam
378	Ksor Chung	2005	Gia Lai	15	Ha Nam
379	Romah Wae	2005	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
380	YPiek Nie	2006	Dak Lak	7	Thanh Hoa
381	Piek Nie	2006	Dak Lak	7	Thanh Hoa
382	Y Num	2006	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
383	Gup	2007	Gia Lai	5	Ha Nam
384	Kpa Bih	2007	Gia Lai	14	Ha Nam
385	Ksor Mier	2007	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
386	Ksor Rik	2007	Gia Lai	9	Ha Nam
387	Ngiang Phit	2007	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
388	Rolan Mok	2007	Gia Lai	5	Ha Nam
389	Rolan Tip	2007	Gia Lai	11	Ha Nam
390	Romah Hlang	2007	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
391	Siu Hanh	2007	Gia Lai	12	Ha Nam
392	Siu Nham	2007	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
393	Siu Them	2007	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
394	Siu Wiot	2008	Gia Lai	8	Ha Nam
395	Siu Xiuu	2008	Gia Lai	10	Ha Nam
396	Rahlan Tip	Unknown	Cu Se	Unknown	Unknown
397	Y Bhong Ayun	Unknown	Dak Lak	10-Jul	Ha Nam
398	Y Lem Mlo	Unknown	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
399	Y Lem Mlo	Unknown	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
400	YYek Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
401	YCuen Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
402	Y Ban Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	8	Thanh Hoa
403	YToan Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	5	Thanh Hoa
404	YKhem Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	10	Thanh Hoa
405	YBhem Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
406	YPlan Enoul	Unknown	Dak Lak	8	Thanh Hoa
407	YThoa Enoul	Unknown	Dak Lak	8	Thanh Hoa
408	YWo Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
409	Ama Trai	Unknown	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
410	Ama Trinh	Unknown	Dak lak	8	Ha Nam
411	Ama Coi	Unknown	Dak Lak		Ha Nam
412	YKral	Unknown	Dak Lak	7	Ha Nam
413	YLo Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	9	Phu Yen
414	YLarib Krong	Unknown	Dak lak	4	Thanh Hoa
415	YKim	Unknown	Dak Lak	8	Thanh Hoa

416	YPol Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	9	Ha Nam
417	YNguyet Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	7	Ha Nam
418	YKros	Unknown	Dak Lak	14	Ha Nam
419	A Hier	Unknown	Dak Lak	14	Ha Nam
420	YJa Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	7	Ha Nam
421	YHung Ayun	Unknown	Dak lak	9	Phu Yen
422	Y Hon Krieng	Unknown	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
423	Y Hon Krieng	Unknown	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
424	Y Jui Eban	Unknown	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
425	Y Knu	Unknown	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
426	Y Tam Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
427	YKhon	Unknown	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
428	YBha Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	8	Ha Nam
429	YKhu Nie	Unknown	Dak Lak	7	Ha Nam
430	Rahlan Thik	Unknown	Gia Lai	14	Ha Nam
431	Rolan Wie	Unknown	Gia Lai	7	Ha Nam
432	Y Toan B.krong	Unknown	Dak Lak	Unknown	unknown
433	Y Toan Hdok	Unknown	Dak Lak	8	Dak Lak
434	Dieu Grol	Unknown	Dak Nong	Unknown	unknown
435	Y Kher	Unknown	Dak Nong	2	Unknown
436	Y Molk	Unknown	Dak Nong	3	Unknown
437	Y Pink	Unknown	Dak Nong	3	Unknown
438	Y Pioh	Unknown	Dak Nong	6	unknown
439	Nay Bro	Unknown	Gia Lai	Unknown	unknown
440	A Brih	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
441	A Thu	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
442	A Hlor	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
443	A Chiuh	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
444	A Da	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
445	Y Cheo Rmah	10.14.2011	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown
446	Y Thuyet Rcam	10.14.2011	Dak Lak	Unknown	Unknown

Hmong Christians Arrested after the Muong Nhe Incident

Compiled from Direct Interviews with Witnesses
BPSOS, January 24, 2012

Contact Information: bpsos@bpsos.org

In early May 2011, Vietnamese military troops attacked thousands of Hmong who gathered near Huoi Khon Village in the Muong Nhe District, Dien Bien Province (North Vietnam) to call for a stop to government confiscation of their land and for religious freedom. Reportedly scores were killed and many more injured. Some 130 Hmong demonstrators were reportedly arrested and detained. The government of Vietnam has effectively blocked access to the area to outsiders and news from the area from getting out. Hundreds of protestors, fearing police brutality and imprisonment, hid in the jungle. After months of hiding and trekking by land, a small number of these Hmong have arrived in Thailand. BPSOS has conducted interviews with many of them to reconstruct what had happened.

Partial List of Hmong Christians in Detention in the Aftermath of the May 2011 Demonstration

- 1) Vang A Thang
- 2) Giuong Van Dau
- 3) Cu A Pao (1980)
- 4) Vang Seo Phu (1978)
- 5) Thao Seo Luu (1983)
- 6) Thao Dung Khai (Xa Na Bung, Muong Nhe)
- 7) Trang Nha Cho
- 8) Cu Seo Vang
- 9) Sung Seo Hoa (1992)
- 10) Sung A Tua (1984)
- 11) Giang Seo Si (1979)
- 12) Vang Seo Thang (1985)
- 13) Giang A Sung (Xa Na Bung, Muong Nhe)
- 14) Ho Sai Hua (Ban La San, Moong, Tong, Muong Nhe)
- 15) Chang Bang Se (Ban Chuyen Gia, Nom Ke, Muong Nhe)
- 16) Sung Seo Vang
- 17) Ly Seo Du (1962)
- 18) Ly Seo Vang (1981)
- 19) Ly Seo De (1986)
- 20) Giang A Vang
- 21) Giang A Hu

List of non-violent political prisoners and recently released political prisoners who are under house arrest in S.R. Vietnam

(Updated on 17 January 2012)

	Name (male, female)	DOB	Affiliation	Arrested	Sentence	Place of detention	Charge (Vietnamese Criminal Code, VCC), Details on arrest, trial (dd/mm/yy) and health
1.	* A Thien (m)	1987	Vietnamese-Love-Vietnamese Party and Vietnam Democracy Forum	2010	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
2.	Bui Dang Thuy (m)	1950	People's Action Party of Vietnam	1997	18 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People's Government (§91 VCC). Arrested in Sep 1999 and trial on 08/09/99.
3.	Bui Thi Minh Hang (f)	1964	Blogger	2011	2 years of re-education	Thanh Ha Re-ed Center, Vinh Phuc Province	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC). She was arrested on 20/11/11 in Ho Chi Minh (HCM) City and imprisoned without trial in Northern Vietnam.
4.	Cao Van Tinh (m)	1974	Viet Tan Party	2010	4.5 years imprisonment and 5 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested on 22/02/11 and tried on 30/05/11 in Province BenTre. The prison term was reduced from 5 to 4,5 year at appeal trial on 18/08/11.
5.	* Chau Heng (m)		Khmer Krom land rights advocate	2010	2 years	An Giang	Charge: creating public disturbance: causing damages to public properties
6.	Chu Manh Son (m)	1989	Catholic Redemptorist Congregation	2011		Detention center Nghi Kim, Nghe An Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). He was arrested on 02/08/11 in Vinh City.
7.	Cu Huy Ha Vu (m) [Dr.jur.]	1957	Cu Huy Ha Vu Law Office	2010	7 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison 5, Thanh Hoa Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 05/11/10 in HCM City and tried on 14/04/11 in Hanoi.
8.	Dang Dinh Dang (m) [teacher]	1963	Human rights activist	2011		Unknown	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). He was arrested on 21/10/11 in Dac Nong Province.
9.	Dang Xuan Dieu (m)	1979	Catholic, affiliated with Redemptorist Order	2011		Detention Center B14, Thanh Tri, Ha Noi	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). He was arrested on 30/07/11 in HCM City.
10.	Dau Van Duong (m)	1986	Catholic, affiliated	2011		Detention Center	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist

			with Redemptorist Order			Nghi Kim, Nghe An Province	Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). He was arrested on 02/08/11 in Vinh City.
11.	Dinh Van Nhuong (m)		Democracy activist	2011		Detention center, Bac Giang Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Nguyen Kim Nhan, Do Van Hoa and Dinh Van Nhuong were arrested on 07/06/11.
12.	Do Thi Minh Hanh (f)	1985	Committee to Protect Vietnamese Workers	2010	7 years imprisonment	Prison Z30D, Thu Duc	Charge: Disrupting security (§89 VCC) by distributing leaflets to incite workers to strike. Arrest on 23/02/10 in Province Lam Dong; No reduction at Appeal trial of Province Tra Vinh on 11/03/11.
13.	Do Van Hoa (m)		Democracy activist	2011		Detention center, Bac Giang Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). He was arrested on 07/06/11.
14.	Doan Huy Chuong (m) [aka Nguyen Tan Hoanh]	1985	Committee to Protect Vietnamese Workers	2010	7 years imprisonment	Prison Phuoc Hau, Tien Giang Province	Charge: Disrupting security (§89 VCC) by distributing leaflets to stimulate strike of workers. Arrested on 11/02/10 in Tra Vinh Province; no reduction at appeal trial of on 11/03/11. As President of the United Workers and Farmers Association (UWFA), Doan Huy Chuong had already been arrested in Nov. 2006 and later sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.
15.	Doan Van Dien (m)	1954	United Workers and Farmers Association (UWFA)	2006	4.5 years imprisonment	Released on 15/05/11	Charge: Abusing democratic freedoms (§258 VCC). Arrested on 15/11/06 in Dong Nai Province. No reduction at appeal trial on 25/02/08.
16.	Duong Au (m)	1954	Vietnam Populist Party (Vi Dan)	2009	5 years imprisonment and 5 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People's Government (§91 VCC). Arrested on 26/08/09 in Province An Giang. Trial on 20/04/2010 in Lam Dong Province.
17.	Duong Kim Khai (m) [Pastor]	1958	Viet Tan Party, Mennonite Church	2010	5 years imprisonment and 5 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested on 10/08/10 in HCM City and tried on 30/05/11 in BenTre Province. The prison term was reduced from 6 to 5 year at the atrial on 18/08/11. In the past he had been arrested and imprisoned 13 times.
18.	Duong Thi Tron (f) [wife of Nguyen Van	1947	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2006	9 years imprisonment	Prison B5, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC) and resisting officers in the performance of their duties (§

	Tho]						257 VCC). Arrested on 02/10/06. She was tried twice: sentenced to 4 years imprisonment on 03/05/07 in Dong Thap Province and to 5 years imprisonment on 19/09/07 in Vinh Long Province.
19.	Hang Tan Phat (m) [Blogger]	1984	Bloc 8406	2005	6 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	<i>Released on 23/06/2011, placed under house arrest until June 2014. Fled to Thailand.</i>	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 23/09/05 in HCM City; tried on 29/01/08 in HCM City.
20.	Ho Duc Hoa (m)	1976	Catholic, affiliated with Redemptorist Order	2011		Detention Center B14, Thanh Tri, Hanoi	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). He was arrested on 30/07/11 in HCM City.
21.	Ho Thi Bich Khuong (f)	1973	Bloc 8406	2011	5 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Detention center of Nghe An Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 15/01/11 and tried on 29/12/11 in Nghe An Province. Mrs. Khuong had already been arrested in 2007 and later sentenced to 2 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest.
22.	Ho Van Oanh (m)	1985	Catholic, affiliated with Redemptorist Order	2011		Detention center, 237 Nguyen Van Cu, HCM City	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). He was arrested on 16/08/11 in HCM City.
23.	Hoang Phong (m)	1985	Catholic activist.	2011		unknown	Charge: unknown. He was arrested on 29/11/11 in district Quynh Luu, Province Nghe An.
24.	Nguyen Van Khuong (m) [Journalist Hoang Khuong]		Youth Newspaper	2012		unknown	Charge: Offering bribe (§289 VCC). He was arrested on 02/01/12 in HCM City because of his investigative reports on bribing by traffic police.
25.	Nguyen Duc Dong Anh	1989		2012		unknown	Charge: Offering bribe (§289 VCC). He is the brother in law of reporter Nguyen Van Khuong. He was arrested on 03/01/12 in HCM City.
26.	Huynh Anh (m)	1975	Cao Dai Church	2005	8 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People's Government (§91 VCC). Arrested in 2005 and tried on 27/07/05.
27.	Kpa Y Co (m)	1980	Ethnic Protestant	2009	6 years	unknown	Charge: Undermining the national unity (§ 87 VCC) by

					imprisonment.		planning anti-government protests. Trial at People's Court of Phu Yen Province on 15/11/10.
28.	Ksor Y Du (m)	1963	Ethnic Protestant	2009	6 years imprisonment.	unknown	Charge: Undermining the national unity (§ 87 VCC) by planning anti-government protests. Tried at People's Court of Phu Yen Province on 15/11/10. In the past he had been sentenced to 3 years in prison because of "fleeing abroad to oppose the People's Government" (§91 VCC).
29.	Le Cong Dinh (m) [lawyer, former Vice president of the Lawyer Bar in HCM City]	1968	Democratic Party of Vietnam	2009	5 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest.	Prison Z30A, Province Dong Nai.	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Initial charge: spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 13/06/09 and tried on 20/01/2010 in HCM City.
30.	Le Nguyen Sang, (m) [Dr. med.]	1959	People's Democratic Party	2006	4 years imprisonment and 2 years house arrest.	Released on 17/08/10, now under house arrest until Aug. 2012	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 14/08/06 in HCM City. The Court of Appeal of HCM City on 17/08/07 reduced the sentence from 5 to 4 years imprisonment and 2 years house arrest.
31.	Le Thang Long (m) [engineer]	1965	Democratic Party of Vietnam	2009	3.5 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest.	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Initially he was charged of propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 04/06/09 and tried on 20/01/10 in HCM City. The Appeal Court on 11/05/2010 reduced his prison term from 5 to 3.5 years.
32.	Le Thi Cong Nhan (f) [lawyer]	1979	Progression Party Vietnam	2007	3 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest.	Released on 06/03/10, now under house arrest until Mar. 2013	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 06/03/07 and tried on 17/08/07 in Hanoi. The Appeal Court on 27/11/07 reduced the prison term from 4 to 3 years.
33.	Le Van Soc (m)	1950	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2006	6 years imprisonment.	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC) and resisting officers performing their duties (§257 VCC). Arrested on 04/11/06 and tried on 03/05/07.
34.	Le Van Son (m)	1985	Blogger, journalist affiliated with the	2011		Detention Center B14, Thanh Tri,	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC).

			catholic Redemptorist Order			Hanoi	He was arrested on 03/08/11 in Hanoi.
35.	Le Van Thanh (m)	1975	Falun Gong practitioner	2010	2 years imprisonment	Detention Center of Police Department A38, Hanoi	Charge: Illegally disseminating information on telecommunication networks (§226 VCC). Arrested on 11/06/10 and tried on 10/11/11 in Hanoi.
36.	Le Van Tinh (m)	1940	People's Action Party of Vietnam	1995	20 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People's Government (§91 VCC). Arrested on 20/01/95 and tried on 08/09/99.
37.	Lu Van Bay (m)	1952	Internet writer	2011	4 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	unknown	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). He was arrested on 26/03/11 and tried on 22/08/11 in Kien Giang Province.
38.	Mai Thi Dung (f)	1969	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church [Wife of Vo Van Buu]	2005	11 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Prison Xuan Loc	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC). Arrested on 05/08/05. She was tried twice: sentenced to 5 years in prison on 27/09/05 and to 6 years imprisonment on 19/09/07 in Province Vinh Long. Very poor health: paralysed legs, gallstone.
39.	Ngo Quynh (m)	1984	Bloc 8406	2008	3 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest.	<i>Released on 01/07/11, now under house arrest until Jul. 2014</i>	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 01/10/08 in Hanoi and tried on 09/10/09 in Hai Phong City. During detention, reduction of 3 months in the prison term.
40.	Nguyen Ba Dang (m)	1965	Democracy activist	2010	3 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest.	Prison Nam Ha, Ha Nam Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 22/01/10 and tried on 24/12/10 in Hai Duong Province.
41.	Nguyen Bac Truyen (m) [jurist]	1968	People's Democratic Party	2006	3.5 years imprisonment and 2 years house arrest.	<i>Released on 17/05/10, now under house arrest until May 2012.</i>	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC) by distributing leaflets. Arrest on 14/08/06 and trial on 17/08/07 in Ho Chi Minh City. The Appeal Court on 17/08/07 reduced the prison term from 4 to 3.5 years.
42.	Nguyen Binh Thanh (m)	1955	Progression Party Vietnam	2007	5 years imprisonment and 2 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province .	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested and tried on 30/03/07 in Hue City.
43.	Nguyen Chi Thanh (m) [Missionary]	1973	Viet Tan Party, Mennonite Church	2010	2 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC).

					and 3 years house arrest		Arrested on 19/11/10 in Ho Chi Minh City and tried on 30/05/11 in BenTre Province.
44.	Nguyen Cong Chinh (m) [Pastor]	1969	Chairman of the Vietnamese People's Evangelical Fellowship (VPEF)	2011		Detention center T20 in Pleiku	Charge: Undermining the national unity (§ 87 VCC); alleging of sowing mistrust of government. Arrest on 28/04/11 in Pleiku, Gia Lai Province.
45.	Nguyen Dinh Cuong (m)	1979	Catholic activist	2011		Detention Center B14, Thanh Tri, Hanoi	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). He was arrested on 24/12/11 in Vinh city.
46.	Nguyen Hoang Quoc Hung (m)	1981	Committee to Protect Vietnamese Workers	2010	9 years imprisonment.	Prison Phuoc Hau, Tien Giang Province	Charge: Disrupting security (§89 VCC) by distributing leaflets to stimulate strike of workers. Claimed to be tortured in detention. Arrested on 24/02/10 in Lam Dong Province; sentence upheld at appeal trial in Tra Vinh Province on 11/03/11.
47.	Nguyen Huu Cau (m)	1947		1982	Life sentence	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: "Destructive act" because he has reported five serious offences committed by the Head of the Procuracy and the Vice Chairman of the People's Committee of Province Kien Giang. Arrested on 09/10/82. On 23/05/83; he was sentenced to death. The death sentence was later turned to life sentence at the appeal trial in Kien Giang Province on 24/05/85. As former captain of the south Vietnamese army (before 1975) Cau was detained in re-education camp from 1975 to 1981. Very poor health.
48.	Nguyen Kim Nhan (m)	1948	Democracy activist	2011		Detention center of Bac Giang Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Nhan was released on 11/01/11 after serving his 2 years' sentence on charge of "Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam" (§88 VCC). He was arrested again with Do Van Hoa and Dinh Van Nhuong on 07/06/11
49.	Nguyen Manh Son (m)	1943	Democracy activist	2009	3,5 years imprisonment and 3 years	Prison Nam Ha, Ha Nam Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 08/05/09 and tried on 09/10/09 in Hai

					house arrest		Phong.
50.	Nguyen Minh Nhat	1988	Catholic, affiliated with Redemptorist Order	2011		Detention center, 237 Nguyen Van Cu, HCM City	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). He was arrested on 27/08/11 in HCM City.
51.	Nguyen Ngoc Cuong (m)	1956	Right activist	2011	7 years imprisonment	unknown	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). He and his son Nguyen Ngoc Tuong Thi were arrested on 29/03/11 and tried on 21/10/11 in Dong Nai Province.
52.	Nguyen Ngoc Tuong Thi (m)	1986	Right activist	2011	2 years imprisonment	unknown	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). He and his father Nguyen Ngoc Cuong were arrested on 29/03/11 and tried on 21/10/11 in Dong Nai Province.
53.	Nguyen Phong (m)	1975	Progression Party Vietnam [Chairman]	2007	6 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison Nr. 5, Province Thanh Hoa	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). of Progression Party Vietnam. Arrest 29/03/07 and trial on 30/03/07 in Hue City.
54.	Nguyen Thanh Phong (m)	1974	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2005	7 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province.	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC) and Resisting officers in the performance of their duties (§ 257 VCC). Arrested on 05/08/05 and tried on 27/09/05.
55.	Nguyen Thanh Tam (m)	1953	Viet Tan Party, Mennonite Church	2010	2 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested on 20/07/10 and tried on 30/05/11 in BenTre Province.
56.	Nguyen Tien Trung (m) [engineer]	1983	Democratic Party of Vietnam	2009	7 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested on 07/07/09 and tried on 20/01/2010 in HCM City. Initially he was charged of propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC).
57.	Nguyen Trung Ton (m) [Pastor]	1971	Full Gospel Church	2011	2 years imprisonment and 2 years house arrest	Detention center of Province Nghe An	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 15/01/11 and tried on 29/12/11 in Nghe An Province.
58.	Nguyen Tuan Nam (m)	1936	People's Action Party of Vietnam	1997	20 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People's Government (§91 VCC). Arrested in Dec 1997 and tried on 08/09/99.

59.	Nguyen Van Canh (m)	1950	People's Action Party of Vietnam	1999	13 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested and tried in 1999.
60.	Nguyen Van Dai (m) [lawyer]	1969	Bloc 8406, Committee for Human Rights in Viet Nam	2007	4 years imprisonment and 4 years house arrest	Released on 06/03/11, now under house arrest until Mar. 2015.	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 06/03/07 and tried on 23/05/07 in Hanoi. The Appeal court on 27/11/07 reduced the prison term from 5 to 4 years.
61.	Nguyen Van Dien (m)	1945	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2005	7 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC) and Resisting officers performing their duties (§ 257 VCC). Arrested on 05/08/05 and tried on 27/08/05.
62.	Nguyen Van Duyet (m)	1980	Catholic, affiliated with Redemptorist Order	2011		Detention Center B14, Thanh Tri, Hanoi	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). He was arrested on 07/08/11 in Vinh city.
63.	Nguyen Van Hai (m) [Blogger Dieu Cay]	1952	Freelance Journalist Club of Vietnam (FJCV)	2008	2.5 years imprisonment	In communicado. Not released after termination of 2.5 years of imprisonment. He was previously in Prison Z20A (K2), Dong Nai Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 19/04/08 in Dalat city and tried on 10/09/2008 in HCM City on charge of tax Evasion (§161 VCC). After serving his sentence of 2.5 years imprisonment, blogger Dieu Cay was not released as scheduled on 19/10/10. The police informed that he is now charged of "Spreading propaganda" (§88 VCC)
64.	Nguyen Van Lia (m)	1940	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2011	5 years imprisonment	Police detention center Province An Giang	Charge: Abusing democratic freedoms (§258 VCC). Arrested on 24/04/11 and tried on 13/12/11 in Province An Giang. Poor health. Mistreatment in detention.
65.	Nguyen Van Ly [Catholic priest]	1946	Bloc 8406, Progression Party Vietnam	2007	8 years imprisonment and 5 years house arrest.	Prison Nam Ha, Province Ha Nam	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 29/03/07 and tried on 30/03/07 in Hue City. Father Ly suffered 2 strokes during his imprisonment. He was released on 15/03/10 (temporary suspension of prison sentence for 12 month) and sent back to prison on 15/07/11.
66.	Nguyen Van Ngoc (m)	1960	Group of Patriots	2007	4 years imprisonment	Released Sept 2010	Charge: Abusing democratic freedoms (§258 VCC). Arrested on 01/03/07 and tried on 11/12/07.
67.	Nguyen Van Oai (m)	1982	Catholic	2011		Detention Center	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's

			Redemptorist Congregation			B14, Thanh Tri, Hanoi	government (§79 VCC). He was arrested on 30/07/11 in HCM City.
68.	Nguyen Van Soc		Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2006	6.5 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC). Arrest in Oct 2006 and trial in May 2007.
69.	Nguyen Van Tho (m)	1939	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2006	6 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC) and Resisting officers in the performance of their duties (§ 257 VCC). Arrested on 02/10/06 and tried on 03/05/07. Husband of Duong Thi Tron (No. 16).
70.	Nguyen Van Thuy (m)		Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2006	5 years imprisonment	Released on 22/11/2011	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC) and Resisting officers in the performance of their duties (§ 257 VCC). Arrested on 22/11/06 and tried on 03/05/07 in Dong Thap Province.
71.	Nguyen Van Tinh (m) [Staff writer]	1942	To Quoc Magazine	2009	3,5 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Released on 30/08/11, now under house arrest until Aug. 2014	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Tinh was initially arrested on 14/09/08, then released on parole on 02/10/08, and arrested again on 08/05/09 in Hai Phong city. Tried on 09/10/09 in Hai Phong city.
72.	Nguyen Van Trai (m)	1933	People's Action Party of Vietnam	1996	15 years imprisonment	Died on 11/07/11 in prison Z30A, Province Dong Nai	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested on 28/11/96 and tried on 08/09/99. Very poor health.
73.	Nguyen Van Tuc (m)	1964	Bloc 8406	2008	4 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison Nam Ha, Ha Nam Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 10/09/08 in Thai Binh and tried on 09/10/09 in Hai Phong City.
74.	Nguyen Xuan Anh (m)	1981	Catholic activist	2011		Detention Center B14, Thanh Tri, Hanoi	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). He was arrested on 07/08/11 in Vinh city.
75.	Nguyen Xuan Nghia (m) [Writer]	1949	Bloc 8406	2008	6 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison Nam Ha, Ha Nam Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrest on 10/09/08 and trial on 09/10/09 in Hai Phong City. Poor health
76.	Nguyen Xuan No (m)	1945	Cao Dai Church	2005	9 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People's Government (§91 VCC). Arrested in 2005 and tried on 27/07/05.

77.	Noh (m)	1959	Montagnard	unknown	12 years imprisonment	unknown	Charge: Undermining the national unity (§ 87 VCC), according to Police Newspaper online on 13/04/09. Trial in April 2009 in Province of Gia Lai.
78.	Nong Hung Anh	1985	Catholic Redemptorist Congregation	2011		Detention Center B14, Thanh Tri, Hanoi	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). He was arrested on 18/08/11 in Hanoi.
79.	Pham Ba Hai (m)	1968	Bach-Dang-Giang Foundation, Bloc 8406	2006	5 years imprisonment and 2 years house arrest	Released on 07/09/11, now under house arrest until Sept. 2013	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 07/09/06 in Thai Binh City; tried on 08/08/08 in HCM City. Sentence upheld on appeal.
80.	Pham Ba Huy (m)	1945	Vietnam Populist Party (Vi Dan)	2010		Detention center B34, Ho Chi Minh city	Charge: counterfeiting documents and terrorism. Pham Ba Huy and his wife Pham Thi Phuong were recognized as political refugee by the UNHCR in Thailand. The Vietnamese Police Newspapers reported that they had been captured on 20/04/10 in HCM City. His wife was tried on 21/09/11.
81.	Pham Minh Hoang (m) [University Professor]	1955	Viet Tan Party	2010	17 months imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Released on 13/01/12, now under house arrest until Jan 2015	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested on 13/08/10 in Ho Chi Minh City and tried on 10/08/11 in HCM City. The prison term was reduced from 36 to 17 months at appeal trial on 29/11/11. Hoang is French citizen.
82.	Pham Ngoc Hoa (f)	1954	Viet Tan Party	2010	2 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested on 19/11/10 in Ho Chi Minh City and tried on 30/05/11 in Province BenTre.
83.	Pham Thanh Nghien (f)	1977	Bloc 8406	2008	4,5 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison No 5, Thanh Hoa Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 18/09/08 and tried on 29/01/2010 in Hai Phong City.
84.	Pham Thi Bich Chi (f)	1983	Human rights activist	2011	Released on parole , 1.5 years imprisonment;	unknown	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). She was tried on 21/10/11 in Dong Nai Province. Wife of Nguyen Ngoc Tuong Thi.
85.	Pham Thi Phuong (f)	1945	Vietnam Populist Party (Vi Dan)	2010	11 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Pham Thi Phuong and her husband Pham Ba Huy were

							recognized as political refugee by the UNHCR in Thailand. The Vietnamese Police newspapers reported that they had been captured on 20/04/10 in HCM City. Initially they were charged of terrorism.
86.	Pham Van Thong (m)	1962	Right activist	2010	7 years imprisonment and 5 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). At time of arrest he was charged of violating §88 VCC. Arrested on 19/07/10 and tried on 30/05/11 in BenTre Province. No reduction at Appeal trial on 18/08/11.
87.	Pham Van Troi (m)	1972	Bloc 8406, Human Rights Committee in Vietnam	2008	4 years imprisonment and 4 years house arrest	Prison Nam Ha, Ha Nam Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 10/09/08 in Ha Tay and tried on 08/10/09 in Hanoi. Sentence upheld at the appeal trial on 18/01/10.
88.	Phan Thanh Hai (m) [Jurist, Blogger AnhBaSg]	1969	Freelance Journalist Club of Vietnam' (FJCV)	2010		Detention center B34, HCM City	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrest on 10/08/10 in HCM City.
89.	Phung Quang Quyen (m)	1956	Vietnam Populist Party (Vi Dan)	2009	4 years imprisonment and 4 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People's Government (§91 VCC). Arrested on 30/08/09 and tried on 20/04/2010 in Lam Dong Province. Phung Quang Quyen was arrested in 2006 because of his activities for the United Workers and Farmers Association (UWFA) and was then sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.
90.	Pinh (m)	1967	unknown	unknown	9 years imprisonment	unknown	Charge: Undermining the national unity (§ 87 VCC), according to Police Newspaper online on 13/04/09. Tried in April 2009 in Province of Gia Lai.
91.	Rôh (m)	1962	unknown	unknown	10 years imprisonment	unknown	Charge: Undermining the national unity (§ 87 VCC), according to Police Newspaper online on 13/04/09. Tried in April 2009 in Province of Gia Lai.
92.	Ta Phong Tan (f) [jurist]	1968	Blogger, member of Freelance Journalist Club of Vietnam (FJCV)	2011		Detention center, 4 Phan Dang Luu, HCM City	Charge: unknown. She was arrested on 05/09/11 in HCM City.
93.	Thai Van Dung	1988	Catholic Redemptorist Congregation	2011		Detention Center B14, Thanh Tri, Hanoi	Charge: unknown. He was arrested on 19/08/11 in Hanoi.

94.	To Van Manh (m)	1950	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2005	6 years imprisonment	Released on 05/08/11	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC) and Resisting officers in the performance of their duties (§ 257 VCC). Arrested on 05/08/05 and tried on 27/09/05.
95.	Tran Anh Kim (m)	1949	Democratic Party of Vietnam, Bloc 8406	2009	5,5 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison Nam Ha, Ha Nam Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested on 07/07/09 and trial on 28/12/09 in Thai Binh City. Initial Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC).
96.	Tran Duc Thach (m)	1952	Democracy activist	2008	3 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Released on 30/08/11, now under house arrest until Aug. 2014	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 11/09/08 in Nghe An and tried on 07/10/09 in Hanoi. Sentence upheld at the Appeal trial on 18/01/10.
97.	Tran Hoai An (m)	1953	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2011	3 years imprisonment	Police detention center An Giang Province	Charge: Abusing democratic freedoms (§258 VCC). Arrested on 02/07/11 in Province Dong Thap and tried on 13/12/11 in An Giang Province.
98.	Tran Huu Duc (m)	1988	Catholic, affiliated with Redemptorist Order	2011		Detention center Nghi Kim, Nghe An Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). He was arrested on 02/08/11 in Vinh City.
99.	Tran Huynh Duy Thuc (m) [engineer]	1965	Democratic Party of Vietnam	2009	16 years imprisonment and 5 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Province Dong Nai.	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrest on 24/05/09 and trial on 20/01/2010 in Ho Chi Minh City. Initial Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC).
100.	Tran Khai Thanh Thuy (f), [writer and journalist]	1960	Organisation of Victims of Injustice (Hôi Dân Oan)	2009	3.5 years imprisonment.	Released and resettled to USA on 24/06/11.	Charge: Intentionally inflicting injury (§104 VCC). Arrest on 08/10/09 and trial on 05/02/2010 in Hanoi. She was arrested after trying to attend the trial of six other dissidents in Hai Phong. In 2008 she was sentenced to 9 months imprisonment. Very poor health (tuberculosis).
101.	Tran Quoc Hien (m) [jurist, speaker of UWFA]	1965	United Workers and Farmers Association (UWFA)	2007	5 years imprisonment and 2 years house arrest	Released on 11/01/12, now under house arrest until Jan. 2014	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC) and disrupting security (§89 VCC). Arrested on 12/01/07 and tried on 15/05/07 in HCM

							City.
102.	Tran Thi Thuy (f)	1971	Viet Tan Party	2010	8 years imprisonment and 5 years house arrest	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Conducting activities to overthrow the people's government (§79 VCC). Arrested on 16/08/10 in Province Dong Thap and tried on 30/05/11 in BenTre Province. Sentence upheld at appeal trial on 18/08/11.
103.	Tran Vu Anh Binh (m)	1974	Catholic Redemptorist Congregation	2011		Detention center of District Binh Thanh, HCM City	Charge: unknown. He was arrested on 19/09/11 in HCM City.
104.	Truong Minh Duc (m), [journalist]	1960	Vietnam Populist Party, Bloc 8406	2007	5 years imprisonment	Prison Z20A, Province Dong Nai.	Charge: Abusing democratic freedoms (§258 VCC). Arrest on 05/05/07 and trial on 28/03/08 in Province Kien Giang. Sentence upheld at appeal trial on 18/07/08. Very poor health, broken arm.
105.	Truong Minh Nguyet (m)	1946	Group of Patriots and “Vietnamese Political and Religious Prisoners Friendship Association”	2007	4 years imprisonment	Released in Sept 2010	Charge: Abusing democratic freedoms (§258 VCC). Arrested on 04/06/07 in Province Long An and tried on 11/12/07 in HCM City.
106.	Truong Quoc Huy (m)	1980	Bloc 8406	2006	6 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Released on 30/11/11, now under house arrest until Nov. 2014	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested on 18/08/06 and tried on 29/01/08 in HCM City. The charge was modified initially from subversive activities against the government (§79 VCC), to abusing democratic freedoms (§258 VCC) and finally spreading propaganda (§88 VCC).
107.	Truong Thi Tam (f)	1963	Vietnam Populist Party	2009	3 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison Z20A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People’s Government (§91 VCC). Arrested on 31/08/09 and tried on 20/04/2010 in Lam Dong Province.
108.	Truong Van Kim (m)	1951	Vietnam Populist Party	2009	3 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Prison Z20A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Fleeing abroad to oppose the People’s Government (§91 VCC). Arrest on 26/08/09 in Province An Giang and trial on 20/04/2010 in Province Lam Dong.
109.	Vi Duc Hoi (m)	1956	Bloc 8406,	2010	5 years imprisonment	Prison Nam Ha, Ha Nam Province	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC).

					and 3 years house arrest		Arrest on 27/10/10 and trial on 26/01/11 in Province Lang Son. Reduction at the appeal trial on 26/04/11. Hoi was director of a Communist training center.
110.	Vo Minh Tri (m) [Viet Khang]		Composer and right activist	2011		Detention center, 4 Phan Dang Luu, HCM City	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). He was arrested on 23/12/11 in HCM City.
111.	Vo Van Buu (m)	1970	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church [Husband of Mai Thi Dung]	2005	7 years imprisonment	Prison Z30A, Dong Nai Province	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC) and Resisting officers in the performance of their duties (§ 257 VCC). Arrested on 05/08/05 and tried on 27/09/05. Husband of Mai Thi Dung.
112.	Vo Van Thanh Liem (m) [monk]	1938	Hoa Hao Buddhist Church	2005	6.5 years imprisonment	Released on 05/08/11	Charge: Causing public disorder (§245 VCC) and Resisting officers in the performance of their duties (§ 257 VCC). Arrested on 05/08/05 and tried on 19/08/05.
113.	Vu Duc Trung (m)	1980	Falun Gong practitioner	2010	3 years imprisonment	Detention Center of Police Department A38, Hanoi	Charge: Illegally putting information into telecommunication networks (§226 VCC). Arrested on 10/06/10 in HCM City and tried on 10/11/11 in Hanoi.
114.	Vu Quang Thuan (m)	1966	Vietnam Prospering Movement	2011		unknown	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrested in Feb. 2011 at the airport in Ho Chi Minh City after being expelled from Malaysia.
115.	Vu Van Hung (m) [Vu Hung]	1966	Teacher	2008	3 years imprisonment and 3 years house arrest	Released on 18/09/11, now under house arrest until Sept. 2014	Charge: Spreading propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (§88 VCC). Arrest on 18/09/08 in Ha Tay and trial on 07/10/09 in Hanoi. Very poor health.

(*) added by BPSOS

JEFF DUNCAN
3RD DISTRICT, SOUTH CAROLINA

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
CHAIRMAN,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4003

116 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-5301

303 WEST BELTLINE BOULEVARD
ANDERSON, SC 29625
(864) 224-7401

200 COURTHOUSE PUBLIC SQUARE
LAURENS, SC 29360
(864) 681-1028

jeffduncan.house.gov

January 15, 2014

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

I am writing with deep concern about the plight of Iranian pastor, Farshid Fathi, who has been imprisoned in Evin Prison since December 2010. He is accused of being a Christian, having Bibles printed in Farsi, and running a network of house churches in Tehran. Formerly detained along with American-Iranian Saeed Abedini, Pastor Fathi has been serving a six-year prison sentence simply for his faith in Jesus Christ.

As an Executive Committee Member of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, I have adopted Pastor Fathi as a "Prisoner of Conscience," and I want to urge you to personally advocate for his release from prison. In last month's House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, I urged you to prioritize American citizen Pastor Abedini in your nuclear discussions with the Government of Iran. Today, I respectfully urge you to also support freedom for Pastor Fathi.

Iranian authorities have penalized Pastor Fathi for being a Christian and attacked him for spreading his faith, which they consider "political offenses" equivalent to "actions against national security." Pastor Fathi was arrested the morning after Christmas. He was beaten, handcuffed, and imprisoned in solitary confinement for 15 months before being handed a six-year sentence. In February 2013, Pastor Fathi's wife and two children fled Iran and were resettled in Canada where they have been offered refuge.

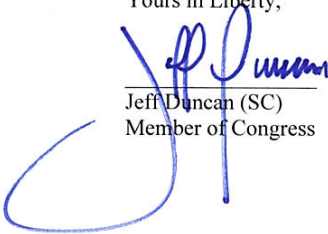
During the past year, there has been a noticeable increase in persecution against religious minorities in Iran, particularly for Christians, Sufi Muslims, and Baha'is. Iranian authorities have continued to raid church services; harass and threaten church members; and arrest, convict, and imprison worshippers and church leaders. Since June 2010, more than 300 Christians have been arbitrarily arrested and detained throughout Iran. As of December 2013, at least a dozen Christians remain in prison.

For these reasons, the U.S. Commission on International Freedom has labeled Iran a "Tier 1 Country of Particular Concern" for its "systemic, ongoing, and egregious violations of religious freedom, including prolonged detention, torture, and executions based primarily or entirely upon the religion of the accused," and the State Department, since 1999, has designated Iran as a "Country of Particular Concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

I am deeply disturbed about the appalling actions of the Government of Iran towards religious minorities, and I strongly encourage you to speak out vigorously to seek the release of prisoners of conscience in Iran.

Yours in Liberty,



Jeff Duncan (SC)
Member of Congress

United States House of Representatives
Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
Washington, D.C.
January 16, 2014
Testimony of Amjad Mahmood Khan, Esq.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Commission:

Thank you for inviting me to submit written testimony today on the plight of several Ahmadi Muslim prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

I am honored to provide testimony before this body. On three prior occasions, I also provided testimony before this body on the persecution facing the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. The fact that you have commissioned a special hearing with a particular focus on prisoners of conscience demonstrates your deep commitment to international human rights and religious freedom, and for that we commend you.

I also want to congratulate the Commission for launching the Defending Freedoms Project, in conjunction with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and Amnesty International USA, to more meaningfully explore strategies for the release of prisoners of conscience. Our Community whole-heartedly supports this project.

I am a Muslim-American attorney residing in Los Angeles. In my private practice, I litigate complex business and commercial matters for a global law firm. In my *pro bono* practice, I represent refugees escaping persecution. I studied international and human rights law at Harvard Law School and have written extensively about the global persecution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and surrounding issues for prominent legal journals and national newspapers. I also volunteer as the National Director of Public Affairs for the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA and submit my testimony today in that capacity.

Before I delve into specific cases of Ahmadi Muslim prisoners of conscience, allow me to briefly introduce our Community and a gist of the persecution we face.

Founded in 1889, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a revivalist movement within Islam and espouses the motto of “Love for all, hatred for none.” As a central tenet of its faith, the Community rejects violence and terrorism for any and all reason. When violent extremists label their acts of terrorism as ‘jihad,’ it is the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community that is usually first and most forceful in its denunciation, focusing on both conveying true Islamic teachings to Muslims around the world as well as removing misconceptions of Islam in the West. Today, our Community is established in more than 200 countries, and its tens of millions of adherents all follow the only spiritual caliph in the Muslim world, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, who resides in London.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is arguably the most persecuted Muslim community

in the world. The U.S. State Department, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and dozens of human rights non-governmental organizations have documented the systematic persecution endured by our Community at the hands of religious extremists and state institutions.

Over the past several decades, hundreds of Ahmadi Muslims have been murdered in Pakistan, and dozens more in Bangladesh and Indonesia. In 2010 alone, 99 Ahmadi Muslims were murdered in Pakistan—the deadliest year ever for the Community. In Pakistan, our Community is declared to be “non-Muslim” by constitutional amendment and is effectively barred from participating in national elections such as the one that took place last May to elect a new government. Ahmadi Muslims also face prosecution under Pakistan’s anti-blasphemy laws, which criminalize Ahmadi activities. For example, even using basic Islamic greetings can result in up to three years imprisonment. In 2013 alone, more than 20 blasphemy cases have been registered against Ahmadi Muslims (doubling the number in recent years).

This brings me to the subject of today’s hearing: some significant pending cases of Ahmadi Muslim prisoners of conscience.

SAUDI ARABIA

Names of Prisoners of Conscience:

Mr. Sultan Hamid Marzooq al-Enezi (سلطان حامد مرزوق العنزي)
Civil ID#: 1008051870

Mr. Saud Falih Awad al-Enezi (سعود فالح عواد العنزي)
Civil ID#: 1022806911

Summary¹:

Approximately 18 months ago, on May 14, 2012, Sultan al-Enezi, age 31, and Saud al-Enezi, age 33, both of whom are Saudi nationals, were arrested by police on the charge of apostasy for becoming members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, a peaceful Islamic sect that is considered non-Muslim by Saudi clerics.

Prior to this, the al-Enezis had both been summoned by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, which advised them to leave the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. The communication with the Ministry of Islamic Affairs was managed by two religious clerics. Mr. Sultan and Mr. Saud regularly visited these clerics to explain why they had become members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. However, their refusal to leave the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, and return to what the clerics purported to be Islam, led to their

¹ For further details, see Asian Human Rights Commission, “Saudi Arabia: Ahmadis Persecuted in the Kingdom,” December 27, 2013, available at: <http://www.humanrights.asia/news/ahrc-news/AHRC-STM-247-2013> (last visited January 15, 2014).

arrest.

In early May 2012, Mr. Sultan's friend, a police officer, informed him that the police intended to arrest him and Mr. Saud due to their acceptance of Ahmadiyyat. Accordingly, on May 14, 2012, Mr. Sultan and Mr. Saud went to report to the local police station at 8:00 am and did not return back. Mr. Sultan called his wife to inform her that the al-Enezi were being detained for five days until further investigations were carried out.

Subsequent to their initial detention, the al-Enezi were told they would be charged for committing apostasy, a crime for which they could be punished with death. On account of having become Ahmadi Muslims, they were alleged to have turned their back from Islam, not believing in Prophet Muhammad and not believing in the Muslim pilgrimage of Hajj to Mecca. Both Mr. Sultan and Mr. Saud rejected these allegations and stated that they believed in the Prophet Muhammad as *Khatam-an-Nabiyyin* or "the Seal of the Prophets" as well as the fundamental pillars of Islam.

Mr. Sultan told his wife that the al-Enezi were being forced to sign a document that would indicate that the al-Enezi have agreed to leave the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Mr. Sultan told his wife that he would never sign any such document even if they would kill him.

Two Saudi clerics have regularly visited the al-Enezi to pressure them to extract a confession and recant their faith in writing. The al-Enezi are not allowed to talk to prisoners about Ahmadiyyat, and if they do, they will be placed in solitary confinement. They have neither been formally charged with any crime nor have been given any opportunity to access a lawyer.

Police have asked the al-Enezi to recant their faith in writing numerous times—something the Ministry of Islamic Affairs initiated more than two years ago—which they refuse. The case can be referred to a judge for ruling at any point, and the al-Enezi are receiving regular threats by Ministry officials that failure to recant will result in the death penalty. Police decided to keep them in jail upon refusing to recant, and more than 18 months after their arrest, they are still in detention. This despite a law stating that six months is the maximum period of detention without trial. At first, they are jailed in al-Aziziya, in the 'Ar-'Ar area, with limited outside contact. Now, however, their location is unclear, and the Community has no contact with them.

The al-Enezi both have families; Mr. Saud has three children. The condition of their families is equally distressing. They have no one to provide for them, and it is torturous for them not to have any information about the whereabouts of their husbands.

The Community's myriad efforts at a quiet diplomatic solution have thus far been met with silence from the Saudi government.²

² On August 9, 2012, Human Rights Watch (HRW) sent a letter to His Highness King Abdullah, calling for the release of the al-Enezi, stating that as they have yet to be convicted of apostasy, the King can release them by a simple order. To date, HRW has not received a reply. On November 21, 2012, U.S.

PAKISTAN

Lahore

Name of Prisoner of Conscience:

Dr. Masood Ahmad

*Summary*³:

In November 2013, police in Lahore arrested 72-year-old Dr. Masood Ahmad, a Pakistan-British dual national, homeopathic physician and member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Two men posing as patients visited Dr. Ahmad's clinic in Lahore and began to ask questions about religion. They used a mobile phone to secretly film him reciting verses from the Holy Qur'an. Subsequently, they called the police in Lahore to arrest Dr. Masood for committing blasphemy and "outraging the religious sentiments of Muslims." In the mind of the accusers, Dr. Masood's public recitation of the Holy Qur'an was an unlawful blasphemous act.

Dr. Masood was subsequently arrested, imprisoned and charged for offenses under Section 295-C for "posing as a Muslim." Significantly, he has been denied bail despite his age and poor health (in 2010, Dr. Masood Ahmad has had several operations to remove a tumor and is recovering from cancer).

According to the BBC, the official complaint registered is in the name of a local cleric, presumably activist Mohammad Hasan Moawwiya, whose name appears in several similar cases against Ahmadi Muslims. Mr. Moawwiya is associated with an emerging group called The Khattam-e-Nabuwwat Lawyer's Forum, an extended legal wing of Majalis Tahaffaz Khattam-e-Nabuwwat, which is a right-wing religious group that has also been associated with distributing hate literature and actively campaigning against the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the past. Mr. Moawwiya maintains that it is his legal and constitutional right to bring the complaint.

Dr. Masood has remained in prison without bail for approximately six weeks. In an interview with BBC from prison last month, Dr. Masood said he felt "marked" prior to his arrest and remained concerned about how his children living abroad are coping with the situation. Dr. Masood's family remains extremely concerned about Dr. Masood's health while in prison.

Congressional Representatives Frank Wolf and Jim McGovern – co-chairs of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission – sent a letter to His Highness King Abdullah urging action on this case. To date, they have not received a reply.

³ For further details, see BBC News, "Jailed British Ahmadi Masood Ahmad in Pakistan blasphemy appeal," available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-25498545> (last visited January 15, 2014).

In Pakistan, Ahmadi Muslims can be jailed for up to three years for “posing as Muslims” and using Islamic names or epithets for their places of worship or religious rituals.

Rajanpur (Punjab)

Name of Prisoners of Conscience/Detainees:

Mr. Muhammad Sharif
Case No. 653/13

Mr. Laeq Ahmad Tariq
Case No. 653/13

Mr. Naseer Ahmad
Case No. 653/13

Summary:

On December 18, 2013, Rajanpur City Police received a First Information Report (FIR) filed by the Assistant Sub-Inspector of the Rajanpur Police for a case of blasphemy under Section 298-C of Pakistan’s Penal Code against three Ahmadi Muslims and brothers: (1) Mr. Muhammad Sharif; (2) Mr. Laeq Ahmad Tariq; and (3) Mr. Naseer Ahmad. They are residents of the Inayatnagar Colony in Rajanpur.

Mr. Muhammad Sharif is the head Imam of the Ahmadiyya place of worship in Rajanpur and is 70 years of age. As of today, he remains arrested and imprisoned without bail. Mr. Laeq Ahmad Tariq and Mr. Naseer Ahmad await further proceedings by the police.

The three Ahmadi Muslims were accused of preaching and propagating their Ahmadi Muslim faith by allegedly distributing a pamphlet entitled *Ahmadi aur ghair Ahmadi main kya farak hai* or “The Differences Between Ahmadis and Non-Ahmadis.” According to the FIR, the distribution of a pamphlet by Ahmadi Muslims is a penal code offense in violation of Pakistan Penal Code Section 298-C.

The above-mentioned cases represent only a select number of cases involving Ahmadi Muslim prisoners of conscience in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. In recent years, the Community has also advocated for the release of Ahmadi Muslim prisoners of conscience in Egypt, Libya and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Ahmadi Muslims continue to face intense persecution, including imprisonment, throughout much of the rest of the Islamic world, including the Middle East (e.g., Egypt, Libya, UAE and Palestine), Central Asia (e.g., Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic) and Southeast Asia (e.g., Indonesia and Malaysia).

In conclusion, let me say that the primary source of our Community's persecution is religious extremists who espouse a militant perversion of Islam. Our Community strongly believes that all such religious extremism must be cut at its root. We welcome any and all efforts by the U.S. Government to release all prisoners of conscience regardless of their religious beliefs or affiliation.

Thank you.

Biography of Submitting Party

Amjad Mahmood Khan is litigation counsel at a prominent global law firm, a post-graduate research fellow at Harvard Law School and President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Lawyers Association USA.

Mr. Khan graduated *summa cum laude* from Claremont McKenna College in 2001 with degrees in English Literature and Government and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and awarded "Student of the Year" as a senior. His thesis, "Fighting Extremism in Islam," earned departmental honors. In 2004, he earned a "Juris Doctor" (J.D.) degree from Harvard Law School, where he served as Editor-in-Chief of the *Harvard Human Rights Law Journal* and as a teaching assistant to Professor Scott Brewer (Contracts, Jurisprudence). He is a former judicial clerk to the late Honorable Warren J. Ferguson, Senior Circuit Judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

In addition to his litigation practice, Mr. Khan devotes thousands of hours to pro bono matters. He has specific experience in asylum and refugee law, deportation defense and legal aid to disaster victims. He has first chaired over two dozen successful immigration and asylum matters and has represented hundreds of refugees escaping religious persecution. He frequently briefs the U.S. State Department on his work to defend international religious freedom in the Islamic world. He has served as an expert witness for asylum cases involving oppressed religious minorities. He has received numerous awards and accolades for his pro bono work, which includes sharing the 2012 Muslim Advocates Thurgood Marshall Award for his legal work in defense of the civil liberties of an American Muslim.

Mr. Khan is a frequent lecturer on topics concerning international religious freedom in the Islamic world, with particular expertise on international human rights law and policy. He has lectured at several leading academic institutions, including Stanford Law School, Harvard Law School, Harvard Divinity School, Carnegie Mellon University, Claremont McKenna College, University of California Berkeley, Southern Methodist University and the State University of New York at Buffalo. His writings have appeared in a variety of prominent journals and newspapers, including the *Harvard Human Rights Law Journal*, *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, *Richmond Journal of Global Law* and

Business, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Christian Science Monitor and *New York Daily News*. His interviews have appeared in a variety of prominent media outlets, including Al Jazeera and NPR. He has testified three times before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission at the U.S. House of Representatives about the persecution of religious minorities in the Islamic world.

For two consecutive years, Mr. Khan has been named a “Southern California Super Lawyer Rising Star” by *Law & Politics* and *Los Angeles* magazines (2012, 2013) – an honor award to 2.5% of California attorneys under 40 years of age.



Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Defending Freedoms Hearing

Highlighting the Plight of Prisoners of Conscience around the World

Thursday, January 16, 2014

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

HVC 210

In December 2012 the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission (TLHRC), in conjunction with the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and Amnesty International USA (AIUSA), launched the Defending Freedoms Project (DFP) with the aim of supporting human rights and religious freedom throughout the world with a particular focus on prisoners of conscience.

At the height of the Cold War it was not uncommon for prominent political prisoners to be household names. Robust advocacy campaigns took root in the West—perhaps best represented by the American Jewish community's efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry. While political prisoners and prisoners of conscience are still very much a reality today, too often their stories are not known, their cases are rarely highlighted in high-level diplomatic talks, and, ultimately, little progress is made in pursuit of their release and eventual freedom.

The Lantos Commission's first hearing of 2014 will address the plight of prisoners of conscience, who are currently unjustly detained by repressive governments around the world. By highlighting several such cases, the hearing will explore strategies for securing the release of prisoners of conscience, the need to shine a bright light on some lesser known cases, the historical precedent for effective advocacy campaigns and the importance of human rights as a central factor in U.S. foreign policy.

The hearing will feature several witnesses including Mr. Natan Sharansky, the noted human rights activist who spent nine years in the Soviet Gulag for his political activities and later authored *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror*.

Witnesses who will testify:

Panel I:

- Dr. Robert P. George, Chair, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)

Panel II:

- Ms. Geng He, Wife of Imprisoned Chinese Human Rights Lawyer Gao Zhisheng, Accompanied by Mr. Jared Genser, Founder, Freedom Now and Pro Bono Counsel for Gao Zhisheng
- Mr. Josh Colangelo-Bryan, Pro Bono Attorney on behalf of Imprisoned Bahraini Human Rights Activist Nabeel Rajab
- Mrs. Tran Thi Ngoc Minh, Mother of Imprisoned Vietnamese Labor Activist Do Thi Minh Hanh
- Mr. Natan Sharansky, Chairman of the Executive, The Jewish Agency for Israel, Introduced by Ms. Katrina Lantos Swett, Vice-Chair, USCIRF and President, Lantos Foundation for Human Rights and Justice
- Mr. Gal Beckerman, Author of *When They Come for Us We'll be Gone: The Epic Struggle to Save Soviet Jewry*

**Witness list subject to change*

Note: The live stream will be available here:

<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/hclive17>

For any questions, please contact the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission at 202-225-3599 or tlhrc@mail.house.gov.

James P. McGovern
Co-Chair, TLHRC

Frank R. Wolf
Co-Chair, TLHRC



**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
Defending Freedoms Project
Prisoner List**

If your boss would like to adopt a person from this list or if you would like more information, please contact:

**Elise Phuong Ho – elise-phuong.ho@mail.house.gov (Rep. Wolf) or
Katya Migacheva – katya.migacheva@mail.house.gov (Rep. McGovern)**

AZERBAIJAN



Zaur Gurbanli (m) is a blogger and youth political activist from Azerbaijan. A member of the board of the youth movement, N!DA, Gurbanli has been in detention since April 1, 2013, on fabricated charges of illegal possession of explosives. Six other N!DA activists were arrested under spurious charges on March 7, March 14 and March 30, in what seems to be authorities' retaliation linked with anti-government protest on March 10.

Gurbanli had already been arrested on September 29, 2012. He was held incommunicado for 48 hours in an unknown location, without being allowed access to a lawyer or his family and without any official explanation for his arrest. On October 1, 2012, the Interior Ministry's press office announced that he had been placed under administrative detention for 15 days pending trial on a charge of refusing to cooperate with police in a drug trafficking investigation. No explanations were provided in the decision taken by the court on why the activist is being held in the organized crime unit detention facility, and not in the regular administrative detention center, consistent with minor charges brought against him. His apartment and offices were searched and 8,000 copies of a pamphlet calling for President Ilham Aliyev to leave office were removed, along with other materials, from N!DA's office.

On September 12, 2013, Gurbanli and seven others who were arrested in March-May 2013 and charged with possession of drugs and explosives, and hooliganism, were additionally charged with planning to organize acts of public disorder and using Molotov cocktails on the March 10 protest against deaths in the army. Because of the new charges of planning to organize 'public disorder,' Gurbanli is now facing up to 12 years of imprisonment.



Avaz Zeynalli (m) is the editor-in-chief and founder of the *Xural* newspaper. He was arrested on October 28, 2011 and accused of trying to extort money from an Azerbaijani MP, Gular Ahjmadova, who has since been charged with involvement in a corruption scam. He has been in detention ever since. His arrest came a week after he wrote an article criticizing the country's President. Two days later, a court sanctioned the confiscation of the newspaper's property and it was then sold without Zeynalli's knowledge. On March 12, 2013 he was sentenced to nine years in prison on charges of extortion and tax evasion, after a trial in which no evidence substantiating those charges was ever presented to the court.



Hilal Mammedov (m) is a journalist and human rights activist, speaking up for minority groups in Azerbaijan. He is the chief editor of the Baku-based newspaper "Tolyshi Sado" (The Voice of Talysh), printed in Azerbaijan's minority language, Talysh. He was also head of a committee fighting to defend a well-known Talysh scientist and human rights activist who was imprisoned for 10 years on spying charges and eventually died in prison. Having already been arrested in 2008 and charged with spying for Iran, Hilal Mammedov was apprehended once again on June 21, 2012 and accused of possession of illegal drugs. He now faces a prison sentence of 3 to 12 years. His family insists he has never used any such drugs and the arrest was politically motivated. Azerbaijani authorities repeatedly deny that there are any political prisoners in the country.

BAHRAIN

Ibrahim Sharif, Hassan Mshaima, Abdel-Wahab Hussain, Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Salah al-Khawaja, Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri and Mohamed Habib al-Miqdad are among fourteen opposition activists in Bahrain serving prison sentences handed down by a military court following anti-government protests in February and March 2011. They were not given fair trials and some of them reportedly were tortured. They are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for peacefully expressing their opinions and their activism. The 14 activists were arrested between March 17 and April 9, 2011. In most cases, they were arrested in the middle of the night by several security officers who raided their houses and took them to an unknown location, where they were held incommunicado for weeks. In most cases, they were only allowed to see their lawyers and family during the first court hearing in May 2011. Many of the 14 defendants alleged they were tortured during their first days of detention when they were being interrogated by officers from the National Security Agency (NSA), an investigating authority associated with the Ministry of Interior. Many of them were then held incommunicado for weeks. Some of the 14 were allowed to see their lawyers during

questioning by the Military Prosecutor ahead of the trial, but they were not allowed to see their lawyers during NSA interrogations just after they were arrested.



Abdulhadi al-Khawaja (m) has been a well-known human rights defender for more than twenty years. Until February 2011, Mr. al-Khawaja worked as a regional coordinator for the international organization Front Line Defenders. Because of his tireless advocacy for peaceful reform in Bahrain, Mr. al-Khawaja has faced a long history of arrests and assaults.

Just before his current detention, Mr. al-Khawaja had publicly criticized the regime's brutal response to the anti-government protests in Bahrain. Early on April 9, 2011, fifteen masked men stormed into Mr. al-Khawaja's daughter's apartment, breaking down the door with a sledgehammer. The masked men did not produce identification or an arrest warrant. The men beat Mr. al-Khawaja until he lost consciousness and dragged him down the stairs by his neck. He was taken into custody along with his two sons-in-law. Authorities held him incommunicado for some weeks, in which time they tortured him physically and mentally.

On May 8, 2011, Mr. al-Khawaja's trial began before the National Safety Court – a military tribunal. He was prosecuted along with a diverse set of twenty other individuals. Despite the lack of evidence against him, Mr. al-Khawaja was charged and convicted with financing and participating in terrorism to overthrow the government, as well as spying for a foreign country. On June 22, 2011, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. On April 2, 2012, the Bahraini Court of Cassation began to review the verdicts of Mr. al-Khawaja and thirteen other defendants charged in relation to the 2011 anti-government protests. Mr. al-Khawaja's lawyer requested that he be released on bail pending the court's decision; however, the request was denied. On April 30, 2012, the Court of Cassation ordered a retrial in civilian court and refused to release Mr. al-Khawaja on bail pending the trial. On September 4, 2012, a Bahraini appeals court upheld his sentence of life in prison. On January 7, 2013, Bahrain's highest appeals court upheld Mr. al-Khawaja's conviction and life sentence.

Mr. al-Khawaja has been subjected to deplorable treatment during his detention. Because of the beatings he endured from security agents, he suffered four fractures to his face, requiring a four hour surgery to repair his jaw. Security forces are also subjecting Mr. al-Khawaja to other forms of inhumane treatment, such as attempted sexual assault and psychological torture. On February 8, 2012, Mr. al-Khawaja began a hunger strike to protest his wrongful detention and treatment in prison. He ended his hunger strike after 110 days on May 30, 2012. During his hunger strike, Mr. al-Khawaja's health deteriorated and he reportedly lost 22 pounds.



Ahmed Humaidan (m) is a renowned Bahraini photographer who has been in prison since December 29, 2012. Humaidan became the target of security officials for his photographs of protests, which also captured human rights abuses by police and security officials. Prior to Humaidan's arrest, he had been in hiding since April 2012 after he received news that he was wanted for charges of "demonstrating illegally" and "using violence to assault police and damage public properties", charges he claims to be innocent of.

For nine months, Humaidan's family also became the target of the authorities. Masked policemen raided his family home on five separate occasions, mostly between midnight and dawn. Then police also began raiding his relatives' homes, such as his grandfather and his uncles, in their search for him. For weeks, Humaidan's family did not hear any news from him and did not know where he slept or lived. Subsequently, he was fired from his job.

Finally, Humaidan, 25, was kidnapped by plain clothes security officials on December 29, 2012 and has since been detained. According to Humaidan's family, he has been subject to a wide array of physical and psychological torture techniques. Humaidan has yet to receive a trial, and continues to be denied due process.



Abduljalil Al-Singace (m) is a Bahraini engineer, blogger, and human rights activist. He was arrested in 2009 and 2010 for his human rights activities and released later. In 2011, he was arrested once again where he was tortured and later sentenced to life imprisonment for pro-democracy activism during the Bahraini uprising.

On his blog, *Al-Faseela*, Al-Singace wrote critically about human rights violations, sectarian discrimination and repression of the political opposition in his native Bahrain. He also monitored the human rights situation for the Shia-dominated opposition Haq Movement for Civil Liberties and Democracy.

Despite his ill treatment, Al-Singace has still remained defiant, having reportedly written a letter to the Bahraini authorities denouncing the practices he has witnessed and experienced while in prison. On October 13, 2012, Al-Singace underwent a hunger strike as a form of protest. Complete details about his current condition are still unknown, but his health condition is suspected of being very poor.



Naji Fateel (m) is a board member of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights (BYSHR), a blogger and prolific tweeter, reporting on human rights violations. During marches and protests in villages he has given speeches about human rights and encouraged people to document and monitor violations. Naji Fateel was arrested without warrant at dawn at his home in the village of Bani Jamra, northwestern Bahrain. The house was raided by 12 plain clothed police officers who searched the house and took away with them his daughter's laptop, his camera and phones. The family home was surrounded by riot police during the raid. No reason for his arrest was given and he was tortured and otherwise ill-treated before he was transferred to Dry Dock Prison on May 5, 2013. On July 11, 2013, Naji Fateel appeared before the Fourth Criminal Court and was charged under Article 6 of the Terrorism Act. This time, he received a sentence of 15 years' imprisonment.

BELARUS



Ales Bialiatski (m) is a prominent Belarusian human-rights defender and chair of the Human Rights Center, Viasna. He was arrested in central Minsk, Belarus, on August 4, 2011. On November 24, 2011, he was imprisoned for four-and-a-half years on charges of “concealment of income on a large scale.”



Mikalai Statkevich (m) is a politician and former presidential candidate who has been wrongfully detained since 2010 as a result of his peaceful struggle for free and fair elections in Belarus. Prior to his arrest, Mr. Statkevich played an active role in Belarus's pro-democracy political opposition. Mr. Statkevich served as the head of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party and Free Belarus, a political opposition coalition in Belarus. In 2010, Mr. Statkevich ran as an opposition presidential candidate. Following the elections, on December 19, 2010, Mr. Statkevich joined thousands of protesters peacefully demonstrating against election fraud in downtown Minsk. Mr. Statkevich was one of hundreds of protesters arrested when police violently dispersed the protest. Following his arrest, he was placed in a KGB pre-trial prison and later charged under Article 293.1 of the Criminal Code for “organizing mass disorder”. On May 26, 2011, the Leninski District Court of Minsk sentenced Mr. Statkevich to six years imprisonment in a high security penal colony. At trial, no proof of violent attacks during the demonstration was presented.

At various times during his detention, Mr. Stratkevich's communication with his family has been restricted and he has been threatened with new sanctions for violating prison rules. Mr. Stratkevich's wife, Maryna Adamovich, attributes the tough measures against her husband to his refusal to apply for a pardon in protest of his innocence.

BURMA (MYANMAR)



Dr. Tun Aung (m) is a medical doctor and attempted to calm a rioting crowd at a mosque in his hometown of Maungdaw, in Rakhine state of Myanmar, having been summoned by the police to help calm the crowd because he was the Chairman of the Islamic Religious Affairs Council in Maungdaw. Eyewitness accounts report that Dr. Tun Aung was attempting to pacify the crowd by telling them that the government was setting up an investigation of the killings. Unfortunately, the crowd would not listen. Three days later, he was offered a ride home by an immigration officer, but was instead detained and held incommunicado for several months. He was subsequently charged in connection with the riots in Rakhine state, put on trial and denied the right to appoint a lawyer of his choice or meet with the court appointed lawyer in private and sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment in the second half of 2012. This sentence has since been increased to 17 years. Dr. Tun Aung is being held in Sittwe Prison, over 105 miles away from his hometown. As such, his family must travel for a day or more to make one 20 minute prison visit.

CAMBODIA



Yorm Bopha (f) is a Cambodian land rights activist noted for her opposition to development around Boeung Kak lake. She was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for "intentional violence with aggravating circumstances" on December 27, 2012, leading several human rights groups to protest on her behalf. Yorm Bopha has lost count of the number of times she has been threatened by authorities because of her involvement with the Boeung Kak Lake (BKL) campaign. As a representative of the BKL community, Bopha is an outspoken land rights activist and a central figure in her community's long-running campaign against forced eviction. She can-not remember how many times she has been beaten during protests but she clearly remembers being shocked twice by electric stun batons whilst protesting peacefully.

CHINA



Liu Xianbin (m) is a long-time political dissident, organizer of the China Democracy Party and member of an “illegal” Protestant house church. He is also a blogger using the pen name Wan Xianming. He is originally from Suining, in China’s southwest Sichuan province. Liu was also one of the original signers of the Charter 08 document that called for constitutional reforms, democracy and human rights, including the freedom of religion and belief. Liu was an active participant in the 1989 Tiananmen

Square democracy movement. After the protests were suppressed, Liu continued to call for democracy and was arrested by Beijing police on April 15, 1991 and held in Beijing’s infamous Qincheng prison. On December 28, 1992, he was convicted by the Beijing Intermediate People’s Court for “counter-revolutionary incitement” and sentenced to prison for two-and-a-half years with a one-year deprivation of political rights. Released in October 1993 after serving his full term, Liu was sentenced again by the Suining Intermediate People’s Court to a thirteen-year prison term for “inciting subversion of state power,” with a three-year deprivation of political rights. He was released on November 6, 2008. From April 2010 to February 2011, Liu submitted to overseas websites and magazines a number of articles critical of the Chinese Communist authorities on issues ranging from corruption, abuses of power and human rights violations. On June 28, 2010, Liu was detained and on March 15, 2011, the Suining Intermediate People’s Court convicted Liu of “inciting subversion of state power” and sentenced him to a ten-year prison term, with deprivation of political rights for two years and four months. He remains in jail.



Dr. Liu Xiaobo (m) is a Chinese scholar and democracy activist who was sentenced to 11 years in prison for inciting subversion on December 25, 2009. On October 8, 2010, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded Dr. Liu the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize “in recognition of his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.” Shortly after the announcement, Chinese authorities isolated Dr. Liu’s wife, Liu Xia, from her supporters, the media and foreign diplomats; she remains under house arrest

without charge.

The Chinese government previously detained Dr. Liu for his peaceful activities on three occasions, including during the crackdown following the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. In 2008, Dr. Liu was one of the primary drafters of Charter 08, a political manifesto that calls for peaceful democratic reform and respect for the rule of law and human rights in China. The Chinese government detained Dr. Liu on December 8, 2008—two days before the official release of Charter ‘08. The government held Dr. Liu at an unknown location without access to a lawyer for nearly six months and then formally arrested him on June 23, 2009.

On December 23, 2009, Dr. Liu was tried for “inciting subversion.” His wife along with foreign diplomats and journalists were not allowed to attend the trial. The proceeding lasted only two hours and the court limited Dr. Liu’s lawyers to 14 minutes in which to defend against the charges. On December 25, 2009, the court sentenced Dr. Liu to 11 years in prison and two years’ deprivation of political rights. In the verdict, Dr. Liu’s participation in the production of pro-democracy essays, including Charter 08, was cited as evidence against him.



Lui Xia (f), because she is the wife of one of China's most prominent human rights advocates, also personally experiences pressures from Chinese authorities for publicly voicing opinions. Since his arrest, she has lived under constant surveillance. From the time of their marriage, during his several terms in prison, she has continued to speak out, although somewhat reluctantly, on issues of human

rights both on her own and on his behalf. Despite the pressures, she attempts to retain a life of normality. After it was announced that her husband had won the Nobel Peace Prize while he was imprisoned for an 11-year term for calling for multiparty elections in China, Liu Xia commented that, “For all these years, Liu Xiaobo has persevered in telling the truth about China and because of this, for the fourth time, he has lost his personal freedom.” She also said that she would visit him in jail and “give him a big hug”. After visiting him, however, she was placed under house arrest and her mobile number deactivated despite not having been accused of an offence.



Chen Zhenping (f) is a Falun Gong practitioner who was detained in August 2008 for “using a heretical organization to subvert the law.” She is currently serving an eight-year prison sentence in Henan Provincial Women’s prison. Repeated attempts by her lawyer to visit her since her imprisonment have all been blocked by the authorities. Her family has not been able to see her since March 2009. She has been subjected to regular beatings, been

forcibly injected with drugs, and given electric shocks on sensitive parts of her body. She remains at serious risk of further torture or ill-treatment.



Guo Quan (m) has been in prison since 2008 under a ten-year sentence for calling for political reform. In 2008, Guo played a leading role in a campaign to protect the rights of demobilized military officers. He also published criticism about the government’s response to the Sichuan earthquake and about the violation of international human rights. On November 13, 2008, he was taken into custody by Nanjing police, who also raided his home, where Guo and his wife hosted regular Protestant “house

church” activities. His family was informed that he was being criminally detained on suspicion of “inciting subversion of state power.” On June 10, 2009, Guo’s case was recorded on the docket of the Suqian Municipal Intermediate People’s Court in Jiangsu province, and his trial was held on August 7, 2009. On October 16, 2009, the court convicted Guo of “subversion of state power” and sentenced him to a ten-year prison term. Guo’s wife and son fled to the United States on January 23, 2012, where they are appealing for international help in winning his early release.

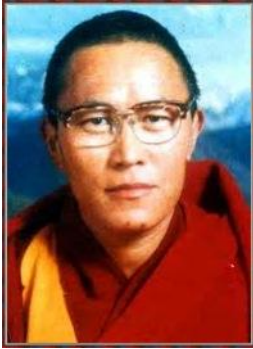


Alimujiang Yimiti (m) is a Uyghur Christian from Xinjiang Province now serving a fifteen-year prison term. His home is in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang and he and his wife have two young sons. While working at a British agri-food company, Alimujiang was the leader of a house church in the city of Kashgar. On September 13, 2007, the Kashgar Religious Affairs Bureau ruled that “Alimujiang Yimiti since 2002 has illegally engaged in religious infiltration under the guise of work, spreading Christianity among the Uyghur people, distributing Christian propaganda and growing [the number of] Christian believers.” On January 12, 2008, the Kashgar police criminally detained Alimujiang on “suspicion of inciting subversion of state power” and “leaking state secrets overseas.” He was formally arrested on those charges on February 28, 2008. On September 12, 2008, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled in its No. 28 document that Alimujiang’s arrest and detention had been arbitrary. In a secret trial on August 6, the Kashgar Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Alimujiang to fifteen years in prison for the crime of “leaking state secrets to foreigners.” On March 16, 2010, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Higher People’s Court, without holding a hearing and barring lawyers from court, upheld the Intermediate Court’s sentence and added a five-year sentence of deprivation of political rights.



Pastor Yang Rongli (f) has been serving a seven-and-a-half-year prison term since 2009 for leading the 50,000-member Linfen Church in Shaanxi province. Yang is a 1982 graduate of the Linfen Normal College’s Chinese department. Because of her excellent academic record, she was retained by the college to teach. She also worked as an editor and reporter. She and her husband, Wang Xiaoguang, were the leaders of the Jindengtai (Golden Lampstand) Church, a house church in Linfen, Shaanxi province. In 1998, they became the church’s full-time clergy and in the following two decades, the church grew to 50,000 members. On September 13, 2009 at 3 a.m., the local Fushan county government dispatched more than 400 police officers and plainclothes police, led by government officials, to the meeting site of the Fushan Christians and the Gospel Shoe Factory, where they brutally beat Christians staying in a dormitory. More than 100 people were seriously injured. On September 23, armed police surrounded the main Jindengtai church building, and on September 25, Yang and six other church leaders were arrested while traveling to the provincial capital of Taiyuan

to petition the government. On November 25, the Yaodu District Court convicted Yang and her husband of “illegal occupation of farmland” and “gathering a mob to create a traffic disturbance.” Yang was sentenced to a seven-year prison term and fined 30,000 yuan (US\$4,755); her husband was sentenced to a three-year term and fined 10,000 yuan (US\$1,585).



Tenzin Delek Rinpoche (m) was sentenced to death in 2002 on charges of “inciting Splittism.” Following international pressure, his sentence later was commuted to life. Imprisoned by Chinese authorities for eleven years, he is reported to be in poor health. He is a Tibetan Buddhist Monk who has sought to reestablish Buddhist practice in Tibetan areas of China. He worked with the Dalai Lama in his exile in India and established Buddhist institutions and promoted social activism in Tibet. In 2002, following a bombing in the Chinese city of Chengdu, he and another monk were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the bombings. Tenzin Delek’s sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in January 2005 following appeal. He has apparently been treated for heart disease. The case has stirred international controversy for its procedural violations and lack of transparency. Tenzin Delek was well-known and respected in his home area for his work building monasteries and providing education for children in remote rural areas and his arrest is likely to have been for political reasons, in order to curb monastic influence and religious expression.



Kunchok Tsephel (m), an official in a Chinese government environmental department and founder of the influential Tibetan literary website ‘Chodme’ (Butter-Lamp). Tsephel was sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of disclosing state secrets on November 12, 2009. Some of the charges are believed to relate to content on his website, which aims to protect Tibetan culture, and passing on information about the 2008 protests that swept across the Tibetan plateau. Tsephel was detained in the early hours of the morning of February 26, 2009. His house was ransacked and his computer, camera and mobile phone seized. His family had no idea where he was for nine months, until early November 2009, according to the same sources. They were summoned to court on November 12, 2009 to hear the verdict of 15 years imprisonment after a closed-door trial in which Tsephel was denied a lawyer at the Intermediate People’s Court of Kanlho (Chinese: Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province. Tsephel had undergone an earlier period of detention in 1995 linked to suspicion of involvement in political activities. He was tortured and interrogated but protested his innocence and was released without charge after two months.



Lobsang Kunchok (m) is a monk from Kirti monastery in Tibet and was given a suspended death sentence for “intentional homicide” connected to the self-immolation of eight Tibetans in Ngaba (Chinese: Aba), although five of the self-immolations never occurred. Despite an assertion by a judge who told the Global Times that: "authorities obtained sufficient evidence showing it

[the alleged crimes] had been instructed by 'forces from abroad'," no evidence was presented to justify the sentencing. Lobsang was not represented by his own lawyer. Xinhua, the state-run news agency, reported that he had passed on information to Tibetans in India about the people who had self-immolated, hinting at charges against him for sharing information with people outside Tibet. Since the self-immolations began, and from March 2008 when protests swept across Tibet, the Chinese government has engaged in a comprehensive cover-up of the torture, disappearances and killings that have taken place across Tibet and an attempt to prevent news reaching the outside world.



Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the Panchen Lama (m) has been held by Chinese authorities in a secret location since 1995 when he was six years old, allegedly to keep him safe from “Tibetan Nationalists.” China refuses all requests, both domestic and international to see Nyima. The Panchen Lama is a high ranking spiritual leader in the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy and is passed down by reincarnation. The Dalai Lama selected Gendun Choekyi Nyima in 1995 to be the next Panchen Lama, while Chinese authorities decreed Gyaltzen Norbu to be the next. As the Panchen Lama traditionally is held responsible for the selection of

the Dalai Lama, The Chinese authorities believe it is important to control the Panchen Lama’s fate.



Bishop James Su Zhimin (m) was arrested in 1996 for unregistered religious activity. He has not been heard from since, despite repeated international inquiries, though he was believed to have been seen in 2003 in a Baoding Hospital. He served as an unregistered Bishop in the city of Baoding in the Chinese province of Hebei. Chinese religious authorities select Bishops over the authority of the Vatican, but Bishop Su recognized only the Catholic Church’s authority in this matter. Chinese authorities

took him during a religious procession in 1996. Attempts at identifying or memorializing him or holding public events in his honor have met with hostile police action.



Wang Zhiwen (m) has been imprisoned in China since 1999 for his membership in the Falun Gong movement and organizing a protest. He was sentenced to 16 years in prison and four years deprivation of political rights. He is a former engineer in China who became involved in the Falun Gong spiritual movement during the 1990's when the movement was permitted. After the movement was declared to be illegal, Wang was arrested for his alleged leadership in the Falun Gong, charged with "illegal acquisition of state secrets" and crimes related to organizing a "cult." He has had limited communication with his family in the United States, but otherwise has not been heard from since. He is believed to be held in the Tianjin Prison in Tianjin City.



Li Chang (m) has been imprisoned in China on charges of "organizing and using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law," "organizing and using a heretical organization to cause death" and "illegally obtaining state secrets." He is serving an 18 year sentence and five years deprivation of political rights. Li Chang is a former Chinese government official who joined the Falun Gong movement during its period of legality in the 1990's. He is believed to have been a leader of the movement. When Falun Gong was declared to be illegal, he was arrested and is believed to have been forced to confess. He was tried with several other Falun Gong members, including Wang Zhiwen and sentenced to 25 years imprisonment, later commuted to 18 years. He currently is being held in Tianjin Prison in Tianjin City.



Dhondup Wangchen (m) is a self-taught Tibetan documentary filmmaker who conceived and shot the film "*Leaving Fear Behind*" to portray life in Tibet in advance of the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Shortly after his footage was smuggled overseas, Wangchen disappeared into Chinese detention. His colleagues in Switzerland founded the film company *Filming for Tibet* to produce the 25-minute film from interviews with Tibetans that Wangchen had taped. In March 2008, the same month that Wangchen was detained, peaceful Tibetan protests deteriorated into clashes with Han Chinese residents of Lhasa, capital of the Tibetan Autonomous Region, and Tibetan areas of western China. Wangchen became the first of at least 10 Tibetans who were imprisoned as Chinese authorities launched a crackdown on independent coverage of tensions in Tibet. Knowledge of Wangchen's whereabouts came only after Jigme Gyatso, a monk who had helped shoot the film, was released after being jailed for seven months. A year later, in December 2009, Wangchen was sentenced to six years in prison. In January 2010, he was denied appeal.

CUBA



Angel Santisteban Prat (m) is a renowned Cuban writer and blogger. On December 8, 2012 he was condemned to five years in prison by the Castro regime for his criticism of the dictatorship in his blog. For his open opposition to the regime, Santisteban has been the subject of continuous harassment and accusations resulting now in arbitrary imprisonment.

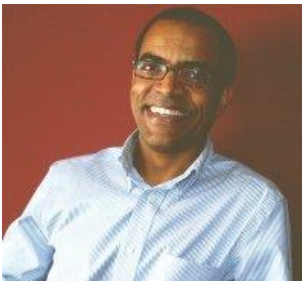
The regime tried to hide Santisteban in the Salvador Allende military hospital under the excuse of a dermatological treatment he is receiving, in what his family and lawyer says was meant to avoid him having access to talk to the Commission of National and International Journalists accredited to visit his previous holding spot, La Lima Prison. Following this, Santisteban was refused by authorities to be taken to a proper hospital and has since been moved to several other detention facilities around the country, where he remains to this day.

Santisteban has been published around the world. He has also been honored with various literary prizes, including the Alejo Carpentier Award organized by the Cuban Book Institute in 2001 for his book “The Children Nobody Wanted” and the Casa de las Américas Award in 2006 for his book “Blessed Are Those Who Mourn.” In March 2009, he started his blog, also titled “The Children Nobody Wanted.”

José Antonio Torres (m) is a former a correspondent for the government newspaper, *Granma*, in Santiago--Cuba’s second largest city. Torres was arrested in 2011 after writing articles about the mismanagement of a Santiago aqueduct project and the laying of a fibre-optic cable from Venezuela. For his critical take on the projects, Torres was sentenced in July 2011 to 14 years in prison and the immediate withdrawal from university program in journalism.

Torres is currently charged with espionage against the Cuban state and Reporters Without Borders has not been able to establish contact with him.

ERITREA



Dawit Isaac (m) is a writer and journalist with dual Swedish and Eritrean nationality, who has been detained without formal charge in Eritrea since September 2001. He was detained alongside ten other independent journalists and eleven politicians, ostensibly for demanding democratic reforms in a series of letters to president Isayas Afeworki. He is the only Swedish citizen currently being held as a prisoner of conscience. In April 2002, the Committee to Protect Journalists

reported that Isaak had been hospitalized after being tortured; the Eritrean government denied that he'd been tortured but refused to allow any visitors. In 2005, he was released for two days before being re-imprisoned while on his way to hospital. In 2009, four of Sweden's biggest newspapers featured Isaak's case on their front pages and launched a petition for his release but, the Eritrean president dismissed the issue during a TV interview later that year saying, "We will not have any trial and we will not free him."



Eritrean Patriarch Abune Antonios (m) was deposed by the government in 2006 and placed under house arrest after he protested the Eritrean Department of Religious Affairs' interference in his church's affairs. In January 2005, the Patriarch's annual Nativity message was not broadcast or televised and the Eritrean Holy Synod met in August 2005 with the main purpose of removing all executive authority from the Patriarch. He was allowed to officiate at church services but prohibited from having any administrative role in church affairs. Among the accusations brought against the Patriarch, were his reluctance to excommunicate 3,000 members of the Medhane Alem, an Orthodox Sunday School movement and his demands that the government release imprisoned Christians accused of treason. In January 2006, he was officially removed from his position as head of the Eritrean Orthodox Church and spiritual leader of more than two-million persons and placed under house arrest. On May 27, 2007, the government installed Bishop Dioscoros of Mendefera as the new Patriarch. That same day, Abune Antonios was forcibly removed from his residence and transported to an undisclosed location. Since then, he has been prevented from communicating with the outside world and reportedly denied medical care.

ETHIOPIA



Eskinder Nega (m) is a prominent Ethiopian journalist who was convicted and sentenced to 18 years in prison on terrorism charges. Prior to his imprisonment, Nega published an online column criticizing the prosecution of journalists and dissidents under Ethiopia's overly-broad 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation and called for an end to politically motivated prosecutions. In the months prior to his arrest, he had also written extensively about how an Arab Spring-like democracy movement might occur in Ethiopia.

Mr. Nega was convicted on terrorism charges on June 27, 2012 and the court sentenced him to 18 years in prison on July 13, 2012. After postponing his appeal numerous times, the Ethiopian Federal Supreme Court upheld Nega's conviction and sentencing on May 2, 2013. One of the charges against him, "serving as a leader of a terrorist group" was dropped, but had no affect on sentencing.

In May 2012, PEN awarded him its 2012 Freedom to Write Award for his role as an advocate for freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Ethiopia. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found his detention illegal under international law and called for his immediate release.

GAMBIA



Ebrima Manneh (m) is a journalist and was arrested in July 2006 by officers believed to be from the National Intelligence Agency (NIA). He has been missing ever since. There are conflicting reports for the reason of his arrest. According to some sources, he was arrested following a disagreement with the managing editor of the Daily Observer, a close ally of President Yahya Jammeh. Other sources claim that he was arrested after he attempted to give information to a foreign journalist, deemed damaging to the country's image. And finally, other sources link his arrest to his alleged attempt to print a report which was critical of the government in the Daily Observer. While the exact reason for his arrest is unknown, it is clear that Ebrima Manneh is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

INDONESIA



Mr. Filep Karma (m) is a human rights activist and former civil servant who was arrested in 2004 for raising the Papuan Morning Star flag during an anniversary celebration of Papuan independence from Dutch rule and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

On December 1, 2004, Mr. Karma was arrested for organizing and participating in a ceremony at Trikora Field in Abepura, Papua, to celebrate the anniversary of the 1961 Papuan declaration of independence from Dutch rule. Several hundred Papuans gathered at the ceremony, shouted “freedom,” chanted a rejection of Papua’s Special Autonomy status, and raised the Morning Star flag—a symbol of Papuan independence. When Indonesian police attempted to forcibly disband the rally, some attendees threw wood, rocks and bottles. Police responded by firing into the crowd. Mr. Karma and Mr. Yusak Pakage, another participant in the ceremony, were arrested and charged with sedition the next day. In May 2005, Mr. Karma was sentenced to 15 years in prison and Mr. Pakage to 10 years. Mr. Pakage accepted a conditional pardon and was released from prison in July 2010. Mr. Karma has refused a conditional pardon and remains a prisoner of conscience.

Mr. Karma's health has seriously deteriorated and continues to worsen. He has suffered from prostate issues, debilitating knee and back pain, and chronic respiratory infections.

IRAN



Ayatollah Mohammad Kazemeni Boroujerdi (m) is a Shi'a cleric who advocates for the separation of religion and state and has spoken out on behalf of the rights of Iran's religious minorities as well as those of its Shi'a Muslim majority. In October 2006, he was arrested and imprisoned without charge. He and seventeen of his followers were tried by a special court with jurisdiction over Shi'a clerics and sentenced to death on spurious charges, including "enmity against God" and spreading propaganda against the regime. After an appeal, the death sentence was withdrawn and Ayatollah Boroujerdi was sentenced to eleven years in prison. He currently is serving his prison term, and the government has banned him from practicing his clerical duties and confiscated his home and belongings. He has suffered physical and mental abuse while in prison.

The Baha'i Seven

The Baha'i Seven are former Baha'i leaders in Iran who have been deprived of the rights accorded to prisoners under Iran's own laws and regulations. Prior to their arrests in 2008, the seven were members of an ad hoc national-level group that attended to the spiritual and social needs of Iran's Baha'i community.



Jamaloddin Khanjani (m) was a successful factory owner who, because he was Baha'i, lost his business after the 1979 Islamic revolution. Khanjani's volunteer service to his religious community included membership on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Iran in 1984, a year in which four of its nine members executed by the government. Khanjani was arrested and imprisoned at least three times before this most recent incarceration in 2008. He has four children and six grandchildren. His wife, Ashraf Sobhani, passed away on March 10, 2010 while Khanjani was still in prison.



Afif Naeimi (m) is an industrialist who was unable to pursue his dream of becoming a doctor because as a Baha'i he was denied access to university. Born in Yazd, he lived part of his youth with relatives in Jordan after the death of his father. He was long active in volunteer Baha'i service, teaching classes for both children and adults and serving as a member of the Auxiliary Board, an appointed position with the function of inspiring, encouraging and promoting learning among Baha'is.



Saeid Rezaie (m) is an agricultural engineer who has run a successful farming equipment business for more than twenty years. During the early 1980's, when persecution of Baha'is was intense, he moved first to northern Iran and worked as a farming manager and then to Kerman to work as a carpenter, in part because of the difficulties Baha'is faced in finding formal employment or operating businesses. His two daughters, both in their twenties, were among a group of fifty-four young Baha'is arrested in Shiraz in 2006 while working on a project aimed at helping underprivileged young people. In 2006, before his latest incarceration in 2008, Mr. Rezaie was arrested and detained for a period that included forty days in solitary confinement.



Behrouz Tavakkoli (m) was a social worker who lost his government job in the early 1980's because of his Baha'i belief. Prior to his most recent imprisonment, he experienced intermittent detainment and harassment and three years ago, was jailed for four months without charge, spending most of that time in solitary confinement and developing serious kidney and orthotic problems. Mr. Tavakkoli was elected to the local Baha'i governing council in Mashhad while a student at the university there and later served on a similar council in Sari before such institutions were banned in the early 1980's.



Vahid Tizfahm (m) is an optometrist and owner of an optical shop in Tabriz, where he lived until early 2008 when he moved to Tehran. He was born and spent his youth in the city of Urumiyyih and went to Tabriz at age eighteen to study to become an optician. He later also studied sociology at the Advanced Baha'i Studies Institute, an affiliate of the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education. Since his youth, Mr. Tizfahm has served the Baha'i community in a variety of capacities – for a time as a member of the Baha'i National Youth Committee and later as part of the Auxiliary Board, an advisory group that serves to uplift and inspire Baha'i communities.



Rozita Vaseghi – is a member of the Baha'i community in Iran. Arrested in March of 2010, she is now serving two five-year sentences in Vakilabad prison in Mashhad and has been banned from leaving the country for 10 years. Rozita has endured months of solitary confinement and was issued new charges while in prison. She is in need of immediate medical attention but the prosecutor for Mashhad, the judge overseeing the prison and the Mashhad branch of the Ministry of Intelligence have opposed this treatment. Rozita has also been denied the right to furlough, despite having now served almost three years of her sentences.



Sima Eshraghi – A member of the Baha’I community in Iran, she was summoned by the Mashhad Revolutionary court in November of 2010 and was transferred to Vakilabad Prison. Sima was sentenced to five years in prison. She has two children and one of her children, Sina Aghdaszadeh, was recently released on bail by the Mashhad Intelligence Office after two months in custody and is currently awaiting trial.

KAZAKHSTAN



Bakhytzhan Kashkumbayev (m) led the Presbyterian Grace Church in Astana. He has been jailed since May 2013. For a period of time he was detained in a psychiatric hospital where he was forcibly administered psychotropic drugs, a notorious Soviet form of punishment. While he was released from the psychiatric hospital, he was rearrested on charges of extremism. These serious charges carry a possible prison term of three to seven years, with obvious grave implications for both Pastor Kashkumbayev and the Grace Church. The Pastor was arrested on May 17, 2013 on charges of “intentional infliction of serious harm to health” to parishioner Lyazzat Almenova, but the complainant’s mother, called for the case against the pastor to be dropped. The pastor’s pre-trial detention was extended on October 7 until November 17 and he was then supposed to be transferred from prison to house arrest. Finally, after the Pastor’s very brief reunion in prison with his family he was re-arrested and charged with acts of “propaganda of terrorism or extremism or public calls to commit an act of terrorism or extremism as well as the distribution of material of the content indicated.” He remains detained today and is not receiving adequate care for a serious heart condition. Police in Astana also have stepped up their intimidation of members of the Grace Church.

RUSSIA



Platon Lebedev (m) is former CEO of Group Menatep, a company created by Mikhail Khodorkovsky that had controlling shares in the Russian oil company YUKOS, Russia’s richest oil company. He, along with Khodorkovsky (see above), was convicted for embezzlement and money-laundering in December 2010. Lebedev played an integral role making YUKOS a world-class company defined by international standards of transparency and corporate governance. Many view his arrest as the beginning of the systematic campaign against YUKOS. He, along with Khodorkovsky, was sentenced to fourteen

years in prison, which includes a previous sentence for tax evasion and fraud they received in 2005. On August 7, 2012, Lebedev's sentence was reduced by 3 years and 4 months by a district court judge in the Arkhangelsk region city of Velsk, where he is imprisoned. Like Khodorkovsky, observers have raised concerns about the harassment of lawyers and witnesses and procedural violations including the exclusion of evidence that might have exonerated the defendants, and the denial of the right to examine and cross examine witnesses. His treatment, and that of Mikhail Khodorkovsky suggest that his conviction was for political reasons relating to who he is.

RWANDA



Ms. Agnes Uwimana Nkusi (f) is an editor with the independent Kinyarwanda-language newspaper Umurabyo, in Rwanda. Rwandan authorities arrested her in July 2010 after Uwimana published articles written by Ms. Saidati Mukakibibi that were critical of the Rwandan government and President Paul Kagame. Uwimana and Ms. Mukakibibi were charged under the country's genocide ideology and sectarianism laws which have been increasingly used to silence government critics in recent years.

The Rwandan High Court charged Ms. Uwimana with endangering national security, genocide denial, defamation of the President, and divisionism. On February 4, 2011, the High Court sentenced Uwimana to 17 years in prison.

On April 5, 2012, the Supreme Court of Rwanda cleared Uwimana on the charges of genocide denial and divisionism. However, the Court upheld her convictions for defamation and endangering national security. Uwimana's sentence was reduced from 17 years to four years in prison. Agnes Uwimanan Nkusi remains imprisoned.

SAUDI ARABIA



Raif Badawi (m) is the founder and editor of the *Free Saudi Liberals* website which encourages religious and political debate. In June 2012 he was arrested in Jeddah and charged with apostasy, "insulting Islam through electronic channels," and "parental disobedience." In January 2013, a Saudi court decided not to pursue the apostasy charge, which carries the death penalty in the Kingdom. On July 29, 2013 Badawi was sentenced by the court to 600 lashes, seven years in prison and his website was ordered closed. Badawi received five years for insulting Islam and violating provisions of Saudi Arabia's 2007 anti-cybercrime law through his liberal website, affirming that liberalism is akin to

unbelief; two years for insulting both Islam and the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice (CPVPV), or religious police, in comments during television interviews; and three months for “parental disobedience,” apparently because of Badawi’s numerous public confrontations with his father over the years.



In May 2012, the Saudi government detained two Saudis, **Sultan Hamid Marzooq al-Enezi** and **Saud Falih Awad al-Enezi**, for the crime of becoming members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. Saudi clerics consider the Ahmadiyya to be non-Muslims. They are facing the death penalty for apostasy, and their current whereabouts and status are unknown. Saudi clerics had visited them in jail, putting pressure on them to recant their faith. They have been given neither access to legal advice nor an official charge sheet. The case can be referred to a judge for a ruling at any point and both of them reportedly have been threatened by officials from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs that failure to recant will result in the death penalty. They are still being detained more than 18 months after their arrest, despite a law stating that six months is the maximum period of detention without trial.

SYRIA



Mazen Darwish (m) is a Syrian lawyer, regarded as one of the country’s most prominent activists and advocates of free speech. He is the president of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (CMFE), which has to operate in secret because of prohibition by the Syrian government. Having already been arrested back in April 2008 and imprisoned for 10 days after reporting on riots near Damascus, he was then was arrested in February 2012. He’s being held along with 15 other journalists but has not been charged with any offence. There has been no news from him since his arrest. In 2012, Darwish was honored as the Reporters Without Borders Journalist of the Year, for his tireless efforts for freedom of expression in Syria.

TUNISIA



Jabeur Mejri (m) was arrested on March 5, 2012, after two lawyers in the eastern coastal city of Mahdia filed a complaint against him in connection with his online posts, which included ‘nude’ cartoons of the prophet Muhammad. On March 28, 2012, a primary court ruled that his posts were insulting to Islam and a

threat to “public order” and morality. Merji was later sentenced to seven and half years in prison – the maximum punishment for each of the charges – along with a fine of 1200 Tunisian Dinars (around \$800 USD). On April 25, 2013, the Court of Cassation upheld Mejri’s sentence and ordered that he complete the remaining 6 years of his sentence. According to Mejri’s lawyer, Mejri was tortured during his interrogation and was later attacked on several occasions by other inmates inside the prison once the news that he had ‘insulted Islam’ had spread. His family has described him as ‘emotionally tired’ from what they insist is unjust imprisonment.

TURKEY



Ömer Çelik (m) is a journalist and photographer for the *Birgün* daily and *DIHA* news agency. He is one of 40 journalists who were arrested during a series of raids on December 20, 2011 in the scope of the ongoing investigations into the Kurdish Communities Union (KCK), an umbrella group that allegedly encompasses the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Çelik and his colleagues are accused of being members of the KCK and their trial is still ongoing at the moment. All of them are either part of the pro-Kurdish media or, like Çelik, members of the mainstream media who occasionally work with their pro-Kurdish colleagues. Çelik denies the charges and his lawyers insist he is only being accused for his professional activities. As the court has declared this ongoing investigation secret, they have not even been able to know the entirety of what they are being charged with and what evidence exists in their case. Çelik is known for authoring several articles criticizing the authorities, as well as his investigations into the shortcomings of the official response to an earthquake in Van region, in October 2011.

TURKMENISTAN



Gulgeldy Annaniyazov (m) is a political dissident and human rights activist who has been detained in Turkmenistan since 2008, when he returned to the country after six years in Norway as a political refugee. On July 12, 1995, Mr. Annaniyazov organized the first ever anti-government demonstration in Ashgabat. The Turkmen government responded to his peaceful demonstration by sentencing him to 15 years in prison. Mr. Annaniyazov was released under a presidential amnesty in January 1999. After his release, Mr. Annaniyazov received refugee status in Norway in 2002. On June 24, 2008, Mr. Annaniyazov returned to Turkmenistan after a change in the country’s leadership to work for democratic reform. That evening while visiting with friends and family at his parents’ home, plain-clothed officers entered the house without presenting any identification or warrant and arrested Mr. Annaniyazov. The officers did not disclose where they were taking Mr.

Annaniyazov. It has been reported that Mr. Annaniyazov was charged with illegal entry into Turkmenistan and that his trial took place in July 2008. On October 7, 2008, he was sentenced to 11 years in prison. The Turkmen government reportedly brought additional charges against him in connection with the anti-government demonstration he organized in July 1995. It has also been reported that these charges have increased the length of Mr. Annaniyazov's prison term. He was not represented by an attorney and all of the hearings were closed to the public. The court has also refused to provide Mr. Annaniyazov's family with a copy of the sentence, leaving them without any specific information about his conviction or where he is imprisoned.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



Waleed Al-Shehhi (m) is a blogger and human rights activist who has been charged under the new cybercrime law in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Al-Shehhi was arrested on May 11, 2013 and then placed in secret detention before being transferred to Al-Wathaba prison. Al-Shehhi is being charged under article 28 of the cybercrime law for having disseminated on his Twitter account information about the trial of 94 UAE citizens, also known as the “UAE94” case. Article 28 of the cybercrime law allows for imprisonment and a fine of up to one million dirhams (approximately 272 000 USD), for anyone who uses information technology “with the intent of inciting to actions, or publishing or disseminating any information, news, caricatures or other images liable to endanger security and its higher interests or infringe on the public order.” Violations are defined as crimes against the state, with no appeal allowed. Foreign media and international observers have been barred from the 13 trial sessions for the “UAE94,” with only handpicked representatives of the national media being granted access into the courtroom.

UZBEKISTAN



Gaybullo Jalilov (m) is a human rights defender sentenced to more than 11 years in prison on religious extremism charges. Before his arrest, Mr. Jalilov was a member of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, where his work focused on government violations of religious freedom, and in particular, on the persecution of independent Muslims in Uzbekistan. At the time of his arrest, he reportedly had collected information on over 200 arrests of independent Uzbek Muslims. On September 5, 2009, Mr. Jalilov was forced into a vehicle by several men and held incommunicado for nearly three weeks before his father received written notification that criminal charges were being brought against him. Authorities charged Mr. Jalilov and three other men with anti-constitutional activity, distribution of materials that threatened public security, and membership in a

banned religious organization. During the trial, Mr. Jalilov testified that he had been coerced into signing a confession and that he was guilty on all counts. Authorities relocated hearings without notifying Mr. Jalilov's attorney or family. In a closed hearing on January 18, 2010, Mr. Jalilov was found guilty and sentenced to nine years in prison. New charges were brought against Mr. Jalilov in August 2010 based on witness statements that Mr. Jalilov had actively participated in religious gatherings, and that during these gatherings, he had taken part in religious studies and watched DVDs that contained religious extremist content. None of these witnesses appeared in court. On August 4, 2010 in a closed hearing, Mr. Jalilov was sentenced to an additional two years' imprisonment, extending his sentence to more than 11 years. Mr. Jalilov is detained in a prison in Zangiyota district where he has suffered repeated ill-treatment. He has been beaten so severely that he is nearly deaf in both ears. Mr. Jalilov also suffers from a lung condition, which causes him to have serious difficulty breathing, and a vertebral hernia. His family has had difficulty visiting him in prison and fears he is in need of urgent medical care.



Hairulla Khamidov (m), a young Uzbek Muslim journalist, was arrested in Tashkent and charged with membership in an alleged extremist group. A police search of his home found recordings of sermons by the independent Muslim clerics. Many believe that Khamidov was targeted because of his popular religious program on a private radio station. In May 2010, Khamidov received a six-year prison camp sentence.

Mehriniso Hamdamova (f), Zulkhumor Hamdamova (f), and Shahlo Rakhmonova (f) were convicted in April 2010 on criminal charges of threatening the constitutional order, public security, and public order because they had conducted private religious instruction of girls. Mehriniso Hamdamova, a teacher at an officially approved women's religion course at Karshi's Kuk Gumbaz Mosque, was sentenced to seven years in a prison camp; her sister Zulkhumor Hamdamova, and their relative Shahlo Rakhmonova, each received six-and-a-half-year terms.



Akzam Turgunov (m) is an Uzbek human rights activist and political opposition leader who has been detained in Uzbekistan since 2008 on extortion charges. Mr. Turgunov founded and served as Chairman of Mazlum ("The Oppressed"), a human rights organization in Tashkent that advocates on behalf of prisoners of conscience and protests against the use of torture. He also served as Director of the Tashkent section of Erk ("Freedom"), a political opposition party. Mr. Turgunov was arrested in the town of Manget on July 11, 2008 by the very police department he was investigating for corruption. The

charges appear fabricated to conceal a political motive for imprisonment. Following his arrest, the Uzbek officials searched Mr. Turgunov's home in Tashkent, where they seized political materials. They then held Mr. Turgunov incommunicado for 18 days, during which time an officer reportedly poured boiling water down his back, causing him to lose consciousness and suffer severe burns. Though Mr. Turgunov revealed his burn marks in open court, the judge accepted as fact statements made by police that they had not tortured him. During the trial, the judge denied Mr. Turgunov and his attorney an opportunity to examine the evidence against him or to cross-examine the government's witness against him. On October 10, 2008, the court sentenced Mr. Turgunov to 10 years' imprisonment. The Board of Appeals of the Karakalpakstan Supreme Court affirmed his sentence on December 11, 2008, after a 15-minute hearing. Mr. Turgunov is currently detained at a work camp in the city of Karshi.



Mohammed Bekjanov (m) was a prominent Uzbek journalist in the period immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union and has been imprisoned since 1999. Bekjanov came to be recognized as a leading voice in the struggle for democracy in Uzbekistan, becoming an outspoken critic of the party of Islam Karimov. Bekjanov worked side-by-side with his brother Muhammad Salih on the publication of *Erk* (*Freedom*), the newspaper of Uzbekistan's major opposition party, which came to represent the main forum of written dissent against the Karimov regime. Even as Karimov moved quickly to consolidate power by enacting policies aimed to limit democratic development and silence criticism, Bekjanov continued to contribute regularly to *Erk* and supported the Erk party, a political movement founded by Salih during the 1991 presidential election. President Karimov worked consistently to stifle the voice of the opposition and his government's efforts led to the banning of the newspaper *Erk* in 1994. Consequently, Bekjanov was forced to flee to Ukraine and to sever ties with the Erk party and its publications. However, *Erk* continued as an underground opposition movement throughout the 1990s in Uzbekistan. In 1999, a series of explosions in Tashkent was blamed on *Erk* and President Karimov ordered all members associated with the group to be arrested. Due to his previous connections to the opposition and his work as a journalist for *Erk*, Bekjanov was arrested in Kyiv on March 15, 1999, and extradited to Uzbekistan.

At his trial five months later, Bekjanov's testimony was procured through pervasive torture during his interrogation. Due to his forced self-incrimination, Bekjanov was convicted of conspiracy related to the Tashkent bombings and was sentenced to 15 years in prison. It is believed that the bombing was used as a pretext to arrest those associated with the Erk party. Further evidence of Bekjanov's innocence came to light in December 2003 when Zayniddin Asqarov, a political leader in the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the lead witness in the prosecution of Bekjanov, told a press conference that Bekjanov had given testimony after being tortured. Uzbek authorities responded by reducing the 50-year-old journalist's sentence to 13 years.

Since his conviction, Bekjanov has been held at Kagan prison, one of the worst in Uzbekistan. Relatives who were permitted to visit Bekjanov in 2001 expressed alarm at the poor state of his health. On June 18, 2003, Bekjanov gave his first interview since his detention to representatives from the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), who were allowed to visit him in a prison hospital in Tashkent. Bekjanov said that he had contracted tuberculosis, a disease that has become endemic in Uzbek prisons. Due to torture, he is now deaf in his right ear and one of his legs was confirmed broken. Bekjanov's wife was allowed to visit him in prison in October 2006 and reported that he was still subject to beatings and torture that, among other things, caused him to lose most of his teeth.

In January 2012, days before he was due to be released, an Uzbek court handed him another five-year prison term on charges of breaking unspecified prison rules. According to recent news reports, he is being held at a prison in the central Navoi region of Uzbekistan.

VIETNAM



Doan Huy Chuong (m), Do Thi Minh Hanh (f), and Nguyen Doan Quoc Hung (m) are labor activists who were charged with disrupting national security and sentenced to between seven and nine years in prison for organizing workers at a Vietnamese shoe factory in 2010.

Government authorities arrested Doan, Do, and Nguyen in early 2010 shortly after they helped organize workers at the My Phong shoe factory in Vietnam, where they distributed a leaflet outlining the striking workers' demands. Authorities held the three organizers for eight months before charging them with threatening national security. On October 28, 2010, 10 days after their indictment, the People's Court of Tra Vinh convicted them and sentenced Doan and Do to seven years in prison and Nguyen to nine years in prison. The organizers were not permitted legal counsel or the opportunity to speak in their own defense. Although they were allowed a lawyer on appeal, the sentence was affirmed by the same court after another closed proceeding.

Throughout their detentions, Doan, Do, and Nguyen have been subjected to serious mistreatment. After arresting the three organizers, the government held them in solitary confinement for months. They have been the victims of repeated beatings, which often occur after one of their frequent prison transfers. As a result, Doan has lost the use of one hand and Do is deaf in one ear. Despite continued poor health—including rashes and liver problems—all three are forced to endure hard labor.



Tran Huynh Duy Thuc (m) is a Vietnamese blogger, entrepreneur and businessman, who was arrested in May 2009, and is currently serving a 16 year prison sentence. He was initially charged with theft of a telecommunications device, but the authorities were unable to find any evidence for this, and later charged Tran with “promoting anti-Socialist, anti-government propaganda” and undertaking “activities aimed at subverting the people’s government”.

He was jailed, along with three other democracy activists, after a trial lasting just one day; his sentence is the longest ever handed down to a dissident in Vietnam. Tran is the founder and CEO of One-Connection Internet, an Internet service provider, and the author of several dissident blogs and articles on Vietnam’s economy.



Nguyen Van Lia (m) is a scholar in Hoa Hao Buddhism, a sect repressed by the Vietnamese authorities. According to state media, he possessed printed materials, CD’s, and DVD’s criticizing the Vietnamese government’s religious record. He had previously met in Saigon with the U.S. Consulate and the U.S. CIRF. He was sentenced to a five-year term on December 13, 2011 on the charge of “abusing democratic freedoms.”



Tran Hoai An (m) is a religious-freedom advocate and a member of the Hoa Hao Buddhist church, a sect which has been repressed by Vietnamese authorities. According to state media, he was arrested for possessing printed materials, CD’s, and DVD’s criticizing the government’s religious policies. He was sentenced to a three-year term on 13 December 2011 on the charge of “abusing democratic freedoms.”



Nguyen Trung Ton (m) is a leader of a Pentecostal house church. Due to his evangelical work and advocacy for dispossessed farmers, Pastor Nguyen Trung Ton has often been harassed and beaten by security police. He is a signatory of the Bloc 8406 Democracy Movement manifesto. On December 29, 2011, he was sentenced to a two-year prison term to be followed by a two-year period of house arrest. The charge was “propaganda against the socialist state.”



Pastor Duong Kim Khai Duong (m) is a pastor for the Mennonite Church in Vietnam, a long-time advocate for aggrieved farmers, a democracy activist and member of Viet Tan, an organization advocating for democracy. Since the early 1990's, he has been detained or arrested thirteen times, often while trying to organize prayer sessions. He was jailed in 2004 for starting an "illegal" religious group. Upon his release in 2006, he founded the Mennonite Cattle Shed Congregation in order to advocate for religious freedom and social justice, particularly to provide assistance to farmers so they could petition the government for redress in land disputes or corruption cases in Ben Tre and Dong Thap provinces. He also joined Viet Tan during this period. Pastor Duong Kim Khai was arrested on August 10, 2010 on the charge of "attempting to overthrow the government." The condition of his health and place of detention were kept from his family by authorities until October 12, 2010, when it received written confirmation of his arrest. On May 30, 2011, he was sentenced to a six-year prison term (later reduced to five years) followed by five-year term of house arrest. In 2011, the [UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#) ruled that the Hanoi government's detention and conviction of Pastor Duong Kim Khai and six other land activists were in violation of international law.



Paulus Le Son (m) is a community organizer and prominent writer for *Vietnam Redemptorist News*. A resident of Hanoi, he is an active community organizer for issues such as HIV and public education; he also serves as member of the John Paul II Group for Pro-Life. His popular personal blog covers issues of social justice, human rights and sovereignty. He was arrested on August 3, 2011 on the charge of "attempting to overthrow the government." His arrest was part of larger crackdown on human-rights defenders; seventeen others were arrested, mostly from Vinh Province.

Adopted Prisoners of Conscience

Prisoner of Conscience	Country	Member of Congress
Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb	Bahrain	Hank Johnson (D-GA)
Nabeel Rajab	Bahrain	Jim McGovern (D-MA)
Gao Zhisheng	China	Frank Wolf (R-VA)
Zhu Yufu	China	Randy Hultgren (R-IL)
Peng Ming	China	Steve Chabot (R-OH)
Soni Sodi	India	Donna Edwards (D-MD)
Saeed Abedini	Iran	Trent Franks (R-AZ)
		Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
		Raul Labrador (R-ID)
		Henry Waxman (D-CA)
Farshid Fathi	Iran	Jeff Duncan (R-SC)
Fariba Kamalabadi	The Baha'I Seven	Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)
Mahvash Sabet	The Baha'I Seven	Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)
Asia Bibi	Pakistan	Joseph Pitts (R-PA)
Nguyen Tien Trung	Vietnam	Alan Lowenthal (D-CA)
Cu Huy Ha Vu	Vietnam	David Price (D-NC)
Father Nguyen Van Ly	Vietnam	Chris Smith (R-NJ)
Ta Phong Tan	Vietnam	Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)
Wang Bingzhand	China	Kerry Bentivolio (R-MI)
Alimujiang Yimiti	China	Lynn Jenkins (R-KS)
Saeid Rezaei	Iran	Lynn Jenkins (R-KS)