



Ma Van Bay

Country: Vietnam

Sentence: Eleven Years

Thirty years after the fall of Saigon, the intensity of the persecution of Hmong ethnic minority Christians continues unabated. Whatever recent legislative changes Vietnam has announced, they appear to provide no improvement at all for the ethnic minority believers in the northwest provinces and Central Highlands. Sources in Vietnam have provided Release International with fresh accounts of persecution against Hmong Christians, including land confiscations, beatings, and forced renunciation of their faith.

Ma Van Bay became a Christian in the early 1990s through listening to FEBC radio. Shortly after his conversion, he emerged as a leader of the rapidly growing Christian community in his province.

In 1997, authorities accused him of “stealing money from the citizens for personal gain ” and illegally following and propagating the Christian religion. Although badly beaten following his arrest and facing the prospect of a long prison sentence, he escaped custody and became one of the many thousands of Hmong to flee from the northern provinces to Vietnam’s Central Highlands.

During the period from 1997 until his re-arrest in 2003, he became a much loved and key leader of the large Hmong Christian community. He also helped in translating Christian materials into the Hmong language.

On November 17, 2003 Ma Van Bay was re-arrested and 12 days later, extradited from Bihn Phuoc province back to his former home in Ha Giang province on the China border to begin an eleven year prison sentence.

Through our international network of missions, Release International serves persecuted Christians in 30 countries around the world by supporting pastors and Christian prisoners, and their families; supplying Christian literature and Bibles; and working for justice.

Please see www.releaseinternational.org for more information.

© Release International 2005 Tel: 01689 823491

**EMAIL ALERT
for prayer & action**

NOVEMBER 2005



Life in prison in Vietnam is extremely harsh. Hard labour and a meagre diet often results in prisoners becoming ill. For Ma Van Bay and others, any food that the families can send on occasions, may be kept by the prison guards or eaten by some of the other prisoners.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- ▶ Pray that Ma Van Bay and other Christians, who experience hardship and beatings while in prison will remain strong in their faith.
- ▶ Pray for the thousands of Hmong believers and the many house churches throughout Vietnam.
- ▶ Pray for Ma Van Bay for protection, for spiritual, physical and emotional strength.
- ▶ Pray for his wife and children, for ongoing grace, peace and for the provision of their daily needs.
- ▶ Pray that he will not serve the full eleven years but will be released early and reunited with his loved ones.

release INTERNATIONAL

THE VOICE OF THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

PLEASE WRITE IN SUPPORT OF MA VAN BAY

Please write a short, polite letter to the following asking for the release of MA VAN BAY.

His Excellency Mr Trinh Duc Du,
Vietnamese Ambassador to the United Kingdom
The Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
12-14 Victoria Road,
London. W8 5RD
Fax: 020 7937 6108
(Salutation: Your Excellency)

His Excellency Tram Duc Luong
President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Bureau de President
Hoang Hoa Tham
Hanoi
Vietnam
Fax: +84 4 823 4137
(Salutation: Your Excellency)

His Excellency Pham Van Khai
Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Hoang Hoa Tham
Hanoi
Vietnam
Fax: +84 4 823 1872
(Salutation: Your Excellency)

Writing to officials

Be brief. Keep your letter short and to the point.

Be polite. You are representing Jesus Christ and His church. Don't be aggressive or offensive.

Be factual. Identify yourself, and state either a general or specific concern for persecuted Christians. If writing about specific prisoners, give the names of the prisoners on whose behalf you're writing and any known details eg: date of arrest, reason for detention, location, their home town, etc.

Be diplomatic. Don't offer political or religious opinions and don't criticise the government. Say that you are concerned to see human rights upheld in keeping with the basic principles of religious freedom, as recognised by the international community.

Be specific. Advise officials politely about what you would like to see done, eg: for the prisoner to be released, given medical treatment, etc.

Be positive. Assume officials are open to reason and discussion. Acknowledge and welcome past developments to protect human rights. Thank them in advance for their positive actions.

Note: We believe in the case of Ma Van Bay you may also write to the prison address below.

Ma Van Bay may not be permitted to receive personal letters and you are unlikely to receive a response.

PRISON ADDRESS

**Ma Van Bay
Bac Quang District Prison
Ha Giang Province
Vietnam**

Having spoken with some of our recently released brothers and sisters in Vietnam we know that although letters are frequently censored by officials, and may or may not be given to the prisoner themselves, it still is important that we write. A number of letters and gifts do get through and each prisoner we spoke with, was so encouraged to know that others in many different nations were praying. Your letter also lets the prison officials know that their prisoners are not forgotten and helps highlight their situation internationally.

Keep writing. Your letters are significant. They are a quiet and loving gift to your brothers and sisters.