

# Rallying For Democracy

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## Recognition of Human Rights Fighters

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The Coalition for Human Rights in Asia strongly recognizes the following Human Rights Fighters for their sacrifices and noble acts toward their compatriots when facing those tyrannical regimes with brutal tactics to suppress them.

China

Lawyer Gao Zhisheng

Human Rights Lawyer Gao Zhisheng known as "Conscience of China", Renowned Rights Defended for Falun Gong Adherents, House-church Members, Petitioners, and Home-demolition Victims, Author of "A China More Just", Jailed and Tortured beyond one's Imagination in Beijing, Top Nominee of 2008 Nobel Prize.

By JEROME A. COHEN and EVA PILS | From Wall Street Journal Asia, February 9, 2009

When Beijing Intermediate Court No. 1 convicted Chinese human-rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng of "inciting subversion," but then suspended the three-year prison sentence for five years and sent him home in December 2006, some saw this as a sign of the Chinese government's greater leniency toward dissidents. Nothing could have been further from the truth, as Mr. Gao's most recent "disappearance" sadly illustrates.

Although the government had long resented Mr. Gao's bold legal championing of human-rights victims of all kinds, his ultimate "crime" in the eyes of the state had been to break the public silence about persecution and torture of Falun Gong practitioners and Christians. His release in 2006 was actually a transfer to a new type of "prison en famille." It was a sentence of collective punishment for him, his wife and their two children. The terms of his suspended sentence deprived Mr. Gao of his political rights, including the right to publish. Yet nothing had been stated about 24-hour police surveillance of the entire family, frequent confinement to their apartment in a building from which other tenants had been removed, or repeated abductions and beatings of both Mr. Gao and the family. They lived in constant terror.

When in September 2007 Mr. Gao sent an open letter to the U.S. Congress alleging a number of human-rights abuses in great detail and urging international protests, the authorities decided to teach him another lesson. In a secret location outside Beijing, they tortured him for 13 days, holding burning cigarettes to his eyes and nose, and electrocuting and piercing his genitals, among other techniques (please see the most recent Account of Lawyer Gao's Torture: <http://tinyurl.com/dmkun8>). They also told him not to dream of ever returning to the relative security of a normal prison. After several weeks of further detention and interrogation, they sent him home and threatened to torture him in front of his family if he told anyone about his ordeal. His wife, who had already tried to commit suicide, was told that they might yet kill her husband.

Mr. Gao's latest "disappearance" began in the early hours last Wednesday when over 10 police and hired thugs spirited him away, without saying a word, from his relatives' home in Shaanxi province, where he had been forcibly taken by the authorities several days earlier. Mr. Gao has not been seen or heard from since, despite many efforts to contact him. There is, therefore, every reason to fear the worst for this courageous lawyer.

Mr. Gao is a threat to the state not just because he tried to represent Christians and Falun Gong members in court. Defying well-known taboos, he had also written a series of open letters detailing allegations of torture inflicted on Falun Gong practitioners.

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The plight of Mr. Gao and his family is an extreme example of a new and more effective "punishment at home" that is less apparent to outsiders than a conventional prison sentence. Other fearless lawyers, such as Shanghai's Zheng Enchong, suffer similar continuing abuse, long after completing their prison terms. They and their relatives, friends and professional colleagues are all victimized by the walls of fear and silence that have been invisibly erected by the police in the middle of the world's most bustling cities.

Can these walls be torn down? Will China's leaders realize the damage that they inflict on the Chinese people and their country's reputation? No wonder China will be questioned about Mr. Gao's case when the United Nations Human Rights Council reviews China's conduct today. How will the Chinese government respond?

Activist Mr. Hu Jia

Hu Jia, born July 25, 1973, in Beijing is an activist and dissident in the People's Republic of China. His work has focused on the Chinese democracy movement, Chinese environmentalist movement, and HIV/AIDS in the People's Republic of China.

Hu is the director of June Fourth Heritage & Culture Association, and he has been involved with AIDS advocacy as the executive director of the Beijing Aizhixing Institute of Health Education and as one of the founders of the non-governmental organization Loving Source.

He has also been involved in work to protect the endangered Tibetan antelope. For his activism, Hu has received awards from several European bodies, such as the Paris City Council<sup>[1]</sup> and the European Parliament, which awarded its Human Rights prize to him in December 2008.<sup>[2]</sup>

On December 27, 2007, Hu was detained as part of a crackdown on dissents during the Christmas holiday season. Reporters Without Borders said that "The political police have taken advantage of the international community's focus on Pakistan to arrest one of the foremost representatives of the peaceful struggle for free expression in China."<sup>[3]</sup>

The decision to take him into custody was made after peasant leaders in several Chinese provinces issued a manifesto demanding broader land rights for peasants whose property had been confiscated for development.<sup>[3]</sup> On April 3 2008, he was sentenced to 3.5 years in jail. Hu pleaded not guilty on charges of "inciting subversion of state power" at his trial in March 2008.

Vietnam

The Most Venerable Thich Quang Do

The Most Venerable THICH QUANG DO (secular name Dang Phuc Tue), is one of Vietnam's most prominent dissidents. Buddhist monk and leader of the outlawed Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam (UBCV), he has spent more than 27 years in detention for his peaceful advocacy of religious freedom, democracy and human rights. He is currently detained at the Thanh Minh Zen Monastery in Saigon. Thich Quang Do is also an eminent scholar, lecturer in oriental philosophy and Buddhist studies, and well-known writer. He has over a dozen published works including novels, poetry, translations and studies of Vietnamese Buddhism.

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Born on November 27th 1928 in Thai Binh Province (former North Vietnam), a monk since the age of 14, Thich Quang

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Do witnessed the summary execution of his religious master by a revolutionary People's Tribunal in 1945. Profoundly disturbed by this image, he resolved to devote his life to the pursuit of justice through the Buddhist teachings of non-violence, tolerance and compassion.

His convictions led him into prison under successive political regimes. In the 1960s, he was jailed for opposing the anti-Buddhist policies of the Ngo Dinh Diem regime in South Vietnam. But it was in 1975, after Vietnam's unification under a Communist government, that Thich Quang Do began a cycle of quasi-systematic detention for his advocacy of religious freedom, human rights and democracy : in 1977, he was detained for 20 months in solitary confinement for denouncing abuses of human rights; in 1982, he was sent into internal exile for 10 years for protesting the government's ban on the independent UBCV and the creation of a State-sponsored Buddhist organization; in 1995, he was sentenced to 5 years reeducation camp at an unfair trial in Saigon on charges of "abusing democratic freedoms to harm the interests of the State" for sending a critical essay to the Communist Party leadership and organizing a UBCV Relief Mission for flood victims.

Released in a government Amnesty on September 2 1998, he was maintained under house arrest - "I have left a small prison only to come into a larger one", he said. He nevertheless continued his peaceful combat by writing appeals in a spirit of dialogue to the Vietnamese leadership for the respect of human rights, the release of prisoners of conscience, the abolition of the death penalty, national reconciliation between Vietnamese of all different opinions... He also launched concrete actions : in 2000, he lead a humanitarian mission to relieve flood victims in the Mekong Delta. These efforts brought him renewed arrests, interrogations, harassment and accusations of "violating national security". In 2001, Thich Quang Do launched an "Appeal for Democracy in Vietnam", a radical transition plan for democratic change, which received overwhelming support from over 300,000 Vietnamese and hundreds of international personalities. For this, he was arrested again and detained incommunicado at the Thanh Minh Zen Monastery for 2 years, deprived even of medical treatment. Released in June 2003, he was re-arrested in October 2003 for organizing a peaceful meeting of UBCV Buddhists. He was never formally charged, but the government accused him of "possessing state secrets".

Thich Quang Do is held under strict Police control, subjected to routine interrogations and threats. In November 2006, he was awarded the Rafto Memorial Prize 2006 by the Norwegian Rafto Foundation for his dedication to human rights, as a "unifying force" and a "symbol of the growing democracy movement in Vietnam". In July 2007, he escaped house arrest to address a demonstration of farmers protesting against State confiscation of lands. In October, he expressed solidarity with the democratic protests of Burmese monks and called for UN action. For these actions, he was subjected to a widespread vilification campaign in the State-controlled media and threatened with arrest. In July 2008, following the death of Thich Huyen Quang, he became the new UBCV Patriarch.

The most Venerable Thich quang Do is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize this year 2009 by a group of US Congressmen and Senators.

## Father Nguyen Van Ly

Father Thaddeus (or Thadeus) Nguyen Van Ly is a Roman Catholic priest and prominent Vietnamese dissident involved in many pro-democracy movements, for which he was imprisoned for a total of almost 15 years. For his ongoing imprisonment and continuous non-violent protest, Amnesty International has adopted Nguyen Van Ly in December, 1983 as a Prisoner of conscience. Most recently, his support for the Bloc 8406 manifesto has led to his sentence on March 30, 2007 for an additional eight years in prison.

Nguyen Van Ly began his dissident activities as early as the 1970s. He spent a year in prison from 1977 to 1978, and an additional nine from May 1983 to July 1992 for "opposing the revolution and destroying the people's unity";

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In November 2000, Nguyen Van Ly gained global and official attention when members of the Committee for Religious Freedom visited him in his village, during the visit of U.S. president Clinton to Vietnam.

On May 17, 2001 Father Ly was arrested at An Truyen church, for his alleged "failure to abide by the decisions on his probation issued by authorized State agencies," and received in October 2001 another prison sentence of 15 years for activities linked to the defense of free expression. The sentence was later reduced several times and he was finally released in February 2004.

As a result of international pressure, Father Ly was released from prison in early 2004 but remains under house arrest in the Archdiocese of Hue.

On April 8, 2006, Father Ly collaborated with other writers on the "Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam." Later on, the signers of this Manifesto called themselves "Bloc 8406," with reference to the date of the document.

On April 15, 2006, Father Ly and three other Catholic Priests published the first issue of "Free Speech" (in Vietnamese T&#7921; Do Ng&#7853;n), an underground online publication.

On September 8, 2006, Father Ly participated in the establishment of the Vietnam Progression Party (in Vietnamese &#272;&#7843;ng Th&#259;ng Ti&#7871;n Vi&#7879;t Nam).

## 2007 Arrest and Sentence

On February 19, 2007, security police surrounded and raided Hue Archdiocese to ransack the office, confiscate computers and arrested Father Nguyen Van Ly. They moved him to the remote location of Ben Cui in central Vietnam, where he was under house arrest; Father Ly engaged in a hunger strike from February 24 to March 5.

As a member of the Bloc 8406 pro-democracy movement, Nguyen Van Ly was sentenced again on March 30, 2007 by Vietnamese provincial court Judge B&#7889;c H&#7879;p for eight years in prison for committing "very serious crimes that harmed national security" by trying to organize a boycott of the upcoming election.

## Dr. Nguyen Dan Que

Dr. Nguyen Dan Que is a Vietnamese medical doctor and pro-democracy activist. He is one of the most prominent dissidents in Vietnam who has been imprisoned three times for a total of 20 years for his pro-democracy activities.

Dr. Que was first placed in prison without trial from 1978 to 1988 for criticizing the government's discriminatory health care policies toward the poor. In 1990, he founded the Non-Violent Movement for Human Rights (Cao Trao Nhan Ban), and on May 11, 1990, on behalf of his Movement, issued the Manifesto urging the communist regime to respect human rights and to accept political pluralism with free and fair elections. For that, Dr. Que was re-arrested, imprisoned, and held incommunicado.

In 1991, under intense international protest and pressure, Hanoi brought Dr. Que to a half-hour sham trial in November and sentenced him to 20 years of hard labor followed by five years of house arrest for "trying to overthrow the government". From 1992-1998 Dr. Que was transferred from one prison to another. Despite his poor health, he was forced to perform hard labor and kept in solitary confinement. On September 3rd, 1988, under the intense pressure from the U.S. government and U.S. Congress, Dr. Que was released, but kept under house arrest.

In March 17, 2003, Dr. Que was arrested for a third time for criticizing the lack of freedom of information and expression in Vietnam. On July 29, 2004, he was sentenced to 30 months of imprisonment. On Feb. 2, 2005, under the intense intervention of the international community, Dr. Que was released, but he was put under house arrest.

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Dr. Que was adopted as a "Prisoner of Conscience" by Amnesty International. U.S. Senator Robert Kerrey likened him to Vaclav Havel, and the President of AFL-CIO, Mr. Lane Kirland, has compared Dr. Que to Andrei Sakharov, Lech Walesa and Nelson Mandela. Dr. Que has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize several times by a group of U.S. Senators and Congressmen, most recently in 2009. He is a Laureate of The Heinz R. Pagels of Scientists Human Rights Award in 2004 of The New York Academy of Sciences, Certificate For Distinction in Civil Courage in 2004, Hellman/Hammatt Human Rights Watch Award 2002, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award in 1995 and Laureate of The Raoul Wallenberg Human Rights Award in 1994.

Burma

Aung San Suu Kyi with Burmese Human Rights Fighters

Chronology of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

\* Born June 19th 1945, Rangoon, Burma.

\* 1960, Accompanies mother to Delhi on her appointment as Burmese ambassador to India and Nepal and studies politics at Delhi University.

\* 1964-1967, BA in philosophy, politics and economics, St. Hugh's College, University of Oxford. She is elected Honorary Fellow in 1990.

\* 1972, Married Dr. Michael Aris, a British scholar.

\* 1988, Returns to Burma to look after sick mother. Becomes involved with politics.

\* August 26th 1988, Addresses half-million mass rally in front of the famous Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon and calls for a democratic government.

\* In 1990, the military junta called a general election, which the National League for Democracy won decisively. Being the NLD's candidate, Aung San Suu Kyi under normal circumstances would have assumed the office of Prime Minister. Instead, the results were nullified, and the military refused to hand over power. This resulted in an international outcry. Aung San Suu Kyi was placed under house arrest at her home in Yangon. During her arrest, she was awarded the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 1990, and the Nobel Peace Prize the year after. Her sons Alexander and Kim accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on her behalf. Aung San Suu Kyi used the Nobel Peace Prize's 1.3 million USD prize money to establish a health and education trust for the Burmese people.

\* The military government released Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest on July 10, 1995 but made it clear that if she left the country to visit her family in the United Kingdom, it would not allow her return.

\* When her husband, Michael Aris, a British citizen, was diagnosed

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with prostate cancer in 1990, the Burmese government denied him an entry visa. Aung San Suu Kyi remained in Burma, and never again saw her husband, who died in March 1999. She remains separated from her children, who live in the United Kingdom.

\* The junta continually prevented Aung San Suu Kyi from meeting with her party supporters or international visitors.

\* In 1998, journalist Maurizio Giuliano, after photographing Aung San Suu Kyi, was stopped by customs officials, and all his films, tapes and some notes were confiscated.

\* In September 2000, the junta put her under house arrest again.

\* On 6 May 2002, following secret confidence-building negotiations led by the United Nations, the government released her; a government spokesman said that she was free to move "because we are confident that we can trust each other". Aung San Suu Kyi proclaimed "a new dawn for the country".

\* However on 30 May 2003, a government-sponsored mob attacked her caravan in the northern village of Depayin, murdering and wounding many of her supporters. Aung San Suu Kyi fled the scene with the help of her driver, Ko Kyaw Soe Lin, but was arrested upon reaching Ye-U. The government imprisoned her at Insein Prison in Yangon.

\* After she underwent a hysterectomy in September 2003, the government again placed her under house arrest in Yangon.

\* In March 2004, Razali Ismail, UN special envoy to Burma, met with Aung San Suu Kyi. Ismail resigned from his post the following year, partly because he was denied re-entry to Myanmar on several occasions.

\* On 28 May 2004, the United Nations Working Group for Arbitrary Detention rendered an Opinion (No. 9 of 2004) that her deprivation of liberty was arbitrary, as being in contravention of Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, and requested that the authorities in Burma set her free, but the authorities have so far ignored this request.

\* On 28 November 2005, the National League for Democracy confirmed that Suu Kyi's house arrest by the ruling military government would be extended for yet another year. Many Western countries, as well as the United Nations, expressed their disapproval of this extension.

\* On 20 May 2006, Ibrahim Gambari, UN Undersecretary-General (USG) of Department of Political Affairs, met with Aung San Suu Kyi, the first visit by a foreign official since 2004. Suu Kyi's house arrest term was set to expire 27 May 2006, but the Burmese government extended it

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for another year,[23] flouting a direct appeal from U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to Than Shwe. Suu Kyi continues to be imprisoned under the 1975 State Protection Act (Article 10 b), which grants the government the power to imprison persons for up to five years without a trial.

\* On 9 June 2006, Suu Kyi was hospitalized with severe diarrhea and weakness, as reported by a UN representative for National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma. Major-General Khin Yi, the national police chief of Myanmar, rejected such claims.

\* On 11 November 2006, USG Gambari, who was undertaking a mission to Burma for four days to encourage greater respect for human rights there, met with Suu Kyi. According to Gambari, Suu Kyi seems in good health but she wishes to meet her doctor more regularly. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has urged the Burmese government to release Aung San Suu Kyi, as it released 2,831 prisoners, including 40 political prisoners, on 1 January 2007.

\* On 18 January 2007, the state-run paper The New Light of Myanmar accused Suu Kyi of tax evasion for spending her Nobel Prize money outside of the country. The accusation followed the defeat of a US-sponsored United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Myanmar as a threat to international security due to strong opposition from China (later voted against the resolution, along with Russia and South Africa), which has strong ties with the military junta.

\* On 25 May 2007, Myanmar extended Suu Kyi's detention for yet another year which would keep her confined to her residence for a fifth straight year.

\* On 30 September 2007, in relation to rising political unrest in Myanmar, a United Nations emissary spent over an hour meeting with her near her guarded residence.

\* On 2 October 2007 Gambari returned to talk to her again after seeing Than Shwe and other members of the senior leadership in Naypyitaw. State television broadcast Suu Kyi with Gambari, stating that they had met twice. This was Suu Kyi's first appearance in state media in the four years since her current detention began.

\* On 24 October 2007, the anniversary of her 12th year in detention, campaigners announced demonstrations in 12 cities to protest against Burma's continued detention of Suu Kyi and other political prisoners.

\* On 25 October 2007, talks between Suu Kyi and recently appointed liaison minister Aung Kyi, a senior member of the ruling junta, were reported to be lined up for the near future.

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\* 8 November 2007 for the first time in three years Suu Kyi will meet her political allies National League for Democracy along with a government minister on Friday. The ruling junta made the official announcement on state TV and radio just hours after United Nation's special envoy Ibrahim Gambari ended his second visit to Burma. The NLD confirmed that it had received the invitation to hold talks with Ms Suu Kyi. She last met party members in May 2004. The NLD (led by Suu Kyi) won polls in 1990 but was never allowed to take power.

\* On 27 May 2008, Myanmar extended Suu Kyi's detention for another year - keeping her confined to her residence for a sixth straight year.

\* On 11 October 2008, Suu Kyi, 63, appealed through lawyers U Hla Myo Myint and Kyi Win and opposition National League for Democracy party to Myanmar junta cabinet in Naypyidaw against her detention.

\* On October 25, 2008, Nyan Win of the National League for Democracy (NLD), stated: "6 party members were sentenced to two to 13 years imprisonment each.... They were charged with inciting people to harm the peace of the State. Win Mya Mya, a senior NLD member from Mandalay, was sentenced to 12 years in jail, along with another member Kan Tun. Min Thu received a 13-year sentence, Than Lwin received 8 years, Win Shwe was given 11 years while Tin Ko Ko was sentenced to 2 years in prison. We will appeal for them soon." Suu Kyi completed 13 years of house arrest on October 25, 2008. UN leaders led by the European Union's Special Envoy for Myanmar, Italian Piero Fassino, the U.S. State Department, and from other nations called for Suu Kyi's release and of the nearly 2,000 other political prisoners in Myanmar.

Some of the Awards that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received from 1988-2008

- \* Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize (1990)
- \* Sakharov Prize (1991)
- \* Nobel Peace Prize (1991)
- \* Jawaharlal Nehru Award (1993)
- \* Prize for Freedom of the Liberal International (1995)
- \* Freedom of Dublin City, Republic of Ireland (1999)
- \* Presidential Medal of Freedom (2000)
- \* Olof Palme Prize
- \* Honorary Companion of the Order of Australia, Australia's highest civil honour. This award was made on 24 May 1996, "In recognition of her outstanding leadership and great personal courage in the struggle to bring democracy to Burma
- \* UNESCO Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance & Non-Violence (2002)
- \* Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) from Memorial University of Newfoundland (2004)
- \* Freedom from Fear award (2006)
- \* Honorary Canadian citizenship, (2007)

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- \* Honorary President of the LSESU
- \* Doctorate of Letters (honoris causa) from Colgate University (2008)
- \* Congressional Gold Medal (2008)
- \* Premi Internacional Catalunya, 20th edition, on 11th November 2008

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