

News and Current Events :: Vietnamese Churches Boldly Standing Up to Abuses

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(Compass) — For years Vietnamese church leaders have filed complaints of religious liberty abuses to government officials and have almost never received replies. But in an unprecedented shift, pastors are now petitioning authorities more openly and internationally.

While thousands of such petitions have been sent to local and central government officials in recent years and some of them have been published outside Vietnam, this marks the first time church officials have openly, simultaneously distributed such letters so broadly. While Father Ly was punished severely for such tactics while in prison, at press time authorities had taken no action against ECVN (N) President Rev. Huyen.

Other church leaders have taken the challenge of refuting their government's widely broadcast denials and fabrications regarding religious freedom, as they too have decided to go international. Further raising the stakes, church leaders show they have acquired legal savvy as their petitions cite articles of the criminal code in naming officials who abuse Christians.

At least in part, the new-found courage stems from growing frustration with the Vietnamese government, which continues to deny credible reports of serious religious liberty abuses while proclaiming complete religious freedom.