

AN OPEN LETTER

We are the wives, mothers and children of those ^{who} have been detained ever since 1st November. No charge is brought against our husbands, our sons and our fathers, no court order had been issued for their arrest.

They are detained on the simple suspicion of having participated in the 'activities' of the NGO DINH DIEM regime. In many cases, our properties were confiscated without trial even before a thorough investigation is completed to determine the nature and origine of the properties involved.

This is an intolerable affront to our honor and to our fundamental rights to freedom, properties and happiness rigorously respected and protected in a democratic country for our husbands: our sons and our fathers, have done nothing other than to contribute their efforts to the building up of this country and the safeguard of this country against communism. After eleven months of investigations no crime is found no charge could be brought against them. Now they have just been exiled to the island prison of Con-Son (Poulo Condor) the place reserved for these criminals already convicted and sentenced to long-term imprisonment.

We wish^{to} bring to the attention of the authorities and public opinion at home and abroad the case of our husbands, our sons and our brothers.

On our regular weekly visit to our husbands on October 1st 1964, we were told by the National Police that they have been transferred to the Gendarmerie Headquarters. But in the afternoon of the next day, the local press announced that a number of detainees had been exiled to Poulo Condor Island. The incident has caused us great astonishment anger and concern :

1/- From the legal viewpoint, the exile of the detainees, without trial, constitutes a real affront to the law and justice. During the eleven long months of detention not even once were our husbands, fathers, sons summoned for judicial interrogation, The authorities having failed to find any charges against the detainees, the latter were not sent to prison to await trial. Thus before the law they must be presumed innocent. Why then, can they be arbitrarily exiled to Poulo Condor Island, the place reserved for these criminals already convicted and sentenced to long term imprisonment ??

This cannot be considered legal as an administrative measure our husband, sons and fathers did not receive any government decision assigning them to obligatory residence in a definite period of time and a definite reason. On the contrary, they have been deceived by the Gendarmerie telling them to get into personnel carriers and go to sign their release papers. Why, with all powers and facilities of a Government in hand must the authorities resort to such a mean deceptive scheme ??

2.-As a matter of fact, a good number of those previously detained with our husbands, fathers, sons for investigation have been released. We had been assured by the Commissions for Investigation on illegal possessions and on crimes, by the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of the Interior, that those found not guilty would be released upon completing their investigations. In fact, if anyone cares to follow the course of events he will easily see that most of those so far released are wealthy, and influential people. Being without resources but putting their faith in justice, our husbands, fathers, childrens have patiently awaited their turn to be released. Now, the fact is distressing ! They are sent on exile while other detainees wealthier are left behind undisturbed.

This fact by itself refutes the opinion advanced by certain local papers that the measure have been taken to assure the safety of the NGO DINH DINH regime's men, against a possible action on the part of extremist elements. Are those who still remain in Saigon not entitled to such a protection ? Besides, it is unacceptable that the authorities cannot assure the citizens, safety in the heart of the capital city of Saigon, seat of the central Government.

3.-From the political view-point, if our husbands, our fathers and our sons are considered as dangerous elements or remnants of the Can-Lao party, we would like to know whether the Government has solid evidence against them ? The Chief of State as well as the Premier of the Republic of VietNam has more than once assured that only those members of the Can Lao party who have abused of their influence to make profits and oppress other people shall be punished !

Why are these promises not honored ? They have advocated national solidarity as means to defeat communism. Why should those, who have served the National anti-communist cause, be treated in such a cruel unfair manner ?

This letter from defenseless wives, mothers and children is written with blood and tears. We address it to the Chief of State and the Premier of the Republic of Vietnam with hope that they will kindly answer our above questions ? At the same time, we would like to ask the International organizations for the defense of human rights, the representatives of friendly nations in Saigon, the local and foreign press, the religious and political groups to speak loud, in our favor the voice of freedom and democracy, of justice and charity so much respected in advanced countries. We do not know who will read this letter and who among newsmen will be kind enough to publish it, but as defenseless women and children we can only put our last hope in public opinion at home and abroad.

SAIGON, October 4th 1964