

A photograph of a person's face and hands behind wooden prison bars. The person's face is partially visible through a gap in the bars, looking towards the camera. Their hands are resting on the bars, with one hand appearing to be in a metal cage. The background is dark and textured, suggesting a prison cell.

THE VOICE OF THE MARTYRS CANADA
DOING TIME FOR GOD
ADVOCACY GUIDE



The Voice
of the Martyrs
Canada

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Introduction

Letter writing remains a highly effective method of raising awareness, encouraging action and also delivering hope to those who otherwise might feel forgotten.

Today, thousands of Christians are languishing in prisons worldwide simply because they have refused to bow a knee to dictatorial governments and ideologies, insisting instead on pledging their allegiance to Christ.

As Christians, we have a duty to **“remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you are also in the body”** (Heb. 13:3).



Pastor Richard Wurmbrand (d. 2001), the founder of The Voice of the Martyrs, spent 14 years in prison in Communist Romania because he refused to deny his Saviour. While in prison, the idea of an organization that would speak up on behalf of the voiceless was born. He wrote in his 1967 book *Tortured for Christ*:

When I was beaten on the bottom of my feet, my tongue cried. Why did my tongue cry? It was not beaten. It cried because the tongue and the feet are both part of the same body. And you free Christians are part of the same Body of Christ that is now beaten in prisons in restricted nations, that even now gives martyrs for Christ. Can you not feel our pain?

Please consider taking up your pen and demonstrating in a highly practical and productive way your love and concern towards your brothers and sisters in chains.

Become a voice for the voiceless and “do time for God”!

Information in this publication is also available
online at: www.vomcanada.com/write.htm

Writing to Government Officials

Letters show officials that there are people who know and care what happens to prisoners. Their conditions may be improved as a result. If the authorities think no one cares, the Christian may be imprisoned with dangerous criminals, abused, deprived of food or denied rights to their mail, parcels and visits. Here are some tips for writing to government officials:

- Be brief.
- Use the correct honorific (see Appendix A).
- Be yourself.
- Be polite. You are representing Jesus Christ.
- Do not write about politics or criticize governments.
- State a general concern for persecuted believers.
- State a specific concern for one or more prisoners.
 - (a) Whenever possible, give the full name and hometown of the prisoner(s).
 - (b) State why you are concerned (perhaps they have been beaten).
 - (c) State what you would like to see done (released, given medical treatment, etc.).
- Remember to thank them in advance for their positive actions.
- Refrain from quoting Bible verses or preaching.

Do NOT mention VOM or other organizations as it may be used against the prisoner.

Never underestimate the power of your letter! Irrespective of location or economic situation, governments are extremely concerned about their reputation on the world stage. VOM believes that originality in writing is important. For this reason, we do not generally endorse the use of letter templates other than in occasional cases where repetition might be beneficial (i.e. postcard campaigns, etc.). We have provided a few sample letters to guide you. Please refer to Appendix B.

Write to your Senator or M.P.

Please consider writing letters to your Senator or Member of Parliament (M.P.). Mail may be sent postage-free to any Senator or M.P. at the following addresses:

Name of Senator
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

Name of M.P.
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Find names, email addresses and phone numbers
for your Senator or M.P. at www.parl.gc.ca/

Writing to Newspaper Editors

Writing short, yet concise, letters to newspaper editors is an effective way of raising awareness of current issues in the global Church.

What should I write?

- Keep your letter friendly. Remember, you are Christ's ambassador.
- Keep your letter short. Concise letters with a single point are more likely to be published.
- Keep your letter clear. State your subject and purpose in the opening paragraph.
- Keep your letter relevant. Editors typically print letters that respond to recent articles in their papers or that address current issues of interest.

What should I NOT write?

- Avoid being confrontational, abusive or offensive.
- Avoid quoting Scripture. A wise and well-balanced biblical perspective, which serves to address a crisis, problem or other evil, can be conveyed without using Scripture.
- Avoid preaching. Readers do not buy newspapers to read a sermon.

Read a helpful National Post article on writing to editors at: www.vomcanada.com/writemedia.htm

Writing to Prisoners

Your words are never wasted when it comes to writing a letter on behalf of the persecuted Church. Mail sent by concerned believers can have a profound impact on those who are suffering and even on their persecutors.

Your letters to prisoners can do five things:

1. Indicate to authorities that you are aware of a Christian's situation, and you care!
2. Testify of the love and unity found among followers of Jesus Christ worldwide. This is especially true when letters are opened and censored. God can use your letter to work in the lives of those in authority.
3. Prove our persecuted family is not forgotten. Through isolation and loneliness, the devil can prey on imprisoned Christians' faith. When a prisoner receives a letter, whether they can read it or not, they know someone cares.
4. Lead to better treatment of Christian prisoners.
5. Provide tremendous encouragement.

May I write in English?

Yes, you may write in English. Please print or write clearly. Your note must be legible to be translated. Many people study English, so there will likely be someone to translate your letter. VOM's sister mission offers www.PrisonerAlert.com, an online resource that provides a translation tool that offers you the ability to write to imprisoned brothers and sisters in their own languages.

What should I write?

- Share your name and that you're aware of their situation.
- Be respectful and encouraging.
- Tell prisoners that they are not forgotten and that you are praying for them.
- Include a Scripture verse.

What should I NOT write?

- Do NOT discuss politics or criticize a government, as this could place prisoners in danger.
- Do NOT include your mailing address. (You may state your name and country.)
- Do NOT send money or respond to requests for money. Unscrupulous individuals, claiming to be the prisoner or a family member, may steal letters and solicit funds.
- Do NOT mention VOM or any other source of info.

Anything else I need to know?

You can send notes, postcards, bookmarks and Christian greeting cards. Express your Christian love and mention that you are praying. You may also include a snapshot of yourself, your family or prayer group.

Please do not send your letters to VOM's office for mailing. The letters are more effective when officials see persons have sent them from many different parts of Canada.

Find names and addresses of imprisoned brethren at: www.prisoneralert.com

Appendix A

Honorifics

Official	Salutation	Valediction
Monarchs	Your Majesty	Yours respectfully and sincerely
Heads of State, Presidents	Your Excellency	Yours respectfully and sincerely
Prime Ministers	Dear Prime Minister	Yours respectfully and sincerely
Ambassadors or High Commissioners	Your Excellency Mr/Mrs... (if you know the name)	Yours respectfully or Yours respectfully and sincerely (if you have used the name)
Local authorities	Dear Sir/Madam	Yours faithfully
Prison governors	Dear Sir/Madam	Yours faithfully
Judges	Your Honour	Yours faithfully
Military Officials	Dear General, Colonel, etc	Yours faithfully
Members of Parliament	Dear Mr/Ms/Mrs...MP	Yours sincerely
A government minister	Dear Mr. Minister or Dear Madame Minister	Yours faithfully or Yours sincerely (if you have used the name)
A government minister (outside Canada)	Your Excellency	Yours respectfully and sincerely

Appendix B

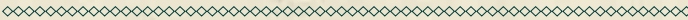
Sample Letters to Government Officials

Dear Sir,

Last year (name) was arrested for (reason arrested). The story of his/her case has been circulated around the world and thousands of Christians know about it.

We ask that he/she be released from all charges. We are praying for you as a leading representative for your country.

Yours sincerely,



Dear Sir,

We are thankful that the laws and constitution in (country) allow freedom of religion. However, we have heard that a man/woman named (name) was put in prison at (place). We are concerned for his/her welfare. We would like to ask you to please give your attention to this matter. Thank you very much.

Yours sincerely,



Online Resources

More Information on Letter Writing

www.vomcanada.com/write.htm

Current Persecution and Prayer Alerts

www.vomcanada.com/News-Articles

Downloadable Resources

www.vomcanada.com/downloads.htm

Multimedia

www.vomcanada.com/multimedia.htm

Persecuted and Monitored Nations

www.vomcanada.com/restricted-nations.htm

Prayer

www.1303.ca

Ways to Help the Persecuted

www.vomcanada.com/take-action.htm

