

THIRD AMNESTY OF GOD
89th Year
TAYNINH HOLY SEE

The Office of the United
Caodai Tayninh Holy
See Overseas

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May 21, 2014

To: **United Nations Special Rapporteur,**

Re: **Report on Violation of Religious Freedom by the Vietnamese Communist Regime**

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam often claims that Vietnam government respects Human Rights and Religious Freedom. On Feb. 5, 2014 at the Universal Periodic Review, Hanoi stated Vietnam's human rights are constantly improved and enhanced. However, the annual United States Commission on International Religious Freedom's (USCIRF) Report normally recommended the U.S. government to designate Vietnam as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) for its egregious violation of religious freedom. The USCIRF in its annual report released on April 30, 2014 again recommends "Vietnam be designated as a country of particular concern or CPC in 2014".

Now, let us look at the recent history since the Communist Regimes were established in this world. There are no human rights and religious freedom in any country under the Communist Party's control. People are suffering and most of them wanted to flee from that country to seek freedom elsewhere. This is the fact and hard to be disputed. In the case of Vietnam, a few million of people have left the country to escape the Communist Rule. According to "Le Livre Noir Du Communisme" (The Black Book of Communism), published in 1997 in Paris by several authors, an estimate of 100 million people have died under Communist regimes including approximately one million in Vietnam.

Vietnam is a one-political party country under the Communist Party's control. What the

government says and provides to the public are unreliable. As former President Nguyen Van Thieu of the Second Republic of South Vietnam once said “don’t believe what the Communists say but watch carefully what they do”. After 39 years under the Communist regime, what the former President said is exactly true. There is no real single civil or religious independent organization existing in Vietnam, which would be able to question or challenge the authorities freely and publicly.

The Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) controls all aspects of citizens’ lives as well as the media, religious activities, and so on. Those who challenge its policies will face isolation, life threatening, physical harm, and financial damage for themselves and their families.

The following three sections presented herein clearly indicate that no religious freedom existed under the Vietnamese Communist regime:

1. An Overview of the Caodai Religion

Third Amnesty of God or Đại-Đạo Tam-Kỳ Phổ-Độ, also known as Caodaism or Caodai Religion, is a new religion founded in South Vietnam in 1926 by God through spiritist séances for human beings. God had established the Religious Constitution and the New Code for the Caodai religion and all Caodaist adepts must respect and obey them. However, the Vietnamese Communist Party has forced Caodaist disciples to follow its policies and to abandon the Religious Constitution established by God and laws and traditional rituals of the Sacerdotal Council of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See in effect prior to April 1975. Caodaism calls for unity, love, justice, peace, freedom, democracy and respects for all faiths.

The Caodai religion had practiced her faith without government interference and had expanded rapidly until the end of April 1975 when the Communists of North Vietnam took over South Vietnam by force. The 1965 Charter of Caodaism was approved by the former Second Republic Government of South Vietnam which respected religious freedom and did not interfere with religious internal affairs.

Prior to the fall of Saigon, all religious activities concerning to legislation of Caodaism were performed by three Councils: Popular Council, Sacerdotal Council and Superior Council. They had the power to make or modify religious laws/rules, and the power of three Councils coalesced was equal to God’s power. All laws/rules must be ratified by the three Councils, who then submitted them to the Supreme Being for final approval. All positions of Caodaist dignitaries were always directed and granted by God and Divine Spirits through spiritist séances.

In 1975 Mr. Tran Quang Vinh, Ex-Archbishop of Caodai, was arrested by the Vietnamese Communist government and died in prison. Many dignitaries and followers were also imprisoned and some of them died in prison; or they were detained and sent to re-education camps to be brainwashed.

The new Communist regime also made up the so called “Caodai Judgment” on Sept. 20, 1978 to accuse Caodaism as a political organization under the form of a religion, a tool of France, Japan and the United States. Despite such accusation, there has never been a trial. Caodaists were also accused of treason and anti-revolutionary. Many high-ranking dignitaries, such as Acting Pope, Le Van Trung (Chief of the Executive Body), and Law Protector, Ho Phap Pham Cong Tac (chief of the Legislative Body) were also charged with the above crimes even though they had passed away many years before the Caodai Judgment.

In 1979 the Vietnamese Communist Party disbanded the Sacerdotal Council of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See; dissolved all Caodai Religious Administrations from the central to local levels; and established the Governance Council (Hoi Dong Chuong Quan) under the government’s control. 42 of the 46 religious real estates of Tayninh Holy See were confiscated. They modified our religious laws and traditional rituals, forbade our assembly for meetings and installation of God’s altars, and did not allow us to preach our religious teachings, print religious books, or make photocopies of religious materials....

The Communist regime also declared spiritist séances (spiritism) as a superstition and officially prohibited the practice. Consequently, Caodai dignitaries appointed through Divine Power, as prescribed in the Religious Constitution, have no longer existed since 1979. By prohibiting spiritist séances, Hanoi regime undoubtedly destroys Caodaism because Caodaism originally came from Spiritism.

Vietnam’s 2004 Ordinance on Religion and Belief requires that all religious organizations must be registered. The independent Caodai practitioners were not registered and refused to join the registered pro-government Caodai Governance Council (Hoi Dong Chuong Quan). The Decree 92, effective January 1, 2013, which obviously eradicates all independent religious organizations because it requires all religious activities must be registered and pre-approved by the Vietnamese Communist government. Any religious organization which register and approved by the VCP must follow its policies; while the Communist policies are contrary to religious rules, teachings and traditional rituals. This has been causing enormous problems for independent religious organizations since the VCP took power in Vietnam.

While outlawing all the Caodai groups, the government has set up the pro-government Governance Council, allowing them to register and recognizing them as the only legal Caodai organization that all Caodai followers must join if they want to formally practice their faith. The government often supported the Governance Council’s imposition of their will on the other Caodai groups, including misappropriating the facilities or estates that once belonged to these groups. So many Caodai practitioners view this Council as the puppet of the government, and created to control the Caodai religion. Under the Communist rule, the practice of faith by independent Caodai practitioners is no longer allowed.

2. Typical Cases of the Government against Caodai Independent Practitioners:

On March 26, 2014 Lady Sub-dignitary Nguyen Bach Phung in Vinh Long City, Vinh Long Province, Secretary of the Representative Committee of the Popular Bloc of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See (of the Independent Caodai organization) was invited to speak in a hearing at the Tom Lantos Human Rights Committee of the U.S. House of Representative in Washington D.C. through the Internet. During the period of 20 to 25 of March, 2014 approximately 10 public security officers of Vinh Long province setting up two blockages on the road leading to her house. The number of officers almost doubled and they surrounded her house both day and night on March 26 to prevent Sub-dignitary Phung from presenting her case in the hearing. At 10:30 pm Vietnamese time of the same day (11:30am ET) her connection to the Internet was cut off; and 5 minutes later the electricity at her house was also shut off until 9:00 am of the following day.

Congressman Frank R. Wolf who chaired the hearing said that he intends “to send a letter to the U.S. Ambassador Shear in Vietnam urging him to meet with these two courageous individuals (Father Loi and Sub-dignitary Nguyen Bach Phung), hear their stories, and closely monitor their situation in the days and weeks following the hearing thereby making it clear to the government of Vietnam that the safety and well-being of these religious leaders are of paramount concern to the Congress and to the United States government”. On April 2, 2014 he sent a letter to U.S. Ambassador David Shear, asked him to protect the safety of Father Loi and Sub-dignitary Phung and to meet them for discussing the issue of independent civil societies in Vietnam.

On April 4, 2014 an officer in the U.S. Consulate office in Hanoi called Sub-dignitary Phung and asked her situation. She answered that so far it is temporarily peaceful but in the future she does not know. However, on April 9, 2014 there were a number of people who called Sub-dignitary Phung; she did not answer the calls and they left messages on her phone numbers (01869257963 or 841234104711) threatening her life; some messages even contained obscenity languages. The independent Caodai practitioners have been constantly living in fear for their lives because the Vietnamese Communist authority views them as enemies for practicing God’s teachings and not following Communist policies.

On March 4, 2014 the police of Duc Trong district, Lam Dong Province sent a letter to Sub-dignitary Hua Phi, the Chief of the Representative Committee of the Popular Bloc of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See and also a member of the Inter-faith Council of Vietnam (of Independent Religious Organization). This letter was signed by Mr Nguyen Hong Nhi, the deputy chief of the district of Duc Trong and forced him to see Mr Trung, the public security officer of Lam Dong province, at 8am on March 5, 2014 for their investigation of the issues concerning his imprisonment and house arrest back in 1980.

During the period of March 20 to 27, 2014 Sub-dignitary Hua Phi was constantly monitored by many strangers, we believe that they were plain cloth public security officers. Sub-dignitary Phi was forced again to meet Mr. Bac, security agent of Lam Dong province for questioning at 8am on March 25, 2014; and later, the public security agents continuously came to his home for further questioning. After the hearing of March 26, a number of anonymous people called Sub-dignitary Hua Phi and left several

messages with obscenity languages.

On Jan. 5, 2014 while some independent Caodai members in the City of Vinh Long, Vinh Long province held a memorial service for Mrs Ngo Thi Thanh Dao at a private home, public security agents and government officials came and ordered them to stop the ceremony for a reason of not seeking the permission from the pro-government Caodai Governance Council.

On Nov. 3, 2013 several independent Caodaiist held a ceremony for Student Priest Thai Kim Thanh at the home of Sub-dignitary Nguyen Kim Lan in Vinh Long City, Vinh Long province. The public security agents used the Decree 92, effective in January of 2013, to accuse them of violating the law. Then the public security agents summoned three young Caodai followers to the police station to question and intimidate them. According to the 2013 U.S. State Department's Human Rights Report, "...and citizens who tried to exercise their right to freedom of religion continued to be subject to harassment, different interpretations, and applications of the law, and inconsistent legal protection,...".

The Vietnamese Communist authority also monitored closely the movement of the independent Caodai practitioners. On July 25, 2013 the public security of Vinh Long province stopped the bus carrying Sub-dignitaries Nguyen Kim Lan and Nguyen Bach Phung who are also the members of the Inter-Faith Council of Vietnam and forced the bus driver to throw these two Sub-dignitaries out of the bus. The public security had stationed at two ends of the road leading into their house from July 25 to July 29, 2013 to prevent them from going out of the province.

On Sept. 12, 2013 Mrs Ta Thi Thu Nga invited the clergy members and followers of the independent Caodai religion to hold a ceremony to establish God's altar at her home in Bau Nang village, Tay Ninh province. Several Caodai practitioners were attacked and harassed by public security, thugs and members of pro-government Caodai Governance Council.

On July 3, 2013 government officials and the public security agents of Tien Giang province along with thugs supporting the local members of the pro-government Caodai Governance Council to take over the Long Binh Temple from the independent Caodai members. They attacked these members and caused severely injuries to several of these members.



Picture of Caodai follower Nguyen Van Em with injury on July 3, 2013.



Picture of Sub-dignitary Le Thi Ket with injury on July 3, 2013

On Sept. 16, 2012 the government helped the pro-government Caodai Governance Council to take over the Phu My Temple of Binh Dinh province; again several independent Caodai members were attacked and injured. A member of the pro-government Caodai group poured petroleum over the body of Mr Tru and want to burn him but was dissuaded by some in his own group.



PTS Nguyễn Công Trứ bị đánh tét mặt và cổ

Picture of Sub-dignitary Nguyen Cong Tru were injured on Sept. 16, 2012



Picture of Sub-Dignitary Nguyen Nhon's injury with broken nose on Sept. 16, 2012

The above cases are just a few examples of suppression of religion by the Vietnamese Communist rulers. The following are the strategies the Communist authority used to abolish the independent Caodai religion and replace it with a government-sanctioned Caodai organization.

3. The Government's Plan on Incorporation of and Control over the Caodai Religion

Since 1975 the government has issued many laws but the eleven confidential and top secret documents prove that its policies are to destroy the Caodai religion created by God, which has been practiced for decades prior to April 1975, and to establish a new Caodai organization guided by the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP) to serve their interests. For example, the Circular Number 2, signed in 1999 by Mr Le Quang Vinh in Hanoi, said that schools for training Caodai's dignitaries must be permitted by the government and

that all positions of the dignitaries, from the lowest level (Student Priest) to the highest ones, such as the Caodai Pope and Law Protector, must all be approved by the government.

Today the VCP provides guidance and controls all Caodaist activities from central to local levels. Hanoi authority can select or dismiss Dignitaries and Sub-dignitaries as they wish. The highest position of the pro-government governance Council of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See chosen by the VCP is Cardinal Nguyen Thanh Tam.

While the original Caodai Constitution and the New Code are based on democratic principles and separation of power between the Executive and the Legislative Bodies of the religion, the VCP now conveys all powers to one person. They gave order to Mr Nguyen Thanh Tam to control both the Executive and Legislative Branches of the government-sanctioned Caodai organization. He is in fact the puppet of Hanoi regime. The vast majority of Caodai practitioners considers his position as illegitimate and does not recognize the pro-government Governance Council, which recently changed its name to the Sacerdotal Council of the Caodai Tayninh.

Furthermore, traditionally Caodaism decentralizes powers to avoid dictatorship. For example, there were 5 administrative levels: Religious Village, Religious District, Religious Province, Religious Region and Nine Ministries at the central and each one had its own autonomous power for religious purpose. However, the Vietnamese Communist rulers had reduced to two levels which are the lowest level: Religious Village and the highest one: Nine Ministries at the central. The aim of centralized power is to help the VCP in controlling the Caodai religion easier and more effective.

On October 18, 2012, the pro-government Governance Council of the Caodai Tayninh was allowed by the Communist authorities to organize the so-called “Popular Council Congress”. The aim of this congress is to promote the Communist party’s propaganda and interests. Many of Vietnamese communist government’s high-ranking officials such as Mr. Pham Dung, Vice Interior Minister, also came to support the event and gave 50 million VN dong (or piasters, the Vietnamese currency) to the Governance Council. In addition, the government of Tayninh Province also gave 50 million VN dong to the Council. Therefore, it is obvious that the VCP has been using pro-government Caodai Governance Council on the surface to hide the true and desperate situation of religions in Vietnam. The fact is that religion and Communism have not co-existed and will not co-exist.



Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tam was reading the opening speech and many communist members were sitting behind him.



Mr Chien who was appointed by the Vietnamese Communist Party as a Caodai Priest was in charge of public order for Congress.

The statue of Mr. Ho Chi Minh and the red flag with a yellow star are put at each meeting of the pro-government Governance Council of the Caodai Tayninh, which proves this Council is controlled and assimilated by the Vietnamese Communist Party. In history of the religion, there never co-exists between Communism and Caodaism because the latter believes in God while the former is atheism.



Mr. Pham Dung, Deputy Head of Interior Minister and The chief of Central Religious Affair Committee made a statement and many members of the VCP were sitting beside and behind him in Oct. 2012 at the Congress of the Popular Council.

There have been many members of the VCP and Government's secret police in the internal area of the Tayninh Holy See to carefully watch all activities of the independent Caodai disciples as well as of members of the pro-government Governance Council of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See. It is very clear that religions under the control of Vietnamese Communist regime are not genuine; they are not purely conducting religious activities as we did before April 1975. Most of Caodai followers are discontent with the pro-government Caodai Governance Council and they rather pray at home, and not going to the temples under the Communist's control. That is the reason why the Decree 92 was born to suppress religious activities even at private homes. According to the World Report 2014, the government uses the Decree 92 to extend controls on non-registered religious organizations such as Caodai, Hoa Hoa Buddhist churches, Protestants, Catholic house churches, Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam and Khmer Krom's places of worship.

Therefore, the Representative Committee of the Popular Bloc of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See was founded, and it is the independent Caodai Religion which challenges the VCP's policies, fights for justice, advocates for the restoration of the sovereignty of the Caodai Religion as founded in 1926 by God and exposes the true face of the Vietnamese Communist regime to the public. Its leaders and members such as Hua Phi, Nguyen Kim Lan, Nguyen Bach Phung and others are subject to harassment, threat of life, intimidation, financial damage, communication cut-off, restriction of their movement,

isolation; and their livelihood is jeopardized spiritually and materialistically.

After consolidating its control over religions at home, the Vietnamese Communist Party extends its activities overseas. The Party's Politburo by all means sends party members to several countries in the world and uses all means to induce the credulous or unduly ambitious Vietnamese refugees to work for them. Then, Hanoi's authority puts these individuals into the Vietnamese communities overseas to implement the Resolution 36, aiming at division of these communities and convincing some individuals to follow the Communist party's policy.

As evidence, last year the VCP ordered the pro-government Caodai Governance Council to appoint the following individuals to carry out the goals of Resolution 36 of the VCP:

1. Mr Tran Quang Canh, now living in California, U.S.A. as the acting chief of the Representative Committee of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See Overseas.
2. Mr Le Ngoc Co, resident of Woodbridge, Virginia, serving as the chief of the Religious District of Washington D.C.
3. Mr Ha Ngoc Duyen, resident of Chantilly, Virginia, serving as first deputy chief of the Religious District of Washington D.C.
4. Mr Le Van Tua, resident of Springfield, Virginia, serving as second deputy chief of the Religious District of Washington D.C.
5. Mrs Bui Thi Quy, resident of Silver Spring, Maryland, serving as female deputy chief of the Religious District of Washington D.C.
6. Mrs Ngo Ngoc Dung, resident of Chantilly, Virginia, serving as female deputy chief of the Religious District of Washington D.C.
7. Mr Tran Thai Xuong, resident of Camden, New Jersey, serving as the chief of Religious District of Camden, New Jersey.
8. Mrs Nguyen Thi Me, resident of Camden, New Jersey, serving as female deputy chief of Religious District of Camden, New Jersey.
9. Mrs Pham Thi Ngoc, resident of Dunellen, New Jersey, serving as deputy chief of Religious District of Camden, New Jersey.
10. Mr Phan Van Sau, resident of Dunellen, New Jersey, serving as deputy chief of Religious District of Camden, New Jersey.

As a result, there has been a division within the Caodaist communities overseas. However, we believe the VCP cannot win because God is on our side and protects us to fight for our just cause: Human Rights and Religious Freedom for all.

Hanoi authority also promotes the pro-government Caodai Governance Council to travel abroad while they severely restrict the movement of the independent Caodai practitioners as shown above. On May 5, 2013 they guided a delegation of the Pro-government Governance Council of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See from Vietnam to visit Oomoto religion in Japan with the participation of Mr. Trang Van Hai, the Chief of Religious Affair Committee of the Tayninh province. On July 20, 2013 a delegation of the Governance Council of the Tayninh Holy See from Vietnam also visited the Tao Yuan religion in Taiwan under the guidance of Mr Vo Thanh Cong, deputy head of the

Religious Affair Committee of the Tayninh province. The VCP now uses religion as a tool to propagate that religious freedom is observed in Vietnam for its own interest. However, Mr Eric P. Schwartz, Commissioner of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, spoke at the hearing before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on March 26, 2014 that “Given Vietnam’s systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of the freedom of religion or belief, USCIRF recommended in 2013, as it has since 2001, that Vietnam be designated as a or CPC. Frankly, it is difficult to see how we should and would make any different recommendation for 2014”.

Presently the VCP examines and ratifies backgrounds of all dignitaries and sub-dignitaries of the pro-government Governance Council of the Caodai Tayninh, which is the branch-new Caodai of the VCP, not Caodai established in 1926 by God, and of course, those chosen or approved must serve the Vietnamese Communist rulers’ interests.

Petition to the United Nations Human Rights Commission:

In the face of danger of Caodaist extermination, the United Caodai Tayninh Holy See Overseas along with faithful dignitaries, followers abroad and at home, the Representative Committee of the Popular Bloc of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See who follow the Religious Constitution, and the laws in effect prior to April 1975, respectfully request your help in defending religious freedom by putting pressure on the Vietnamese Communist government to implement the followings:

1. The Communist members under disguise of Caodaists must leave the Sacerdotal Council of Caodai Tayninh Holy See and return all religious estates/properties to the independent Caodai Religion under the supervision of the United Nations.
2. Remove the Caodai Judgment created on Sept. 20, 1978 and the Religious Edict Number 01 created on March 1, 1979 by the Communist Government who must officially apologize to all Caodaist followers for its egregious mistake.
3. Remove all Religious Edicts, Resolutions, Directives and laws issued by the VCP, which focus on training dignitaries and followers with the goal of forcing them to follow the Vietnamese Communist Party’s orders.
4. The Communist government must truly respect freedom of religion and beliefs and will not put any party members into all religious organizations in Vietnam, including Caodai.
5. The Fatherland Front and other government agencies shall not harass, use secret police and thugs to assault and expel independent dignitaries, sub-dignitaries and followers out of their temples and later appropriating these temples, Mother-God temples, and other religious estates/properties.
6. Independent Caodaists must be free to publish religious books and to promote materials, documents and to preach religious teachings of the Sacerdotal Council of the Caodai Tayninh Holy See in effect prior to April 1975.

7. All religious and human rights political activist prisoners must be released unconditionally.
8. The Vietnamese Communists are not allowed under the pretext of religion to create disorders in religious activities and social orders overseas and at home in Vietnam.
9. The VCP is not allowed to interfere into internal activities of religious organizations.

We would like to respectfully request the United Nations Human Rights Commission to conduct the followings:

1. Visiting the independent Caodai practitioners in Vietnam and protecting them.
2. Promoting human rights and religious freedom in Vietnam.

We, the United Caodai Tayninh Holy See Overseas, greatly appreciate your kindness for considerations of these important issues.

May God bless you and Mankind!

Respectfully Yours,

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On behalf of the United Caodai Tayninh Holy See Overseas
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