

Model Questionnaire of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief

The questionnaire below should be filled out and sent to:

Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief
c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations at Geneva
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland
Fax: (+41) 22 917 90 06

E-mail: freedomofreligion@ohchr.org or urgent-action@ohchr.org

(Please include in the subject box: Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief)

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

- Does the incident involve an individual or a group? Yes
- If it involves a religious or belief group please state the number of people involved and the denomination of the group: Khoi Nhon Sanh Cao Dai (Popular Council of Cao Dai Religion)
- Country(ies) in which the incident took place: Vietnam
- Nationality(ies) of the victim(s): Vietnam
- Does domestic law require (re-)registration of religious associations and if yes, what is the current status of the group in question?

By the Ordinance on Religion and Belief of June 29th, 2004 and Decree 92 of November 11th, 2012 of the Vietnamese government, it is compulsory for religious organizations to register and get approved by the government before conducting any religious activities.

On May 9, 1997 the government set up a state-controlled religious organization (hereafter referred to as Cao Dai Sect 1997) and gave it the property title and possession of material facilities of the Sacerdotal Council (a committee that controls religious activities) of Caodaism - The Great Way for The Third Universal Salvation. The government stipulates that only those Cao Dai followers who submit themselves to Sect 1997 may practice their faith. This Sect 1997 has deviated from the New Law and Righteous Dharma Code that have been set since the beginning of Caodaism since 1926.

Followers who comply with the rules of original 1926 Caodaism have become the object of false allegations, violence, and incarceration by the government. Those who fought for the rights of performing true religious activities of The Great Way for The Third Universal Salvation are threatened, imposed with administrative penalties, falsely accused, slandered, assaulted, and imprisoned.

2. IDENTITY OF THE PERSONS CONCERNED

Note: if more than one person is concerned, please attach relevant information on each person separately.

- Family name: Nguyen
- First name: Thi Kim Thoi
- Denomination of his/her religion or belief: Cao Dai
- Place of residence or origin: Ap An Quoi, Xa An Hoa, Huyen Trang Bang, Tinh Tay Ninh
- Age: Born in 1976
- Sex: Female
- Nationality(ies): Vietnam

(See Photo #1)

- Family name: Nguyen
- First name: Van Tho
- Denomination of his/her religion or belief: Cao Dai
- Place of residence or origin: Khóm 5, phường 8, TP Vĩnh Long
- Age: Born in 1956
- Sex: Male
- Nationality(ies): Vietnam

- Family name: Nguyen
- First name: Xuan Mai (Anh)
- Denomination of his/her religion or belief: Cao Dai
- Place of residence or origin: Khóm 5, phường 8, TP Vĩnh Long
- Age: Born on 26/01/1959
- Sex: Female
- Nationality(ies): Vietnam

(See Photo #6)

Some 40 Cao Dai followers in total were assaulted (see video clips).

3. INFORMATION REGARDING THE ALLEGED VIOLATION

- Date and time (approximate, if exact date is not known): July 15, 2015 at approximately noon

- Place (location and country/countries): At the home of Mrs. Nguyen Thi Kim Thoi in An Quoi hamlet, An Hoa village, Trang Bang district, Tay Ninh province

- Please provide a detailed description of the circumstances of the incident in which the alleged violation occurred respectively the nature of the governmental action:

On July 15th, 2015, independent Caodaists from Vĩnh Long province, Go Cong district (Tiền Giang province), Đồng Nai province, Bình Dương province, Hồ Chí Minh City, and Tây Ninh Holy Sites Prefecture City (the land which previous leaders of Caodaism had taken ownership of before 1975) went to Mrs. Thôi's house to attend the rite of installing the Divine Eye portrait at her home's altar (Installing Portrait Rite). (See photo #17 - followers at the rite)

Five minutes into the rite, the police in the company of Sect 1997 dignitaries and thugs intruded the site and beat the followers, snatched their cameras, smashed furniture and glasses, disrupted the worshipping service. They also took away the Divine Eye Portrait, altar bowl bell, and wooden fish drum. (See photo #2 - Thug taking away the Divine Eye Portrait)

Mrs. Thôi, still kneeling in front of the altar in her home, was pulled at her hair by the thugs. Her son was beaten, his arm twisted and sprained. (See photo #19)

The rite was disrupted as the authority had taken away the Divine Eye Portrait, altar bell and wooden drum, including the petitionary ritual script used in the rite. (See photo #3 - Altar where the portrait, bell, and drum taken away)

The recorded video clip shows the An Hoa Commune police in uniform had come to the site to offer their tutelage and direct the assault, which involved smashing furniture and demolishing the Divine Portrait. (Watch the video clips at below links: see appendix)

- Which indications exist that the victim(s) has been targeted because of his/her religion or belief?

The incident is part of the government's policy to control religions by requiring that all Caodaists must submit themselves to the control of Sect 1997, which the government sets up and controls. Those who do not comply are subject to harassment, physical assault, and many other forms of abuse. Religious activities conducted independently of Sect 1997 are violently disrupted. The authorities lend official support to Sect 1997 in acts of violence against independent Caodaists. This has been going on for decades and the incident reported herein is by no means unique.

On July 15, 2015, Mrs. Thoi, her family members and her guests were attacked by members of Sect 1997 and thugs in the presence of the police because she invited independent Caodaists, and not Sect 1997 members, to her home for the religious rite.

In terms of faith, the Installing Portrait Rite has a sacred meaning to the devotees of Caodaism - The Great Way for The Third Universal Salvation. The Divine Eye symbolizes humanity's conscience, the Almighty's conscience and also each person's conscience. Caodaism legislation ordains that each person may take the Installing Portrait Rite only once in his/her life. (See photo #1 - The God Altar at the home of a Caodaist)

In social meaning, the Rite expresses solidarity in followers where people of the same belief stay together to perform a petitionary ritual to the God of Cao Dai, asking for peace and good karma, and to declare the eloquent testimony to the altar owner's faith when setting up a God altar at home. It shows the spirit of equality – whether rich or poor, intellectuals or common people, authorities or civilians, religion dignitaries or followers – where all worship the same God. It is also a manifestation of freedom and democracy. In other words, the

possession of full rights to practice the person's faith, from simple daily ritual to important events of life such as marriage or funeral, is not under the control of any religious head office. Each follower faces his/her own conscience in his/her own private home.

The practice presents religious freedom, based on the fundamental belief that each human being is free and equal in front of God. The government does not accept this basic tenet of the Cao Dai religion and has sought to subvert it.

Note that the rite of placing the Divine Eye Portrait is part of the Cao Dai culture. The government therefore also violates the cultural right of the community of Cao Dai believers.

- Identification of the alleged perpetrator(s), name(s) if known and/or function, suspected motive:

Several uniformed police commanded about 40 people to raid the Installing Portrait Rite on July 15, 2015. This was evidence of the involvement of the Vietnamese government authorities. They control and use Sect 1997 dignitaries and followers along with thugs as tool to destroy the true dogma of The Great Way for The Third Universal Salvation. Present at the incident were Thuong Tui Thanh, the Student Priest of Sect 1997, and his subordinates.

- Are the perpetrator(s) known to the victim?

Yes. We recognized three police agents in uniform and Sect 1997 dignitaries. They came with a group of thugs, totaling about 40 people. (See photo #s: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)

- Are state agents or non-state-actors believed to be responsible for the alleged violation?

Yes. The police directed the Sect 1997 dignitaries and the thugs at the site. Therefore, the government should be held responsible. (See photos # 4 and #13)

- If the perpetrators are believed to be State-agents, please specify (police, military, agents of security services, unit to which they belong, rank and functions, etc.), and indicate why they are believed to be responsible; be as precise as possible.

The police security agents wore uniform (see photo #s: 10, 11, 12). However, we, the religious followers, could not approach them in order to take their information.

- If identification as State agents is not possible, do you believe that Government authorities or persons linked to them, are responsible for the incident, why?

Yes. The government of Vietnam, under the control of the Communist Party of Vietnam, is squarely behind the July 15, 2015 incident and many other similar incidents.

- If there are witnesses to the incident, indicate their names, age, relationship and contact address. If they wish to remain anonymous, indicate if they are relatives, by-passers, etc.; if there is evidence, please specify.

- Family name: Nguyen
- First name: Thi Kim Thoi
- Denomination of his/her religion or belief: Cao Dai
- Place of residence or origin: An Quoi hamlet, An Hoa village, Trang Bang district, Tay Ninh province
- Age: Born in 1976
- Sex: Female
- Nationality: Vietnam
- Tel: +84 162 647 4648

(See photo #1)

- Family name: Nguyen
- First name: Van Tho
- Denomination of his/her religion or belief: Cao Dai
- Place of residence or origin: Group 5, Ward 8, Vinh Long city, Vinh Long province
- Age: Born in 1956
- Sex: Male
- Tel: + 84 949 315 646

- Family name: Nguyen
- First name: Xuan Mai (Anh)
- Denomination of his/her religion or belief: Cao Dai
- Place of residence or origin: Group 5, Ward 8, Vinh Long city, Vinh Long province
- Age: Born on 26/01/1959
- Sex: Female
- Tel: 84-996-801-426

(See photo #6)

- Family name: Trần
- First name: Quốc Tiến
- Denomination of his/her religion or belief: Cao Đài
- Place of residence: 258/80, Dương Bá Trạc road, Ward 2, District 8, Ho Chi Minh City
- Age: Born in 1970

- Sex: Male
 - Email: ngoctung963@gmail.com
 - Tel: 84-938-222-409
- (See photo #19)

Witnesses also include more than 40 persons who signed this report.

We authorize Katie Duong, a United States citizen, who is in charge of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Popular Council of the Cao Dai Religion, to be the liaison for all communications relating to this incident. Below is her contact information:

Telephone: 1-469-525-3356

Address: 3112 North Jupiter Road, Suite 216, Garland, Texas 75044, USA

4. STEPS TAKEN BY THE VICTIM, HIS/HER FAMILY OR ANYONE ELSE ON HIS/HER BEHALF

- Please indicate if complaints have been filed, when, by whom, and before which State authorities or competent bodies (i.e. police, prosecutor, court):

At 14:30 o'clock on the same day, the homeowner (Mrs. Nguyen Thi Kim Thoi) and some 40 independent Cao Dai followers went to the police headquarters of Trang Bang district to report the incident. (See photo #: 31, 32, 33, 34, 35)

- Were any other steps taken?

We were interviewed by RFA and Vietnam Times. See links:
http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/clash-betwn-authen-cao-n-state-supp-07152015052338.html

- Steps taken by the authorities?

The authorities have not taken any steps so far. The incidents of preventing and sabotaging the Installing Portrait Rites have taken place many times before. Faith followers had sent complaints and asked for solutions or taken the matter to the court many times but the authorities have never responded or given any explanation.

- Indicate whether or not, to your knowledge, there have been investigations by the State authorities; if so, what kind of investigations? Please indicate progress and status of these investigations as well as which other measures have been taken?

Similar to many times before, the government has kept silence and never investigated, let alone punished the perpetrators. The incident conforms to the actual policy of the government towards independent followers of Caodaism.

- In case of complaints by the victim or his/her family, how have those authorities or other competent bodies dealt with them? What has been the outcome of those proceedings?

If the government knew that the victims had reported or made complaints, they would use more brutal methods to stop the victims from asking for justice – such as physical assaults by the hands of thugs, or suppressing their ways of earning a livelihood.

5. IDENTITY OF THE PERSON OR INSTITUTION SUBMITTING THIS FORM

- Family name: Duong
- First name: Katie
- Contact number or address (please indicate country and area code): 3112 North Jupiter Road, Suite 216, Garland, Texas 75044, USA
- Fax:
- Telephone: 1-469-525-3356
- Email: dvnk9@aol.com
- Status: Individual, group, non-governmental organization, religious or belief group, intergovernmental agency, government. Please specify: Overseas Representative of the Popular Council of Cao Dai Religion

The Popular Council of the Cao Dai Religion is a group of Cao Dai followers who struggle for religious freedom for all believers of The Great Way for The Third Universal Salvation. Religious freedom is a universal and essential right and has existed before any administrative procedure; therefore it does not depend on any administrative procedures or government approval. We actively practice and promote the right to freely practice religion through rituals like installing the divine portrait, funeral, and other religious activities without permission given by the government.

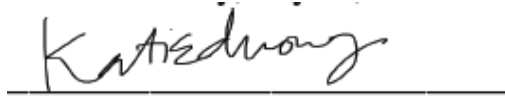
The Popular Council is a non-governmental organization and does not accept being dictated by the government on how to organize ourselves or manage our members.

- Do you act with knowledge and on behalf of the victim(s)? Yes

- Please state whether you want your identity to be kept confidential: No

Date you are submitting this form: Tuesday, August 4th, 2015

Signature of the author:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. A. S. Duong', is written above a horizontal line.

Appendix

The video clip was divided into many files show the scene in which independent Cao Dai followers at the Installing Portrait Rite were attacked, house was smashed, and furniture was lying about in disorder. The Divine Eye Portrait, altar bell, and wooden drum were taken away from the altar by the thugs.

Video clip #1: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynUMY_f8wyU

This video clip is 1 minute 19 seconds long. At 12:00p.m. on July 5, 2015, when the independent worshippers closed the house door to begin service, the Student Priest Thuong Tui Thanh of Tay Ninh Holy See Committee (of the government-sponsored Cao Dai Sect 1997) arrived. He signaled to the thugs to enter the home and destroy household items. Cups were broken, glasses were shattered, and furniture was tumbled. Just in one minute, the thugs had smashed the tables and chairs into pieces. They then entered the home to attacked Sub-dignitary Nguyen Xuan Mai.

Video clip #2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXwZd0_84w8

This 1 minute 42 second video clip shows the thugs started banging on the door and assaulted the worshippers. They threw tables and chairs to attack the worshippers. They searched around for anyone with a recording camera to confiscate the cameras and attacked anyone who dared to shout out that there were robbers.

Video clip #3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=exesBjyoyDI>

This 1 minute 48 second video clip shows the muffled cries of the religious followers towards those with the Cao Dai Sect 1997. The cries of the victims were dimmed in the pounding and shrieking noises of the thugs. The thugs assaulted anybody who recorded videos, and blatantly ordered to arrest an old man. Evil was unleashed in broad daylight by the government. With truncheons in hands, the police then ordered the thugs to take away the Divine Eye Portrait, wooden bell, and ritual script. This was an obvious evidence of the attack committed by the thugs. The worshippers were beaten, but the police did not arrest any of the perpetrators. It was therefore clear that the police had ordered the thugs to carry out all those activities.

Video clip #4: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=grf2sXyuuoo>

This 1 minute 45 second video clip shows the police continuing to order the thugs to beat the worshippers. The Student Priest Thuong Tui Thanh walked around at ease and spoke on the phone to report that the orders of the police had been carried out. The religious followers helplessly watched the scene ravaged by violence that the government had created. The end of the video clip is a dark screen, depicting the Vietnamese people living in a dark society controlled by the leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party.

Video clip #5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnLsVnxjhP0>

This video clip is 1 minute 22 seconds long. The beginning of the video clip is a dark screen, just like the ruined morality in the society of Vietnam today. From that darkness, strong faith was still alive, and the religious followers swept the floor to continue the worshipping service. However, they found out that the brass altar bowl bell and the wooden drum had been taken away by the thugs. Pieces of glass from the broken window scattered on the floor, just like the respect for the government by the victims had been broken.

PHOTO 1



PHOTO 2



PHOTO 3



PHOTO 4



PHOTO 5



PHOTO 6



PHOTO 7



PHOTO 8



PHOTO 9



PHOTO 10



PHOTO 11



PHOTO 12



PHOTO 13



PHOTO 14



PHOTO 15



PHOTO 17



PHOTO 18



PHOTO 19



PHOTO 31

Cộng hòa xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam.
Độc lập - Tự do - Hạnh phúc.
TỜ TƯỜNG TRÌNH
Kính gửi: UBND huyện Trảng Bàng
Giám đốc Công An huyện Trảng Bàng

Họ tên: Nguyễn tên' Kim Thuì sinh năm 1976.
Hiện ngụ tại ấp Suối An, xã An Hòa, huyện Trảng Bàng
Giống Tây Ninh.

Nay tôi làm tờ tường trình vì việc ô nhiễm môi trường
Tích UBND xã Nguyễn Văn Độ đã tuyên bố, được
còn đồ áp lực, đóng đũa, đánh phá, tàn phá, đập
bể của khu đóng đũa đang hành lễ thường lệ
giết mổ để dân Ngọc N. gần Thuận,
đánh đũa, đóng đũa, tàn phá, tàn phá, tàn phá, tàn phá.
bể gây tay còn lại: Lê Quang Liêm, 14 tuổi.
Còn đồ quay tóc đánh hội đồng vào mặt vào
đầu tôi, Lê Quang Liêm, 14 tuổi, bị đánh vào mặt
lập, đánh, tàn phá, tàn phá, tàn phá, tàn phá.
Cộng an gọi đến những không ai đến liên lạc
Còn đồ đánh hội đồng, tàn phá, tàn phá, tàn phá, tàn phá.
liên lạc. Do là dân ở vùng núi, dân ở vùng núi, dân ở vùng núi.
đang còn đồ, và có đến chỗ, đóng đũa, tàn phá, tàn phá, tàn phá.

1 - Nguyễn Xuân Mai	
2 - Trần Ngọc Diệp	
3 - Nguyễn Văn Hòa	
4 - Đặng Văn Chon	
5 - Võ Hồng Cẩm	
6 - Hoàng Thị Hoài	
7 - Huỳnh Thị Lương	
8 - Phạm Thị Thanh	
9 - Phạm Văn Phúc	
10 - Nguyễn Quốc Sơn	
11 - Nguyễn Văn Dũng	
12 - Lê Thị Khuê Nga	

PHOTO 32

13- Nguyễn Thị Hồng	Hồng
14- Nguyễn Kim Lân	Lân
15- Nguyễn Thị Bý	Bý
16- Lê Thị Ngọc Bôn	Bôn
17- Đoàn Văn T. Hải	Hải
18- Nguyễn Văn Thọ	T. Thọ
19- Nguyễn Văn Khôi	Khôi
20- Trương Hữu Đức	Đức
21- Lê Thị Dũng	Dũng
22- Nguyễn Thị Thanh Thảo	Thảo
23- Đỗ Thanh Thiên	Thiên
24- Trần Văn Hoàng	Hoàng
25- Trần Ngọc Châu	Châu
26- Trần Thị Vàng	Vàng
27- Trần Thị Trang	Trang
28- Nguyễn Thị Du	Du
29- Nguyễn Văn Phương	Phương
30- Trương Thanh Công	Công
31- Trương Văn Núi	Núi
32- Võ Thị Lan	Lan
33- Trần Thị Lai	Lai
34- Phan Thị Bưởi	Bưởi
35- Phan Thị Ngọc Diệp	Diệp
36- Nguyễn Thị Mạnh	Mạnh
37- Lê Văn Huệ	Huệ
38- Phan Văn Khoa	Khoa
39- Nguyễn Văn Lâm	Lâm
40- Nguyễn Quốc Bảo	Bảo
41- Phạm Thị Anh	Anh
42- Đặng Thị Huệ	Huệ
43- Đặng Văn Ngộ	Ngộ
<p> Eung 180 Đông Đạo Dã và về về Ky sau. 17/5/2015 Người đứng đơn Nguyễn + Kim Eloi </p>	

PHOTO 33



PHOTO 34



PHOTO 35



PHOTO 36

