

**Vietnamese Communist Cao Dai Sect Disrupted  
Independent Cao Dai Adherent's Burial in Early 2018**

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

**1/- General Information**

-Does the incident involve an individual or a group?

A group.

-If it involves a religious or belief group, please state the number of people involved and the denomination of the group

Several members of the independent Cao Dai Church were involved.

-Country(ies) in which the incident took place: Vietnam

-Nationality(ies) of the victim(s): All are Vietnamese citizens (Kinh ethnicity)

-Does domestic law require (re-) registration of religious associations and if yes, what is the current status of the group in question?

Vietnam requires all religious organizations to register. In Vietnam, the government banned the authentic Cao Dai Church (established in 1926, referred to as "1926 Cao Dai"). The state-sponsored Cao Dai denomination (established in 1997, referred to as "1997 Sect") is a tool of the Communist regime for demolishing the independent, authentic Church.

**2 / - Information on victims**

Please provide the information below for each victim.

- Family name: Nguyen. Name: Thi Anh. Religion: 1926 Cao Dai (independent Cao Dai).

- Residence: Ninh Phuoc Village, Ninh Thanh Ward, Tay Ninh City, Tay Ninh Province.

- Date of birth: 1951. Sex: Female. Wife of the deceased.

2.- The persons authorized to speak on his / her behalf, if any:

- Dr. Nguyen Dinh Thang, a US citizen. Phone: 703-598-6420. Chairman and Executive Director of Boat People SOS.

- Ms. Katie Duong, a US citizen, KNS External Relations Committee. Tel. 469-525-3356 (309 Christopher Cir Murphy, Texas 75094).

**(Other victims: please see Addendum 1.)**

**3 / - Information about the violation**

Please provide a detailed description of the circumstances of the incident in which the alleged violation occurred and the nature of the government action:

-Date and time (approximate if exact date is not known):

The first violation occurred from 09:00 am on 10 January 2018 to 9 am on 11 January 2018.

The second violation: from 10 am to 12 noon on 15 January 2018.

- Location of violation:

The first violation: Bau Nang Commune, Duong Minh Chau District, Tay Ninh Province.

The second violation: Ninh Phuoc Village, Ninh Thanh Ward, Tay Ninh City, Tay Ninh Province, Vietnam.

**- Please provide a detailed description of the circumstances of the incident in which the alleged violation occurred and the nature of the government action.**

The Vietnamese government established the 1997 Sect and uses it as a tool to violate the right to religious freedom of the 1926 Cao Dai Church.

**First offense:** The 1997 Sect and the Government prevented the coffin from being brought into the graveyard and subsequently prevented the burial. The family and their fellow adherents had to leave the coffin on the ground when it was time for them to go home. The event unfolded as follows.

Mr. Le Van Nha (78 years old) was a 1926 Caodaist who died. He had instructed his family to invite 1926 Cao Dai adherents to attend the funeral (photo 1 and 2).

The family and fellow adherents brought the coffin to Thai Binh Cuc Lac Cemetery for burial. They were stopped by the police of Bau Nang Commune and the 1997 Sect who used trucks to stop the "Bat Nha" hearse from entering the cemetery (Photos 3, 4, 5). The hearse driver had to find another way to get into the cemetery

VIDEO 01: Video addendum. Link:

<http://khoinhonsanh2014.blogspot.com/2018/01/2020-toi-ac-chi-phai-1997.html#more>.

When the family arrived with the coffin to the grave site, Mr. Thai Men Thanh of the 1997 Sect prevented them from digging the grave. Mr. Men demanded the family to write an apology letter (for relying on independent Cao Dai adherents for funeral rites) and also pledge to join the 1997 Sect before he would allow the burial to proceed. Yet, Cuc Lac Thai Binh Cemetery was started by the Independent Cao Dai Church in 1928.

#### **The family refused to apologize or join the 1997 Sect**

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tam, the 1997 Sect top manager and Mr. Le Phuong Hong, Bishop of the Thuong Thong Administrative Institute (also 1997 Sect), were at the Cuc Lac Thai Binh Cemetery. Ms Nguyen Thi Anh requested these two men to allow Mr. Nha's burial to go forward. They did not agree.

The family waited from 10 am until past noon but the 1997 Sect did not allow them to dig the grave. Consequently, the coffin had to be left on the ground. The participants performed the rites and recited burial prayers (without a dug grave) and then left, leaving the coffin on the ground (Photos 6, 7, 8).

VIDEO 02: See the video annex. Link:

<http://khoinhonsanh2014.blogspot.com/2018/01/2019-toi-ac-cua-chi-phai-1997.html#more>

At 2 p.m., 6 Ninh Thanh Commune officials, including Mr. Tai, Vice Chairman of the Commune and Mr. Hai Hon, Chief of Ninh Phuoc Village, came to try and persuade the family to "confess" their mistake in inviting 1926 Cao Dai adherents to perform funeral rites and to join the 1997 Sect. In return, they would allow the burial to proceed (photo 9). Ms. Anh (widow) did not go along.

At 3:30 p.m., the Vice Chairman of Tay Ninh City came and discussed with the family the alternative of burying Mr. Nha elsewhere or cremating him instead. Ms. Anh and her family disagreed. The City government representative left.

The coffin had been left on the ground for one night. At 8 am on 11 January 2018, Parish Committee Chairman Tran Ngoc Diep arrived at the cemetery and saw the unburied coffin (Photo 10).

At about 9 a.m. on 11 January, 2018, the 1997 Sect invited the family to be present at the burial at Cuc Lac Thai Binh Cemetery. All those who dug the grave and lowered the coffin into the grave were members of the 1997 Sect, the entity which had held up the burial during one day and one night.

#### **Second violation:**

The 15th of January 2018 was the time for the Cao Dai rite for the ninth day following elderly adherent Le Van Nha's death; this rite was to be performed at his house.

The 1997 Sect sent the Tu Phuoc rites group and the Ninh Phuoc Religious Area Administrative Committee to Ms. Anh's house to obstruct the planned ceremony (Photos 11, 12).

The secretary of the Ninh Phuoc Religious Area, the person who interfered with the burial on 10 January 2018, also came to Ms. Anh's house on 15 January 2018 (Photo 13).

VIDEO 03. Link:

<http://khoinhonsanh2014.blogspot.com/2018/01/2512-hom-nay-toi-ac-chi-phai-1997.html#more>

See videos addendum.

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

The 1926 Cao Dai Church (founded by the Supreme Being) and the 1997 Sect (created by the Vietnamese government) are two different religious organizations. The 1997 Sect occupied the Tay Ninh Holy See and Cuc Lac Thai Binh Cemetery of the 1926 Caodaists and forced them to join the 1997 Sect before allowing the burial to proceed.

Plots in the cemetery are made available to those who did not follow a religion and adherents of other religions. Preventing Mr. Nha's burial in this cemetery amounted to religious discrimination.

On the occasion of rite marking the first nine-day cycle after his death, the 1997 Sect again came and attempted to pressure the family to rely on its members for this rite.

Both of these violations are related to Official Document No. 42/90 dated 14 October 2015 in which the Tay Ninh Province representatives of the 1997 Sect ordered the religious areas' administrative committees to use all means to prevent the 1926 Caodaists from conducting religious activities. (Fig. 14, 15).

- Perpetrators information and their motives

#### **Government:**

Mr Tai is the Vice Chairman of Ninh Thanh Ward, Mr Hai Hon is the the Village Chief, and the 4 other government employees in Photos 10 and 12.

#### **1997 Sect:**

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tam, the 1997 Sect top manager, Mr. Le Phuong Hong, Bishop of the Thuong Thong Administrative Institute, and Pious Thai Men Thanh, Secretary of Ninh Phuoc Religious Area, should be held

responsible for hampering Mr. Le Van Nha's burial. Pious Ngoc Tu Thanh and 3 members of the Tu Phuoc Rites Group, and especially the religious area secretary because this person committed two violations. Their motive was to intimidate the 1926 Caodaists and then pressure them to join the 1997 Sect, and eventually achieve the government's objective of eradicating the 1926 Cao Dai Church.

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

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

The perpetrators are government employees and members of the government's Cao Dai Sect.

-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.

It is evident that the perpetrators are state agents (see their names and affiliations in a previous section)

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?

The victims could identify the perpetrators as state agents, i.e., Vietnamese government employees and members of the state-controlled Cao Dai Sect.

- If there were witnesses for this event, please provide their names, relationship with victims, and contact information, e.g., email address, telephone numbers. In case they choose to keep their identities secret, state if they are family members, passers-by, etc. Please supply any available evidence.

The victims are their own witnesses.

#### **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, etc.). No, because the Executive Branch controls the 3 branches of government, including the courts which are not independent of the Executive Branch.

Mr. Phạm Văn Phúc, an adherent of the independent Cao Dai Church, made videos and took photos of the violations and posted them on Facebook. Policemen from the police division of Dương Minh Châu District telephoned and ordered him to remove the 2nd section of his 2 video clips. He removed it, but other adherents had already recorded it for further distribution.

-Were there any other steps taken? None.

- Steps taken by the authorities: None.

-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.

The government does not and will not investigate because, as in numerous other cases, it is the mastermind and coordinator of the violations.

-In case of complaints by the victim or his family, how have those authorities or other competent bodies dealt with them? What has been the outcome of those proceedings? No justice from the government.

#### **5/- Identity of the person or institution submitting this form**

-Family name: Duong -First name: Katy

- Popular Council's External Relations Committee. Tel. 469-525-3356 (309 Christopher Cir Murphy, Texas 75094)

If the victims did not prepare this report, do you act with knowledge and on behalf of the victim(s)? Yes, the victims knew and collaborated on this reporting activity.

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

Report submitted on: March 25, 2018

Signature: Katy Duong

#### **Addendum 1. List of victims (continuation)**

| Family Name | Given Name | Address   | Birth Year | Gender |
|-------------|------------|---|------------|--------|
| Trần        | Ngọc Diệp  | Bình Hòa Village, Thái Bình Commune, Châu Thành District, Tây Ninh Province | 1955.      | M      |
| Trần        | Văn Hạp.   | Suối Mưỡn Village, Thái Bình Commune, Châu Thành District, Tây Ninh.        | 1978.      | M      |

|      |              |   |       |   |
|------|--------------|---|-------|---|
| Phạm | Văn Phúc.    | Lộc Ninh Commune, Dương Minh Châu District, Tây Ninh.                   | 1959. | M |
| Tạ   | Thị Thu Nga. | Ninh Phú Village, Bàu Nặng Commune, Dương Minh Châu District, Tây Ninh. | 1967. | F |
| Tạ   | Thị Thu Nga. | Ninh Phú Village, Bàu Nặng Commune, Dương Minh Châu District, Tây Ninh. | 1972. | F |
| Trần | Quốc Tiến.   | 258/80 Dương Bá Trạc St., Ward 2, District 8, Ho Chi Minh City.         | 1970. | M |

## Addendum 2. Photographs

### Violation No. 1: CỤC LẠC THÁI BÌNH Cemetery

Photos 1, 2: Mr. Le Van Nha, deceased.



Photo 3: Government's 1997 Cao Dai Sect blocked access to the cemetery



Photo 4. Bat Nha Hearse carrying coffin had to stop.



Photo 5. The police had trucks come to help with the blocking of the hearse's movement.



Photo 6. The mourning family members and fellow adherents



Photo 7. Widow Anh praying before returning home that afternoon and leaving her husband's coffin unburied because the government stopped the funeral.





Photo 8. Being prevented from digging the grave, the funeral party had to leave the coffin above ground that afternoon.



Photo 9. The secretary of the Ninh Phuoc Religious Area, a government-controlled adherent, participated in the blockade to prevent the burial from taking place.



Photo 10. This secretary and the other members of the Ninh Phuoc Religious Area Administrative Committee came to the widow's home on January 15, 2018 to discuss alternatives to burying her husband.



Photo 11. At 8 a.m. on January 11, 2018, the coffin was still above ground although the family had planned to bury it on the previous day.



### Second Violation(at Widow Anh's home).

Photo 12. The secretary of Ninh Phuoc Religious Area (marked with the number 2)



Photo 13. The Rites group from the Ninh Phuoc Religious Area at the widow's home on January 15, 2018



### Addendum 3, Video Clips.

-**VIDEO 01(4 min 20 s):** First violation. Trucks blocking the hearse's way. Link:

<http://khoinhonsanh2014.blogspot.com/2018/01/2020-toi-ac-chi-phai-1997.html#more>.

30th second and at 1 min 30 s: the video clip recording person talked about the trucks used to block the hearse and funeral party. The 2 policemen at 2 min 40s; 3 min 10 s and 3 min36s.

**VIDEO 02 (10 min 34 s):**

The family of the deceased decided to return home and leave the coffin above ground. Link:

<http://khoinhonsanh2014.blogspot.com/2018/01/2019-toi-ac-cua-chi-phai-1997.html#more>

Phút 2:10: Thuyền Bát Nhã và ban bộ đào huyệt ra về.

2 min 28 s: Family began to say the Burial Prayer (the grave could not be dug because of government interference).

5 min 40 s: Chú vắng sanh Prayer.

6 min 40 s: Family and friends began to leave after the prayers.

8 min: The secretary of Ninh Phuoc Religious Area's Administrative Committee showed up.

### VIDEO 03: 2 minutes 59 seconds.

The secretary of Ninh Phuoc Religious Area's Administrative Committee said that the 1926 Cao Dai Church was an illegal organization. Link.

<http://khoinhonsanh2014.blogspot.com/2018/01/2512-hom-nay-toi-ac-chi-phai-1997.html#more>

24 s: Widow Anh affirmed her belonging to the 1926 Cao Dai Church and said that if the government did not want the family to bury their dead, it was not the family's fault.

1 min 40 s: The secretary of Ninh Phuoc Religious Area's Administrative Committee said that the 1926 Cao Dai Church was an illegal organization.

### - Other Evidence:

The letter sent from the Communist-controlled Cao Dai Sect leadership requesting the administrative committees of the 75 Religious Areas in Tay Ninh Province to stop the original, authentic Cao Dai Church adherents from engaging in religious activities. A government official penned a note to concur on the second page.

Figure 14. Letter from 1997 Sect to Religious Areas Administrative Committees

**CHI PHÁI 1997 RA CV 42/90 & BÚT PHÉ CỦA CHÍNH QUYỀN: KHÔNG-CHO ĐẠO CAO ĐÀI 1926 HÀNH ĐẠO**

BAN ĐẠI DIỆN HỘI THÁNH

TỈNH TÂY NINH

Số 42/90. BDD. VT

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### ĐẠI ĐẠO TAM KỲ PHỔ ĐỘ

( Cửu Thập Niên )

TÒA THÁNH TÂY NINH

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PHÒNG NỘI VỤ HÒA THÁNH  
Số: 294  
Ngày: 04/11/2015  
Chuyên: \_\_\_\_\_

Kính gửi: Ban Cai Quản 75 Họ Đạo trong Tỉnh Tây Ninh.

Ban Đại diện Hội Thánh Tỉnh Tây Ninh nhận nhiều phản ánh của Tín Đồ và các Ban Cai Quản Họ Đạo. Thời gian qua trong địa bàn Tỉnh Tây Ninh có nhóm người tự xưng "Bảo Thủ Chơn Truyền" đến các Họ Đạo tổ chức hành Lễ Tang, An Vi, Thương Tượng, Cầu Kinh Giải Bịnh cho các gia đình Tín Đồ kém hiểu biết về luật Đạo, không thông hiểu nguyên tắc, thủ tục, hành chánh, Nghi Lễ đạo mà Hội Thánh qui định.

Thực hiện sự chỉ đạo của Hội Thánh Cao Đài Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh và căn cứ tinh thần phiên họp ngày 26 tháng 8 năm Ất Mùi ( DL; 08-10-2015 ) của Ban Đại Diện Hội Thánh và 75 Ban Cai Quản Họ Đạo đồng thống nhất đưa ra các biện pháp ngăn chặn, giải tán các việc làm sai trái của nhóm người tự xưng " Bảo Thủ Chơn Truyền " như Sau:

1/- Các Ban Cai Quản, Chức Sắc, Chức Việc, Tín Đồ phát hiện nhóm người giả danh Người Đạo, Cao Đài Tòa Thánh Tây Ninh đến địa bàn tổ chức hoạt động Tôn giáo trái pháp luật, thì Ban Cai Quản Họ Đạo, Chức Việc đến giải thích cặn kẽ, tạo điều kiện giúp đỡ theo luật đạo, nếu không chấp hành cần báo ngay cho Chính Quyền địa phương ( Báo cáo bằng Văn Bản ) để được hỗ trợ về tính pháp lý và tư cách pháp nhân.

2/- Vận động, tổ chức lực lượng Chức Việc, Nhân Viên các Ban, Bộ của Đạo đến giải tán nhóm người nói trên bằng nhiều hình thức ngăn chặn, cương quyết không cho họ thực hiện

3/- Thông báo cho các Ban Cai Quản lân cận hỗ trợ về lực lượng, nhân Sự ủng hộ về tinh thần thể hiện mối đoàn kết trong đạo, theo sự hướng dẫn của Ban Đại Diện Hội Thánh Tỉnh Tây Ninh giúp nhau hoàn thành nhiệm vụ Hội Thánh giao và thực thi pháp Luật Đạo đã qui định cho Chức Sắc, Chức Việc trong phạm vi trách nhiệm.




Figure 15.


**CHI PHẢI 1997 RA CV 42/90 & BỨT PHÉ CỦA CHÍNH QUYỀN: KHÔNG CHO ĐẠO CAO ĐÀI 1926 HÀNH ĐẠO**

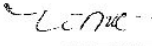
4/- Cương quyết không để cho nhóm người tự xưng " Báo Thủ Chơn Tru " tổ chức các hoạt động Tôn giáo trái với Pháp Chánh Truyền và luật đạo làm ảnh hưởng sự uy nghiêm của Tôn Giáo Cao Đài.


Rất mong các Ban Cai Quản Họ Đạo, Chức Sắc, Chức Việc, và đồng Đạo đoàn kết, cùng nhau thực hiện tốt lời dạy của Hội Thánh và giữ gìn trật tự, kỷ cương, đem lại thương yêu, hòa ái, vẻ vang nền đạo cho thế hệ hiện tại và tương lai.

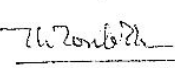
Nay kính  
Tây Ninh ngày 02 tháng 9 năm Ất Mùi  
( DL: 14-10-2015)

**PHÓ BAN ĐTNP**  


**BAN ĐẠI DIỆN HỘI THÁNH**  
**TRUNG ƯƠNG BAN**  
**ĐẠI DIỆN**  
**TỈNH**  
**TÂY NINH**  


**Giáo Sư HƯƠNG LAN**  
**PHÓ BAN CỤM 1**  


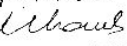
**PHÓ BAN CỤM 2**  


**Giáo Sư THÁI THỌ THANH**  
**PHÓ BAN CỤM 3**  


**Giáo Hữu THƯỢNG HỮU THANH** **Giáo Hữu NGỌC HÓA THANH** **Giáo Hữu THÁI TÙNG THANH**

**NƠI NHẬN**  
- Hội Thánh "Kính Tường"  
- Ban Tôn Giáo, UBMTTC, Công An Tỉnh Tây Ninh  
- Phòng Nội Vụ, UBMTTC các Huyện, Thành Phố  
"Vui lòng giúp đỡ"  
- 75 họ Đạo "để thực hiện"  
- Lưu VP

*Hạt qui các xã, thị trấn phối hợp thực hiện  
theo nội dung Công văn này.*

Hòa Thành, ngày 10/10/2015  


**Nguyễn Văn Khanh Em**