

Recommendations for UPR - Vietnam (May 7, 2024) – by BPSOS

- (1) Issue ID cards and household registration to some 100,000 undocumented Hmong: For the past two decades, Hmong Christians resisting forced renunciation of faith were evicted from their ancestral villages, with their personal documents taken away. Many migrated to Vietnam's Central Highlands where they are treated practically as stateless persons.
- (2) End forced conversion of Montagnard Christian house church members: Montagnard Christians refusing to join a state-controlled Evangelical church are threatened, harassed, tortured, imprisoned or killed. In the first few months of 2024, two Montagnard house church leaders have been sentenced to 4.5 years and 13 years in prison respectively. A third one was found dead after a purported meeting with public security officers near his home.
- (3) Stop the crackdown on Khmer Krom Buddhists for resisting government control: Recently five Khmer Krom Buddhist monks were defrocked and arrested after they publicly declared independence from the state-created and controlled Vietnamese Buddhist Sangha (VBS). Also arrested were three lay Buddhists supporting them. Since 1981 Khmer Krom followers of Theravada Buddhism have been forced to join VBS, which is primarily Vietnamese and follows Mahayana Buddhism.
- (4) Stop transnational repression against defenders of religious freedom: Vietnam's Ministry of Public Security (MPS) recently blacklisted Montagnard and Hmong Christians who reported rights violations, including some 30 young FoRB champions seeking refugee protection in Thailand. In January, a young Montagnard FoRB leader was sentenced, in absentia, to ten years in prison; MPS designated his group of young champions a terrorist organization.
- (5) Return Cao Dai temples to Cao Dai followers for their religion's centennial: Millions of Cao Dai followers in Vietnam seek the return of some 300 Cao Dai temples, including the central temple known as their "Tay Ninh Holy See", in time to celebrate their religion's centennial in late 2025. A religious sect created by the Vietnamese government in 1997 and ruled a criminal organization by a Texas court in 2023 currently occupies these temples.
- (6) Lift travel bans against religious leaders and religious freedom advocates: Catholic priests, Cao Dai lay leaders, and Buddhist monks who spoke up for religious freedom are placed under travel ban, often after attending forums such as the Southeast Asia FoRB Conference, the International Religious Freedom Summit, or the Ministerial on International Religious Freedom.
- (7) Free religious prisoners of conscience: Vietnam should release some 80 religious prisoners of conscience and stop imprisoning religious believers for such crimes as "abusing democratic freedoms to injure the interest of the state" or "destroying the great unity of the entire nation."