

**Vietnam: police and local officials in Tây Ninh Province and Bến Cầu District threatened authentic Cao Dai adherents with reprisal for their religious activities and reports to the UN**

*The victims consent to have their names disclosed in a letter that may be sent as appropriate to the Vietnamese Government, or others, and have his name appear in a public report presented to the Human Rights Council and inserted in a public database.*

To: Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief  
c/o Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
United Nations at Geneva

**(1) General information**

Summary: After the Communist government seized the Holy See and many temples of the Cao Dai Church in Vietnam, several authentic Cao Dai adherents chose to rely on fellow authentic adherents and clerics for religious rites at their homes instead of relying on the government-controlled Cao Dai sect (the 1997 Sect). The Bến Cầu District government and the Long Thuận Commune government, supported by the Police Department of Tây Ninh Province, attempted to use their power to stop this in violation of religious freedom.

- *Did the incidents involve an individual or a group?* Five adherents of the authentic Cao Dai Church.

- *Location of incident:* Bến Cầu District, Tây Ninh Province, Vietnam

- *Nationality and ethnic group of victim:* Vietnamese citizenship, Kinh (dominant ethnic group)

- *Does national policy require registration for religious activities? If yes, what is the current status of the group?* Yes, required.<sup>1</sup> The Communist government established a Cao Dai denomination in 1997 (with fundamental doctrinal differences from the authentic Cao Dai religion that was established in 1926, in other words, not the same religion) and turned over the original Cao Dai Church's assets to the 1997 sect. Further, the 1997 sect has been used to infiltrate and oppress the authentic Cao Dai Church.

**(2) Identity of the persons concerned**

In Addendum 1

**(3) Information on the alleged violation(s)**

- *Location of incidents:* Long Thuận Commune, Bến Cầu District.

- *Date and time (approximate if not known exactly):*

- **10 January 2022:** Home of Hồ Quốc Khánh, authentic Cao Dai, Bến Cầu District  
Several adherents of the 1997 Cao Dai Sect entered when a group of authentic Cao Dai adherents were performing an important Cao Dai ritual, Installation of the Divine Eye Banner at the altar of the homeowners (wife's name: Trần Thị Đệ). The sect members used force to stop the ritual because the homeowner did not rely on sect members to conduct the ritual. One of the participating authentic Cao Dai adherents, Mr. Trần Văn Đực,

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<sup>1</sup>The Law on Belief and Religion uses the devious approach of implicitly requiring registration because this law denies the possibility of acquiring legal personality unless an organization is registered, but does not state that registration is a prerequisite for conducting religious activities.

submitted a complaint to the People's Committee of Bến Cầu District, Tây Ninh Province, but the government failed to reply.

- **22 April 2022:** Trần Văn Đực, Long An Hamlet, Long Thuận Commune, Bến Cầu District

Mr. Nguyễn Văn Tuấn, Vice Chair, Long Thuận Commune government, had an invitation delivered to Trần Văn Đực requesting him to come and meet at 8:00 AM, 22 April 2022 at the offices of the People's Committee of Long Thuận Commune on local "security" issues.

At the meeting, Mr. Huy, the Internet Security team leader of the Police Department of Tây Ninh Province wanted to know what Mr. Đực had said to Political Officer Gaetan Damberg-Ott from the Saigon US Consulate at their 28 February 2022 meeting.

Mr. Đực replied: "I told him about the government using the 1997 Sect to suppress the religious freedom of authentic Cao Dai adherents, disregarding Vietnam's commitment to the ICCPR. I did not need to report on specific cases because other authentic adherents had already submitted reports to the UN and Western governments."

Police: the government forbids all authentic adherents from getting together for religious practice because this destabilizes the country's economy.

Mr. Đực: I don't know if the economy is affected or not. I only knew that I had to submit a complaint to the People's Committee of Bến Cầu District in Tây Ninh Province.

Police: If you don't comply with our orders, your family's livelihood would be impacted.

#### **Perpetrator List**

1. Mr. Huy, team leader, Internet Security Team, Police Department of Tây Ninh Province
2. Mr. Nguyễn Văn Tuấn, Vice Chair, government (people's committee) of Long Thuận Commune (signed "invitations" - actually orders to report to the government offices for interrogation)
3. Mr. Phan Quốc Hưng, Security Team leader, Police of Bến Cầu District
4. Mr. Lê Hoàng Kiểm, Deputy chief, Police of Long Thuận Commune
5. Mr. Lê Phát Đạt, Police of Bến Cầu District

#### **(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.). A complaint about the 10 January 2022 harassment has been submitted to the People's Committee of Long Thuận Commune in Tây Ninh Province.

- 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 and which other measures have been taken: None.

- 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? The government and its Cao Dai sect would not do anything to help.

#### **(5) Identity of the person or institution submitting this form:**

- Boat People SOS, Email: [info@bpsos.org](mailto:info@bpsos.org) using information provided by M. Nguyen of the authentic Cao Dai Church.

- *Individual or organization authorized to represent:* BPSOS, a nonprofit organization based in Virginia, USA.

*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:* 4 May 2022.

### **Addendum 1 Identity of the persons concerned**

1. Trần Văn Đực DoB: 1959 Male

Long An Hamlet, Long Thuận Commune, Bến Cầu District, Tây Ninh Province

2. Nguyễn Thành Công DoB: 1984 Male

Long Hưng Hamlet, Long Thuận Commune, Bến Cầu District, Tây Ninh Province

3. Phan Thị Hây DoB: 1953 Female

Long Hưng Hamlet, Long Thuận Commune, Bến Cầu District, Tây Ninh Province

4. Võ Thị Liêm DoB: 1965 Female

Long Hưng Hamlet, Long Thuận Commune, Bến Cầu District, Tây Ninh Province

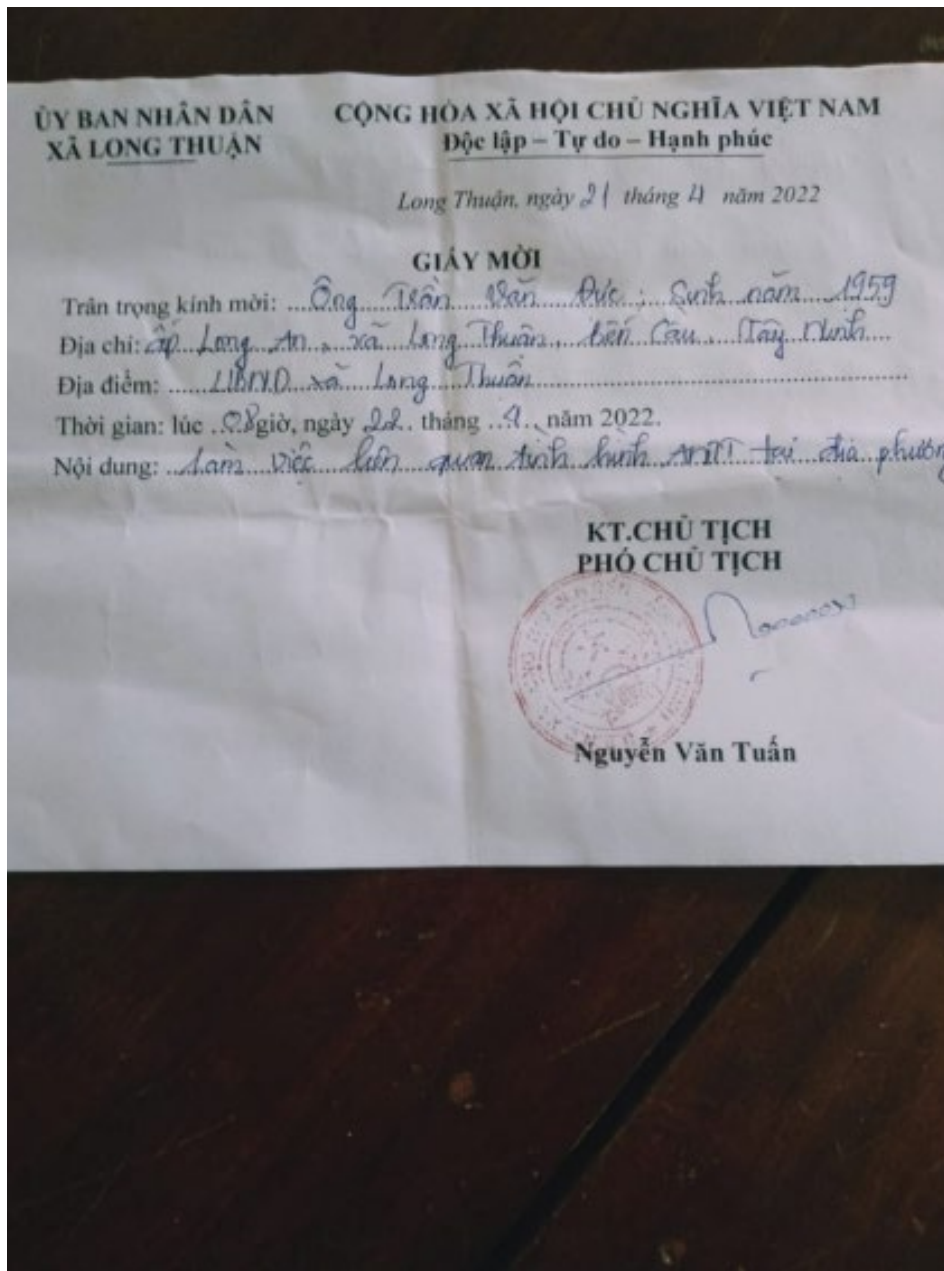
5. Hồ Quốc Khánh Male

Bến Cầu District, Tây Ninh Province

### **Addendum 2. Evidence**



One of the 1997 sect members disrupting the ritual of authentic Cao Dai adherents (in white religious garments) on 10 January 2022



1. Interrogation request for Mr. Trần Văn Đức to meet with the People's Committee of Long Thuận Commune.

ỦY BAN NHÂN DÂN  
XÃ LONG THUẬN

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM  
Độc lập – Tự do – Hạnh phúc

Long Thuận, ngày 24 tháng 11 năm 2022

**GIẤY MỜI**

Trân trọng kính mời: Ông Nguyễn Thành Công, Sinh năm: 1984

Địa chỉ: ấp Long Thuận, xã Long Thuận, huyện Vĩnh Cửu, tỉnh Tây Ninh

Địa điểm: UBND xã Long Thuận

Thời gian: lúc 15 giờ, ngày 25 tháng 11 năm 2022.

Nội dung: Làm việc liên quan thủ tục PAST tại địa phương

KT. CHỦ TỊCH  
PHÓ CHỦ TỊCH



Nguyễn Văn Tuấn

2. Interrogation request for Mr. Nguyễn Thành Công to meet with the People's Committee of Long Thuận Commune.

BAN NHÂN DÂN  
LONG THUẬN

CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM  
Độc lập – Tự do – Hạnh phúc

Long Thuận, ngày 24 tháng 4 năm 2022

**GIẤY MỜI**

rân trọng kính mời: Bà.....Phan.....Thị.....Hây..... Sinh năm: 1952.....

Địa chỉ: Xã Long Hòa, Xã Long Thuận, Huyện: Kiên Giang, Tỉnh Kiên Giang

Địa điểm: UBND Xã Long Thuận.....

Thời gian: lúc 14 giờ, ngày 25. tháng 4. năm 2022.

Nội dung: Làm việc Mùa gặt Lễ hội hát AN.T.T tại địa phương

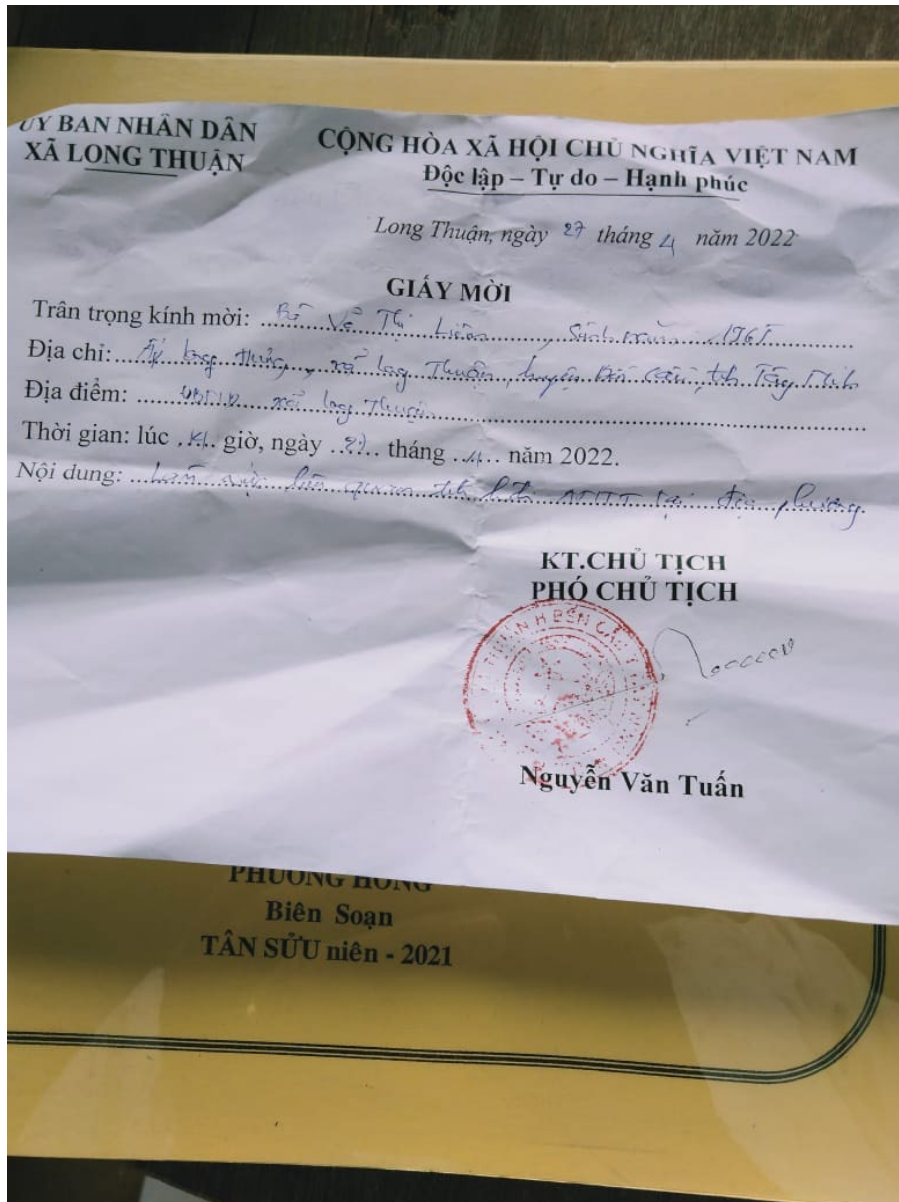
**KT.CHỦ TỊCH  
PHÓ CHỦ TỊCH**



**Nguyễn Văn Tuấn**

3. Interrogation request for Ms. Phan Thị Hây to meet with the People's Committee of Long Thuận Commune.





4. Interrogation request for Ms. Võ Thị Liêm to meet with the People's Committee of Long Thuận Commune.

Video: <https://www.facebook.com/100046639024130/posts/4836>