

Vietnam: Increasing pressure in September 2023 to make Cao Dai followers join the government's Cao Dai Sect. A victim was interrogated. Four others did not let themselves be interrogated.

To: Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief
United Nations at Geneva

(1) General Information

Summary

The local government and police in Bến Cầu District increase pressure on local Caodaists in Tây Ninh Province. A victim was told that she and family members would be “negatively impacted” if they practiced their religion without joining the Cao Dai sect established by the government in 1997 (much later than the authentic Cao Dai Church established in 1926).

- *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 national, Kinh (dominant ethnic group)

- *Does national policy require registration for religious activities? If yes, what is the current status of the group?* Yes, required. 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.

(2) Identity of the persons concerned

See Addendum 1

(3) Information on the alleged violation(s)

● **27 September 2023** - Ms. Trần Thị Điệp:

At 8 am she came to the government center of Long Thuận Commune per the “invitation” she received from the government. Nguyễn Văn Tuấn, vice chair, government of Long Thuận Commune in Bến Cầu District, Tây Ninh Province, led the interrogation team.

- Government: You must practice your religion at our local Cao Dai Temple or else you will be interrogated and even arrested.

- Reply: I won't go to the temple controlled by the government's Cao Dai sect. I have committed no crime..

- Government: You say you follow the Cao Dai Church established in 1926, but it is not registered. You must stop your religious practice now because you are breaking the law. This can cause negative impacts on you and your children.

- Reply: This order should be in writing. If the government accepts applications for registering our Cao Dai Church, I will apply.

The government wanted her to sign the minutes of the meeting which they prepared. She refused to sign it.

Perpetrator list (at the interrogation session with victim Ms. Trần Thị Điệp)

1. Nguyễn Văn Tuấn - Vice chair, Long Thuận Commune government (signed “invitations” to interrogation sessions).

2. Nguyễn Văn Phong - Fatherland Front Committee of Long Thuận Commune

3. Nguyễn Văn An - chief, Long Phi Hamlet
4. Nguyễn Văn Tư - secretary, Long Thuận Commune government
5. An unidentified officer - Police of Long Thuận Commune .

(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.). Yes (in Addendum).
- 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 using information provided by the authentic Cao Dai Church (Ms. Nguyễn Xuân Mai).
- 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: 9 October 2023

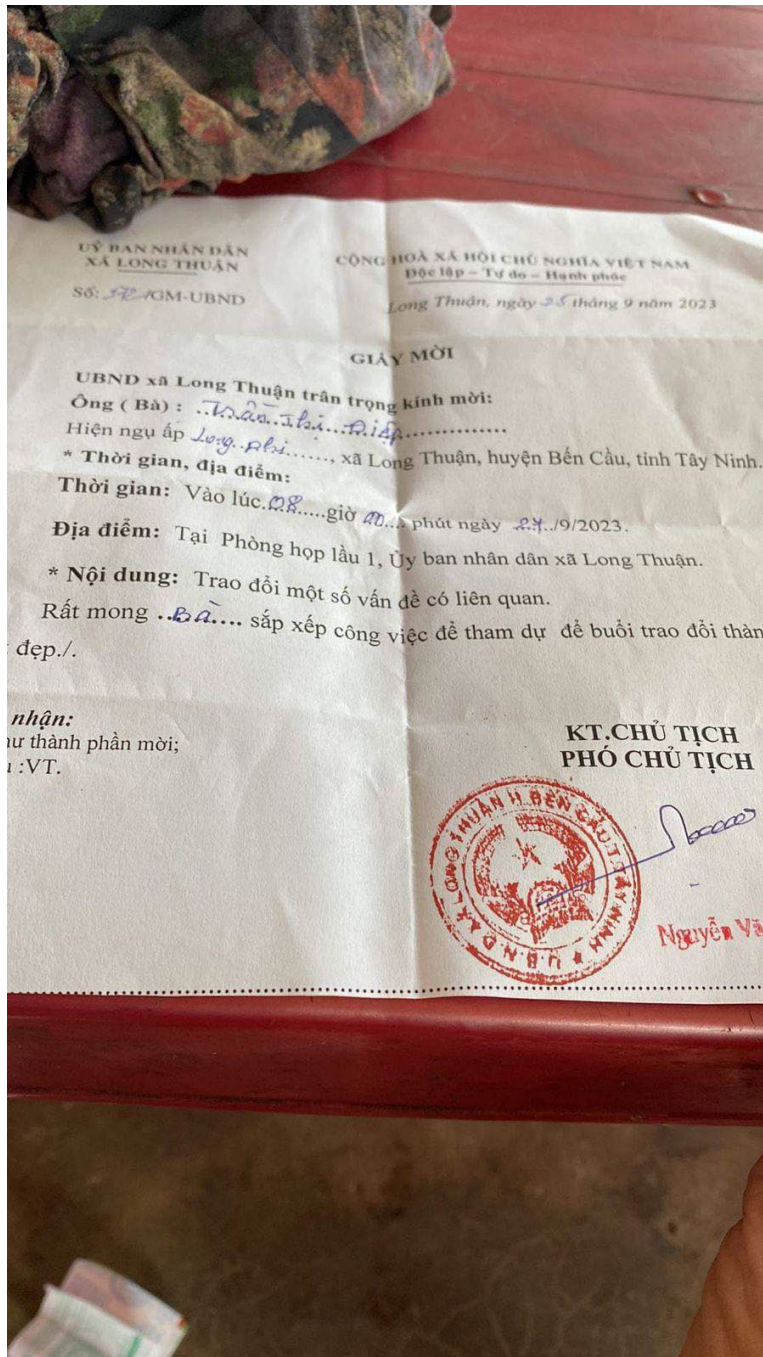
Addendum 1. Identity of the Persons Concerned

The victims are Vietnamese citizens, followers of the Cao Dai Church established in 1926, and authorize Boat People SOS to represent them.

1. Trần Thị Điệp Gender: female DoB: 1976
2. Nguyễn Thành Lợi Gender: male Vice chair, parish executive committee
3. Thái Minh Châu Gender: male
4. Nguyễn Hà Đông Gender: male parish executive committee member
5. Thái Minh Tâm Gender: male parish executive committee member

Address: Long Phi Hamlet, Long Thuận Commune, Bến Cầu District, Tây Ninh Province

Addendum 2. Evidence



“Invitation” for Ms. Trần Thị Điệp to meet with government of Long Thuan Commune on 27/09/2023, signed the vice chair of the commune government.

ỦY BAN NHÂN DÂN
XÃ LONG THUẬN

Số: 175/GM-UBND

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

Long Thuận, ngày 25 tháng 9 năm 2023

GIẤY MỜI

UBND xã Long Thuận trân trọng kính mời:

Ông (Bà) : ..*Thái Minh Châu*.....

Hiện ngụ ở *Long Phú*..... xã Long Thuận, huyện Bến Cầu, tỉnh Tây Ninh.

* Thời gian, địa điểm:

Thời gian: Vào lúc *15* giờ *00* phút ngày *27*/9/2023.

Địa điểm: Tại Phòng họp lầu 1, Ủy ban nhân dân xã Long Thuận.

* Nội dung: Trao đổi một số vấn đề có liên quan.

Rất mong *ông*..... sắp xếp công việc để tham dự để buổi trao đổi thành công tốt đẹp./.

Nơi nhận:

- Như thành phần mời;
- Lưu :VT.

KT. CHỦ TỊCH
PHÓ CHỦ TỊCH



Nguyễn Văn Tuấn

“Invitation” for Mr. Thái Minh Châu, signed by the vice chair of the commune government.

ỦY BAN NHÂN DÂN
XÃ LONG THUẬN

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

Long Thuận, ngày 27 tháng 9 năm 2023

GIẤY MỜI

UBND xã Long Thuận trân trọng kính mời:

Ông : Nguyễn Thành Lợi

Hiện ngụ ấp Long Phi, xã Long Thuận, huyện Bến Cầu, tỉnh Tây Ninh.

*** Thời gian, địa điểm:**

Thời gian: Vào lúc 09 giờ 00 phút ngày 29/9/2023.

Địa điểm: Tại Phòng họp lầu 1, Ủy ban nhân dân xã Long Thuận.

*** Nội dung:** Trao đổi một số vấn đề có liên quan.

Rất mong ông sắp xếp công việc để tham dự để buổi trao đổi thành công tốt đẹp./.

Nơi nhận:

- Như thành, phần mời;
- Lưu :VT.

KT.CHỦ TỊCH
PHÓ CHỦ TỊCH



Nguyễn Văn Tuấn

“Invitation” for Mr. Nguyễn Thành Lợi, signed by the vice chair of the commune government.