

## **United Caodai Tayninh Holy See Overseas**

### **Submission to the Universal Period Review of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam**

1. We, the United Caodai Tayninh Holy See Overseas, (UCTHSO), primarily former residents of Tay Ninh who are living in the United States consisting of:
  - a. Refugees who escaped Vietnam in the aftermath of the end of the Vietnam War;
  - b. Soldiers of the former Republic of Viet Nam who came to live in the U.S. through the H.O. program;
  - c. Caodai disciples who are not members of the UCTHSO but who are faithful to the TRUE Sacerdotal Council pre-1975 of Caodai Tayninh Holy See.
2. Of all the recommendations in the 2009 UPR of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), our submission focuses on the following: Religious Freedom. Not only the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) violated its own law on belief and religion but it's in direct violation of international laws and international agreements.

### **Human Rights Violation**

3. Third Amnesty of God or Dai-Dao Tam-Ky Pho-Do (abbreviated Caodai) is a relatively new religion founded in Southern Vietnam in 1926 by God through Spiritualist séances for human salvation. The Caodai had developed rapidly with more than 5 million disciples until the Northern Vietnamese Communists completely overtook the South by force at the end of April 1975. During that time, millions of people had to leave their beloved country for refuge, which led to some 300,000 deaths on seas or in deep forests on the way to freedom.
4. The Caodai Holy See is located in Vietnam and the religion has undergone the most relentless persecution. In 1945, even long before the fall of Saigon, the Communists killed 2,791 Caodai followers (Caodaists) in the province of Quang Ngai. When the Communists gained power in all parts of Vietnam, many Caodaists notably members of traditionally anti-Communist Tay Ninh were mistreated by the new authorities. The Communist government wrongly viewed many priests as CIA spies.
5. In 1978 the Communist government issued a so-called 'Caodai Judgment,' which accused Caodai of treason, being anti-revolutionary and being a tool of France, Imperial Japan and America. In 1979 they disbanded the Caodai Sacerdotal Council, aiming for eradication of its original foundation pre-1975, and established a new Caodai organization: the Governance Council under Communist control and administration. They also distorted religious doctrine and modified the Religious Charter and New Code of Caodaism.

6. Tran Quang Vinh, Ex-Archbishop, was arrested under false accusation and died in prison. Many dignitaries were also detained and sent to re-education camps to be brainwashed.
7. Caodaists were accused of treason and anti-revolutionary. Many high-ranking dignitaries, such as Acting Pope Le Van Trung (chief of the executive body) and Law Protector Hộ Pháp Pham Cong Tac (chief of the legislative body) were also charged with the above crimes. The accusation was groundless and they were not given rights to a fair trial. Furthermore, many of the accused were unable to defend themselves; hence the result in murderous deaths or being deceased in confinement.
8. The Communist regime also made up the “Caodai Judgment” on Sept. 20, 1978 to accuse Caodaism as a political organization under a form of religion, a tool of France, Japan and the United States. The Vietnamese Communist government has controlled and administered the Sacerdotal Council so as to excommunicate Caodai disciples who are faithful to the TRUE Sacerdotal Council pre-1975. Subdignitaries Hua Phi, Le Minh Chau, Le Ngoc Diep, and so on because they do not follow religious precepts imposed by the government-controlled Sacerdotal Council.
9. On March 1, 1979, the Communist regime forced high-ranking dignitaries including Religious Conservator Rev. Ho Tan Khoa to sign the Religious Edict Number 1 (Đạo Lệnh 01), which disbanded the Caodaist Sacerdotal Council and established the “Governance Council”, an organ totally unknown in Caodaism Religious Charter, to oversee the Tay Ninh Holy See. According to the Edict, all Caodai organizations from central to local had to be dissolved. Forty two of Cao Dai Church’s 46 religious properties were confiscated during that time period. The Communist regime declared spiritist séances as a superstition and officially prohibited the practice. Consequently, Caodai dignitaries appointed through Divine Power had to cease. By prohibiting spiritist séances, they undoubtedly intended to destroy Caodaism because Caodaism originally came from Spiritism.
10. By early 1983, the highest-ranking dignitary of the Tay Ninh Holy See, Rev. Ho Tan Khoa (Religious Conservator), was accused of a political plot to overthrow the Communist regime. The regime’s objective was to undermine his leadership; hence, he was put under house arrest in the Giáo Tông Đường until his death. In 1984 his son, Mr. Ho Thai Bạch, was also accused of treason and was executed.
11. On June 16, 1999 the Governmental Religious Committee issued Circular 02/TT-CP to regulate all activities of the Caodai Sacerdotal Council. The Circular stated that all schools for training dignitaries must receive permission from the Prime Minister and all positions of the dignitaries from the lowest (Student Priest) to the highest (the Pope and Law Protector).
12. On Feb 1, 2011 over 100 Caodai adepts from many parts of Vietnam came to the Tayninh Holy See for the ceremony of God and prayed peacefully outside the Great Temple for the pre-1975 Caodai Sacerdotal Council soon to restore its sovereignty. The Governance

Council's security, with the support of the authorities, thugs and police wearing civilian clothing, relentlessly beat many of these followers. Sub-dignitary Hua Phi was heavily injured and was taken to the hospital in Tayninh and then transported to Saigon. He is the chief of the Representative Committee of the Popular Bloc (Ban Dai Dien Khoi Nhon Sanh), which is the independent religious organization of Caodai, not approved by the authorities. Its leaders such as Sub-dignitaries Hua Phi, Le Kim Lan, Nguyen Thi Bach Phung and its members are subject to harassment and persecution.

13. An Ninh Tay Temple, located in An Ninh Tay village, Duc Hoa district, Long An Province has been suppressed many times because they followed religious precepts of the true Sacerdotal Council pre-1975. On March 16 and Oct. 19 of 2011 the government-controlled Sacerdotal Council came and tried to take over the Temple. On March 16, 2013 Police came to take picture and film disciples who entered into the Temple.
14. On Sept. 16, 2012 the authorities and police of My Phong village, Phu My district and Binh Dinh province brought thugs accompanying the Governance Council's group to attack Phu My Temple and caused injuries to six faithful disciples. Sub-dignitary Nguyen Cong Tru was heavily injured. Temples, dignitaries and followers of Caodai religion who disobeyed the Governance Council and practice the Religious Charter and the New Code of the Sacerdotal Council founded in 1926 by God were punished and will be certainly subjected to future chastisements.
15. On Oct. 18, 2012, the Governance Council of the Caodai Tay Ninh was ordered by the Communist authorities to organize the so-called "Popular Council Congress," which is contrary to the Caodaist Charter. The aim of this congress is to train dignitaries and followers to become cadres to co-opt the Caodaist faithful and promote Communist propaganda. According to the Representative Committee of the Popular Block, more than 5,000 followers who came to participate in the congress received money from local authorities. Many high-ranking officials such as Mr. Pham Dung, vice interior minister, also came to congratulate and gave 50,000,000 Vietnamese money to the Governance Council, while World Report 2012 – Human Rights Watch on Vietnam said, "Local police continue to prohibit unsanctioned Buddhist Hoa Hao groups from commemorating the anniversary of the death of Hoa Hao Founder Huynh Phu So."
16. On May 29, 2013 the dignitaries of five religions, including the genuine representatives of Caodaism, held a meeting at the office of the Catholic Redemptorist Order in Saigon to discuss interfaith collaboration. The police obstructed this event by:
  1. sending a plain-clothed police officer into the church to get news and cause public disorder;
  2. sending police force to surround the Lien Tri Pagoda to prevent Rev. Thich Khong Tanh from coming to the meeting;

3. coming to Pastor Nguyen Hoang Hoa's house and forced his wife to call him to return home.
17. The Vietnamese Communist Party presently sends its agents to infiltrate the Caodai groups overseas, especially in the United States of America. This tactic employed by agents of the Communist regime operating overseas has caused internal division within Caodai organizations overseas.
18. Today the Caodai religion is being co-opted because the Vietnamese Communist Party controls all Caodaist activities from central to local levels. The Charter of 1997, 2007 and 2012 concocted by the Communist regime consolidates its grip on the Caodai religion. Step by step the authority has changed Caodaism into an instrument for Communist propaganda. The Governance Council, created by the government, recently had its name changed to Sacerdotal Council of Caodai Tayninh Holy See. This change simulates the restoration of the sovereignty for the original Sacerdotal Council pre-1975 and the existence of religious freedom in Vietnam. However, this is just a puppet Sacerdotal Council set up by the Vietnamese Communist Party in which the government has selected its dignitaries. The communist party has used these dignitaries as a screen to co-opt followers and the international community. And it has also expanded its activities abroad by sending its agents to infiltrate the overseas Caodai communities.

### **Recommendations**

19. We, the United Caodai Tayninh Holy See Overseas, are concerned about Caodai, the religion of God, as well as other religions, which have endured countless sufferings under the Vietnamese communist regime. We respectfully propose the government of the UN Human Rights Council:
  1. to intervene with the Vietnamese government to return the Tayninh Holy See, which the communist party has to the original self-administered Sacerdotal Council;
  2. to ensure that the Communist government truly respect freedom of religion and faith and is not allowed to install party members to control religions in Vietnam, including Caodai.
  3. to ensure that the Fatherland Front and government agencies no longer harass, use secret police, and thugs to assault and expel genuine dignitaries, sub-dignitaries and followers for appropriating temples, Mother-God temples, and religious properties.
  4. to ensure that Caodaist followers be free to produce religious books and to promote materials and documents of the Sacerdotal Council pre-1975.
  5. to ensure that the Communist government orders all of its infiltrating agents leave the Tay Ninh Holy See.

Thank you for your attention and God bless America.

Respectfully yours,

Mountain View Temple, Dallas, TX , U.S.A.

On behalf of The United Caodai Tayninh Holy See Overseas

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