



# SEAFORB

## SEAFORB Webinar 4:

# VIETNAM: How to engage the international community in combatting intolerance and coping with repression

**Date:** November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Time:** 15.00-16.15 GMT/22.00-23.15 Bangkok (GMT +7). Find your time zone [HERE](#)

**Registration:** <http://www.facebook.com/VNFoRB>

The Government of Vietnam uses an array of instruments to control religions and suppress non-conforming religious communities. These instruments include restrictive laws and regulations, harassment and violence against religious and lay leaders, confiscation of religious facilities, dismantling a religion's administrative structure and producing a government-controlled substitute, use of hate speech directed at religious communities, denial of access to judicial procedures, and blocking support from the Vietnamese diaspora and the international community.

The Cao Dai Religion, established in 1926, is a case in point. The government has used all the above measures to subjugate Cao Dai believers. Nevertheless, Cao Dai followers have shown surprising resilience and creativity, determined to defend their religion and preserve their religious practices. Because most of their 300-plus temples are occupied by a substitute Cao Dai sect created by the government in 1997, Cao Dai followers have turned their homes into places of worship. Because the 1997 Cao Dai Sect members and the Vietnamese police have interfered with their home-based practice, Cao Dai followers make use of domestic laws to request investigation of these crimes. When faced with intimidation by the police or harassment by the 1997 Cao Dai Sect, Cao Dai followers report these human rights violations to UN Special Procedures, diplomatic missions, USCIRF, and the US State Department. In most of these undertakings, and particularly in international advocacy and the media, they receive solid support from their co-religionists overseas.

The SEAFORB Conference session on Vietnam will focus on the Cao Dai Religion as a case study of policies and measures employed by the government and the coping strategies developed by affected communities. The session will have four panels spanning two days. Registrants only need to register once and use the same link for all sessions. For further assistance, please contact [TuanQ.Nguyen@bpsos.org](mailto:TuanQ.Nguyen@bpsos.org).

## Speakers



**Anurima Bhargava** is a Commissioner at the United States Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF). She serves as the President of Anthem of Us, which she founded to advise efforts to promote dignity and justice, and to center equity and belonging in workplaces, schools, and communities.



**Dan Nadel** is a Senior Official of the International Religious Freedom Office at the U.S. State Department. He is responsible for promoting FORB for all as a core objective of U.S. foreign policy. Dan leads the State Department's efforts to monitor religiously motivated abuses, persecution, and discrimination worldwide, and to recommend and implement policies and programs to address these concerns.



**Jos Douma** is the Special Envoy on Religion or Belief at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and currently holds the position of Chair of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance (IRFBA). He comes from a long diplomatic career from the foreign ministry.



**Rev. Victoria Sheahan** is the first Cao Dai chaplain in the USA and has served thousands of patients of diverse spiritual backgrounds. Rev. Sheahan is also the founder of Caodai Today which virtually unites Cao Dai followers among the Vietnamese diaspora and supports at-risk Cao Dai congregations inside Vietnam.

This event is organized by



*The Southeast-Asia Freedom of Religion or Belief (SEAFORB) Network is a coalition of organizations working to protect and promote the Human Right of Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) in Southeast-Asia. Members come from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds, nevertheless they stand together in unity to promote FORB for all.*