

***Human Rights Without Frontiers* urges the authorities of the EU member states to grant political asylum to Chinese religious refugees**

HRWF (02.12.2017) - *Human Rights Without Frontiers* (Brussels) is urging the authorities of France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Switzerland and other European countries to urgently grant political asylum to Chinese citizens who have been persecuted because of their religious beliefs in China.

Hundreds of members of the Church of Almighty God (CAG), a new religious movement founded in China in 1991, have left their country in search of a safe haven in Europe. They have been denied political asylum and are under threat of being sent back to China where they will be arrested and sent to prison for years.

From the early 1990s to 2017, more than 300,000 of their members have been incarcerated. Many have been tortured and at least 30 have died in custody in suspicious circumstances.

While they are victims of state violence in China, Beijing's propaganda is demonizing their movement. The Center for Studies on New Religions in Italy (CESNUR) has published a research work of Dr Massimo Introvigne refuting Beijing's fake news and fake accusations against the Church of Almighty God (See http://cesnur.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/tjoc_1_1_6_introvigne_ter.pdf).

In 2004, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees published guidelines on religion-based refugee claims (<http://bit.ly/2BtCRgn>). These guidelines clarify that new and non-traditional religions are entitled to the same protection as mainline religions; that individuals should not prove that they have been individually persecuted and a general pattern of persecution against their religious group is enough; and that "persecution" should be broadly interpreted, including prohibition to freely practice and propagate one's religion.

The Church of the Almighty God fulfills these conditions.

Human Rights Without Frontiers (Brussels) calls upon the EU member states to grant political asylum to their members.