

# UNITED STATES/IRAQ/SYRIA: H.R.390 – Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2018 115th Congress (2017-2018) | 11 December 2018

## *Iraq and Syria Genocide Relief and Accountability Act of 2017*

Congress (11.12.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2PzUamI> – (Sec. 4) This bill states that is U.S. policy to ensure that humanitarian, stabilization, and recovery assistance for nationals and residents of Iraq or Syria, and of communities from those countries, is directed toward ethnic and minority individuals and communities with the greatest need, including those individuals and communities that are at risk of persecution or war crimes.

(Sec. 5) The Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development may provide assistance, including financial and technical assistance, to support the efforts of entities, including nongovernmental organizations with expertise in international criminal investigations and law, to address crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes in Iraq since January 2014 by:

- conducting criminal investigations,
- developing indigenous investigative and judicial skills

- to adjudicate cases consistent with due process and respect for the rule of law, and
- collecting and preserving evidence for use in prosecutions.

The State Department shall encourage foreign governments to identify and prosecute individuals who are suspected of committing such crimes, including members of foreign terrorist organizations operating in Iraq or Syria.

(Sec. 6) The State Department shall identify:

- threats of persecution, genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes against members of Iraqi or Syrian religious or ethnic groups that are minorities in Iraq or in Syria with respect to whom the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has committed such crimes in Iraq or Syria since January 2014 or who are members of other persecuted religious or ethnic groups;
- persecuted religious and ethnic minority groups in Iraq or Syria that are at risk of forced migration and the primary reasons for such risk;
- humanitarian, stabilization, and recovery needs of these individuals; and
- entities, including faith-based entities, that are providing such assistance and the extent of U.S. assistance to or through such entities.

(Sec. 7) The State Department shall provide Congress with:

- a description of the efforts taken and proposed to implement this bill; and
- an assessment of the feasibility and advisability of prosecuting individuals for acts of genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes in Iraq since January 2014 or in Syria since March 2011.

See as well : Trump signs bill to help religious minorities in Iraq, Syria:

<https://www.apnews.com/6c456d1fc4f1443699eb7ef8b7670e92>

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**WORLD : US condemns 10**

# **countries for severe religious freedom violations**

By Jennifer Hansler

CNN (11.12.2018) – <https://cnn.it/2Erh0kr> – Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Tuesday announced the US has deemed 10 countries guilty of severe religious freedom violations.

The nations – China, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar (also known as Burma), North Korea, Pakistan, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan – were categorized “Countries of Particular Concern” under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. They were found to have engaged or tolerated “systematic, ongoing, (and) egregious violations of religious freedom.”

“In far too many places across the globe, individuals continue to face harassment, arrests, or even death for simply living their lives in accordance with their beliefs. The United States will not stand by as spectators in the face of such oppression,” Pompeo said in a statement. “Protecting and promoting international religious freedom is a top foreign policy priority of the Trump Administration.”

“These designations are aimed at improving the lives of individuals and the broader success of their societies. I recognize that several designated countries are working to improve their respect for religious freedom; I welcome such initiatives and look forward to continuing the dialogue,” he

added.

Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback, in a call with reporters on Tuesday, cited a catalog of religious freedom violations perpetrated by some of these nations. They included Pakistan's blasphemy laws, specifically the case of Asia Bibi, Myanmar's mass violence against the Rohingya population and China's imprisonment of the Uyghurs and its treatment of Christians and Buddhists.

"China isn't backing away from the religious persecution, it seems to be expanding," he said. "This is obviously very troubling to the administration."

According to the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, such "egregious violations" include "torture, degrading treatment or punishment, prolonged detention without charges, abduction or clandestine detention, or other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty, or the security of persons."

Congress is notified of the designations annually, and sanctions to pressure the country to change its behavior may be imposed if all non-economic means have been used.

According to Brownback, such sanctions are "double-hatted" – meaning the countries are sanctioned in other areas but also considered sanctioned as Countries of Particular Concern. China, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea and Sudan are all being sanctioned as such, but Saudi Arabia, Pakistan,

Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have had their sanctions waived due to "national interest," Brownback said.

In addition to the Countries of Particular Concern designation, Pompeo "placed Comoros, Russia, and Uzbekistan on a Special Watch List for governments that have engaged in or tolerated 'severe violations of religious freedom,' " and designated al Nusra Front, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, al Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, the Houthis, ISIS, ISIS-Khorasan and the Taliban as "Entities of Particular Concern," according to the statement.

Pompeo made the designations in late November.

The US Commission on International Religious Freedom, an independent, bipartisan federal government commission established by the 1998 law, said the designation "demonstrates America's strong and active support for freedom of religion and belief worldwide."

"We are particularly gratified that, after years of documenting systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom in Pakistan, the State Department has finally added that country to the list of the world's worst violators for the first time," Chairman Tenzin Dorjee said in a statement to CNN. "We also welcome the new addition of Russia as a severe violator on the Special Watch List, but question whether Uzbekistan has sufficiently improved to be moved from the CPC list to the Special Watch List. In April 2018 USCIRF recommended that both of those countries should be designated as CPCs."

Brownback said Uzbekistan had made “substantial changes.”

In December 2017, Pompeo designated China, Eritrea, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan as Countries of Particular Concern and placed Pakistan on the Special Watch List for severe violations of religious freedom.

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**EGYPT: Copt sentenced to**

# three years in prison for 'blasphemous' Facebook post

World Watch Monitor (12.12.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2SEULFM> – An Egyptian court has sentenced a Coptic Christian to three years in prison after he was found guilty of “insulting Islam in the first degree”.

Abdo Adel, 43, from Menbal, a village in Egypt's Minya governorate, 200km south of Cairo, was accused in July of publishing a post on his Facebook page that insulted Islam, as World Watch Monitor reported.

In his post, Adel had compared Islam's prophet, Muhammad, with Jesus. Muslim villagers filed a complaint with police in the nearby city of Matai and Adel was arrested on 6 July on charges of insulting Muhammad and contempt of Islam. He was detained and his lawyer told World Watch Monitor at the time that if found guilty, he could receive a sentence of up to five years in prison.

Following his arrest, a mob attacked houses owned by Copts and the situation has remained tense ever since, according to Washington-based International Christian Concern, which suggested the judge may have handed down the sentence, which Adel will appeal, in the hope of restoring calm in the village.

“[I] was expecting this to happen in the first degree. But what I hope is that he will be freed in the appeal,” a close



relative of Adel's told ICC.

A lawyer familiar with the case said: "Usually the judge gives the maximum penalty in the first degree to secure himself that he applied the law, knowing that the other judge in the second degree will reduce or set him free." Adel's appeal is expected to be heard at the end of this month.

Regional security forces had to be deployed to restore order, as the attack left the Coptic community holed up in their houses, fearing for their lives, as World Watch Monitor reported.

Most of the 90 Muslims arrested following the riots – on charges of mobbing, attacking Coptic homes, inciting sedition and attacking the police – were released after a "community reconciliation session" at the end of July.

At the time, one of Adel's relatives told World Watch Monitor: "Abdo is a simple man. He works in making the church's bread [for use during Mass]. He is a very humble man and he is loved by all the church members. He is not good at reading and writing, and he is not good at dealing with his Facebook page in the best way, which put him and the village in this crisis."

Homes of Copts have been attacked by mobs of Muslim villagers in other parts of Minya in recent months. In August Coptic houses were attacked after it was discovered the Copts were praying in a home owned by one of them, since there is no

village church.

In the same month, a Coptic diocese in Luxor governorate saw its eighth church closed while seeking legal recognition. Mob rule has meant that many churches in the process of being officially licensed have been unable to complete the process due to security concerns.

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**CHINA: Roundtable discussion  
at the European Parliament**

# about religious freedom (video)

On the occasion of Human Rights Day (10 December), Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF) in collaboration with EU Reporter has held a roundtable discussion at the European Parliament about religious freedom in China. China is regarded as one of the worst offenders of this human right as one million Uyghur Muslims are in re-education camps, crosses have been removed from the top of Catholic churches, Protestants are under heavy pressure and are often put in prison, over 1,200 Church of Almighty God members are now in prison, and more than 2,000 Falun Gong practitioners are now in prison ([see database of prisoners here](#)). Furthermore, all believers who are arrested often face physical and mental torture and are forced to recant their faith if they want to get released.

## **Human Rights Without Frontiers calls upon China**

- to put an end to the detention of Uyghur Muslims and believers of all faiths in re-education camps;
- to respect its international obligations concerning freedom of religion or belief;

## **Human Rights Without Frontiers calls upon the international community, including the European Union,**

- to press China to respect the individual right to have a religion, to manifest one's religion in public and in private, to create religious associations, to peacefully worship and assemble for religious purposes;
- to grant political asylum to any Chinese citizen persecuted in his country because of his/her faith and not to deport them back to China.

## Program of the video (about 25 minutes)

MEP Zdechovsky (EPP): 00.00 – 09.05

Lea Perekrests (HRWF): 11.00 – 12.45

Willy Fautre (HRWF): 12.45 – 16.00

Dr Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy: 16.05 – 22.00

Lea Perekrests (HRWF): 22.00 – 23.00

Dr Zsuzsa Anna Ferenczy: 23.00 – 25.14

Willy Fautre (HRWF): 25.14 – 25.35

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## **CHINA: 100 church attendees in custody, attacks ongoing**

ChinaAid (10.12.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2C5rXRc> – Around 100 leaders and seminary students from Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, Sichuan have been arrested today.

Among the arrested are Pastor Wang Yi and his wife, Jiang Rong, who were seen being taken away after those who attend

their church could not find them. Another two, Guo Hai and his wife, were forced to leave their two children at home unattended when police took them into custody.

Others had their homes raided. One church elder, Qin Defu, was forced to the ground as police inspected his residence.

The situation began at 6:00 p.m. China Standard Time (hereafter referred to as CST) when police seized a Christian at the entrance of the church and a multitude of officers searched his place.

Additionally, authorities shut off power to the home of church members Song Enguang and his wife. The police stationed downstairs also took three Christians, who attempted to visit them during the ordeal.

As this happened, officials stationed many vehicles outside the entrance to the church and broke in.

The officers carrying out the arrests reportedly exhibited rude behavior. When the Christians asked why they were being taken away without warrants, one of them replied, "We are enforcing laws. Our process is to summon litigants and require them to cooperate with the investigation. you all should follow our process ... What else am I supposed to tell you? You are not supposed to know some details, so you can never know. It is us rather than you who enforce laws."

An incomplete list of those arrested includes: Jiang Ruolin, Ge Yingfeng, Zhu Hong, Xiao Hongliu, Ye Yin, Zhang Jianqing, Liu Yingxiu, Assistant Deacon Zhang Guoqing, Elder Su and his wife, Xiao Yingshan and his spouse, Song Engquang and his spouse, Xiao Baoguang, Zhou Xiaojuan, Liu Daxuan, and Zhou Yong.

The arrests continued into Dec. 11, when Li Yingqiang, who went into hiding and became the one contact available to speak to the press, was arrested. A prayer letter released by the church states that at least three Christians who have been freed were raped by the police.

“The massive overnight attack against members of the independent, renowned Early Rain Covenant Church represents a major escalation of religious persecution in China,” said Dr. Bob Fu, ChinaAid’s founder and president and a close friend of Pastor Wang. “Ironically this largest scale of arrests and clamp down on the international Human Rights Day shows Xi’s regime deliberately making itself the enemy of universal values, such as religious freedom for all. ChinaAid calls upon the international community to condemn these arbitrary arrests of innocent religious believers and urges the Chinese regime for their immediate release.”

The church’s official translation of one of their prayer letters has been included below.

ChinaAid exposes abuses, such as those suffered by the attendees of Early Rain Covenant Church, in order to stand in solidarity with the persecuted and promote religious freedom,

human rights, and rule of law.

***Emergency prayer information 07: Autumn Rain St York Church***

Three brothers and sisters who have been released told us that they were raped by police at the police station today and even stepped on their feet. One of the brothers was tied to his hands and feet at a late night and was detained all day, and the leg was tortured in multiple ways, and the body was injured with multiple injuries. These evils are heinous.

A brother said the police didn't give him a sip of rice in 24 hours, didn't drink a sip, was deprived of rest time and was tied to the chair all night for only two or three hours.

At around, the police asked the fire officers to break the door and enter the female hostel of the church humanities academy to take two of them. The Church, a sermon in da state, was inspected by the police at nine o'clock at pm and was taken by the same worker.

At around pm, there was a brother who saw more than young lad wearing a license in a car near the church into the church building. We estimate that these people are prepared and will damage, damage the renovation and equipment of church and church schools.

The night is deep, but there are still many brothers and sisters who are missing, we don't know where to look for these

taken siblings, parents are looking for children, wife is looking for husband, brother is looking for sister.....

O Lord, look at the grievances of your children, and this country trample on the dignity of your children, but these children are the pupils of your eyes. You will have to heal these scars with your loving hands and let us learn from the suffering and learn the patience of Christ. Lord, may you come soon!

Autumn Rain St York church

Issued on 10 December 2018, 24:00 slightly revised.

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# CHINA: Yingye'er re-education camp managed like prison (video)

*New exclusive video details internal management regulations of the Yingye'er "transformation through education" camp in Xinjiang. Experts confirm that the rules are almost identical to those of a prison.*

By Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (11.12.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2SLeFyZ> – At the end of November, Bitter Winter posted an exclusive video about the large-scale Yingye'er "transformation through education" camp for Uyghurs in Yining city of Xinjiang. The video has drawn a lot of attention throughout the world. We now present another video about the same camp, detailing its internal management rules and regulation.

The rules and regulations are posted on public signboards displayed in the corridors of the camp and detail a variety of internal management issues, such as the security of the camp, the code of conduct of "students" and personnel, as well as provisions regarding the inmates' communication with families. According to public security personnel, some of these rules

and regulations are almost identical to the management regulations of prisons.

The instructions regarding the security of the camp state, "The section needs to make overall arrangements of armed police officers, public security personnel, security guards, and other forces." In fact, armed police officers and public security personnel are part of the state security forces. So, if Yingye'er camp were an ordinary vocational school, the daily routine of providing safety would only require regular security guards.

The "Code of Conduct" for 'students,' posted on the "class affairs board" in the corridor, contains 26 regulations. Among these, article 23 is especially worth mentioning: it requires "students" to address armed police and special police as "police officers" and address teaching cadres as "training officers." The requirement is notably similar to the code of conduct used for prison inmates.

One of the responsibilities for teachers requires them to "strive hard to study Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's thought," "adhere to the Party's basic line," and teach students a "proletarian philosophy."

As per the regulations, the responsibilities of the headmaster and Mandarin Chinese teachers include the indoctrination of students through ideological and political education. The rules state that, basically, only the students who speak Uyghur are required to learn Mandarin.

In a recent interview with Bitter Winter, an employee of

another “transformation through education” camp revealed that all Uyghur detainees are forced to learn Chinese. “But even if an Uyghur manages to get a perfect score in Chinese, he or she will not be allowed to leave the camp,” revealed the employee.

The regulations of the Yingye'er camp include detailed provisions regarding contacts between “students” and their families, which are extremely restrictive. Phone calls between them must be applied for and approved, and the length of each phone call is usually limited to under five minutes. The rules require that phone calls must be “personally registered, personally dialed, and personally monitored” by members of the staff. The use of “code words and secret language” during conversations is prohibited. Inmates who do not comply with these rules will be punished with deprivation of family phone call privileges from one to six months based, depending on a situation.

Article 1 of the regulations states that “anti-extremism” should be incorporated within the content of “heart-to-heart chats,” and emphasizes that through such chats, “staff should gain a multifaceted understanding of students’ ideological dynamics and strive to discover emerging and tendentious intelligence information and clues.”

Our reporter has also discovered a room with a sign on the door “zhēnbié shì (Screening Room).” The original meaning of the Chinese word zhēnbié (screening) is “to differentiate and distinguish,” which emphasizes carrying out the assessment, examination, identification, and verification cautiously and seriously.

One of the most probable explanations for the function of this screening room could also lie in the interview with the employee of another “transformation through education” camp, mentioned earlier. He states that all detainees are divided into four levels of supervision: lenient, ordinary, strict, and enforced. According to him, special teams regularly screen “students” to determine whether they have signed a statement of repentance and “admitted their guilt.” An assessment is then conducted, and students who do not pass are sent to a detention center. Therefore, most probably, the screening room at the Yingye’er camp is used to evaluate the degree of “transformation” and “reform” of students.

Although CCP’s propaganda strives to conceal the truth, a growing body of evidence shows that the CCP authorities are carrying out large-scale persecution and suppression of Muslim Uyghurs. In its external communications, the CCP refers to “transformation through education” camps as “schools.” The factual materials our reporter has collected confirm that in terms of both internal structure and management regulations, this “transformation through education” camp is, in fact, a prison.

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