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CHINA: Religious persecution and issues – Bimonthly digest 16-31 August

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General

18.08.2023 – Massive campaign against “Xie Jiao and illegal religion” targets children in Guangxi

Bitter Winter – Rongxian County, in Guangxi province, with a population of 700,000, witnessed between June and July 2023 a massive effort to indoctrinate primary and middle school

children against “xie jiao and illegal religion.” What started by illustrating the harms of the “xie jiao” (movements banned for spreading “heterodox teachings,” sometimes less correctly translated as “cults”), quickly extended to denouncing “illegal religion” and criticizing religion in general as “anti-scientific.”

Children in some cases as young as six were led to repeat slogan hailing “science” and denouncing “feudal superstition.” Games, exercises, lectures, and even nursery rhymes were mobilized to impress the pupils.

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Buddhists

24.08.2023 – Tantrayana Buddhism: When China uses “cults” for propaganda purposes

Bitter Winter – Master Wang’s group is criticized by many. However, there are serious suspects the CCP uses it in Australia to promote a pro-Xi-Jinping and anti-Taiwan agenda.

We all know that China hates and persecutes groups it labels as “xie jiao” (heterodox teachings), an expression it incorrectly translates as “cults” to elicit sympathy from international anti-cultists. In fact, it does more than that. One of the tasks the CCP assigns to the mammoth China Anti-Xie-Jiao Association, which likes to promote itself as the “largest anti-cult organization in the world,” is to collect and spread through Chinese media any possible item of news from all over the world, including fake news, showing that “cults” are evil and dangerous. We read often on Chinese media long articles about “cults” that never set foot in China, including NXIVM and Kenya’s Good News International Church.

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Falun Gong

28.08.2023 – Middle School teacher sentenced to two years and ten months for practicing Falun Gong

Minghui – A 46-year-old middle school math teacher in Gaozhou City, Guangdong Province, was sentenced to two years and ten months with a 10,000-yuan fine on August 18, 2023, for his faith in Falun Gong.

Eight officers from the Gaozhou City Domestic Security Office and Chengnan Police Station broke into Mr. Yu Tao's home on the morning of August 12, 2021, (a Thursday). Mr. Yu wasn't home, so the police forced his high-school son to call him and ask him to come home immediately to answer the police's questions. As soon as Mr. Yu returned, the police arrested him. They also confiscated the family's printer and the work computer belonging to his wife, who is an accountant. None of the officers showed their IDs or a search warrant. They also refused to provide a list of confiscated items.

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26.08.2023 – Liaoyang City, Liaoning Province: Sixteen Falun Dafa practitioners arrested, seven have been sentenced

Minghui – At present 16 Falun Dafa practitioners from Liaoyang City, Liaoning Province remain incarcerated after being arrested for not renouncing their faith, which has been persecuted by the Chinese Communist Party since July 1999.

Most of the 16 practitioners lived in Liaoyang County and Dengta City of Liaoyang City. Seven of them have been sentenced to prison, and the whereabouts of four of them remain unknown. The families of the other nine practitioners have not been able to ascertain their current situations.

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20.08.2023 – After two years of forced labor and 14 years in Prison, 70-year-old Mr. Yang Xiaoguang Is sentenced to 3.5 years for his faith

Minghui – Mr. Yang Xiaoguang, 70, from Mishan City, Heilongjiang Province was sentenced to three and a half years and fined 10,000 yuan on June 26, 2023 for practicing his faith, Falun Gong, a mind-body practice that has been persecuted by the Chinese Communist Party since July 1999.

Mr. Yang Xiaoguang talked to a student about Falun Gong outside the Yifu Elementary School at 8 a.m. on March 3, 2023 and was reported to police by that student. Just after 9 p.m. that day, a group of agents from the Mishan City Domestic Security Office and the Limin Police Station broke into Mr. Yang's home and arrested him. An officer took out his gun and threatened Mr. Yang. They photographed his home and confiscated his Falun Gong books and related materials.

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Muslims

20.08.2023 – Sinicization attacks mosques in Beijing as well

Bitter Winter – The famous Doudian Mosque and the Songyu Mosque have lost their trademark Islamic features and now look like non-Muslim Chinese temples.

“Bitter Winter” reported last year that the largest Arab-style mosque in northern China, the Doudian Mosque in Beijing, would begin its “Sinicization” in August 2022, and the authorities at that time had planned to complete the “renovation” by May 1, 2023. “Bitter Winter” has recently learned that the

“Sinicization” of the Doudian Mosque in Beijing was completed in April this year. It was reopened to visitors in mid-August, a few days ago.

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Protestants

30.08.2023 Illegal social organization: Guangzhou Huajing Christian Church

ChinaAid – The Chinese government once again issued a notice banning a house church under the pretext of cracking down on illegal social organizations. According to public documents, the CCP banned “Guangzhou Huajing Christian Church”.

The Civil Affairs Bureau of Tianhe District, Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province issued a notice on August 19 to ban Guangzhou Huajing Christian Church. “Guangzhou Huajing Christian Church has carried out activities in the name of a social organization without registration,” the notice states. “According to the provisions of Article 32 of the Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations, as well as provisions of Article 2 and Article 9 of the Temporary Measures On The Suppression of Illegal Civil Society Organizations; it falls under the category of an illegal social organization. After looking into it, it has been decided to ban it.”

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28.2023 – Bengbu Dissident Pastor and co-workers prosecuted for fraud

Bitter Winter – Wang Changchun and others from the Living Stone Reformed Church were detained in April for “illegal

business operations.” Now they are accused of a more serious crime.

In the last month of April, Bitter Winter reported that on April 11 Pastor Wang Changchun was arrested while he was traveling in Lijiang, Yunnan province, and taken back to the prison of his home city of Bengbu, Anhui province.

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28.08.2023 – So called ‘illegal organization’ Great Grace Church banned.

ChinaAid – The Civil Affairs Bureau of Lishan District in Anshan City, Liaoning Province, closed Great Grace Church under the pretext of being an “illegal social organization.” Any unregistered house church not included in the “legally registered social organization information inquiry system,” is susceptible to being listed as an illegal social organization by the Chinese government.

On August 9, 2023, the Civil Affairs Bureau of Lishan District in Anshan City, Liaoning Province, announced the crackdown on illegal social organizations. The statement states that Great Grace Church operated “without proper registration”. According to the authorities, the house church engaged in activities “under the guise of a social group, thereby violating the provisions of the Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations.”

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25.08.2023 – Christians told to strictly enforce new restrictive measures on religion

Bitter Winter – The new rules convert churches into Communist

propaganda outlets. The Three-Self Church leaders solemnly received the Measures and promised to promote them. Earlier this month, "Bitter Winter" published the first full English translation of the new "Administrative Measures for Religious Activity Venues," which will come into force on September 1 next. With respect to the draft previously circulated, in their final text there are even stricter provisions for including propaganda content in sermons, and establishing study groups of Communist Party documents in all places of worship. Religious activity venues should actively broadcast CCP propaganda, or face liquidation.

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23.08.2023 – New Hope House Church raided by police, preachers detained

ChinaAid – Authorities raided New Hope House Church on August 20th during their Sunday service. Meanwhile, a summer camp staff was targeted in Hebei province.

New Hope in Meizhou, Guangdong province, was in the middle of their worship when local police stormed inside. Authorities took away two preachers, Lan Yi and Zeng Hu. Other Christians were taken for questioning, and the worship space was sealed off.

In the afternoon, police released everyone except for the two preachers. According to ChinaAid sources, Lan Yi has been administratively detained for seven days, and Zeng Hu had been administratively detained for five days.

The impact on Sunday meetings is the norm for house churches in China and is a regular practice of the Chinese government to suppress restrictions on religious freedom.

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