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CHINA : Religious persecution and issues – Bimonthly digest April 01-15

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General

07.04.2023 – Coming soon in China: new (and worse) “administrative measures for religious activity venues”

What else needs to be regulated in Chinese religion? All

religions are suffocated by a plethora of laws, regulations, and ordinances, not to mention the daily administrative and police surveillance. Yet, Xi Jinping has repeatedly stated that there are still risks that unchecked religion may threaten the CCP, and bureaucrats follow up with continuous new measures.

The 2005 “Regulations for the Establishment, Approval, and Registration of Religious Activity Venues” were already bad enough. However, the 2023 “Administrative Measures for Religious Activity Venues,” which will replace those of 2005, are worse. They have been published as a draft for comments, which interested parties may submit by April 24. As usual, this pseudo-democratic process will not result in significant changes, and most likely in no changes at all.

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Uyghurs

10.04.2023 – China using spies to keep Muslim Uyghurs from fasting during Ramadan

Chinese police are using spies to make sure that Uyghur Muslims are not fasting during the holy month of Ramadan – including members of their own ethnic group.

The spies – which Chinese officials refer to as “ears” – are drawn from ordinary citizens, police and members of neighborhood committees, said a police officer from an area near Turpan, or Tulufan in Chinese, in eastern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

“We have many secret agents,” she told Radio Free Asia.

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Catholics

10.04.2023 – A Shanghaied Holy See: What is left of the Vatican-China deal?

First, it was Bishop Giovanni Peng Weizhao of Yujiang (Jiangxi), who was installed as Auxiliary Bishop of Jiangxi on November 24, 2022, without the authorization of the Holy See. Now, it is a much bigger diocese, Shanghai. On April 4 Bishop Shen Bin, until now Bishop of Haimen, was installed as the new Bishop of Shanghai.

In the case of Jiangxi, the Holy See knew of the installation ceremony, told China it had not authorized it, and was ignored. The case of Shanghai is worse. The Vatican stated officially that “the Holy See learned from the media of the installation” the morning it happened.

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Protestants

13.04.2023 – Qin Yongpei sentenced to five years for ‘inciting subversion of State power’

Qin Yongpei, a Christian human rights lawyer from Guangxi, was detained by the Chinese authorities for more than three years beyond legal time limits. On March 31, Qin was convicted of “inciting subversion of state power” by the Nanning City Intermediate People’s Court of Guangxi. The verdict of the first instance sentenced Qin Yongpei to five years in prison, to be followed by three years of deprived political rights. Dissatisfied with the verdict, he has appealed.

On March 31, Qin Yongpei's wife, Deng Xiaoyun, and his younger sister attended the court hearing. Two bailiffs brought him out, and he became slightly emotional. Qin Yongpei's meeting with his wife and younger sister went on for about 10 minutes, in which he signed a power of attorney entrusting his wife and daughter to be the defenders of the second instance of his appeal.

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11.04.2023 – CCP-controlled three-self church mobilized to implement the two sessions directives

On March 20, 2023, the Three-Self Church organized a meeting of its local and youth associations to implement the directives of the recent Two Sessions in all government-controlled Protestant churches throughout the country.

Pastor Xu Xiaohong, who is not only the chairman of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement but also a member of the Standing Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPC), and Reverend Shan Weixiang, deputy chairman of the Three-Self Church, "conveyed the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping's important speech, the spirit of the first session of the 14th National People's Congress and the first session of the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference," according to the official press release.

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08.04.2023 – Chinese Mayflower Church members resettled in US after 3-year quest for asylum

The 63 members of China's "Mayflower Church" who fled persecution in China arrived in the United States on Friday,

intending to resettle permanently after being granted humanitarian parole status amid a harrowing three-quest for asylum.

In November 2019, the Christians, comprising 32 children, from Pastor Pan Yongguang's Shenzhen Holy Reformed house church (dubbed "Mayflower Church") fled to Jeju Island in South Korea after encountering threats and interrogations from Chinese police.

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06.04.2023 – Police released Gao Heng; his whereabouts remain unknown

Police released Gao Heng from prison yesterday, but none of his fellow church members can contact him. The authorities claim he was picked up by his father and sent back to his hometown.

Gao Heng served one year and 10 months in prison for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble." On the morning of April 5, ministers and Christians of Guangzhou Bible Reformed Church went to Guangzhou No. 2 Detention Center to pick him up, but he was not there. Prison staff told the church members that they released Gao Heng to his father. The two of them returned to Gao's hometown in Jinchun County, Huanggang City, Hubei Province. He is already back in his hometown. So far his church is not able to get in touch with him.

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04.04.2023 – Prominent house church leadership tried publicly; no verdict released

Yang Rongli, the leader of Golden Lampstand Church, and 11

other Christians stood trial for their alleged “fraud” case. Her brother, Yang Kai, issued three requests for prayer. ChinaAid has not yet received the verdict.

The “fraud” case of Golden Lampstand Church was heard in public on March 29. Linfen authorities target Wang Xiaoguang and his wife, Yang Rongli, as well as the remaining 10 Christians. Yang’s younger brother Yang Kai asked all to pray for three things in a public prayer invitation letter.

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03.04.2023 – Guangzhou Bible Reformed Church’s Gao Heng sentenced

On March 21, 2023, the Panyu District People’s Court of the prefecture-level city of Guangzhou, the capital of the Guangdong province, sentenced **Gao Heng** to one year and ten months in jail for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.”

Bitter Winter had reported on the case of Brother Gao Heng after he was arrested in 2021. An active lay member of the Bible Reformed Church in Guangzhou, the 38-year-old Gao became popular as a volunteer assisting those in need during the difficult days of the COVID-19 lockdown.

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Falun Gong

15.04.2023 – Four arrested for reading Falun Gong’s teachings, three have been sentenced

Ms. Yang Chunrong, a 38-year-old Chongqing resident, suffered all kinds of ailments from head to toe in her 20s. She tried all kinds of treatments, but none had any effect. In August

2012, she learned about the Chinese Communist Party's ruthless persecution of Falun Gong and realized that she had been deceived by the communist regime into harboring hatred toward this ancient mind/body practice. She read Falun Gong books and was drawn to the profound teachings. She took up Falun Gong and was surprised to see her health quickly improve.

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12.04.2023 – 67-year-old woman imprisoned for her faith

Ms. Guo Shufen's family was recently notified by the Liaoning Province Women's Prison that their loved one had been admitted to the 12th ward, the correction ward, to serve time for her faith in Falun Gong.

Since the Chinese communist regime ordered the persecution of Falun Gong in 1999, the Liaoning Province Women's Prison has been actively torturing incarcerated practitioners, especially those held in the 12th ward.

Ms. Guo's family requested to visit her. But a guard replied that she wasn't qualified for family visits. An insider revealed to the family that Ms. Guo is suffering from some medical condition, including dangerously high blood pressure. The family is calling on the International community to pay attention to her case.

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08.04.2023 – Once incarcerated for 11 years, Guangdong man gets another 5 years for his faith

Having served one labor camp term and two prison terms for a total of 11 years, a Zhanjiang City, Guangdong Province resident was recently sentenced to another five years for his

faith in Falun Gong.

Mr. Wu Haibo, 58, was arrested on March 5, 2022. He was first held at the Suixi County Detention Center and then transferred to the Zhanjiang City Detention Center. The Chikan District Court sentenced him to five years with a 5,000-yuan fine on March 24, 2023.

Mr. Wu, a former pharmaceutical company technician, has been repeatedly targeted over the past 23 years for practicing Falun Gong. He was brutally tortured in custody and barely survived.

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03.04.2023 – 25 Falun Gong practitioner deaths due to persecution reported in March 2023

The deaths of 25 Falun Gong practitioners as a result of the persecution by the Chinese communist regime were reported in March 2023.

Six of the deaths took place between 2014 and 2019, seven in 2022, and ten in 2023. The exact times of the remaining two practitioners' deaths remain unknown. Due to strict information censorship in China, deaths can't always be reported in a timely manner, nor is all information readily available.

The deceased practitioners were from 12 different provinces and centrally-controlled municipalities. Heilongjiang reported four cases, followed by Beijing, Jilin and Liaoning (each with three cases). Sichuan, Chongqing, Hunan and Shandong each had two cases. The remaining four provinces, including Anhui, Gansu, Hebei and Jiangsu, each had one case.

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