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CHINA: Religious persecution and issues – Bimonthly Digest August 01-15

Religious persecution and issues – Bimonthly digest August 01-15

General

14.08.2023 – China represses religions, council says

Taipei Times – China continued to repress religious freedom by destroying places of worship and detaining clergy in the first

six months of the year, the Mainland Affairs Council said in a report.

Chinese officials closed down the Jokhang Temple, one of the holiest sites of Tibetan Buddhism, from March 8 to March 11, a date seemingly chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day on March 10, the council said.

Beijing has been carrying out deliberate attacks on organized religion with arrests and other means, it said, adding that religious leaders and followers were detained in tens of recorded incidents.

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09.08.2023 – Xinjiang, anti-religious propaganda targets herdsmen in pastures at 4500 meters above sea level

Bitter Winter – A policewoman received national commendation for warning ethnic Kyrgyz shepherds against xie jiao and religions that are not officially recognized.

Not even herdsmen quietly grazing their cattle at 4500 meters above the sea level are left alone by the CCP propaganda against “illegal religion.” Zenur Ishak, a policewoman from the police station of Heiziwei township, Ulugqat (Wuqia) county, Kizilsu Kyrgyz Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang, won national commendation for having traveled all the way to Yuqitashi Grasslands, part of Urukchati township and located more than 200 kilometers from the county seat. The shepherds in the area are predominantly ethnic Kyrgyz.

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08.08.2023 – Even Taoists are being “sinicized”: Shanghai

hosted the “First forum on sinicization of taoism”

Bitter Winter – Taoism is quintessentially Chinese. The campaign confirms that “Sinicizing” religion does not mean making it more Chinese, but more subservient to the CCP.

On July 25 and 26, 2023, the government-controlled China Daoist Association, in cooperation with the Shanghai Taoist Association, the Shanghai City God Temple, and the Mingdao Taoist Culture Research Institute of East China Normal University co-organized in Shanghai “Taoism on the Sea: The First Forum on the Theory and Practice of Sinicization of Taoism.”

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07.08.2023 – The new Chinese measures for religious activity venues come into force on September 1

Bitter Winter – Even worse than the draft version, the Measures will convert places of worship into branches of the CCP propaganda system. “Bitter Winter” offers a full English translation.

Last April, “Bitter Winter” revealed that a draft of new “Administrative Measures for Religious Activity Venues,” intended to replace those of 2005, was being “circulated for comments.” Normally, this is a cosmetic exercise of pseudo-democracy, comments are ignored, and drafts become laws.

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Falun Gong

14.08.2023 – Hebei man’s family given runaround while seeking to uncover true cause of his tragic death in prison

Minghui – A 73-year-old resident of Zunhua City, Hebei Province, died suddenly in Jidong No.2 Prison while serving seven years for his faith in Falun Gong.

Mr. Wang Jian's children said they got a call from the prison at noon on April 3, 2023, saying that their father had fallen into a coma. By the time they got to the Kaifaqu Hospital an hour later, Mr. Wang had already passed away. His chin was up, and his mouth and eyes were slightly open. His children couldn't understand how their father, who was given a clean bill of health during a physical exam just a month before, could die so suddenly.

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12.08.2023 – Additional persecution news from China – August 3, 2023 (12 reports)

Minghui – **Mr. Li Xiaoyan** was arrested in the Shijiazhuang Railway Station on July 27, 2023. Many bills imprinted with Falun Gong facts were confiscated. His home was then ransacked by officers from the Fangxing Police Station in the Yuhua District and the Railway Police Department. The police confiscated over 20,000 yuan, many truth-clarifying materials, and Falun Gong books.

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08.08.2023 – Once jailed for 3 years, 55-year-old Liaoning woman is admitted to prison again to serve a 3.5-year term

Minghui – A 55-year-old woman in Qingyuan County, Liaoning Province, was admitted to Dabei Prison in Shenyang (the capital city of the province) on July 26, 2023, four months after she was secretly sentenced to three and a half years for raising awareness of the persecution of her faith, Falun Gong.

Ms. **Zhang Chuanwen** was arrested on December 4, 2022, with two other Falun Gong practitioners, Mr. Liu Zhenqing and Mr. Du Qinghua, after being reported for handing out calendars with information about Falun Gong. Mr. Liu's home was ransacked. The police also attempted to ransack Ms. Zhang's home, but she refused to take them to where she lived.

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The Church of Almighty God

11.08.2023 – China: New massive wave of persecution against the Church of Almighty God

Bitter Winter – The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which has never ceased its persecution and surveillance activities against The Church of Almighty God (CAG), the largest Christian new religious movement in the country, recently launched a new coordinated arrest operation against the group. As reported by CAG members to “Bitter Winter,” the persecution was most severe in the provinces of Zhejiang, Fujian, and Jiangsu. On June 15, in just a single day, at least 1,043 CAG members in Zhejiang Province were placed under arrest, and until this day 408 are still in custody, facing prosecution and sentencing. One died just three days after her arrest.

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Protestants

15.08.2023 – Nanning Christian Pastor detained—for no reason whatsoever

Bitter Winter – The vague provision punishing “disturbing the social order in the name of religion” was enforced against **Pastor Park Kwang-Zhe** of New Life Christian Church.

These days, the CCP does not need any specific reason to detain Christian house church pastors.

As the document we reproduce, sent by the church's co-workers to several human rights media outlets, demonstrates, Pastor Park Kwang-Zhe of New Life Christian Church was detained in Shibu town, Xixiangtang district, Nanning, Guangxi province, on August 8, 2023.

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08.08.2023 – Cross demolition continues in Zhejiang Province

ChinaAid – The local government of Wenzhou plans to resume the forced removal of crosses from Christian churches.

Dongqiao Church in Zhejiang province received a notice that on August 3rd the government will forcefully remove the cross from the church. The church has issued a public notice, urging brothers and sisters in Christ to pray fervently for this matter.

An anonymous pastor from Wenzhou informed ChinaAid that the “demonic wind (a trend/movement harmful to society) of removing crosses may rise again.” He revealed that last month, the governments of Shanxi Town, Yongjia County, and Lucheng District demanded churches remove Christian phrases. For instance, bronze plaques and characters on church walls bearing the words “Emmanuel,” “Jesus,” “Christ,” and “Jehovah” were all required to be removed.

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