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

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General

23.03.2023 – Wenzhou, parents asked to sign a “Kindergarten Family Commitment not to believe in religion”

A good Communist Party education starts from kindergarten, and it should necessarily include atheism. At the beginning of March, Christian parents from the Longwan District of Wenzhou, Zhejiang, sent to several human rights media pledges they are required to sign to have their children, aged 3 to 6, continue to attend kindergarten. The documents look genuine, and similar texts have been circulated previously in China.

The document is called a “Kindergarten Family Commitment Not to Believe in Religion” and should be signed by the parents, who should indicate the name of the children.

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Uyghur

28.03.2023 – Cultural Genocide: The Indoctrination of Uyghur Children

“What is your biggest worry?” A six-minute video has attracted much attention from the Uyghur community. It shows how young Uyghur students lined up to respond in turn to a question: “What is your biggest worry?” To a casual viewer, there may be nothing improper in the clip, but to the Uyghurs to see and hear Uyghur children interrogated in this manner is worrisome and traumatic. These children have been “orphaned” and forcibly separated from their families, and are now isolated and under the total care, control and influence of Han Chinese “guardians” within orphanages and boarding schools for indoctrination, assimilation and sinicization.

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Protestants

31.03.2023 – Chinese Christians detained in Thailand while

seeking U.N. protection

U.S. citizens taken in alongside 63 church members, who say they faced years of government harassment in China

A self-exiled congregation of Chinese Christians seeking United Nations protection from religious persecution faces potential deportation from Thailand, where police have detained the group along with two Americans who were assisting them.

Thai immigration police rounded up 63 members of the Shenzhen Holy Reformed Church on Thursday, taking them from their hotel in the coastal city of Pattaya to a police immigration bureau facility, according to the church's pastor and an American activist who has been supporting the congregation's efforts to seek asylum.

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30.03.2023 – Hohhot trial of Christians who illegally sold legal Bibles scheduled for late April

Selling Bibles illegally printed without the government's authorization is a crime in China. But what about Bibles printed legally by an authorized publisher connected with the government-controlled Three-Self Church? Presumably, they can be sold without problems.

But this is not the case if you belong to an unauthorized house church. The authorities now claim that a "legal" Bible can still be "illegally" sold if those who sell it belong to a non-authorized religious organization.

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29.03.2023 – Early Rain Christians detained, families forcibly evicted

Three members of Early Rain Covenant Church (ERCC) in Chengdu, China, have been detained, and many families have been subject to forced evictions, according to a statement published by the church on 26 March.

On 24 March, police in Wenjiang District in Chengdu placed a deputy deacon of ERCC Jia Xuewei in administrative detention for 14 days. A preacher, **Ding Shuqi**, and another church member, **Shu Qiong**, were given the same punishment, also for 'activities in the name of a banned social organisation', a week earlier on 17 March.

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29.03.2023 – Xi'an police torture another innocent christian for "fraud" case.

The staff of Xi'an Church of Abundance, including **Fu Juan** and pastors **Lian Changnian** and **Lian Xuliang**, were officially arrested on March 22 for "fraud." Meanwhile, police torture another innocent Christian for a false confession.

On August 17, 2022, Xi'an Shilipu Police Station arrested the three staff members on the pretext of "fraud" and held them under residential surveillance at a designated location (RSDL). Their families did not receive any updates about them until six months later. Police tortured all three Church of Abundance members to obtain false evidence.

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27.03.2023 – Beijing house church leader released from prison after completing sentence

A veteran human rights defender and house church leader was released from prison in Tianjin, China on 26 March after completing his prison sentence.

Elder Hu Shigen was arrested as part of the government's infamous 709 crackdown in 2015. In August 2016, he was sentenced to seven years and six months in prison, with five-year deprivation of political rights, for 'subversion'.

A former university lecturer, Elder Hu led several house churches in Beijing prior to his arrest. The authorities quoted his religious activities and ties to foreign groups and human rights lawyers as basis for his harsh sentence, saying that he had used 'illegal religious groups' to 'spread subversive thoughts and ideas'.

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27.03.2023 – Three families evicted due to their involvement with Early Rain

Officials continue to escalate their persecution of the Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu. They plan to evict three families from the church that reside in the same condo complex—Shu Qiong, Chen Yan, and Xu Jiali.

Various departments of the Shuangliu District including the Political Security Department, the police station, the sub-district, and the community workers collaborated to harass the three families living at Blue Light Long Island International Complex.

On the afternoon of March 21, the three families received the Notice of Terminating the Lease issued by the landlords. Due to their involvement in "illegal activities," the landlord claimed they all broke their lease agreement. Each family initially agreed to stay in their respective apartments for

three years. Consequently, Xu Jiali and her family will be evicted after staying in the rental for one month and five days.

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Falun Gong

31.03.2023 – Targeted in a Police Sweep, Two Shandong women sentenced to prison for practicing Falun Gong

Two Dongying City, Shandong Province residents were both sentenced to 3.5 years and fined 20,000 yuan in January 2023 for their faith in Falun Gong.

Ms. Guo Hongyan, a 46-year-old employee of Shengli Oilfield, and **Ms. Chen Xiaohong**, a retired middle school Chinese teacher, were both arrested on April 23, 2021, during a police sweep. The Dongying District Court held a hearing of their case through a video call on January 14, 2023, without telling them that they had the option to request an in-person hearing.

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29.03.2023 – Six Falun Gong practitioners tortured in a Shandong brainwashing Center

Six residents of Zhucheng City, Shandong Province were tortured in a brainwashing center for a month, following their arrests for practicing Falun Gong.

Ms. Li Yeshu, her husband **Mr. Luo Wenxin**, **Ms. Li Mingxia**, **Ms. Xu Huancui**, **Ms. Li Hongmei**, and **Ms. Zheng Zhimei** were arrested on March 4, 2022, and taken to the Zhucheng City Brainwashing Center, also known to the outside as the “Care Center.”

Officers Song Wei, Hao Xiaojun, and Su Lei hit Ms. Li Yeshu’s

head, hands and body with a bamboo stick and also stomped on her. They then wrapped her hands with a wire connected to an electrical box, ordered her to sit on the ground, and turned on the switch to shock her. Her body was bounced up and down by the electric shock. Before she completely lost consciousness, she remembered someone stepping on her back against the ground.

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25.03.2023 – Once incarcerated for 17 Years, Hunan Man arrested again for practicing Falun Gong

Having served one labor camp term and two prison terms totaling 17 years, a Xiangtan City, Hunan Province resident was arrested again for his faith in Falun Gong.

Several officers broke into Mr. Yang Shiyi's home on February 20, 2023 and took him to the Xiangtan City Detention Center. The police called his son the next day and asked him to deliver some clothes to his father. They also claimed that Mr. Yang and five other practitioners put up banners bearing information about Falun Gong and that they managed to catch him (while the other five practitioners escaped). But Mr. Yang denied having ever put up the alleged banners.

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18.03.2023 – Beijing couple sentenced to prison for raising awareness about the persecution of Falun Gong

A married couple in Beijing were convicted for their shared faith in Falun Gong and had their appeals rejected.

Mr. Li Wencai and Ms. Li Sujuan were arrested on April 18, 2020, after being reported for raising awareness about the

persecution. The police raided their home and confiscated their Falun Gong books, computer, and printer. The couple were released on bail the next day after they were denied admission by the local detention center due to failing the physical examinations.

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