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CHINA: Religious issues & persecution – Bimonthly Digest Nov. 16-30

Religious persecution and issues – Bimonthly digest November 16-30

Buddhists

30.11.2023 – China requires job applicants in Tibet to denounce Dalai Lama

RFA – Tibetans who want to get public sector jobs must comply with a harsh Chinese rule requiring them to denounce the Dalai Lama, the leader of Tibetan Buddhism.

The move would seem to violate China's constitution, which officially protects the freedom of religion.

An official directive from Beijing released this month advertised 554 new public job opportunities in the city of Sigatse (in Chinese Xigaze) for its Village Development Expansion Program. It sought college graduates from the Tibet Autonomous Region with training in medicine, counseling and village development.

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21.11.2023 – The False Panchen Lama ordains monks in Tashi Lhunpo Monastery—for the Communist Party

Bitter Winter – The Tibetans know the story and readers of "Bitter Winter" know it too. In the Tibetan Buddhist Gelug tradition, the Panchen Lama is the second most important figure after the Dalai Lama. The 10th Panchen Lama died in 1989. The real 11th Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, was kidnapped by the CCP at age six in 1995, immediately after having been recognized by the Dalai Lama. If he is alive as the CCP maintains, his present whereabouts are unknown.

Having kidnapped the genuine 11th Panchen Lama,

the CCP proceeded to install a false 11th Panchen Lama of its own, a Tibetan child educated in Beijing called Gyaincain Norbu. The false Panchen Lama is now also Vice President of the CCP-controlled China Buddhist Association and member of the Standing Committee of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

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17.11.2023 – The CCP wants to control the interpretation of Tibetan Buddhist scriptures

Bitter Winter – How Tibetan Buddhist scriptures should be interpreted is a matter the CCP and the United Front believe they can decide in Beijing.

On November 9 and 10, under the aegis of the United Front, the China Tibetan Advanced Buddhist College and the China Tibetan Studies Research Center organized a “Tibetan Buddhist Scriptures Interpretation Seminar” in Beijing with the title “Answering the Propositions of the Times and Finding the Correct Role Positioning: Comprehensive and Strict Religious Governance and New Opportunities for Tibetan Buddhism in the New Era”

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16.11.2023 – 4 Tibetans sentenced to prison for 2nd time for religious activities

RFA – China has sentenced four Tibetans from Sertar county in Sichuan province to two years in prison each for engaging in religious activities – the second time they have been arrested and given jail time, said two Tibetans with knowledge of the situation.

The four men – **Gyalo, Tsedho, Bhamo and Kari**, each going by just one name – are being held at Yaknga Prison in Sichuan province, according to the sources.

“In September when they were sentenced to two years in prison, none of their families were informed,” said a Tibetan who lives in exile. “Neither are the families aware that the court has issued this judgment.”

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Muslims

22.11.2023 – China: Mosques shuttered, razed, altered in Muslim areas

HRW – The Chinese government is significantly reducing the

number of mosques in Ningxia and Gansu provinces under its “mosque consolidation” policy, in violation of the right to freedom of religion, Human Rights Watch said today.

Chinese authorities have decommissioned, closed down, demolished, and converted mosques for secular use as part of the government’s efforts to restrict the practice of Islam. The authorities have removed Islamic architectural features, such as domes and minarets, from many other mosques.

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Falun Gong

30.11.2023 – An old couple in jail: Husband and wife sentenced in Henan as Falun Gong practitioners

Bitter Winter – Husband and wife in Luoyang, Henan, share the same faith and the same fate. An old couple of Falun Gong practitioners has been sentenced to four years in jail for the husband and five years for the wife.

Li Shulin is a male Falun Gong practitioner from Henan and should not be confused with a female co-religionist from Hebei also called Li Shulin, who died in 2004 because of the mistreatments she suffered during her “re-education.” The male Li Shulin was born in 1964 and had been already arrested three times during the first decade of our century as a Falun Gong practitioner. He has been sent to re-education centers where he has been beaten and tortured.

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27.11.2023 – After four forced labor terms and one prison term, former music teacher stands trial again for his faith

Minghui – A former middle-school music teacher in Yinchuan City, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, stood trial on October 31, 2023, for practicing Falun Gong.

Mr. Ding Qian, also known as Ding Fadong, was ordered to report to the Wenhua Street Police Station on May 24, 2023. As soon as he left his apartment building, he was arrested by Wang Hao, director of the Qingtongxia City Domestic Security Office. Wang raided his home and took him to the Wuzhong City Detention Center, where he remains. Qingtongxia City is about 30 miles away from Yinchuan City and under the administration of Wuzhong City.

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23.11.2023 – Three Sichuan residents sentenced to five years for practicing Falun Gong, Mr. Liu Jia brutally tortured

Minghui – The Pengzhou City Court in Sichuan Province

sentenced three residents on October 30, 2023 for practicing their faith, Falun Gong.

Mr. Liu Jia, a resident of Chengdu (capital city of Sichuan Province), **Mr. Nie Zongguo** (a resident of Pengzhou City), and **Ms. Gong Yubin** (unclear whether she lives in Chengdu or Pengzhou) were each sentenced to five years.

Mr. Liu, around 54, was arrested on the morning of January 6, 2022, while driving to Pengzhou (about 20 miles from Chengdu) to run some errands. The arresting officers from the Junyue Police Station in Pengzhou impounded his car on the spot and raided his home in Chengdu around 2 p.m. that day. They confiscated seven computers, three cellphones, a printer, one bluetooth server, a set of Falun Gong books, and 2,000 yuan.

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Protestants

30.11.2023 – Wang Honglan's trial continues into five days

ChinaAid – Saturday, November 25 was the 5th day of the trial of the case against Hohhot Christians. Wang Honglan, Ji Heying (Wang Honglan's husband), Ji Guolong (Wang Honglan's son), Wang Jiale (Wang Honglan's nephew), Liu Minna, Liu Wei (Liu Minna's husband), Zhang Wang, Yang Zhijun, Li Chao, and Ban Yanhong, a total of 10 people, were charged with "illegal business operations".

They were criminally detained by Hohhot Huimin District Public Security Sub-bureau on April 15, 2021. Li Chao was released on bail after one year. The other nine have been detained for two years and seven months, significantly exceeding the statutory period. On November 22, 2021, Huimin District Procuratorate transferred the case to the court for prosecution. After two pre-trial meetings (the first one declared invalid due to the prosecutor's legal capacity), Huimin District Court officially opened the trial on November 20, 2023 (Monday).

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26.11.2023 – Christian watchdog group pushes back against Pew report suggesting decline of Christians in China

Christianpost – The leader of a Christian nonprofit watchdog group is pushing back against a recent Pew Research report suggesting that the number of Christians in China could have declined in recent years amid a crackdown by the Chinese Communist Party.

“A recent Pew Research Report measuring religion in China suggests that Christianity in the country has stagnated and is perhaps even in decline,” Global Christian Relief President and CEO David Curry wrote in a Nov. 19 op-ed for Fox News Digital about the Chinese Christian population.

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26.11.2023 – Sunday church service turns into communist party performance

ChinaAid – China has passed a “Patriotic Education Law,” and in compliance with government requirements, an officially

recognized church in Northeast China transformed a worship service on Sunday into praise for the party and the country. In the name of using literature and arts performances to promote excellent traditional culture in churches, the church featured a song titled "Ode to the Motherland," composed by one of the church's pastors. It also brought together various art groups to celebrate the Communist Party of China and its rule over the country.

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