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

CHINA: Religious persecutions and issues, bimonthly Digest FORB (16-30.11.2022)

Catholics

28.11.2022 – Vatican: China breached the agreement–But we will continue with it

Officially, the Vatican line, reaffirmed by Pope Francis himself, is that the Vatican-China deal of 2018 “is good,” is

slowly producing its fruits, and renewing it twice in 2020 and 2022 was the right thing to do.

“Officially” is the operative word here. Because “unofficially” the Vatican is well aware that China manipulates the agreement for its own purposes, and breaches it when it deems it fit. Now, the cat is out of the bag.

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28.11.2022 – China vows more ‘friendly consensus’ amid Vatican complaints

Beijing and the Vatican are once again tangling over the prickly issue of appointing Chinese bishops.

After complaints from the Vatican that Beijing was violating a 2018 interim accord, China’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Monday said the country is willing to expand the “friendly consensus” achieved with the Vatican over bishop nominations.

The Vatican issued an unusually harsh statement Saturday complaining that Beijing on Nov. 24 had installed Bishop John Peng Weizhao as an auxiliary bishop in the province of Jiangxi, which the Vatican doesn’t recognize as a diocese.

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26.11.2022 – In rare public protest, Vatican calls out China over bishop’s appointment

For the first time since brokering a controversial deal with China on the appointment of bishops four years ago, the Vatican Saturday called out Beijing for violating the terms of the accord by installing a bishop in a diocese not recognized

by Rome.

John Peng Weizhao was clandestinely appointed bishop of the papally recognized Diocese of Yujiang by Pope Francis in 2014, four years before the Vatican struck its provisional agreement with China in 2018. As a so-called “underground” prelate, Peng Weizhao was arrested and held by Chinese authorities for six months. He was eventually released, but his ministry was closely monitored by local authorities.

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22.11.2022 – China wants to “sinicise” its Catholics

When the Vatican signed a deal with China in 2018 on the appointment of bishops, the pact was denounced by a former leader of the Catholic church in Hong Kong, Cardinal Joseph Zen. He said it would legitimise the Communist Party’s control over Chinese Catholics, and be like “giving the flock into the mouths of the wolves”. The flock has not yet been devoured, but the grip of the government’s jaw has been tightening. The authorities have accelerated a campaign to “sinicise” the church by making its buildings, art and rituals look more Chinese and, crucially, its followers more loyal to the party. Catholics in Hong Kong are in their sights, too.

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Protestants

28.11.2022 – Minister An Yankui and Zhang Chenghao released

Minister An Yankui and coworker **Zhang Chenghao** of Zion Reformed Church were released after serving their sentence. Yao Congya, An Yankui’s wife, disclosed that the two ministers could not return to their home and reunite with their wives

due to the pandemic lockdown, so they went to their hometown first and waited there. An and Zhang were slimmer than before but seemed to be in high spirits. After going back to his hometown, An Yankui communicated with his wife, son, and daughter via video chat. Minister An Yankui wrote hymns, composed music and wrote lyrics during his imprisonment.

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22.11.2022 – Linfen Covenant House Church shut down

Linfen City Yaodu District Bureau of Civil Affairs announced on its website that they shut down Linfen Covenant House Church and Asilan School run by the church. Their announcement from November 16 stated that the church and school did not register with the government and organized events in the name of NGO without authorization, thus making it illegal.

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21.11.2022 – Covenant home church banned in Shanxi

.On November 16, 2022, the Civil Affairs Bureau of Yaodu District, Linfen City published an official notice banning Covenant Home Church and its school, citing unauthorized religious and educational activities.

Bitter Winter reported last August that on August 19, some 70 members of the Covenant Home Church were attending a parent-children camp that was raided by armed police. Some 170 police officers participated in the raid. **Pastor Li Jie**, his wife **Li Shanshan**, and Elder **Han Xiaodong** were detained and later placed under residential surveillance. Bibles, Christian books, and church documents were confiscated.

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16.11.2022 – Christian stands trial today for ‘picking quarrels and provoking trouble’

Long Kehai, a Christian from Gansu Province, will be in court today for the crime of “picking quarrels and provoking troubles.” Lawyer Zhang Keke received the notice to appear in court on November 15. The letter requires lawyer Zhang to attend the trial at the No. 1 Trial Chamber of Hui County People’s Court of Gansu Province at 9:00 am on the 16th.

Chen Zijuan is the wife of another detained human rights lawyer in Shaanxi **Chang Weiping**. She appealed to everyone on social media to take notice of Long Kehai’s case, who was arrested following the trial of her husband.

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Falun Gong

28.11.2022 – Wuhan City, Hubei Province: Twelve Falun Gong practitioners held for months in eight brainwashing centers

According to information collected by the Minghui website, at least twelve Falun Gong practitioners in Wuhan City, Hubei Province are still being held at eight different brainwashing centers as of November 2022, with one practitioner having been detained for fourteen months.

Ms. **Zhou Ailin**, 54, a former auditor at the Qiaokou District Industrial and Commercial Bureau, was arrested on September 14, 2021 for talking to people about Falun Gong. She was held for 15 days at the Wuhan City No. 1 Lockup. When she was released on September 29, 2021, the police stopped her at the gate, carried her into a police car, and took her to the Etouwan Brainwashing Center, where she has since been held.

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22.11.2022 – First-hand witness of torture of Falun Gong practitioners in Heilongjiang Province women's prison

Since the Chinese communist regime launched the nationwide campaign against Falun Gong, a traditional mind-body practice, in 1999, the Heilongjiang Province Women's Prison has been actively participating in the persecution.

I witnessed and experienced the brutal persecution firsthand when I was imprisoned there a few years ago for practicing Falun Gong.

There were 14 wards in the prison during the time I was there, with the 9th and 11th wards specifically set up to "transform" Falun Gong practitioners. Both wards had a number of divisions for practitioners with different levels of persistence in upholding their faith. The other inmates monitored us all the time, including when we used the restroom. We weren't allowed to talk among ourselves.

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18.11.2022 – One month after daughter's persecution death, mother sentenced to 3.5 years for their shared faith

Ms. Bai Xingwen's oldest daughter died at 45 in October 2022 as a result of the persecution of their shared faith in Falun Gong. One month later, **Ms. Bai**, a Gongying City, Shandong Province resident in her late 60s, was sentenced to 3.5 years.

Ms. Bai and two of her three daughters, Ms. Ji Yingmei and Ms. Ji Yingping, were arrested on July 15, 2021, after the police suspected Ms. Bai of putting up a Falun Gong banner two months earlier, on May 8.

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17.11.2022 – Current status of the nine Fuyang City, Anhui Province, residents who were sentenced for their faith

Nine residents of Fuyang City, Anhui Province, were sentenced to prison on February 3, 2021, for practicing Falun Gong. Three of them have been released after serving their terms; five of them are still serving time in two different prisons; and the remaining practitioner is being held in a detention center.

Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a spiritual discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

The nine practitioners were arrested on June 12 and July 22, 2020. Many of their Falun Gong informational materials and the supplies they used to print the materials were confiscated. They were tried and convicted in the Linquan County Court on February 3, 2021.

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