

# CHINA: Henan, Kaifeng Jews persecuted along with other religions

*The Jewish community is not recognized among the official religions and its activities are considered "illegal". The persecution increases after the launch of the new regulations on religious activities. The Jewish community of Kaifeng dates to the 10th century and is made up of about 1000 members. The project to rebuild the synagogue has been blocked by the government*

AsiaNews (16.02.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2BHQ1cn> – Kaifeng: The small Jewish community of Kaifeng (Henan) is suffering persecution along with all other religions in China.

In an article published yesterday in the "Jerusalem Post", Lela Gilbert, a member of the Hudson Institute and author of several books on persecution, writes: "The harsh treatment of China's miniscule Jewish population is emblematic of the Godless CCP's massive suppression of religious faith. And the Kaifeng Jews' vulnerability is both ominous and all-too-familiar to millions of Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims and Chinese Christians".

The Jewish community of Kaifeng has less than 1000 members, but it is subjected to heavy controls, police raids, obstacles of various kinds, especially after the February 2018 launch of new regulations on religious activities.

“During a raid – says Gilbert – government agents reportedly tore loose a metal Star of David from the entryway and tossed it on the floor. They ripped Hebrew scriptural quotations off the walls. They filled up a well that had served as a mikveh (ritual bath) with dirt and stones. And all foreign plans to build up and support the Jews of Kaifeng were summarily canceled.

The problem is that the Chinese government recognizes only five religious communities: Taoists, Buddhists, Muslims, Protestant Christians and Catholics. The other religions – including the Jewish one – are considered illegal and suffer a fate similar to that of the underground communities. In Henan, many Catholic and Protestant churches have been forced to close and prohibit entry for young people under 18.

The Jewish community of Kaifeng has a history dating back to the 10th century, when Jews from Persia arrived in China. The first synagogue in Kaifeng was built in 1163. After several events over the centuries, in recent years the community has succeeded in establishing relations with Jewish world and has created a small center of Jewish culture. Some benefactors are ready to support the reconstruction of the synagogue. But, since February, this project has been blocked.

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## **CHINA: Woman dies after torture during interrogation by Chinese authorities**

HRWF (19.12.2018) – Xiaocao (alias) was born on November 26, 1968, and was a native of Dunhua City in Jilin Province. She joined The Church of Almighty God in July 2007, and from 2012 to March 2015, she held a position as a mid-level leader in the Church.

Around 9 p.m. on 13 September 2018, four plain-clothes officers from the Dunhua Public Security Bureau pried open the door and burst into Xiaocao's home. While yelling at her about her involvement in the Church, the police ransacked her home. Xiaocao was terrified and in complete shock; the trauma caused her to suffer a heart attack right on the spot. She was then taken to the hospital for emergency treatment.

Early the morning of 14 September, as soon as Xiaocao woke up, the police took her from the hospital to the Dunhua Public Security Bureau for questioning. Upon learning this, her

husband rushed to the PSB, but the police would not allow him to see her.

At 6:20 p.m. that same day, Xiaocao's husband received a call from the Dunhua PSB telling him to go to the Dunhua City Hospital. He rushed to the hospital where he found his wife lying in a hospital bed in the ICU hooked up to oxygen; she was unable to breathe on her own and was unconscious. Her family found bruises and purple marks on her left arm. They tried to discretely take a photo for evidence but were stopped by the police. When they asked the police where the injuries on her body had come from, the police and the doctor stammered and then said they were from receiving injections. Her family did not believe their answer.

At 3 p.m. on 15 September 2018, after an unsuccessful rescue effort, Xiaocao died.

According to the medical records, when the ambulance arrived to the Public Security Bureau, Xiaocao was not breathing and did not have a pulse. The police insisted that she was not deceased, but brain dead.

When Xiaocao's family went to the Dunhua Public Security Bureau to try to get an explanation for her death, Mr. Zhang, the Bureau's deputy chief, told them:

"This is a major national arrest operation. Orders came directly from the provincial level to round up and get rid of people from The Church of Almighty God. She not only believed

in Almighty God but was a leader. Nobody will be held responsible even if she was beaten to death.”

The Public Security Bureau refused to take responsibility for her death in spite of her family trying twice to negotiate with them for reparations. Her husband later contacted the mayor of Dunhua, Lu Yang, to discuss the matter with him. Her husband repeatedly asked about the cause of his wife’s death, but the mayor fobbed him off, saying that it was a ‘normal death’. In their conversation, Mayor Lu also revealed that Xiaocao did not forfeit information about members of her Church during investigations.

Her family asked for the Public Security Bureau’s surveillance footage, but they claimed that their security cameras were broken, so they were unable to provide any footage. Combined with countless of testimonies, the circumstances of Xiaocao’s case points to the cause of her death being torture.

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# **CHINA: Yingye'er re-education camp managed like prison (video)**

*New exclusive video details internal management regulations of the Yingye'er "transformation through education" camp in Xinjiang. Experts confirm that the rules are almost identical to those of a prison.*

By Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (11.12.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2SLeFyZ> – At the end of November, Bitter Winter posted an exclusive video about the large-scale Yingye'er "transformation through education" camp for Uyghurs in Yining city of Xinjiang. The video has drawn a lot of attention throughout the world. We now present another video about the same camp, detailing its internal management rules and regulation.

The rules and regulations are posted on public signboards displayed in the corridors of the camp and detail a variety of internal management issues, such as the security of the camp, the code of conduct of "students" and personnel, as well as

provisions regarding the inmates' communication with families. According to public security personnel, some of these rules and regulations are almost identical to the management regulations of prisons.

The instructions regarding the security of the camp state, "The section needs to make overall arrangements of armed police officers, public security personnel, security guards, and other forces." In fact, armed police officers and public security personnel are part of the state security forces. So, if Yingye'er camp were an ordinary vocational school, the daily routine of providing safety would only require regular security guards.

The "Code of Conduct" for 'students,' posted on the "class affairs board" in the corridor, contains 26 regulations. Among these, article 23 is especially worth mentioning: it requires "students" to address armed police and special police as "police officers" and address teaching cadres as "training officers." The requirement is notably similar to the code of conduct used for prison inmates.

One of the responsibilities for teachers requires them to "strive hard to study Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's thought," "adhere to the Party's basic line," and teach students a "proletarian philosophy."

As per the regulations, the responsibilities of the headmaster and Mandarin Chinese teachers include the indoctrination of students through ideological and political education. The rules state that, basically, only the students who speak

Uyghur are required to learn Mandarin.

In a recent interview with Bitter Winter, an employee of another “transformation through education” camp revealed that all Uyghur detainees are forced to learn Chinese. “But even if an Uyghur manages to get a perfect score in Chinese, he or she will not be allowed to leave the camp,” revealed the employee.

The regulations of the Yingye'er camp include detailed provisions regarding contacts between “students” and their families, which are extremely restrictive. Phone calls between them must be applied for and approved, and the length of each phone call is usually limited to under five minutes. The rules require that phone calls must be “personally registered, personally dialed, and personally monitored” by members of the staff. The use of “code words and secret language” during conversations is prohibited. Inmates who do not comply with these rules will be punished with deprivation of family phone call privileges from one to six months based, depending on a situation.

Article 1 of the regulations states that “anti-extremism” should be incorporated within the content of “heart-to-heart chats,” and emphasizes that through such chats, “staff should gain a multifaceted understanding of students’ ideological dynamics and strive to discover emerging and tendentious intelligence information and clues.”

Our reporter has also discovered a room with a sign on the door “zhēnbié shì (Screening Room).” The original meaning of the Chinese word zhēnbié (screening) is “to differentiate and distinguish,” which emphasizes carrying out the assessment, examination, identification, and verification cautiously and



seriously.

One of the most probable explanations for the function of this screening room could also lie in the interview with the employee of another “transformation through education” camp, mentioned earlier. He states that all detainees are divided into four levels of supervision: lenient, ordinary, strict, and enforced. According to him, special teams regularly screen “students” to determine whether they have signed a statement of repentance and “admitted their guilt.” An assessment is then conducted, and students who do not pass are sent to a detention center. Therefore, most probably, the screening room at the Yingye’er camp is used to evaluate the degree of “transformation” and “reform” of students.

Although CCP’s propaganda strives to conceal the truth, a growing body of evidence shows that the CCP authorities are carrying out large-scale persecution and suppression of Muslim Uyghurs. In its external communications, the CCP refers to “transformation through education” camps as “schools.” The factual materials our reporter has collected confirm that in terms of both internal structure and management regulations, this “transformation through education” camp is, in fact, a prison.

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## **CHINA: Government unleashes new round of religious persecution**

*Since the launch of a nation-wide supervision program to inspect the implementation of Xi Jinping's policies on religion in China's provinces and municipalities, believers across the country are facing even more intense crackdown on their religious liberties.*

By Jiang Tao

Bitter Winter (05.12.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2E8gy4P> – As reported by Bitter Winter, the United Front Work Department (UFD) launched in September a nation-wide supervision program to check on the implementation of central government's policies on religion in provinces and municipalities across China. Since the end of October, special teams are being sent out to various localities in the country to conduct inspections.

Believers from various provinces report that, because of these visits, the persecution of churches and people of faith has intensified.

For example, two crosses were removed from a Three-Self church in Chizhou city of the eastern province of Anhui. Local government officials informed the church that, on October 25, a team of inspectors from Beijing would be coming to the area of Mount Jiuhua where the church is located, and that the crosses were too conspicuous and needed to be removed.

In November, on the eve of the visit by an inspection team, UFWD officials from Shuangyashan city in Heilongjiang, China's northernmost province, demanded that a government-approved Three-Self church displayed outside its entrance a five-meter-long banner with a speech of Xi Jinping.

The officials also ordered the local village secretary to visit the church every day to make sure that the order had been implemented. He was also demanded to photograph members of the congregation and the displayed banner and send the photos to his superiors.

The person in charge of the church told the congregants about the anticipated inspection, and that central government officials could show up at the church unexpectedly. He, therefore, advised the believers to hide any religious books published by unofficial publishers or they could be punished.

On October 26, the leader of a Buddhist temple under

reconstruction in Jinzhou city in the northeastern province of Liaoning received a phone call from a local official who stated that a “secret visit group” composed of 37 central government personnel was coming to the city to conduct inspections. The official ordered the leader of the temple to demolish it within one day. If not – the authorities will destroy the temple themselves, threatened the official. The temple’s leader was forced to obey the order.

The Tongguan county government in Weinan city of Shaanxi Province in China’s northwest issued a notice ordering party cadres in every village to demolish all the temples under their jurisdiction. Those who refused to comply were told to submit their resignation letters.

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