

CHINA: Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (08-14.09.2020)

14.09.20 – Organ harvesting: A blind eye to mass atrocity

For the CCP, removing and selling organs from prisoners of conscience is a huge business. Democratic countries should stop looking the other way.

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13.09.20 – Prayer inscriptions on Hui Muslims' homes banned

Government officials across China expand Islam "sinicization" campaign by ordering to conceal traditional Islamic duas—prayers of supplication or request.

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12.09.20 – Faith-based nursing homes closed or demolished in Fujian

Disrupting the peaceful final days of numerous elderly believers, authorities harass senior care centers to block any promotion of religions.

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11.09.20 – So, you want to report on Xie Jiao and get money? The CCP publish a "manual of the informer"

In Inner Mongolia, those who want to denounce banned religious movements for a reward are told how they should be trained and become more skilled.

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10.09.20 – Christians coerced into removing crosses from churches

The CCP comes up with new pretexts to suppress people of faith. In Zhejiang Province, believers' businesses are threatened if they disobey government orders.

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08.09.20 – Police harass and beat believers protecting temples

Authorities in Anhui Province use force against people who try to prevent demolitions of their worship venues.

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08.09.20 – Minors detained and imprisoned for practicing their faith

Teenage members of The Church of Almighty God are given hefty sentences, tortured and indoctrinated, and deprived of visitation rights when in detention.

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CHINA: Jehovah's Witnesses hunted down and deported

China's religious persecution extends to all religions without discrimination.

By Li Mingxuan

Bitter Winter (21.02.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2TfkKr3> – Not only

are Jehovah's Witnesses facing a severe crackdown in China, but the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is also supporting other countries' similar crackdowns. As Bitter Winter reported earlier this month, a Russian court sentenced Danish citizen Dennis Christensen, a Jehovah's Witness, to six years in prison for extremism. While international organizations and democratic countries condemned Russia's crackdown, the CCP-connected anti-xie jiao website, published an article in support of Russia.

The exact number of Jehovah's Witnesses in China is difficult to ascertain; they're not included in the list of the xie jiao, but their activities are regarded as illegal. Missionaries from abroad are considered "hostile forces" and often deported, as part of China's campaigns to crack down on foreign religious infiltration.

On December 26, 2018, two police officers from a city in eastern China's Shandong Province stormed into the home of two Spanish Jehovah's Witnesses missionaries, asking them about work they did and why they were staying there while earning so little. The officers then ordered them to leave China within two weeks on the grounds that "foreigners are not allowed to do missionary work."

"They [the missionaries] felt that their deportation was very sudden. They just contacted some people to talk about faith; there is no record that they violated any regulations or broke the law," said one believer.

"They felt very reluctant when leaving China," another

believer added.

As for the foreign missionaries who have not yet been arrested or deported, they're still facing a difficult time. Worried about being followed by the police, one South Korean missionary told Bitter Winter that she is extremely careful every time she goes out. Another South Korean missionary has suffered multiple recurrences of gastric illness as a result of being under too much pressure and is planning to return to South Korea in the near future.

To prevent being discovered by the police when they hold gatherings, Jehovah's Witnesses have not only installed a thickened security door at the meeting venues but have also used a foam board, measuring two meters high and ten centimeters thick, to keep sounds from carrying.

Still, believers don't dare to sing loudly.

They also specially arrange for believers to keep watch at the meeting venue's entrance – if any danger is detected, they'll immediately notify others to end the gathering. The believers also use hand gestures to signal each other to turn off the lights.

In May 2018, a Jehovah's Witnesses meeting venue in Shandong's Linyi city was raided by the police. Without presenting any credentials, eight preachers were summoned to the local police station. The visas of four Japanese missionaries were annulled, and the police ordered them to leave China within

ten days, prohibiting them from returning to China to do missionary work.

Around the same time, the United Front Work Department of Xinxiang city's Party committee in central China's Henan Province, the municipal State Security Bureau, and other related departments formed eight working groups to investigate the Jehovah's Witnesses.

On May 5, they carried out a concentrated operation in which seven meeting venues were raided and shut down. One Japanese missionary was detained for 15 days, fined 20,000 RMB (about \$2,857), and ordered to leave the country.

In mid-October 2018, a Jehovah's Witnesses meeting venue in Harbin city of northeastern China's Heilongjiang Province was also raided by the police. Officers from the local police station and officials from the local Religious Affairs Bureau stormed into the meeting venue and demanded that all the believers show their ID cards. Three South Korean missionaries were taken to the local police station for questioning and were deported later that month.

In November, a government official in Harbin city's Shuangcheng district encouraged villagers to report foreign missionaries to the authorities as soon as they discover them.

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CHINA: The Church of Almighty God: US Congress adopts Mo Xiufeng as prisoner of conscience



For the first time, a prisoner of The Church of Almighty God detained in China is “adopted” by the bipartisan Lantos Commission of the US Congress.

By Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (30.01.2019) – <https://bit.ly/2DIJkIk> – On September 24, 2008 H. Res. 1451 created the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, as a bipartisan body of the House of Representatives for the international advocacy of human rights. It was named after U.S. Democrat congressman Tom Lantos (1928–2008), a well-known champion of human rights. Perhaps the most well-known activity of the Lantos Commission is the “adoption” of prisoners of conscience, which started in 2012. When a prisoner of conscience is “adopted,” the Lantos Commission, through one or more members of the House, releases information about him or her, urges the Department of State and the White House to prioritize the prisoner’s case, urges the government of the country to release the prisoner, and ensures that U.S. delegations traveling to the country in which the prisoner is detained raise concerns about the prisoner.

For the first time, on January 29, 2019, the Lantos Commission has adopted a prisoner of conscience of The Church of Almighty God (CAG), a Christian new religious movement banned in China and included in the list of the xie jiao.

The name of the prisoner is Mo Xiufeng. She was born on April 16, 1988 and is a native of Nanning City, Guangxi. She lived in No.8, Building 29, Qiaowang Community, Hecheng Town,

Qingtian County, Lishui City, Zhejiang Province. In 2011 she became a Christian, and in 2012 she joined The Church of Almighty God.

At around 5 p.m. on July 2, 2017, six or seven plainclothes police officers from the National Security Brigade of the Public Security Bureau in Lishui City, Zhejiang Province burst into the rented apartment where Mo Xiufeng lived, and screamed at her and her husband that they were suspected of being members of a xie jiao. After ransacking the apartment, they confiscated several CAG books and other materials. The police then took Mo Xiufeng and her husband to the Wanxiang Police Station in Liandu District Branch, Lishui City, for interrogation.

At 9 o'clock in the morning on July 3, officers escorted Mo Xiufeng to the East West Rock Hotel in Shaxi Village, Laozhu Town, Lishui City, where they attempted to make her relinquish her beliefs, give up the names of co-religionists and the location where CAG funds were kept, and become an informant for the Chinese authorities so that they could arrest more CAG members and confiscate CAG assets.

When Mo Xiufeng refused to give any information, the police tortured her and prevented her from sleeping for several days. As soon as she started nodding off, they

would have her stand on a bench so that she dared not close her eyes. After 18 days of torture, the police had to conclude they had been ultimately unsuccessful. Mo Xiufeng will keep her faith and will not become an informant.

On July 21, the Liandu District Branch of the Public Security Bureau in Lishui City charged Mo Xiufeng with the crime of “organizing and using a xie jiao”. She was taken into criminal custody at the Lishui City Detention Center.

On March 1, 2018, the People’s Court of Liandu District in Lishui City sentenced Mo Xiufeng to nine years in prison (from July 21, 2017 to July 20, 2026) and fined her 30,000 RMB (about 4,500 US dollars), having found her guilty of the crime punished by Art. 300 of the Chinese Criminal Code. Art. 300 makes “using” a xie jiao a criminal offense punishable with a 3 to 7 years “or more” jail penalty. The formula normally used in the court decisions is “using a xie jiao to undermine the enforcement of the law.” However the case of Mo Xiufeng, like many others, confirms that no other crime is needed to apply Art. 300 than being active in a religious group listed and banned as a xie jiao. Mo Xiufeng was sentenced to nine years having been recognized as a local leader of a xie jiao, but Art. 300 is routinely enforced also against members who are not leaders. In fact, 11 other CAG members who had been arrested on the same day as Mo Xiufeng were also sentenced to prison terms ranging from three to eight years and fined between 5,000 RMB (about 730 US dollars) and 20,000 RMB (about 3,000 US dollars).

To this day, Mo Xiufeng and six other co-religionists remain imprisoned in China. But the “adoption” of Mo Xiufeng by the Lantos Commission is a sign they have not been forgotten.

Mo Xiufeng

Detained Since: July 2, 2017

Charges: Organizing and using a “Xie Jiao” (heterodox teachings) organization to undermine law enforcement.

Sentence: Nine years in prison and a fine of \$4,500.

Biography: Mo Xiufeng joined the Church of the Almighty God, a Christian denomination with roots in China, in 2012. She and her husband lived in Lishui, Zhejiang Province, where she served as a Church leader.

On July 2, 2017, plainclothes policemen from the National Security Brigade of the Public Security Bureau in Lishui City entered Mo’s apartment, confiscated several books and electronic files containing Church of the Almighty God teachings, and took Mo and her husband for interrogation. 11 other members of the Church were arrested the same day. For 18 days, the police sought to force her to relinquish her beliefs while questioning her about the identities of other Church members and the location of Church assets. She was subjected to sleep deprivation and torture during this time.

Mo and other Church leaders were charged with “organizing and using a “Xie Jiao” organization to undermine law enforcement. She was sentenced to nine years in prison and fined about 4,500 US dollars in March 2018.

Source:

<https://humanrightscommission.house.gov/defending-freedom-project/prisoners-by-country/China/Mo%20Xiufeng>

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CHINA: Woman tortured to death by Chinese police: the case of Huang Guorong

HRWF (04.12.2018) Huang Guorong, was born on 22 July 1961 and lived in the Dongfanghong Forestry Bureau Shilin Farm in Heilongjiang Province. In 2002, she joined The Church of Almighty God. Around 16 April 2013, she was arrested by the local police during a religious gathering and was locked up in a detention center for the crime of “organizing and using a

superstitious sect or Xiejiao organization, and using superstitions to undermine the enforcement of the law.” While she was detained, Huang Guorong was not only beaten and given electric shocks by the police, but was also brutally force-fed feces. After 69 days of detention she began to suffer psychologically and physically; she had injuries all over her body, she was unable to walk, could not eat or drink, and was completely incontinent. She wasn’t able to take care of herself at all. On 10 July, she died without ever having the chance to clear her name; she was just 52-years-old.

Arrested and detained for attending a gathering

Around 16 April 2013, while Huang Guorong was in a gathering with another church member, they were arrested by Zhou Kai and two other officers from the Shichang Police Station. The police found faith-related books and CDs at their gathering site. They handcuffed Huang Guorong and took her and the books to the Shichang Police Station.

The next day, they locked her up in the Dongfanghong Forestry Bureau Detention Center for the crime of “organizing and using a superstitious sect or Xiejiao organization, and using superstitions to undermine the enforcement of the law.”

When her family learned of her detainment, they went to the detention center to see her on three separate occasions but were denied visitation every time.

Tortured to breakdown after 69 days of detainment

On 23 June, the detention center notified Huang Guorong's son asking him to handle procedures to have her released on bail pending trial. Her son demanded that he be allowed to see her before going through the formalities. The police pretended to go call for her, and returned to the son saying that she wasn't willing to come out – he had to take care of the formalities first. After he had paid 5,000 RMB in bail and handled the other procedures, four people carried Huang Guorong out of the detention center. They left her rolling around on the ground, yelling gibberish.

After they brought her home, Huang Guorong's family discovered that she didn't even recognize her own children. When they changed her clothing they discovered that from the neck down, her entire chest was black and blue; her ribs, her belly, and her four limbs were all purple and covered with wounds.

Medical treatment ineffective

That evening, Huang Guorong's family took her to Raohe County Hospital to treat her external wounds. At this time, she was in a very precarious psychological state; she would start trembling and crying out when seeing a person's shadow or hearing someone's voice.

The morning of 25 June, Huang Guorong's mind cleared for a little while—this was the only time she was fully awake after her release. Her son hurriedly asked her how she had been injured and whether the police had beaten her; she confirmed this. He then asked her why she wouldn't eat, she replied,

“I’m hungry but I don’t dare eat!” Her son asked, “What are you afraid of?” Huang Guorong said, “When they gave me food they mixed it with feces and made me eat it.”

Her family then took her to the Mudanjiang Hospital for treatment. Upon examining her, the doctor said that she had to be admitted to the ICU, but her family had no way of handling the daily medical expenses of over 10,000 RMB.

Around 20:00 on 10 July, 2013 Huang Guorong left this world without clearing her name.

No recourse, nowhere to turn

Before her passing, Huang Guorong’s family went to the Dongfanghong Forestry Bureau Discipline Inspection Committee to plead their case, but were threatened by the employees there, who said that if they continued to cause trouble they’d arrest them all. They then went to the Public Security Bureau, but the police refused to release the surveillance videos from the detention center. Huang Guorong’s family hired a lawyer to go with them to review the footage from the Public Security Bureau’s monitoring room, but there was an issue with the equipment, which their lawyer said was the authorities intentionally not allowing them to see the footage. In order to seek justice for Huang Guorong, her family posted a video to Baidu revealing her persecution by the CCP, but it was removed just ten minutes after being uploaded. They then contacted the Tencent news network on QQ, but before they had even finished describing the circumstances surrounding Huang Guorong’s death, the network said: “No, no one can report on

this kind of news.”

On 17 July, Huang Guorong’s family went to the detention center to request the bail money that had never been refunded. One employee admitted that Huan Guorong had been tied up and beaten by fellow detainees, and that after learning of this the director did nothing about it. When the police discovered she had had a mental breakdown, not only did they refuse to give her treatment, but they intentionally delayed notifying her family for six or seven days so that they could pay the bail amount.

At Huang Guorong’s grave, her family said: “Such a healthy person—being killed this way was such an injustice! We want to seek redress for you, but that’s impossible with the CCP in power. There’s nowhere to take our case!” Huang Guorong’s family looks forward to the day that the truth will see the light of day.

Those responsible for Huang Guorong’s death include:

- Zhou Kai, male, over 30, policeman of Dongfanghong Forestry Bureau Shilin Farm in Heilongjiang Province;
- Zeng Zhibin, male, Director of Public Security Bureau of Hulin City, Heilongjiang Province;
- Ding Yuquan, male, Deputy Director of Public Security Bureau of Hulin City, Heilongjiang Province;

- Zhang Wenjun, male, Political Commissar of Public Security Bureau of Hulin City, Heilongjiang Province;

- Wang Changhong, Executive Deputy Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Commission of the Party Committee of Dongfanghong Forestry Bureau of Hulin City, Heilongjiang Province;

- Ji Guosheng, male, Director of the Dongfanghong Detention Center of Hulin City, Heilongjiang Province

HRWF Comment

Members of The Church of Almighty God applying for refugee status in the EU, South Korea, Australia, Canada, the United States should be granted political asylum and should never be sent back to China.

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CHINA: Twenty banned religious groups

FOREF (15.10.2018) – <https://bit.ly/2pVeaFS> – On September 18, 2017, the revamped China Anti-Cult (xie jiao) website reiterated the list of banned groups which had been listed publicly in 2014. Of the total 20 groups, eleven were listed as being “dangerous”:

1. Falun Gong (法轮功)
2. The Church of Almighty God (全能神)
3. The Shouters (呼喊派)
4. The Disciples Society (门徒会)
5. Unification Church (统一教会)
6. Guanyin Method (观音法门)
7. Bloody Holy Spirit (血淋淋的神)
8. Full Scope Church (全能神)
9. Three Grades of Servants (三级仆人)
10. True Buddha School (真佛学校)
11. Mainland China Administrative Deacon Station (大陆中国行政执事站)

See the full article (25 pages) as published by CESNUR earlier this year: **The Black-Lists: The Evolution of China’s List of “Illegal and Evil Cults”** by Edward A. Irons

Abstract

In China, departments under the central government have published lists of banned and illegal religious groups since

1995. This practice can be seen as an extension of traditional ways of categorizing heterodox associations dating back to imperial times. Groups on the current list are often identified as xie jiao—normally translated as “evil cults.” The list is thus directly connected to questions of the categorization of religion in China. The study of the lists provides insight into the government’s evolving policy on religion, as well as the legal environment for religious activity.

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