

New report accuses the CCP of mass-scale human rights violations

By Willy Fautré, *Human Rights Without Frontiers*

HRWF (11.03.2019) - In 2018, more than 11,000 members of the Church of Almighty God (a new Christian movement with continuities to the Protestant tradition) were arrested in China for merely engaging in religious activities. It has been reported that twenty of them died during their imprisonment: seven of which were in so-called 'transformation through education centers', the same centers where one million Muslims from Xingjiang are currently detained and indoctrinated against their will.

According to information gathered by the Church of Almighty God (CAG), 23,567 of their members were persecuted by the authorities in 2018 for either attending underground religious meetings or for trying to share their faith with others.

Across thirty provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities, at least 12,456 church members have suffered harassment, including having their personal data collected, being forced to sign statements renouncing their faith, being forcefully photographed or video recorded, and having their fingerprints, blood samples, and hair involuntarily collected.

According to the report, some 6,757 members were held in detention either for short or long periods; 685 members were known to have been tortured and 392 members were sentenced to lengthy prison terms. The majority of individuals were sentenced to three years in prison, but eight were sentenced to more than ten years.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) estimates a total of 4 million members of the Church of Almighty God.

Since the Church's foundation in 1991, over 300,000 members have been arrested and at least 500,000 have fled from their homes. The report says that 101 known cases of death in detention have been confirmed by the Church.

The report details nineteen documented cases which demonstrate the CCP's use of arbitrary detention, torture, extra-judicial killing, propaganda against the CAG, and undue interference in applications for political asylum abroad.

The two cases below, taken from the report, illustrate the intensity of the repression (pseudonyms are used to protect the victims and their families).

Tortured & Humiliated, Aizhen's brutal story from a Chinese prison

On 9 May 2018, Aizhen (pseudonym) a 54-year old woman from Jiujiang City, Jiangxi Province was arrested in a police raid.

While at the police station, three police chiefs took turns questioning her. The interrogation lasted from 5:00 p.m. on the day of her arrest until the afternoon of the following day. She was brutally beaten and humiliated, deprived of sleep, and was not given anything to eat or to drink. They wanted to know her name and her address. They attempted to force her to release information about the Church and to sign a document by which she would renounce her faith. When she refused to comply, the police officers took off their leather shoes and used them to hit her face.

On 16 May, the police transferred her to a detention center. They indicated to the prison guards that she was a believer of The Church of Almighty God and required 'special

treatment'. While in custody, Aizhen was frequently subjected to beatings by both the prison guards and other prisoners. On three occasions she was handcuffed, suspended from a pole and beaten. Her entire body was black and blue.

The prison guards made Aizhen stand at attention facing the bathroom wall for over two hours every day and got other prisoners to watch over her. If they noticed she was praying, they would beat her. They pulled her into the restroom and pressed her head down on the floor, they hit her face, buttocks, and thighs with the soles of their shoes. They hit her all over her body. The inmates also beat and insulted Aizhen. Once, the head of the prison forced her to sit topless in the main hall under the surveillance cameras in order to humiliate and shame her.

Aizhen was released on 10 June. After returning home, her arms hurt so much that she could not fully stretch them. To this day, even after several rounds of medical treatment, she remains physically impaired.

Tortured to death

On the evening of 13 September 2018, Miao Zenghua, a fifty-one-year old woman, was arrested at home in Dunhua City, Jilin Province, by officers from the local Public Security Bureau (PSB). She had a heart attack on the spot and was sent to the hospital for emergency treatment. After regaining consciousness, despite her health condition, she was taken by the police to the local PSB where she was tortured for a confession.

On 14 September, her family received a call from the PSB and rushed to the hospital. They discovered that Miao was not breathing. Big purple and blue marks covered her left arm and legs. They were clearly the result of terrible torture.

Her medical record stated that when an ambulance arrived at the PSB on the afternoon of 14 September, she had already stopped breathing and her heart had ceased beating.

Miao Zenghua had joined The Church of Almighty God in 2007. She was a mid-level leader of the Church. Once CCP officials learned about her position, they targeted her for arrest.

Moving forwards for justice

In 2018, Brussels-based NGO, *Human Rights Without Frontiers* contributed to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review of China with a brochure titled "**Tortured to Death**" documenting numerous fatal cases of torture (See <https://hrwf.eu/forb/our-reports/>).

On the homepage of its website, *Human Rights Without Frontiers* has published documented cases of prisoners believing in the teachings of The Church of Almighty God in China. At the beginning of 2019, the list, which is only partial, comprised **1663 prisoners: 1291 women and 372 men** (See <https://hrwf.eu>)