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Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (15-30.12.2020)

30.12.20 - A 3-year "final solution" plan against The Church of Almighty God

Countless CAG members have been arrested following a national crackdown operation launched this September to eradicate the Church.

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29.12.20 - How Jews celebrated Hanukkah with Uyghurs in mind

The global Jewish community is refusing to stay silent in the face of mounting human rights atrocities perpetrated against the Uyghurs.

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28.12.20 - “Christmas, get out of China!”—But not before bringing CCP a lot of money

Christians were harassed, often with the pretext of COVID-19. Meanwhile, 80% of Christmas ornaments sold in the West were made in China.

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24.12.20 - A Christmas letter from Bitter Winter

2020 has been a bad year for religious liberty, not only because of the COVID-19. Bitter Winter was there every day to report, but needs your help.

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21.12.20 - “Anti-Cult Disneylands” proliferate in China

“Rule of law and anti-xie-jiao theme parks” put together the ubiquitous propaganda for “Xi Jinping’s thought on the rule of law,” and the persecution of religious minorities.

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21.12.20 - “Raising Goblins”: A bizarre accusation against Asian spiritual minorities

In 1997, a prosecutor accused a respected Taiwanese spiritual master of practicing black magic. Although ridiculous, the accusation was part of an historical and old tradition of discrimination.

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19.12.20 - Catholic sanctuary of our Lady of Zhaojialing under CCP attack

The village is a nationally famous pilgrimage site since the 19th century. Now, the Catholic signs and images are disappearing.

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18.12.20 - Uyghur forced labor in the cotton fields: denial is futile, the evidence is here

Game-changing revelations prove irrefutably that China's cotton trade is stained from start to finish with Uyghur forced labor.

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17.12.20 - Kaifeng Jews: As Hanukkah gift from CCP, more repression

"Judaism is not one of the five authorized religions, and therefore is illegal," authorities tell the century-old Jewish community.

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16.12.20 - Zhonggong: The "cult" that refused to die

Hundreds of police hunt for a new incarnation of a group the CCP believed it had successfully eradicated in 2016.

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15.12.20 - Religious books burned or trashed, printers jailed

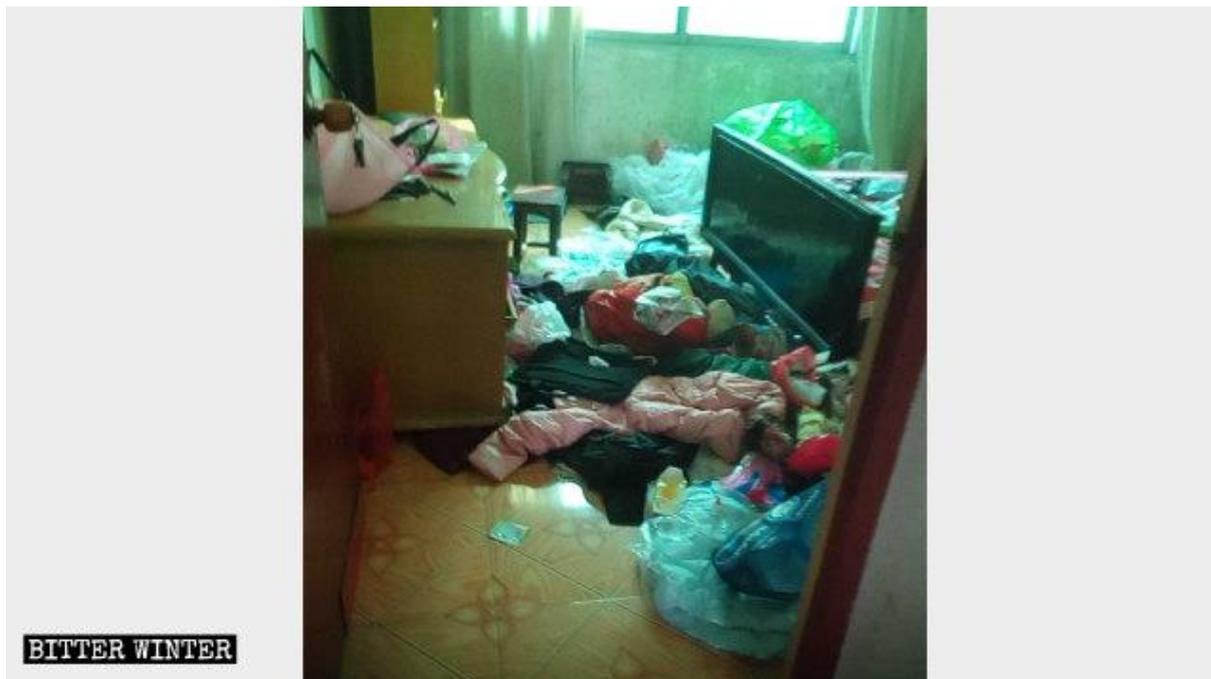
Not content with persecuting believers, the CCP confiscates and destroys Christian texts, Qurans, and Buddhist scriptures.

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A 3-Year "Final Solution" plan against The Church of Almighty God

Countless CAG members have been arrested following a national crackdown operation launched this September to eradicate the Church.

by Wang Yichi



A CAG member's residence in Yichun city after it was raided by the police

The Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission **issued a confidential document this September**, ordering a three-year crackdown operation targeting [The Church of Almighty God](#) (CAG) nationwide. The campaign aims to achieve three strategic goals: to destroy the Church's system domestically completely, to substantially downsize its membership by preventing Church activities and blocking new members from joining, and to curb the development of the Church abroad.

Chen Yixing, Secretary-General of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission, arranged the task at a work conference devoted to cracking down on, and dealing with, the CAG nationwide. He stated that the CAG not only has millions of members in China and is growing abroad, but also has a "perfect organizational system" and "extraordinary resilience ability." Chen designated the CAG as the [xie jiao](#) organization that currently imposes the most serious potential threat to the [CCP](#). He ordered to carry out a 3-year "general battle" against the CAG, by cracking down on it to control its growth, to curb its development, and to bring along other crackdown operations against it.

Since the document was issued, the government of the eastern [province](#) of Shandong has carried out a sustained arrest operation. Within three months, 562 CAG members were arrested, and on November 10 and 11, over one hundred CAG members were arrested in Qingdao city alone. At least 233 were arrested in Zibo and Tai'an cities. The arrest operation has also been carried out in other provinces.

Xixia city in Henan Province: 160 arrested one day

The suppression operation against the CAG was also launched in September in the central [province](#) of Henan. In Xixia [county](#), administered by Henan's Nanyang city, at least 160 CAG members were arrested in one day alone on November 10.

A government insider told *Bitter Winter* that various police officers were dispatched from Nanyang-administered counties to cooperate with public security officers from Xixia to arrest CAG members. The arrest operation began at 2 a.m. on November 10. Checkpoints were set up at every intersection and major road in the county, and the police, followed by workers from blacksmith companies, went to houses of CAG members to arrest them. If any of them refused to open their door, the police ordered the workers to unlock the door, before making their way into the house and searching every room.

The arrest operation lasted three days. After November 11, over one thousand plainclothes police officers patrolled residential quarters and sites, resulting in successive arrests of further CAG members.

“Over 20 police officers armed with submachine guns broke into a CAG member’s house and arrested three fellow members,” an elderly CAG member told *Bitter Winter*, with lingering fear while recalling the scene of arrest.

“At 4 a.m. on November 10, dozens of personnel came and totally surrounded our building. They pried open the lock with an iron rod and arrested five people who were sleeping,” an eyewitness said, who was a neighbor of these CAG members.

According to a police officer who participated in the arrest operation, about two thousand officers joined the arrest operation in six Nanyang’s counties. Ten of them on average arrested one CAG member. They all wore plain clothes and brought unlocking tools with them.

A government employee from Xixia county told *Bitter Winter* that, following the 3-day arrest operation, special investigation teams were established in all Xixia’s towns. Local plainclothes police officers joined forces with thugs to patrol and arrest CAG members. The government also offered monetary awards to those who provided clues on CAG members, ranging from 1,000 to 6,000 RMB (about \$ 150 to 900), according to the importance of clues.

Xuzhou city in Jiangsu Province: 71 arrested, many tortured

The police in Xuzhou city in the eastern province of Jiangsu carried out the arrest operation against the CAG in September, detaining at least 71 CAG devotees. Some released CAG members told *Bitter Winter* that they were tortured during police interrogation.

On September 7, three CAG members were arrested and detained in Xuzhou-administered Xinyi city. “During the interrogation, a police officer gave me hard slaps on the face, and he shocked my chest, back, and arms with an electric baton, until the baton was dead. He then got another baton and shocked my neck for over ten minutes. It hurt as if the flesh were torn off my neck,” one female devotee who was released reported to us, adding that the police tortured her in order to force her to give up the information on church leaders and money.

Three other CAG members from Xinyi were arrested on September 22, and nearly 20,000 RMB (about \$ 3,000) of personal and church assets were confiscated. They then were taken to a local hotel, where they were secretly interrogated for seven days.

"As the police knew that I had been a church leader, they deliberately cranked the TV volume so loudly or played noises through a loudspeaker to prevent me from sleeping, forcing me to give up the information on the Church," one of the arrested CAG members said.

A nearly 70-year-old CAG member was taken by the police away from her home on September 4. This was the third time she was arrested. Two 17-year-old CAG members were also arrested, and one of them is still in custody.

Arrest operations continue in Jiangxi and Shaanxi provinces

After 22 CAG members were arrested in October in Yichun city in the south-eastern province of Jiangxi, the local police continued their arrest operations against CAG members. In November, at least 24 CAG members were arrested, and personal and church assets worth 144,000 RMB (about \$ 22,000) were confiscated. The youngest among the arrested was only 17 years old.

On top of that, the CCP searched and arrested CAG members taking advantage of the population census. On October 28, nine CAG members were arrested in Xianyang city in the northwestern province of Shaanxi. As reported to *Bitter Winter*, the police broke into a CAG member's house on the pretext of "population census" that night. They questioned and searched, and then they arrested two CAG members and confiscated their belongings worth 16,000 RMB (about \$ 2,500).

"This is not an ordinary census. Previously, census takers left soon after asking a few questions," our source said. "During this census, however, the police did not investigate other residences but had targets (aimed to arrest CAG members)."

International Criminal Court says it cannot investigate crimes against Uyghurs in China

By Ewelina U. Ochab

Religion unplugged (21.12.20) - <https://cutt.ly/ZhMYOji> - Last week, the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) to the International Criminal Court (ICC) confirmed that it could not take further the case of the Uyghurs.

In its report, OTP stated that there was no basis to proceed at this time. The statement comes after on July 6, 2020, lawyers for the East Turkistan Government in Exile (ETGE) and the East Turkistan National Awakening Movement (ETNAM), have submitted a communication to the OTP asking for an investigation to be opened against senior Chinese leaders for genocide and crimes against humanity allegedly committed against the Uyghur and other communities.

As China is not a party to the Rome Statute, and hence, the ICC does not have the territorial jurisdiction over the crimes allegedly perpetrated there, the communication advances the argument, earlier used in the case of Myanmar/Bangladesh, that part of the criminal conduct occurred within the territory of a state party to the Rome Statute. In that case Pre-Trial Chamber I of the ICC held that "the Court may assert jurisdiction pursuant to article 12(2)(a) of

the Statute if at least one element of a crime within the jurisdiction of the Court or part of such a crime is committed on the territory of a State Party to the Statute.” In the case of Myanmar/Bangladesh, the argument enabled the ICC to engage and investigate the atrocities.

In the case of the Uyghurs, the communication argued that part of the criminal conduct occurred in Tajikistan and Cambodia what could open the door for the ICC to engage on the situation. The communication incorporates evidence of “brutal torture through electrocution, humiliation in the form of being forced to eat pork and drink alcohol, mandatory insertion of IUD birth control for Uyghur women of child-bearing age—of which there is recent evidence of a major increase, and an estimated 500,000 Uyghur children being separated from their families and sent to “orphanage camps” where there have been credible reports of attempted suicide by the children.”

The OTP distinguished the cases and stated that the precondition for the exercise of the ICC’s territorial jurisdiction did not appear to be met with respect to the majority of the crimes alleged, including genocide, crimes against humanity of murder, imprisonment or other severe deprivation of liberty, torture, enforced sterilisation and other inhumane acts).

The OTP further assessed the alleged crimes perpetrated in Cambodia and Tajikistan, and observed that “while the transfers of persons from Cambodia and Tajikistan to China appear to raise concerns with respect to their conformity with national and international law, including international human rights law and international refugee law, it does not appear that such conduct would amount to the crime against humanity of deportation under article 7(1)(d) of the Statute.”

The OTP concluded that: “In the present situation, from the information available, it does not appear that the Chinese officials involved in these forcible repatriation fulfilled the required elements described above. While the conduct of such officials may have served as a precursor to the subsequent alleged commission of crimes on the territory of China, over which the Court lacks jurisdiction, the conduct occurring on the territory of States Parties does not appear, on the information available, to fulfill material elements of the crime of deportation under article 7(1)(d) of the Statute.”

The OTP confirmed that it has received a request for reconsideration pursuant article 15(6) on the basis of new facts or evidence. The OTP is yet to consider and make a determination on these new facts or evidence.

Religious books burned or trashed, printers jailed

Not content with persecuting believers, the CCP confiscates and destroys Christian texts, Qurans, and Buddhist scriptures.

by Deng Changlin

26 people given hefty sentences for printing Good News Mission books

Bitter Winter (15.12.2020) - <https://bitterwinter.org/religious-books-burned-or-trashed-printers-jailed/> - On July 7, the People’s Court of Huai’an city’s Huaiyin district in the

eastern province of Jiangsu gave hefty sentences to Xian Renguo, director of the Secretarial Department of the South Korean Good New Mission, and other 25 people on the charge of "illegal business operations."

Xian Renguo was sentenced to three years and ten months in prison, and fined 20,000 RMB (about \$ 3,000). Two other Mission members in charge of books were sentenced to three years and six months in prison, and were given fines. Several printing house managers were sentenced to three years of imprisonment, with a probation period ranging from three to five years. Most of them were fined 100,000 RMB (about \$ 15,000) or more. Many others who participated in the translation, compilation, and printing of books were given prison sentences ranging from six months to two years. These people who received sentences involved 13 provinces of China.

The court also gave fines ranging from 30,000 (about \$ 4,500) to 110,000 RMB (about \$ 16,500) to the Changlü Paper Product Co. Ltd. in Yiwu city in the eastern province of Zhejiang, the Tianhong Color Printing Co. Ltd. in Guangzhou city in the southern province of Guangdong, and three other involved printing houses.

According to our sources, the Good News Mission established the Secretarial Department in Guangzhou city in 2009, whose major task was to compile and publish "Looking Up" (仰望), "Colorful Dreams" (七彩梦), and other religious publications. These two books mainly include testimonies on the experiences of Mission members, and are intended for internal circulation within the Mission. Nearly all of these 26 people were sentenced for participating in the compiling and printing of these two books.

Sentenced for photocopying religious materials



A warning notice posted on the wall of a printing shop reads "a ban on printing religious-related printing materials without confirming clients' legal certificates" (i.e., printing permits).

A printing shop owner in the southwestern province of Guizhou was detained by the police in September for 37 days on "suspicion of illegal business operation" for photocopying the Quran, and was later released on bail.

A house church preacher in Fushun city in the northeastern province of Liaoning was arrested in December last year for transporting religious books, and is still held in a detention house now.

In November 2019, a house church member was sentenced to ten months in prison on the charge of "illegal business operation" for printing children's Christian books used within the church, and the involved printing house manager was also sentenced to ten months in prison.

EU-CHINA: Advocacy for the Uyghur issue

Speech on behalf of HR/VP Borrell at the European Parliament on forced labour and the situation of the Uighurs in Xinjiang

Madam President, Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

EEAS (17.212.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3p7IWIo> - The European Union has spoken out clearly and repeatedly on the situation of Uighurs: expressing grave concerns about political re-education camps, surveillance, and restrictions on freedom of religion and belief.

As High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell mentioned during the debate on the situation of Uighurs one year ago: "the policies applied to Xinjiang appear disproportionate to the stated aim of fighting against terrorism and extremism". The conclusions of United Nations experts expressing serious concerns are, regretfully, still valid.

During the past year, a number of reports have brought to light worrying allegations that Uighurs and other minorities in China are subject to forced labour and forced labour transfer schemes, as well as forced sterilisation and forced birth control. They add to the gravity and magnitude of concerns we already expressed.

EU leaders raised these concerns in their meetings with Chinese leaders this year: at the EU-China Summit on 22 June and at the EU-China Leaders' Meeting on 14 September. We also issued a comprehensive statement during the last UN Human Rights Council, under the 'Item 4' debate on human rights situations that require the Council's attention. We clearly highlighted the need for meaningful access to the region for independent experts.

We will continue to call on China to uphold its national and international obligations, and to respect human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, especially in Xinjiang and Tibet. Defending human rights and combatting forced labour are priorities for the EU.

As a key trading partner of the EU, China should ensure that business activities in its territory meet international standards on labour rights and responsible business conduct. We expect the Chinese authorities to implement those standards across all sectors of production and at all levels of supply chains.

Responsible business practices by European companies working in China play a very important role. While the Commission is working on a legislative proposal on sustainable corporate governance, the EU already has mandatory standards in some sectors and actively promotes international guidelines. European companies are already encouraged to implement effective due diligence practices across their supply chains.

The Commission and the European External Action Service will continue working with companies to underscore the importance of taking up international due diligence guidelines in all aspects, including human rights.

The new EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, adopted on 7 December [2020], enables the EU to forcefully stand up for human rights. It allows the EU to target human rights violations and abuses worldwide, irrespective of where they occur. The regime does not contain any listings yet; however, we expect discussions on listings to start soon.

I thank you all for your engagement in this debate and your contributions to further increase the awareness on this matter.

Thank you.

Link to the video: <https://audiovisual.ec.europa.eu/en/video/I-200285>

Switzerland-China secret deal: Did it affect religion-based refugees?

An NGO published a confidential document hinting at the disturbing possibility that Chinese State Security agents directly interfere in asylum cases.

by Rosita Šorytė



The Embassy of China, Bern, Switzerland.

Bitter Winter (14.12.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3mmDjnG> - On December 9, 2020, the Spanish NGO Safeguard Defenders published the confidential text of an agreement between Switzerland and China dated December 8, 2015. That the agreement existed was known from an article published on *NZZ am Sonntag* on August 23, 2020, which led to considerable political controversy, but Safeguard Defenders has published the text for the first time. Its authenticity has not been disputed.

The deal is part of a broader category of so-called “readmission agreements,” which are commons between democratic countries. They provide for reciprocal cooperation between the immigration authorities of two countries, when an unauthorized immigrant coming from one of them is identified in the other. Once his or her identity and nationality have been ascertained, the two countries cooperate to take the immigrant back home.

The agreement with China, however, is anomalous for three different reasons. First, it is not reciprocal, which can be explained with the fact that perhaps not many Swiss try to illegally immigrate to China.

Second, it authorizes teams of two experts from the Chinese Ministry of Public Security to travel to Switzerland confidentially, with their identities kept secret and their travel expenses paid by Swiss taxpayers, to cooperate with Swiss immigration authorities. It is true that the Ministry of Public Security in China is in charge, inter alia, of immigration. But it is also true that it is a ministry of police, also dealing with the repression of dissidents and banned religious groups.

Third, the Chinese “experts” from the Ministry of Public Security are authorized to interview the Chinese “with irregular stay in Switzerland” on Swiss soil, advise the Swiss authorities on whether they should be sent back to China, and share the information they collect with the Chinese Embassy in Bern. The agreement states that personal data collected in the process should be kept “confidential,” and not used for purposes other than those stated in the agreement, but one can easily imagine how safe is information about Chinese who escaped from China in the hands of Beijing’s Embassy.

A key question is whether the Chinese Public Security agents intervene only in the cases of economic immigrants, or also in those concerning refugees who seek asylum in Switzerland for reasons of political or religious persecution. After the *NZZ am Sonntag* started investigating the matter, this question was officially answered. Swiss authorities told the newspaper that “asylum seekers” are included in the scope of the agreement, and indeed four of them were sent back to China in 2016 after having been interviewed by the Chinese Public Security agents. They were keen to add that “Tibetan and Uighur asylum seekers are not affected by the agreement and would not be sent back to China due to the threat of persecution they face.”

Arrangement between
the State Secretariat for Migration of the
Federal Department of Justice and Police of the
Swiss Confederation

and the

Exit and Entry Administration of the
Ministry of Public Security of the
People's Republic of China

on

the identification of alleged Chinese citizens with
irregular stay in Switzerland

This is good for Tibetans and Uyghurs, but there is an important omission. In Western Europe in general, in recent years the majority of religion-based refugee claims did not come from Tibetans and Uyghurs. They came from Christians persecuted in China, most of them from members of a Christian new religious movement, The Church of Almighty God. Chinese embassies have been active in spreading fake news about this group, and actively intervene to prevent its members from obtaining asylum in democratic countries. The book by Massimo Introvigne *Inside The Church of Almighty God: The Most Persecuted Religious Movement in China*, published this year by Oxford University Press, tells the story of Wang Xiumei, a Church of Almighty God asylum seeker in Switzerland, who received a deportation order from the Swiss authorities. Wang agreed to go back to China spontaneously, but took the precaution of not returning to her home in Linshu County, Shandong. Instead, she rented a room in the housing facility of a construction company in the same county. Yet at the end, the police knocked on her door and arrested her as a member of a *xie jiao*, a banned religious movement. On February 9, 2018, the Linshu County People's Court sentenced Wang to three and a half years in jail under Article 300 of the Chinese Criminal Code, which punishes those active in a *xie jiao*.

We do not know in which cases of which refugees the Chinese agents intervened, and whether the case of Wang Xiumei was included. Yet, we know that under the agreement with Switzerland, Chinese Public Security agents were involved in cases of asylum seekers other than Tibetans and Uyghurs, and we know that China continuously tries to prevent members of The Church of Almighty God from obtaining asylum abroad.

The agreement between China and Switzerland was due for renewal on December 8, 2020. It is unclear whether it has been secretly renewed, after the protests of politicians and NGOs, although the head of the Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Mario Gattiker, stated in August that “such arrangements were in the interest of Switzerland, and that Bern—not Beijing—was pushing to renew the agreement.”

One also wonders whether secret agreements parallel to the one signed with Switzerland exist with other countries, without having been leaked to independent media or NGOs. That Chinese Public Security agents may roam free in democratic countries, interview asylum seekers, and work with local authorities to send victims back to their executioners is clearly intolerable. Wherever it happens, it should be stopped.

Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (07-14.12.2020)

14.12.20 - Falun Gong torturer punished by U.S. Department of State

A police chief of Xiamen, Fujian, was described by the CCP as a “hero,” working 12 hours a day against xie jiao. The U.S. believes he is in fact a criminal.

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14.12.20 - Buddhist temples vandalized in California

Six places of worship have been attacked in one month. Local officials and police denounce a sustained campaign of hate crime.

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14.12.20 - Switzerland-China secret deal: Did it affect religion-based refugees?

An NGO published a confidential document hinting at the disturbing possibility that Chinese State Security agents directly interfere in asylum cases.

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12.12.20 - “Xi Jinping’s thought on the rule of law”: A new key tool of CCP ideology

“The whole country” is called to study and propagate, both in China and internationally, an idea of the law antithetical to Western democracy

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12.12.20 - Church of Almighty God refugees struggle for asylum status in democratic countries

Better Country of Origin Information (COI) led to favorable decisions in some countries—but not all courts are aware of them.

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10.12.20 - Huawei has technology to recognize Uyghur faces: The evidence

Chinese electronic giant tries to deny that it produces technology for Uyghur face recognition. But it's all true, here are the proofs.

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08.12.20 - Numerous protestant venues shut down across China.

Local authorities raid and close places of worship using various pretexts, from poverty alleviation to epidemic prevention.

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07.12.20 - How Sun Tzu and the "36 Stratagems" inspire China's deceptive diplomacy

Old Chinese classics on how to deceive and manipulate enemies are studied and put into practice by the CCP "Wolf Warrior" diplomats and politicians.

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Church of Almighty God refugees struggle for asylum status in democratic countries

Better Country of Origin Information (COI) led to favorable decisions in some countries—but not all courts are aware of them.

By Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (12.12.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3nk7q0n> - Although the COVID-19 pandemic made escaping China and entering democratic countries more difficult, administrative commissions and courts continue to hear cases concerning Chinese refugees. The largest number of religion-related asylum cases concerning Chinese citizens refers to members of The Church of Almighty God (CAG), a Chinese Christian new religious movement that is currently the most persecuted religious group in China.

The outcome of their asylum proceedings largely depend on which COI (Country of Origin Information) about both the situation of religious liberty in China and the CAG are available to, and relied upon, by the commissions and courts involved.

The first decisions about CAG asylum seekers were mostly negative, and based on COI with incomplete and often erroneous information on the Church. There were two reasons for this. First, COI are based either on scholarly studies or on journalistic sources. The latter, even when published in the West, mostly reflected official Chinese publications that tried to justify the persecution of the CAG. For independent scholars studying the CAG in China, where it is heavily persecuted, is virtually impossible. Serious academic studies on the CAG started appearing after the Church established communities in democratic countries, i.e. from 2015 on, and became significant after 2017, in turn influencing some quality media. Second, as Bitter Winter has repeatedly learned from lawyers involved in asylum proceedings, Chinese embassies and consulates continue to supply authorities in the countries where the refugees arrive with hostile information about the CAG.

Even when produced by governmental agencies, most pre-2017 COI on CAG were inadequate, and often repeated fake news spread from the Chinese propaganda. Starting in 2017, however, the situation changed. While scholars had criticized COI produced in 2014 by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, often quoted in European decisions, the Canadian Board released new and updated COI in 2019, after consulting with the leading Western scholars who had written about the CAG.

In the same year, the Italian Ministry of Internal Affairs published its COI (in Italian) on the CAG and its persecution in China. A parallel COI report by the same Ministry highlighted how CAG members abroad are kept under surveillance and identified through facial recognition, so that they can be arrested if they return to China. Finally, in 2020, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands published new COI on China, with a substantial section on the CAG. In 2019 and 2020, the Department of State of the United States also examined the persecution of the CAG in its yearly reports on religious liberty.

Although a CAG believer may find occasional incorrect details when CAG theology is mentioned, these documents from 2019 and 2020 are based on a serious and commendable effort to deal with the scholarly literature on CAG now available. Based on these COI, it should be possible for CAG refugees to be recognized as members of a persecuted minority, whose reasonable and justified "fear of persecution" should they return to China entitles them to asylum in democratic countries.

This is indeed the case when the new COI are read and used. For example, several decisions issued after the new Dutch COI were published granted asylum in the Netherlands to CAG believers. In Italy, several decisions, including two by the Supreme Court, were also favorable to CAG refugees.

Unfortunately, however, we still see decisions where old COI are used, the new COI are ignored, and unfounded arguments are invoked to conclude that CAG refugees are not entitled to asylum. Bitter Winter has learned of a recent negative decision in Italy that is somewhat typical in this respect, but examples also exist in other countries.

Some decisions recognize that there is no religious liberty in China, and that the CAG is persecuted, but regard the individual story of the CAG asylum seeker as not believable. Refugees who arrive in a new country may sometimes be afraid and confused, and not capable of clearly reporting their stories. It is also the case that the official translators provided by the commissions may not offer the high translation quality that would be needed in such delicate cases.

Commissions should look at the larger picture rather than looking for contradictions in lesser details. Since, as the most recent COI confirm, being a member of the CAG is

enough to be arrested and jailed in China, once the fact that an asylum seeker belongs to the CAG is proved, the “fear of persecution” should be regarded as proved too.

There are, however, decisions that do not recognize the existence of a religious persecution in China or that the CAG is persecuted. Some seem to trust more the information spread by the Chinese embassies than the COI of their own governments (in Italy, one decision continued to quote outdated COI from the University of Rome, while new ones from the Ministry of Internal Affairs are available). In rare cases, governmental COIs and scholarly studies are dismissed as coming from sources “hostile to China”—which would of course disqualify almost all scholars and international human rights bodies who have dealt with China, as they unanimously concluded that human rights are not respected there. Unbelievably, Chinese propaganda claiming that religious liberty prevails in the country is believed, together with the fake news about the CAG, and this despite the fact that recent COI produced by governments tell a different story.

It is also false to argue that only scholars and governments hostile to China report about the persecution of the CAG. In fact, these news often come from the Chinese government itself. An official Chinese Web site on the repression of the xie jiao (religious groups banned by the government) has a section on court cases, and informs weekly on decisions sentencing CAG members to several years in jail only because they practice and spread their faith. China operates the largest data base of legal decisions in the world. Although it does not include all decisions rendered in China, searching for cases involving CAG devotees leads to find hundreds of them sentenced to severe jail penalties for the only “crimes” of gathering for worship, evangelizing, or keeping at home CAG literature. The conclusion is that the information about the persecution of the CAG in China does not come from governments and scholars critical of China only. It comes primarily from the Chinese authorities themselves.

Finally, some decisions continue to argue that, if the CAG asylum seekers had been really persecuted in China, they should not have been able to obtain a passport. If they obtained a passport, some European decisions state, this is the proof that they were not persecuted.

A legal answer to this argument is that the asylum seekers should not prove they were persecuted in China, but that they have a “well-founded fear of persecution” (Article 1 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, Article 1 of the 1967 Refugee Protocol, Article 2 of the 2011 European Union Recast Qualification Directive). As the Italian COI on CAG and facial recognition specifies, even if the refugees were not known as CAG members in China, when they obtained the passport, they are known to the Chinese authorities as CAG believers now, because China keeps watch of the CAG and other dissident Chinese communities abroad, and identifies its members through facial recognition. If they go back to China, they will be arrested.

But there is also a factual answer. Once again, when stating categorically that a member of a persecuted group cannot obtain a passport in China, some European decisions rely on outdated COI on Chinese security, and also on a faulty logic. Chinese security systems are not infallible, and as the 2020 Dutch COI on China report, can possibly be overcome “through bribery.”

Plain logic should also help in concluding that obtaining a passport for a CAG member is not impossible. Every month, Chinese sources report that dozens of CAG members have been identified and arrested. While this proves persecution, it also proves that there are thousands of CAG believers who have not yet been identified as such (otherwise, they would have been arrested before). Before they are identified as CAG members, they live in a situation of risk and “well-founded fear” (as they can be identified or exposed at any

time, particularly because those who denounce them receive significant monetary rewards), but can still be able to obtain a passport.

Obviously, political considerations interact with the purely legal ones. In certain countries, the desire not to antagonize China may prevail on other considerations. Yet, administrative commissions and courts should recognize that in China there is no religious liberty, that CAG is severely persecuted, that being identified as a CAG member is enough to go to jail for several years, and that China keeps a watch on CAG communities abroad and knows who is active there. These are all facts, easy to be proved, and acknowledged by COI published by governmental authorities. Those who send back to China CAG asylum seekers should know they are sending them to jail, or worse.

Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (01-07.12.2020)

06.12.20 - How Sun Tzu and the "36 stratagems" inspire China's deceptive diplomacy

Old Chinese classics on how to deceive and manipulate enemies are studied and put into practice by the CCP "Wolf Warrior" diplomats and politicians.

[Continue reading...](#)

04.12.20 - Protestant churches continue to be destroyed across China

Both Three-Self and house church venues have been demolished under various pretexts in Shaanxi, Anhui, and other provinces. Exclusive videos and pictures from Bitter Winter.

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04.12.20 - Tax justice, religious freedom, and the Tai Ji men case

A movie and a side event at the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom or Belief focused on how taxes can be used to deny religious freedom or belief.

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03.12.20 - 76 Church of Almighty God members sentenced to prison

The believers were sentenced to years in prison merely for practicing their faith. One of them was just 19.

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03.12.20 - From Charlie Hebdo to "The Boys": "Freedom of expression" vs. religious liberty

Where exactly lies the limit between free speech and hate speech that offends members of a religion? Many discuss Charlie Hebdo—but it is not the only case. The Boys is another pop culture example.

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01.12.20 - More crosses toppled from christian venues

For over two years now, CCP implements a comprehensive nationwide campaign to remove religious symbols from places of worship, documented here with exclusive pictures.

[Continue reading...](#)

01.12.20 - New unified arrest operations target The Church of Almighty God

Over 300 believers were arrested in October and November, as local authorities launched new crackdown campaigns against this Chinese Christian new religious movement.

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Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (18-30.11.2020)

27.11.20 - Exposing religious persecution leads to harsh punishment in China

The CCP treats any disclosed information about its actions to suppress people of faith as “the divulgence of state secrets” and cracks down on “leakers.”

[Continue reading...](#)

26.11.20 - CAG members tortured in Xinjiang’s internment camps

Members of banned religious groups are often detained in transformation through education camps. Three Church of Almighty God believers tell their stories.

[Continue reading](#)

25.11.20 - China uses national census to investigate people of faith

Enumerators of the 7th census are told to ascertain people’s religious status and notify the police about detected religious symbols and “suspicious” behavior.

[Continue reading...](#)

25.11.20 - The CCP cuts the number of churches through mergers

To prevent people from worshipping close to their homes, authorities across China close state-run Protestant venues and force believers to attend other churches.

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25.11.20 - China cracks down on religious exchanges with foreigners

A new draft law, of which Bitter Winter publishes the English translation, would severely limit the possibility of foreign visitors, including academics, to interact with Chinese discussing religion.

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24.11.20 - Religious funerals dispersed, cemeteries desecrated

The CCP bans all religious rites and traditions during funerals and threatens to punish local officials who allow them.

[Continue reading...](#)

24.11.20 - House churches are pushed to the brink of extinction

Unregistered Protestant venues are monitored by plainclothes police officers and residential communities' managers before their churches are raided and closed.

[Continue reading...](#)

22.11.20 - Unlicensed and official protestant venues destroyed nationwide

More accounts from across China on crackdowns against Protestant places of worship.

[Continue reading...](#)

21.11.20 - Buddhist, Taoist temples and statues destroyed nationwide

The CCP continues crackdowns on traditional Chinese places of worship and religious icons.

[Continue reading...](#)

20.11.20 - Association of disciples members arrested across China

Crackdown operations targeting this banned religious movement are being carried out since May, resulting in arrests of its key leaders.

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18.11.20 - Churches told to worship the CCP or face closure

Government propaganda continues to invade China's places of worship, as they are turned into publicity centers to promote the Communist Party and its leaders.

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House church leader in Yunnan detained for five days

International Christian Concern (23.11.2020) - <https://bit.ly/37dKWro> - The leader of a house church in China's Yunnan province was detained for five days as his "administrative punishment," since he held worship at his residence and "disturbed public order."

According to China Aid, on November 15, Li Chunze, the leader of a house church in Panlong District in the city of Kunming, saw Changqing police raided his house and accused the fellowship he attended for disturbing the order of public places.

Mr. Li, a local believer told China Aid, "The staff from the district religious affairs bureau said that it is illegal for believers to participate in religious activities at a venue not approved by the government. Numerous police officers transported all the attendees to the police station for interrogation. That evening, officials released all those they had arrested but one—Li Chunzhe, who remains detained."

The decision for administrative punishment provided by his church members shows that Li was subject to administrative detention (from November 16 to November 21) and fine, though it did not specify the amount. He was detained in Kunming Municipal Detention Center.

The house church led by Li was established about ten years ago, with most of the members being local senior citizens. While their Sunday service does not inconvenience their neighbors, local police and officials from the religious affairs bureau have requested them multiple times to join the state-sanctioned Three-Self church, to which they refused.

Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (10-17.11.2020)

17.11.20 - Propaganda bases replace religious venues

The CCP expands its propaganda bases across China to exert ideological control over the population. Numerous places of worship are seized for this purpose.

[Continue reading...](#)

17.11.20 - Outdoor Buddhist statues destroyed in temples and scenic areas

The CCP's campaign to eliminate Buddhist icons across China continues unabated for nearly three years. More accounts of demolitions.

[Continue reading...](#)

16.11.20 - Taoists deprived of temples, customs, and traditions

As China's communist government continues to invade and close down temples, Taoists are banned from wearing traditional clothes and hairstyles.

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15.11.20 - They demolished a temple and put up a parking lot

The CCP intensifies efforts to eradicate Buddhist and Taoist temples using various pretexts to cover up its true intentions—to suppress people of faith.

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14.11.20 - Felons torture religious inmates to earn sentence reduction

A former inmate and a Church of Almighty God member reveal details of mistreatment and torture prevalent in China's prisons to "transform" people of faith.

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14.11.20 - 370+ Church of Almighty God members arrested across China

Believers were arrested in several provinces from June to October after prolonged surveillance and pursuing tip-offs from residents.

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12.11.20 - Falun Gong banned in Khakassia, "liquidation" threatened in the whole of Russia

The law against "extremism" has been applied by the Novosibirsk court, following lobbying by Russian anti-cultists.

[Continue reading...](#)

12.11.20 - Landlords punished for renting to House churches

Authorities intimidate property owners and hotel managers who allow unregistered religious groups to hold religious gatherings.

[Continue reading...](#)

12.11.20 - Elderly man dies protesting temple demolition in Anhui Province

Buddhist and folk religion temples continue to be destroyed across the eastern province of Anhui, as their guardians face government threats and police violence.

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10.11.20 - Residents beaten for protecting their temples

Followers of Buddhism and Taoism, two traditional Chinese religions, face ruthless suppression at the hands of authorities for defending their religious liberties.

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Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (03-09.11.2020)

09.11.20 - Taoist temples demolished or repurposed across China

Cases of crackdowns against Taoism, one of the Chinese Three Teachings, from Zhejiang, Liaoning, and Jilin provinces.

[Continue reading...](#)

06.11.20 - Believers arrested and fined for Bible verse hand fans

Even little keepsakes with religious content are becoming off-limits to people of faith in China, as authorities punish those who make and distribute them.

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06.11.20 - Closed churches ordered to be sold, rented, or destroyed

Local governments repurpose places of worship and turn them into propaganda centers, entertainment venues, or factories. Some are even leveled to the ground.

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04.11.20 - How the CCP manipulated the “war on terror” for its own “war on the Uyghurs”

A new book by anthropologist Sean Roberts sheds light upon how the West naively accepted for decades the idea that atrocities in Xinjiang were justified by a “terrorist threat.”

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04.11.20 - Buddhist statues purged across Sichuan province

Temples throughout this southwestern province are increasingly pressured by local authorities to conceal or even destroy their large outdoor icons.

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03.11.20 - Catholic nuns deemed 'dangerous' and forced out of convent

The CCP ramps up intimidation and persecution of Catholics who refuse to join the Patriotic Church.

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03.11.20 - Minors intimidated to stay away from religion

The CCP imposes extreme measures to ensure that the young are not exposed to religion: from interrogating 10-year-olds to separating minors from religious families.

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Hunan, Protestant pastor on trial for 'subversion against the state'

The Rev. Zhao Huaiguo is accused of using the internet, bypassing censors and posting news about the Covid-19 epidemic in China. Since 2007, the authorities have been demanding that his domestic Church join the Three-Self Movement, but he has always refused.

AsiaNews.it (09.11.2020) - <https://bit.ly/32tZkdo> - The trial against Protestant pastor Zhao Huaiguo, founder of the Bethel House Church, in Cili County (Hunan), has begun on charges of "inciting subversion against the state". The first session of the trial took place last October 13, but the news has only emerged in recent days.

The pastor was arrested on April 2, but was taken by police since March 15. According to the prosecutor, the accused used software to bypass national internet censors; he recommended the software to his followers; he disseminated information on the Covid-19 epidemic in China and abroad. For the Communist Party of China, these actions seriously endanger national security.

As is now the practice in many trials in China, the authorities refused the choice of legal representation to Zhao and his family, forcing the accused to seek defense from an official lawyer. The latter, at the first session, admitted the accusation, instead of rejecting it, trying to obtain a more lenient sentence.

The trial was attended by Zhao's wife, his son and three members of his community.

Pastor Zhao founded his Bethel Church in 2007 in Cili near the city of Zhangjiajie (Hunan). The authorities have often asked him to join the Three Self Movement, the official body that brings together all Protestant denominations, but Zhao has always refused.

In March 2019, the public security forces, together with members of the Religious Affairs Office, carried out raids, destroying and seizing church property (liturgical instruments, religious symbols, bibles, songbooks, gospels, piano, ...). They declared community gatherings illegal and arrested the pastor.

According to some estimates, there are about 80-100 million Protestants in China. Of these, only 23 million adhere to the Three Self Movement, considered by the others as an easy tool in the hands of the atheist government.

Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (27.10-02.11.2020)

01.11.20 - Buddhist temples demolished across Hebei Province

Throughout the northern province of Hebei, local authorities continue crackdowns on Buddhist venues, not even sparing protected cultural heritage.

[Continue reading...](#)

31.10.20 - House churches suppressed across China

Numerous venues were shut down, believers arrested and dispersed in August across Henan, Guizhou, and Fujian provinces.

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31.10.20 - Buddhists struggle to survive after their temples are closed

As numbers of closed and destroyed Buddhist venues continue to swell, nuns and monks driven away from them find it agonizingly hard to live in the secular world.

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31.10.20 - Religious venues shut after assessment of local party cadres

Countless places of worship suffer devastating consequences as local authorities do anything to please CCP's visiting higher-ups.

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29.10.20 - Banned from churches, youth only allowed to believe in socialism

The CCP intensifies sanctions on Christian Sunday schools and summer camps while strengthening patriotic education to foster the new generation of Party followers.

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27.10.20 - Folk religion temples wiped out across China

After the coronavirus lockdown restrictions were lifted in April, authorities took to destroying temples on various pretexts.

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27.10.20 - Unapproved Buddhist books confiscated and burned

Local authorities across China confiscate from temples and shops materials that are not sanctioned by the state and investigate their distribution channels.

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Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (20-26.10.2020)

26.10.20 - Want to keep your temple? Worship Mao Zedong

Amid the nationwide crackdowns on religions, only the venues venerating Chairman Mao are protected from closures and demolitions.

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26.10.20 - Believers tortured and abused to renounce their faith

When members of The Church of Almighty God are detained for practicing their faith in China, they are subjected to various forms of physical and mental torture.

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24.10.20 - Facial recognition cameras installed in State-Run religious venues

More than 200 facial recognition cameras were installed in churches and temples in one Jiangxi Province county. This alarming practice is spreading across China.

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24.10.20 - Tiananmen Square protest supporters punished for 30+ years

Activists and advocates of the 1989 student protest, which was violently crushed by the regime, continue to be monitored and suppressed to this day.

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22.10.20 - Vatican and China renew their agreement

The Holy See admits that "extremely painful situations" are not solved, but claims it is too early to assess the effects of the deal.

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22.10.20 - Clergy ordered to promote the Communist Party in sermons

The government increases censorship on what is said in state-run Protestant churches, demanding pastors and preachers to advocate CCP policies and praise its leaders.

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22.10.20 - State-run protestant churches demolished on bogus pretexts

Even members of government-approved churches find it hard to practice their faith, as authorities throughout China exert increasingly harsh suppression measures.

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21.10.20 - New High School textbooks for patriotic education

The new teaching materials are one more tool to indoctrinate China's youth by promoting Maoism and slating Western democratic values.

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21.10.20 - House Churches closed as 'illegal venues,' believers punished

The CCP eradicates unregistered Protestant venues, harassing and arresting believers, imposing hefty fines on them.

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20.10.20 - Provisional asylum granted to two refugees from China in Kazakhstan

For the first time, authorities admit that ethnic Kazakhs are persecuted in Xinjiang. The two asylum seekers tell their story to Bitter Winter.

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Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (13-19.10.2020)

19.10.20 - 550+ Church of Almighty God members arrested in 4 months

Adherents to this banned religious movement, a key target of CCP's persecutions, were taken into custody in Jiangxi, Henan, and Guangdong provinces.

[Continue reading...](#)

18.10.20 - Now they come for the Uyghur children: Thousands sent to jail-like boarding schools

Eyewitnesses talk to Bitter Winter, and confirm that data published by scholar Adrian Zenz, unlike CCP propaganda, are believable.

[Continue reading...](#)

18.10.20 - Inner Mongolians pressured to sinicize their children

Amid the CCP's campaign to eradicate Mongolian cultural and linguistic identity, schoolteachers and parents are threatened to accept CCP's cultural genocide policies.

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17.10.20 - Religious weddings and funerals banned as illegal activities

People of faith, Buddhists and Christians alike, are not allowed to celebrate life's most significant moments according to religious traditions and rites.

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16.10.20 - Believers forced to renounce faith for social benefits

People of faith who receive subsistence allowances from the government face a hard decision to choose between religion and sustaining their livelihood.

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16.10.20 - Government orders to destroy Swedish missionaries' gravestones

Shanxi government desecrated the resting place of 20 missionaries, who worked and died in China nearly a century ago, and destroyed a house for visiting believers.

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16.10.20 - Is the world finally facing up to China?

A debate in the British Parliament, new calls to boycott the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, coalitions forming to protest atrocities in Xinjiang offer hope that the CCP crimes will no longer be ignored.

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14.10.20 - Church of Almighty God members subjected to sound torture

Three members of this banned religious group in China share their horrifying experiences of torture after being arrested for their faith.

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13.10.20 - More bans on religious materials not approved by the State

Businesses are prohibited from publishing religious texts that don't pass CCP's censorship, while postal and courier services are banned from distributing them.

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Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (07-12.10.2020)

10.10.20 - 90+ folk religion temples destroyed in Henan's Linzhou City

The municipal government launched a unified crackdown campaign, resulting in demolitions and takeovers of religious venues across rural areas.

[Continue reading...](#)

10.10.20 - The case of the Quran floating in the river: saving holy books from CCP desecration

Qurans are seized and burned in Xinjiang. In desperation, some put them in the Ili River, wrapped in plastic, hoping they will be recovered in Kazakhstan.

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09.10.20 - CCP sinicizes mosques to weaken muslim faith

Authorities in Shandong and Hebei provinces remove domes from mosques and vigorously promote the sinicization of Islam, demanding Muslims to obey the Party only.

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08.10.20 - Religious venues lacking State-issued permits face demolition

The CCP demands worship places to get religious activity venue registration certificates but denies almost all requests, creating a "legal" basis for persecution.

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08.10.20 - 39 countries at the UN express "grave concerns" on Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong—and refugees from China

39 Countries at the UN Express "Grave Concerns" on Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong—and Refugees from China

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07.10.20 - Students from Xinjiang Subjected to Disproportionate Control

Muslim students who attend universities in inland China are continuously monitored, barred from exhibiting ethnic and religious characteristics.

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07.10.20 - 'Xi Jinping's religious persecution harsher than Mao Zedong's'

Members of state-run Protestant churches suffer unmatched harassment at the hands of authorities, as their worship places are demolished on trumped-up pretexts.

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Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (29.09-06.10.2020)

06.10.20 - CCP officials: 'Christianity doesn't belong in China'

On top of removing crosses, Chinese authorities order to replace Christianity's main symbol on churches' seals with the five-pointed star.

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04.10.20 - Persecution of protestant churches intensifies

House churches and state-controlled Three-Self churches across China are raided and closed down. Believers are questioned, and their homes are searched.

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03.10.20 - Ancestral temples repurposed for public use

Even the venues where familial clans meet to honor their ancestors and celebrate important events have become targets of the CCP's crackdown on religion.

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02.10.20 - CCP investigates leaks about religious persecution

Increasingly criticized by the international community for crackdowns on people of faith, China's regime enforces more stringent measures to cover up its crimes.

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30.09.20 - China's persecution of the Uyghurs: A human rights emergency

The situation in Xinjiang is getting worse rather than better. It is time for the international community to speak up.

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30.09.20 - While a U.S. House bill targets Xinjiang slave labor, new voices support the Uyghurs

France calls to similar action. Ms. Tursunay Ziyawudun flees safely from a detention camp. Two awards honor the Uyghur cause.

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29.09.20- Catholics increasingly harassed ahead Vatican-China deal renewal

Some churches refusing to join the Patriotic Church are repurposed by the state, while others are barred from activities in the name of "epidemic prevention."

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29.09.20 - Surveillance devices planted in believers' homes

To keep members of The Church of Almighty God under constant control, the police follow their every move through listening and tracking devices.

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29.09.20 - Now they come for the Utsuls: sinicizing another Muslim minority

Denied its traditional clothing and identity, a Chamic-speaking people in Hainan Island is challenging the CCP with public protests.

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Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act

U.S. House of Representatives House passes legislation to crack down on business with companies using China's forced labor. HRWF welcomes the House of Representatives' passage of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act and calls upon the European Union to take a similar initiative.

US House passes legislation to crack down on business with companies that utilize China's forced labor

By Juliegrace Brufke

The Hill (22.09.2020) - <https://bit.ly/33Vzb6Z> - The House on Tuesday overwhelmingly passed legislation aimed at tamping down the exchange of goods made in forced labor camps by Uighur Muslims in China's Xinjiang region.

The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act — introduced by Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.) and passed in a 406-3 vote — would "prevent certain imports from Xinjiang and imposing sanctions on those responsible for human rights violations" from the region."

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have stressed the need for the U.S. to take action to combat the human rights abuses in China.

"It is time for Congress to act. Over the past several years we have watched in horror as the Chinese government first created and then expanded a system of mass internment camps," McGovern said on the floor ahead of the vote.

"As many as 1.8 million Uighurs and members of other predominantly Muslim ethnic minority groups have been arbitrarily detained in the camps and subjected to forced labor, torture, political intimidation, and other severe human rights abuses."

Rep. Michael McCaul (R-Texas) likened the abuses to what was seen in concentration camps in Nazi Germany.

"In July. U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized a 13-ton shipment of human hair. Madam Speaker, human hair that originated in the forced labor system," he said on the floor.

"We haven't heard about human hair since the nazis in the concentration camps of the war that my father fought in, World War II. It's brazen and sickening. We must refuse to be complicit financially or otherwise. And the CCPs crimes against the Uighurs, the Muslim Uighurs, for that reason I support this bill before us today."

The House is also slated to pass legislation that would require publicly traded companies in the United States that do business within the region to disclose information on their supply chains and whether their products are made by forced labor.

Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (15-21.09.2020)

21.09.20 - The architecture of Hui schools in Inner Mongolia 'hanified'

Buildings with Islamic architecture elements, like domes, are rectified as part of the CCP's Islam "sinicization" campaign in areas populated by Muslim Huis.

[Continue reading...](#)

21.09.20 - Nearly 550 protestant venues shut down in Jiangsu Province

During a six-month crackdown last year, authorities merged and repurposed places of worship using threats, intimidations, and other deceitful methods.

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20.09.20 - Church of Almighty God members driven to suicide

After years of abuse and harassment, living under close surveillance, some members of this banned religious group in China chose to take their own lives.

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19.09.20 - Teachers denied freedom of speech and religion

China's communist regime implements drastic censorship and ideological control measures to ensure that educators follow the Party line.

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19.09.20 - Sexual Abuse of Uyghur Women by CCP Cadres in Xinjiang: A victim speaks out

Now a refugee in Europe, Qelbinur has decided to break her silence and tell Bitter Winter the reality about Han Chinese "relatives" sent to Xinjiang to live in the homes of Uyghurs

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18.09.20 - House Church believers arrested for practicing their faith

It's increasingly hard for unregistered Protestant churches to survive, as numerous venues are closed to make believers join the official Three-Self Church.

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17.09.20 - Buddhist statues removed from temples and tourist sites

Using various trumped-up pretexts, the CCP continues its campaign to eliminate outdoor religious statues across China.

[Continue reading...](#)

16.09.20 - Unregistered catholics told to obey CCP or face consequences

As the Vatican-China Deal of 2018 expires this month, priests refusing to join the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association are threatened with more restrictions.

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16.09.20 - Uyghur students taught to neglect native language and culture

Han teachers working in schools for Uyghur children reveal the ugly side of the CCP's campaign to "support Xinjiang."

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15.09.20 - A thousand-year-old tibetan buddhist temple destroyed in Shanxi

The Fuyun Temple in the northern province of Shanxi was demolished after several attempts by the government to rectify it.

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15.09.20 - Tibetan youth 'sinicized' through education

The CCP brings gifted students from Tibet to study in inland China, forcing them to give up their culture, language, and traditions in exchange.

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Xinjiang: 1.3 million people a year 'educated' in internment camps

In a white paper, the Beijing authorities argue that the facilities are professional institutions to combat poverty. For the UN and a large part of the international community they are concentration camps. The US is ready to pass a law that blocks imports from the region. Swedish clothing giant cuts ties with Xinjiang supplier.

AsiaNew (18.09.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3j9J5sp> - The Xinjiang authorities have "educated" and trained 1.3 million residents a year between 2014 and 2019. In a first ever, the Chinese government yesterday published a white paper providing a figure on the number of people housed in what the United Nations and a large part of the international community consider "concentration camps".

According to expert data, confirmed by the UN, over one million Uyghurs (out of a population of nearly 10 million) and other Turkish-speaking minorities of Islamic faith are arbitrarily detained in Xinjiang, which the local population calls "East Turkestan".

Human rights activists and many governments, including the United States and the European Union, describe the detention facilities as concentration camps used to indoctrinate the Uyghur population.

After years of accusations, Beijing admitted the centres existed in October 2018, arguing however that they are vocational schools to educate Uyghur citizens, especially young people, against terrorism, separatism and Islamic extremism, and for fighting poverty – the document just presented reaffirms such a position.

On August 30, during a visit to France, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that all the people housed in these institutions had finished their studies and found employment. A 9/11 Radio Free Asia investigation proves the opposite: at least three concentration camps, with more than 20,000 Uyghur prisoners, are still in operation in Uchturpan county.

These policies in Xinjiang have brought international condemnation down on Beijing. The United States has imposed sanctions on Chinese politicians and officials involved in the repression of Uyghurs. In recent days, Washington has banned the importation of some goods from the region that it believes are produced through prisoner exploitation. In an agreement between Democrats and Republicans, the US Congress is ready to pass a law banning imports from Xinjiang when these are related to forced labour.

The Trump administration has already called on US companies to cut ties with their suppliers in Xinjiang. Nike and Apple, which have strong interests in the autonomous region, have opened an investigation into the employment of Uyghur workers and other local minorities. Some European companies are doing the same. On September 16, Swedish clothing giant H&M announced that it will cut off relations with a cotton producer suspected of exploiting Uyghur prisoners.

Mindong: Fr. Liu released (VIDEO). But in Zhengding the bishop has been kidnapped for over a month

The 46-year-old priest returned home yesterday at 6.30pm. Msgr. Julius Jia Zhiguo was taken from his residence last August 15.

AsiaNews (18.09.2020) - <https://bit.ly/33V3OJJ> - Fr Liu Maochun, an unofficial priest, kidnapped for 17 days by members of the Religious Affairs Bureau was released yesterday. A few hours after the AsiaNews report around 6.30 pm local time, Fr. Liu was able to return to his faithful (see [video](#)).

So no further news on his wellbeing has been shared.

Fr Liu, 46, is among about 20 priests in the diocese of Mindong (Fujian) who do not accept membership of the "independent Church" subject to the Chinese Communist Party. All these priests suffer from pressure and censorship to force them to sign up.

Meanwhile, some faithful from Zhengding (Hebei) recall that their bishop, Msgr. Julius Jia Zhiguo, not recognized by the government, has been held prisoner for over a month by the ministry of religious affairs.

According to information shared, the bishop was sequestered on August 15 to educate him in the politics of the Patriotic Association (PA), the organization that controls the life of the Church in China, which aims to build a national Church independent of the Holy See.

Msgr. Jia allegedly removed one of his priests who would have joined the PA from a parish of the diocese. The PA is demanding the priest be reintegrated into the parish.

According to Benedict XVI's Letter to Chinese Catholics, the decision to enter the official Church must be made by the bishop, after having conversed with all the priests (No. 7).

Bishop Jia is famous throughout China for his commitment to abandoned children. He is in charge of an orphanage that the authorities are constantly threatening to close.

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.

[Continue reading...](#)

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.

[Continue reading...](#)

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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Special Weekly FoRB Newsletter (01-08.09.2020)

07.09.20- Branded: a woman's 28-year-long religious persecution in China

A new film tells the story of a devotee who joined The Church of Almighty God at its beginnings. She was hunted, detained, and tortured ever since.

[Continue reading...](#)

06.09.20 - Banned religious groups' members 'transformed' in Xinjiang camps

Followers of The Church of Almighty God, Falun Gong, and Jehovah's Witnesses are kept in camps until they renounce their faith and betray fellow believers.

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06.09.20 - Religious venues suppressed in the name of epidemic prevention

Churches and temples were rigorously restricted to reopen after coronavirus measures were eased, and authorities used the situation to expand control over them.

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05.09.20 - Awards offered to snitch on unregistered religious venues

To prevent members of state-run churches from joining unregistered places of worship, the government implements new repressive measures to control them.

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05.09.20 - Uyghurs discriminated and abused in inland China

Authorities across China impose draconian control measures on Muslims from Xinjiang, prohibiting them from renting properties and running their businesses.

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04.09.20 - A people's tribunal to investigate allegations of Chinese genocide against the Uyghurs

World-famous legal expert Sir Geoffrey Nice has accepted to preside what is announced as the most thorough investigation ever of CCP crimes in Xinjiang.

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04.09.20 - Inner Mongolia: The CCP tries to blame all problems on "cults"

While protests on school reforms continue, the authorities launch a "Prevention of Xie Jiao Propaganda Month," and claim that banned religious groups are threatening the region's stability.

[Continue reading...](#)

03.09.20 - Islam 'sinicized' further in Ningxia after President Xi's visit

When the president scolded local officials in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region for not doing enough to curb Islamic culture, they rolled up their sleeves.

[Continue reading...](#)

02.09.20 - The disappeared: relatives of vanished Uyghurs tell their sad stories

August 30 was the International Day of the Disappeared. Bitter Winter interviewed exiled Uyghurs who are in the vain search of their loved ones.

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02.09.20 - State-run churches in Handan City destroyed as 'illegal'

Authorities in Hebei Province's Handan city intensify crackdowns on Protestant churches with valid, government-issued religious activity certificates.

[Continue reading...](#)

02.09.20 - Bishop Jia Zhiguo under house arrest again

The popular bishop was taken away by authorities on August 10. He has been harassed for months to close an orphanage for disabled children he runs for 30 years.

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Jehovah's Witnesses persecuted for 'political neutrality'

China's regime does not accept believers' religious choices and punishes them for not saluting the national flag or refusing to sing the country's anthem.

By Wu Xishan

Bitter Winter (31.08.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3jArIk6> - In May, the police in southeastern China investigated a student for not saluting the national flag during a school flag-raising ceremony. It was later revealed that her mother was a member of Jehovah's Witnesses, who was later arrested and interrogated about the Church's ties abroad. Her husband and their daughter were also questioned, and the woman was detained for five days for "disturbing the teaching process."

According to a church member, Jehovah's Witnesses don't align with political ideologies or sing national anthems because of their faith. Nor do they join political organizations, like the Communist Party. Their children also refuse to join China's League of Young Pioneers and wear its symbol—the red scarf.

These and other similar expressions of "political neutrality" by Jehovah's Witnesses, including not voting in elections or serving in the army, have landed many believers in trouble with Chinese authorities. Unlike most democratic countries, China does not recognize such peculiarities as this group's religious liberty and continuously persecutes its members, often regarded as a threat to its political stability.

The indictment by the People's Procuratorate of Korla city in Xinjiang against 18 Jehovah's Witnesses in 2019 states that these believers "were advocating and propagating the so-called 'political neutrality' and the ideas of not recognizing Chinese traditional culture, not joining the army, not singing the national anthem, refusing military service, not hoisting the national flag, and not participating in elections, etc."

The same 18 believers were later sentenced to lengthy jail terms for “organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement.” However, Jehovah’s Witnesses are not included in the CCP’s list of the xie jiao.

Multiple CCP documents issued since last year specifically mention severe crackdowns on Jehovah’s Witnesses to impede their religious activities.

On April 25, the police arrested a Japanese elder of Jehovah’s Witnesses as he was having a dinner meeting at a fellow believer’s home in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. According to a local Jehovah’s Witness, 11 Religious Affairs Bureau personnel and police officers stormed into the house and searched the premises. Having ascertained the man’s Japanese identity, officers took him to a police station in handcuffs and shackles for an overnight interrogation. The questioning has not yielded any results, so they ordered the Japanese national to “leave China within a week.”

A believer from Weihai city in the eastern province of Shandong told Bitter Winter that in August last year, a Jehovah’s Witnesses couple from South Korea were arrested while sharing the gospel in the province’s Qingdao city. They were later deported to their country and prohibited from entering China for five years. He also revealed that many South Korean preachers in Qingdao and other cities, like Yantai and Jinan, were forced to leave China, as religious persecution increased in China.

Jehovah’s Witnesses missionaries from abroad are reluctant to leave China regardless of their difficult situation. They often adopt various strict safety measures during gatherings and frequently move to avoid drawing attention to themselves. But with each new CCP’s surveillance measure, involving either citizen vigilantes or high-tech tools, safe spaces for practicing their faith in China become extinct.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (25-31.08-2020)

31.08.20- 160+ folk religion temples demolished, shut down in Sichuan

Chinese authorities crack down on all things religious, including venues of indigenous religions that have been an integral part of life in rural areas for years.

[Continue reading...](#)

31.08.20- Jehovah’s Witnesses persecuted for ‘political neutrality’

China’s regime does not accept believers’ religious choices and punishes them for not saluting the national flag or refusing to sing the country’s anthem.

[Continue reading...](#)

30.08.20- Xie Jiao-free communities help crush banned religious groups

Local governments across China urge to create “model” towns or villages without residents who are members of religious groups labeled “heterodox teachings.”

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29.08.20- Religious activities replaced with veneration of Mao Zedong

Places of worship were off-limits to believers amid the coronavirus outbreak, while activities to worship China's revolutionary leader in temples were green-lighted.

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27.08.20- State-run institutions investigate employees' religious status

Religious persecution in China affects each aspect of believers' life. Those unwilling to give up their faith may lose their jobs.

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26.08.20- Catholic churches destroyed or repurposed by the government

To make unregistered Catholics join the official Patriotic Church, authorities throughout China harass congregations and clergy members.

[Continue reading...](#)

26.08.20- Investigated for selling or buying Bible players

The CCP persecutes people for electronic devices with religious content as part of the campaign against "illegal publications and pornography."

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26.08.20- Mazars destroyed in Xinjiang: a cultural genocide continues

A study by Rian Thum shows how the most beloved Uyghur shrines are being either "museumified" or destroyed.

[Continue reading...](#)

25.08.20- Ancestral temples turned into communist party propaganda bases

Communist ideology continues to invade places of worship across China, as folk religion temples are repurposed to propagate President Xi's Thought.

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Inhumane persecution suffered in China before fleeing to Italy

HRWF (26.08.2020) - Chen Xin (pseudonym) was born in Fujian Province, China. He was a Christian from his childhood and joined The Church of Almighty God (CAG) in 2002. His faith, and connecting activities, caused his arrest in 2003 and his sentence of one-year detention in a labor camp. During that time he was subjected to severe punishments, and forced to do 14 hours a day hard labor. In October 2015 he fled to Italy and filed an application for asylum. He shared his experiences with Human Rights Without Frontiers.

Arrested for carrying a Bible and religious books

"On the night of June 30, 2003, when Brother Wu and I went to his relative's home to spread the gospel, we were stopped by the police at a fork in the road. They forcibly took away my laptop bag to search it. As soon as they found the Bible and some CAG books, they called the local Religious Affairs Bureau and took us to a border police station."

Interrogated, tortured, and sentenced to one-year imprisonment

"In order to get information from me about church leaders and church assets, the Religious Affairs Bureau officials and the police interrogated and tortured me. They violently slapped me in the face, beat, and kicked me. They pulled my hands from my back and tied my thumbs together tightly with a hemp cord. It hurt so bad that I could not sleep a wink that whole night. On the second day, the cord had already cut deep wounds in my flesh, and my thumbs were black and felt numb. Then the police ordered me to do the horse-riding stance. In less than two minutes it caused me to sweat and I was unable to control the trembling in my hands and feet. The policeman first slapped me various times, and then hit on my head with a book. My face was burning with pain and I heard a ringing in my ears. They then put a motorcycle helmet on my head and banged my head on the wall continuously for seven to eight times. The strikes caused me to feel dizzy and made me vomit, until I collapsed on the floor. The policeman then forcibly took me back again into the interrogation room. Seeing that I still refused to confess, a policeman made me kneel down, with my knees on the edge of a metal pan of only ten centimeters in diameter. Its edge penetrated deeply into my knees, making me suffer unbearably into the bones. After kneeling for about one minute, my whole body trembled. I felt dizzy, and soon fell on the ground.

Without any proof and with no officially recognized legal process, the CCP government charged me of belonging to a xie jiao organization, and sentenced me to one year of detention in a labor camp."

Stripped naked and forced to do slave labor

"In China's prisons believers in God are deemed to be the leading political criminals, meaning that both jailers and convicts can abuse and insult them at will. As soon as I entered the cell, the guards started to incite the other convicts to torturing me. They forced me to get completely naked, do a half squat, and open my mouth wide in front of everybody. Then by throwing a continuous jet of water into my face they almost suffocated me.

Life in the labor camp was inhuman. The cells are less than fifty square meters, and house more than seventy people, with horrible sanitary conditions. Every day we had plain rice which contained insects, and a bowl of vegetable soup with seven or eight worms, and no oil. As a result of the lack of nutrition, my body was swollen everywhere. Often I had allergic reactions. In the camp, I had to perform hard labor for fourteen

hours each day, without any remuneration. The needles caused blisters in my hands, causing great pain. I was given no bandages. Doing hard labor for such a long time, combined with hunger, gradually made me sick. I was given no medical attention. During the night I often heard the cries and screams of fellow convicts who were beaten by other inmates or the guards. It was so horrible. The prisoner in the bed opposite to mine had tried to commit suicide. All of those scenes occupied my mind from time to time, and I often woke up from nightmares. These ten months went by in pain, fear, and great suffering.

After I was released, the village officials repeatedly showed up at my house to be checked. The police threatened me with another arrest in case I believed in God.

To avoid being arrested again by the Chinese Communist Government, and for my family's safety, I had no choice but to leave my home, and run away. I continued practicing my faith in other places while doing odd jobs."

Fleeing China

"In July 2008, I was reported to the police by a couple when I had shared the gospel with them. I had to leave from there quickly.

During a decade on the run, the CCP police often searched for believers in God under pretense of checking for a so called Temporary Resident Permit. This caused me to live in constant fear, and to suffer miserably.

In July 2015, a brother in our church was arrested by the police; I, myself, was also seen in the security video they had. The police called my home phone to ask my whereabouts. They monitored the phone so they could find me and arrest me. Realizing that I lived in greater danger and that I had no place to hide in China, I decided to flee the country, and seek for asylum abroad.

Sometime later, using connections and money, I obtained a passport. In October 2015, I successfully fled to Italy. Once there I filed for asylum. Unfortunately, the Italian Immigration Department denied my application twice because of fabricated misinformation by the CCP. I appealed to the Supreme Court and am currently awaiting for a final decision. I sincerely hope the international community can truly stand behind those who are persecuted, rather than intentionally ignoring the CCP's persecution of Christians."

HRWF calls upon the relevant Italian authorities to grant asylum to members of The Church of Almighty God who have fled China because of the persecution.

(*) The real name of this asylum-seeker is known to HRWF.

Suffered repeated arrests and fled to Italy

HRWF (26.08.2020) - Mr. Zhiwen (pseudonym) was born in 1972 in Jiangxi Province, China. Already as a youngster he followed his mother in her Christian faith. He joined The Church of Almighty God (CAG) in 2000. On many occasions, the CCP tried to arrest him. The following arrest attempts and torture activities caused a fractured ankle and head injuries. In 2015 he felt forced to flee China and seek asylum in Italy. The following is a description of his experiences as shared with Human Rights Without Frontiers.

Church demolished twice

"We attended meetings of a house church and were often harassed by the CCP government. Officials of the township government would periodically burst into our meetings to restrict the topics of our sermons, as well as telling us where we could spread the gospel. They also forced us to become part of the state-sanctioned Three-Self Patriotic Church. After we refused to do that, our church was demolished. We rebuilt it but the government tore it down again, arrested the preacher of our church, and put him in prison."

First arrest attempt

"In August 2000, I accepted The Almighty God's message. Because I often spread the gospel, village committee officials and police officers repeatedly asked me to renounce my faith. They warned me that if I carried on believing in God and spreading the gospel, I would be sentenced to prison. One day, several officers from the local Police Station forced themselves into the home of my family without showing their credentials and searched it without a warrant. Our house was completely turned upside down. Seeing that I was not at home, they took my mother instead. Since then, I dared not go back home. I started a life on the run, moving from place to place."

Fractured ankle during escape from second arrest

"One day in June 2005, while I was preaching the gospel in an apartment, five to six policemen suddenly arrived and surrounded the building. Desperate as I was, I broke the wooden window frames of the restroom and escaped out of the window, letting myself fall down from the second floor. Several policemen blocked my way and one of them grabbed me by my clothes. I got myself loose and kept running, with the three policemen not far behind me. I ran through a paddy field and rough terrain. I then hid myself for some time in some thatches. I later hitched a ride to the hospital. The whole ordeal took long to recover, and to this day I cannot stand, or walk for a long time, or carry heavy objects."

Police brutality caused serious injuries

"One day in the winter of 2012, I went to preach the gospel to a brother's relatives. Soon four policemen showed up. They shouted at us loudly and condemned our gospel-preaching activities as disturbing the social order. Meanwhile, the police called up dozens of others to surround and attack me. When they caught me, they beat me with wooden sticks that were more than three feet long and three inches thick. I was pulled by my hair, struck near my temples, and hit in the chest. I was in shambles and fainted. The police car soon arrived and I was taken, without them showing their credentials. I had been beaten so badly that my head seemed to explode.

At the police station, I was interrogated about church information. But my pain was excruciating and my body shaking all over; I foamed at the mouth. Then I was taken to the county Public Security Bureau. As they were getting me out of the car, I could not even stand, and I fell on the ground. When they realized I was about to die, they left me in front of the gate. Later, a brother took me to hospital to give me the medical attention I needed. The recovery lasted more than a year. However, I still have sequelae of the injuries incurred, as I remain having dreadful headaches."

Fleeing from a third arrest attempt

"While I was recovering, two brothers with whom I had spread the gospel were arrested by the police. The officers had found a notebook with my name and address in it in their

possession. I was warned by other brothers and sisters that the police were out to find me. I fled before I was arrested.”

Fleeing to Italy, but no safety yet

“Between 2013 and May of 2015, I had moved house a total of thirty different times. But wherever I went, there seemed no way to avoid arrest or persecution. In China there was nowhere safe for me any more and the only way to remain free was to flee. In 2015 I managed to get a passport and to reach Italy where I sought refuge.

Unfortunately, in December 2018, my application was rejected by the Italian Territorial Commission. In the meantime I filed for appeal. I am now deeply concerned that I might be sent back to China one day.”

HRWF calls upon the relevant Italian authorities to grant asylum to members of The Church of Almighty God who have fled China because of the persecution.

(*) The real name of this asylum-seeker is known to HRWF.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (18-24.08.2020)

24.08.20 - Numerous temples shuttered in two Shaanxi province’s cities

Buddhist, Taoist, and folk religion temples suffered severe attacks in the prefecture-level cities of Baoji and Yan’an last year: some were closed, others destroyed.

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23.08.20 - Bans on religious funeral ceremonies further expanded

The CCP enforces strict measures to prohibit people from saying goodbye to their deceased devout family members according to religious traditions and customs.

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22.08.20 - Crosses toppled from over 900 three-self churches in Anhui

Throughout the province, local authorities cracked down on state-run Protestant churches to implement the central government’s order to eliminate crosses.

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22.08.20 - Bitter Winter for the international day commemorating the victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief

A digest of persecution in China for August 22, the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief.

[Continue reading...](#)

20.08.20 - 1,634 Church of Almighty God members arrested in first half of 2020

Mass arrest operations were planned across China before the coronavirus outbreak. If it were not for the pandemic, even more people could have been detained.

Continue reading...

20.08.20 - Core socialist values invade places of worship

The CCP distorts religious teachings by forcing churches, temples, and mosques to preach according to the government-prescribed scripture.

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19.08.20 - Officials exhume and burn bodies to promote cremation

Implementing the central government's "funeral reform" drive, officials in Hebei Province's Xingtai city use drastic measures to please their superiors.

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19.08.20 - Spirit breaking: On mosque rectification and cultural genocide

A public toilet installed on the remains of the Tokul mosque in Xinjiang—and other rites of humiliation the CCP performs against religion.

Continue reading...

The Xinjiang decision against 18 Jehovah's Witnesses – English translation

Bitter Winter (18.08.2020) - <https://bit.ly/324rfQ3> - Bitter Winter publishes the core part of the decision of the Korla City People's Court dated June 30, 2020. For the background, see [our relevant article](#).

1. Defendant Liu, Weiguo committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of years 6 years [sic, an extra "years" was typed in the original] and 6 months, and a fine of 30,000 RMB [about 4320 USD]. (The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 5th October 2018 to 4th April 2025.)

2. Defendant Lin, Zaiwu committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 6 years and 6 months, and a fine of 30,000 RMB. (The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the

prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 8th October 2018 to 7th April 2025.)

3. Defendant Li, Yifan committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 6 years and 6 months, and a fine of 30,000 RMB. (The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 12th November 2018 to 11th May 2025.)

4. Defendant Lin, Haofan committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 6 years, and a fine of 30,000 RMB. (The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 1st October 2018 to 30th September 2024.)

5. Defendant Jiang, Xijun committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 6 years, and a fine of 30,000 RMB. (The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 7th March 2019 to 6th March 2025.)

6. Defendant Gao, Xinlian committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB. (The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 23rd September 2018 to 22nd September 2021.)

7. Defendant Wang, Xiaoqing committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 6 years, and a fine of 30,000 RMB. (The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 8th October 2018 to 7th October 2024.)

8. Defendant Yu, Bingru committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB. (The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 21st September 2018 to 20th September 2021.)

9. Defendant Zhang, Min committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB. (The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against

one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 5th October 2018 to 4th October 2021.)

10. Defendant Jiang, Jinling committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB.

(The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 12th November 2018 to 11th November 2021.)

11. Defendant Chen, Meiling committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB.

(The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 5th October 2018 to 4th October 2021.)

12. Defendant Fan, Tao committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 2 years and 8 months, and a fine of 15,000 RMB.

(The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 24th September 2018 to 23rd May 2021.)

13. Defendant Wei, Pengfei committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB.

(The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 20th September 2018 to 19th September 2021..)

14. Defendant Huang, Lili committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB.

(The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 20th September 2018 to 19th September 2021..)

15. Defendant Ma, Xiaojun committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB.

(The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 20th September 2018 to 19th September 2021..)

16. Defendant Yang, Huafan committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB.

(The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against

one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 20th September 2018 to 19th September 2021..)

17. Defendant Shi, Xianhe committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 2 years and 6 months, and a fine of 15,000 RMB.

(The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 21st September 2018 to 20th March 2021.)

18. Defendant Xu, Yanli committed the crime of organizing and using a xie jiao organization to undermine law enforcement, and is sentenced to a fixed term of imprisonment of 3 years, and a fine of 15,000 RMB.

(The prison term is calculated from the day the court decision is executed. Each day spent in custody in advance of the court decision's being executed is to be set off against one day of the prison term, that is, [the imprisonment shall run] from 23rd September 2018 to 22nd September 2021.)

19. The defendants' books and other goods associated with the activities of the xie jiao organization are to be confiscated (see detailed list [attached]).

Appeal against this verdict may be entered during the 10-day period starting from the day after receiving the verdict, either to this court or directly to the Intermediate People's Court of the Bayingolin Mongol Autonomous Prefecture. Any appeal must be submitted as an original document with two duplicates.

stamp: Korla City People's Court

Xu, Ruijiang, Presiding Judge

Wang, Laiyou, Judge

Yu, Meiling, Judge

30th June 2020

书记员米克热巴 [Mikereba?], secretary

[Note: the secretary's name is not a standard Chinese name; it is probably a transliteration of a local Uighur name]

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (11-18.08-2020)

17.08.20 - 18 Jehovah's Witnesses sentenced to years in jail in Xinjiang

The 18 Jehovah's Witnesses arrested in Xinjiang have now been sentenced to long jail terms. Lawyers complain of the inhumane conditions of their detention.

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17.08.20 - Hunt for unsanctioned religious materials continues nationwide

Provincial and municipal governments intensify measures to purge from state-run churches all publications that are not approved by the state.

[Continue reading...](#)

17.08.20 - More Church of Almighty God members arrested and tortured

Using pandemic restrictions as a pretext to check residents' identity, authorities hunt down believers from this banned religious group.

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16.08.20 - The story of the lonely Uyghur: he protested every week in the Netherlands, on August 14 he was arrested

Abdurehim Gheni's 19 relatives disappeared. He wants to know from the CCP where they are.

[Continue reading...](#)

16.08.20 - CCP agents beat Australians—in Australia: something should be done

One of the attorneys representing Drew Pavlou documents with exclusive videos and pictures how Chinese operatives got away with their crimes.

[Continue reading...](#)

15.08.20 - Several State-run protestant churches demolished in June

Three-Self churches in Anhui, Henan, and Jilin provinces were leveled to the ground on government orders, bullying and injuring congregation members in the process.

[Continue reading...](#)

14.08.20 - World Uyghur congress to IOC: stop the 2022 Winter Olympics in China

London lawyer Michael Polak submits a formal written complaint to the International Olympic Committee.

[Continue reading...](#)

13.08.20 - Fengqiao experience: The CCP revives a Maoist terror strategy

On August 12, the People's Daily called for a nation-wide revival of one of the most dreaded practices of Chairman Mao's years, accompanied by more propaganda.

[Continue reading...](#)

11.08.20 - Ancient temples converted into revolutionary bases

On President Xi's orders, local governments across China turn some places of worship into propaganda centers to pay tribute to China's communist history.

[Continue reading...](#)

11.08.20 - Stop Uyghur genocide: an appeal by religious leaders in support of the Uyghurs

As religious leaders and leaders of belief-based communities, we come together to affirm human dignity for all by highlighting one of the most egregious human tragedies since the Holocaust: the potential genocide of the Uyghurs and other Muslims in China.

[Continue reading...](#)

11.08.20 - Jimmy Lai arrested, a blow to catholic dissidents in Mainland China

The Catholic tycoon was a main financial supporter of Catholics who refuse to join the government-controlled Patriotic Association.

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18 Jehovah's Witnesses sentenced to years in jail in Xinjiang

The 18 Jehovah's Witnesses arrested in Xinjiang have now been sentenced to long jail terms. Lawyers complain of the inhumane conditions of their detention. HRWF: This is the first time that Jehovah's Witnesses have been sentenced to prison terms in China

by Chang Xin

Bitter Winter (17.08.2020) - <https://bit.ly/317k5eJ> - *Bitter Winter* has learned that, on June 13, the People's Court of Korla city in Xinjiang, has sentenced 18 Jehovah's Witnesses to imprisonment, ranging from two years and six months to six years and six months, on the charge of "organizing and using a *xie jiao* organization to undermine law enforcement." As *Bitter Winter* previously reported, this was the first time that Article 300 of the Chinese Criminal Code was applied for a crackdown against the Jehovah's Witnesses. Their religion is not part of the official list of the *xie jiao* ("heterodox teachings," or movements banned in China), yet law provisions against the *xie jiao* are now applied against them.

According to the verdict, three of the Jehovah's Witnesses, Liu Weiguo, Lin Zaiwu, and Li Yifang, were sentenced to six years and six months and fined 30,000 RMB (about \$ 4,200). Another three, Lin Hao, Jiang Xijun, and Wang Xiaoqing were sentenced to six years and fined 30,000 RMB (about \$ 4,200). Ten, whose names are Gao Qiaolian, Yu Bingru, Zhang Min, Jiang Jinling, Chen Meiling, Wei Pengfei, Huang Lili, Ma Xiaojun, Yang Hua, and Xu Yanli, were sentenced to three years and fined 15,000 RMB (about \$ 2,100). The remaining two were sentenced to two years and six months, and two years and eight months respectively, and each fined 15,000 RMB (about \$ 2,100).

18 Jehovah's Witnesses were arrested by the Xinjiang police for evangelism in 2018 one after another, and held in the Korla Detention House in Xinjiang. As *Bitter Winter* and *China Aid* reported last year, on April 15, 2019, the People's Procuratorate of Korla city indicted the 18 Jehovah's Witnesses members "on the suspicion of organizing and using a *xie jiao* organization to undermine law enforcement."

According to a report by the *Weiquanwang (the Rights Protection Network Information Center)*, which operates a blog that posts information on human rights abuses in China), on February 14, during detention, most of the 18 members were subjected to physical punishment and mistreatment, such as "conjoined handcuffs" and "hug handcuffs" (where the handcuffs are linked to the shackles with a short chain, attached with a 5-kg block). According to the blog, as a result of the unbearable conditions, Jiang Xijun knocked his head against a wall trying to kill himself, but failed.

Several defense lawyers wrote a joint letter to the People's Procuratorate of Korla city, complaining that "conjoined handcuffs" and "hug handcuffs" "were kept locked for 24 hours a day, including the time for going to toilet, eating, washing and brushing. Those who are handcuffed can only walk with their waists bent, and sometimes they have to crawl on all fours like a dog (as remarked by Xu Yanli)."

The defense lawyers stated in the letter of complaint that, "The detention house has no right to force detainees to sing any kind of songs," yet that is what happened. The teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses mandate political neutrality, so their members do not join political parties or sing national anthems. It is also said in the lawyers' letter of complaint that, "Singing red songs has nothing to do with the love for the country. So far, there is not an authoritative definition of the 'love for the country,'" and "those who sing red song do not necessarily love the country, while those who do not sing do not necessarily lack the love for the country."

We face the specter of genocide in Xinjiang

DR. JIANLI YANG AND AARON RHODES

Newsweek (12.08.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3k1vwks> - "Genocide" is a word that should only be used with great caution in the world of international relations and human rights. If genocide is recognized and verified, it imposes an unconditional moral obligation to intervene to stop the extermination of the victimized group. We are correct to preserve a narrow definition of the term, and to apply it only in cases that reach the threshold of horror it signifies; otherwise, the term will lose its meaning.

But by the same token, we must seek and face the bitter truth when evidence of genocide appears. We owe it to the millions of ghosts from the last century—victims not only of genocide, but of denial, appeasement, bureaucratic dithering, prejudice and indifference. Even more, we owe it to people at risk today, like the Uyghurs of Xinjiang, China. Make no mistake, free and democratic nations today face a moral test the likes of which have not been seen since the onset of Nazi Germany's (largely successful) effort to exterminate Europe's Jews.

Today, we know and should understand more. Since it came into force in 1951, we have the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. The Convention defines genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

While no government has declared a genocide in Xinjiang, documentary evidence has become irrefutable that all of these things are happening to the Uyghur population. At the very least, it is certain that we are witnessing a genocide in the making, and it is our highest responsibility to prevent it from developing into a mass slaughter.

Like all international treaties concerning humanitarian issues, the Genocide Convention rests on a foundation of national sovereignty and self-regulation. It obligates states to prosecute those who incite genocide, those who conspire and perpetrate the international crimes it includes, and those who are complicit.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination describes Xinjiang as "a massive internment camp shrouded in secrecy, a 'no rights' zone, while members of the Xinjiang Uyghur minority, along with others who were identified as Muslim, were being treated as enemies of the state based on nothing more than their ethno-religious identity." Yet when China's human rights record was last examined by the UN, only a handful of states challenged the Chinese delegation's official characterization of the Uyghur detention camps as "vocational educational and training centers"—a tactic apparently inspired by the Nazi regime's cynical charades.

In a future, democratic China, perpetrators of the crimes in Xinjiang will hopefully be fairly tried by independent courts. But this is the specter paradoxically driving the genocidal dynamic in China, and we need only refer again to Nazi Germany for insights into its internal logic. There, the policy of extermination assumed a thoroughly apocalyptic form; knowing their crimes would be punished hardened the Nazis' position, and they accelerated their crimes as the Allied Powers closed in on Berlin. The persecution of the Uyghurs is part of a racist-nationalist strategy to mobilize the Han Chinese by demonizing minority groups—a project which will end in disaster for its architects if it fails. Potential witnesses must be silenced or destroyed. Huge numbers of Chinese Communist officials are apparently more strongly committed to the preservation of their inhuman regime precisely because they face trials and retribution if it falls.

The Genocide Convention has 152 contracting parties, but offers those parties no real leverage for constraining states on the verge of committing a crime. The International Criminal Court could take up the issue, even though China is not a party to the Court's underlying treaty. Unfortunately, the politics of multilateral human rights organizations and international courts may encourage high-minded posturing, but they mitigate against decisive actions, as good-faith efforts to use available tools encounter paralysis and moral equivalence.

Realistically, the only way the atrocities against the Uyghurs will end is by international concerted efforts led by the bilateral actions of powerful states—and those of the Chinese people themselves. Some Muslim states have oil-based leverage on China, but have shamefully ignored the problem; Iran has even entered into an alliance with China. Germany, the strongest country in Europe, is waffling.

In this situation, the United States government has taken the lead with legislation and sanctions. In June, President Trump signed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 into law. The Chinese government said the bill "wantonly smeared China's counter-terrorism and anti-radicalization efforts."

Will these actions interrupt the dynamic of genocide? It seems doubtful, unless they are joined by many more. With the world's second-most powerful state tightening a noose around the neck of the Xinjiang Muslim population, China is threatening not only the Uyghurs, but also the fragile moral fabric of solidarity with threatened peoples everywhere.

Dr. Jianli Yang is founder and president of Citizens Power Initiatives for China. Dr. Aaron Rhodes is president of the Forum for Religious Freedom-Europe.

The views expressed in this article are the writers' own.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (04-10.08-2020)

10.08.2020 - "Eat the Buddha": Why Tibetans are setting themselves on fire?

Award-winning American journalist Barbara Demick tells the story of Ngaba, Sichuan, who became the world capital of Buddhist self-immolations.

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09.08.2020 - Christians must worship President Xi to get social welfare

Banned from displaying religious symbols at home, believers are forced to hang images of Xi Jinping instead to continue receiving state benefits.

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09.08.2020 - The story of Rizwangul: A Uyghur woman in search of a brother who "disappeared"

For no other reason than being a Uyghur, Mewlan disappeared in 2017. His sister did not give up, and discovered he is in jail for nine years for "separatism."

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08.08.2020 - House Churches raided to force them into official church

To intimidate unregistered churches in Zhejiang Province, local officials order to remove crosses and other religious symbols, close down the venues.

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08.08.2020 - CCP investigates leaks about persecuted catholic priests

Ahead of the Vatican-China deal renewal, the regime makes sure that no information about repressions against Catholic conscientious objectors gets outside China.

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07.08.2020 - Mosques 'Sinicized' in Ningxia Region, Jilin and Henan Provinces

With the ease of pandemic restrictions, the CCP intensifies its mosque "sinicization" campaign in areas inhabited by Hui Muslims.

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06.08.2020 - Outdoor Buddhist statues demolished nationwide

The CCP continues its campaign to eliminate religious statues in Hubei and Guangxi provinces.

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06.08.2020 - Crosses removed from churches across Shandong Province

Ahead of provincial government inspections, local authorities ordered to eliminate crosses from the roofs of Protestant and Catholic venues from April through June.

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06.08.2020 - Buddhist statues removed for 'being too tall'

China's communist regime uses a variety of pretexts to eliminate Buddhist symbols in its war against anything religious.

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05.08.2020 - Sinicization' of Islam intensifies amid the pandemic

The CCP continues removing domes and minarets from mosques and suppresses any expression of Hui Muslim tradition and culture.

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04.08.2020 - Places of worship forced to donate to the State or stay shut

Extending persecution of religious venues, the CCP demands them to contribute to the coronavirus relief fund, or they won't be allowed to reopen after lockdown.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (26.07-03.08-2020)

03.08.20 - Ama Adhe, Tibetan Hero, dies at 88

She organized an underground network of women fighting for human rights and freedom, and was tortured for 27 years in the CCP jails.

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03.08.20- Only 'politically correct' religious venues allowed to reopen

Places of worship are issued strict prerequisites to open their doors after the coronavirus restrictions are lifted. The primary must—loyalty to the Communist Party.

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02.08.20 - Crosses toppled from two protestant venues in one village

Amid the CCP's nationwide cross removal campaign, a state-run and a house church in a Zhejiang Province village were attacked by government-hired security guards.

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01.08.20 - Uyghurs, CCP fake news exposed by new UHRP report

The Uyghur Human Rights Project reveals new details on Beijing's massive campaign to persuade the world that there is no persecution in Xinjiang.

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31.07.20 - 52 Church of Almighty God members given long jail sentences

One of the sentenced believers will spend 15 years in prison merely for keeping at home CAG-related e-books and videos.

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30.07.20 - A popular Tibetan Buddhist Palace demolished in Hebei

The Tushita Palace in the ancient Lingyan Temple was destroyed in November last year, after months of rectifications ordered by the local authorities.

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30.07.20 - CCP offers high monetary awards to those who report on banned religious groups

To create an atmosphere where “every person participates and all population report” on xie jiao, the government offers up to 100,000 RMB (about \$ 14,000) for delation.

[Continue reading...](#)

30.07.20 - Morally ensnared in Xinjiang: A young researcher reflects on genocides

Xinjiang and other theaters of genocide may seem far away from us. They aren't, as products of forced labor are in our shops.

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29.07.20 - Vatican-China deal: “The CCP hacked Vatican computers”

One of the largest international cybersecurity firms claims that the Chinese have hacked since May the Vatican agencies involved in the renewal of the agreement.

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27.07.20 - Ekrem Mehmet: No welcome, no goodbye

A young father dies before being allowed to see his newly born child. Another Uyghur victim of the transformation through education camps.

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27.07.20 - You can't believe in God in China,' police tell believers

Attacks on house churches across China intensified in the past few months, as police and government officials raid places of worship and intimidate congregations.

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27.07.20 - Numerous folk religion temples destroyed in Henan and Hebei

China's folk religion venues, an integral part of rural life for generations, suffer severe crackdowns, as the communist regime aims to eradicate all religions.

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26.07.20 - Poverty alleviation in Xinjiang: slaving in jail-like plants

An ethnic Han manager at a garment factory in Xinjiang discloses disturbing details of local Uyghurs' abuse, disguised as bogus projects to improve their lives.

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26.07.20 - Believers beaten and injured trying to protect their rights

As the CCP sends armed police to rectify or demolish places of worship, congregations resist them bravely defending the right to practice their faith.

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26.07.20 - A book trailer launched for Massimo Introvigne's book on The Church of Almighty God

The volume published this year by Oxford University Press has now its own video introduction.

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The Uighurs' suffering deserves targeted solutions, not anti-Chinese posturing

While Trump faces off against Xi, others must act to prevent genocide in Xinjiang and a new cold war.

By James Millward

The Guardian (27.07.2020) - <https://bit.ly/39Wurkh> - Leaders in China and the US seem nostalgic for the worst aspects of the 20th century. Following recent revelations about forced labour, family separation and the repression of Uighur births, there should be no doubt that the policies inflicted by the Chinese Communist party (CCP) on the indigenous central Asians it rules meet the UN definition of genocide. While the Trump administration has belatedly begun imposing sanctions over these atrocities, its overall China policy is driven by self-serving, not humanitarian, motivations. It is clear that after first appeasing Xi Jinping, Trump now hopes a new cold war will cover up his own bungled response to Covid-19. How, then, should other countries respond to the Xinjiang crisis amid dangerous Trumpian provocations? It helps to understand what's been happening in Xinjiang on its own, outside the context of superpower sabre-rattling.

What the People's Republic of China (PRC) has been doing in Xinjiang has little to do with counter-terrorism. It is the culmination of a decade-long campaign to develop the north-western territory of Xinjiang by making its landscape and peoples seem more "Chinese". The PRC has reversed what were once relatively pluralistic diversity policies in favour of assimilationism, aimed at engineering a homogeneous "Zhonghua" people: a nationalistic, unitary Chinese identity envisioned in general secretary Xi Jinping's "China Dream".

After a peaceful Uighur protest in Urumchi in 2009 was repressed by police with lethal force and turned violent, the party increased investment in the region by requiring rich provinces and cities in eastern China to build industrial parks and commercial zones in Xinjiang. As labour costs rose in the rest of China, the state relocated cotton-growing and low value-added manufacturing from coastal China to Xinjiang. The goal was to provide manufacturing jobs for poor Uighur farmers and cheap labour for Chinese manufacturers.

Alongside this process of turning Uighurs into “Chinese” factory workers, the party attacked symbols of their identity. It razed the old cities of Kashgar and Hotan; it penalised, then outlawed, veils and head-coverings for women and beards on young men; it opposed public prayer, fasting at Ramadan, and abstention from alcohol; it discouraged Uighur language and culture, to the point where Uighur students in the one remaining Uighur language class in Xinjiang schools study Chinese classics in Uighur translation, rather than Uighur classics (the earliest Uighur texts are older than Beowulf). The party sent police and inspection teams to search and even live in Uighur homes to hunt for signs of “religious extremism”, such as simply owning Qur’ans. In response, unrest only increased.

After four relatively small terrorist events in 2013-14, a new party secretary in Xinjiang, Chen Quanguo, implemented hi-tech surveillance and “grid policing”, an intense deployment of checkpoints and police stations around areas that are deemed suspect. A new artificial intelligence system drew on a vast database of behavioural and bio-data to assess, sort and submit some 2 million people deemed likely to have “extremist thoughts” to imprisonment or arbitrary internment. Children of detainees were sent to orphanages and boarding schools to be brought up Chinese. Simultaneously, the CCP began suppressing Uighur births, while encouraging Han (China’s ethnic majority) to have more babies. Through coerced insertion of IUDs (80% of all IUD placements in China in 2018 were performed in Xinjiang, which has only 1.8% of the population), sterilisations and mass detentions, the CCP lowered population growth rates by as much as 84% in Uighur population areas between 2015 and 2018. The forceful transfer of children and measures intended to prevent births are two of the five elements of the UN definition of genocide.

Since 2019, the party has moved hundreds of thousands of Uighurs and other Xinjiang peoples from internment camps and villages into factories in those industrial parks built by east China provinces, cities and companies as part of the development project. It has also transferred tens of thousands of Uighurs to factories in eastern parts of China, housing them in barracks under military-style discipline. In doing so, the PRC has made Chinese provinces, cities and hundreds of companies that invested in Xinjiang and built and supplied the internment camps, partners in the Xinjiang gulag system. Recent investigations have implicated at least 83 global brands in supply chains connected to this forced labour regime.

The US is right to investigate and block the import of products from these supply chains, and any company sourcing from anywhere in China, not just Xinjiang, should redouble their due diligence. Likewise, employing the recently passed Uighur human rights policy act (UHRPA) and the global Magnitsky act, the US recently sanctioned Chen and other Xinjiang officials. It has put Chinese security agencies and companies on the Entity List that restricts their access to US technology. These are positive developments. The UHRPA, which Trump delayed for a year and half, apparently in the hope that Xi would gift him a trade deal to help his re-election, is a precise, calibrated tool to target PRC human rights atrocities.

Its application and that of global Magnitsky sanctions could not be more different from the White House’s other, pointlessly antagonistic actions against China and Chinese

people: broad tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of Chinese goods; using a racist term to refer to Covid-19 rather than collaborating to defeat a global pandemic; cancelling Peace Corps and Fulbright exchanges; calling Chinese students and scholars "spies"; threatening to block CCP members and their families (a group estimated at more than 200 million, the vast majority with no role in policy-making); or shutting down the PRC consulate in Houston, Texas, at short notice.

Although there are certainly structural issues underlying US-Chinese rivalry, we should not discount the extent to which power-grasping and sheer lunacy from the top has needlessly exacerbated tensions. Both the US and China are better than their current leaders. Other countries, multilateral organisations, NGOs and people outside the US and Chinese governments must thus think and act with agility to help stop the genocide but also head off a cold war. Investigations of supply chains, shaming and sanctioning of corporations and officials linked to the Xinjiang gulag and similarly targeted measures will be important. Providing support and legal refuge to Uighur, Kazakh and other Xinjiang exiles is critical.

A number of democratic nations have already denounced the Xinjiang atrocities in the UN Human Rights Council – a body from which Trump rashly withdrew the US, clearing the way for cynical PRC perversion of the council's purpose. Although these 22 nations (including Britain, much of Europe, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand) were outnumbered by a cadre of states lined up behind Beijing, the joint statement condemning Xinjiang mass detentions matters, as will future such moves.

At the same time, whatever can be done to slow the runaway, off-the-rails train of Trumpian China policy more generally, and resolutely oppose racism and indiscriminate China-bashing, is equally necessary. If the UK, EU and other democratic allies are caught in the middle of a US-China cold war, the Huawei tiff will be just the beginning. Maintaining cultural and academic relations with the PRC is now more important than ever, as White House xenophobes seek to exclude Chinese people from American soil. And though the president himself is not known for heeding wise advice, cautionary words from friends of the pre-Trumpian US can still influence the broader conversation and prevent Sinophobic frenzy from surging along with coronavirus.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (20-26.07.2020)

25.07.20 - Unregistered catholic priests pressured into patriotic church

As the Vatican-China Deal of 2018 expires in September, the CCP intensifies persecution of Catholic conscientious objectors through harassment and indoctrination.

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24.07.20 - Patriotic activities mandated to reopen religious venues

Places of worship must prove loyalty to the CCP before opening their doors after the coronavirus lockdown. Flag-raising ceremonies are obligatory.

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24.07.20 - Russia supports Chinese persecution of Falun Gong

Seven NGOs supporting the spiritual movement have been banned by the Russian government. They include the anti-organ-harvesting organization DAFOH.

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24.07.20 - The world wakes up to China, denounces persecution of Uyghurs

From Secretary Pompeo to the Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales, UN experts, and a coalition of 190 NGOs, many are now breaking the silence.

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21.07.20 - Aysel Eli: How CCP is punishing the brightest Uyghur students

She was an honor student who wrote an innovative MA thesis. She was punished and sentenced to 20 years in jail.

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21.07.20 - Believer tortured and beaten in prison to abandon his faith

A member of The Church of Almighty God recounts three years and six months in detention where he was forced to eat cockroaches and banned from the toilet for days.

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21.07.20 - CCP: 'Forsake religion to become prosperous and happy'

The network of "Civilization Practice Stations for a New Era" is expanded all over China to transform believers through education.

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20.07.20 - More than 600 lawmakers denounce China on the anniversary of Falun Gong repression

International support grows for the persecuted spiritual movement, notwithstanding the fake news spread by the CCP.

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20.07.20 - Church of Almighty God members hounded their entire lives

Countless members of this Christian new religious movement are blacklisted in China and are harassed and persecuted for years, pressured to renounce their faith.

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20.07.20 - Cao'an Manichean temple subjected to 'sinicization'

An important site of Manichaeism, an extinct ancient religion, has not escaped China's religious persecution, as the CCP infiltrates it with its propaganda.

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13.07.20 - Religious liberty in Tibet: From bad to worse

Bitter Winter interviews Dr. Dominic Nardi, China policy analyst at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

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Unregistered Catholic priests pressured into Patriotic Church

Bitter Winter (25.07.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3eVS3WZ> - As the Vatican-China Deal of 2018 expires in September, the CCP intensifies persecution of Catholic conscientious objectors through harassment and indoctrination.

AsiaNews reported on July 8 that bishops and priests in the unregistered Catholic Diocese of Yujiang, Jiangxi Province, are "prohibited from any pastoral activity," calling the situation "worse than before."

According to the newly received information, the government forced some of the diocesan priests who refuse to join the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association (CPCA) to attend a 3-day patriotic training in April.

One of the priests who attended the event told Bitter Winter that the participants were pressured to follow the government's orders. The priest remains determined not to join the CPCA since he views accepting the CCP's demands as a "betrayal of God."

Another priest in the diocese also expressed his firm resolution to withstand the CCP's continuous persecution and pressure. "I would rather spend my life in prison than join the Patriotic Church," the priest said. "Joining the CPCA means worshiping the Communist Party, not God because it is one of the Party's pawns—it does what the Party orders. When told to sing the national anthem and raise the national flag, the CPCA does it like a puppet."

Disregarding the Vatican Guidelines of 2019 that allow priests and bishops of what was known as China's Underground Catholic Church to remain outside the CPCA for reasons of conscience, the CCP persists on forcing all Catholics in China to be controlled by it. As the expiration of the provisional Vatican-China Deal of 2018 approaches, the Chinese authorities intensify the persecution of those refusing to join the CPCA.

On March 8, the government of Handan, a prefecture-level city in the northern province of Hebei, put an 83-year-old Catholic priest under house arrest in a hotel to coerce him into joining the CPCA. Three days later, the priest was taken to a hospital with stroke symptoms, and the authorities sent him back to his hometown, banning him from celebrating Mass and other church services.

A Catholic from Handan told Bitter Winter that on March 13, when the priest was still in the hospital, the local government assigned specialized personnel to surveil the churches where he served and warned their congregations not to gather again. According to the believer, the government aims to shut down these churches permanently.

"By forcing us to join the CPCA, the CCP aims to put us under its rule," said a priest from an unregistered church in Hebei's Shijiazhuang city who was subjected to intense pressure to join the Patriotic Church in June. "We won't renounce our faith. We do nothing wrong by upholding truth and justice."

In the Diocese of Mindong in Fujian Province, the government's intimidation of Catholic conscientious objectors intensified after Father Huang from the Saiqi townparish was tortured to make him join the CPCA in April.

"In the beginning, all 23 priests in the diocese agreed on refusing to join the CPCA, but the government arrested some priests, including Father Huang, and made them join," a priest from the diocese said. He added that some priests had to go into hiding to evade torture and persecution.

"During the Cultural Revolution, it was not easy to find someone on the run, but as high-tech surveillance equipment permeates every corner now, one has no place to hide," the priest explained. He also revealed that seven elderly ill priests, who refused to join the CPCA, were demanded to "retire," banned from holding religious ceremonies. Another priest explained that with this move, the government wanted to silence these respected priests who may influence their congregations.

According to some Catholics in the Diocese of Mindong, local officials frequently harass priests to join the CPCA because their superiors assign them quotas: Hitting or missing them means either being awarded or punished.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (12-19.07.2020)

19.07.20 - 'We choke with silent fury'

Buddhists are devastated as local authorities continue implementing the central government's orders to demolish outdoor religious statues.

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18.07.20 - USCIRF exposes european "experts" who support CCP campaigns against "cults"

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom publishes a document against Russian anti-cultist Alexander Dvorkin and his organization FECRIS, both supporters of religious persecution in China.

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16.07.20 - People on social welfare ordered to worship CCP, not God

Because of the aid they get from the state, impoverished religious residents are told to renounce their faith, or their benefits will be withdrawn.

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16.07.20 - Folk religion temples continue to be demolished nationwide

Local officials are pressured to crack down on religions under threats to be expelled from the CCP and fired from their public office if they disobey.

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15.07.20 - In China, 'civilized' means having nothing to do with religion

Offering monetary rewards and praises, the CCP encourages communities to do away with religions to be named a "civilized village, town, or city."

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15.07.20 - The "corpse-in-concrete" case in Vietnam: fake news against Falun Gong

A small religious group commits two murders. The CCP accuses Falun Gong, repeating the scheme it used against The Church of Almighty God with the 2014 McDonald's incident.

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14.07.20 - Are Uyghurs really freed from internment camps?

Having declared that over 90 % of detained Uyghurs in Xinjiang had been released, the CCP continues subjecting them to forced labor in the region's factories.

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14.07.20 - Control over CCP members' religious beliefs intensifies

Authorities across China adopt strict measures barring Party members from having any affiliation with religion and traditional Chinese spiritual practices.

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13.07.20 - Religious liberty in Tibet: from bad to worse

Bitter Winter interviews Dr. Dominic Nardi, China policy analyst at the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

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13.07.20 - Uyghurs: Yes, it is a genocide. A new report

Campaign for Uyghurs, chaired by Ms. Rushan Abbas, offers evidence of the criminal policies of the CCP, and calls for an international trial.

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12.07.20 - 400+ protestant venues destroyed or closed in Shangrao City

The CCP continues cracking down on house churches and state-approved venues in the southeastern province of Jiangxi.

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USCIRF exposes European “Experts” who support CCP campaigns against “Cults”

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom publishes a document against Russian anti-cultist Alexander Dvorkin and his organization FECRIS, both supporters of religious persecution in China.

by Massimo Introvigne



Alexander Dvorkin (credits)

Bitter Winter (18.07.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3jh9V21> - On July 17, 2020, the USCIRF, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, unveiled a new document, whose title is “**The Anti-cult Movement and Religious Regulation in Russia and the Former Soviet Union.**” The USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission created by the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA). Its Commissioners are appointed by the President and by Congressional leaders of both political parties.

The title may indicate that the document does not concern China, and in fact its main focus is Russia. However, there are three important connections between the new USCIRF report and China.

First, the report offers a detailed and accurate analysis of the activities of Alexander Dvorkin, a Russian activist who has led for almost thirty years campaigns against religious movements he has labeled as “cults.” As the report documents, he has been instrumental in preparing the repression of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Russia, and has attacked many other religious minorities. The USCIRF asks the government of the United States to “publicly censure Alexander Dvorkin and [his organization], the Saint Irenaeus of Lyon Information-Consultation Center (SILIC), for their ongoing disinformation campaign against religious minorities.”

The report mentions Dvorkin’s activities outside of Russia. Although this part of his “disinformation campaigns” is not mentioned by the USCIRF, Dvorkin has regularly supported the CCP in its repression of movements labeled as *xie jiao*. Dvorkin went repeatedly to China and Hong Kong to offer his support **to the persecution of Falun Gong**, to **deny that the CCP is harvesting organs** from prisoners of conscience, and to **applaud the repression** of The Church of Almighty God. In turn, the CCP has supported Dvorkin’s **campaigns against the Jehovah’s Witnesses** in Russia, and “imported” them to China. While the CCP has introduced Dvorkin as an authoritative “Russian expert in sect studies,” the USCIRF report exposes him as a pseudo-expert “relying on discredited theories” and promoting religious intolerance and discrimination.

Second, Dvorkin, as the USCIRF report notes, has been active internationally as vice-president of a transnational anti-cult organization known as FECRIS, the European Federation of Research and Information Centers on Sectarianism. FECRIS **is also notorious** for the support several of its members, in addition to Dvorkin, have offered to the CCP’s persecution of Falun Gong in China. In turn, the CCP’s Anti-xie-jiao association has advertised and republished reports by the FECRIS **against the Jehovah’s Witnesses** and other groups. The more one investigates, the more one discovers a two-way relationship between FECRIS (and Dvorkin) and Chinese organizations who promote and justify the bloody persecution of Falun Gong, The Church of Almighty God, and other religious movements.

Third, the USCIRF document is an important indictment of the anti-cult ideology in general. Dvorkin, the report says, absorbed when he was in the United States, between 1977 and 1992, the ideas of an “anti-cult movement informed by pseudoscientific concepts like ‘brainwashing’ and ‘mind control.’” The anti-cult movement “described new religious movements as ‘fanatic’ or ‘bizarre,’ and portrayed individual members as helpless victims without their own free will or ability to save themselves. This rhetoric enabled groups to justify the forced removal of friends and relatives from the religions of their choice, and even advocated for ‘deprogramming.’” As the USCIRF notes, while “claiming to be experts in academic fields like religious studies, psychology, and sociology, [Dvorkin and the anti-cultists] are rarely qualified in any of them and often rely on discredited theories and methodologies to promote their ideological agenda.”

This is, again, important for China as well. While the persecution of movements labeled as *xie jiao* started in the late Ming era, the CCP has tried to justify and promote it abroad by translating *xie jiao* as “cults,” or “evil cults,” and claiming that the repression of the *xie jiao* in China is part of an international effort against “cults,” which are perceived as a problem in other countries as well. In fact, *xie jiao* means “heterodox teachings,”

and “heterodox” in Chinese history has been interpreted both as ideologically deviant and not approved by the government in power.

Translating *xie jiao* as “cults” is not a mistake. The CCP hopes to be able to jump on the bandwagon of international anti-cultism, and convert those Western media that are sympathetic to the anti-cultists into supporters of its repressive campaigns against the groups it lists as *xie jiao*, particularly The Church of Almighty God and Falun Gong. Occasionally, this campaign was successful, although the fake news produced by the CCP against these movements are now increasingly exposed as lies by quality Western media.

But it remains true that the ideology of anti-cultism is similar to the repressive anti-xie-jiao ideology of the Chinese Communist Party. Wherever the former is promoted, the CCP easily finds friends. It is, thus, very important that, for the first time, an official U.S.federal government commission exposes anti-cultism as an “ideology” based on discredited pseudo-science and aimed at “the suppression of religious liberty.”

After 15 years of hardship in China, Chen Min fled to Spain

HRWF (14.07.2020) - Chen Min¹ escaped several arrest attempts by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) but was detained twice. The CCP’s repression tore her family apart: her husband divorced her on good terms and, for the sake of their children, she had ‘to disappear’. In 2015 she fled to Spain. However, due to her arrests in China she cannot return to obtain the necessary documentation for her immigration application. She was left no choice but to file for asylum, and her case is still pending.

Chen Min is from China’s Henan Province. She joined The Church of Almighty God (CAG)² in 1998. She shared her experience of persecution in China with *Human Rights Without Frontiers* during an interview.

¹ This is a pseudonym. The real name of this asylum-seeker is known to HRWF.

² The CAG is a new religious movement that has only gained visibility outside of China due to thousands of its members fleeing and applying for refugee status in Europe and North America. It has been defamed by Chinese propaganda and, as a fast-growing movement, it is perceived as a competitor by Protestant Churches inside and outside of China, which present its theology as heresy.

The CAG releases periodic statistics on its website (<https://www.holyspiritspeaks.org>). According to this source, between 2011 and 2013 more than 300,000 members were arrested.

These figures are not inconceivable if one factors in the frequent references to ‘successful’ campaigns against the CAG in Chinese anti-*xie-jiao* propaganda and other official sources. The Church also reports that many of its members were tortured, and that some have died while in custody under suspicious circumstances.

According to official Chinese sources, the number of CAG members had reached approximately four million members by 2014. However, this figure is disputed by scholars who argue that it is inflated. They believe this over-estimation is used by the CCP as justification for the urgent need to persecute the CAG.

Detained for 18 days and extorted 6,000 USD

“On 20 December 2001, when my two children and I were having lunch, out of the blue, the National Security Brigade (NSB) chief and three other officers broke into my house. They stormed through every room and turned the house upside down in their search. They found a Bible and a notebook on spiritual devotions and then took me to a Public Security Office.

The NSB chief commanded me to sit on a tiger bench and cuffed my hands into two iron hoops. They tried to extract information about Church leaders and assets from me. An officer used an electric baton to shock me. On seeing the baton sparking and hearing the awful cracking sound, I prayed to God, asking Him to keep my heart. When the officer was about to shock me, they received a phone call warning them to hurry. They were informed that my family had used their connections to get help. The NSB decided to send me to the detention house, so they could instead extort money from us.

I was detained in a small, dark, and smelly room, that was less than 15m² (about 160 ft²) in size. It was already crowded with 27 other inmates. One of them was also a CAG member. She had been stripped naked several times, and then kept in the freezing cold outside. During my own detention I was interrogated six times. 18 days later, the CCP police extorted more than 40,000 RMB (about 6,000 USD) from my family before releasing me on bail, pending trial.”

Divorced due to the “guilt by association” policy

“In China, family members of religious people are seen to be affiliated, and, thus, will also be targeted by the CCP. Their rights to schooling, jobs, and travel can all be restricted, and they are often no longer promoted at work. On 25 April 2017, my husband asked me, ‘Is it possible for you to stop believing in God? If so, then we can work together for a better life. If not, I am afraid I will have to file for divorce. My work is going to promote a group of people soon, and I do not want to be associated with your faith and lose an opportunity like this again.’ The idea that my husband was left with no choice but to propose a divorce, broke my heart. I understood his difficulties but could not give up my faith. Sadly, we had to agree to get an official divorce.”

A narrow escape

“In June 2009, someone reported that I had been sharing the gospel. The police came to my store to arrest me. They lied to the store clerk, claiming that they wanted to talk to me about a purchase plan of several hundreds of towels. When I entered the supermarket using the backdoor, I could see four men standing at the store counter. I recognized one of them as an officer who had arrested me the first time. I realized the danger I was in of further torture and detention and so I fled. After this narrow escape I dared not to return home. Instead I moved from place to place, staying with relatives, or living in rental apartments.

Eight months later, after seeing that I was living in hiding and unable to live a normal life or manage my business, my ex-husband used his connections and bribed the police 3,6000 RMB (about 5,000 USD) to settle my case.”

Detained 28 days and extorted 23,000 USD

“On the morning of 6 May 2011, when three sisters and I were in a worship meeting, six police officers barged in unexpectedly. Without showing any credentials, they began to search the premise. After a policewoman found my ID card in my bag, she shouted excitedly, ‘We have been to your home several times and we can finally arrest

you today.’ They confiscated all our religious books and compact discs, handcuffed the four of us, and took us to a Police Station.

There, the police threatened me about my two children’s prospects in attempts to get information regarding church leaders and assets. They told me that if I were sentenced, my children’s futures would be ruined. They would be disqualified from taking college entrance exams. Since I still refused to say anything they sent me to a detention center where I was interrogated nine times. After twenty-eight days of detention, I was released. It was two days before the college entrance examination day for my children.

I found out that to enable my children to take part in the college entrance exams, release me and have my previous arrest records deleted, my family had paid off the police with 158,000 RMB (about 23,000 USD). My ex-husband told me that he had had no other choice but to write in their School Admission Papers that ‘their mother had died’ in order to prevent any future issues for our children. As heartbreaking as it was to lose my children, there was little I could do but agree.”

Forced to live abroad

“In December 2012, the CCP arrested CAG Christians nationwide. Over a dozen members were arrested from my local congregation. One day, my ex-husband explained to me that he believed there was nothing wrong with me believing in God, but that it was wrong to believe in God while living in China. He suggested that I move to a country in the West where people are able to enjoy religious freedom.

In June 2015, I received an EU Tourist Visa and came to Spain. I then bought a house, but to finalize my immigration I needed to go back to China to obtain a Certificate of Deposit. Just when I was about to leave, I received news that the CCP was going to re-arrest all CAG members with prior arrests, and then re-sentence them. I have never returned to China since learning that, and so I was unable to apply for my Permanent Residence Permit. I had no choice but apply for Asylum. I now have an Interim Residence Permit and am awaiting a decision on my case.”

Forced to flee China due to religious persecution: the case of Li Jie

HRWF (14.07.2020) – Li Jie³ was transporting religious books in 2006 when he was stopped by armed police, arrested and tortured. Fortunately, he managed to escape. He then lived on the run to avoid another arrest until 2016 when he fled China and sought asylum in a democratic country.

Li Jie, who is from Shandong Province in eastern China and joined The Church of Almighty God (CAG)⁴ in 1999, shared his experiences of religious persecution in China with *Human Rights Without Frontiers* during an interview.

³ This is a pseudonym. The real name of this asylum-seeker is known to HRWF.

⁴ The CAG is a new religious movement that has only gained visibility outside of China due to thousands of its members fleeing and applying for refugee status in Europe and North America. It has been defamed by Chinese propaganda and, as a fast-growing movement, it is perceived as a competitor by Protestant Churches inside and outside of China, which present its theology as heresy.

Stopped by armed police

“On 7 August 2006, we loaded a truck with 20 boxes of books of Almighty God’s words⁵ in Shandong Province’s Rizhao City, which were scheduled to be transported to a congregation in another province. When we reached a toll station in Pizhou City, Jiangsu Province, five or six armed police officers stopped us. They forced the driver to open the container door to search the contents. As soon as they saw that the title of the books in the crates was *The Word Appears in the Flesh*, they phoned their superior to report it. They then took us and the truck to the police station.”

Eight officers tortured him

“At the Police Station, officers searched me and confiscated my money (700 RMB or 100 USD in cash), as well as my notebook which contained handwritten phone numbers. They destroyed my trousers in the process. The officers fiercely interrogated me about where I came from, where we had printed the books, and demanded to know where they were destined to go. Seeing that I would not say anything, the chief of the Police Station pointed at my head and angrily said, ‘Do not think that the Government is a loving entity. You, believers in Almighty God, deserve harsh punishment.’ Their interrogation lasted four hours, but it yielded no results. Consequently, they called the local Public Security Bureau to take over my case.

At around 9:00pm a man in his fifties came in. Under his command, eight officers took turns torturing me in an attempt to force me to speak. They first demanded that I stand in a half squat. As it was August, and scorching hot in Jiangsu, I sweated profusely, wetting the ground under my feet. After about half an hour, I was so exhausted that I collapsed onto the floor, unable to stand up.

They then instructed me to sit on the floor with my two legs stretched out straight and a straight back. If I moved, they kicked and beat me as punishment. Since I had still refused to talk, they took a stainless-steel instrument with an iron head and a spring. They violently beat my toes and ankles, causing a tremendous pain. Even to this day, the skin around my ankles is dark and numb.

Next, they sprayed a liquid with a very strong odor into my eyes, causing immense pain and for me to tear heavily. It felt like my eyes were burning. Later, with a fully charged electric baton stick, an officer shocked my shoulders and knees. The torture I endured from these nine officers caused tremendous agony.”

The CAG releases periodic statistics on its website.⁴ According to this source, between 2011 and 2013 more than 300,000 members were arrested. These figures are not inconceivable if one factors in the frequent references to ‘successful’ campaigns against the CAG in Chinese anti-*xie-jiao* propaganda and other official sources. The Church also reports that many of its members were tortured, and that some have died while in custody under suspicious circumstances.

According to official Chinese sources, the number of CAG members had reached approximately four million members by 2014. However, this figure is disputed by scholars who argue that it is inflated. They believe this over-estimation is used by the CCP as justification for the urgent need to persecute the CAG.

⁵ In the CAG theology, the Almighty God is their (female) spiritual leader, the reincarnation of Jesus-Christ.

A narrow escape

"The next morning, two officers took me into a separate room. They twisted my arms behind my back, tied my thumbs together with a thin cotton string, and told me to squat between two sofas near the wall. I knew that I would soon face more severe torture, and so I kept praying silently to be able to escape.

Out of the corner of my eye I observed how the door of the room was opened and closed. At the same time, I tried to pry my thumbs loose. To my surprise and joy that seemed to work. One of the two officers on guard then left the room, leaving only a young officer to keep an eye on me. This officer kept dozing off while sitting on the bed in the room. I was hoping to escape while he was napping.

However, just when I thought it might be possible, he seemed to notice something was wrong and moved a chair so as to sit directly in front of me, with his feet on one of the sofas to prevent me from leaving. I felt my heart in my throat because soon it would be lunch time and I would lose this window of opportunity to escape. Luckily, it wasn't long before he began to snore. That is when I built up the courage to creep over him and, as quietly as I could, leave the room. To my horror, the door slammed shut behind me. After I realized the young officer was still sleeping, I breathed a huge sigh of relief. There was no one in the corridor and so I was able to walk out of the police station without being stopped. This is how I escaped the CCP and return home safely.

About two months later, fellow members of the CAG informed me that the CCP was asking about my whereabouts, and that I had to go into hiding as soon as possible. It left me with no choice, I had to leave my home and start to live as a fugitive."

Forced to flee China

"After eight years of living in hiding, in 2014, the CCP falsely attributed the so called 'May 28 Shandong Zhaoyuan Murder Case'⁶ to the CAG. The CCP mobilized the armed police, as well as the army, and conducted the 'One Hundred Day Battle' nationwide to repress and arrest CAG members. I learned from my family that people were asking about my whereabouts. My village's Party Secretary had already reported me to the municipal township authorities. Later, I received word that many CAG members in my village had been arrested. I did not dare return home again.

It took another two years of living on the run before I managed to get a Passport and flee to Spain in August 2016, seeking asylum. In late September, my case was heard by the refugee board. Now, in 2020, I am still awaiting a decision from the Government."

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (06-11.07.2020)

⁶ In 2014, the CCP falsely accused members of the CAG of being responsible for a homicide that occurred at a McDonald's in Zhaoyuan, Shandong Province. The CCP used all of the media outlets under its control to attack, defame, and slander the CAG. In 2017, Dr Massimo Introvigne investigated this criminal case and uncovered the CCP's deliberate deception in an article published in [The Journal of Cesnur](#).

11.07.20 - Afraid to seek medical care, believer on the run dies

For runaway Church of Almighty God members, seeking medical care means being found by the state. Many are arrested in hospitals; others die of untreated illnesses.

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11.07.20 - Uyghur traditional houses destroyed by the CCP: Another tool of cultural genocide

A fascinating study by Timothy Grose shows how the "Three News" brutal campaign in Xinjiang is transforming domestic spaces to eradicate Uyghur identity.

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10.07.20 - Ancestral halls destroyed or turned into propaganda centers

Under the CCP rule, any form of religion is banned: even worship of ancestors or ancient sages is banned.

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09.07.20 - The EU will have another special envoy for religious liberty in the world

The office was restored, after the European Commission dismantled it and many protested. While his or her name is still unknown, the work of the next Envoy must start from China.

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09.07.20 - House churches suppressed, believers arrested in Chongqing

Since the coronavirus restrictions started to be lifted in March, the CCP intensified attacks on Protestant venues that are not part of the state-run church.

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08.07.20 - The CCP before the International Criminal Court for the Uyghur genocide

Although China did not sign the treaty establishing the court in The Hague, London attorney Rodney Dixon believe jurisdiction against Beijing can be asserted there.

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08.07.20 - Church of Almighty God members tortured for their faith

In China, dissidents and members of banned religious groups are often subjected to torture while in detention. Two believers share their stories.

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06.07.20 - Pope Francis and China: A Vatican mystery and a proposal

Allegedly, on July 5 a paragraph of a pre-written speech by the Pope where he supported freedom in Hong Kong was not read by Francis. To avoid further wild speculations, the Vatican may publish the text of the 2018 China deal.

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06.07.20 - China's outdoor Buddhist statues continue to tumble

As temples were shut to prevent the spread of COVID-19, CCP intensified its campaign to eliminate all Buddhist statues in Sichuan, Fujian, and Shandong provinces.

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Chinese bishop missing for 17 years feared dead

Officials say the case can be solved only by the Chinese central government and the Vatican



Bishop James Su Zhimin, who was last seen 17 years ago, is feared dead.

(Photo: UCA News)

An underground Chinese bishop last seen 17 years ago is feared dead as state officials reportedly push the Vatican to recognize his assistant as a bishop in his place.

Bishop James Su Zhimin of Baoding in Hebei province, now aged 88, was last seen in 2003 by a Catholic in a hospital in Baoding. That was six years after he was arrested. However, he has been missing since then. Bishop Su was arrested for his refusal to join the government-sanctioned Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) in 1997.

The authorities have requested the Vatican to appoint Coadjutor Bishop Francis An Shuxin as the bishop of Baoding, according to Su Tianyou, Bishop Su's nephew.

Su Tianyou, who has been trying to discover the whereabouts of Bishop Su, told UCA News his information is based on a diocesan source.

It is feared that Bishop Su is no longer alive, Su Tianyou said, quoting a diocesan source who had a meeting with a local government official. However, government officials could not confirm news about Bishop Su, he said.

The state authorities have never recognized Bishop Su, who fiercely defended the underground church loyal to the Vatican. Instead, they considered Bishop An, his assistant, as the bishop of Baoding.

Bishop An, 71, originally belonged to the underground church, and in 1993 he was secretly ordained as auxiliary bishop.

In 1996, he was detained by authorities and under house arrest for 10 years until he was released in 2006. Since then, he has been working openly and became vice-chairman of the local CCPA.

The state-sectioned church installed him as the bishop of Baoding in 2010, with state authorities recognizing his position.

According to Su Tianyou, local Catholics refuse to accept Bishop An as the bishop of Baoding. The authorities want him to be recognized by the Vatican so that local Catholics will accept him as their bishop.

Su Tianyou said the move was part of a plan to make the local Church submissive. Bishop An will unquestionably toe the government line, leaving the local Church wholly under the state.

However, Bishop An told UCA News that he had not heard about the state trying to get Vatican recognition for his status.

"Bishop Su is the official bishop of Baoding Diocese and I am the coadjutor of the bishop. I have a lot of respect for Bishop Su. When I was released in 2006, I asked provincial government officials about Bishop Su's whereabouts, but they said they had no idea," said Bishop An, noting that he was unsure whether Bishop Su was dead.

Bishop An said that at a meeting with officials at the National Religious Affairs Administration in Beijing, he tried to discover the whereabouts of Bishop Su. But he was told that "it is not a matter that we can resolve. It's up to the central government and the Vatican," he quoted a senior official as saying.

But Su Tianyou said he believes Bishop Su may be dead now. "But we still hope to see him, whether he is alive or dead."

Su Tianyou said the Vatican could help unravel the mystery surrounding Bishop Su. Reports say representatives of the Vatican and China are to meet this month to review the 2018 temporary agreement they signed on bishops' appointments.

"The Vatican should be able to take the lead in the negotiations and demand that Bishop Su be released," Su Tianyou said.

He said most local Catholics consider Bishop An a traitor who gave up his faith for positions. The Vatican's cooperation with Beijing is a betrayal of Catholics like Bishop Su who have been standing up to the communists, he said.

"The Vatican cannot forget the bishops in prison, but the CCPA teases them," Su Tianyou said.

Born in 1932, Bishop Su was arrested eight times, imprisoned, put under house arrest or put through labor camps for more than 30 years. He was ordained a priest in 1981 and appointed bishop of Baoding in 1992.

Jiangxi, the Yujiang Underground Church suffocated by persecution

by Pietro Jiang

Bishop and priests banned from pastoral activities. They refuse to join the "independent Church". Their situation worsened after the launch of the new regulations on religious activities and after the provisional agreement between China and the Vatican. The considerations of one believer.

Asia News (08.07.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3iL058b> - *The unofficial (underground) Church of Yujiang (Jiangxi) is being suffocated by persecution and now bishops and priests are prohibited from any pastoral activity. This is the very grim picture that Pietro Jiang, a local believer, paints for AsiaNews. According to Jiang, the causes that contribute to this situation are two.*

*The first is the implementation of **the new regulations on religious activities**, which require the registration of staff and assembly places. These Regulations, launched in February 2018, aim to **eradicate underground communities** and obtain total control of the life of the Church. The second cause, according to Jiang, is the provisional agreement between China and the Vatican, signed in September 2018, which has made the government even more bold in demanding registration, given that - as he says - **"the Vatican is on our side"**.*

*The question of registration revolves around the order to join an **"independent Church"**, subject to the Chinese Communist Party, which for China means "independent of the Holy See", even **if the Vatican has downplayed this interpretation**. The faithful of Yujiang are concerned by the experience of the "reconciliation" of Mindong, where **the ordinary, underground bishop, Msgr. Guo Xijin, accepted demotion to auxiliary bishop to leave the post of ordinary to an ex-communicated bishop, Msgr. Zhan Silu. However, the government still does not accept Msgr. Guo as bishop.***

The diocese of Yujiang, headed up to 2014 by Msgr. Tommaso Zeng Jingmu, a martyr of the faith, has nearly 20 thousand faithful. But it is not recognized by the government, which has restructured the traditional dioceses, unifying five dioceses in the one diocese of Jiangxi.

The hardships in the Yujiang underground church in Jiangxi province have intensified. Recently all the underground clergy are forbidden to openly preach and do related church activities. This change is worse than before.

For the past couple of years, many of the underground churches' meeting places have closed down. The faithful are harassed if they provide a place for any religious activity. Some of the underground priests have already been driven away by the government and replaced by official government approved priests. The parishioners from the underground church are against this new arrangement by the Chinese government, and they refuse to participate in any religious activity held by the government approved priests. For example, they refuse to attend mass with the new government official priests. This causes a problem for the official church.

Over the past couple of years, especially after the the Vatican and China's Provisional Agreement two years ago, the Chinese government have attempted to make Bishop Peng Weizhao and all his priests to register and join the official church of China, with the threat that if they did not so, they would not be allowed to preach and evangelize openly. The Chinese government has continuously threatened and pressured Bishop Peng Weizhao and his priests to oblige. However, Bishop Peng Weizhao refuses, expressing he and his priests do not to submit to the Chinese government. While a few of the priests have secretly contacted the government in order to to become registered, the overwhelming majority of priests follow Bishop Pen Weizhao and refuse to submit.

Bishop Peng Weizhao and his priests worry about what will happen to the underground church if they submit to the Chinese government. The official church already has their own bishops, and they do not know who will lead if the two churches merge. How the church will be managed in term of his own his diocese and property. Furthermore, Bishop Peng Weizhao and his priests have little confidence in the Chinese government, especially after observing what happened to the Mindong diocese. When the underground church from the Ming Dong diocese united with the official church of China, many of the underground priests were persecuted.

Why do Muslim states stay silent over China's abuse of the Uighurs?

Nations that claim to be defenders of the faith offer no protest to the concentration camps



One of China's 're-education' centres in Dabancheng, Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region. Photograph: Thomas Peter/Reuters

BY NICK COHEN

THE GUARDIAN (04.07.2020) - When China imposed trade [sanctions on Norway in 2010](#) for honouring the imprisoned dissident Liu Xiaobo with the Nobel peace prize, it spat out a word we weren't used to hearing from propagandists for an atheist communist regime, but should get used to today. "[It's a blasphemy,](#)" a party mouthpiece said.

Once, blasphemy was damning the faithful's gods and sacred books. Now, criticism of the world's largest dictatorship has become sacrilegious. You shouldn't be surprised. As some of us tried to say in the 1990s and 2000s, the gap between the sacred and the profane was never as wide as religious sentimentalists and liberal multiculturalists believed. They went along with the argument that it was bad taste at best and racism at worst to offend believers. You were "punching down" at largely poor and largely Muslim communities. We thought they were being wilfully blind. They did not understand how men with real power and malice were manipulating religious outrage to consolidate their rule over their wretched population. Iran issued a [death sentence on Salman Rushdie in 1989](#) for satirising Islam's foundation myths in *The Satanic Verses*. Its theocratic dictator, Ayatollah Khomeini, was augmenting his powers by claiming to speak for the Muslim world, as well as taking aim at novelists. When the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* [published largely innocuous cartoons of Muhammad](#) in 2005, to assert the right to mock religion, the Egyptian and Syrian dictators, Hosni Mubarak and Bashar al-Assad, turned a local argument into a global campaign against Denmark. The [cries of rage](#) usefully distracted from their corruption and misrule. I could add further examples but they tell the same story. Authoritarian politics and authoritarian religion are just two sides of the same debased coin.

China has stripped away the religious justifications to reveal what was once half-hidden: unadorned and unstoppable power. In many countries, criticising China is the new blasphemy. Nowhere can you see the power more nakedly displayed than in Muslim-majority regimes. Once, they tried to murder blasphemous novelists and screamed about their desire to defend the prophet from the smallest insult. Today, they bend their knees and bite their tongues as China engages in unspeakable atrocities against the largely Muslim Uighur population of western [China](#).

One of the great crimes of the 21st century is being committed in front of our eyes. We see it, yet we don't register it. The Chinese Communist party is reverting to type, and reviving the totalitarian fear of the Mao era. To bring down numbers of the largely Muslim Uighurs of Xinjiang, the China scholar Adrian Zenz reports, the [Communists are forcing women to be sterilised](#) or fitted with contraceptive devices. If they resist, the state sends them to join the one million Uighur people and other Muslim minorities detained in what the state defines as "[re-education](#)" camps. A BBC investigation found that China was separating children from their families so they grew up without understanding Islam.

Countries that could not tolerate Rushdie's magical realist novel can live with the mass sterilisation of Muslim women

It may be a cheap point but it remains true that if a western country were to display one-tenth, one-hundredth or one-thousandth of the brutality that China is inflicting on Muslims, the global left would be burning with outrage.

If you want to be charitable, its silence can in part be explained by logistical difficulties. Reporters are free to cover China's suppression of democracy in Hong Kong, for the time

being at any rate, but cannot get near [Xinjiang](#) without taking extraordinary risks. With no footage of their suffering, millions can suffer unnoticed in the dark.

But the main reasons why Muslims suffer in silence is that the Muslim-majority countries that raged against Rushdie, *Jyllands-Posten* and *Charlie Hebdo* have decided to stay silent. They use the idea of Muslim solidarity only when it suits them.

In July 2019, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria and other Muslim-majority states that pose as defenders of the faith helped [to block a western motion at the United Nations](#) calling for China to allow "independent international observers" into the Xinjiang region. Iran issues occasional criticisms but wants Chinese support in its struggle against the Trump administration and so [keeps its complaints coded](#). Their hypocrisy is almost funny, if you take your humour black. Iran, Egypt, Syria and dozens of other countries that could not tolerate a magical realist novel can live with the mass sterilisation of Muslim women. They will give concentration camps a conniving wink of approval, but draw the line at cartoons in a Danish newspaper.



China sterilising ethnic minority women in Xinjiang, report says

Many have been bought off. China is now a more active and influential voice at the [United Nations](#) because so many countries are benefiting from billions of dollars in Chinese investments through its "Belt and Road" infrastructure programme. As Norway found in 2010, and Australia found this year when it asked for an international inquiry into the origins of Covid-19, those who blaspheme against China face cyber-attacks and sanctions. Better to take the rewards and avoid the punishments.

Following the money, however, can lead you into a dead end. In a survey of China's growing power, the *Economist* noted it was making the world safe for autocracy. [Recep Tayyip Erdoğan](#), for example, keeps his conservative base happy in Turkey by posing as an ostentatiously Islamic strongman. But he is not likely to condemn the abuse of Muslims by China when he is just as keen on abusing the rights of his domestic opponents. The Chinese world order appeals to the freemasonry of publicity-shy sadists. You say nothing about what we do to our subject people and we will say nothing about what you do to yours.

"The idea of the sacred is quite simply one of the most conservative notions in any culture, because it seeks to turn other ideas – uncertainty, progress, change – into crimes," said [Salman Rushdie](#) when he was in fear of his life in 1990. He was talking about conservative Islam. China is now turning criticism of its disastrous record on incubating the Covid-19 virus and its atrocities against its Muslim minorities into crimes, and the people who should be shouting the loudest are bowing their heads in reverential silence.

•Nick Cohen is an Observer columnist

Where Is the Panchen Lama?

JIANLI YANG & LIANCHAO HAN

As the Dalai Lama turns 85, the Chinese Communist Party is stepping up its plans to control the selection of the Tibetan spiritual leader's successor. The kidnapping of the six-year-old Panchen Lama and his family 25 years ago shows how far it is prepared to go.

The American Interest (06.07.2020) - <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2020/07/06/where-is-the-panchen-lama/> - On July 6, the Tibetan spiritual leader, the 14th Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso, celebrates his 85th birthday. On November 29 of last year, at the conclusion of the 14th Tibetan Religious Conference in the northern Indian city of Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama is based, he said "I am physically very healthy and joyful," indicating that he was in no hurry to look for his successor.

But China is in a hurry. The ruling Communist Party has been stepping up preparations to attempt to control the process of selecting the successor of the Dalai Lama. Its efforts can be traced back to the dispute over the reincarnation of another Tibetan spiritual leader, the Panchen Lama.

In May, 2020 the India-based government-in-exile for Tibet marked the 25th anniversary of the disappearance of a six-year-old boy, named as Tibetan Buddhism's second-highest spiritual authority after the Dalai Lama, by calling on China to account for his whereabouts. The Tibetan parliament in exile said the boy, who is considered the sole legitimate holder of the title of 11th Panchen Lama, was taken along with his family in 1995.

"China's abduction of the Panchen Lama and forcible denial of his religious identity and right to practice in his monastery is not only a violation of religious freedom, but also a gross violation of human rights," the parliament's statement said. "If China's claim that Tibetans in Tibet enjoy religious freedom is to be considered true, then China must provide verifiable information on the well-being and whereabouts of the 11th Panchen Lama along with others."

The continued non-appearance of Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the legitimately recognized 11th Panchen Lama, and Beijing's efforts to control the reincarnation of prominent Lamas, including the Dalai Lama, clearly show its intentions in Tibet.

The Dalai Lama recognized Choekyi Nyima as the Panchen Lama in 1995, after he had been named with the help of Tibetan lamas trained in reading portents and signs. Days later, he disappeared, becoming the world's youngest political prisoner.

China, meanwhile, has claimed that the reincarnate can only be chosen by pulling lots from a golden urn, a method it used to pick its own candidate under strict control of the officially atheistic ruling Communist Party. In 1995, it named another boy, Gyaltsen Norbu (officially known by China as Lama Bainqen Erdini Qoigyijabu), to the position. Confirmed and approved by the Chinese State Council on November 29, 1995, he is believed to live under close government control in mainland China and is rarely seen in public.

In 1996, a year after Gedhun Choekyi Nyima had gone missing, China admitted that it was holding him. At the time, the United Nations asked that a delegation be allowed to visit the seven-year-old boy, whom Beijing said was being held to prevent him from being kidnapped by Tibetan nationalists. No such requests have been granted.

The United States has also urged China to release the Panchen Lama. In a May 14 video conference call with reporters about the Panchen Lama, Sam Brownback, U.S. Ambassador-At-Large for International Religious Freedom, said the kidnapping of the Panchen Lama had taken on increased relevance in light of China's continued assertion that it alone has the right to appoint the next Dalai Lama. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), in a statement, reiterated its call for the U.S. State Department to fill the vacancy for Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. The appointment of this position, which is mandated by the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, has been vacant since January 20, 2017.

Previous special coordinators have been crucial to raising the profile of religious freedom issues in Tibet and mobilizing government resources to address the issue. USCIRF Commissioner Gary Bauer claimed that the Communist Party of China was attempting to erase the unique identity of Tibetan Buddhism. "We need to utilize all of the policy tools available, including the position of Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, to confront this grave threat to religious freedom," he said.

Traditionally, the Panchen Lama has served as a teacher and aide to the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhism's highest leader. The Dalai and Panchen Lamas were supreme figures of spiritual authority in Tibet (as well as of the Gelug tradition) and enjoy a reverence among Tibetans that transcends the plurality of regional and sectarian affiliations. They were linked by, among other things, a unique authority in the selection and tutelage of each other's successive reincarnations. The Chinese Communist Party used the breakdown of this special relationship in the early 20th century to intervene in and take control of Tibet's political affairs.

Traditionally, the Dalai Lama has been involved in recognizing the Panchen Lama, and similarly, the Panchen Lama is part of the process by which each new Dalai Lama is chosen. That is precisely why China, as far back as 1995, schemed to have its own candidate selected as the Panchen Lama. With the endorsement of its own Panchen Lama, China plans to choose, and thus control, a successor to the current Dalai Lama. China fears that Tibetan exiles will appoint their own Dalai Lama, and it wants to prevent any authoritative Tibetan figure from showing that figure their support. Both China and the exiles have recently been stepping up preparations for this dispute.

Interestingly, in August 2018, the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama, Norbu, held a worshipping ceremony at Lhamo Lhatso Lake in Gyaca County, Shannan Prefecture of Tibet Autonomous Region. This was the first visit by the Chinese Panchen Lama to Lhamo Lhatso, which is famous for the visions that Regents and High Lamas have reportedly had in it. For example, signs can be "seen" there, and clues gathered, pointing to the discovery of a new Dalai Lama. This was the case when Regent Reting Rinpoche went to the lake in 1935 and had several visions; he saw the roofs of the house of the young 14th Dalai Lama, who had just been reborn in a remote village of Amdo Province (now

Qinghai). Two years before this, Gyaltzen Norbu visited another sacred lake, the Rinbung Yamtso in the Dekyiling area of Rinbung County (Shigatse). As the French journalist, Claude Arpi, one authority on Tibet aptly put it, "There is no doubt that China is preparing for the rebirth of the present Dalai Lama."

While the Dalai Lama is considered by many in the world a great spiritual leader and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his contribution in promoting peace and non-violence, the dictators of China have condemned him as a devil, a terrorist, a separatist, and a wolf in a sheep's skin. One wonders: Why are they so desperate to have this devil, terrorist, separatist, and wolf be reborn?

The Dalai Lama has on numerous occasions explained his stance on the reincarnation. Here is what he said in September 2011, from his official website:

As I mentioned earlier, reincarnation is a phenomenon which should take place either through the voluntary choice of the concerned person or at least on the strength of his or her karma, merit, and prayers. Therefore, the person who reincarnates has sole legitimate authority over where and how he or she takes rebirth and how that reincarnation is to be recognized. It is a reality that no one else can force the person concerned, or manipulate him or her. It is particularly inappropriate for Chinese communists, who explicitly reject even the idea of past and future lives, let alone the concept of reincarnate Tulkus, to meddle in the system of reincarnation and especially the reincarnations of the Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas. Such brazen meddling contradicts their own political ideology and reveals their double standards. Should this situation continue in the future, it will be impossible for Tibetans and those who follow the Tibetan Buddhist tradition to acknowledge or accept it.

The leaders of the free world and the advocates of freedom, justice, and democracy around the globe should uphold the words of the Dalai Lama and collectively urge the Chinese leadership to refrain from any act of sacrilege against the highest order of Tibetan Buddhism. It is succession of lamas, not succession of general secretaries. The Chinese communist regime has no historical, religious, or political rights to select Dalai Lamas or the Panchen Lamas.

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Jianli Yang is founder and president, and Lianchao Han is vice president, of Citizen Power Initiatives for China.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (28.06-06.07.2020)

04.07.20 - Must raise national flag and sing anthem to reopen church

Some state-run churches were allowed to reopen in China after a 5-month lockdown. But only after proving their loyalty to the Communist Party.

[Continue reading...](#)

03.07.20 - Numerous mosques 'sinicized' amid the pandemic

Threatening and intimidating Muslims, the CCP implemented forced rectifications of mosques in Hui-populated areas in Henan, Hebei, and Ningxia.

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02.07.20 - Hundreds of policemen sent to demolish Buddhist temples

The Chinese government continues stepping up efforts to suppress religions by demolishing places of worship.

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01.07.20 - Religious venues ordered to subscribe to CCP's periodicals

The government wants to ensure that all people of faith in China accept its ideological leadership. Those who disobey are punished.

[Continue reading...](#)

01.07.20 - Two State-run protestant churches demolished in Henan

As other venues started reopening after the coronavirus lockdown, places of worship remained closed in China. Some never opened—they were destroyed instead.

[Continue reading...](#)

01.07.20 - Protestants, catholics stifled to curb 'foreign infiltration'

Amid escalating tensions with Western democracies, China's regime incites nationalist sentiment among residents, cracks down on religions as "foreign agents."

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30.06.20 - Three-Self church venues demolished or repurposed

Officials suppressed state-approved Protestant venues in Jiangxi Province using a variety of pretexts—for being "dilapidated" or "too eye-catching."

[Continue reading...](#)

30.06.20 - 100+ Church of Almighty God members arrested

Most of the detained have been monitored for days, and some elderly people were tortured to make them disclose information about fellow believers.

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29.06.20 - Uyghurs subject to mass sterilization: A new CCP crime against humanity

A new study by Adrian Zenz proves that Muslim women in Xinjiang are massively subjected to forced abortion, sterilized, and fitted with IUDs.

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29.06.20 - Makers of religious statues suppressed

The Chinese government is expanding the scope of crackdowns on religions by stifling businesses that produce religious items.

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29.06.20 - Poverty alleviation—Yet another tool to control Xinjiang

In the name of fighting poverty, the CCP moves impoverished households from across China to Xinjiang, while sends Uyghurs to other provinces for forced labor.

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28.06.20 - Islamic Symbols Removed from 300+ Hui-Run Businesses in Yunnan

Star-and-crescent and other symbols, also writings in Arabic, are purged from shops and restaurants, as the CCP enforces its plan to "sinicize" China's Muslims.

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The Axis of Shame, July 2020: The countries that supported China on Hong Kong

The Representative of Cuba introducing the 53-country pro-CCP resolution at the Human Rights Council in Geneva

Bitter Winter (05.07.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2AvoUDX> - On July 1, 53 countries (including China) signed a resolution introduced by Cuba at the United Nations' Human Rights Council in Geneva praising China for the passing of the Hong Kong National Security Law. The list of those that became part to this new Axis of Shame (a label Bitter

Winter originally created for those supporting Chinese persecutions of Muslims in Xinjiang) has now been [published by Axios.com](https://www.axios.com):

China, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahrain, Belarus, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo-Brazzaville, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Lesotho, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tajikistan, Togo, UAE, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Russia did not sign, but its Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva issued on June 30 a separate statement denouncing the "external interference into the domestic affairs of China." Chinese media announced that other countries also issued pro-China separate statements, including Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Capo Verde, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Maldives, Nigeria, Serbia, Tanzania, Chad, Vietnam. It seems however that these separate statements did not necessarily "praise" the new Hong Kong National Security Law, while they criticized those "politicizing human rights" and "interfering in the internal affairs of China."

The following countries signed a statement introduced at the same Human Rights Council by the United Kingdom strongly criticizing China for violations of human rights and international law in Hong Kong and Xinjiang:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland, Germany, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Palau, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.K.

The United States did not sign because of their problems with the Human Rights Council, but have also strongly condemned China's wrongdoings in both Hong Kong and Xinjiang. In the middle are those countries that did not sign either statement, including European Union countries such as Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

From China to Italy after being on the run for three years

HRWF calls upon the relevant Italian authorities to grant asylum to members of The Church of Almighty God who have fled China because of the persecution.

HRWF (30.06.2020) - After being persecuted and living in hiding for three years in China, Cheng Lu, a pseudonym used to protect her family who still live in China (*), arrived in Italy and asked for the protection of the Italian government.

Cheng Lu is from Henan Province, China, and used to work as a designer at a shoe company. In 2012, she was arrested by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) because of her membership in The Church of Almighty God. Consequently, she lost her well-paid job.

In 2013, she narrowly escaped from the CCP's mass arrest campaign targeting believers of all faiths. After that, she lived on the run. In 2015, she escaped China and sought asylum in a democratic country overseas.

She shared her experiences of persecution in China during an interview with *Human Rights Without Frontiers* (HRWF).

Arrest in 2012

"It was 12 December 2012. Two church sisters and I were sharing the gospel with other people when four police officers caught us. They put us in a police car without showing any official identification. One of them shouted at me: 'You break the law by believing in God in China. Instead, you should believe in the Communist Party. If all people become followers of God, then who will follow the Party?'"

At the police station, the officers ordered us to take out all of our religious materials and personal belongings and to put them on our legs. They photographed us and then separated us for interrogation. An officer questioned me about how I got the religious material. As the three of us refused to say anything, they locked us in a very small room and deprived us of food and water.

That night, my then company manager bailed me out. When I left, an officer warned me that if I was found to be continuing to believe in God and spreading the gospel, I would be sentenced to between eight and ten years in prison. My manager became afraid for his business and gave me an impossible choice: to leave The Church of Almighty God and continue working there or to leave. I chose to quit my job.

Since I now had this arrest on my record, I was unable to find a job or rent an apartment, and I was afraid to show my ID card to others. I had no other choice than to flee to another city and live in hiding."

A narrow escape in 2013

"In late June 2013, the CCP launched a mass arrest campaign in Zhejiang Province, which led to the arrests of over 100 members of our church, including leaders and general members. Among them was Sister Liu, who managed the church in the town I lived in. She had been secretly tracked by the police for six months. Since I had frequent contact with her, I was in grave danger. I decided to escape immediately to another province. Later I learned that five leaders and church staff were arrested there after I left.

Sometime in August 2014, the CCP ordered the police to re-arrest believers of The Church of Almighty God who had arrest records and to re-sentence them. The CCP police conducted a blanket search for church members by going from door to door under the guise of a census or checking either the water or electricity.

To escape another CCP arrest, I moved from place to place and had to constantly hide. Wherever I was, I dared not go out and only spoke in whispers, living in stifling fear every day. Once, when residential committee staff visited our place for a check, I had to hide in a small cupboard, curling myself into a ball in total darkness. I could only see a gleam of light from the crack in the cupboard door, and in that moment, I felt miserable. It occurred to me that believers in God had nowhere to live in China where they would be free from persecution. This realisation led to a great deal of pain. I longed for freedom.

In the 14 months I spent in hiding, I did not dare to call my parents because I knew their phone was under surveillance."

Forced to flee China

"In 2014, the CCP falsely accused members of our Church of a homicide at a McDonald's in Zhaoyuan, Shandong. The CCP used all of the media outlets under its control to attack, defame, and slander our Church. In 2017, Dr Massimo Introvigne investigated the criminal case and uncovered the CCP's deliberate deception in an article published in [The Journal of Cesnur](#).

Afterwards, the CCP mobilised armed police and military forces to carry out a nationwide 'Hundred Day Battle' with the sole purpose of arresting members and leaders of our Church. Throughout the campaign, almost 1,900 members of The Church of Almighty God were arrested and at least six of them were tortured to death. From time to time I heard news about the arrests of members and leaders that I knew or had worked with. My situation became even more dangerous and I ran out of places to hide.

In 2015, I managed to get a passport and escape China to seek asylum in a democratic country. I have filed my application for asylum in Italy and I am waiting for a decision that will change my whole life. During my hearing in March 2018, I talked about how I joined The Church of Almighty God, my participation in the church activities, and my persecution by the CCP. The Church of Almighty God overseas confirmed my membership after rigorous review and issued a certificate.

However, in July 2018, Italy's Ministry of the Interior rejected my asylum claim. They didn't recognise my affiliation to The Church of Almighty God and my persecution in China because I managed to obtain a valid passport. This demonstrates ignorance of the loopholes within the Chinese system and the widespread corruption that allowed me to purchase this passport. I have appealed this decision."

HRWF calls upon the relevant Italian authorities to grant asylum to members of The Church of Almighty God who have fled China because of the persecution.

(*) The real name of this asylum-seeker is known to HRWF.

[Read on hrwf.eu](#)

Fled China to escape the CCP's persecution, now seeking asylum in Europe

HRWF calls upon the relevant Spanish authorities to grant asylum to Wang Dongdong and other members of The Church of Almighty God whose case is similar.

HRWF (30.06.2020) - Wang Dongdong is from Jiaozuo City in Henan Province, China. In 2001, his family all joined The Church of Almighty God and so he has been a member since childhood. He once had a happy family, but it was torn apart by the CCP's arrests and persecution. In May 2015, he managed to escape China and reach Spain to seek asylum.

The following is Wang Dongdong's personal experiences under the CCP's persecution that he shared with *Human Rights Without Frontiers* (HRWF).

Arrested at the age of 12, forced to drop out of school

"One day during the spring of 2002, someone reported that my parents were preaching the gospel to the police. About eight police officers arrested my father and three other church members on charges of 'illegal preaching' and took away all of their faith-related

books. My father was released one day later. After that, the police would regularly come and raid our home, intimidating and threatening us by saying that they were going to take my father away to be re-educated through labour. In order to avoid another arrest, my father had to run away from home and go into hiding.

The harassment by the police and the CCP's persecution had a long-lasting impact on my mental and emotional wellbeing. Even today, I am overwhelmingly fearful when I see police on the streets in Spain, and I panic. My entire body shakes uncontrollably.

In 2003, when I was 12 years old, I was arrested while preaching on the streets. The police informed my school and my teachers began discriminating against me. For example, I was disqualified from exams. Later, I had to drop out of school because of this."

Mother died due to being in hiding and unable to see a doctor

"In November 2011, the CCP carried out a massive repression campaign in Henan Province. They frantically arrested and persecuted Christians everywhere: 29 leaders of our Church as well as many members were arrested in our area. My parents had to leave the region to escape capture.

Afterwards, the police learned that my parents were custodians of church funds. They went to our home and turned it upside-down during their search for them. My home was a total mess after that, as if it had been cleaned out by looters. Fortunately, my parents had transferred the church's money when they had fled home. The police didn't find the funds, so they arrested my older brother and waited at our home until the evening, hoping to capture all four members of my family.

In order to avoid being caught by the CCP, my parents hid in a cave for a long time. Due to the lack of clothing and food, they suffered from extreme cold and hunger. They lived in fear the entire time. My mother soon fell ill. My parents didn't dare go to the hospital because they were afraid of exposing their whereabouts after showing their ID cards. Unable to receive treatment, my mother passed away.

When I heard about my mother's death, I was absolutely devastated and am heartbroken to this day. I wish I could have seen her one last time before she died but that was made impossible. It was the CCP's persecution that separated us and broke my family.

Unexpectedly, I met my father one day. When I saw him, I was shocked. He had become so thin, aged and haggard. Almost all of his hair had turned white. His eyes were swollen, and he looked defeated. I held my father tightly in my arms and we cried. The passing of my mother is an anguish that will never end for us."

Arrested again in 2013

"In 2012, I faced great difficulties in my attempts to reach Sichuan Province to spread the gospel. On the morning of 29 March 2013, I was meeting two church members at the Guangyuan City Wetland Park when, within five minutes, we were surrounded by twenty to thirty heavily armed special force officers, all of them pointing their guns at us. An older member tried to run, but several police rushed up to her and violently kicked her onto the ground. They forced us in police cars and drove us to the police station.

The police took away my two cell phones, my watch, and RMB 1,500 (approximately 212 USD) in cash. After they had searched me, they yelled at me and violently kicked me onto the floor. They kept kicking if I made even the slightest movement. Later, they took

me to the interrogation room and cuffed me to a tiger stool, without allowing me to relieve myself, and while denying me any food or water.

That evening, the Cangxi County National Security Brigade Police escorted me to the Cangxi County Detention Center.”

Torture and forced labour

“On the morning of 30 March 2013, the police cuffed me to an iron chair and interrogated me with the aim of extorting information about myself and the church. When I told them nothing, they threw burning cigarette butts on my face. For more than half a month, I was threatened and interrogated every day. They showed me many photos of church members and pressed me to identify them. They told me details about phone conversations I had with other church members. It was then that I realised that they had already been tracking us for at least half a year using video cameras, wiretapping our phones, and recording our conversations.

While I was incarcerated at the detention center, I was forced to make tin foil for up to ten hours every day. This tin is poisonous, and if you continually breathe it in, you will eventually get cancer. After working for a long period of time, every inmate there developed numerous red blotches on their skin which were insufferably itchy, and our mouths were also festering.

One time, a flu was spreading amongst the inmates, but the guards refused to give us medicine and forced us to continue working. According to one inmate, the work of just our cell alone would net them over one million yuan in one year. We ate moldy rice and rotten vegetables boiled in water, without any salt or oil. We never had enough to eat. Apart from that, two video cameras were installed in every cell to monitor us 24 hours a day.

I was detained under these horrendous and dangerous conditions for three months and eleven days.”

Fleeing China and arriving in Spain

“On 28 May 2014, the CCP accused members of our Church of a horrifying homicide at a McDonald’s in Zhaoyuan, Shandong. This tragic incident was used by the CCP to justify a large-scale mobilisation of armed police and military troops to arrest leaders and members of our Church. Fellow followers of the Church of Almighty God were captured one by one and so I had to relocate many times. In 2017, Dr Massimo Introvigne investigated this criminal case and uncovered the CCP’s deliberate deception in an article published in [The Journal of Cesnur](#).

In 2015, as there was a high risk of being re-arrested, I somehow managed to obtain a passport. After many challenges, I finally escaped China and have now reached Europe where I am applying for asylum.”

HRWF calls upon the relevant Spanish authorities to grant asylum to Wang Dongdong and other members of The Church of Almighty God whose case is similar.

[Read on hrwf.eu](http://www.hrwf.eu)

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (21-27.06.2020)

27.06.20 - New religious movements in China: they were always there

A new book on the sacred scriptures of “redemptive societies” helps exposing myths and misunderstandings about Chinese religion.

[Continue reading...](#)

25.06.20 - ‘This is no longer the Xinjiang of my memories’

An ethnic Han man shares his impressions of Xinjiang after visiting it many years since his first encounter with the Uyghur region.

[Continue reading...](#)

24.06.20 - Chinese government spends millions to rectify mosques

Authorities in Hui populated areas launched campaigns to “sinicize” mosques amid the coronavirus outbreak. More are planned for later this year and 2021.

[Continue reading...](#)

23.06.20 - Mosques, businesses rectified in the name of ‘sinicization’

To implement its five-year plan to “sinicize” all Muslims outside Xinjiang, the CCP continues demolishing Islamic symbols and “transforming” believers.

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23.06.20 - Tibet: The CCP launches a campaign against prayer flags

Nothing is more typical of Tibetan culture and religion than religious banners. They are now being taken down, village after village, as persecution of religion escalates.

[Continue reading...](#)

22.06.20 - The CCP takes over direct management of religious venues

After new provisions were enforced at the start of last year, the government appoints its representatives to administrative committees in places of worship.

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22.06.20 - Mahire: A Uyghur mother punished for her care

She sent her son to study abroad, believing she was preparing a better future for the family. For this “crime,” she should now spend sixteen and a half years in prison.

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22.06.20 - Riyue Qigong: The CCP announces a Xie Jiao has been “totally destroyed”

The leader reorganized the movement after having been detained and “reeducated” for two years. Now, he goes to jail again, this time for 19 years.

[Continue reading...](#)

21.06.20 - Cultural revolution returns: Everything religious is purged

From crosses on graves to traditional Buddhist and Taoist attire and even signboards of martial art schools—all religious symbols and names ordered to be removed.

[Continue reading...](#)

21.06.20 - Undelivered birthday wishes: How the CCP destroys Uyghur families

Memeteli wanted to send a message to his sister Heyrigul for her birthday. But she has been arrested, and the CCP would not disclose where she is.

[Continue reading...](#)

21.06.20 - A sad father’s day: The story of Siqi

In the United States and other countries, June 21 is Father’s Day. A member of the Church of Almighty God tells Bitter Winter the sad story of her beloved and persecuted father.

[Continue reading...](#)

Riyue Qigong: The CCP announces a Xie Jiao has been “totally destroyed”

The leader reorganized the movement after having been detained and “reeducated” for two years. Now, he goes to jail again, this time for 19 years.

by Massimo Introvigne



The trial of Riyue Qigong leaders in Luohe City (from Twitter)

Bitter Winter (22.06.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3fNc1UJ> - On June 15, 2020, the Intermediate People's Court of Luohe City, Henan, sentenced Wen Jinlu (温金路), the 75-year-old founder of Riyue Qigong ("Sun and Moon" Qigong, 日月气功) to 19 years in jail for having organized and promoted a *xie jiao* ("heterodox teaching," often less correctly translated as "evil cult") and for rape. Six other leaders of the movement received sentences from two years and ten months to three years and six months. With this trial, Henan authorities claimed that Riyue Qigong has been "completely destroyed."

Wen Jinlu, also known as Jin Guangdao, was born in 1945 in Xiangcheng County, Henan. He was interested in Qigong since high school, and founded Riyue Qigong in 1994. Reportedly, in a few years he had gathered several thousand followers. According to police authorities, by 2000 the movement was present in 29 provinces, districts, and cities, with a total following around 130,000.



Wen Jinlu under arrest (from Twitter)

Riyue Qigong was a victim of the repression of large Qigong groups following the crackdown on Falun Gong in 1999. On April 15, 2000, Wen was arrested and sent to a reeducation camp, where he spent two years. While the authorities believed he had been successfully reeducated, this was not the case. He reorganized Riyue Qigong and, while keeping a low profile for some years, eventually gathered more followers than he had before his arrest. With the help of his eldest son, Wen Lijun, and his senior disciple, Guo Junzhao (who are among those sentenced in 2020), in 2007, he inaugurated the movement's temple headquarters in Zhanbei Township, Xiangcheng County, Xuchang City, Henan, which started being visited by a continuous flow of devotees and pilgrims, and in 2008 an "ecological park" in Mengzhai Town, Wuyang County, Luohe City, Henan.

It is difficult to reconstruct the doctrine of Riyue Qigong, as the only sources available are Chinese anti-cult publications. Reportedly, Wen taught mostly through poems, which members were requested to study, and promoted a system of "signal decoding," claiming that most problems come from the acquired incapacity of human body to receive and interpret "signals." A correct "decoding" may be restored by Qigong practice. Anti-cult

publications also accuse Wen to deify himself, brainwashing followers, using his position to sleep with multiple female devotees, and announcing the imminent end of the world. These are standard accusations against *xie jiao* leaders in China.

On April 8, 2017, Henan's Public Security carried out one of the spectacular raids typical of the repression of "cults," involving a large number of armed police. Both the headquarters and the "ecological park" were stormed at 1 a.m. The buildings were destroyed, and Wen and 26 devotees were arrested.

The authorities reported that after the raid several members were successfully reeducated, but not Wen and the other leaders, who have been sentenced on June 15, 2020. Eight female devotees testified they had been raped by Wen, allowing the court to sentence him for rape in addition to the crime punished by Article 300 of the Chinese Criminal Code, i.e. being active in, and promoting, a *xie jiao*. Accusations of rape are fairly common in China in cases against leaders of *xie jiao*.

Riyue Qigong is not included in the last known official list of *xie jiao*. There are, however, multiple examples in China of applications of Article 300 to movements not included in the list.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (15-20.06.2020)

20.06.20 - Nearly 100 folk religion sites suppressed in three provinces

As a result of crackdowns launched in April in the provinces of Zhejiang, Henan, and Hebei, some temples were demolished while others repurposed for government use.

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20.06.20 - The Church of Almighty God refugees: remember them on World Refugee Day

The world remembers refugees. Do not forget the asylum seekers who were persecuted and tortured in China for their faith.

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19.06.20 - Tibet, Tibetan refugees and the way ahead

While we celebrate the World Refugee Day, a Tibetan scholar reflects on the history and resilience of 150,000 Tibetan refugees living in exile.

[Continue reading...](#)

18.06.20 - The US Uyghur Human Rights Act: The CCP finally unmasked

The Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020 (formerly known as Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2019) is a landmark piece of legislation, upholding the rights Muslim Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities.

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18.06.20 - China under Xi Jinping: more ideology, more repression

Introductory speech by Massimo Introvigne, editor-in-chief of Bitter Winter, at the plenary discussion in the Lithuanian Parliament on Lithuania's strategy for Asia, June 18, 2020.

[Continue reading...](#)

18.06.20 - Persecution of rebellious catholic churches intensifies

Pressure on China's Catholic conscientious objectors to join the Patriotic Church continues, as churches are shut, priests hunted down, congregations intimidated.

[Continue reading...](#)

17.06.20 - Over 90 Church of Almighty God members arrested in 2 days

Arrests were made in May during unified operations in Shanxi Province's Linfen city after targets were tracked and monitored using mass surveillance systems.

[Continue reading...](#)

17.06.20 - CCP curbs religious activities related to Hong Kong

Chinese authorities restrict mainlanders' communication with the special administrative region while expanding influence on Hong Kong's believers.

[Continue reading...](#)

17.06.20 - Seven years of torture and forced labor

A member of The Church of Almighty God recalls his time in detention after he was arrested and later sentenced for his faith.

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17.06.20 - China cracks down on Indian spirituality, calls it "Full of brainwashing"

Not coincidentally, border tensions with India are accompanied by a renewed campaign against Indian religious and spiritual movements active in China.

[Continue reading...](#)

16.06.20 - House Churches and their schools suppressed in Xiamen

Protestant churches are raided in this southeastern China's metropolis, as the CCP seeks to eliminate unregistered churches and educational institutions they run.

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16.06.20 - New orders to suppress churches with ties to abroad

Recently issued guidelines across China demand to intensify crackdowns on "foreign religious infiltration," mainly targeting US-affiliated places of worship.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (08-14.06.2020)

14.06.20 - In 2019, Jiangsu Province closed nearly 200 christian venues

The six-month-long campaign was launched after President Xi Jinping's orders to the provincial government to crack down on Christianity.

[Continue reading...](#)

14.06.20 - Want to reopen church? Praise Xi Jinping for beating COVID-19

Since China started resuming most regular activities in March, like reopening businesses and entertainment venues, places of worship remain under strict control.

[Continue reading...](#)

13.06.20 - "Welfare for autocrats": How China uses welfare as a tool for surveillance

A new book by Jennifer Pan shows how the CCP, under the pretext of "elimination of poverty," uses its "Dibao" livelihood guarantee program to better watch over political and religious dissidents.

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13.06.20 - Nury Turkel, Uyghur leader: My work at USCIRF

The newly appointed first Uyghur member of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom talks about USCIRF and the struggle against religious persecution in China.

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12.06.20 - For China's rights defenders, fighting the State leads to prison

A law that the CCP uses widely to silence those protesting its autocratic rule lists 32 instances when petitioning the government may result in hefty sentences.

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12.06.20 - Uyghur women persecuted: Will the feminists support them?

Uyghur women are raped, compelled to marry Han Chinese, detained in the dreaded transformation through education camps, and killed. Why do Western feminists ignore their tragedy?

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12.06.20 - Over 40 Old Local Church Venues Stifled in Jiangxi Province

China's southeastern province continues to intensify religious persecution measures after coronavirus lockdown measures were lifted.

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11.06.20 - Crackdowns on unregistered catholics resume across China

As the coronavirus lockdown measures were eased, the CCP recommenced threats and intimidations against Catholics who refuse to join the Patriotic Church.

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11.06.20 - U.S. Department of State's religious freedom report: The CCP routinely abuses, tortures, and kills members of all religions

The most comprehensive official document ever published on religious persecution in China quotes Bitter Winter 74 times.

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10.06.20 - Crosses removed from over 250 churches in Anhui Province

Provincial authorities ordered to eradicate crosses "no matter what," and in four months, many state-run Protestant churches were left without them.

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10.06.20 - Gulshan Abbas found—in detention

The world knows her because of the campaign of her sister Rushan Abbas, who continued to ask the CCP where Gulshan was. There is now an answer. She is detained in a Xinjiang camp.

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10.06.20 - Mosque 'sinicization' campaign surged amid the pandemic

Numerous mosques in Gansu Province had their domes and crescent symbols removed, triggering anger among the local Hui Muslim population.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (01-07.06.2020)

07.06.20 - China's health codes increase population surveillance

The CCP regime enforced mobile apps to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which will likely outlive the pandemic and will be used to expand automated social control.

[Continue reading...](#)

06.06.20 - Believers forced to choose between faith or survival

Elderly Christians across China are deprived of government subsidies if they continue practicing their faith.

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05.06.20 - Crosses taken off 26 three-self churches in a Jiangxi County

As soon as coronavirus lockdowns were lifted, government officials in Duchang county resumed crackdown campaigns on places of worship.

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05.06.20 - Arrested by police, believer forced to undress in public

A member of The Church of Almighty God recounts the humiliation and suffering

she had to endure at the hands of the Chinese authorities because of her faith.

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04.06.20 - Three-self churches ordered to unite with the communist party

The clergy and management of state-run Protestant churches are evaluated on their patriotism and adherence to the CCP rule. Those who fail are dismissed.

[Continue reading...](#)

04.06.20 - China-India border dispute: it's about Tibet and Nepal—and religion, too

"What's happening in Ladakh is the repetition of what happened to Tibet 60 years ago," says the president of the Central Tibetan Administration.

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03.06.20 - Chairman Mao replaces Buddha in temples

While countless Buddhist and Taoist temples are demolished, places of worship that install statues of China's revolutionary leaders are spared CCP's persecution.

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03.06.20 - Surveillance of believers intensified amid the pandemic

Presented as a coronavirus prevention measure, numerous cameras were installed in China's religious venues. Believers fear that they will remain for good.

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02.06.20 - CCP expands indoctrination to Hong Kong schools

China's teachers have been forced for years to serve as enforcers of the authoritarian regime's ideology, swapping school education with government propaganda.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (25-31.05.2020)

48 State-run churches shut down in one county in two weeks

31.05.20 - Protestants in Jiangxi Province's Yugan county have been suffering CCP's persecution for the past few years. Attacks renewed after coronavirus lockdown was lifted.

[Continue reading...](#)

China's religious persecution wrecks people's lives

31.05.20 - Following CCP's relentless crackdowns against The Church of Almighty God, numerous families are shattered as their loved ones are sent to prison for their faith.

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Hong Kong, the darkest hour has yet to come

30.05.20 - Bitter Winter publishes exclusive footage of the police repression. "Is there any country welcoming Hong Kong people now?"

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More restrictions on religious publications imposed

30.05.20 - To advance CCP's religion "sinicization" policy, crackdowns are launched to confiscate faith-related materials that are not approved by the state.

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Bypassing China's Great Firewall may land you in prison

29.05.20 - Chinese citizens on the mainland are punished for using foreign websites or social media. Those who post comments unfavorable to the regime may end in jail.

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Jews support the Uyghurs: The lonely jew is no longer lonely

29.05.20 - Last year, we reported how one Jewish gentleman gathered attention with his solitary protest in London. Now, Jewish support for Uyghurs is growing everywhere.

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Nothing can stop the CCP from exterminating Buddha

28.05.20 - Even during the coronavirus outbreak, the Chinese authorities continued closing down Buddhist temples and destroying statues of deities.

[Continue reading...](#)

Catholic nursing homes raided and closed

28.05.20 - The CCP uses any tools possible to force Catholic conscientious objectors into the Patriotic Church, even by disbanding charitable organizations they run.

[Continue reading...](#)

300+ police officers demolish a Tibetan Buddhist temple

27.05.20 - The CCP continues to impose severe restrictions on religious practices of Tibetan Buddhists, destroying temples and eliminating traditional symbols across China.

[Continue reading...](#)

The Xinjiang class: How the CCP tries to "convert" the Uyghurs-and fails

27.05.20 - A book by Timothy Grose examines Beijing's project of taking Uyghur students to boarding schools far away from Xinjiang to "sinicize" them.

[Continue reading...](#)

State-run churches destroyed throughout coronavirus outbreak

26.05.20 - Even the spread of a deadly virus cannot mitigate CCP's religious persecutions: numerous Three-Self churches were suppressed in the past few months.

[Continue reading...](#)

Rectification of Mosques in Henan continued amid the pandemic

26.05.20 - As the CCP advances its 5-year plan to "sinicize" Muslims outside of Xinjiang, numerous places of worship in the province were stripped of religious symbols.

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Members of banned churches imprisoned, some for 15 years

26.05.20 - Believers who resist being managed by China's communist regime are often arrested and interrogated, despite their elderly age and declining health.

[Continue reading...](#)

House church venues closed, demolished in Jiangxi Province

25.05.20 - As soon as coronavirus lockdown lifted, house churches immediately felt the resurgence of CCP's crackdowns, aimed at forcing them to join the state-run church.

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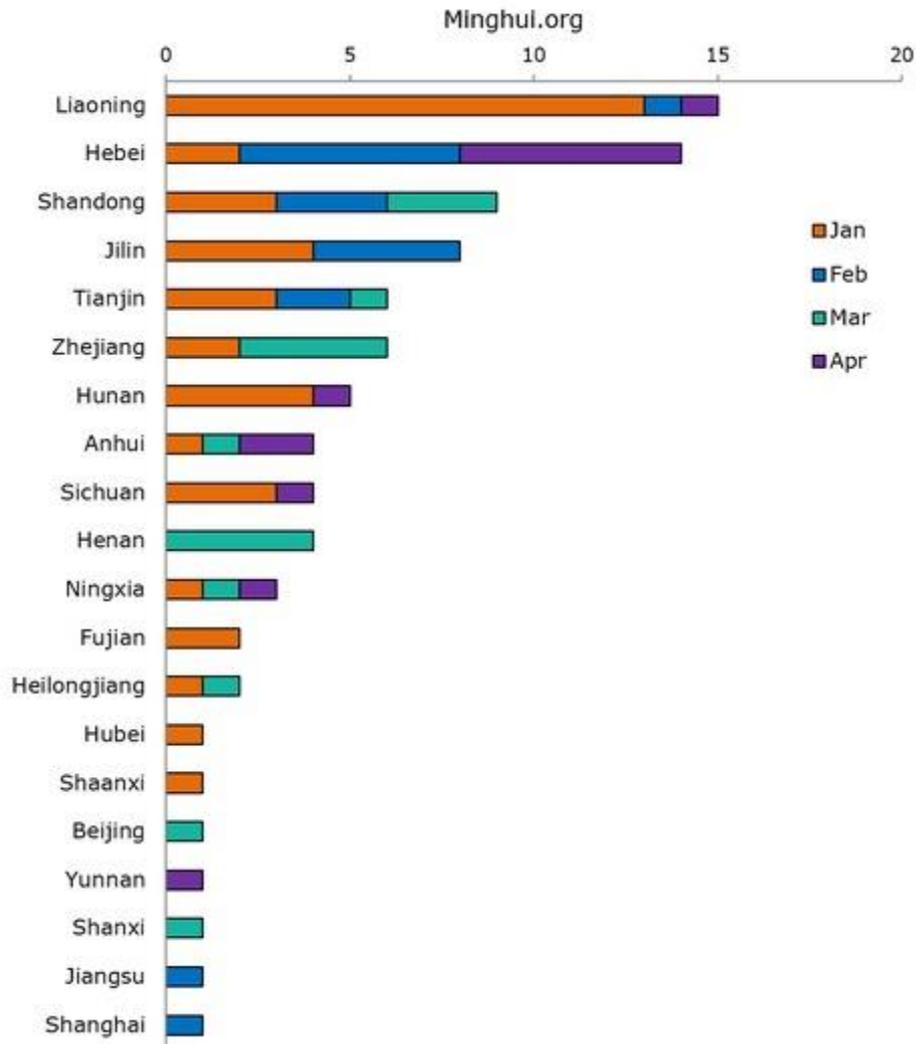
89 Falun Gong practitioners sentenced for their faith between January and April 2020

Minghui (20.05.2020) - <https://bit.ly/37cKCbC> - The month of April 2020 saw another 13 Falun Gong practitioners being sentenced for their faith, bringing the year's tally to 89, including 41 in January, 18 in February and 17 in March.

Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a spiritual practice centered on the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Forbearance. Since the Chinese communist regime started persecuting the practice in July 1999, many practitioners have been subjected to arrest, imprisonment, torture, forced labor, and even organ harvesting.

The 89 sentenced practitioners are from 14 provinces and centrally-controlled municipalities. Liaoning Province topped the list with the most practitioners sentenced (15), followed by Hebei (14). The rest of the regions reported single-digit sentencing cases ranging from 1 to 9. Due to information blockade, especially during the coronavirus epidemic, the actual sentencing cases are expected to be higher.

Geographic and Monthly Distribution of Prison Sentences against Falun Gong Practitioners between January and April 2020

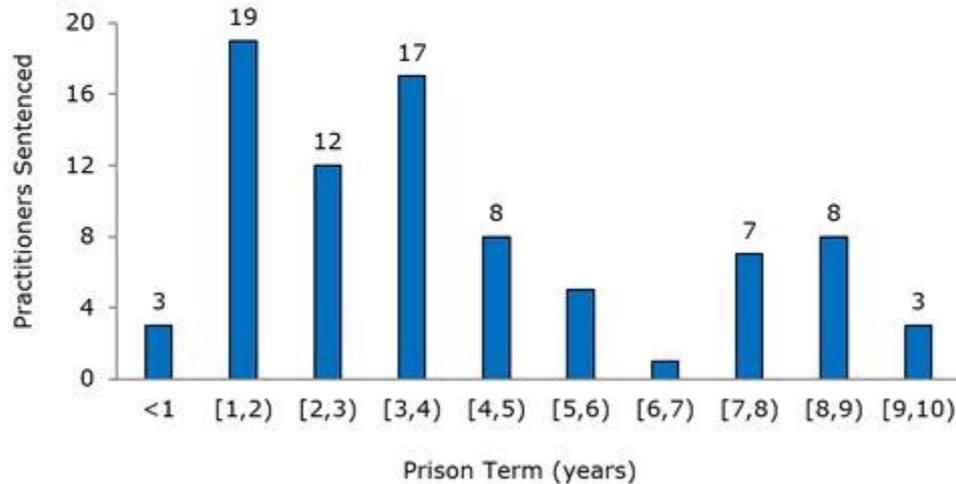


Terms as high as nine years were given out each month between January and March. The highest term in April was seven years, given to a 73-year-old woman. The average term for all 89 cases was 3.72 years.

Prison Terms of 89 Falun Gong Practitioners Sentenced between January and April 2020

Minghui.org

Not on graph: 4 probations and 2 sentences unknown



Most of the practitioners sentenced in April were women and three were in their 70s. Several courts secretly sentenced a few practitioners without informing their lawyers. The practitioners' families only found out about their sentencing when delivering clothes to them at the detention centers and realizing that they were no longer there.

A Suihua City, Heilongjiang Province resident, [Ms. Song Hongwei](#) was still monitored by the authorities after she was released on April 9, 2020, after serving a 1.5-year term. The police demanded that Ms. Song turn in her ID and promised to issue her a new one, probably in an attempt to flag her ID for more advanced surveillance.

Below is a snapshot of sentencing cases in April and newly confirmed cases in earlier months.

Sentencing Cases in April

73-Year-Old Woman Sentenced to 7 Years

Ms. Gao Jinping, a 73-year-old retired textile factory worker of Baoding City, Hebei Province, was recently sentenced to seven years in prison for her faith in Falun Gong.

Ms. Gao's ordeal started from a previous arrest on September 9, 2013. Although she was released on bail after the Baoding Detention Center refused to admit her due to her poor health, the police submitted her case to the Xinshi District Procuratorate without her knowledge.

Only when the prosecutor summoned her in January 2014 did she realize that she had been indicted for her faith.

Fearing being sentenced, Ms. Gao decided to go into hiding.

In early 2019, the Baoding Social Security Office suspended her retirement payments under orders from the police. The police also summoned her daughter to try to find her mother.

After monitoring her family for several months, the police found Ms. Gao's address and arrested her on August 22, 2019.

Ms. Gao appeared in Gaoyang County Court on December 5, 2019. The judge recently informed her lawyer that she has been sentenced to seven years.

Ms. Gao appealed to Baoding City Intermediate Court soon after receiving the verdict. But an insider told her family not to pin too much hope on the appeal, as the verdict was actually determined by the intermediate court.

Tianjin Woman Secretly Sentenced to Six Years Without a Hearing

When Ms. Gao Yuming's family tried to visit her in the Wuqing Detention Center in late April 2020, they were told that she has been sent to Tianjin Women's prison to serve a six-year term for her faith in Falun Gong.

Ms. Gao's sentencing came shortly after she was arrested on February 9, 2020. Prior to her latest arrest, Ms. Gao was targeted in a group arrest of 37 Falun Gong practitioners in Tianjin on December 28, 2017. Although she was released on bail on February 2, 2018, the police continued to harass her and threatened to sentence her to prison.

Fearing the persecution, Ms. Gao went into hiding, only to be arrested again a year later. The local court reopened Ms. Gao Yuming's case and swiftly sentenced her without following the legal procedure or notifying her family.

Ms. Gao was the eighth practitioner among those arrested in Tianjin on December 28, 2017, to have been sentenced. The longest term was 11 years, given to a dentist, Mr. Li Yongquan.

Hebei Woman Tried at Her Home and Sentenced to Four Years

A resident of Qinhuangdao City, Hebei Province was at home on April 6, 2020, when officers and staff members from the Haigang District Court broke in. The police restrained Ms. Yang Suhua's son while the judge held a hearing in the case against her.

The court staff returned to Ms. Yang's home on April 13 to deliver a verdict. She was sentenced to a four-year prison term and fined 2,000 yuan. She had ten days, between April 13 and 23, to file an appeal, and was scheduled to be imprisoned on April 24.

According to Ms. Yang's family, the police have been harassing her during the past few years and the authorities hastily sentenced her in order to close her case from 2016.

Ms. Yang was arrested on August 29, 2016, after being reported for talking to people about Falun Gong. After the Qinhuangdao City Detention Center refused to admit her due to her poor health, the police released her and put her under house arrest.

Officers from the Duzhuang Police Station frequently called her and urged her to go to the police station to answer some questions in early 2017.

After Ms. Yang finally went to the police station a few weeks later, they took her to the Haigang District Procuratorate to sign her indictment file. Only then did Ms. Yang realize that the police had fabricated the interrogation record against her and submitted her case to the Procuratorate.

On March 14, 2017, two police officers and two staff members from the Procuratorate visited Ms. Yang at home and told her that her case had been forwarded to the court. The police attempted to bring Ms. Yang to the court on the morning of May 10, 2017, but relented after finding that she wasn't home.

Ms. Yang's health began to decline as a result of the harassment and fear of being imprisoned. She was often in a delirious state and having difficulty walking.

The authorities continued the harassment and finally decided to sentence her in 2020, despite her health condition.

Woman in Her 70s Sentenced to Four Years

Ms. Geng Wenjing, in her 70s, was arrested on August 29, 2019, for passing out informational materials about Falun Gong. The police ransacked her home several times and held her at the Hengshui City Detention Center.

Ms. Geng, of Xinji City, Hebei Province, appeared in the Anping Court on January 17, 2020. The authorities didn't inform her family of her indictment and court hearing. Her loved ones only learned of the trial when they went to the court themselves to inquire about her case.

Ms. Geng's family learned of her four-year prison sentence on April 13, 2020. She was transferred to Shijiazhuang Women's Prison two days later.

Caregiver-Daughter Given Three Years of Prison for Her Faith, Parents in Their 80s Left Unattended

A Wuhu City, Anhui Province resident was recently sentenced to three years in Anhui Province Women's Prison for practicing Falun Gong. Her parents in their 80s, who had relied on her for care, now struggle to fend for themselves.

Ms. Xu Fengliu, a 59-year-old herbalist, was arrested on May 28, 2018, for passing out informational materials about Falun Gong. She was beaten, force-fed and monitored around the clock when she was detained at Wuhu City Detention Center.

It remains to be investigated when she was tried and by which court.

Retired Sichuan Teacher Sentenced Over Fabricated Evidence

Mr. Xu Shikai, a retired middle school teacher in his 60s, was sentenced to 16 months in prison on April 23, 2020.

Mr. Xu, a Huili County, Sichuan Province resident, was arrested on the evening of April 23, 2019. The police took him to different places the next day and took photos of him at each place. They then accused him of posting Falun Gong information across town.

Mr. Xu appeared in the Huili County Court on October 23, 2019. His lawyer entered a not-guilty plea for him, and he also testified in his own defense.

When Mr. Xu's family contacted Judge Fu Jing to inquire about his case in February 2020, the judge said he had just received more materials from the prosecutor and that he was considering another hearing.

According to Mr. Xu's lawyer, Chinese criminal law prohibits prosecutors from submitting additional evidence after the court hearing. He urged the judge not to consider such evidence and not to follow the Chinese Communist Party's persecution policy against Falun Gong while deciding the verdict against Mr. Xu.

The judge never contacted the lawyer afterward. When Mr. Xu's family went to the court to inquire about his case on April 25, 2020, the judge said that he had already sentenced Mr. Xu the week before. He didn't offer more details and left in a hurry.

Mr. Xu's family has filed an appeal with Liangshanzhou Intermediate Court on his behalf.

77-year-old Woman Sentenced to Six Months' House Arrest

Ms. Shi Qiaoyun, a 77-year-old resident in Xiangtan County, Hunan Province, was sentenced to six months of house arrest for her faith in Falun Gong.

According to the verdict issued by the Yuhu District Court on April 21, 2020, Ms. Shi is prohibited from leaving home without police permission and communicating with others in person or by mail. She was also ordered to turn in her ID, including her passport and driver's license, and has to show up at the local police station whenever she is summoned.

Ms. Shi was arrested on May 22, 2019, after being reported for distributing informational materials about Falun Gong.

The police searched her home around 11 p.m. on May 22 and verbally abused her. They confiscated three of her Falun Gong books.

The police harassed Ms. Shi on September 24 and 25, 2019, asking her what she was doing and looking around her residence. On the 25th, they arrested her and ransacked her home. She was taken to the hospital with her hands cuffed behind her back.

After Ms. Shi was found to have high blood pressure and a heart condition, the police released her and ordered the local village secretary to monitor her.

The police returned on September 28 and took Ms. Shi to Huashi Police Station, collected her fingerprints, and took pictures of her. She went home later that day.

Ms. Shi was taken to the Procuratorate on December 24, 2019, and told that she had been indicted. The Falun Gong materials confiscated from her home were used as evidence for the prosecution, with each page counting as one separate piece of evidence.

Newly Confirmed Sentencing Cases in Earlier Months

Two Sisters in Tianjin Given Heavy Terms for Their Faith

Two sisters in Tianjin were sentenced in January 2020 to heavy terms and fines for their faith in Falun Gong.

Ms. Cheng Guiying and Ms. Cheng Guijing were arrested on May 17, 2018, and sent to Nankai District Detention Center. Their Falun Gong books and related materials were confiscated.

After the police submitted their cases to the Nankai Procuratorate, the prosecutor returned their cases twice for insufficient evidence before indicting them and moving their cases to the court.

The two sisters appeared in court twice, first on February 13 and then on October 18, 2019. The judge announced the verdicts on January 13, 2020, with Ms. Cheng Guiying given eight years and fined 40,000 yuan and Ms. Cheng Guijing nine years with a 50,000 yuan fine.

The heavy terms were based on accusations that the sisters made phone calls to the public to spread information about the persecution of Falun Gong, and that they were "repeat offenders" due to their previous labor camp terms for practicing Falun Gong.

Ms. Cheng Guijing's arrest left her parents-in-law, in their 80s, in deep distress and fear.

They couldn't sleep and experienced high blood pressure and heart problems.

Shandong Woman Sentenced for Her Faith on Fabricated Evidence

Ms. Liu Xifang, a nursing mom in her 30s, was sentenced to two years and three months in March 2020, for her faith in Falun Gong. She has appealed the verdict.

Ms. Liu, of Jinan City, Shandong Province, was arrested on June 14, 2019, while staying at her mother's house in Huimin County, also in Shandong Province. She had been reported for distributing materials about Falun Gong the day before.

Ms. Liu appeared in Huimin County Court in mid-January 2020. The judge didn't allow her family to attend the hearing.

Ms. Liu was charged with "undermining law enforcement with a cult organization," a standard pretext used by the authorities to criminalize Falun Gong practitioners. Her lawyer entered a not guilty plea for her and refuted the charges.

The prosecutor, Li Haijun, listed some Falun Gong materials found in a residential area in July 2019 as prosecution evidence against Ms. Liu.

The lawyer asked Li, "My client was arrested and sent to the Binzhou City Detention Center in June. Did the police take her to the residential area to distribute the materials in July?"

[Full list of the 89 practitioners sentenced between January and April 2020 \(PDF\).](#)

Gong Dazhi: Fled religious persecution in China, now waiting for refugee status in Spain

The case of Gong Dazhi, a member of the Church of Almighty God

Human Rights Without Frontiers calls upon the Spanish authorities to grant refugee status immediately to believers of all faiths that are persecuted in China

HRWF (28.05.2020) - After thirteen years of harrowing persecution in China due to being a member of The Church of Almighty God, **Gong Dazhi**, 41, shared his story with HRWF. He was detained and subjected to horrific torture. In April 2019, he arrived in Spain and applied for asylum. To this day, he is waiting to hear whether he will be recognised as a political refugee or not.

Arrested and tortured in 2003

"On 15 March 2003, I was arrested in Jilin Province because of my faith in The Church of Almighty God and my evangelism activities. While detained, I was tortured and then sentenced to one year of so-called 're-education' through labour.

On the day of my arrest, I was reported to the police by passers-by for preaching the gospel with an elderly sister. The police confiscated our books and took us to the Jingyue Town Police Station in Erdao District, Changchun City, Jilin Province. It is in the Changchun Municipal Public Security Bureau that my first experience of torture occurred.

The policemen put hoods over our heads, handcuffed us and took us to a secret interrogation room. They put me on a tiger bench, twisted and lifted my arms behind my back, and then placed my arms on the iron rail at the top of the tiger bench. They handcuffed my wrists in that position and tied a white nylon rope to the chain between the handcuffs. They also tied my feet to the tiger bench with another rope.

A young officer slapped me hard in the face. A middle-aged policeman yanked the nylon rope connected to my handcuffs while simultaneously stomping on the rope attached. The handcuffs pulled on my wrists so tightly that it felt like the metal was cutting through my bones.

The officers attempted to force me to identify and denounce my fellow brothers and sisters in the church. When I refused, they placed two thick white plastic bags over my head and tightened them around my neck. One officer repeatedly punched my chest while another treaded hard on the rope connected to the handcuffs at the same time.

I was being suffocated while experiencing excruciating pain. I struggled and, in the process, managed to free my feet from the rope. I twisted my feet around the chair legs, trying to tear the plastic bags with my teeth so that I could breathe. Despite my best attempts, I failed to create a hole and subsequently passed out.

The police revived me by pouring cold water on me. When I came to, gasping for breath, they interrogated me about the church. Again, I refused to tell them anything, and so they put the plastic bags back over my head and trod harder on the rope tied to my handcuffs. I fainted again from a lack of oxygen. They repeatedly tortured me in this way until they were exhausted."

Tortured and sentenced

"The next evening, the police took me to Daguang Detention Center of Changchun Municipal Public Security Bureau. After seven days of detention and torture I was charged with 'disturbing the social order' and sentenced to one year of so-called 're-education' through labour. I was sent to the Chaoyangou Labour Camp in Changchun City to serve my sentence."

Tortured again and subjected to inhumane labour

"At the camp, the guards often instigated other prisoners into torturing me. I was forced to carry out intense physical labour every day that year without pay. I was woken up at 5 am every day and had to work until midnight. If I couldn't finish the compulsory tasks within the stipulated time, I would be subjected to severe beatings.

Additionally, the prison guards and inmate boss often forced me to handwash clothes and sheets for them, even when the temperature of the winter in Jilin Province was colder than minus 20 degrees Celsius. The water was icy and it took two or three hours to do the washing, which created great pain in the joints of my fingers.

If I stood in the wrong line at the cafeteria, the inmate boss would punish me by forcing me to bend down until my head touched the iron pipe at the corner and lift my hands as high as I could from my back. I would have to stay in this position for a prolonged period of time. They would also hit my mouth hard with a 30 cm long bamboo plate. I lived in constant fear.

After my release in 2004, I had to go into hiding, moving from place to place, because the police were searching for me."

Forced to flee China

After living in hiding and nonstop fear for many years, Gong Dazhi fled China "to freely practice my faith", as he said to HRWF. He arrived in Spain in April 2019. He now has an interim residence permit and is waiting for a final decision on his asylum application. He says: "I'm often afraid that I may be sent back to China where I have suffered so much persecution by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) government. I do not want to experience that ever again."

HRWF Comment

Since Xi Jinping came into power in 2012, the Chinese Government has dramatically escalated the persecution of Christians and other religions.

HRWF's Database of Prisoners in China is regularly updated. At the time of writing, it has documented over 4,000 cases where members of The Church of Almighty God are imprisoned. This figure is estimated to be only the tip of the iceberg.

See HRWF's Prisoners' Database here: <https://hrwf.eu/hrwf-prisoners-database-china/>

From China to Spain to flee discriminatory arrests and torture

The case of Zhang Wenbo, a member of the Church of Almighty God

Human Rights Without Frontiers calls upon the Spanish authorities to grant refugee status to believers of all faiths that are persecuted in China.

HRWF (27.05.2020) - In December 2019, **Zhang Wenbo**, 50, landed in Spain after escaping the "Chinese Communist paradise" where he had spent nearly his entire life. He hopes to start a new life in this safe haven, where he is free to practice his religion without fear. About 600 asylum seekers from China who fled harsh religious persecution are still waiting for Madrid to recognise them as refugees. Spain has not threatened to deport any of them, but it has not granted them political asylum either.

Zhang Wenbo was born in a Christian family in Henan province, one of the cradles of Chinese civilization. As an adult he converted to The Church of Almighty God, and he has now been a member of it for 22 years. He was arrested twice by the Chinese police in 2003 and 2012 due to his missionary activities inside the country. Both times, he was subjected to inhumane torture and nearly killed.

He shared his experience of religious persecution in China with *Human Rights Without Frontiers* (HRWF):

Arrested and tortured in 2003

"I was arrested for the first time because of my faith in 2003. Over a dozen police officers surrounded the place where four of us were worshipping. We were apprehended and tortured to reveal the names of our church leaders. I was forced into painful positions for prolonged periods of time, such as half squatting. Additionally, they shone a 1000-watt spotlight into my eyes which caused severe pain in my head, but they would beat me if I closed my eyes.

After this incident, the police visited my furniture shop frequently. They would ask me whether I continued believing in God. Sometimes they would take me to the police station and try to force me to revoke my faith. To evade potential arrest and further persecution from the Communist Party of China (CCP), I had no choice but to go into hiding.”

Arrested again and tortured in 2012

“On 17 December 2012, the director of Tongren City Public Security Bureau and over a dozen officers discovered our hiding place. They confiscated more than 10 cellphones, 6,000 RMB (about 850 USD) in cash and a deposit book. They then took me to the Bijiang District Police Station of Tongren City, where they interrogated me about our church leaders. As I refused to cooperate, they slapped me in the face, punched me and kicked me. I was assaulted to the point that I felt dizzy and pain all over.

Over the course of 16 days, I was subjected to torture as the officers tried to force me to talk. I was taken to the basement of the police station for the so-called ‘swing treatment’. While handcuffed, I was hung on a door frame so that my feet were no longer touching the ground. They tied my feet to a rope and then, for an hour and a half, they swung my legs back and forth. This caused excruciating pain in my wrists and blackened my hands.

Since I still refused to betray our church leaders, they then laid me on the ground and hit my back, waist and shoulders with a 70 cm long steel tube, fracturing my ribs. I was then forced to kneel, and this steel tube was rolled over my calves. This was so painful that I thought it was crushing my knees and ankles.

Then, one of my handcuffed wrists was hung high above my head on the wall, so that only one of my feet could touch the ground, whilst the other hand was tied around my back. This meant I was hanging from one arm and barely standing on one leg, and so I could neither stand or squat down.

On 3 January 2013, I was transferred to Bijiang District Detention Center in Tongren City. I was detained there for an additional 23 days.

During my detention, I was fed minimally. Other inmates often abused me and beat me up due to instigation from the guards. Also, at one point, the authorities forced me into a wooden chair and stabbed my genitals with a long iron awl.

On 26 January 2013, my family and friends from the church used their connections to obtain my release on bail. My freedom was bought with 16,000 RMB (about 2,290 USD), although the standard fee was registered as only 3,000 RMB (about 430 USD).

To this day I have not recovered from this torture. It traumatized me and created long-term physical damage to the extent that now I am unable to do any physical labor.”

Under constant threat of a new arrest: no choice but to flee

“After my release in 2013, I was under strict surveillance by the police. I had to report to them every month and they threatened and interrogated me on a regular basis.

Between 2013 and 2018, I was always on the run, moving from place to place and living in constant fear and pain. While preaching in Sanmenxia City of Henan Province in 2013, I was reported to the police and narrowly escaped arrest. In 2016, I was questioned by the police in Yiyang City. Ultimately, I realized that I had no alternative but to leave China if I wanted to live according to my faith.

In December 2019, I managed, with great difficulty, to obtain a passport and flee to Spain. I submitted my asylum application and received an interim residence permit. In February 2020, my case was heard by the refugee board. Now I'm awaiting the decision from the Spanish government."

HRWF Comment: During his interview with HRWF, he disclosed many more details about additional sexual torture that he was subjected to.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (18-24.05.2020)

Scarred for life: interrogated, tortured, imprisoned

24.05.20 - A member of The Church of Almighty God, arrested for his faith, was tortured for six days before he was sentenced to six years in prison.

[Continue reading...](#)

Catholics disallowed religious funerals

24.05.20 - Even the dead are not spared religious persecution in China, as most religious ceremonies are prohibited, and symbols are removed from believers' gravesites..

[Continue reading...](#)

CCP stepping up the pace of Uyghur forced labor into inner China

23.05.20 - Beijing is ramping up transfers of Uyghurs into forced labor outside of their region, according to an Australian think tank set up to probe human rights violations in Xinjiang.

[Continue reading...](#)

"Inside the Church of Almighty God": A new book tells it like it is

22.05.20 - Oxford University Press publishes Massimo Introvigne's survey of the most persecuted religious movement in China.

[Continue reading...](#)

Worshipping Jade Emperor by kowtowing to Mao Zedong

22.05.20 - Taoism, one of the Three Teachings of Chinese spirituality and religion, faces increasing suppression, as temples are repurposed and believers indoctrinated.

[Continue reading...](#)

Churches with foreign ties suppressed, pastors deported

21.05.20 - The CCP treats any link the Chinese believers have with abroad as "foreign infiltration" that threatens its regime. Any such tie is investigated and severed.

[Continue reading...](#)

With lockdown lifted, crackdowns on churches intensify

19.05.20 - The minute coronavirus prevention restrictions were eased, state-run churches in Jiangxi Province felt the resurgence of onslaughts. Many were closed for good.

[Continue reading...](#)

State orders to repurpose temples, eliminate Buddhist statues

19.05.20 - Even during the coronavirus outbreak, the CCP continued crackdowns on places of worship, turning them into entertainment venues and destroying Buddhist icons.

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China's social media platforms-tools of religious persecution

19.05.20 - The Chinese government is using WeChat, a popular multi-purpose social media and messaging app, for mass surveillance, including to monitor people of faith.

[Continue reading...](#)

Teachers forced to renounce faith, become CCP's political pawns

18.05.20 - To warrant "proper" indoctrination of students, China's regime probes and punishes religious teachers, ensures that not a single faith-related word is said in class.

[Continue reading...](#)

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (10-17.05.2020)

25 years after: release the 11th Panchen Lama!

16.05.20 - In 1995, the CCP kidnapped the second highest authority in the Geluk school of Tibetan Buddhism to substitute him with a puppet. European MPs now call for his release.

[Continue reading...](#)

Mistaken identity: How Chinese look at the Uyghurs

16.05.20 - A Chinese Han, who happens to physically look like a Uyghur, opens a window on the relationships between the Han majority and the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang and beyond.

[Continue reading...](#)

China's muslims forced to eat pork during Ramadan

15.05.20 - The CCP continues to eliminate Muslim culture and Islamic faith by prohibiting people from observing traditional practices during the holy month of Ramadan.

[Continue reading...](#)

Prisoners of faith forced to make goods for foreign markets

14.05.20 - A member of The Church of Almighty God recounts her experience serving a five-year sentence for her faith in prison where she was subjected to forced labor.

[Continue reading...](#)

CAG members arrested and tortured during lockdown

13.05.20 - Members of The Church of Almighty God recount their ordeals trying to evade CCP's persecution amid the coronavirus outbreak.

[Continue reading...](#)

CCP advances 'sinicization' of religion amid the pandemic

13.05.20 - Authorities throughout China adopt new measures demanding the clergy of state-run churches to promote the Party doctrine and indoctrinate believers.

[Continue reading...](#)

Mass surveillance and 5G in Tibet: between oppression and espionage

12.05.20 - Tibetans are continuously controlled through camera networks and artificial intelligence. Now, Huawei's highest 5G base station on Mount Everest will also favor international cyber-espionage.

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Church-run orphanages shut after bans on religious charities

11.05.20 - With restrictions imposed by the new law on religion in China, many private orphanages across the country were closed, depriving children of love and care.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (03-09.05.2020)

The police region of Xinjiang: checkpoints, camps, and fear

09.05.20 - Police officers from inland China, who worked in Xinjiang, disclose details of control measures employed by the CCP to suppress Uyghur Muslims.

[Continue reading...](#)

'Ensuring stability' by demolishing places of worship

08.05.20 - Unregistered house churches remain key targets of religious persecution as China re-opens after coronavirus lockdowns.

[Continue reading...](#)

Fighting the pandemic at the cost of human rights

08.05.20 - The CCP claims to have won a "great victory" against COVID-19 thanks to "great leadership" and the socialist system. Those who took part in the fight disagree.

[Continue reading...](#)

325 CAG members arrested during coronavirus outbreak

06.05.20 - The Chinese government used the deadly virus to persecute believers of banned religious groups, entering their homes under the pretext of "epidemic prevention."

[Continue reading...](#)

Shouters' members arrested, preacher imprisoned for his faith

06.05.20 - Believers of this banned Christian group suffer severe persecution and are often sent to jail, where they are indoctrinated and subjected to forced labor.

[Continue reading...](#)

Mistaken identity: how Chinese look at the Uyghurs

05.05.20 - A Chinese Han, who happens to physically look like a Uyghur, opens a window on the relationships between the Han majority and the Uyghur minority in Xinjiang and beyond.

[Continue reading...](#)

Jilin Province shut down over 160 House church venues in 2019

05.05.20 - The CCP continued cracking down on unregistered Protestant venues in this northeastern Chinese province, arrested and fined believers and clergy members.

[Continue reading...](#)

Surveillance increases in Xinjiang's residential communities

05.05.20 - Disregarding growing concerns from the international community, the CCP steps up efforts to control the daily lives of people by monitoring their every move.

[Continue reading...](#)

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (25.04–02.05.2020)

Numerous State-run church venues shut down in late 2019

02.05.20 - The government harassed these Protestant places of worship on a variety of pretexts: from "disturbing neighbors" to "supporting protests in Hong Kong."

[Continue reading...](#)

Muslims threatened not to resist the removal of islamic symbols

01.05.20 - To enforce its Islam "sinicization" policy, the CCP removes domes and star-and-crescents from mosques and demands total submissiveness from the Muslim population.

[Continue reading...](#)

Xinjiang students mandated to love CCP, resist 'US interference'

01.05.20 - Universities hold allegiance ceremonies for teachers and students, make them criticize countries that raise concerns over the mistreatment of Uyghurs.

[Continue reading...](#)

Places of worship targeted during coronavirus outbreak

30.04.20 - As the deadly virus was spreading through China, the government continued cracking down on temples and churches, destroying buildings and harassing believers.

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73 CAG members sentenced to prison in Hunan and Jiangsu

29.04.20 - The Church of Almighty God remains one of the primary targets of China's religious persecution, as its members are given hefty sentences for practicing their faith.

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Huawei, 5G and human rights abuses: Yes, they are connected

29.04.20 - Citing Huawei's complicity in slavery and oppression, British Uyghurs are appealing to the British Government to reverse a decision to allow it to run part of the UK's 5G network.

[Continue reading...](#)

How China's 4.5 Million grid administrators monitor residents

28.04.20 - Battalions of overseers patrol residential communities in the name of "social stability," watch for "unstable elements" and report on religious activities.

[Continue reading...](#)

Online buyers of religious books caught and interrogated

28.04.20 - The CCP intensifies inquiries into Christians' online activities, scrutinizing their every digital step, including purchases of "illegal" religious materials.

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Catholic priests tortured to join the patriotic church

28.04.20 - The coronavirus pandemic doesn't prevent the Chinese government from persecuting Catholic conscientious objectors in the Diocese of Mindong.

[Continue reading...](#)

A Uyghur man's letter to his lost mother

28.04.20 - Abdulhakim Idris is a human rights activist and the husband of the well-known advocate for Uyghurs' rights, Rushan Abbas. He does not know where his mother is.

[Continue reading...](#)

Pastor arrested for "inciting subversion of state power"

China Aid (24.04.2020) - <https://bit.ly/35dbqrA> - Authorities arrested a church founder on a trumped-up charge of "inciting subversion of state power" this month.

Zhao Huaiguo, who established Bethel Church, has been targeted by the officials for not merging his church into the Three-Self Patriotic Movement [TSPM]. The TSPM is China's state-run and censored network of churches. Last year, the church was banned, with the government saying Zhao illegally preached and distributed Christian pamphlets.

10 days prior, around 50 government agents broke into the church and destroyed some of its property. They also seized Bibles, hymnals, and musical instruments. Zhao and other Christians were then interrogated.

From March-December of last year, the local public security bureau took preachers at the church away for questioning and made them sign a commitment not to continue their religious practices. In addition, since Zhao's arrest, the authorities have been investigating the amount and source of the church's offerings, trying to find evidence against Zhao. However, the Christians are refusing to answer their questions.

ChinaAid exposes abuses in order to stand in solidarity with the persecuted and promote religious freedom, human rights, and rule of law. If you wish to partner with us in helping those persecuted by the Chinese government, please click the button below to make a charitable donation.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (18-24.04.2020)

Believers tortured to renounce their faith in Xinjiang's camps

24.04.20 - Along with Muslims, members of The Church of Almighty God, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other persecuted groups are also sent to internment camps for "transformation."

[Continue reading...](#)

Three-Self churches continue to be destroyed amid the pandemic

24.04.20 - As the coronavirus was spreading throughout China, CCP-run Protestant churches and their congregations suffered continuous crackdowns at the hands of the government.

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Hundreds of temples stifled in Sichuan Province in 2019

21.04.20 - Buddhism and Taoism in the southwestern province suffered heavy blows last year, as temples were shuttered or demolished, religious symbols and statues destroyed.

[Continue reading...](#)

Arabic script, islamic Symbols ordered to be removed

21.04.20 - Shops and restaurants run by Hui people across China are losing an integral part of Muslim cultural identity, as the CCP pushes forward its "sinicization" policy.

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Activists, believers held in psychiatric clinics as punishment

18.04.20 - Instead of helping people, some mental health institutions in China are used to "reform" dissidents, even people petitioning the government or religious believers.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (11–17.04.2020)

Want to run a business? Pledge allegiance to the party

17.04.20 - As coronavirus lockdowns are being lifted across China, businesses in some provinces can only reopen if they display government-supporting propaganda slogans.

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Guilt by association: all are punished for the faith of one

17.04.20 - The CCP forces believers to give up their faith by implicating their families, threatening to deter education or employment opportunities, revoke state benefits.

[Continue reading...](#)

For Uyghurs, "poverty alleviation" means cultural genocide

17.04.20 - Scholar Adrian Zenz exposes how what is advertised as an anti-poverty program in Xinjiang is in fact just another tool to deprive Uyghurs of their identity and coerce them into slave labor.

[Continue reading...](#)

Protestants in Shandong's Zaozhuang City face CCP's attacks

16.04.20 - Both house churches and state-approved places of worship suffered severe government crackdowns in the second half of last year.

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Decoding China's disinformation on COVID-19

16.04.20 - As the CCP controls public opinion with propaganda to depict itself as "the great power defeating the epidemic," many Chinese learn to read between the lines.

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Coronavirus, China kept it secret for six fatal days

16.04.20 - The CCP realized a pandemic was developing on January 13. In a secret meeting on January 14, it decided not to disclose the information, until January 20. The move costed the world tens of thousands of deaths.

[Continue reading...](#)

CCP assimilates Uyghurs by banning their culture and religion

14.04.20 - The Chinese government has been eradicating Xinjiang Uyghurs' customs and traditions by prohibiting the use of their language, forcing them to eat pork.

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Coronavirus: CCP and the World Health Organization, partners in cover-up?

13.04.20 - A new report by the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation denounces Chinese control of the World Health Organization, and how it damaged all of us in the current crisis

[Continue reading...](#)

Believers denied religious services online amid the pandemic

13.04.20 - The CCP intensified censorship to prevent believers from practicing their faith online, as religious gatherings were prohibited during the coronavirus outbreak.

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In China, all calls for freedom lead to punishment

11.04.20 - The death of Li Wenliang, the whistleblower Wuhan doctor, stirred an online rebellion in China. But the regime promptly quashed people's demands for free speech.

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Crosses removed from numerous State-run protestant churches

11.04.2020 - Though approved by the government, Three-Self churches are not guaranteed protection from the state, and they often become targets of religious persecution.

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The Communist Party's rule by fear endangers Chinese citizens-and the world

11.04.2020 - The Communist Party's rule by fear endangers Chinese citizens-and the world. An open letter to Chinese citizens and friends of China at home and abroad

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (04.04–10.04.2020)

China's online censors hide truth with government's lies

10.04.20 - A "posts' deletion officer" who removes comments online that the CCP deems unfavorable to its regime, shares the details of his daily work.

[Continue reading...](#)

At least 150 temples demolished in Shaanxi Province

10.04.20 - Bitter Winter continuously receives reports about the regime's attacks on Buddhist and Taoist temples, which are destroyed, sealed-off, or repurposed.

[Continue reading...](#)

Refugees from the Church of Almighty God: Hope from the Italian Supreme Court

10.04.20 - In Italy, more than one thousand requests from asylum based on religious persecution were filed by Chinese refugees. Most of them belong to The Church of Almighty God.

[Continue reading...](#)

Refugees from the Church of Almighty God: Hope from the Italian Supreme Court

10.04.20 - Two decisions canceled the refusal of asylum by courts in Milan, asking them to reconsider the applications.

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Pandemic or not, love for the Communist Party must come first

09.04.20 - The Chinese government continues indoctrinating students with socialist ideology, forces citizens to study Xi Jinping Thought.

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Paving the way for the Bible according to the CCP

09.04.20 - Religious texts not approved by the state, including the Bible, are confiscated

from churches and believers, replaced with socialist propaganda.

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Catholic schools, kindergartens shut down in Hebei Province

08.04.20 - To stifle faith in the cradle, the CCP bans church-run education of children, implements measures to prevent minors from having any contacts with churches.

[Continue reading...](#)

Coronavirus, the CCP should be asked to pay US\$4 trillion in damages: Here is why

08.04.20 - An influential British think tank, the Henry Jackson Society, has published the most detailed legal paper so far on Chinese liabilities for the epidemic.

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Elderly and gravely ill believers tortured in China's prisons

07.04.20 - Members of The Church of Almighty God are given lengthy prison sentences and are brutally pressured to give up their faith while in detention.

[Continue reading...](#)

Over 300 protestant churches closed in two provinces

06.04.20 - Jiangsu and Liaoning provinces continue reducing the number of places for believers to assemble, barring state-run and house churches alike.

[Continue reading...](#)

Horrific reality of serving in people's liberation army

05.04.2020 - Soldiers share the memories of serving their country they wish to forget: hunting down Uyghurs, killing Tibetan monks, "selective" rescue of earthquake victims.

[Continue reading...](#)

Religious activities online banned or censored during pandemic

05.04.2020 - As coronavirus spreads around the world, people of faith rely on the internet as the only way to maintain their group religious activities. But not in China.

[Continue reading...](#)

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (28.03– 03.04.2020)

National anthem replaces calls to prayer for Hui Muslims

03.04.20 - Mosques throughout China are rectified to be "more Chinese," as the CCP continues to enforce its five-year plan to "sinicize" Islam outside Xinjiang.

[Continue reading...](#)

Coronavirus, CCP to students: Stay home and study communism

03.04.20 - While staying home during the epidemic, Chinese students are subjected to red ideology and anti-religious education.

[Continue reading...](#)

Coronavirus, Cardinal Bo: The CCP is clearly responsible, should pay compensation

02.04.20 - Senior Catholic prelate insists we should blame the Party, not the Chinese people, for spreading the virus throughout the world.

[Continue reading...](#)

Hotels penalized for 'insufficient control' of Uyghur guests

02.04.20 - The CCP's unyielding control over Muslims from Xinjiang extends to every aspect of their daily life, including travel and staying in hotels.

[Continue reading...](#)

'Unpatriotic' catholic churches shut down across China

02.04.20 - The CCP continues to suppress places of worship that refuse to be governed by the state.

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Coronavirus, Twitter, and Nostradamus: Chinese fake news infecting the world

02.04.20 - A European Union agency reports a massive disinformation attack, claiming the U.S. created the virus and China is saving the world from it.

[Continue reading...](#)

In Jiangxi Province, crosses removed from churches, cemeteries

01.04.20 - As part of the ongoing campaign to eradicate religions, the regime disposes of religious symbols, pressures believers to give up God, and follow the Communist Party.

[Continue reading...](#)

CCP continues suppressing house churches amid the pandemic

01.04.20 - Even during the coronavirus outbreak, China's regime does not relax its efforts persecuting the religious groups it doesn't control.

[Continue reading...](#)

Coronavirus: Uyghurs deported to other provinces as slave laborers to restart economy

01.04.20 - Evidence piles up and videos document the massive transfer of Turkic workers sent to work in Chinese factories outside of Xinjiang.

[Continue reading...](#)

China's other virus, religious persecution: Christian solidarity worldwide

31.03.2020 - In its new report about China, the well-known Christian NGO denounces the increased repression of Muslim, Buddhists, Taoist, Catholics, House Churches, Falun Gong, and The Church of Almighty God.

[Continue reading...](#)

With breadwinners locked in camps, families struggle to survive

31.03.2020 - The mass confinement of Xinjiang's Uyghurs in internment camps resulted in a myriad of children and parents of the detained left with no means of subsistence.

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Islamic schools shuttered, 100,000 Qurans burned

30.03.20 - Two schools offering classes to learn Arabic and study the Quran were closed last year, amid the CCP's accelerating campaign to eradicate Muslim culture and faith.

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Medical staff forced to join in CCP's coronavirus lies

29.03.20 - While sacrificing their lives to treat the victims of the deadly virus, China's doctors and nurses were pressed to play along with the government's propaganda.

[Continue reading...](#)

Coronavirus: China is sued in the US, sues back claiming the virus is "American"

28.03.20 - What we predicted, happened: American lawyers are suing China. And in China, lawyers sue the U.S. claiming America is responsible for the virus.

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Freedom of expression about religion criminalized

74-Year-old retired teacher has been detained a month for spreading information about his faith

Minghui.org (28.03.2020) - <https://bit.ly/3bFohVr> - A 74-year-old retired middle school teacher in Shanghai has been detained for more than a month for spreading information about his faith in Falun Gong, an ancient spiritual and meditation discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

Officers broke into Mr. Fa Zhengping's home on February 16, 2020, and claimed that someone had reported him for giving out informational materials about Falun Gong. The police ordered him to sign a document. When he refused to cooperate, they pushed him down and carried him into the police car.

The police ransacked Mr. Fa's two residences and confiscated his printer and Falun Gong books.

The next day, the police ordered Mr. Fa's family to go to Zhoudong Police Station to pick up his criminal detention notice. He was charged with "undermining law enforcement with a cult organization," a standard pretext used to criminalize Falun Gong practitioners in China.

Mr. Fa's family next went to the local detention center to deliver clothes to him. The guards refused to accept them, citing the strict management during the coronavirus epidemic.

Prior to his latest arrest, Mr. Fa was held in labor camps twice for a total of four years and sentenced to three years in prison.

In the labor camps, he was force-fed, given unknown drugs, and deprived of sleep. In the summer, the guards forced him to wear a thick sweater and down jacket and kept him tied up for days at a time. Sometimes, they shocked him with four electric batons at the same time.

As a result of the torture, he suffered some brain damage and had significant hearing, vision, and memory loss. His legs and arms were bruised after being tied up for long stretches. He was unable to lift his arms and had difficulty walking. He also suffered from extremely low blood pressure and his blood turned dark due to lack of oxygen.

While he was in prison, the inmates picked at the inside of his cheek with their fingers. The injuries took a long time to heal. He also had injuries to his face and ear from being

beaten by the inmates. He often fainted after returning home, and his urine was brown. After he resumed practicing Falun Gong, he recovered his health.

Coronavirus, a chronology: The CCP is responsible, here is the evidence

If you need a smoking gun, here it is. A timeline of delays, cover-ups, and fake news proving that the world should indeed blame the CCP for the deadly epidemic.

by Massimo Introvigne



****This chronology is partially based on one compiled by the Daily Wire, to which we have added additional events and links.***

November 17 (2019): The first case of what was later identified as COVID-19 was detected in Wuhan.

December 10: 57-year-old Wei Guixian, a merchant in the seafood section of the Wuhan Animal Market, reported sick with what were later identified as COVID-19 symptoms.

December 26: Wuhan patients data were sent to several Chinese genomics companies, which were supposed to detect new viruses. Reportedly, at least one of these companies was ordered to stop the tests and destroy the material.

December 27: Zhang Jixian, a doctor from Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine, **told China's health authorities** that he believed the disease was caused by a new coronavirus.

December 31: Chinese officials **told the Country Office in China of the World Health Organization** (WHO) that cases of a "new form of pneumonia" had been reported in Wuhan. At the same time, CCP Internet censorship **started preventing searches** for "Wuhan Unknown Pneumonia," "SARS Variation," "Wuhan Animal Market," and similar.

January 1 (2020): Eight doctors who had alerted about an epidemics caused by a new coronavirus in Wuhan, including Dr. Li Wenliang (1986-2020), who will later die of the disease, **were detained and questioned by the CCP police** for "spreading false statements." Li was forced to **sign a letter of apology**.

January 1: The Hubei Health Commission **ordered all genomics companies** that had been contacted on December 26 to stop their tests and destroy the materials they received (which would have proved that data about the virus were already available from late December).

January 1: Authorities **closed the Wuhan Animal Market**, without swabbing individual animals and their cages and without drawing blood from everyone working there or otherwise checking who might have been infected.

January 3: China's National Health Commission **issued a national gag order**, preventing all medical institutions in the country to disclose information about the disease.

January 5: **Professor Zhang Yongzhen** of the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center provided the genomic sequence of the virus to Chinese authorities.

January 5: Wuhan Municipal Health Commission **stopped releasing daily updates** on new cases of the disease.

January 9: WHO released a **statement** about the situation in Wuhan, suggesting a new coronavirus was at work.

January 10: China Central Television broadcasted **a statement by Wang Guangfa**, a prominent government medical expert, stating that the "Wuhan pneumonia" was "under control" and mostly a "mild condition" (11 days later, Wang reportedly tested positive himself)

January 11: The Shanghai laboratory of Professor Zhang Yongzhen, who had provided the genomic sequence of the virus, **was shut down for "rectification"** by the Shanghai Health Commission, after Zhang had posted his data online to put them at the disposal of the international scientific community. Only after he did it (and was consequently punished), China's National Health Commission announced it would share the sequence (which was by then already online) with the WHO.

January 12: The National Health Commission **shared the virus genomic information with the WHO** for the first time. It had been **available** from January 5.

January 14: WHO (rather than the Chinese authorities) **advanced the hypothesis** that the virus was spreading through human-to-human transmission.

January 14: Journalists trying to cover the outbreak at Wuhan's Jinyintan Hospital **were stopped by the CCP police**, and their cameras and phones were confiscated.

January 15: China **answered the WHO** through a statement by Dr. Li Qun, head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Emergency Center, who claimed that only a "low" risk of human-to-human transmission of the virus had been detected.

January 17: The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission **resumed its daily updates** on new cases of the coronavirus, which had been stopped on January 5.

January 18: Despite the virus outbreak, the city of Wuhan **hosted a potluck banquet** attended by more than 40,000 families, so the city could apply for a Guinness world record for most dishes served at an event. Wuhan authorities also announced they were distributing 200,000 free tickets to residents for festival activities during the Lunar New Year holiday.

January 20: Dr. Zhong Nanshan, an authority on SARS **said in a TV interview** that person-to-person transmission was a fact, and that authorities had been negligent in disclosing information about the virus.

January 20: Wuhan Mayor Zhou Xianwang **admitted** that he had not released all the information the city had on the virus, but said he was just following "Beijing rules."

January 23: The lockdown of Wuhan was finally ordered, but only after **about 5 million people** had already left the city without being tested.

February 6: President Xi Jinping **personally ordered** increased censorship of the Internet on all news about the virus, and to close the WeChat accounts of those criticizing the authorities.

February 6: Attorney and "citizen journalist" Chen Qiushi, who had posted on the Internet footage showing overcrowded hospitals and panicking families in Wuhan, **"disappeared."**

February 7: Dr. Li Wenliang, the doctor who had sounded the alarm on the new coronavirus (and had been detained for this), died of coronavirus. A debate followed whether Li, who had joined a Christian chat room, **had in fact converted to Christianity.**

February 9: Another "citizen journalist" who had posted unauthorized videos on the epidemics, Fang Bin, **"disappeared" in Wuhan.**

February 15: President Xi Jinping made censorship on the Internet on anything concerning the virus **even stricter.**

February 15: Human rights activist Xu Zhiyong, who had publicly asked President Xi Jinping to apologize for his cover-ups about the virus and resign, **was arrested**.

February 16: Academic Xu Zhangrun was **put under house arrest** and banned from using the Internet after publishing an essay claiming that, "The coronavirus epidemic has revealed the rotten core of Chinese governance."

February 16: A paper posted by two Chinese scientists, Dr. Botao Xiao from South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, and Dr. Lei Xiao, from Wuhan University of Science and Technology, on the international scholarly database Research Gate, suggesting that the virus may have originated from bats from two Wuhan laboratories (rather than from wild bats), **"disappeared" from Research Gate**.

February 19: China **expelled three *Wall Street Journal* reporters** who were covering the epidemics.

February 26: The State press agency *Xinhua* **announced the publication of a book** by the CCP's Central Propaganda Department, which will be translated in six languages and explain how President Xi Jinping's "outstanding leadership as a great power leader" defeated the virus.

March 8: Reportedly, Chinese embassies throughout the world were instructed to **promote the theory** that the virus did not originate in China.

March 12: Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian **publicly stated** that the virus did not originate in Wuhan, nor in China, but came from the United States through American soldiers who participated in the Wuhan Military Games in October.

March 14: Chinese tycoon Ren Zhiqiang **"disappeared" in Beijing** after posting critical remarks on how President Xi Jinping handled the coronavirus crisis.

March 18: China announced that another 13 journalists from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal* **will be expelled**.

March 19: Wuhan Public Security **apologized to the family of Dr Li Wenliang**, admitting his detention was "inappropriate" and stating that two officers who "mishandled" the case had been disciplined.

March 22: The CCP-controlled *Global Times*, **misquoting a statement** by Italian pharmacologist Giuseppe Remuzzi, claimed that the virus did not originate in China (nor in the United States) **but in Italy**.

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (14.03-20.03.2020)

Cardinal Kung Pin-mei: A Saint without halo

20.03.20 - He died twenty years ago and his beatification process has been blocked after the Vatican-China agreement. He should not be forgotten.

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House churches shut down after violent raids

20.03.20 - The CCP continues to suppress unauthorized places of worship, beating believers, looting church property, and imposing hefty fines on landlords.

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Three-Self church clergy punished for not preaching CCP's dogma

19.03.20 - To accelerate the "sinicization" of religion, China's regime compels preachers to indoctrinate congregations and turns places of worship into propaganda centers.

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Study or work in Hong Kong? Your family will be investigated

19.03.20 - To ensure that the pro-democracy movement spirit does not spread to mainland China, the CCP scrutinizes anyone with links to the special administrative region.

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Church of Almighty God Members tortured in Xinjiang's Camps

18.03.20 - The CCP indoctrinates believers to give up their faith through beatings, sleep and food deprivation, and other cruel physical and psychological means.

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Yes, the virus came from Wuhan

17.03.20 - Two Chinese scholars suggested that the virus came from bats kept in two Wuhan research centers. Their paper was promptly censored, but the CCP should explain to the world what exactly happened there.

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Buddhist pagodas and temples shuttered, destroyed

17.03.20 - The CCP continues to close down and demolish Buddhist places of worship across China. Even the ones approved by the government are not spared.

[Continue reading...](#)

Media reports about coronavirus heavily censored in China

17.03.20 - A journalist from central China details control and punishment measures the CCP employs on media outlets during the COVID-19 epidemic.

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"Abuses, torture, and killing": U.S. Human Rights Report denounces the CCP regime

14.03.20 - The State Department's new annual Human Rights Report denounces a staggering situation. Bitter Winter and its detained reporters are among those mentioned.

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Xinjiang camps were built as prisons, their builders expose

14.03.2020 - Workers who were hired to build transformation through education camps in Xinjiang reveal details about the jails that the CCP likes to call "vocational schools."

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Numerous crosses removed in Shandong's Linyi City

14.03.2020 - The CCP continues its campaign of demolishing Christian symbols, as the authoritarian regime perceives them as a threat to its rule.

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China and the outbreak of COVID-19: Yes, the virus came from Wuhan

By Marco Respinti

Bitter Winter (17.03.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2IWNqXO> - Two Chinese scholars suggested that the virus came from bats kept in two Wuhan research centers. Their paper was promptly censored, but the CCP should explain to the world what exactly happened there.

A whole country, Italy, is quarantined. Others are following suit. It never happened before. Coronavirus is threatening our life everywhere, and its toll of human lives in Italy, my country, grows bigger every hour.

But what do we know about this new lethal virus, especially on its origin? Very little, and people sink into confusion as media all too often seems to serve sensationalism rather than the truthful information.

If an Italian national Googles "mercato pesce Wuhan", i.e. "fish market Wuhan", what he or she gets is a rather striking example of blatant contradiction. As everyone can see from the above screenshot, *Corriere della Sera*, the largest Italian daily newspaper, asserts that coronavirus didn't originate in the Wuhan market, as many repeated over the last weeks. But the second Google record, from the *National Geographic*, says just the opposite: the virus came from Wuhan's fish market. Both articles bear the same date: January 20, 2020, and they are the first two records popped up in my Google search on March 9, 2020.

On February 15, the scholarly and authoritative [British medical magazine *The Lancet* has scientifically denied](#) the origin of coronavirus in the Wuhan market. The first coronavirus case in China is in fact dated December 1, 2019 and no link to the Wuhan market can be

established. Also, 13 cases out of 41 (a rather high percentage in statistics) have no link to the Wuhan market as well. Media in the world have relaunched this news.

Case closed? No. While serious academic researchers, and less serious amateurs, were speculating on the virus' origin, in mid-February two Chinese researchers, on behalf of South China University of Technology in Guangzhou, Dr. Botao Xiao and Dr. Lei Xiao, recognized bats as the real source of the infection. Interestingly, the paper has since disappeared from the international scholarly data base Research Gate, not the first such incident for texts from China the [CCP](#) does not like, but is still [available through the Wayback Machine](#), a tool recovering deleted Internet material China has been so far unable to control.

ResearchGa

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339070128>

The possible origins of 2019-nCoV coronavirus

Preprint · February 2020

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.21799.29601

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South China University of Technology

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The paper by Xiao and Xiao before it disappeared from ResearchGate.

The article is not about wild bats, though, since there are no such animals in the region where coronavirus appeared. The nearest are located at more than 900 km from Wuhan, making it impossible for them to fly all the way through without infecting anyone on the trail. Those bats, say the two Chinese experts, may thus come from two research centers located in Wuhan or nearby. One is the Wuhan Center for Disease Control & Prevention, located at less than 300 meters from the Wuhan market, and the other is the Wuhan Institute of Virology, administered by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, at about 12 km from the market. The paper by the two Chinese researchers report that experiments on virus are held in those centers, concluding that "[t]he principal investigator participated in a project which generated a chimeric virus using the SARS-CoV reverse genetics system, and reported the potential for human emergence 10. A direct speculation was that SARS-CoV or its derivative might leak from the laboratory."

Bats are indeed responsible for coronavirus. They infect human beings. A possible answer to the question on the coronavirus' origins is that something in the two research centers may have gone out of control and the disease spread. What the two Chinese researchers clearly *do not say* in their paper is that the deadly virus that is plaguing the world has been created and proliferated on purpose.

The first Western journal which apparently published news about the two Chinese researchers paper was the [British Daily Mail](#), which had already [lit light on the second research center](#) of the area, created in 2015 and opened in January 2018 to study dangerous pathogens like SARS and Ebola. Fearing that a virus could escape from there, US biosafety experts expressed concerns already in 2017, since in 2004 a SARS virus escaped from a laboratory in Beijing.

Now, none at *Bitter Winter* is a virologist or a contagious disease specialist, and therefore we leave the whole matter to real experts. We are even not in the condition to evaluate whether the theory of Drs. Botao Xiao and Lei Xiao is reliable. But of one thing we are sure: we want transparency. The international community has the authority and strength to ask China to explain clearly to the whole world what happens in the Wuhan research centers, how they treat viruses and experiment with animals, what they do with them.

We live in a globalized world, and diseases show us the hard meaning of this word. We are not accusing China of any conspiracy. We just want to know. People in the world want to know, and repressed people in China also want to know. And what puzzles us most, in this storm of information, impressions, opinions, expertise, real or alleged, is that no one is asking China, a country with an already horrible record on humans rights and disinformation, to explain plainly what happens in those research centers, one at less than 300 meters from the Wuhan market and the other at only 12 km. None of us is accusing China with a light heart. We are asking questions, and we want answers. Why the world is not asking as well?

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (07-13.03.2020)

Children pressured to betray religious relatives and neighbors

13.03.20 - Using propaganda and monetary rewards, police and teachers join forces to make schoolchildren report on people of faith.

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Fighting deadly viruses with marxism and maotism

12.03.20 - The coronavirus epidemic is not over, but China's propaganda hails President Xi, socialism with Chinese characteristics, and "revolutionary spirit" for beating it.

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Xinjiang's camps are 'ideal' settings for infections to spread

12.03.20 - An ex-detainee and relatives of those who have died in transformation through education camps share their horrifying experiences with Bitter Winter.

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Believers forced to prove loyalty to the State with Money

11.03.20 - China's religious groups are happy to help when disasters strike. But much of their efforts, and collected donations, are exploited by the government.

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Mao Zedong as the antidote to coronavirus

11.03.20 - To curb the spreading virus, mass gatherings were banned in China. But the restriction didn't seem to apply to events organized to worship Chairman Mao.

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Police torture believers to get information on church money

09.03.20 - To eradicate The Church of Almighty God, the CCP goes to great lengths to deprive it of financial means, including vicious harassment of its members.

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De-sinicizing the virus: How CCP propaganda is rewriting history

09.03.20 - Secret documents instruct Chinese diplomats and agents to call COVID-19 "Italian virus," claim it did not originate in Wuhan, and promote Xi Jinping as the heroic leader who defeated the virus.

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Multiple protestant venues in Sichuan suppressed, shut down

08.03.20 - Both state-run and house churches are subjected to continuous CCP's clampdowns.

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New re-education of Uyghurs: forced labor outside Xinjiang

08.03.20 - Uyghurs are being sent to work all over China against their will, where they are strictly controlled and live in conditions reminiscent of internment camps.

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No 2022 Olympics in China, say US senators

08.03.2020 - A bipartisan resolution asks to move the games to another country, since China has "committed crimes against humanity"

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True colors of China's boarding schools for Uyghur children

07.03.2020 - After parents are locked up in transformation through education camps, their children end up in the government's hands - mistreated, malnourished, and depressed.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (01-05.03.2020)

Xinjiang camps: A book exposes CCP's Lies

05.03.20 - An interview with Kazakh author Turarbek Kusainov, whose book on the experience of ethnic Kazakhs in the transformation through education camps is greatly embarrassing China.

[Continue reading...](#)

Crosses purged from churches in Northeastern China

05.03.20 - The CCP's campaign to remove religious symbols from places of worship continues unabated, as believers are harassed in places of worship and at home.

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Eradication of Jiangxi Province's House churches in full swing

05.03.20 - Unregistered Protestant churches were continuously pressured in 2019 to join the state-run Three-Self Church. Crackdowns don't seem to ease down this year.

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Sayragul Sauytbay honored as "Woman of courage" in the U.S.

04.03.20 - Bitter Winter campaigned for preventing the deportation back to China of this heroic ethnic Kazakh woman, who escaped the Xinjiang camps and fled to Kazakhstan. Now, she is honored as she deserves.

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For China's religious refugees, coronavirus brings more gloom

04.03.20 - Not only do Church of Almighty God members face inhuman persecution at home. For those hoping to find safety abroad, refugee status is hindered by the virus.

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Is Coronavirus increasing organ harvesting in China?

04.03.20 - The CCP ask for applause for its double lung transplant on a coronavirus victim. But the fact that two matching lungs were found in a few days raises new suspicions of organ harvesting, just as London's China Tribunal releases his final judgment.

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CCP's new measures to control 'disobedient' catholic priests

04.03.20 - The government offers money to believers to pressure Mindong Diocese's priests to join the state-run church, seeks to cut off clergy's contacts with abroad.

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No online religious activities allowed amid coronavirus outbreak

03.03.20 - To curb the virus, China's children study in virtual classrooms, employees are urged to work from home. But people of faith are banned from assembling online.

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China's citizen journalists persecuted for reporting the truth

03.03.20 - People who seek to disclose the lies behind the CCP's propaganda are accused of "divulging state secrets" and are treated as spies.

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A double virus in Xinjiang: COVID-19 and CCP's fake news

03.03.2020 - As coronavirus spreads to the martyred region, the CCP claims again, falsely, that all inmates have been released and the epidemics is under control there. It isn't.

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Catholics pray outside their shut down churches

01.03.2020 - To push all believers under its control, the Chinese government is closing down all churches that refuse to join the Patriotic Catholic Church.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (23-29.02.2020)

Persecuted Uyghurs' stories mirror the facts in Karakax list

29.02.20 - Accounts of one Uyghur woman's family members locked up in Xinjiang's internment camps support what is described in the recently leaked CCP's secret document.

[Continue reading...](#)

Coronavirus doesn't stop religious persecution in China

29.02.20 - The CCP continues harassing people of faith amid the outbreak of the deadly virus, accusing those who pray for the ill and dead of "endangering social stability."

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Chinese netizens arrested for criticizing President Xi Jinping

28.02.20 - Ruled by the totalitarian government, the Chinese are suppressed for any word that the regime deems as damaging its image.

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The CCP wants you-and your eyes too

25.02.20 - The CCP is collecting iris information about all Chinese, including children, and storing it in gigantic databases-why?

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Sinicization of Islam: Xi Jinping thought instead of Quran

25.02.20 - The CCP implements its plan to "sinicize" Muslims outside Xinjiang by discarding Islamic symbols, rectifying Arabic-style architecture, and indoctrinating people.

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Released from Xinjiang camps but forced to lie about them

24.02.20 - The wife of a Hui Muslim held in one of the internment camps details how the Chinese government silences inmates to hide the truth about its persecutions.

[Continue reading...](#)

End the persecution of The Church of Almighty God now!

24.02.20 - As representatives of NGOs, religious organizations, and citizens concerned about freedom of religion and belief and the dignity of every human being, we call the attention of the political authorities on the dramatic situation of The Church of Almighty God (CAG) in China.

[Continue reading...](#)

A family broken by the CCP: The story of Doğan Erdoğan

23.02.20 - A Turkish citizen married a Uyghur woman. Now, he is told he cannot see his wife and little daughter - and his father-in-law has been arrested for the "crime" of letting his daughter marry a foreigner.

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CCP expands control over items sent to Hong Kong and Taiwan

23.02.20 - Postal and courier services in China are scrutinized to ensure that no "sensitive" goods reach pro-democracy fighters, their staff punished for minor missteps.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (15-22.02.2020)

Numerous protestant churches stifled in Hubei Province

22.02.20 - In the past year, not only unregistered house churches but also state-controlled Three-Self churches in Hubei suffered severe clampdowns.

[Continue reading...](#)

The ruined lives of Church of Almighty God devotees

22.02.20 - The stories of two members of The Church of Almighty God who were harassed by the Chinese authorities in 2019. Two out of more than 32,000 last year's cases.

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Books on religion continue to be purged from school libraries

21.02.20 - Since the CCP launched its campaign to eliminate publications "damaging the country's unity" last year, many books are no longer available to students in China.

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23 Church of Almighty God members imprisoned in Shandong

21.02.20 - The sentenced believers - aged from 17 to 78 - were prosecuted for making videos for the Church. Two among them will be kept behind bars for eight years.

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Catholic churches continuously curbed across China

20.02.20 - During 2019, many Catholic churches were closed down for refusing to join the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association. Even state-run churches are suppressed.

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China's police probe people amid expanding online censorship

20.02.20 - Sending "sensitive" messages, even reposting or liking anything the government deems "harmful" to its regime, may put you under investigation.

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"Yes, torture is used in China": A Church of Almighty God refugee in Spain speaks out

19.02.20 - Brother Zhang Wenbo tells Bitter Winter how he was suspended on a rope, beaten with a steel tube, and burned with cigarettes. His only crime? Preaching a banned religion.

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China forcibly collects DNA to monitor its people

19.02.20 - With threats and abusing rights, the CCP makes its citizens give samples of their biometric data, often disguised as mandatory medical exams or other pretenses.

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Instead of justice - police harassment and arrest

18.02.20 - Parents of two children who died in school were prevented from finding the truth and were suppressed by the government in the name of "stability maintenance."

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China's anti-religion policies intensified even more in 2019

18.02.20 - A series of new regulations to suppress people of faith of all denominations were adopted last year, followed by unprecedented crackdown campaigns.

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Comics and vocational courses used to fight religion

17.02.20 - People in China are bombarded with atheist propaganda in a variety of forms, as the government seeks to eliminate religion from their lives.

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Buddhist statues continue to disappear across China

17.02.20 - Reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution, the CCP's drive to eliminate Buddhism sweeps across the country. Even icons in state-sanctioned temples are not spared.

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Coronavirus: CCP censorship makes the epidemic worse

16.02.20 - Chinese reporters talk to Bitter Winter about how they are prohibited from publishing real news about the epidemic. They should follow the official guidelines and press releases, thus depriving their readers of potentially vital information.

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Spy culture invades China's universities

16.02.20 - The authoritarian regime incites teachers and students to report each other, forced to act as informers to monitor and snitch on dissidents and believers.

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How many Li Wenliangs are there in China?

15.02.20 - Amid the spread of the coronavirus epidemic, China's communist government is censoring and suppressing any information that might damage its reputation.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (07-14.02.2020)

Hubei Province destroys Buddha statues and seals off temples

14.02.20 - Threatened to be fired, local officials intensify crackdowns on outdoor religious statues and temples, leaving Buddhists with no place to worship.

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Chinese propaganda attempts to blame the US for coronavirus

14.02.20 - From government spokespersons to teachers in schools, the Chinese authorities are trying to divert attention from their inability to deal with the outbreak.

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Folk religion temples and ancestral halls suppressed in Hubei

14.02.20 - Ahead of central government inspections and a significant international event, the province launched numerous campaigns against religion in 2019.

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Delayed treatment in detention results in believer's death

13.02.20 - A 21-year-old member of The Church of Almighty God was kept in captivity despite his serious illness. When he was finally released, it was too late to save him.

[Continue reading...](#)

Sanya Chams Muslim minority in Hainan: eradicating an identity

13.02.20 - Sanya Chams are part of a Muslim minority with a rich history and a unique identity. Now, the CCP has decided to eradicate it.

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Chinese officials hunt for 'pirated' bibles

12.02.20 - As the campaign "to eradicate pornography and illegal publications" sweeps across the country, religious materials not approved by the Communist Party are seized.

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CCP cracks down on Islamic schools in mosques

12.02.20 - Mosque-based tutoring was a common way for Muslims in China to study Quran and Islamic customs. Amid government suppression, the number of schools is dwindling.

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Rape in Xinjiang camps: the Tibetan precedent

11.02.20 - Accounts of sexual abuse of detained Uyghur and ethnic Kazakh women are highly believable. Buddhist nuns are also raped in Tibet's transformation through education camps, where rape is used as a tool for re-education.

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Crackdowns on house churches in Zhejiang's Ninghai County

10.02.20 - During the last month of 2019, Protestants in the county's towns and villages suffered intense persecutions, as their churches were shut down for "being illegal."

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Voluntary organ donation or shady harvesting scheme?

10.02.20 - A woman from northern China shares a tragic story of how doctors promised to help her ill husband, but she was lured into agreeing to donate his organs instead.

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Longing for the spring: The Uyghur poets who denounce the CCP

10.02.20 - At home, where intellectuals are hunted down and arrested, or in the diaspora, literature keeps alive the flame of freedom and exposes the evil of the persecution.

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'They acted like bandits,' believers remember a police raid'

09.02.20 - Gospel Church in Henan's Pingdingshan city was closed down after law enforcement officers stormed it on October 23, menacing the congregation and seizing assets.

[Continue reading...](#)

House churches in Heilongjiang severely persecuted in 2019

09.02.20 - Nearly 100 places of worship were closed down in Daqing and Nehe cities alone. Believers were intimidated and pressured to renounce their faith, fined, arrested.

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Clergy trained to suppress 'foreign religious infiltration'

09.02.20 - Religious groups or persons from abroad are under attack in China since its totalitarian regime regards them as "enemies fighting for ideological territory."

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Christians forced to choose between State benefits and faith

08.02.20 - Local officials throughout China are intimidating people of faith to renounce religion and start worshiping the Communist Party and its leaders, past and present.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (01-06.02.2020)

More temples shut down in Hubei Province

06.02.20 - As the crackdown on Buddhist and Taoist venues sweeps across the province, believers are left with no place to worship, and monks forced to return to secular life.

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Zhengzhou Diocese priest ousted for disobeying the party

06.02.20 - Even state-approved Catholic clergy members are subjected to severe persecution when they start questioning the CCP's oppressive religious policies.

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Persecutions increased in Wuhan ahead of Beijing's appraisal

06.02.20 - At the end of last year, Hubei's capital was getting ready to welcome the central government's inspection team by implementing more religious suppression measures.

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Government banned religious couplets for Chinese New Year

05.02.20 - Ahead of Spring Festival, officials throughout China took measures ensuring that holiday wishes, traditionally hung in homes, don't have religious connotations.

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The human price of Wuhan's military world games

05.02.20 - For residents of Hubei Province's capital, 2019 was hard: the coronavirus virus outbreak was preceded by severe security measures ahead of the international event.

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Catholic church in Jiangxi stifled on the first day of 2020

05.02.20 - After removing the crucifix from Xiahuang village's church on Christmas Day, government officials ordered to vacate the place of worship on January 1.

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China's schools pledge to do away with religion

04.02.20 - Indoctrination measures intensify all over the country, as teachers are charged with their effective execution, and children urged to report religious relatives.

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Xi Jinping's quotes replace holy images in Catholic churches

02.02.20 - Churches refusing to join the Patriotic Catholic Association are repurposed for cultural or propaganda centers, as congregation members are driven away.

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Banning Christmas as an 'infiltration of western forces'

02.02.20 - While prohibiting all things Christmas, China seeks to fuel nationalist sentiment among its population and teach the young about the "evil Western world."

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Coronavirus: Why Chinese don't trust the CCP

01.02.20 - The Chinese government has a consistent record of denying the truth about disasters. Bitter Winter went to a village in Shandong to uncover a significant precedent about the Lekima Typhoon.

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The 'Sinicized' Weizhou Grand Mosque in Ningxia

01.02.20 - Spared demolition in 2018, the mosque was ordered to be "renovated" and had all its Islamic symbols removed. It now looks like a traditional Chinese building.

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Students from Xinjiang indoctrinated for 'stability maintenance'

01.02.20 - While millions of Muslims are detained in Xinjiang's camps, their children are subjected to "sinicized" education thousands of miles away from home.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (25-31.01.2020)

30 police officers raid a house church in Guangdong

31.01.20 - They first cut off the power supply, then terrorized the congregation. Two pastors were taken in for interrogation, threatened to give up their faith.

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Xi Jinping's new "Little Red Book(s)"

31.01.20 - Chinese from all walks of life, young and old, are required to memorize and copy by hand president's speeches to prove loyalty to the president and the CCP.

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6,000+ members of The Church of Almighty God arrested in 2019 in China

31.01.20 - 6,132 members of The Church of Almighty God (CAG) have been arrested in China in 2019. 3,824 have been tortured, and 19 died as a result of the persecution

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House Churches subjected to increasing persecution

30.01.20 - To drive believers into the state-run Protestant Church, the CCP threatens to take away their social benefits, shuts down and destroys meeting venues.

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Nursing home destroyed for worshiping Buddha

29.01.20 - Buddhist temples continue to be demolished across China. Even their charitable projects, like providing a home for the elderly, are not spared.

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China's handbook on concealing religious persecution

29.01.20 - What does the totalitarian regime do when news about its mistreatment of citizens get out? It lies, hides or destroys evidence, adopts harsher suppression measures.

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A systematic policy to reduce the number of religious venues

29.01.20 - The CCP continues to demolish churches, temples, and mosques-and to adopt new regulations to make this easier.

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Another catholic pilgrimage site demolished in Shanxi

28.01.20 - The Gate of Heaven on the Seven Sorrows Mountain was replaced with a building in traditional Chinese style, as part of the CCP's religion "sinicization" campaign.

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People are risking lives to protect their rights

27.01.20 - The CCP claims that the situation of human rights in China "is the best in history." Two more cases prove that such statements are very far from reality.

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Plays slandering religion indoctrinate villagers all over China

27.01.20 - As a propaganda tool, stage performances have been used since the Cultural Revolution to vilify CCP's enemies, including religions, in the eyes of the masses.

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Zhejiang Province expands digital surveillance of residents

27.01.20 - In the past few years, the coastal eastern province of Zhejiang has significantly increased the concentration of cameras to ensure that everyone is monitored 24/7.

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Three-Self churches demolished in Henan and Shanxi

26.01.20 - Amid intensifying religious suppression in China, even membership in an official church no longer guarantees believers that they can practice their faith.

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Islamic culture in China purged to the edge of extinction

26.01.20 - The CCP is stepping up efforts to exert more control over Hui Muslims across the country, suppressing their faith and eliminating traditional culture.

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China's secret agreement with Nepal: new Tibetan refugees will be sent back

26.01.20 - Although the Nepalese government resisted pressures to deport back to China the refugees who are already in Nepal, it will deport those of them who will enter Nepal in the future.

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Government's persecutions result in church workers' death

25.01.20 - Even state-run churches are not spared CCP's endless harassments. Two directors of Three-Self churches in Henan died after crackdowns on their places of worship.

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China temporarily frees Bishop confined 13 years



by [Bradley Eli, M.Div., Ma.Th.](#)

Church Militant (22.01.2020) - <https://bit.ly/2PIQB6y> - A Catholic bishop jailed by China's Communist officials for 13 years is being given a few weeks of freedom before being sent back to solitary confinement.

Communist authorities are temporarily freeing Bp. Agostino Cui Tai, ordinary of the diocese of Xuanhua in the province of Hebei, while China's New Year celebrations take place. At the conclusion of the secular festivities on Feb. 8, Cui Tai will be rearrested.



Bishop Agostino Cui Tai

The 69-year-old bishop is a member of the Catholic Church, which has been underground in China since communists took over in 1949. He has been under house arrest since 2007 but is now allowed to spend a few weeks with his elderly sister during the national celebration of the holiday.

The Catholic Church recognizes Cui Tai as one of its bishops but the atheist government of China does not. It is persecuting Cui Tai in the hope that he will join China's communist-run version of the Catholic Church.

During the last 13 years, Cui Tai has been placed in multiple detention centers or sent away to labor camps. Only during the Chinese New Year and China's Mid-Autumn Festival is Cui Tai given temporary freedom to visit his elderly sister at home.

China's government-run church is called the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association (CPCA). Cui Tai has spoken out against a Fr. Zhang Li, who was denouncing Cui Tai for not joining the CPCA. Following the signing of the China-Vatican treaty in 2018, Zhang Li and other priests claimed all Catholics must join the CPCA.

Bishop Cui Tai took the priest to task in March, saying his vision of the Catholic Church was gravely flawed.

"He is promoting a concept of the 'unity' of the diocese of Zhangjiakou as one, which the Holy See does not recognize, said Cui Tai. He is causing divisions within the Church and does not recognize the diocese and bishop of Xuanhua."

It is a much harsher persecution after the agreement. Tweet

Cardinal Joseph Zen, bishop emeritus of Hong Kong, has often praised Cui Tai. Denouncing the China-Vatican treaty, Zen told Church Militant in July that the agreement was disastrous for faithful Catholics in the authentic, underground Catholic Church:

The situation is pretty much worse. Before there was an agreement, there was a kind of compromise on many points; for example, the underground Church could have its church buildings and the underground priests, even in the cities, could say Masses for the faithful, even though the law is against that. But the authorities, for a long time, never enforced those laws. Now, they enforce those laws. So, it is a much harsher persecution after the agreement; it is terrible.

The CPCA, China's "official" state-run Church, was started in 1957 by communists in opposition to the Catholic Church. The CPCA does have valid sacraments but doesn't recognize the supreme administrative, legislative and judicial authority of the pope. The authentic Catholic Church was then outlawed and driven underground. The true Catholic Church in China is thus called the underground or unofficial Church.

In 1958 Pope Pius XII declared that all bishops who belong to the CPCA are excommunicated. In 1996, Pope John Paul II referred to the CPCA as "a Church which does not respond to either the will of the Lord Jesus, or to the Catholic faith." In the same speech, the Holy Father called the underground Church "a precious jewel of the Catholic Church."

Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (18-24.01.2020)

Christians not allowed to hold religious funerals

24.01.20 - Rules and regulations prohibiting religious funerary rituals are being adopted across China, as the government promotes "civilized secular" traditions.

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State-run church destroyed for refusing to raise national flag

24.01.20 - The government harassed this Three-Self church in Henan Province for nearly a year because its pastor opposed religion "sinicization" requirements.

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London protests against CCP atrocities

23.01.20 - Uyghur and Tibetan exiles, Hong Kong students and their supporters gathered in their hundreds in front of the Chinese Embassy in London to denounce the CCP.

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Communist Party clamps down on its religious members

23.01.20 - Religion is identified as the major "dark and evil force" behind "weak and lax" CCP organizations that are being investigated across China.

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Three refugees from Xinjiang in Kazakhstan will not be deported to China

22.01.20 - Although they should spend time in jail, Tilek Tabarak and the Musakhan-Alimuly duo will remain in Kazakhstan, thanks to international support.

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Buddhist books seized as 'pornography and illegal publications'

22.01.20 - Authorities across China are confiscating books by Venerable Master Chin Kung, a prominent Buddhist monk whose teachings have been banned by the CCP

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CCP resolute to remove all outdoor Buddhist statues at any cost

21.01.20 - In 2019, countless statues and other Buddhist symbols were demolished all over China. More reports from the provinces of Shanxi, Hebei, and Guangdong.

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No expense spared for citizen spies grassing on believers

20.01.20 - To disseminate fear among people of faith, measures promoting snitching and offering considerable amounts of money for informers are expanded throughout China.

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Wu Huayan: Dying of hunger in a China "without poverty"

18.01.20 - Xi Jinping claimed poverty would disappear by 2020. Here is 2020, and here is a young student who died of malnutrition.

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Believers tortured in prisons to make them renounce their faith

18.01.20 - Members of religious groups designated as "evil cults" by China's regime are being "transformed" through indoctrination while they serve their sentences.

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House Churches pushed to the brink of extinction

18.01.20 - CCP uses many bullying methods to force unregistered believers to join the official Three-Self Church: from direct threats to extorting landlords who rent to them.

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'Hong Kong protestors are thugs,' students in China are taught

18.01.20 - While Hong Kong people continue fighting for freedom and democracy, school students in the mainland are instructed by CCP-trained teachers to hate them.

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96 Falun Gong practitioners persecuted to death in 2019

18.01.20 - A report released by the banned movement offers horrific details of the continuing persecution.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (11-17.01.2020)

Crackdown on ethnic Kazakhs continues in Xinjiang

17.01.20 - The story of two families, which were persecuted and destroyed for the sole crime of maintaining their Kazakh identity.

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CCP's Anti- Xie Jiao propaganda ruins families

16.01.20 - Manipulated and lied to by the government, relatives of believers from banned religious groups are forced to mistreat their loved ones to save themselves.

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Three-Self church believers indoctrinated to become atheists

16.01.20 - As China's state-run Protestant Church is being turned into a tool to spread CCP's ideology, its congregations are forced to study Marxist texts and accept atheism.

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Demolishing graveyards in Xinjiang: even dead Uyghurs are now persecuted

16.01.20 - After CNN revealed the CCP's destruction of Uyghur cemeteries, Chinese propaganda claimed these were just fake news. Uyghur poet Aziz Isa Elkun tells us the true story.

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Lawyers told they cannot claim Xie Jiao members are innocent

15.01.20 - The CCP has a list of banned religious groups. Now, it is telling lawyers they cannot argue in court their accused members are not guilty - or else.

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The dangers of religious social networking in China

15.01.20 - Believers not only face the risk of arrest for gathering in unlicensed places of worship - even joining a religion-affiliated group online may lead to persecution.

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Police hunt for and persecute buyers of religious books

15.01.20 - After an online Christian bookstore owner was arrested, buyers were traced and investigated all over China as part of CCP's drive against "illegal publications."

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English translation of the 2019 administrative measures for religious groups

15.01.20 - English Translation of the 2019 Administrative Measures for Religious Groups.

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Forget Christmas, celebrate Mao Zedong

14.01.20 - Prohibited from observing Christmas, the Chinese were urged instead to salute and worship the Great Helmsman, Mao Zedong, on his 126th birthday on December 26.

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CCP goes all out forcing catholic clergy into official church

13.01.20 - If direct harassment doesn't help to "transform" priests, make them succumb to regime's rule, then clergy's relatives are bullied and congregations terrorized.

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Tibetan buddhist temples monitored, monks controlled

12.01.20 - To curb the development of Tibetan Buddhism and "hanify" it, the CCP intensifies suppression efforts by surveilling and indoctrinating religious adherents.

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How Xi Jinping became God

12.01.19 - The Chinese President, like Chairman Mao before him, is trying to propose himself as an object of worship worthier than god. Bitter Winter has selected some typical reports about this bizarre, yet worrying development.

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Islamic structures demolished, symbols removed from shops

11.01.19 - New reports about the destruction of Islamic architecture and purge of religious symbols from China's capital Beijing and the northeastern province of Jilin.

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Attack on the association of disciples: 329 members arrested

11.01.19- Labeled as a dangerous cult, this Chinese new religious movement has been banned by the CCP for nearly 30 years. In 2019, it suffered more persecutions.

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Special Weekly FORB Newsletter (04-10.01.2020)

Church of Almighty God devotees hunted for practicing faith

10.01.20 - The Chinese government offers financial rewards for tip-offs on believers who are hiding from persecution and uses intimidation tactics against their families.

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CCP uses demolition of Buddhist statues as intimidation tool

09.01.20 - Fearing that China's large Buddhist population will be hard to control, the regime is accelerating efforts to eliminate religious symbols.

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No man - no problem: disposing of problematic petitioners

09.01.20 - The death of a veteran on New Year's eve resurfaced anxieties about the lengths CCP's officials would go to keep their posts. For them, human lives mean nothing.

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Threatened to be fired, officials pledge to demolish temples

09.01.20 - On central government orders, local authorities throughout China are cracking down on Buddhist places of worship. As a result, many are razed to the ground.

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All religious activities for catholic youth prohibited

08.01.20 - The CCP is clamping down on anything religion-related for children - be it a kindergarten on church property, a Sunday school, or training of future clergy members.

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Christmas 'sinicized' to praise the Communist Party, not God

08.01.20 - Amid bans on Christmas, state-run Protestant churches all over China were allowed to celebrate the birth of Jesus only by singing "red" songs and extolling the CCP.

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Opinion: What China does is cultural genocide

08.01.20 - The West loses dignity turning a blind eye to Beijing's Orwellian human rights abuse.

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Kazakhstan: Refugees fight to avoid deportation back to China

08.01.20 - Torn between CCP's pressures and the civil society's support for the refugees, courts adjourn the hearings of Tilek Tabarak and the Musakhan-Alimuly duo.

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Will the hidden Buddha statues reappear?

08.01.20 - Temples and scenic areas in Inner Mongolia, Fujian, and Liaoning forced to conceal from view outdoor Buddhist statues amid CCP's nationwide drive to eradicate them.

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With husbands in camps, Hui women struggle taking care of families

04.01.20 - When almost all men from a village in northern Xinjiang were locked up in internment camps, their wives were left alone to run households.

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'Only government-supervised worship is allowed!'

04.01.20 - House churches throughout China are pressured to stop gatherings and join state-run churches, as religious activities outside them, even at home, are prohibited.

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Missing Uyghurs do not reappear: The case of the Hamdullah family

04.01.19 - The CCP campaigns claiming that the Uyghurs who disappeared are now safely home is a lie, as proved by the case of two prominent Uyghur businessmen and their relatives.

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