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## **Code of conduct forbids religiosity by Tibetan CCP members**

International Campaign for Tibet (14.07.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3B3BBQX> - A new code of conduct for members of the Chinese Communist Party in the Tibet Autonomous Region explicitly forbids party members from all forms of religiosity in both public and private life.

The six-point code of conduct, currently in trial, is significant for being perhaps the first party regulation that clearly and comprehensively details the specific types of religiosity forbidden for party members in the TAR. Examples of explicitly forbidden conduct include wearing rosary beads or religious imagery, forwarding or liking religious materials online and circumambulating mountains and lakes.

Party members are also required to take on an active role to propagate the party's anti-religion stance by advising relatives to downplay their religious consciousness, not set up altars or hang religious imagery in homes, and seek party approval before inviting religious personnel to conduct rituals for customary occasions such as weddings and funerals.

The International Campaign for Tibet obtained the code of conduct document, which has been in internal circulation among party members since April 2021. ICT believes that the "Code of Conduct for Communist Party Members in the Tibet Autonomous Region for Not Believing in Religion" is specifically aimed at Tibetan members in the CCP, despite the document being formally titled as applicable to all Communist Party members in the TAR.

According to state media, a study campaign to promote strict compliance to the code of conduct by party members is currently underway in various parts of the TAR. For example, on May 14, the party branch of [Tsamchu](#) (Chinese: Cangqu) Village in Nyima County, Nagchu City, held a study meeting for 32 branch party members. Two other study meetings were held for party members at the [Singe Khabab](#) (Shiquanhe) Seismic Station (May 19) and at a primary school in [Yakra](#) (Yare) Township in Drongba County, Shigatse (May 20). Similar study meetings have also been conducted in Lhasa, Nyingtri and Metok counties in May and June.

In addition to studying the code of conduct, the campaign stresses ideological conformity and political responsibility from all the party members in the TAR.

Several regulations, such as “Regulations on Disciplinary Measures of the Communist Party of China,” “Regulations on Inner-Party Supervision of the Communist Party of China,” “Several Provisions on Political Life within the Party” and “Regulations on the United Front Work of the Communist Party of China,” apply to all Communist Party members in China, emphasizing ideological conformity, discipline and political responsibility.

The code of conduct for the TAR, however, appears to be unique as no equivalent code on religion is found for party members in other Chinese provinces and “autonomous” regions. Xinjiang, with a Muslim majority, is the nearest comparable region to the majority-Buddhist TAR; however, ICT has not found an equivalent code of conduct forbidding Islamic religiosity for party members in Xinjiang. The unique nature of the code of conduct points to the TAR party leaders exercising their latitude in focusing on Tibetan Buddhist religiosity in implementing the central party directives against religion and party building in the TAR.

Against the backdrop of a growing number of new laws on controlling and limiting Tibetan Buddhist practices and containing the spread of Tibetan Buddhism in the Chinese heartland, the newly issued code of conduct for the TAR party members uniquely defines what is not permissible for Tibetan party members in the TAR. The code not only forbids party members from all forms of religiosity (both subtle and overt) at an individual level, but it also extends their obligation as party advisors to their family and society at large. By obligating party members to advise their family members and relatives not to participate in religious activities, the party seemingly aims to make a direct impact on over 50% of the Tibetan society in the TAR to not believe in Tibetan Buddhism. For instance, [57,000 party members in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa](#) constitute around 10% of the Lhasa population. Assuming a family of three—although an average household size in the TAR is 4—with two relatives in the city, the party can percolate its ideal directly onto at least 50% of the Lhasa population.

Religiosity forbidden for the party members in the TAR and their obligation as party advisors in the code of conduct are as follows:

1. Not wearing beads and statues on your body
2. Not tattooing religious scriptures or signs on your body
3. Not placing religious signs on office premises or official vehicles
4. Not participating in group religious study and religious chanting
5. Not donating money and materials to monasteries
6. Not going for religious ritual visits, pilgrimage
7. Not receiving ordination, making religious offerings
8. No religious or spiritual retreats
9. No circumambulation of mountains and lakes
10. Not inviting monks and nuns and performing divination for family members or performing prayers or providing names to children
11. No forwarding or liking religious audio, video, religious information or scriptures
12. Not sending children to monasteries as monks and nuns, not sending them to places of religious worship or schools run by religious believers
13. No to the 14th Dalai Lama

The obligations of Tibetan party members toward family members and the society are:

1. Guide religious family members and relatives to downplay their religious consciousness
2. Advise them not to set up altars, place religious objects or hang religious pictures or photos of religious personalities at home
3. Advise family members and relatives not to participate in religious activities or do so as little as possible

4. In case of customary activities (such as weddings and funerals) permission must be sought from the party branch before inviting religious personnel to carry out religious activities
5. Promptly stop family members and close relatives on trips abroad from having audience with the 14th Dalai Lama or participate in various religious ceremonies and activities organized by the 14th Dalai Lama and the "Dalai clique." Report to the party if they could not be stopped.
6. Instruct the religious public to treat religion consciously, change their customs and reduce the influence of religion

Party leaders in the TAR demand strict performative compliance from Tibetan party members, who often face conflicts between their faith and party discipline. Unlike party members in other parts of China, Tibetans not only join the party for pragmatic reasons (such as for personal advancement), but they also join the party to work within the regime to make a difference in the lives of their fellow Tibetans, despite [not being trusted with important and strategic leadership positions](#). Overturning the Buddhist faith in their homeland was not an ideal for joining the party, nor was erasing their Tibetan identity in favor of a Communist or Chinese identity.

When in conflict with the party ideals and policies, Tibetan party members have had to undergo tumultuous turns in their lives. This is exemplified in the life of the famous Tibetan revolutionary [Bapa Phutsok Wangyal](#), who struggled for the welfare of the Tibetan people throughout his life. Bapa was imprisoned in solitary confinement for 18 years (1960-1978)—during which his vocal cord was damaged for not having spoken at all for six years—for his outspoken criticism of the socialist reforms in Tibet and against Han chauvinism in the early years of the CCP's revolution in Tibet.

The contradiction between faith and party idealism is an ongoing challenge for the party leadership in cultivating loyal Tibetan party members for the party's effective governance of Tibet. With no real progress in eliminating the Tibetan party members' belief in their faith and identity in the "70 years of peaceful liberation," the Code of Conduct for Communist Party Members in the Tibet Autonomous Region for Not Believing in Religion appears to be the latest attempt at strengthening the party through a region-specific party regulation comprehensively forbidding Tibetan religiosity.

This is part of the study material being distributed to party members and cadres in the Tibet Autonomous Region from April this year.

***Code of Conduct for Communist Party Members in the Tibet Autonomous Region for Not Believing in Religion (for trial implementation)***

In order to implement the requirements of strict party governance in all aspects, strengthen the party's political institutions, and strengthen the political discipline of communists not permitted

to believe in religion, and in accordance with the "Constitution of the Communist Party of China," "Norms of Political Life Within the Party Under the New Situation," and "The Regulations on the Education and Management of Party Members of the Communist Party of China and the Regulations on Disciplinary Actions of the Communist Party of China" and other internal party regulations have formulated this code of conduct in accordance with the actual conditions of our region.

1. Strengthen theoretical arms, firm ideals and beliefs, adhere to Marxist materialism and atheism, firmly establish Marxist religious views, not forgetting the original aspiration, keep the mission in mind, be absolutely loyal to the party, strictly abide by party constitution, rules and discipline, not believe in religion, and not participate in religious activities, not spreading and promoting religion, do not provide support for the holding of religious activities or the construction of religious facilities unilaterally, and resolutely put an end to not believing overtly, but doing so covertly; not believing in public, but doing so on arrival at home; not believe while in office, but doing so upon retirement.

2. Strictly require yourself to adhere to party member standards, take the initiative to wear party member badges, not wear religious symbols such as beads, statues, not tattooing religious scriptures or religious signs on your body, and not placing religious signs on office premises or official vehicles , not participating in group religious study and religious chanting, not donating money and materials to monasteries, not going for religious ritual visits, pilgrimage, receiving ordination, making religious offerings, and not doing retreats. Not doing circumambulation of mountains and lakes. Not inviting monks and nuns and requesting them to perform divination for family members, perform prayers and provide names to children. Nor forwarding or liking religious audio, video, religious information and scriptures.

3. Categorically draw a clear line with the 14th Dalai and the Dalai clique, and clearly hoist the flag to eliminate the negative influence of the 14th Dalai and Dalai clique using religion. Not believing in rumors, spreading rumors, not using religion to interfere in the nation's affairs, social work, economic, cultural, and social undertakings. Not obstructing national construction projects by seeking recourse to "sacred mountains" and "divine lakes".

4. To send minor children to receive compulsory education in accordance with the law, rather than sending them to monasteries as monks and nuns. Not sending them to places of religious worship, schools or training institutions run by religious clerics to receive education and training.

5. Assiduously guide religious family members and relatives to downplay their religious consciousness, advise them not to set up altars, place religious objects, hang religious pictures and photos of religious personalities at home. Make efforts as best as possible to make them not participate in religious activities or do so as little as possible. Incense-burning ceremonies must be conducted according to best practices to protect the environment. In case of customary activities such as weddings and funerals advance supplication has to be made to the party branch before inviting religious personnel to carry out religious activities. Family members and close relatives who go abroad to have an audience of the 14th Dalai or participate in various religious ceremonies and religious activities organized by the 14th Dalai and the Dalai clique should be promptly stopped, and if that does not work, then it should be reported to the party organization immediately.

6. Assiduously guide the religious public to treat religion rationally, consciously change customs, and reduce the negative influence of religion. Then, through pursuing a healthy and civilized lifestyle, and depending on hard work and perseverance, create a happy life.

Photo : getwalls.io

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## **Tibetan Monk in Sichuan: 4 ½ years in jail for chatting with his sister**

***Rinchen Zhuzhen was sentenced to for "inciting separatism" in WeChat conversations.***

By Deng Huizhong

Bitter Winter (02.07.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3wB5vZi> - We all know that WeChat conversations are monitored, but a Tibetan monk in Sichuan forgot it and paid the price.

Rinchen Zhuzhen is from Ngawa Tibetan and Qiang autonomous prefecture, also known as Aba, in Sichuan province. Many do not know that the majority of Tibetans in the People's Republic of China do not live in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) but are divided into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Yunnan. In fact, historical Tibet was split by China for political reasons: roughly half is present-day TAR, the other half was included in the above-mentioned four Chinese provinces. The Aba area is of special concern to the CCP because it is the world capital of self-immolation, with the highest number of Tibetan monks who set themselves on fire to protest the Chinese regime.

This is why repression of Tibetan Buddhism and culture in Aba is described by some as worse than in the TAR. The case of monk Rinchen Zhuzhen seems to confirm this. His sister Gonsang Drolma, who lives in India, confirmed via social media last week that he has been sentenced to four and a half years in jail for "inciting separatism." This week, she has confirmed he is detained in Mianyang Prison in Sichuan province.

But what did Rinchen Zhuzhen exactly do to earn such a severe jail sentence? The monk, his sister says, had already been arrested twice, in 2018 and 2019, after his WeChat conversations with her had been monitored and recorded. It seems he had expressed a favorable opinion of the Dalai Lama.

He was arrested again after another long conversation where he said that the CCP-appointed Panchen Lama is not the real Panchen Lama. The monk said that Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who was recognized by the Dalai Lama and was kidnapped by the Chinese at the age of six in 1995, is the real Panchen Lama. This determined Rinchen Zhuzhen's new arrest, detention, and sentence.

Notwithstanding the official propaganda, the repression of Tibetan Buddhists continues. The world should not focus on the TAR only. There is a possibility that the worst atrocities occur in the Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu, and Yunnan provinces, where, as mentioned earlier, the majority of the Tibetans residing inside Chinese borders live.

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## False documents against Chinese refugees and Bitter Winter

*The incredible story of a failed black propaganda operation, which started as a spy story and ended up in comedy.*

By Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (12.07.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3e8uEEI> -



*The false text attributed to the Belgian federal center CIAOSN published in Italy*

The persecution of religious minorities in China is a deadly serious affair, but the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) propaganda abroad sometimes looks more like a comedy. We at *Bitter Winter* were ourselves involved in a bizarre series of events, which can be read as a spy story but also as a piece of old-time vaudeville.

First, we should introduce the main characters. If you are reading this article, you probably know what *Bitter Winter* is all about. The respected American Protestant magazine *Word* [once called us](#) "a thorn in the side" of the CCP. To remove the thorn, the CCP has arrested 45 of our reporters in China. It has also mobilized its fellow travelers in the West to attack us whenever possible.

If you read *Bitter Winter*, you also know the CCP, but most probably you don't know a minor Belgian fellow traveler of that Party, a Belgian called Roland Delcourt, who is married to a Chinese and has been living in Shenzhen [for "at least 20 years."](#) He gives interviews and writes propaganda letters in favor of the CCP that are published in the Chinese regime's official organs, including the *People's Daily* and the news agency *Xinhua*. He is also a "cyberwarrior" and posts on social media to defend the CCP, with a language that parrots, but goes beyond, the "wolf warrior" Chinese diplomats. [For instance](#), he likes to play on the phonetic similarity between "Biden" and the French word "bidon" (phony), and calls the U.S. President, when he criticizes China, "a false democrat," "the Yankee

Gauleiter" (suggesting a comparison with Nazi war criminals), and "the cholera (as Trump was the plague)."

 **Roland Delcourt**  
14 giugno alle ore 09:59 · 🌐

Demain matin, à 10h30, les députés fédéraux belges voteront sur les 4 motions voulant condamner la Chine sur la question des Ouïghours. Avant cela, le très zélé député Ecolo, Samuel Cogolati, interrogera le ministre des Affaires étrangères sur "Le rôle de la diplomatie dans l'implantation d'Alibaba à Liège Airport" (55017064C), suivi d'une question d'Annick Ponthier (VB - Nationaliste flamand) sur " La mise en place du hub logistique Ali Baba à l'aéroport de Liège" (55018099C).

Je n'aime pas du tout que cette mascarade se déroule en même temps que la visite de Bidon, désolé Biden à Bruxelles.

On sait l'état de servitude de nos députés vis-à-vis des Etats-Unis, qu'ils soient menés par la peste, Trump ou Biden, le choléra.

On sait que la visite du Gauleiter Yankee, faux démocrate, est de réunir les vassaux des États-Unis dans un combat contre la Chine même si cela devait déboucher sur une guerre chaude.

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A "moderate" post by Roland Delcourt mentioning President Biden

We should also introduce two other organizations. The first is [The Church of Almighty God](#) (CAG), a Christian [new religious movement](#) and the single most persecuted religious group in China. Because of the merciless persecution vested on them in China, more than 5,000 CAG members have fled the country and are [seeking asylum](#) in democratic countries.

The second is a Belgian federal center called CIAOSN (Centre for information and advice on harmful cultic organizations), created in 1998 to advise other branches of the Belgian government on "dangerous cults," and [influenced by](#) the similar (but not identical) French governmental organization MIVILUDES. *Bitter Winter* is critical of certain positions expressed by CIAOSN (particularly [about the Jehovah's Witnesses](#)) but our parent organization, [CESNUR](#), maintains a respectful if critical attitude to the Belgian center, members of which have attended [CESNUR](#) conferences.

All these organizations and individuals came together in a strange way in the last few months. On April 1, 2021, *Bitter Winter* received, through an E-mail without signature and from an address unknown to us, a 15-page document entitled "Almighty God , the Devil, Stretches Their Claws into Europe. Europe Is in Danger Now." At first, the coincidence of the date suggested a connection with April Fools' Day. It was a compilation of standard Chinese accusations against [The Church of Almighty God](#), including fake news we had already seen in Chinese media, such as false statistics about how many CAG refugees were granted asylum, and the false information that Pope Francis had publicly denounced the CAG. However, the repeated reference to a "devil Almighty God" inspiring the CAG looked like a caricature version of the Evangelical literature against the "cults," and prevented us from taking the document seriously.

When several scholars, most of them in Belgium and the Netherlands, started writing to us that they had also received the document, we took a second look. We concluded that it was written to give the impression that it had been produced by conservative Christians concerned with the "heresies" of the CAG, but it was in fact just another product of the [CCP](#) propaganda. Apart from the references to the devil, most of the content reproduced almost literally [CCP](#) propaganda literature against the CAG. It was also written in bad English, with mistakes typical of a Chinese trying to write in that language.

Why the [CCP](#) should produce such a bizarre document was, at that time, unclear. It seemed that the main aim was to campaign against CAG asylum-seekers in Europe, and that the [CCP](#) was concerned that a number of CAG asylum applications [had been granted](#) in European countries, recognizing that CAG members are severely persecuted in China.

One month after we first received the report, on May 1, [an article appeared](#) in the Belgian *EU Reporter* by Roland Delcourt, who told the story that he had recently visited CIAOSN and was told that the Belgian federal center "was very interested in an 18-pages [sic] report they recently received on the [Eastern Lightning \(The Church of Almighty God\)](#)," and would consider it if asked to render advise on asylum applications by CAG members in Belgium. Several Belgian and international scholars contacted CIAOSN, and were told that a gentleman called Roland Delcourt had indeed visited the center, but he had done most of the talking about the anti-CAG report (which was indeed the same we had received). While the article, which had been published on the same day also [in a Swedish newspaper](#), was spreading through other pro-Chinese Web sites, on May 7 CIAOSN [issued a press release](#) clarifying that, "Contrary to what is mentioned in the article [by Delcourt], the CIAOSN has never spoken out on this religious group in question [the CAG]. These incorrect statements do not in any way reflect the informal exchanges between the Center and the author of the article."

07 mai 2021

**Reaction to EU Reporter article**

The CIAOSN has taken note of the article with the title "Beware of false refugees, the cult nature of the Eastern Lightning (The Church of Almighty God)" published on May 1, 2021 on the EU Reporter website and taken up by others websites. Contrary to what is mentioned in the article, the CIAOSN has never spoken out on this religious group in question. These incorrect statements do not in any way reflect the informal exchanges between the Center and the author of the article.

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*From CIAOSN' press release*

This was just the beginning of the story. Radio Gold is a local Italian radio that operates in the Piedmontese [province](#) of Alessandria, and specializes in local news. On May 30, 2021, it published a "commercial advertisement" with a large title "CIAOSN, the Center of Research for Information and Advise on Harmful Cultic Organization," and a subtitle, "What do we know about *Bitter Winter*?" This time, the article attacked *Bitter Winter*. It included an unusual amount of false information even for Chinese propaganda, including mentioning as if they had exposed *Bitter Winter* articles from the Italian weekly *L'Espresso* and the German Catholic periodical *Katolisches* that had, in fact, highly praised our magazine. It also stated that "many intellectuals, Christians, including these connected with the Vatican, Protestant churches, as well as many other religious organizations have abandoned this structure [*Bitter Winter*]." We don't know what they are talking about.

Apart from the content, we were astonished by the fact that the article published on Radio Gold's Web site was signed by Ms. Roxane Verbockhaven of CIAOSN. She was the staff member who had received Delcourt when he had visited CIAOSN. We immediately smelled a rat. Not only it is not in the style of CIAOSN to attack an independent magazine, but why

on earth a Belgian federal center should publish an article as a paid advertisement in the Web site of an Italian local radio mostly known for its (excellent) coverage of the football club Alessandria and its recent promotion from Italy's third to second division?

Again, a member of [CESNUR](#)'s advisory board called CIAOSN and received the expected confirmation that CIAOSN had nothing to do with the article published by Radio Gold. This was too much, and on June 1 our lawyer wrote to Radio Gold asking for the removal of the defamatory article. Radio Gold's attorneys answered that the article had indeed been removed, and emphasized that it was a paid advertisement placed by a reputable advertising agency. Our lawyers contacted the agency and were told that the article had been given to them to be placed in an Italian media outlet by (surprise, surprise) a Chinese gentleman.

The bizarre incidents had not ended. On June 6, an obscure British publication called *Epistle News* published [an anonymous opinion](#) very much similar to Delcourt's early articles against the CAG refugees. It again mentioned CIAOSN, and claimed that "the government of Belgium recognized the [Eastern Lightning](#) as an illegitimate [cult](#) and, as a consequence, all the requests from their believers will be automatically rejected." CIAOSN's press release denying that they told anything similar to Delcourt was ignored, and Delcourt's article as published on May 1 in Sweden was linked.

The strangest part (so far) of the story came on June 26. In China, banned religious movements are called [xie jiao](#), an expression dating back to the Middle Ages and designating "heterodox teachings" prohibited by the government (less correctly, the expression is often translated as "evil cults"). There is an official China Anti-xie-jiao association, controlled by the [CCP](#). On June 26, they [published](#) what they presented as an account and translation of the *Epistle News* article, under the title "British Media: Beware of the Dangers of the [Xie Jiao](#) 'Almighty God.'" Only the most gullible Chinese readers may believe that the *Epistle News* represents the opinion of the "British media."

The most interesting feature of the article in Chinese is that it falsely reports that the article in the *Epistle News*, in addition to the CAG, also attacked *Bitter Winter* and the undersigned. In fact, the Chinese article happily reported that the text in the *Epistle News* "pointed out that the [xie jiao](#)'s mouthpiece media *Bitter Winter* lacks credibility and is a pro-American media."

The problem is, the article published by the *Epistle News* did not say anything similar, and did not mention *Bitter Winter* at all. So, the [CCP](#) was publishing fake news about fake news, in addition to the usual [false myths about the CAG](#).

The Chinese article even revamped [the old fake news](#) that the CAG was responsible for the murder of a woman in a McDonald's diner in Zhaoyuan, Shandong, in 2014. The article credits *Bitter Winter* with having persuaded many that the assassins were in fact members of a different religious movement. We would be honored if such were the case, but well before *Bitter Winter* the fact that those responsible for the murder were not CAG members (they worshiped different persons [their two female leaders] as "Almighty God," had a different theology, and had no relations with the CAG organization) had been established by articles [published in 2014](#) by the [CCP](#)-owned *The Beijing News*, which also published [part of the transcripts](#) of the trial of the assassins, who stated in unequivocal words that they were not members of the CAG and in fact regarded the CAG as a "false" religion. Among Western scholars, the first who documented that the McDonald's murderers were not CAG members was the Australian sinologist Emily Dunn in her 2015 book *Lightning from the East* (Dunn is not associated with [CESNUR](#) or *Bitter Winter*). I also

published about the McDonald's murder in [peer-reviewed journals](#) and [books](#) (my book on the CAG was published by Oxford University Press), not only in *Bitter Winter*.

The Chinese article stated that "there is on-site surveillance of this murder, which is unequivocal." Nobody denies that the murder happened, but the on-site surveillance recording obviously has nothing to do with which religious movement the perpetrators were members of. A video the article failed to mention is [an interview](#) with one of the two leaders of the group responsible for the murder, Zhang Fan (who was later executed in 2015), which was broadcasted by the Chinese Phoenix Television in 2014 (and clearly recorded with the authorization of the police), where she stated that as a young woman she was curious about the CAG, but "I never managed to contact [The Church of Almighty God](#) because they were secretive people, and I was not able to find them."

Since it is easy to compare the article in the *Epistle News* and the "translation" by the China Anti-xie-jiao Association, why did they publish a bogus text that is so easy to unmask? Our educated guess is that the article was originally written in Chinese, and sent to co-conspirators in Europe for publication in the *Epistle News*. After the text was written in China, but before it was sent to the *Epistle News*, the European conspirators were hit by the letter sent to Radio Gold in Italy by *Bitter Winter's* lawyers. They realized that, unlike struggling refugees with different immediate concerns, *Bitter Winter* does react to slander. They got scared enough to eliminate the part about *Bitter Winter* from the piece submitted to the *Epistle News*.

All this has a smell of secret services, but also of amateurism and gaucherie. In 2017, I and other Western scholars were invited to China, as experts of new religious movements, for a dialogue with Chinese anti-cultists and leading police officers in charge of the repression of the [xie jiao](#). Chinese media [published propaganda accounts](#) of the meetings (including several pictures of the undersigned), where in fact we disagreed on almost everything. However, one thing our Chinese counterparts were not was stupid. They looked like intelligent people. Perhaps they have now been replaced by less competent officers—with a taste for vaudeville.

Photo : [CCP media covering \(in their own way\) a 2017 dialogue on xie jiao between Chinese anti-cultists and police officers and Western scholars, including Massimo Introvigne.](#)

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## Special bimonthly FoRB newsletter (16-30.06.2021)

### General

#### 28.06.21 - The Great Purge of China Legal history

China operated the largest data base of legal decisions in the world. Until it realized it offered ammunition to critics—including *Bitter Winter*.

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### Uyghur Muslims

### **23.06.21 - Will Hilton Build a Xinjiang Hotel on the Site of a Mosque Demolished by the CCP?**

Protests continue after the company's decision to open a Hampton where the Uyghur Duling Mosque once stood.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **19.06.21 - A house divided: European Union countries and China**

While the Czech Republic and Belgium label the horrors of Xinjiang as "genocide," a strange Italian document vows to go on with the Belt and Road cooperation

[Continue reading...](#)

### **18.06.21 - China policies could reduce millions of Uyghur births in Xinjiang: researcher**

China appears to be taking measures to sharply reduce ethnic minority population growth in the southern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) under "population optimization" policies amid its crackdown on Uyghurs and other Muslims, according to a new report by a German researcher.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **15.06.21 - Xinjiang: Forced sterilizations, abortions, infanticides—A doctor testifies**

Newborn babies were killed by lethal injection to enforce the CCP's family planning against the Uyghurs.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Tibetan Buddhists**

### **30.06.21 - "The nerve, how did they even think of this?" Tibetans react to CCP projection into Potala Palace**

The Chinese Communist Party's celebrations have seen coercion and crackdowns across Tibet

Today, 1 July 2021, the Chinese Communist Party marks its 100-year anniversary. Through a series of huge events across China, it will celebrate its foundation in Shanghai in 1921 through to the power it projects today across China and beyond.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **25.06.21 - Tibetans in Driu county arrested for speaking to Tibetans in exile**

In April 2021, Chinese authorities carried out several arrests in Driru County in Nagchu, which is governed as part of the so-called Tibet Autonomous Region. One Tibetan,

Gyajin, has been identified while the names of other Tibetans arrested are yet to be ascertained.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Protestants

### **01.07.21 - Insider information disputes Chengdu Jintang Prison's claim "Wang Yi is doing very well..."**

Recent insider information disputes Chengdu Jintang Prison officials' claim: "Wang Yi is doing very well ..., (that he) reads every day, works out, and does physical exercises." *ChinaAid* resources, including one individual who closely tracks Wang Yi's prison situation, reveals reasons that indicate Pastor Wang's life in prison dramatically differs from the prison's description.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **29.06.21 - Early Rain Covenant Church family welcomed to the United States**

Liao Qiang, a church member of the Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, and his family fled to Taiwan from China in July 2019 after repeated interrogation and harassment by the police. Today, the family of six arrived safely in the United States where they will apply for asylum.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **28.06.21 - Hunan police arrest street preacher Chen Wensheng again—and again and again**

On June 19, Hengyang Community, United Front Work Department, State Security Department, and Municipal Bureau of Public Security authorities teamed with Ninghai police officers to jointly arrest Chen Wensheng and Brother Shao for preaching the gospel in Zhejiang Province. That night, after officials transported the two Christians back to Hengyang City, Hunan police then transferred them to West Lake Mount Resort. There, State security officers will "watch" Brother Chen and Brother Shao while they are quarantined for 14 days.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Church of Almighty God

### **30.06.21 - 1000+ Church of Almighty God members arrested**

The crackdown prepared the Chinese Communist Party's 100th anniversary.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Falun Gong

### **01.07.21 - Two inner Mongolia residents sentenced to prison for their faith, with one arrested after a decade of displacement**

Two Chifeng City, Inner Mongolia residents were recently sentenced to prison for their faith in Falun Gong, a mind-body practice that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **01.07.21 - Tianjin woman harassed for her faith, son speaks up for her**

The son of a Tianjin resident stopped the police from forcing his mother to sign a statement to renounce her faith in Falun Gong, a spiritual discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Other religious groups

### **24.06.21 - 35 Years Ago: The tragedy of the Great Sage Dynasty**

Depicted as the quintessential xie jiao, the movement founded in 1986 was eradicated in 1990 and its leader executed. Why do Chinese media remember it now?

[Continue reading...](#)

### **22.06.21. - Manmin Central Church believers detained in different provinces**

While the leader is serving a 16-year jail term in Korea for sexual abuse, the church is still active both in its home country and in China.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **21.06.21 - 21 Bloody Holy Spirit members sentenced in Guangxi**

As the banned Christian movement continues to be active, persecution intensifies.

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## **21 Bloody Holy Spirit members sentenced in Guangxi**

*As the banned Christian movement continues to be active, persecution intensifies.*

By Qi Junzao (Uses a pseudonym for security reasons)

Bitter Winter (18.06.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3hcjG1f> - On June 7, 2021, the Qinnan District People's Court of Qinzhou city, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region (GZAR), sentenced 21 members of the Christian new religious movement known as "Bloody Holy Spirit" (血水圣灵) to jail penalties under Article 300 of the Chinese Criminal Code, which forbids being active in a banned religious movement classified as a xie jiao. 15 of them were women.

They were part of a group of Bloody Holy Spirit devotees detained by the Qinnan Branch of Qinzhou City Public Security Bureau on September 2, 2020, and formally arrested on October 1, 2020.

The police found that the movement was active in Qinzhou city and Fangchenggang city, both in GZAR, where it had established several churches and a "Youth Formation Group" that was training more than 20 minors.

On August 17, 2020, the devotees hold a meeting for the anniversary of the foundation of the movement in Qinnan district, Qinzhou city. The meeting was raided and 24 participants arrested. According to the decision, the police also seized "113 books, 989 loose propaganda materials, 183 CDs, 1 notice paper, 2 large advertising cloths, 3 calendars, 2 diaries, 48 signs, 37 paper plates, and 2 photographs."

The court also claimed that a well-organized fundraising operation had been organized through a "Logistics Business Group."

The movement is mercilessly persecuted in China. In the last month of April, *Bitter Winter* reported on a similar case in Jiangxi, where members of the Bloody Holy Spirit received heavy jail penalties.

The official name of the group is Blood and Water of Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit Full Gospel Evangelistic Group (血水圣灵全备福音布道团). The movement was founded in Taiwan by Zuo Kun (左坤), aka Moses Tsuo (b. 1930), a former local leader of the New Testament Church (新约教会), founded by Taiwanese actress Kong Duen-Yee (江端仪, 1923–1966), who separated from the parent organization in August 1988. The movement claims to be a restoration of the primitive Christian church. In China, the Bloody Holy Spirit was included in the list of the xie jiao in 1995.

Photo : Trial images (from Weibo).

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## Special bimonthly FoRB newsletter (01-15.06.2021)

### Uyghur Muslims

**14.06.21 - Activists praise UK 'People's Tribunal' on China's alleged Uyghur abuse**

Human rights activists and Uyghur experts have welcomed a "people's tribunal" initiated in London last week to probe whether China's alleged crimes against the Uyghurs amount to genocide, stressing the need for more practical action from the international community.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **10.06.21 - Uyghur camp inmates detail 'crimes against humanity' in New Amnesty report**

More than 50 former inmates of detention camps in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) — many of whom have never spoken publicly — have presented new testimony of "crimes against humanity," Amnesty International said in a report published Thursday.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **10.06.21 - "We were trained to torture Uyghurs": A former police officer speaks**

Electric rods were used on male prisoners' private parts, hammers were used to break the legs of inmates, some were left to starve while others ate in front of them.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **09.06.21 - Raped, tortured, humiliated: The Uyghur tribunal hears 24 witnesses**

One witness testified that she and 100 other inmates were forced to watch prison guards rape a young girl in front of them.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **05.06.21 - 900,000 Uyghur children: The saddest victims of genocide**

The Chinese Communist Party has forcibly displaced them into Han Chinese families or state-run orphanages. Figures prove the program is expanding.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **03.06.21 - Mihray Erkin: The Senseless killing of a Uyghur young girl**

Exiled Uyghur scholar Abduweli Ayup tells Bitter Winter how his niece died in jail just because of being his relative and cooperating with him.

[Continue reading...](#)

**Falun Gong**

### **15.06.21 - Three siblings imprisoned for their shared faith**

Three siblings were sentenced to prison for their shared faith in Falun Gong, a spiritual discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999. The older sister, Ms. Luo Qiaoli, was sentenced to 5 years and fined 30,000 yuan.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **15.06.21 - Liaoning man succumbs to torture-induced health problems, dies 3.5 years after medical parole**

While detained for his faith in Falun Gong, Mr. Li Hongwei was subjected to brutal torture and force-fed highly salted milk for 29 days in a row. His health was severely damaged as a result. After struggling with severe diabetes and other health issues for three and a half years following his medical parole, Mr Li passed away on June 8, 2021. He was 58.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Protestants**

### **11.06.21 - CCP cracks down on Korea-based good news mission**

The Christian movement is being banned, and its churches raided, one province after the other.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Other religious groups**

### **11.06.21 - Shenzhen Holy Reformed Church members who fled to Jeju Island and await rescue admit, "There's no way back for us"**

Persecution by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities led to approximately 60 members (30 children) of Shenzhen Holy Reformed Church in southern China currently seeking asylum in South Korea. Today, although the road ahead may seem painful and hazy at times, 43-year-old Pan Yongguang, the Church's pastor and former doctor, tells members that every suffering they experience is a part of God's plan. "There's no way back for us," he said.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **07.06.21 - Shouters: Persecuted in China and entitled to asylum, Court of Rome says**

An important decision recognized refugee status to members of groups classified as "xie jiao" by the CCP

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Special bimonthly FoRB newsletter (16-31.05.2021)**

### **Catholics**

#### **24.05.21 - China arrests Vatican-approved bishop, priests, seminarians**

Authorities in northern China have arrested a Vatican-appointed Catholic bishop, his seven priests, and an unspecified number of seminarians in what is seen as part of a renewed crackdown on the underground Catholic Church in the communist country.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **23.05.21 - Pope: Let us pray for the Catholics in China 'whom I hold deep in my heart'**

Pope Francis's invitation for the Chinese faithful, on the occasion of the feast of Our Lady of Sheshan and the World Day of Prayer for the Church in China. "The Holy Spirit is like a strong and free wind". He "connects different people by realizing the unity and universality of the Church"

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **22.05.21 - Xinxiang, the bishop, seven priests and 10 seminarians arrested**

Bishop Zhang Weizhu has been imprisoned on other occasions. A large number of policemen broke into the factory that served as a seminary and arrested the students and professors.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **22.05.21 - 2022 Olympics: Crimes against Catholics in one of its main venues**

China plans to host in Chongli, notorious for its persecution of Catholicism, most of the skiing events. Another reason to stop the Olympics.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Uyghur Muslims**

#### **21.04.21 - Lithuanian Parliament condemns "Uyghur genocide"**

Lithuania joins its voice to the U.S., Canada, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom that have already used the G-word. Beijing is not pleased.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **19.05.21 - China's arrest of 1,046 Imams is a misguided assault on religion**

Since 2014, according to a new [report](#) released by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) and Justice for All, China's authorities have arrested at least 1,046 Muslim imams from its Xinjiang (East Turkistan) region.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Falun Gong

### **31.05.21 - Well-respected teacher and loving daughter held in detention center for their faith**

Five members of one extended family in Guangdong Province were arrested within 48 hours in early April 2021 for their shared faith in Falun Gong. At the time of writing, only one of them was released and the other four are incarcerated in two separate detention centers.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **31.05.21 - Anqing City, Anhui Province: Authorities hold brainwashing session targeting Falun Gong practitioners**

The Political and Legal Affairs Committee (PLAC) of Anqing City, Anhui Province set up a brainwashing session on the first floor of Zhenfengta Hotel in early April 2021.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Protestants

### **31.05.21 - Shouters: crackdown continues, devotee sentenced in Beijing**

In Beijing, Jiangsu, and Guangxi local communities were forced to close. Several members remain in jail.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Buddhists

### **25.05.21 - Followers of persecuted Buddhist leader arrested in Henan**

Nobody knows whether Tian Ruisheng died or went into seclusion. What is certain, members of his Xiang Gong movement are still persecuted.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **24.05.21 - China seeks to 'sinicise' Tibetan religion**

Lhasa [Tibet], May 23 (ANI): Despite international condemnation over human rights violations by Beijing in Tibet, the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) top official in Lhasa called for greater stress on Chinese elements in religion and a crackdown on 'separatism' in the region.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Other religious groups**

#### **31.05.21 - Zhonggong: National crackdown and jail sentences**

The CCP is so concerned with the banned qigong movement that it has set up a special task force to fight it.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **19.05.21 - "Final" crackdown on the Lord God's teachings Church**

Despite heavy persecution, the offshoot of the Shouters is still active in rural areas. The CCP arrests and tortures members to eradicate it.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **18.05.21 - Taiyuan reformed Church under police attack**

Brother Zhao Weikai has been arrested on May 17. The house church has been repeatedly harassed in the last few months.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Pastor of heavily persecuted church hospitalized after attack by communist authorities**

By Leah Marie-Ann Klett

The Christian Post (28.05.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3wGDRuf> - The pastor of a heavily persecuted house church in China's southwest Guizhou Province was hospitalized after being detained and brutally beaten by Chinese Communist Party authorities.

Persecution watchdog China Aid reports that on May 23, as Pastor Yang Hua of Guiyang Living Stone Church planned to visit Christians in Qingdao, police seized and transported him to their station.

There, a leader of the Guiyang Yunyan District Party Committee punched the pastor, injuring him so severely that an official called emergency medical personnel, who then transported the pastor to a nearby hospital.

Since founding Guiyang Living Stone Church in 2009, the pastor has experienced ongoing persecution at the hands of communist authorities. China Change notes that initially, the church didn't attract much attention, but it grew rapidly, doubling parishioners each year, it came under increasing scrutiny from Chinese authorities.

In 2015, Guiyang City government officials forcibly shut down the church and one year later sold it to a commercial group for more than \$779,909 (5,000,000 yuan), a sum Chia Aid notes was "much lower than its actual assessed value."

That same year, CCP officials apprehended Yang, falsely charged him with "deliberately divulging state secrets," and sentenced him to serve 2.5 years in prison. Though he was released in 2018 after serving the full term of his sentence, he continued to face scrutiny from the CCP.

Members of the pastor's family told China Aid that police would intensify their surveillance of the pastor on a "sensitive" day or whenever "potential disturbance or trouble" emerged. During those times, authorities forced Yang to travel away from the area or place him under house arrest with 20 CCP officers guarding his door.

During late August in 2018, Pastor Wang Yi, head of the heavily-persecuted Early Rain Covenant Church, traveled to Guiyang to visit Yang. The two pastors encouraged each other to "hold fast to the faith," and three months later, CCP authorities arrested Wang and imprisoned him.

Numerous reports have documented how religious persecution in China intensified in 2020, with thousands of Christians affected by church closures and other human rights abuses.

Authorities in China are also continuing their crackdown on Christianity by removing Bible Apps and Christian WeChat public accounts as new highly restrictive administrative measures on religious staff went into effect earlier in May.

Open Doors USA's World Watch List ranks China as the 17th-worst country in the world when it comes to the persecution of Christians. The organization notes that all churches are perceived as a threat if they become too large, too political or invite foreign guests.

Christians are not the only religious minority to face persecution at the hands of the CCP. Estimates suggest that as many as 1 million Uighur Muslims have been subject to internment camps in Xinjiang, where they are taught to be secular citizens who will never oppose the ruling Communist Party.

In January, Southern Baptist ethicist Russell Moore warned that the crimes being perpetrated against religious minorities in China and elsewhere rely on "tribalism" and invisibility "where the rest of the world doesn't pay attention."

"The way of Jesus Christ says that we pay attention to our neighbor on the side of the road who is persecuted, who is being beaten," he said. "So let's pray for ... persecuted peoples. Let's pray not just individually, but together, and pray for them by name."

"Let's be the people who stand up for whoever is being made invisible, whoever is being intimidated and bullied in our own neighborhoods and in our own communities because we're the people of Jesus Christ."

## US evangelical leader Johnnie Moore sanctioned by China for religious freedom advocacy

By Emily Wood

The Christian Post (27.05.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3fwr2wX> - China sanctioned a United States private citizen and evangelical leader on Wednesday for exposing human rights abuses and standing up for the religious freedom of Uyghur Muslims, Christians and other minority faith groups that are being silenced and oppressed.

Rev. Johnnie Moore, a two-time commissioner who served on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom and president of the Congress of Christian Leaders, said it is an "honor" to be sanctioned by China because of his advocacy for people of oppressed minority faiths.

"If the cost of sanctioning Chinese officials responsible for human rights abuses in China is the sanctioning of activists like me, then I say, 'fine, I am more than happy to be sanctioned,'" Moore told The Christian Post in an interview on Thursday.

Moore, a public relations executive and a former Liberty University vice president, said there is "no better compliment for a human rights activist to actually get under the skin of those you are calling to change."

"It's literally millions of people like me around the world who are saying in one clear voice, 'we love China, we love the Chinese people,'" he said. "'We understand it is a certain type of political system. But these types of behaviors are not the types of behaviors we're willing to accept in the modern world, and we're going to be unrelenting.' And clearly, [China is] paying attention."

As a human rights advocate who shines a light on atrocities, it sometimes seems to go unnoticed. But for China, Moore said it has become "increasingly clear" that the government is "noticing that the tide of the world is finally turning against them in this regard. They are deeply, deeply concerned about it."

"It is an honor to be sanctioned by the Chinese Communist Party for giving my voice to the Uyghur Muslims, Christians [including Jimmy Lai], Tibetan Buddhists & countless others the CCP tries to silence every day," he shared in a tweet.

Moore called his ability to freely advocate for the oppressed "a privilege of living in the United States, the land of the free and the home of the brave."

"The CCP doesn't understand the difference between 'the truth' and a 'lie' but here's some truth we know: they are weaker than they want us to believe that they are," Moore continued. "A global coalition is building to hold them to account and it transcends political parties and U.S. administrations. This Great Wall of Collaboration is a promise to future generations that we will not hand our world to the CCP to victimize the innocent as they please."

Secretary of State Antony Blinken released a statement on Thursday promising the U.S. will "continue to speak out for human rights" and "promote accountability" for the Chinese government's abuses.

"Beijing's attempts to intimidate and silence those speaking out for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion or belief, only draw additional international attention and scrutiny to its egregious abuses," Blinken said.

"This includes the ongoing crimes against humanity and genocide in Xinjiang, as well as its repression of religious and spiritual adherents, including Tibetan Buddhists, Christians, and Falun Gong practitioners."

Blinken condemned the Chinese government's "baseless sanctions" imposed in March against USCIRF Chair Gayle Manchin and Vice-Chair Tony Perkins for speaking out against the genocide and human rights abuses of Uyghur Muslims.

Moore's service as a USCIRF commissioner ended several weeks ago, so the CCP sanctioned him as a private citizen in response to the State Department's release of the 2020 Report on International Religious Freedom and the announcement of sanctions of a Chinese official.

China's Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said the 2020 report is a "disregard of facts and fraught with ideological bias, has unscrupulously denigrated China's religious policy and severely interfered in China's internal affairs."

Lijian said China "firmly rejects" the report, which led them to impose sanctions on Moore. China "urges the U.S. side to rectify its mistake, rescind the so-called sanctions and stop interfering China's internal affairs in the name of religious issues."

Lijian said in a press conference on Wednesday that China sanctioned Moore "in response to the [U.S.'] blatant move to endorse cults and impose unilateral sanctions on Chinese personnel based on lies and disinformation."

The sanction forbids Moore and his family members from entering mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao of China

Moore said the sanction "is partly a retaliatory measure, it's partly a PR stunt and it's partly about intimidation."

"One of the key phrases in my official statement in response to [the sanction] is that the United States of America is the land of the free," Moore said. "It's the home of the brave. We have always used our freedom as not only something to enjoy in the boundaries of our own country but as our responsibility in the world to use our freedom on behalf of those who don't have it."

"... We haven't been easily intimidated in the history of our great country. Despite all of the different parts of our history, there is one thread that runs through it, which is that we are a brave, proud people who are obsessed with self-corrections within our own history and who are always raising our voice on the behalf of those that need [it] around the world. So, I think it is partly an exercise in intimidation. But we're not an easily-intimidated people," he continued.

Moore said the sanctions will not silence him.

"If by sanctioning Americans you're attempting to silence us, the exact opposite thing's going to happen," Moore shared. "Sanctioning me is not going to silence me. It's going to cause me to become more aggressive. It's going to cause me to raise my voice more. As best as I can tell, this is simply a travel ban."

Moore assured that he loves China and has for years displayed a willingness to "sit at the table" and "have these conversations."

"I am not against the Chinese people. I am not against China. I'm an American. I believe in the free market. ... But when you believe in the free market, you have to fight fair. And one of the reasons the United States of America has been blessed the way it has been is [that] it has been the freest country in human history and it has taken that freedom and it has used it to raise a voice for those who aren't free."

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and 27 other Trump administration officials, including former Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, former national security adviser Robert O'Brien and former White House Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, were also sanctioned by China just minutes after President Joe Biden took office.

The sanctions restricted these individuals, their immediate family members and companies or institutions associated with them from entering mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao of China since they "seriously disrupted China-U.S. relations," a Jan. 20 statement from a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

The Trump administration designated the Chinese persecution of the minority Uyghur Muslims as a "genocide" and "crimes against humanity" against in January.

In the western Xinjiang province, the Uyghur and other ethnic Muslims undergo mass internment, forced labor and forced sterilization under the Chinese Communist Party.

Moore met with the transition teams between the Trump and Biden administrations in January to discuss religious freedom and human rights.

"The United States needs to use its unrivaled stature in the world to build an alliance beginning in Europe but extending certainly throughout the continents ... to further build this 'great wall of collaboration' to serve as a wall of freedom that ensures that China cannot buy its way, extort its way, lend its way and engage in other extortionist tactics in order to buy alliances throughout the world. ...," Moore said.

The government of China must change its behavior, or the U.S. will continue to try to stifle its influence throughout the world, Moore added.

"... The last thing that I want is a bad relationship between the U.S. and China. I think the U.S. and China ought to tomorrow decide to turn a page on recent days and to pursue a fairer, more just approach to their relationship and to their joint efforts around the world in shaping the future for everyone," he said. "But the Communist Party is going to have to change their behavior. And if they are unwilling to change their behavior, then the United States needs to do what needs to be done to make it more difficult for the Communist Party to export their behavior to other parts of the world."

Moore believes the Biden administration should "take a page out of the Trump administration's playbook" and "keep unrelenting pressure on the Communist Party" and sanction those responsible for the atrocities being committed.

Human rights and religious freedom must be "at the heart of American foreign policy," he stressed.

Christian persecution watchdog group Open Doors USA ranks China, the world's most populous country with over 1.4 billion people, at No. 17 on its 2021 World Watch List of countries where Christians face the most severe persecution.

## Special weekly FoRB newsletter (01-15.05.2021)

### General

#### **13.05.21 - Department of State religious freedom report: China is guilty of "crimes against humanity"**

The Department of State releases its yearly religious liberty report: China (with 85 quotes from Bitter Winter), Russia, Pakistan are severely criticized.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **05.05.21 - China leveraging the International System to further religious persecution**

As China assumes the presidency of the UN Security Council for the month of May, human rights activists around the world are raising concerns about China's abuse of the international system to further its persecution of religious minorities. The presidency rotates among the fifteen member states, with China last holding the position in March 2020.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **02.05.21 - China shuts down Bible App, Christian WeChat as new crackdown policies go into effect**

China's communist authorities are continuing their crackdown on Christianity by removing Bible Apps and Christian WeChat public accounts as new highly restrictive administrative measures on religious staff went into effect Saturday.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **01.05.21 - Bible apps and Christian WeChat accounts shut down in China**

In a move to crack down on Christianity nationwide, the Chinese government is targeting the cyberspace— Bible Apps and Christian WeChat public accounts have been removed.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **30.04.21 - China introduces new regulations restricting religious practice**

New administrative measures on religious staff, released by China's State Administration for Religious Affairs in February 2021, will come into effect on 1 May amid concerns from some religious leaders about their restrictive nature. One human rights lawyer described the measures as "one more weapon in (the Chinese authorities') arsenal to limit or further persecute the religious communities."

[Continue reading...](#)

### Church of Almighty God

## **06.05.21 - Church of Almighty God refugees: why they should be granted asylum**

A monumental study of 271 decisions rendered in administrative and court cases shows that more applications are being accepted—but not everywhere.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Uyghur Muslims**

### **14.05.21 - Xinjiang: An extraordinary UN event elicits China's furious reaction**

Gathered by the U.S., UK, and Germany, 18 countries vowed to break the United Nations' silence on the Uyghur genocide.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **14.05.21 - On Eid, Xinjiang imams defend China against US criticism**

Muslim leaders from the Xinjiang region rejected Western allegations that China is suppressing religious freedom, speaking to foreign diplomats and media at a reception at the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **13.05.21 - China detaining and sentencing Uyghur Imams en masse, UHRP reveals**

The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), in partnership with [Justice for All](#), has released a [new report](#) detailing the mass detention of Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim imams in East Turkistan, and attempts by the Chinese government to cut off the transmission of religious knowledge across generations.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **13.05.21 - Since 2014 Beijing has imprisoned at least 630 imams in Xinjiang**

According to the Uyghur Human Rights Project, 18 Muslim clerics have died in prison or immediately after their release. Many have not been heard from for some time. Little official documentation exists about people sent to concentration camps. Uyghurs and members of other Muslim groups have been imprisoned just for praying.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **12.05.21 - Islam dispossessed**

The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) promotes the rights of the Uyghur people through research-based advocacy. We publish reports and analysis in English and Chinese to defend Uyghurs' civil, political, social, cultural, and economic rights according to international human rights standards.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Falun Gong**

#### **15.05.21 - Once incarcerated for eight years, Ningxia woman gets another four years for her faith**

A Yinchuan City, Ningxia Province resident was sentenced to four years on February 25, 2021, for her faith in Falun Gong, a spiritual and meditation discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Protestants**

#### **10.05.21 - Leading house churches targeted in China**

Beijing's Zion Church, Renai Church in Guiyang, and Early Rain in Chengdu continue to be under attack.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **09.05.21 - China: Authorities arrest preacher of heavily-persecuted house church for officiating funeral**

Communist authorities arrested a preacher from the heavily-persecuted house church in southwestern China's Sichuan province, Early Rain Covenant Church, for "allegedly disturbing public order" by officiating a member's funeral.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **07.05.21 - House church leader formally arrested on fraud charges after weeks in detention**

Zhang Chunlei, an elder of Love (Ren'ai) Reformed Church in Guiyang in China's southwestern Guizhou province, has been officially arrested and accused of fraud after nearly seven weeks in detention.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Buddhists**

#### **10.05.21 - No Religion in Tibetan schools, China tells parents**

Across China, multiple celebrations mark the anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. Catholics and other believers can choose among a panoply of seminars, conferences, trips, visits, and exhibits. For Mgr Ma Yinglin, without the Communist Party there would be no New China, no socialism with Chinese characteristics, and no happy life for people today.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **07.05.21 - Buddhists celebrate the 32nd birthday of the Panchen Lama, still held hostage by Beijing**

Buddhists in Ladakh and the Tashi Lhunpo monastery in Bylakuppe (Karnataka) joined Tibetans around the world to celebrate the **Panchen Lama's** 32nd birthday. The celebrations, held on 25 April, were accompanied by renewed calls on China to release him.

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## **Since 2014 Beijing has imprisoned at least 630 imams in Xinjiang**

***According to the Uyghur Human Rights Project, 18 Muslim clerics have died in prison or immediately after their release. Many have not been heard from for some time. Little official documentation exists about people sent to concentration camps. Uyghurs and members of other Muslim groups have been imprisoned just for praying.***

AsiaNews (13.05.2021) - <https://bit.ly/2QmM5Ze> - Since 2014, Chinese authorities have imprisoned or detained at least 630 imams and other Muslim clerics in Xinjiang, this according to the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) based on research it shared with the *BBC*. In all, 18 clerics have died in detention or shortly after their release.

The study looked at the fate of 1,046 imams, mostly ethnic Uyghurs, based on official papers, testimonies by relatives, public and private databases, and media reports.

The actual numbers are probably much higher since Chinese authorities do not report most cases involving incarceration in concentration camps, which often takes place without formal charges.

Jailed clerics are usually accused of "propagating extremism," "inciting separatism" or "gathering crowds to disrupt the social order." In reality, according to their relatives, they are targeted simply for praying, organising prayer groups, translating religious texts, i.e. performing their normal duties as imams.

Western countries, the United Nations Human Rights Agency, humanitarian organisations and academics have long **accused China of repression** against Uyghurs and other Turkic and Muslim minority groups living in the autonomous Xinjiang region.

According to expert data, confirmed by the United Nations, Chinese authorities hold or have held more than a million Uyghurs, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz people in Xinjiang internment and labour camps, often forced to take part in the cotton harvest.

Some independent researchers also claim that the Chinese government is conducting a local campaign of forced sterilisations to control the growth of the Muslim population.

Beijing has rejected the accusation of genocide against Uyghurs and other Turkic minorities, calling it the "lie of the century." Chinese leaders say that the camps in the autonomous region are not concentration camps, but **vocational centres implementing projects to reduce poverty**, as well as fight terrorism and separatism.

The UHRP study shows that all 1,046 imams they were able to track down were detained at one point or another. In 630 cases, court documents and direct testimonies could be cross-referenced.

Of these, at least 304 clerics were reportedly sent to prison rather than to the network of "re-education" camps. About 96 per cent were sentenced to at least five years whilst 26 per cent got 20 years or more, including 14 life sentences.

The families of prisoners often have no news of where they are being held. This is the case, for example, of Abidin Ayup, a prominent scholar and imam from the city of Atush who was taken into custody in 2017.

Ayup's family believes he is in a hospital detention facility. His niece Maryam Muhammad, who now lives in the United States, said that about 60 members of her extended family have been arrested, including her uncle's eight children.

Photo: AsiaNews.it

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## China detaining and sentencing Uyghur Imams en masse, UHRP reveals

UHRP (13.05.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3ohpXvy> - The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP), in partnership with [Justice for All](#), has released a [new report](#) detailing the mass detention of Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim imams in East Turkistan, and attempts by the Chinese government to cut off the transmission of religious knowledge across generations.

"The wholesale round-up of imams exposes the Chinese government's intention: to destroy our faith and traditions, once and for all," said UHRP Executive Director Omer Kanat. "Uyghur and other Turkic imams are the custodians of religious scholarship and teaching. Eliminating religious teachers is a weapon for eliminating Islam from our homeland."

The report, [Islam Dispossessed: China's Persecution of Uyghur Imams and Religious Figures](#), presents a dataset of 1,046 Turkic imams and other religious figures from East Turkistan detained in camps or imprisoned for their association with religious teaching and community leadership since 2014.

The dataset reveals that of the 1,046 recorded cases, 428 have been sent to formal prisons, including 304 sentenced to prison terms. Of the cases with sentencing information, 96

percent have received prison terms of five years or more, and 25 percent were sentenced to 20 years or more, often on unclear charges.

Another 202 religious figures have been detained in camps, 18 have died while in detention or in prison, or shortly thereafter, and incomplete data for the remaining cases likely indicate that these individuals continue to be held indefinitely, or have received sentences that remain unreported.

The dataset confirms that hundreds of religious figures have been sentenced, without due process, to prison terms for quotidian religious practice and expression protected under Chinese law and internationally recognized human rights treaties. Imams have been sentenced for “illegal” religious teaching (often to children), prayer outside a state-approved mosque, the possession of “illegal” religious materials, and communication or travel abroad.

The dataset includes cases of prison sentences of 15 years or more for “teaching others to pray,” “studying for six months in Egypt,” “refusing to hand in [a] Quran book to be burned,” and a life sentence for “spreading the faith and for organizing people.”

The figures presented are not comprehensive, given extreme secrecy and lack of transparency in the Uyghur Region, and very likely represent a small fraction of the total number of religious figures detained. Nonetheless, the data provides an alarming indication of the scale and severity of the Chinese government’s persecution of religious figures since 2014.

UHRP interviewed Uyghur imams abroad who described their experience of having been persistently watched, followed, scrutinized, and being given detailed orders controlling all their work. These imams fled the country when the controls reached the point where they felt that they could no longer play a positive role for their congregation and were at increasing risk of detention themselves.

“China’s persecution of imams stretches back decades, but it wasn’t until 2016 that the screws were tightened even further and thousands were likely arrested and sentenced,” said UHRP Senior Program Officer, and the report’s author, Peter Irwin.

In addition to the arbitrary detention of religious figures, authorities have prohibited the teaching of religion at all education levels; banned the use of traditional Islamic names like Muhammad and Medina for Uyghur children; banned long beards for Uyghur men and headscarves for women; instituted an “anti-halal” campaign to prevent the labeling of food and other products this way; criminalized Hajj pilgrimage without government approval; and adopted legislation broadly defining quotidian religious practices as “extremist,” which a group of UN independent experts [urged](#) to be repealed in its entirety.

The current campaign targeting Uyghur and other Turkic peoples bears a striking resemblance to the horrors of the Cultural Revolution as it was experienced in East Turkistan. While forms of repression share some similarities, the scale and scope of what is happening today makes this current campaign distinct, particularly owing to the ability of the state to utilize sophisticated technologies to “predict” criminality and infiltrate even the most intimate social unit, the family home.

The Turkic peoples of East Turkistan are facing their darkest era in decades, as the devastating fate of Uyghur religious figures demonstrates.

United Nations member states should [establish](#) an official Commission of Inquiry to investigate rights abuses. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights should

simultaneously make use of her independent monitoring and reporting mandate to investigate and report to the Human Rights Council with her findings.

Governments should urge the Chinese government, at every possible opportunity, to end its campaign of mass detention and release those imprisoned without due process. Governments should also provide support to Uyghurs currently under threat of refoulement or retaliation in third countries; form, strengthen, and mobilize international coalitions to deter further rights violations; and implement commitments on atrocity and genocide prevention through bilateral and multilateral diplomacy.

The U.S. Congress should also pass [H.Res.317](#) and [S.Res.131](#) without delay, providing a strong Congressional mandate for urgent U.S. action at the UN level.

Photo: UHRP

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## Leading house churches targeted in China

***Beijing's Zion Church, Renai Church in Guiyang, and Early Rain in Chengdu continue to be under attack.***

by Qi Junzao



*Zion Church, before its main place of worship was closed (from Twitter).*

Bitter Winter (10.05.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3uw6RnX> - There is no pause nor mercy in the [CCP](#) campaign to crack down on independent [house churches](#). The limited tolerance granted to some of them in the pre-Xi-Jinping era is gradually coming to an end. Either the [house churches](#) join the government-controlled [Three Self Church](#), or their leaders go to [jail](#). It also happens that [house churches](#) are labeled as [xie jiao](#), "heterodox teachings," and their elders and pastors prosecuted under [Article 300](#) of the Chinese Criminal Code, originally conceived to crack down on banned new religious movements.

Beijing's Zion Church is one of the most famous [house churches](#) in China. In 2018, it **was officially "dismantled" and banned** by the authorities, which tried to bankrupt it by imposing extravagant fines. **It was also accused** of being a [xie jiao](#). Much to the [CCP's](#) surprise, however, Zion Church did not disappear. It lost its place of worship, as the [CCP](#) persuaded the landlord to cancel the lease, but devotees continued to meet in private homes. A believer told *Bitter Winter* that there are "hundreds" of Zion Church meeting places, not all of them in Beijing, and the total membership may be in excess of 25,000.

Obviously, this is not something the [CCP](#) can tolerate. Two Zion Church preachers, Qie Jiafu and Huang Chunzi, have been arrested in their homes in the last days of April. It is unclear whether they will be formally incriminated, but believers are afraid that this is just the beginning of a new crackdown on their church.

In March, *Bitter Winter* reported about the attack against another significant [house church](#), Renai Reformed Church, in the [prefecture-level city](#) of Guiyang, in Guizhou [province](#). When the church's elder, Zhang Chunlei, went to the police station to negotiate the release of the devotees arrested during a police raid in a hotel where they had gathered for praying, he was arrested himself.



*Elder Zhang with family, from [Twitter](#).*

Elder Zhang should have been released after 11 days of administrative detention, but this did not happen. When his wife and the Christians of the Renai Reformed Church protested, they were told that Zhang's case was being investigated. On May 1, he was formally indicted for "religious fraud" and placed under criminal detention at Yunyan

Branch [Detention Center](#). Houses of Renai Church members were also searched by the police, and religious items were confiscated.

On May 7 in Chengdu, Sichuan [province](#), yet another pastor of Early Rain Covenant Church, Wu Wuqing, was arrested for "disturbing the public order" after officiating the funeral of a church member. Wu had already been arrested in April, and Early Rain's leader, pastor Wang Yi, is currently serving a nine year sentence in [jail](#).

These are significant messages sent to all [house churches](#) throughout China. Unless they submit to the government, their days are numbered.

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## **Beijing's foreign 'useful idiots' support China's propaganda about Uyghur Muslims : Who are they?**

By Willy Fautré, Human Rights Without Frontiers

HRWF (05.05.2021) - They tell stories confirming that Uyghur culture is flourishing in Xingjiang, that Uyghurs are sent to vocational training centers and not to internment camps. They justify the necessity to fight against Islamic terrorism in Xinjiang by all means and any means. They denounce American imperialism and a huge disinformation operation carried out by the CIA and NGOs financed by the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED). They criticize the vested interests of their own country with regard to China and the Uyghur issue.

Those foreign propagandists of the People's Republic of China (PRC) are both lauded by Beijing and disparaged in their countries of origin where they are presented as useful idiots, negationists and sometimes superspreaders of conspirationist theories. Who are they?

### ***AFP blacklisting some foreign CCP's policy propagandists***

On 4 May, AFP published an article titled "Sino-béats? Des Occidentaux stars des médias chinois, décriés à domicile" (China-blissful? Western stars in Chinese media disparaged at home", in which it listed a number of propagandists supporting China's policy concerning the Uyghur Muslims:

**Maxime Vivas (French):** He is a French retired ergonomist. He is the author of a recent book titled "Ouïghours, pour en finir avec les fake news" (Uighurs, to put an end to the fake news) and published on Amazon. On two occasions, he was invited by the Chinese authorities to have "a guided tour" of Xinjiang. He was highly commended by China's Minister of Foreign Affairs for his book which describes "a prosperous and stable Xinjiang" and criticizes "those who fabricate fake news and spread rumors about the alleged repression in Xinjiang without ever visiting the region."

Vivas claims to have 2500 followers on Twitter. He also published on Amazon "Behind the Smile, the Hidden Side of the Dalai Lama" (2013) and "The Hidden Face of Reporters Without Borders" (2007).

**Max Blumenthal (American):** He is a journalist, author, blogger and filmmaker. He claims to have 225,000 Twitter followers on his Grayzone website. In a recent [tweet](#), he depicts the World Uighur Congress (WUC) as "a network of right-wing US govt-funded

exiles which provides every testimony that US media relies on for its information war on Xinjiang.”

Blumenthal has broadcast on [RT](#) (formerly known as Russia Today) on many occasions. In December 2015, during a trip to Moscow presumed by multiple sources to have been paid for by the Kremlin. He has also contributed on multiple occasions to [Sputnik radio](#), as well as to Iran's [Press TV](#) and China's [CGTN](#).

**Daniel Dumbrill (Canadian):** He promotes China’s policies with videos on YouTube, such as [Hongkong is far freer since its return to Chine](#) or [Debunking anti-China allegations](#). He claims to have 110,000 subscribers. He has been living in China for almost 12 years. He was first in business in Shenzhen before moving to Hong Kong. After staying there for a couple of years, he came back to Shenzhen where he opened a brew pub, several thousand kilometers away from Xinjiang...

**Raz Gal-Or (Israeli):** This young blogger claims to have 1,7 million followers on the Chinese network Weibo. He makes videos promoting China. In an article titled [“Pékin cherche idiots utiles désespérément”](#) (Beijing is desperately looking for useful idiots) and published in Le Monde, Frédéric Lemaître said he met him at the Economic Forum of Boao, the “Chinese Davos”. He admitted that he had met Uyghur farmers chosen by the government.

### ***Bitter Winter blacklisting some foreign CCP’s policy propagandists***

Bitter Winter also recently revealed the names some other pro-China and pro-CCP propagandists such as:

**Laurène Beaumont (pseudonym):** According to her, “the [Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region](#) is the perfect habitat for Muslims and everybody else, and all you heard about the Uyghur genocide perpetrated by the [CCP](#) is a gross lie.” The ‘truth’ – ‘her truth’ - was published in an article entitled [“Mon” Xinjiang: halte à la tyrannie des fake news](#) (“My’ [Xinjiang](#): Stop the Fake News Tyranny”), published on March 28 on the French web site of China Global Television Network (CGTN).

CGTN is a 24/24 all-news tv channel in six languages, registered under the State Council of the People’s Republic of China and controlled by [CCP](#)’s Central Committee Publicity Department. The author of the article is introduced as “Ms. *Laurène Beaumont*,” “an independent journalist based in France, holding a degree in art history and another in archeology from *la Sorbonne-IV*, as well as an MA in journalism,”

Marco Respinti writes in [Bitter Winter](#) that “her article of March 28 of course mentions, in passing, “terrorism,” but basically hers is a fairy-tale [Xinjiang](#) where everybody is happy and loves the Chinese Communist Party. ‘Laurène Beaumont’ plays the smiling, good cop. The bad cop is played by a four-parts propaganda “documentary” by a “state broadcaster” that “blames ‘terrorist threats’ to justify the clampdown on [Uyghurs](#) in region”, as the [Financial Times](#) clearly put it.”

Laurène Beaumont goes on hiding her real identity, claiming that she does not want to be harassed “by the media sphere” critical of China’s Xinjiang policy.

Noteworthy is that her Twitter account was suspended for violating Twitter rules.

**Prof. Golley**, an Oxonian Dphil (i.e., Ph.D.) in Economics, directs the Australian Centre on China in the World at the Australian National University in Canberra. [On April 21 she led the panel for a symposium, The China Crisis](#), hosted at the National Press Club of Australia in Canberra and designed to launch the [China Story Yearbook 2020](#), precisely

entitled *Crisis. The China Story Yearbook* is both a blog and a series of annual themed overviews of Chinese current affairs. Prof. Golley is one of its co-editors. In an article published by Bitter Winter titled "[Xinjiang Genocide: An Anonymous 'Scholarly Article' Echoes CCP's Lies](#)", Marco Respinti stresses "Prof. Golley said that the figure of 1 million people detained in the [Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region](#) (XUAR)'s dreadful [transformation through education camps is exaggerated.](#)"

As proof of this exaggeration, Prof. Golley referred to a "scholarly article" the authors of which sent her anonymously. On the basis of this anonymous "scholarly article", she [told](#) the world that dozens of signed and independent pieces of research, supported by respected international organizations, parliaments, and governments, rely on false information. In an interview after the symposium, she admitted that she had received the article "via a former Australian ambassador to China, whom she declined to name, and said she had consulted two other colleagues before going public."

### **Palestine Solidarité, Le Grand Soir and others**

Marco Respinti also identified two other propagandists: the [news web portal, in French, Palestine Solidarité](#) ("Solidarity with Palestine"), which reprinted the article by Laurene Beaumont as well as the CGTN's self-defense of April 1 from a [French leftist web site, Le Grand Soir](#). In spite of an [entire section dedicated to religion, mainly featuring Islam, Palestine Solidarité](#) shows no solidarity for the Muslims ([Uyghurs](#) and other Turkic people) persecuted by the [CCP](#) (held dear by *Le Grand Soir*) in [Xinjiang](#), Respinti commented.

Last but not least, Respinti also pointed at Italy's best-selling conservative newspaper *il Giornale* which published a propaganda article *Così la Cina combatte il terrorismo nello Xinjiang* (How China fights against terrorism in Xinjiang), probably not for free, by *Cinitalia*, the official bilingual media outlet owned by state China Media Group, of which [CCP's](#) CGTN is a division.

### **HRWF identified a CCP's policy propagandist in Brussels**

*Human Rights Without Frontiers* also identified a CCP's policy propagandist who tried to instrumentalize a well-known media outlet in Brussels and the *Center for Information and Advice on Harmful Sectarian Organizations* (CIAOSN) under the Ministry of Justice of the Belgian Federal Government.

**Roland Delcourt** recently said he interviewed a spokesperson of the Center and published an article on 1 May about this meeting in an online media outlet covering EU issues in Brussels which was quickly removed from its website for failing to meet journalistic ethics and the General Data Protection Regulation. This article was titled "Beware of false refugees, the cult nature of the Eastern Lightning (The Church of Almighty God)."

Delcourt provided the CIAOSN with an 18-page report denouncing allegedly false refugees from China who belong to The Church of Almighty God. In his article, he wrote:

"According to the information from the report, the worship of the Eastern Lightning (The Church of Almighty God) corresponds to the very definition of a harmful sect. The Center would therefore give an unfavourable opinion to the Immigration Office in the event that individuals presenting themselves as a member of the sect would request political or other asylum."

The manipulation strategy was obvious. The interview about the activities of the CIAOSN was just a vicious pretext to manipulate the Belgian state institution and convince it that the CAG was a harmful cult whose members should be denied asylum and sent back to China, where they would of course be arrested and imprisoned. I assume that the CIAOSN will not be deceived by this gross attempt of manipulation and will refrain from playing in the hands of China's propagandists.

HRWF personally knows those refugees in Belgium and has interviewed them. There are only 11 of them. They are all young people in their 20s, mainly girls. They are neither dangerous nor harmful.

This is not the first time that China tries to use anti-cult organizations to campaign against the CAG. The best-known example is the organization of Ms Oh in South Korea where over 1000 CAG applications for asylum have been rejected.

In early May, [CESNUR](#) (Center for Studies on New Religions founded in 1988) published a 135-page issue of its scholarly magazine about the administrative and legal management of [The Church of Almighty God Asylum Cases from 2015 to 2021](#) in Europe and other continents. This extremely well documented report was written by Massimo Introvigne (CESNUR), James Richardson (University of Nevada, Reno, USA) and Rosita Šoryte (International Observatory of Religious Liberty of Refugees). Thousands of members of the CAG have escaped China, where they are heavily persecuted, to seek asylum abroad. Their asylum cases offer a unique opportunity for a comparative study of how religion-based refugee claims are dealt with by administrative authorities and courts of law in several different countries. The article examines and summarizes 271 decisions rendered in CAG asylum cases throughout the world, and analyzes the main issues that led to grant or deny asylum.

Roland Delcourt, a 76-year-old Belgian citizen, presents himself as follows on the website of [The Brussels Times](#): "I am a former student of UCL and the School of Journalism. I got my start in the daily newspaper La Cité. I worked with the Iranian press before the revolution and then in Belgium for various women's magazines. I have been travelling in China since 1999. In 2005, I met my wife, Wang Xu, in Beijing."

He mainly writes on social media and blogs. When Laurène Beaumond was hunted by prominent media all over Europe he immediately flew to her rescue.

All his recent articles accessible from open sources reveal his full support for China's policies, in particular concerning the COVID-19, and whip those who criticize China's responsibility in the pandemic.

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## **Church of Almighty God refugees: why they should be granted asylum**

***A monumental study of 271 decisions rendered in administrative and court cases show that more applications are being accepted—but not everywhere.***

By Alessandro Amicarelli

Bitter Winter (05.05.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3xKgQbn> - [The Church of Almighty God](#) (CAG) is [the most persecuted religious movement](#) in China. Persecution generates refugees, and more than 5,000 CAG members have sought asylum in democratic countries. Not all their cases have been already examined by the authorities, but there are hundreds of available

decisions making the CAG a unique case for studying the response to religion-based refugee claims filed by members of a single movement in several different countries.

Massimo Introvigne, an Italian sociologist and the author of the [most complete scholarly study of the CAG](#), James T. Richardson, professor emeritus of sociology and judicial studies at University of Nevada, Reno and one of the most well-known scholars of religion in the United States, and Rosita Šorytė, a former diplomat and the president of [ORLIR](#), the International Observatory of [Religious Liberty](#) of Refugees, have now published [a 132-page study](#) of 271 decisions rendered by administrative authorities and courts of law in CAG refugee cases all over the world. Simply put, it is the largest case law study of religion-based refugee claims ever published.

The study consists of two parts. In the second, the authors offer a summary of each of the 271 decisions. In the first, they discuss the main issues the administrative authorities and courts have based their decisions on. They also argue that most negative decisions are based on misunderstandings or erroneous information about the situation in China or the CAG.

The authors note that one crucial issue concerns the COI, "Country of Origin Information," i.e., the documents the authorities regard as authoritative and base their decisions on. The notion of COI is somewhat ambiguous. Some courts regard as COI only those published on the United-Nations-affiliated data base Refworld or the European-Union-affiliated data base EASO. Others regard as COI documents produced by a variety of sources, including international media. Some years ago, the authors note, the CAG was virtually unknown. The oldest COI were heavily influenced by Chinese propaganda, produced to support the persecution. Today, the situation has changed. There are several reliable scholarly studies of the CAG, which are quoted in more recent and improved COI produced, inter alia, by governmental authorities in [Canada](#), [The Netherlands](#), and [Italy](#). However, some decisions continue to quote old and outdated COI, and documents labeled "COI" but of dubious value (such as one produced by law students in an Italian university). The effort by Chinese embassies and consulates to spread false information about both the situation of [religious liberty](#) in China and the CAG should also be considered.

The authors mention ten points the courts and administrative officers normally consider when deciding whether asylum should be granted to CAG applicants. The two first, that there is no [religious liberty](#) in China and CAG is heavily persecuted, should be somewhat obvious. Only a handful of decisions, influenced by "information packages" distributed by the Chinese embassies, dare to deny the persecution. Chinese propaganda depicts CAG as guilty of various crimes, but most decisions now recognize that these are [fake news](#) fabricated by the [CCP](#) regime.

More complicated is the interpretation of [Article 300](#), the provision of the Chinese Criminal Code making "using a [xie jiao](#)," i.e., a banned religious movement such as the CAG, a crime punished with heavy prison terms. Some older decisions argued that only "leaders," not all members of the CAG, are sentenced under [Article 300](#), and only those who "commit crimes." The three authors had published a [previous monumental study](#) of decisions rendered in China against CAG members under [Article 300](#), using only decisions published by the Chinese government in its official legal data base. That study proves beyond any possible doubt that being a member of the CAG and having committed "crimes" such as attending a prayer meeting, trying to convert a relative or co-worker, or even keeping religious literature at home, is enough in China to be sentenced under [Article 300](#) and go to [jail](#).

This should be sufficient under the international conventions and national laws to grant asylum to CAG refugees. Yet, even if the authorities agree that being a CAG member is enough for having a “credible fear of persecution” in China, which entitles to asylum, the refugees’ journey has not ended. They should prove that they are genuine CAG members, and tell a story the authorities may evaluate as credible.

In some old cases, the authorities asked questions about the CAG based on COI that were full of mistakes, then concluded that the refugees were not “genuine” CAG members when their answers did not conform to the COI. In fact, the answers were right, and the COI were wrong. As new and better COI are now available, these objections become rarer. However, it may still happen that individual stories are found as not believable. There may be problems in translating from Chinese, and in understanding stories coming from a very different culture.

The authors quote a decision rendered in 2019 by the Italian Supreme Court of Cassation, overturning a decision from the Justice Court of Milan that had denied asylum to CAG refugees, and establishing three principles. “First, that courts of law cannot rely on interviews before immigration officers and administrative commissions, where the applicant is not assisted by a lawyer and may be the victim of substandard translations. Courts should interview the applicant again. Second, the interview is not a match or a competition where the authorities should shop for contradictions to find reasons to deny the asylum. If they find contradictions, the courts should point them out to the applicant, make sure he or she understands the problem, and allow for an explanation. Third, an interview should not be divided in segments and, if one of it appears as not persuasive, lead to the conclusion that the applicant lacks credibility. Rather, the courts should assess the applicant’s narrative as a whole, considering that contradictions in matters of detail are frequent but do not mean that the basic story is false.” These are common sense principles, and should be applied everywhere.

In a majority of cases where asylum was denied, the key argument used against the refugees is that, if they were really persecuted in China, they should not have been able to obtain a passport and pass the controls at the airport, because the Chinese authorities record the names and biometrical data of those suspected of crimes, including of being members of a [xie jiao](#), in a very effective national data base, making getting a passport and overcoming the advanced facial control technologies virtually impossible.

This objection is discussed at length in the study, quoting from specialized literature on police and corruption in China, stories by refugees, and court decisions. The authors quote in particular a string of decisions by German courts, who examined the passport question in detail, and concluded that CAG members identified as such may still be able to obtain a passport, for three main reasons. First, there are different levels of registration in the police data bases, from local to national, not all those in local data bases are immediately registered in the national one, and sometimes they are not registered at all, particularly when they have been arrested and then released after paying an amend. In this case, the police may not register their names in the data base and pocket the amend. Second, border controls using new technologies only became effective in a couple of airports in 2015 and in more airports in 2018, making objections based on the high-tech border control systems not applicable to those CAG members who had left China before 2018. Third, and most important, technology is always operated by humans. China has an enormous level of corruption, and it is always possible to “persuade” the officers to alter or cancel data from the data bases and to give a passport to persons who would not be legally entitled to it. As the Administrative Court of Freiburg, Germany, concluded in a decision dated September 12, 2019, “It has been possible for followers of [The Church of Almighty God](#) who are already persecuted or threatened with persecution to leave legally with their

own documents, not only because there is corruption in China, but also because the wanted persons register and also the exit controls are not always complete.”

Finally, the authors mention that even in the case of members of other religions who converted to the CAG abroad rather than in China (so-called conversions *sur place*), asylum can be granted when they made themselves visible by participating in CAG activities or being featured in CAG videos. Several recent decisions recognize as a proved fact that Chinese authorities keep a watch on dissidents abroad, and if they return to China, they are immediately arrested.

The article (virtually, a book) by Introvigne, Richardson, and Šorytė is a milestone in the study of religion-based refugee claims and mandatory reading for lawyers and judges handling CAG cases. On a personal note, as I have been involved in CAG cases both as a lawyer and as a [human rights](#) activist, it gives great encouragement to read that our efforts have not been in vain, better COI have been produced, and in some countries more favorable decisions have been obtained. As we read the text, we understand that sometimes our work may really save human lives. At the same time, it is sad to read that some authorities still choose to believe the Chinese propaganda, or reject obviously valid asylum claims for political reasons or because they rely on outdated and faulty information. The battle is far from being over.

Read the full study in "[The Journal of CESNUR](#)".

Alessandro AMICARELLI

*Alessandro Amicarelli is a member and director of [Obaseki Solicitors Law Firm](#) in London. He is a solicitor of the Senior Courts of England and Wales, and a barrister of Italy, specializing in International and Human Rights Law and Immigration and Refugee Law. He has lectured extensively on human rights, and taught courses inter alia at Carlo Bo University in Urbino, Italy, and Soochow University in Taipei, Taiwan (ROC). He is the current chairman and spokesperson of the [European Federation for Freedom of Belief](#) (FOB).*

## **HRWF additional info**

### **Over 80% of CAG prisoners are women, a gender issue**

According to HRWF Database of FORB prisoners, which comprises 4704 documented cases of CAG prisoners, most of them are peaceful women who do not represent any threat to the Communist regime. Many more devotees of The Church Almighty God are undoubtedly behind bars but access from abroad to such information is almost impossible.

NGOs concerned about women's rights in the world should put this issue on their agenda. Female CAG prisoners cannot be accused of terrorism or separatism as it is not an ethnic group.

The more the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) represses CAG devotees the more it alienates them and gives them reasons to complain about the lack of religious freedom in China on the international scene. Additionally, the CCP's policy also reinforces their apocalyptic view which equates the Chinese Communist Party or Communism in general with the Red Dragon of the Book of Revelation.

See some of our reports hereafter:

[Tortured to death: The Persecution of the Church of Almighty God in China](#)

[NGOs unite against religious freedom oppression in China](#)

[The Church of Almighty God: Persecution in China - Refugee problems abroad](#)

Photo : CAG refugees in Italy - Bitter Winter

## Xinjiang Genocide deniers: Hyper-cautious scholars or useful idiots?

***Those who argue that the G-word is not appropriate and the hired guns for Beijing play different games. But in both cases, the CCP wins.***

by Marco Respinti

**UYGHUR DETAINEES/PRISONERS AS ORGAN SOURCES**

- All Uyghurs are forced to undergo mandatory DNA collection to prepare them for forced organ harvesting
- A scene in Kashgar, recently broadcasted by Japanese TV says, "Special passengers, human organ transportation route."
- "Halal organs" being advertised as available in one Chinese hospital to Arabic-speaking countries

Rushan Abbas

Rushan Abbas speaking at the Webinar

On April 29, 2021, the US Embassy to Italy in Rome hosted a webinar of its "Transatlantic Thursdays" series, entitled [Human Rights in China: the Uyghur Community](#). Introduced by Kimberly Krhounek, Minister Counselor for Political Affairs at the US Embassy in Rome, and moderated by Giulia Pompili, Asia-Pacific desk journalist at *Il Foglio*, two Uyghur panelists took the floor: **Rushan Abbas**, founder of the Washington-based "**Campaign for Uyghurs**", and singer Rahima Mahmut, director of the London, UK, branch of the **World Uyghur Congress**.

*The video of the webinar.*

The two keynote speakers effectively illustrated the situation in the [Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region](#) (XUAR), that its non-Han inhabitants call East Turkistan, where, out of its hatred of religion, the [CCP](#) harshly persecutes [Uyghurs](#) and other Turkic people of Muslim faith, along with other religious groups. They told personal

stories and important anecdotes, adding details and substantiating their charges against the Chinese regime with strong evidence.

Rushan Abbas (who quoted *Bitter Winter*) displayed revealing pictures of the sufferings of the [Uyghurs](#), who are subject to all kinds of cruelty, from kidnapping to unlawful incarceration, from forced weddings to forced sterilization of women, from organ harvesting to compulsory abortions. Rahima Mahmut focused on culture, highlighting the war waged by the [CCP](#) against the Uyghur language and traditions, in a general attempt to wipe out her people's identity. She also read some beautiful Uyghur poems in her English translations, and recited verses in the Uyghur language that resonated as the voice of the voiceless.

### ***It's genocide, of course***

A question posed by the undersigned, during the Q&A session, drew much of the **focus on the label "genocide,"** still a controversial **G-word**. I in fact asked whether the panelists have an idea why, not only [CCP](#) officials or hired guns on the Party's payroll, but also respected independent commentators still hesitate to define genocide the [Xinjiang](#)/East Turkistan crisis. They stop short of reaching the obvious conclusion. They are aware of all the evidence of the genocide, but they refrain to call it a genocide. They denounce it *as if it were* a genocide, but they do not dare to call it genocide.

A brief but clear statement from the audience by Italian MP Paolo Formentini, who recently introduced a resolution on genocide to indict China in the Italian Parliament, strengthened the case. Formentini commented that, no matter how hard it will be to pass his resolution in the Italian parliament, nonetheless what the [CCP](#) does in XUAR "is *of course* genocide."

Generally, the hesitant "good guys" affirm that the Uyghur crisis is not a genocide because there is no attempt at the physical elimination of all members of a persecuted minority. But the two Uyghur speakers showed that the opposite is true, underlying that the crimes committed by the [CCP](#) in [Xinjiang](#)/East Turkistan qualify for genocide under the UN Genocide Convention since they meet its five requirements. Rahima Mahmut pointed specifically at two very recent documents: the report *The Uyghur Genocide: An Examination of China's Breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention*, published by the Washington-based [Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy](#) in collaboration with the [Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights](#) in Montreal, Canada, and the opinion of leading lawyers at [Essex Court Chambers](#) in London, led by [Alison McDonald QC](#).

### ***Meeting the five UN requirements***

The first document—that *Bitter Winter* reviewed and that, by the way, *the Jewish News* also promoted—clearly states: "While commission of any one of the Genocide Convention's enumerated acts with the requisite intent can sustain a finding of genocide, the evidence presented in this report supports a finding of genocide against the [Uyghurs](#) in breach of each and every act prohibited in Article II" of the UN **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide**, commonly called "Genocide Convention," "(a) through (e)." Namely, "(a) Killing members of the group. [...] (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group. [...] (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part. [...] (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group. [...] (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." And it concludes that "China bears State responsibility for an ongoing genocide against the [Uyghurs](#), in breach of the Genocide Convention."

### ***The first legal opinion***

The second document is extremely important, being a **100-pages legal opinion—the first legal opinion on this matter**. After considering principles and facts in a very detailed way, this legal statement concludes **“that the available evidence credibly establishes** that crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide” (two different crimes, legally speaking) “have been committed” by the Chinese regime in XUAR.

Its last paragraph underlines: “Serious international crimes are of concern to all States, and, in line with the authors of other reports, we consider there to be a strong imperative for national governments to take urgent action to prevent the ongoing atrocities committed against the Uyghur population of XUAR. At the very least, national governments should render official statements recognising the atrocities being committed and stating their view that there is evidence of the commission of crimes against humanity and/or genocide. They may also consider whether it is possible for them to exercise criminal jurisdiction over any individuals suspected of the crime and/or to impose Magnitsky sanctions in line with their domestic legislation. They should also initiate and engage in diplomatic efforts to demand a full and transparent investigation into the facts on the ground, the trial and punishment of those found to be responsible for any international crimes, and the cessation of further atrocities against the Uyghur population.”

Commentators and possibly even scholars who don’t dare to pronounce the G-word should be always carefully distinguished from [CCP](#) propagandists and hired guns. The former may have intellectually honest reasons for their shyness, the only ignoble ones being longing for social acceptance or supporting governments and businesses that want to protect their trade with China. Readers at large can still benefit from their research and utterances. But inevitably their refusal to qualify what is happening in XUAR as “genocide” is an undeserved gift to genocidal Communist China. This is the substance of the answer that the two Uyghur panelists gave to my question.

- Y** YUQING HUANG Liars!!!!!!
- r** rushan bugie STUPID GIULIA!
- r** rushan bugie LIAR!!!
- Y** YUQING HUANG Liars!!!!!!
- r** rushan bugie NOW WE HAVE ANOTHER GREAT ACTRESS!!!
- E** Emma Loren U know nothing about real XinJiang
- S** Simon Brown World Uyghur Congress is a US-backed right-wing regime-change network seeking the "fall of China"
-  Mihnea molto bello 😊
- S** Simon Brown The Indians want their land back!Are there any Indians?Oh, No
- F** Floyd Giorge STOP TELLING LIES!!!!
- H** Haoyu Wang An American smear campaign again!
- F** Floyd Giorge STOP CHEATING THE WORLD!!!
-  Ellen Iur Some American politicians show extraordinary care to the minorities in Xinjiang, but turn a deaf ear to their own racial hatred and discrimination. Well done!! Way to spend your taxpayers' money.

*Chinese trolls in action on YouTube.*

The army of haters and trolls that unleashed their bile against the US (for hosting the webinar), the two speakers, and the moderator (with personal offences) on YouTube demonstrates that the [CCP](#) doesn't need any help to spread lies. It has its own legions of trolls.

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## **ChinaAid releases 2020 Annual Persecution Report**

ChinaAid (22.04.2021) – <https://bit.ly/3taprk5> - Today, China Aid Association released its [2020 Annual Persecution Report](#) documenting the last year in state-mandated religious persecution of Chinese Christians.

The report covering January-December 2020 points to an ongoing escalation of harassment of Christians by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Under the direction of President Xi Jinping, Chinese officials carried out the third year of its "Five-Year Plan for the Sinicization of Christianity." The Sinicization campaign had a sustained emphasis on upholding Chinese traditions through faith groups such as ordering churches to fly the Chinese flag and sing patriotic songs in services.

In the context of COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control, the CCP shut down churches and banned religious activities throughout mainland China. The destruction and dismantling of crosses, prevalent in both state-run and house churches, continued during the pandemic.

Overall, ChinaAid found that 100% of house churches experienced some level of harassment in 2020. Police formally, as well as informally, summoned and questioned every house church's main leader. Dr. Bob Fu, Founder and President of ChinaAid, said, "We are excited to release this report documenting the stories of Christians the Chinese Communist Party targeted for living out their faith. We are dismayed, however, at the increasing number of persecution cases year after year. ChinaAid will continue to advocate for our brothers and sisters in China by sharing their stories of faithfulness and seeking justice against their oppressors."

The complete report may be read [here](#) with the summary of the key findings [here](#).

Photo : ChinaAid

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## **Special weekly FoRB newsletter (16-30.04.2021)**

### **General**

#### **26.04.21 - USCIRF, China aid release yearly reports on religious liberty**

China Aid focused on house church Christians persecuted in China, USCIRF singled out 14 countries, insisting for a tougher stand on Russia.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **21.04.21 - China: national security education day focused on fighting illegal religion**

On April 15, Chinese were called to support repression of banned religions, including Falun Gong, The Church of Almighty God, and the Association of Disciples

[Continue reading...](#)

### **20.04.21 - Rural settlements ordered to intensify crackdown on religion**

In order to qualify as "Beautiful Villages," they should report that illegal (and preferably also legal) religious activity has been eradicated.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **19.04.21 - Grid system used to target "illegal" religion**

The Orwellian system of dividing China into 100×100 meter grids for surveillance now includes grid officers in charge of hunting members of banned religious groups.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **16.04.21 Association of disciples: Two making Red Cross flags arrested in Hunan**

Sewing the wrong flag will land you in jail for several years in China.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Uyghur Muslims**

### **27.04.21 - China's attempt to spy on Uyghurs at home and abroad**

China today hosts a complex web of surveillance systems to keep track of its citizens and critics, both at home and abroad. Not only does the Chinese state operate multiple systems to maintain surveillance on its citizens, but it also tasks private companies working in China to further enhance its network of human and technical spies

[Continue reading...](#)

## **The Church of Almighty God**

### **27.04.21 - Church of Almighty God: 750 arrested in three months**

Between January and March 2021, in Jiangsu, Henan, Sichuan, and other provinces, devotees were arrested. Many were tortured.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Falun Gong

### **29.04.21 - Falun Gong: Share an App with friends, go to jail for 3 and a half years**

In Guizhou, one Peng Biao went to prison just for sending to friends a QR code allowing to download the "Shenzhou Mingmei" application.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **29.04.21 - 69-year-old man suddenly dies in prison while serving time for his faith**

A Daqing City, Heilongjiang Province resident passed away on April 4, 2021 while serving a seven-year term for his faith in Falun Gong, a spiritual discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **29.04.21 - Jilin woman arrested in a police sweep secretly sentenced to prison**

Ms. Zhou Yongjie's family had been kept in the dark of her situation after she was arrested in a police sweep about two and a half years ago. It wasn't until the end of 2020 that the authorities informed her family that she had been sentenced to four years for practicing Falun Gong, a spiritual discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Catholics

### **27.04.21 - Fined for hosting underground bishop's mass. The Sino-Vatican Agreement betrayed**

A Catholic from Zhejiang is fined for hosting Msgr. Shao Zhumin in his private chapel. The prelate, recognized by the Holy See, but not by the Party, is branded as an emissary of a "foreign institution". All attempts by the Party to eliminate pastors and unofficial communities, tearing up the premises of the Agreement between China and the Holy See.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **19.04.21 - Chinese Church: 'knowing, thanking, listening, following the Party'**

Across China, multiple celebrations mark the anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. Catholics and other believers can choose among a panoply of seminars, conferences, trips, visits, and exhibits. For Mgr Ma Yinglin, without the Communist Party there would be no New China, no socialism with Chinese characteristics, and no happy life for people today.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Shenzhen, two Protestant pastors and 8 faithful arrested during a liturgical service**

***Human rights activists Cheng Yuan and his wife Shi Minglei were members of the Trinity Gospel Harvest Church. Cheng is in prison, accused of subversion against the state; Shi is in voluntary exile in the US, where she met with members of the US State Department. Cheng campaigned for an end to the one-child law, for the rights of the sick and disabled.***

AsiaNews (26.04.2021) - <https://bit.ly/2QwH8wU> - Two Protestant pastors and 8 members of the community were arrested yesterday during a liturgical service. Security forces entered Trinity Gospel Harvest church where about 20 people were gathered and after interrupting the prayer service, they took the arrested away.

A video taken during the raid identify the two pastors as Cao Yuan and Mao Zhibin and shows them arguing with the security forces before being taken away.

According to *Apple Daily*, the reason for the arrests could be retaliation. The church community counts among its faithful Cheng Yuan, head of Changsha Funeng, an NGO of human rights lawyers, and his wife Shi Minglei.

Cheng was arrested last July; Shi, who is in voluntary exile in the United States, met with members of the US State Department on April 20. Shi voiced her suspicions pointing to the unprecedented nature of a similar raid and arrest and adding that her relatives had phoned her in the US to ask about her health and warn her against meeting with US government figures.

Changsha Funeng has been working for more than 10 years for health rights, non-discrimination, aid to vulnerable groups, including those with HIV, hepatitis, and the disabled. In the past, Cheng has also launched campaigns for the cancellation of the one-child policy and for the reform of the residence certificate system, which would allow migrants in cities to receive medical care and school for their children.

Last July, Cheng and two other members, Wuge Jianxiong and Liu Yongze, were arrested by public security officials and later charged with subversion against state power.

Photo : AsiaNews.it

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**Chinese Church: « knowing, thanking, listening, following the Party »**

***Across China, multiple celebrations mark the anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China. Catholics and other believers can choose among a panoply of seminars, conferences, trips, visits, and exhibits. For Mgr Ma Yinglin, without the Communist Party there would be no New China, no socialism with Chinese characteristics, and no happy life for people today.***

AsiaNews (19.04.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3szQRPV> - The centennial of the founding of the Communist Party of China is being celebrated under the banner of "knowing, thanking, listening, following the Party".

Catholics can choose among a number of seminars, conferences, trips, visits, and exhibits, after the Council of Bishops and the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association (CPCA) decided to decree the centennial as the **most important event** for the Church in China. Indeed, "knowing" means "knowing the history" of the Party, which is why a deep 'communist' education must be assimilated.

In **Fujian**, conferences and visits to sites important in the history of communism were held between 12 and 14 April under the banner "Love the Party, love the homeland, love socialism" with the participation of more than 50 representatives from all official religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism).

The official report of the events stressed the emergence of a "State Church", totally obedient to the emperor with "a solemn flag raising ceremony in a Catholic church in Changting (Fujian) in what was the first event of its kind involving the five main religions in a place of religious activity in the province".

Seminars on "knowing, thanking, listening, following the Party" were also held in **Guangdong**. Last Saturday, the Standing Committee of the Guangdong Church focused on an "Independent, Self-Managed, and Self-Elective Church (in episcopal appointments and ordinations)."

These reflect the long-term goals of the CPCA, and before that, Mao Zedong, i.e. the creation of a Chinese national Catholic Church, subject to the power of the state.

Buddhist communities also held "thanksgiving" events, celebrating the Party.

Last Thursday, Liu Yuanlong, CPCA vice-president and secretary general, chaired a second seminar in **Beijing** on the history of the Party, along with the president of the Council of Bishops, Mgr Ma Yinglin, one of the bishops whose excommunication Pope Francis reversed.

"In his closing speech, Bishop Ma Yinglin pointed out that history has clearly shown that without the Communist Party there would be no New China, no socialism with Chinese characteristics, and no happy life for people today.

"China's Catholic community should actively respond to the initiative to 'love the Party, love the homeland, love socialism', as well as firmly support the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, support the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, firmly follow the path of patriotism and love, and actively adapt to socialist society".

On 11 April, a conference on the history of the Party was also held in **Shifang** (Sichuan), chaired by Fr Liu Conghua, organised by Luo Min, deputy director of the Shifang Municipal Office, centred on "Developing the Study of Party History and Educational Propaganda in Religious Circles".

Tang Jun, a representative of the United Front, urged the Catholic Church to "unite patriotism and love in order to teach the history of the Party."

Last but not least, a real show of "gratitude" towards the Communist Party came on Easter in **Zhengzhou** (Henan) where many churches are closed due to the pandemic, while cinemas, restaurants, factories, and entertainment centres are open.

Here, a priest, Fr Wang Yuesheng, stood in front of a closed church (see *picture*), holding a special exhibit dedicated to the "glorious history of the founding of the Communist Party". This shows how people can be grateful to the Party for the closed doors of the church.

Photo : asianews.it

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## **Special Bimonthly newsletter (01.04 -15.04.2021)**

### **General**

#### **04.04.21 - Bloody Holy Spirit Members Sentenced in Jiangxi**

Devotees from the Ji'an area of the Taiwan-based religious movement received jail terms up to 4 years and six months.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **01.04.21 - 181 association of disciples members arrested in Ningxia**

Local authorities claim this is a fruit of their model policy of offering large rewards to those who denounce devotees of banned religious groups.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Protestants**

#### **13.04.21 - Chengdu early rain covenant church reports recent mysterious return of CCP confiscated items**

Chengdu Early Rain Covenant Church (Sichuan Province) reported that on April 09, unidentified individuals mysteriously returned several Christian items the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had confiscated in the past. That morning as Sister Zhang performed her duty sweeping the road in Pidu District, a yellow car stopped a few yards away from her.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **09.04.21 - Elder Zhang Chunlei meets with lawyer for first time; CCP changes administrative to criminal detention**

On April 6, Elder Zhang Chunlei of Ren'ai Reformed Church, detained since March 16, met with his lawyer for the first time. Initially, as Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities detained Elder Zhang on administrative detention for 11 days since March 17, they should have released him March 28. Now, however, as CCP officials have put him under criminal detention for a "fraud" charge, Elder Zhang's family reported that they do not yet know the length of time he will be imprisoned.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **06.04.21 - China institutes new crackdown on 'illegal social organizations' to go after house churches**

China has launched a campaign to increase restrictions on five types of social organizations that the government has deemed illegal, which includes house churches that aren't members of the Chinese Communist Party-backed Three-Self Patriotic Association.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **03.04.21 - China will stamp out five "illegal social organizations" including house churches**

According to China's Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA), China will launch a campaign to toughen its clampdown on five types of illegal social organizations.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **01.04.21 - Chinese Christians held in secretive brainwashing camps: sources**

Authorities in China are detaining Christians in secretive, mobile "transformation" facilities to make them renounce their faith, RFA has learned.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Uyghur Muslims**

#### **08.04.21 - Pro-Uyghur protests restart in London— and the "Lonely Jew" is there**

As lockdown begins to ease in Britain, demonstrations outside the Chinese Embassy in London started again. Bitter Winter was there, too.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **04.04.21 - A Jewish-Uyghur solidarity passover seder with a difference**

Each of the Four Cups was raised to symbolize Uyghur's captivity and hoped-for deliverance.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **03.04.21 - The sad story of Uyghur soccer proves China unfit to host Olympics**

Uyghurs love soccer, but Chinese authorities do not love Uyghur players and supporters. Their discrimination is another argument for an Olympic boycott.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **The Church of Almighty God**

### **09.04.21 - Slave labor in Chinese jails: CAG women prisoners of conscience speak**

It is not only about Xinjiang camps. Church of Almighty God female members tell how they had to work 13–15 hours per day in “regular” jails.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Falun Gong**

### **14.04.21 - 80-year-old Hubei man arrested for practicing Falun Gong**

An 80-year-old Wuhan City, Hubei Province resident was arrested on the evening of March 28, 2021, for his faith in Falun Gong. Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a spiritual and meditation discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **14.04.21 - Heilongjiang woman sentenced to over six years based on fabricated evidence**

A Hailin City, Heilongjiang Province resident was framed and sentenced to six years and three months for her faith in Falun Gong on March 30, 2021. Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a spiritual and meditation discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **14.04.21 - A nine-year jail penalty for distributing Falun Gong leaflets**

Persecution continues in China—and a serious attack by masked thugs also happened in Hong Kong. Wang Jianmin is a quiet, soft-spoken retired medical doctor from Laiyang, a [county-level city](#) in Shandong [province](#), famous in China for its production of tasty pears. On March 26, 2021, 65-year-old Wang was told by the Intermediate People’s Court of Yantai city, Shandong, that her crimes were so serious that she could not expect any leniency from the judges.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Catholics

### **13.04.21 - Hebei closes orphanage for the disabled run by the Sisters of Zhaoxian**

Sisters and staff will be banned from visiting children and young people under the age of 18. The reasons: The dismantling of the structures of the unofficial Church and the prohibition of evangelization for minors under the age of 18.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Other religious groups

### **05.04.21 – Bloody Holy Spirit members sentenced in Jiangxi**

Devotees from the Ji'an area of the Taiwan-based religious movement received jail terms up to 4 years and six months.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **House Church Under Attack in Guiyang**

***Guiyang Renai Reformed Church organized private meetings in a hotel room. After a police raid, three members and the elder were arrested.***

By Qi Junzao

Bitter Winter (26.03.2021) - <https://bit.ly/2O2Ltqk> - Because of the CCP's increased surveillance and crackdown on house churches, many of them quietly organize their prayer meetings in hotel rooms. However, there is always the risk that the hotel personnel or others attracted by the monetary rewards paid to those who denounce illegal religious activities report them to the police.

This is what happened on March 16 in Guiyang, a prefecture-level city with a population of 4.7 million and the capital of the south-western Guizhou province. The Guiyang Renai Reformed Church organized a prayer meeting in room 1702 of the commercial building part of the Wenzhou Hotel complex, when the police raided the room and arrested several members of the congregation, accusing three local devotees, Chen Jianguo, Li Jinzhi and Li Lin, of having organized the illegal meeting, which was also attended by out-of-town Christians.

They were taken to Yan'an Middle Road Police Station. The church's elder, Zhang Chunlei, decided to go to the station and negotiate the release of the believers with the police. Instead, he was thrown to the ground by the officers and arrested himself.

Elder Zhang should remain in preliminary detention for 15 days, and we learned that the police are investigating who else participated in the “illegal” activities of the Guiyang Renai Reformed Church. Houses of devotees were raided, and computers and religious materials were confiscated.

The incident confirms that even meetings of quiet prayer in weekdays in a closed environment are regarded as crimes by the CCP police.

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## **Special Bimonthly newsletter (16.03 -29.03.2021)**

### **General**

#### **26.03.21 - House Church under attack in Guiyang**

Guiyang Renai Reformed Church organized private meetings in a hotel room. After a police raid, three members and the elder were arrested.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Tibetan buddhists**

#### **25.03.21 - Diluting Tibetan Buddhism to cancel an entire people**

Bitter Winter’s review of the new report by International Campaign for Tibet. Destroying religion is the CCP’s preferred road to destroying Tibet’s culture and soul.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Uyghur Muslims**

#### **27.03.21 - Confirmed: CCP hackers target pro-Uyghur accounts on Facebook**

A secret group known as Earth Empusa or Evil Eye is attacking the accounts of those exposing repression in Xinjiang.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **The Church of Almighty God**

#### **19.03.21 - New tortures target Church of Almighty God members**

Women and men are sentenced merely for being active in the church, and tortured and humiliated during their detention. Some suffer permanent harm.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **15.03.21 - Christian mistreated, tormented for refusing to give up belief**

In July 2020, Li Huizhen (pseudonym), a Christian of The Church of Almighty God (CAG), was finally got out of prison after she completed her 3-year sentence term for her belief due to the CCP cruel persecution.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Falun Gong

### 29.03.21 - 77-year-old Woman Sentenced to Four Years for Her Faith

After one and a half years of detention, Ms. Wang Xuezhen, 77, lost the ability to walk on her own due to the abuses in custody. She is now facing a dire situation after being sentenced to four years in prison on March 17, 2021, for upholding her faith in Falun Gong.

[Continue reading...](#)

### 29.03.21 - Shandong man sentenced to seven years for his faith

A Dongying City, Shandong Province, man secretly sentenced to seven years for practicing Falun Gong was transferred to the Shandong Province Prison on March 9, 2021, without his family's knowledge

[Continue reading...](#)

### 24.03.21 - Falun Gong: Police cracks down on "Nine True Words" meditation

Suggesting meditation to help dealing with COVID-19 is regarded as "use of a xie jiao" and punished with heavy prison terms.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Catholics

### 25.03.21 - Yining (Xinjiang): 'Thanks to you, the church has not been destroyed. But Catholics cannot use it'

Thanks to the pressure exerted by AsiaNews, the church of the Sacred Heart was not demolished. Tensions in the country over the seizure of land. The faithful had already removed the furnishings and decorations. But the building cannot be used because water, electricity and other services have been cut off by the government.

[Continue reading...](#)

### 22.03.21 - Vatican should speak up on China, scholar says

A Swedish scholar who studies China has called for the Vatican to speak up about human rights abuses by the Chinese government, noting that "dialogue on equal terms is not what is happening."

[Continue reading...](#)

### **19.03.21 - Has the Vatican lost its voice in China?**

2020 ended on a sad note for China–Vatican relations. News emerged on 30 December that two nuns from the unofficial Vatican office in Hong Kong were detained for three weeks in Hebei in May 2020. They were not allowed to return to Hong Kong and likely remain under house arrest.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Special Bimonthly newsletter (01.03 -15.03.2021)**

### **General**

#### **05.03.21 - New Report Highlights Severe Lack of Religious Freedom in China**

In its recent Freedom in the World report, Freedom House—a D.C.-based human rights watchdog group—ranked 195 countries and 15 territories on their political rights and civil liberties. The report considered many specific questions within the categories of political and civil freedom, including the extent to which each country allows its citizens to freely practice and express their religion.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **12.03.21 - -U.S. condemns China at UN rights forum for abuse of Uighurs, Tibetans**

The United States on Friday condemned China’s abuse of ethnic and religious minorities, including what it called “crimes against humanity and genocide” in Xinjiang against Muslim Uighurs and severe restrictions in Tibet.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Uyghur Muslims**

#### **05.03.21 - Five Uyghurs from one family imprisoned for Egypt study, another believed to have died in camp**

Five relatives of a Uyghur trader who died after being freed from an internment camp in northwest China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) are in prison, according to officials, while one other is believed to have died in a camp after being ordered home from Egypt.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **09.03.21 - Uyghur Human Rights Project welcomes bill to provide Uyghurs safe haven**

The Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) welcomes the introduction of the Uyghur Human Rights Protection Act ([H.R. 1630](#)) in the U.S. House of Representatives to address the Uyghur refugee crisis.

"This legislation would empower the U.S. government to rescue vulnerable Uyghurs who have escaped China's genocide," said UHRP Executive Director, Omer Kanat.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **13.03.21 - "I was a teacher in a concentration camp": Women and the Uyghur genocide**

The CCP has shamelessly attacked the character of Uyghur women who have courageously testified to the rape and torture they endured or witnessed with their own eyes. Here is one.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **The Church of Almighty God**

### **02.03.21 - Heavier sentences for Church of Almighty God members**

As part of the campaign aimed at eradicating the movement, jail terms have been substantially increased.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **15.03.21 - Christian mistreated, tormented for refusing to give up belief**

In July 2020, Li Huizhen (pseudonym), a Christian of The Church of Almighty God (CAG), finally got out of prison after she completed her three-year sentence term for her belief due to the CCP cruel persecution.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Falun Gong**

### **13.03.21 - 54-year-old man denied medical parole, dies two months after being imprisoned**

A 54-year-old man died two months after he was imprisoned for his faith in Falun Gong. Mr. Yue Caiyun, a native of Yucheng County, Henan Province, was arrested in Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province, where he had been living the past few years, on August 21, 2020. The Hangzhou police accused him of mailing informational materials about Falun Gong and held him at the Red Cross Detention Center in Xiaoshan District.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **15.03.21 - Guangdong women sentenced to two years for reading Falun Gong teachings**

A woman in Jieyang City, Guangdong Province was recently sentenced to two years for her faith in Falun Gong. Ms. Lin Liqing was arrested on June 14, 2020 while reading Falun Gong teachings at Ms. Lin Wanzhen's home. Ms. Lin Wanzhen's two other practitioner-guests, Ms. Wu Rongduan and a female practitioner whose name is unknown, were also arrested.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **15.03.21 - Report: 3,020 Elderly Falun Gong practitioners targeted for their faith in China between 2018 and 2020**

In recent years, the persecution of elderly practitioners has become especially rampant. Even those in their 80s or 90s weren't spared.

This report focuses on the persecution of elderly Falun Gong practitioners and how they have been physically and mentally abused despite their age. Some were even persecuted to death as a result of torture and pressure from the authorities.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Catholics**

### **14.03.21 - Cardinal Bo calls for week of prayer for China Church**

Cardinal Charles Bo, president of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), has called on the faithful to join a week of prayer for the Chinese Church from May 23-30.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Special weekly FoRB newsletter (22-28.02.2021)**

### **Tibetan Buddhists**

#### **25.02.21 - Women routinely raped in Tibetan reeducation camps too**

Just like Muslim women in Xinjiang, lay Buddhist girls and nuns are also submitted to systematic rape in Tibet's transformation through education camps.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Uyghur Muslims**

#### **26.02.21 - UN rights chief says abuses in Xinjiang must be 'independently assessed'**

The United Nations lead official for human rights called on Friday for a full and independent investigation of human rights abuses in northwest China's Xinjiang region, where reports say over a million Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities have been held in a vast network of internment camps since 2017.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **23.02.21 - Canada calls it a genocide**

The vote in Ottawa's House of Commons is a slap in the face of the CCP, and a sign of hope for those persecuted in Xinjiang.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **22.02.21 - Support Hursen Hesen, another persecuted Uyghur intellectual**

A filmmaker and actor from Xinjiang committed two capital sins: he was successful, and maintained his Uyghur identity. He has been sentenced to 15 years in jail.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Falun Gong**

### **28.02.21 - Once imprisoned for five years, a 69-year-old man sentenced again for his faith**

Having served five years in prison, Mr. Duan Yifa, a Jimusi City, Heilongjiang Province resident, was secretly sentenced again for his faith in Falun Gong, a mind-body practice that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **28.02.21 - Married couple in their 70s sentenced to prison for their shared faith**

A married couple in Dongying City, Shandong Province were both sentenced to three years and three months for their faith in Falun Gong, a mind-body practice that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Catholics**

### **22.02.21 - Church in China: 2021 dominated by the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party**

This year's work program for Catholics has been drawn up by bishops and the Patriotic Association. Deepen the history of the Party, the Long March, Socialism, aligning with the leadership of Xi Jinping. A Theological Forum on Sinicization is also planned. More than a

"pastoral" program, it is a political program in which the "independent and autonomous Church" is exalted.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## Special weekly FoRB newsletter (15-21.02.2021)

### Tibetan Buddhists

**16.02.21 - When the Dalai Lama dies, his reincarnation will be a religious crisis. Here's what could happen**

A decade ago, the Dalai Lama set himself a significant deadline. The best-known living Buddhist figure in the world said that when he turned 90 years old, he would decide whether he should be reincarnated -- potentially ending a role that has been key to Tibetan Buddhism for more than 600 years, but in recent decades has become a political lightning rod in China.

[Continue reading...](#)

**16.02.21 - Gatherings banned in Tibetan areas of China during Lunar New Year**

Authorities in Tibetan areas of China are restricting travel and public gatherings during the Lunar New Year period, called Losar in Tibetan, with punishments threatened for those violating the bans, Tibetan sources say.

[Continue reading...](#)

### Uyghur Muslims

**18.02.21 - Faith leaders condemn Uyghur persecution**

Faith leaders across Ireland have condemned the persecution of Uyghurs and other Muslims in China's Xinjiang province in a statement in which they also express solidarity with Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners and Christians in China who, they warn, are facing "the worst crackdown on freedom of religion or belief since the Cultural Revolution".

[Continue reading...](#)

**18.02.21 - Two Uyghur students dead, four injured in fire at forced labor scheme dorm**

Two Uyghur high school students who were sent to pick cotton as part of a forced labor scheme in northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) died last autumn in a dormitory fire, according to official sources in the region, where forced labor practices have sparked an increasing global outcry.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **17.02.21 - US President Biden warns China of 'repercussions' for rights abuses in Xinjiang**

China will face "repercussions" if it continues to perpetrate human rights abuses against its people, U.S. President Joe Biden said Tuesday, including Uyghurs in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), where Washington has said authorities are carrying out genocide and crimes against humanity.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **17.02.21 - Prominent religious leaders persecuted in Xinjiang**

One CCP strategy to destroy Uyghur identity in Xinjiang is to identify and jail prominent figures of the Muslim religion.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Falun Gong**

### **21.02.21 - Having served 9.5 years and losing her son, 80-year-old woman sentenced again in the persecution of her faith**

Having served two prison terms totaling 9.5 years, an 80-year-old woman was sentenced to another 3 years in October 2020 for her faith in Falun Gong. Ms. Zhao Yulan was recently taken to the Liaoning Province Women's Prison to serve time.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **21.02.21 - Widowed 79-year-old woman faces financial devastation after serving time for her faith**

When Ms. Wang Fengying, a 79-year-old resident of Nanchang City, Jiangxi Province, went to withdraw some cash on February 1, 2021, she was surprised to discover 5,000 yuan missing from her account.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **21.02.21 - After a seven-year prison sentence, Guangdong woman's whereabouts still unknown**

After a woman in Foshan City, Guangdong Province, was sentenced to seven years in prison for her faith in Falun Gong, her family is still being kept in the dark regarding her whereabouts.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **19.02.21 - A life in jail: Falun Gong practitioner arrested again, sentenced to 14 years**

Ma Zhiwu, from Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, has been in prison for most of the last twenty years. He will remain there for the next decade and more.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Catholics

### 19.02.21 - China betrays its deal with the Vatican

Beijing has quietly indicated that it will soon abrogate its “breakthrough” 2018 agreement with the Vatican, which was meant to settle a decades-long dispute over the appointment of bishops in China.

[Continue reading...](#)

## The Church of Almighty God

### 16.02.21 - Church of Almighty God refugee cases discussed in new book

Massimo Introvigne and Rosita Šorytė explore while some asylum applications are still rejected, and what can be done about it.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## Enter the “Administrative Measures for Religious Clergy”: Be Afraid, Be Very Afraid

***Bitter Winter* offer the first English translation of a text converting the clergy in apparatchiks under a system of awards and penalties based on their loyalty to the CCP.**

by Massimo Introvigne

Bitter Winter (11.02.2021) - <https://bit.ly/3bj9qkV> - Here we are. Announced in November, and as usually published for collecting “comments” that never change anything substantial, the new “[Administrative Measures for Religious Clergy](#)” will come into force on May 1.

They create an Orwellian system of surveillance, and strengthen the already strict control on all clergy. The tool is a national data base of the authorized clergy, meaning clergy trained and recognized by the [five authorized religions](#). There is a complicated system to enter the data base, but those who are out of it and will claim to be clergy will commit a crime. This includes pastors of the Protestant [house churches](#), [Catholic conscientious objectors](#) who reject the [Vatican-China deal of 2018](#) and refuse to join the [Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association](#), teachers and clergy at independent mosques and Buddhist and Taoist temples, Jewish rabbis (as Judaism is not one of the [five authorized religions](#)), and religious personnel of new religious movements. They will now be immediately identified: they will not have a clergy card, and will not be included in the national data base.

To be registered in the data base, it is not enough to be proficient in one of the authorized religions. The clergy should prove that they “support the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and support the socialist system” (article 3: note that this article is repeatedly mentioned in the Measures as the key to the whole regulation), and cooperate in the fight against the [xie jiao](#) and other illegal or “extremist” religions (article 6E).

Things do not end when a clergy is registered in the data base. It is difficult to be registered, easy to lose the registration. As for being registered, a clergy will have special problems if s/he is part of the “high clergy” (provisions are stricter), particularly Tibetan Buddhist, or Roman Catholic. [Tibetan Buddhists](#) are reminded by article 15 that they should respect the principle that any reincarnation of a lama should be authorized by the [CCP](#) ([we discussed this bizarre system](#) in a previous article in *Bitter Winter*). In a slap of the face of the Vatican, Catholics are told by article 16 that bishops in China should be democratically elected through the [Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association](#), i.e., appointed by the [CCP](#), and consecrated through the Chinese Catholic Bishops Conference. There is no mention of the Vatican or the Pope, which in theory should appoint the bishops under the [Vatican-China deal of 2018](#), renewed in 2020. Also, the socialist principle that those of teach in a religious community should submit to the “religious teaching guidance” of the community rather than the other way round is proclaimed by Article 43.

Once registered, the clergy enters an Orwellian world whether loyalty to the [CCP](#) and love for the Party is assessed periodically, in a system similar to social credit. The clergy receives awards and punishments, and if the latter exceeds the former registration in the data base is lost and worse consequences are threatened.

Compliant clergy is thus transformed into apparatchiks of the [CCP](#), lured by rewards and terrorized by punishments. They will be called to “Sinicize” their religions and preach love for the [CCP](#) to their devotees. Not much will be left of genuine religion—which is precisely the aim of these and other previous measures.

The full translation of the Measures follows.

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### ***Administrative Measures for Religious Clergy***

[State Administration of Religious Affairs](#) Order No. 15

These Measures for the Administration of Religious Clergy have been considered and adopted by the [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#) in accordance with the prescribed procedures on January 8, 2021, and are hereby promulgated and shall come into effect on May 1, 2021.

### ***Chapter I General Provisions***

**Article I** In order to regulate the management of religious clergy, and to protect the legitimate rights and interests of religious clergy, according to the “Regulations on Religious Affairs,” the present measures are formulated.

**Article II** The religious clergy referred to in these measures, identified according to the definition of religious clergy according to law, can engage in religious teaching activities.

**Article III** Religious clergy should love the motherland, support the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, support the socialist system, abide by the Constitution, laws, regulations, and rules, practice the core values of socialism, adhere to the principle of independent and self-administered religion in China, adhere to the direction of the [Sinicization](#) of religion in China, operate to maintain national unity, national unity, religious harmony, and social stability.

**Article IV** Religious affairs departments, in accordance with the administrative management of religious clergy, should protect the legitimate rights and interests of religious clergy, religious groups, religious institutions, and religious activities; train, manage religious clergy, and guide religious clergy to play an active role in promoting economic and social development.

## **Chapter II Rights and Obligations of Religious Clergy**

**Article V** Religious clergy shall enjoy the following rights.

(A) to preside over religious activities, religious ceremonies.

(B) engage in the collation of religious texts, religious doctrine and regulations, and religious culture research.

(C) engage in and receive religious education and training.

(D) participate in the management of their religious groups, religious institutions, and religious activity sites, and hold corresponding positions in accordance with procedures.

(E) carry out public welfare and charitable activities.

(F) participate in social security and enjoy related rights.

(G) other rights provided by laws, regulations, and rules.

**Article VI** Religious clergy shall fulfill the following obligations:

(A) to safeguard the national interest and the public interest, within the scope of the laws, regulations, and rules in carrying out their activities.

(B) follow the instruction of the religious affairs departments and other relevant departments in accordance with the law.

(C) abide by the rules and regulations established for religious groups, and accept the management of the religious groups, religious institutions, and religious activity sites where they are located.

(D) serve the citizens of the faith and guide them to be patriotic and law-abiding.

(E) maintain the normal order of religious activities, resist illegal religious activities and religious extremist ideology, and resist infiltration by foreign forces using religion.

(F) maintain and promote harmony between different religions, within the same religion, and between believing and non-believing citizens.

(G) follow all other obligations under the laws, regulations, and rules.

**Article VII** Religious clergy should focus on improving their own quality, improve cultural and moral literacy, research doctrine and regulations always trying to favor social harmony, progress of the times, and healthy and civilized contents, and also through their sermons, should play a role in promoting the [Sinicization](#) of religion in China.

**Article VIII** Religious clergy, when publishing religious information on the Internet, should comply with the relevant provisions of the national Internet information regulations.

**Article IX** Religious clergy income should be obtained in accordance with the laws, regulations, rules, and policies, as well as the provisions of the rules and regulations of the different religious groups.

Religious clergy shall distinguish between personal property and the property of religious groups, religious institutions, religious activity sites, shall not misappropriate, appropriate, destroy, or unauthorizedly dispose of the legitimate property of religious groups, religious institutions, religious activity sites.

Religious clergy shall pay taxes in accordance with the law, and respect the laws for tax returns.

**Article X** In religious groups, religious institutions, religious activities, the activities of the clergy in charge or engaged in financial-related work should be in accordance with national financial, accounting, asset management regulations, and rules on financial management responsibilities.

**Article XI** When religious clergy from out of the country has religious contacts with Chinese clergy, this should be in accordance with the relevant state regulations and procedures.

**Article XII** Religious clergy shall not perform the following acts:

(A) endanger national security, public safety, promote, support, finance religious extremism, undermine national unity, split the country, support terrorist activities, or participate in related activities.

(B) interfere with the implementation of administrative, judicial, educational. and other state functions.

(C) Being dominated by foreign forces, accepting the appointment of teaching positions by foreign religious groups or institutions without authorization, and other acts that violate the principle of independence and self-administration of religion.

(D) violate relevant state regulations when accepting donations from within and outside the country.

(E) affect the normal productive activities and life of the citizens.

(F) organize, host, or participate in unauthorized religious activities held outside the authorized places of religious activities.

(G) use public charity activities to preach, preach in schools and other educational institutions other than religious institutions, and engage in other violations of state regulations for preaching.

(H) make commercial propaganda in the name of religion.

(I) other violations of laws, regulations, and rules.

### **Chapter III Qualifications of Religious Clergy**

**Article XIII** Whether religious clergy is qualified should be identified by authorized religious groups, and reported to the Religious Affairs Department for recording purposes.

National religious groups shall train the religious clergy of the religion and determine the training method and the title attributed to religious clergy, determine the conditions and procedures, etc. The conditions shall include the content of Article III of these measures. National religious groups should develop religious clergy identification methods and report them to the [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#) for recording purposes.

Religious groups shall identify religious clergy in accordance with the rules of the national religious groups for identifying religious clergy.

**Article XIV** Religious groups shall identify religious clergy within twenty days from the date, fill out the religious clergy filing form, reported to the religious affairs department recording purposes, and submit a copy of the file of the proposed religious clergy for recording purposes with a copy of each clergy's resident ID card.

National religious groups identify religious clergy, and report to the [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#) for recording purposes; religious groups in provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government, identify the local religious clergy, and report to the provincial people's government religious affairs departments for recording purposes; religious groups in municipalities (prefectures, states, leagues) identify the local religious clergy, and report to the municipal people's government religious affairs departments for recording purposes; religious groups in counties (cities, districts, banners) identify the local religious clergy, and report to the [county](#) people's government religious affairs departments for recording purposes.

The forms developed by the [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#) should be used for registering clergy for recording purposes.

**Article XV** Tibetan Buddhism's succession of living Buddhas should be regulated in accordance with the "Regulations on Religious Affairs," the "Tibetan Buddhism Reincarnation Management Measures," and other relevant provisions.

**Article XVI** Catholic bishops are approved and consecrated by the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference. The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference shall, within twenty days after the consecration of the bishop, fill out a Catholic bishop reporting form and report it to the [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#) for the record, and submit the following materials.

- (a) A copy of the bishop's household register and a copy of his resident identity card.
- (b) A statement issued by the Catholic community of the [province](#), [autonomous region](#), or [municipality](#) directly under the Central Government on the democratic election of the bishop.
- (c) a letter of approval from the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference.
- (d) the certificate of consecration of the bishop signed by the consecrating bishop.

The Catholic bishops registration form shall be the one supplied by the [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#).

**Article XVII** Religious affairs departments should, within twenty working days from the date of receipt of the religious groups' recording form submitted for the record, send a written response. Should the departments fail to respond, the form will be deemed to have been registered.

**Article XVIII** In the following circumstances, registration of religious clergy shall be refused:

- (A) when not in accordance with the method of identification developed by the national religious groups to identify clergy.
- (B) when the filing materials submitted are not true.

**Article XIX** The religious affair departments will assign to each registered clergy a record number. Record numbers will use a twelve-digit code, including six administrative codes, a number identifying the religion, and five running numbers.

**Article XX** Religious groups shall issue a religious clergy certificate to the religious clergy to complete the record, and shall not charge a fee.

The religious clergy certificate is applicable nationwide. Religious groups and religious affairs departments shall not duplicate the identification or filing of religious clergy.

For each religious clergy certificate printed by the national religious groups, the certificate shall contain the record number and expiration date and other content. Religious clergy should renew the certificate in a timely manner before the expiration.

**Article XXI** In each of the following circumstance, the certificate of registration will be cancelled, and the cancellation will be officially announced:

(A) by the religious affairs department, in accordance with the law indicating the circumstances in which to cancel the qualification of religious clergy.

(B) by the religious community, in accordance with the relevant provisions of this religion to cancel the qualification of religious clergy

(C) due to voluntary renunciation, death. or other reasons for the loss of religious clergy qualifications.

#### **Chapter IV Religious Activities of the High Clergy**

**Article XXII** The religious activities of the high clergy referred to in these measures, refers to the religious activities of those entrusted with the duty of presiding over religious affairs of religious clergy.

National religious groups shall specify the religious activities of the high clergy, the specific scope of religious activities of the high clergy, the conditions of service and procedures, etc. The conditions of service should include the content of Article 3 of these measures. These conditions of service should be reported to the [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#) for recording purposes.

**Article XXIII** The religious clergy who will be appointed to the main teaching positions and the leadership of religious activities, in accordance with the principles established by the national religious groups about the main teaching positions and the leadership of religious activities, should be appointed within ten days after the creation of a new religious site or to fill out a vacancy in the main teaching positions and the leadership of religious activities, and reported to the religious affairs department for recording purposes, by submitting the following materials:

(A) a CV of the proposed incumbent.

(B) a copy of the proposed incumbent's family register, a copy of his/her resident ID card and a copy of the religious clergy certificate.

When the proposed is expected to leave previous teaching positions or religious activities, s/he should also submit documents proving the cancellation of the previous teaching or religious position.

Religious activities of the high clergy should be recorded through the filing form provided by the [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#).

**Article XXIV** The religious affairs department shall, within twenty working days from the date of receipt of the high clergy application submitted for the record, send a written response. Should it fail to respond, the recording procedure will be deemed to have been completed.

**Article XXV** In the following circumstances, application to register somebody as part of the high clergy will be refused:

(A) the person to be appointed is not acceptable, in accordance with the rules of the national religious groups or the religious site whether the person should serve.

(B) the proposed incumbent leaves his/her previous position and has not completed the corresponding cancellation procedure.

(C) the filing materials submitted are not true.

**Article XXVI** After the completion of the filing procedures for high clergy, those so designated can have an appointment ceremony and be inaugurated in their duties.

**Article XXVII** The high clergy will remain in their position for a term of three to five years. After the expiration of the term, a possible continuation in the office should be in accordance with the provisions of Article 23 of these Measures.

**Article XXVIII** When the high clergy leaves the position, a cancellation procedure should be initiated and follow the prescribed procedures, as follows:

(A) a statement by the organization managing the position confirming that a decision has been taken for the high clergy to leave the position.

(B) indicate the place where the religious community issued a written opinion.

When the high clergy leaves a position as leader of a place of worship or the head of the financial management agency, those in charge of the place of worship should also submit a report including a financial review at the time of the high clergy's departure.

**Article XXIX** In the following circumstances, registration as high clergy will be cancelled:

(A) the management of the relevant organization is not in accordance with the rules and procedures of the national religious groups about organization, worship, education, etc.

(B) there is no, or no longer, consent from the religious community.

(C) the religious clergy who left a position was the clergy in charge of the place of worship, or the head of the financial management agency, and the community did not submit a report on the financial review at the departure.

**Article XXX** High clergy can generally only serve in the main teaching position in one site. If necessary, exceptions can be granted.

Part-time leading religious activities and main teaching positions will be authorized in a [county](#) (city, [district](#), flag) if the local religious groups agree. This situation will be reported to the [county](#) people's government religious affairs department. The [county](#) people's government religious affairs department will report to the provincial people's government religious affairs department for recording purposes. In cross-provincial entities, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government, the religious affairs department of the provincial people's government where the proposed part-time religious activity site will happen should be informed.

**Article XXXI** The religious clergy serving in the main teaching positions in religious activities should be dismissed in the following circumstance, with a public announcement:

(A) the loss of religious clergy qualifications.

(B) violation of laws, regulations, rules, and regulations of religious groups, resulting in the loss of the main teaching position in religious activity sites.

(C) more than one year without performing the duties of the main teaching in the religious activity sites, or loss of the ability to perform the duties of the main teaching.

## **Chapter V Supervision and Management**

**Article XXXII** The religious affairs departments shall supervise the duties of the religious clergy, and the religious activities of the high clergy, and perform in general the guidance and supervision of religious groups, religious institutions, religious activities, to strengthen the management of religious clergy.

**Article XXXIII** The religious affairs departments shall, in accordance with the principle of management of the service, strengthen the information management of religious clergy.

The [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#) shall establish a database of religious clergy, the local people's government departments of religious affairs should provide and update the basic information of religious clergy, including awards and punishments, cancellation of records, and other information.

**Article XXXIV** The religious clergy across provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government who engage in religious teaching activities, should be agreed by the religious groups in the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government when they arrive and depart from there, and reported to the provincial people's government religious affairs departments in both places for recording purposes. Cross-provincial, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government should keep records of those who engage in religious activities for more than one year, and the two provincial people's governments religious affairs departments of the localities from where and to where the clergy moves should update the religious clergy database for the relevant information changes. The management responsibilities of the religious clergy will be transferred to the corresponding religious affairs departments and religious groups in the place of relocation.

Religious clergy across counties, municipal administrative regions can only engage in religious teaching activities under the management of the provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government, in accordance with the actual situation and the relevant provisions.

**Article XXXV** Religious groups should develop religious clergy training program, strengthen the political education of religious clergy, the education on the rule of law, cultural education, religious education, improve the overall quality of religious clergy, and the overall quality of the religious clergy team.

National religious groups and provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government religious groups shall develop rules and regulations for religious clergy who want to study abroad.

**Article XXXVI** Religious groups shall regulate the management of religious clergy certificate, shall not violate the issuance of certificates, shall not profit from the issuance of certificates.

**Article XXXVII** Religious groups shall, in accordance with the Constitution, laws, regulations, rules, and policies and the actual work needs, within the scope of their mandate, establish and improve the management of religious clergy rules and regulations, develop a religious clergy code of conduct, which should include an improved mechanism of rewards and punishments for religious clergy, provisions for being coopted and expelled, and in case of violation of laws, regulations, rules and regulations, provisions for the religious clergy to be punished accordingly.

**Article XXXVIII** Religious groups should develop a religious clergy assessment system, as an important basis for appointment, rewards, and punishments.

**Article XXXIX** Religious groups shall establish religious personnel files, and improve the information sharing mechanism concerning religious groups, religious institutions, religious activities, and religious personnel, and regularly report changes in religious personnel information to the religious affairs departments.

Religious colleges and universities should report to the appropriate institution of the religious community in a timely manner the files of the religious staff of the institution.

Religious activity sites should be reported to the religious community institutions and religious affairs departments in the location of the religious site.

**Article XL** Religious institutions should adhere to the correct direction, improve the quality of education, train high-quality religious clergy.

**Article XLI** Entrance to religious places of worship should be regulated through strict gatekeeping, verification of identity, and registration.

Religious sites shall not exceed the capacity and financial ability of the site to receive religious clergy.

**Article XLII** Religious groups, religious institutions, religious sites should establish and improve the groups, institutions, places of religious clergy management system, strengthen the supervision and management of religious clergy engaged in religious activities, control domestic and foreign donations.

**Article XLIII** The high clergy serving in the main teaching positions in religious sites should perform religious affairs management responsibilities, accept the religious community's teaching guidance, submit to the management of religious activities in the management organization, accept the supervision of the religious clergy and religious citizens in the place of religious activities.

**Article XLIV** The religious affairs departments and religious groups, religious institutions, religious activities that receive reports that the religious clergy violate laws, regulations, rules, or regulations of religious groups, shall investigate and verify, according to the relevant law and regulations.

**Article XLV** When religious clergy believe that religious groups, religious institutions, religious activities and their members violate their legitimate rights and interests, they can report to the religious affairs departments. Religious affairs departments shall investigate and verify, and shall deal with it according to law.

## **Chapter VI Legal Liability**

**Article XLVI** The public officials managing religious clergy guilty of abuse of power, negligence, or favoritism, should be submitted to disciplinary action and, if their behavior constitutes a crime, be held criminally responsible.

**Article XLVII** The religious groups, religious institutions, institutions regulating religious activities caught in one of the following acts, and asked to correct them by the religious affair departments, should be punished if they fail to perform the correction of:

- (A) a failure to establish a sound system for the management of religious clergy.
- (B) a failure to manage religious clergy in accordance with the provisions of these Measures.
- (C) a failure to identify or approve religious clergy in accordance with these provisions.
- (D) when teachers for religious activity sites are not selected in accordance with the provisions regulating the teaching positions in the religious activity sites.
- (E) when religious groups do not act in accordance with the provisions of these Measures for recording the religious clergy, or religious activity sites do not operate in accordance with the provisions of these measures for recording the high clergy teaching at religious activity sites.
- (F) failure to issue certificates of religious clergy in accordance with the provisions, or making a profit by issuing certificates.

(G) infringement of the legitimate rights and interests of religious clergy.

(H) other violations of the relevant provisions of these Measures.

**Article XLVIII** The religious clergy who violate the relevant provisions of these Measures shall be punished in accordance with the "Regulations on Religious Affairs," Article 73, and other relevant provisions.

**Article XLIX** Those not satisfied with the religious affairs department's administrative actions can apply for administrative reconsideration; those not satisfied with an administrative reconsideration of a decision can file an administrative lawsuit in accordance with law.

### **Chapter VII Administrative Rules**

**Article L** If the [county](#) (city, [district](#), flag) cannot manage the relevant religious groups, the corresponding responsibilities under these measures will pass to the upper level ([prefecture](#), state, [league](#)) that will manage the religious group.

If the city ([prefecture](#), state, [league](#)) cannot manage the relevant religious groups, the corresponding duties will pass to the provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government.

If the provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government cannot manage the relevant religious groups, the corresponding duties will pass to the national religious groups.

**Article LI** These Measures shall be interpreted by the [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#).

**Article LII** These Measures shall come into force on May 1, 2021. The [State Administration of Religious Affairs](#) measures of 2006 for registering religious clergy and religious places of worship shall be deemed to be no longer in force.

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## **Special weekly FoRB newsletter (08-15.02.2021)**

### **General**

**11.02.21 - Enter the "administrative measures for religious clergy": be afraid, be very afraid**

Bitter Winter offer the first English translation of a text converting the clergy in apparatchiks under a system of awards and penalties based on their loyalty to the CCP.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **10.02.21 - The 'Big Brother' of religions: Beijing's new database**

It will contain all information on religious personnel, including the punishments received and the revocation of their ministry. A document on the management of clergy, monks, priests, bishops, who above all have the obligation to "support the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, support the socialist system", "resist illegal religious activities and religious extremism and resist infiltration of foreign forces that use religion".

[Continue reading...](#)

### **09.02.21 - Rape in Xinjiang camps: male inmates are victims too**

Encouraged by the women who pierced the veil of silence, men are telling tales of how they were sexually abused in the transformation through education camps.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Protestants**

### **08.02.21 - Henan House Church pastor sentenced to five and a half years in prison**

Trying to save his church's cross from destruction and refusing to use services to spread "patriotic" propaganda were regarded as serious crimes.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Uyghur Muslims**

### **11.02.21 - Protecting the Uyghurs isn't just the right thing to do. It's also good politics**

In a parting shot at Beijing, the outgoing Trump administration formally declared that the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) repression of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang constitutes a genocide.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **11.01.21 - Uyghur group defends detainee database after Xinjiang officials allege 'fake archive'**

An organization compiling information on Uyghurs detained in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) has defended its findings after officials in the region accused it of spreading lies, saying forcing witness testimonies and making unsubstantiated claims will not undermine its work.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **10.02.21 - Ankara deporting Uyghur dissidents to China**

Erdoğan appears to have traded them for millions of doses of the Chinese COVID-19 vaccine. Protests are taking place in front of the Chinese embassy in Ankara. The ratification of an extradition treaty with China faces an uphill battle. Turkish opposition parties are on the attack against the “sultan”.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Falun Gong

### **12.02.21 - Five year jail Penalties for Falun Gong practitioners in Liaoning, Jiangxi**

The CCP continues its campaign to identify members of the banned group. When caught, they go to jail.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **12.02.21 - 75-year-old man sentenced to four years for his faith**

A 75-year-old man in Linxia County, Gansu Province was sentenced to four years and fined 3,000 yuan in late December 2020 for his faith in Falun Gong. He is now appealing the case with the Intermediate Court of Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture.

[Continue reading...](#)

## Others

### **13.02.20 - CCP Cracks Down on Association of Disciples in Tianjin**

Although reduced in strength, the Christian new religious movement is still active in China—and still persecuted.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Henan House Church pastor sentenced to five and a half years in prison**

***Trying to save his church's cross from destruction and refusing to use services to spread "patriotic" propaganda were regarded as serious crimes.***

by Daniela Bovolenta

Bitter Winter (08.02.2021)- <https://bit.ly/3cUe37f> - Li Juncai is the pastor of the Yuan Yang [County House Church](#) in Xinxiang, Henan [Province](#). He resisted the crackdown on Christians in his [province](#), and opposed an order that the cross of his church should be demolished.

He also refused the [CCP](#)'s request to change the slogan "Love God and Love Others" into "Love the Country and Love Religion," and to build a stand within the church where a national flag will be placed.

On February 20, 2019, Pastor Lin's church was raided, and he was arrested together with three co-workers. With Lin out of the picture, personnel from the local religion bureau, public security, and the city administration finally managed to demolish the cross, a few days after the pastor's arrest.

Shortly after one month from the raid, the three co-workers were released on bail. Pastor Li, however, remained in [jail](#) and was indicted by the Yuan Yang [County](#) Prosecutor's Office for "misappropriation of an office, obstruction of official duties, and destructions of accounts." All [house church](#) pastors are not legitimate clergy under Chinese law, and certainly Li had "obstructed" the efforts to destroy his church's cross. Alleged irregularities with the community's account are often thrown in for good measure when [house church](#) pastors are prosecuted.

His case was remanded twice from the Prosecutor's Office to the [Public Security Bureau](#) for additional investigation, which is normally a clue that evidence for trumped-up charges is difficult to find.

In January 2021, after almost two years of pre-trial detention, Pastor Li, who was in [jail](#), and his three co-workers, who were free on bail, finally had their day in court. The other three defendants escaped with suspended sentences, but Pastor Li was found guilty of all three charges and sentenced to five years and six months in prison.

He was sent to Yuan Yang [County Detention Center](#) in Xinxiang City, where, considering the pre-trial detention, he should remain until August 20, 2024, as the decision indicated.

Photo : Pastor Li Juncai. From Twitter (Weiquanwang).

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## **Church of Almighty God: Over 1000 members sentenced to a prison term for their faith**

HRWF (05.02.2021) - In 2020, at least 7055 members of The Church of Almighty God (CAG) were arrested in China, 1098 of them were sentenced to a prison term, and 21 lost their lives under torture, according to [the 2020 Annual Report](#) of the Church.

Jiang Yanghua, a Christian from Xinjiang, was given a 15-year sentence for "convening" gatherings. Three Christians who were minors at the time of their arrests, were sentenced to prison terms: three years to two of them and three and a half years for the other one.

At least 35,752 Christians were victims of various forms of police harassment, according to the CAG.

The report details the ongoing destruction of religious venues and crosses by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) during the pandemic and reveals a number of confidential documents. It also lists a series of crackdowns resulting in mass arrests.

In February 2020, a police operation was carried out in Sichuan Province although many cities and towns were under a severe lockdown. At least 142 CAG Christians were arrested.

On 16-17 May, over 100 CAG Christians were arrested in Linfen City, Shanxi Province.

On 11 November, in a single day, at least 120 CAG Christians were arrested in Zibo City, Shandong Province.

On 3 December, no less than 200 Christians were arrested in Zhejiang Province. A number of them had been under police surveillance for nearly a year.

While in custody, they were subjected to various forms of torture such as sleep deprivation, electric shocks, being suspended from handcuffs, having their fingers stabbed with toothpicks, and having their nipples put in iron clamps.

At least 21 Christians died in 2020 as a result of torture and other forms of abuse.

Qin Shiqin, a CAG Christian from Shandong Province, passed away after being held in a police station for 10 days.

Additionally, the CCP's oppression of The Church of Almighty God continued to intensify. In September, the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission issued a confidential document calling for a three-year "all-out war" against The Church of Almighty God. The Church was identified as "the most prominent potential threat" to its rule, its "utter annihilation" was put on the CCP's agenda as a priority and efforts are to be intensified to thwart the CAG's growth abroad. After the release of the document, the number of arrests climbed steadily to reach 1525 for the sole month of November alone across the country.

The CCP also extended its oppression beyond China's borders. A Christian living abroad who appeared in CAG films became a target of CCP's persecution while his relatives in China were subjected to harassment and one of them died in the hands of the police.

The CCP also established a big data platform for the surveillance of CAG's members, using a variety of illegal practices such as inciting anti-CAG public hostility, applying guilt by association and misusing the social credit system. The CCP did not hesitate either to use blackmail: recanting their faith or depriving them and their relatives of their right to employment, education, basic living allowances, travel, and more.

The Church of Almighty God, a new religious movement, was established in 1991. Due to its rapid growth and its refusal to accept government control, it has been perceived as a threat by the CCP. It is currently among the religious groups facing the most severe persecution by the CCP. At least 420,000 of its members have suffered arrests from 2011 until now.

This report has been compiled by the CAG on the basis of over 40,000 documented cases of CCP's persecution and confidential documents released by CCP officials. It provides a valuable resource made up of solid data and evidence that can be useful for researchers and defenders of religious freedom in China. It is available at

<https://en.godfootsteps.org/persecution/annual-report-2020.html>

Several thousands of CAG members fled to Europe for safety. They urgently need to be recognized as political refugees.

For more information about The Church of Almighty God by scholars in religious studies, see

[https://www.cesnur.org/cag\\_page.htm](https://www.cesnur.org/cag_page.htm)

<https://cesnur.net/category/church-of-almighty-god/>

For more information about the CAG, see their website [here](#).

<https://en.godfootsteps.org/news.html>

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## Special weekly FoRB newsletter (01-07.02.2021)

### Protestants

#### **05.02.21 - Shandong Province orders: Do not publish audios and videos of preaching from online gatherings/services**

On January 29, the Three-Self Patriotic Association and Christian Association of Qingdao City, Shandong Province, published a copy of the notice relating Restrictions on Churches in China's Shandong Province: A ban on live broadcasts as well as releases of preaching audios and videos.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **03.02.21 - Imprisoned Pastor Wang Yi's poem, Miss my Son, reflects our Heavenly Father's love**

Two days prior to learning that Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities had sentenced him to serve 9 years in prison during a secret trial December 30, 2019 [one year after being arrested], Pastor Wang Yi wrote the following poem.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **01.02.21 - CCP forcibly removes cross of 100-yr-old Shuixin X'tian Church in Wenzhou city**

Early February 1, for the second time since 2014, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials forcibly removed and demolished the cross of 100-yr-old Shuixin X'tian Church in Wenzhou City, Zhejiang Province. A large number of armed Chinese police officers raided the church to facilitate the annihilation of the cross from the church roof top.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Uyghur Muslims**

### **05.02.21 - The UK genocide amendment: Let's try it again**

Resisting pressures, the Lords confirmed the amendment aimed at punishing Chinese atrocities in Xinjiang. Now, it goes back to the Commons.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **04.02.21 - US 'disturbed' by reports of rape of Muslims in China camps**

The US warns of serious consequences for atrocities committed against women in internment camps for ethnic Uighurs.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **03.02.21 - Systematic rape in Xinjiang camps**

A shocking BBC report (with some images from Bitter Winter) led politicians from all over the world to call for an UN-led investigation of "crimes against humanity."

[Continue reading...](#)

### **02.02.21 - China retaliates against Uighur activists by imprisoning relatives, US officials say.**

U.S. officials say China is targeting relatives of some Uighur activists with terrorism charges, while intimidating others who raise awareness about the plight of the Muslim minority in the Xinjiang region.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Tibetan Buddhists**

### **03.02.21 - Biden Administration promises continued US support for Tibet**

The administration of U.S. President Joe Biden will continue to promote policies supporting human rights for Tibetans living under Chinese rule, working with allies to press Beijing to engage in dialogue with exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the State Department said this week.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **05.02.21 - Chinese officials engaged in 'takeover' of Tibetan Buddhist monastery: Human Rights Watch**

Chinese officials are engaging in a “takeover” of one of the world’s largest Tibetan Buddhist monasteries with a plan to put Communist Party officials in charge of its administration, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Wednesday.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **02.21 - Tibetan Buddhism: Religious Freedom in China**

Revival and expansion: Tibetan Buddhism has revived significantly since the rampant destruction of the Cultural Revolution. Over the past decade, it has gained millions of new believers from the urban Han elite across China, joining the widespread piety among roughly six million Tibetans.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Falun Gong**

#### **06.02.21 - 74-year-old man detained incommunicado for 14 months**

A 74-year-old man in Hutou Town, Yinan County, Shandong Province, has been detained incommunicado for over a year for his faith in Falun Gong, a spiritual and meditation discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **06.02.21 - Once imprisoned for three years, Liaoning woman again faces indictment for her faith**

A Shenyang City, Liaoning Province, woman detained since December 2020 is now facing indictment for her faith in Falun Gong, a spiritual and meditation discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **05.02.21 - Two Heilongjiang residents sentenced to prison for speaking out for their faith in Falun Gong**

Two Jiamusi City, Heilongjiang Province residents were sentenced to prison by the Xiangyang District Court in late January 2021 for their faith in Falun Gong, an ancient spiritual and meditation discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Church of Almighty God**

#### **07.02.21 - How do you call an explicitly announced CCP plan to “annihilate” a large group of Chinese citizens because of their faith?**

In an [interview published in Bitter Winter](#) last week, former Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Terzi stated that the CCP repression of Falun Gong, including organ harvesting, can be described as a “genocidal practice.”

[Continue reading...](#)

### **05.02.21 - CHINA: Church of Almighty God: Over 1000 members in prison in 2020**

In 2020, at least 7055 members of The Church of Almighty God (CAG) were arrested in China, 1098 of them were sentenced to a prison term, and 21 lost their lives under torture, according to [the 2020 Annual Report](#) of the Church.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Special weekly FoRB newsletter (25-31.01.2021)**

### **News from Bitter Winter**

#### **26.01.21 - Villager fined \$ 24,693 for celebrating Christmas**

In Lushan county, Henan, one Niu Guobao organized a meeting to pray and sing hymns. Now, he has to pay a fine of 160,000 yuan.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Other sources**

#### **31.01.21 - Seven Sichuan residents sentenced to prison, families in distress**

Six Falun Gong practitioners in Xichang City, Sichuan Province and one of their spouses were sentenced by the Xichang City Court on December 9, 2020. They are appealing the verdicts to the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture Intermediate Court.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **31.01.21 - 75-year-old woman sentenced to prison for her faith**

Having previously served a four-year term for her faith in Falun Gong, a 75-year-old woman in Meishan City, Sichuan Province was sentenced to ten months on December 30, 2020.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **29.01.21 - Uyghurs losing circumcision traditions under China's Xinjiang policies**

Authorities in northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) are severely restricting the Islamic tradition of circumcision, either by delinking its religious significance or banning it outright, according to officials.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **29.01.21 - The genocide amendment: Why is the UK government dragging its feet?**

On 7 December 2020, the House of Lords debated the Trade Bill that defines the UK's post-Brexit trade relationships and engaged with the question of what should happen if the trading partner stands accused of committing genocide.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **29.01.21 - Follow-up: Ms. Wang Jing, imprisoned and tortured for years, now safe in USA**

The backstory of Ms. Wang Jing began with the murder of her second oldest sister on November 13, 1993. As noted in [ChinaAid's Post on January 27](#): "After suffering years of torture in a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) prison for human and religious rights defense work, Ms. Wang Jing arrived safely in the USA on December 31, 2020."

[Continue reading...](#)

### **28.01.21 - Family concerned: Imprisoned seven years, Pastor Zhang Shaojie transferred to begin "concentrated education"**

On January 8, prison officials escorted Pastor Zhang Shaojie\* to Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, to carry out the five remaining years of his 12-year sentence. Previously held at the Xinxiang, Henan Province facility, Pastor Zhang will spend his first two months in the new prison in "concentrated education."

[Continue reading...](#)

### **27.01.21. Ms. Wang Jing, imprisoned and tortured for years, now safe in USA**

After suffering years of torture in a Chinese Communist Party (CCP) prison for human and religious rights defense work, Ms. Wang Jing\* arrived safely in the USA on December 31, 2020. The State Department cooperated with *ChinaAid* to facilitate her rescue from China.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **25.01.21 - Travel restrictions announced at Tibetan monastery in Gansu ahead of major religious festival**

Authorities in northwestern China's Gansu province are imposing restrictions on travel to and from an important Tibetan monastery ahead of a major annual religious festival, requiring the wearing of masks by those attending and forbidding entry even to private vehicles, Tibetan sources say.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **25.01.21 - Persecution of The Church of Almighty God: From bad to worse**

They call it epidemic prevention. In the Chinese province of Hebei, special teams go door to door, and inspect apartments and houses, ostensibly to make sure that anti-COVID measures are implemented.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Special weekly FoRB newsletter (16-24.01.2021)**

### **News from Bitter Winter**

#### **21.01.21 - Persecution of The Church of Almighty God: From bad to worse**

The British Conservative Party Human Rights Commission report called again the attention on a brutal campaign of repression, made worse by COVID-19.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **20.01.21 - Genocide in Xinjiang: The Word is no longer taboo**

The U.S. officially adopted the designation, and in the UK an amendment to prevent trade with genocidal states was narrowly defeated.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **15.01.21 - "The Chief Witness": Alexandra Cavelius tells the story of Sayragul Sauytbay**

Soon in English, the German best seller gives voice to a woman whose testimony about the transformation through education camps in Xinjiang cannot be impeached.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Other sources**

#### **22.01.21 - Once imprisoned for 14 years, Beijing man gets another 5 years for practicing Falun Gong**

A Beijing resident was recently sentenced to five years and fined 10,000 yuan for his faith in Falun Gong, a spiritual discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **22.01.21 - Two Hebei women sentenced to prison for distributing Falun Gong information**

While people around the world celebrated the arrival of 2021, two Baoding City, Hebei Province residents were sentenced to prison on the last day of 2020 for their faith in Falun Gong, a spiritual and meditation practice that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **20.01.21 - Hebei, religious activities blocked: 'they spread Covid' (even if unproven)**

Vice-Premier Sun Chunlan issues order, after a visit to the province. Online posts against religions and Catholics are multiplying: their "development" endangers the "socialist system". Up until yesterday, over 800 positive cases have been recorded in Hebei, of which 771 in Shijiazhuang.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **20.01.21 - CCP authorities sentence house church Pastor Li Juncai to five-and-a-half years in prison plus heavily fine him**

Recently, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities sentenced Yuanyang County Central House Church Pastor Li Juncai to five-and-a half years in prison plus ordered him to pay a fine of 50,000 Chinese Yuan (7701 USD).

[Continue reading...](#)

### **19.01.21 - US Declares China's policies toward Uyghurs amount to 'genocide' and 'crimes against humanity'**

China's repression of Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim ethnic minorities in its northwestern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), including its use of internment camps and forced sterilizations, amounts to "genocide" and "crimes against humanity," the U.S. State Department said Tuesday.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **15.01.21 - Christian Qin Shiqin dies from 10-day interrogation by torture after arrested for religious belief**

Qin Shiqin, female, born in 1969, was a resident of Yuanhou community in Xifuzhen sub-district of Chengyang district of Qingdao city in the eastern province of Shandong. She joined [The Church of Almighty God \(CAG\)](#) in 2002.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Poland top court overturns extradition of Chinese man**

AFP (16.01.2021) - <https://bit.ly/2LXIyh8> - The Polish Supreme Court on Friday quashed a lower court's green light for the extradition of a businessman to China for alleged fraud, a charge he has denied, saying that he is being targeted for supporting Falun Gong.

Polish authorities took Chinese-born Swedish citizen Li Zhihui, now 53, into custody in 2019 on an international warrant issued by China for alleged non-payment in a business deal, Krzysztof Kitajgrodzki, his Polish lawyer, told reporters.

Following the Supreme Court ruling, the case would return to a lower appellate court for review.

Kitajgrodzki told reporters that it was still not a given that his client would avoid extradition.

"It's certainly a good decision at this stage, but we still can't call it a success," he said, adding that the Supreme Court has required that the lower court ask China to explain the nature of the sentence his client faces.

He said that Li was unlikely to get a fair trial in China and could be sentenced to life in prison or even death due to his membership of Falun Gong, a religious group that has been banned by Chinese authorities.

Kitajgrodzki has said that his client is also being targeted for quitting the Chinese Communist Party.

The charges leveled by China stem from a 2011-2012 business deal, the lawyer said.

He also said that it was about this time that Li, whose family made bed linens, moved to Sweden and subsequently gained citizenship there.

The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a Wednesday said in a statement to parliament that it had been "actively working" on the case and voiced concerns, saying that "human rights violations in China are extensive and appear to be on the rise."

Regardless of any court ruling on the matter, under Polish law the minister of justice has the final say on extradition requests.

Kitajgrodzki said his client has already filed a complaint against the Chinese legal move with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

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## **Special weekly FoRB newsletter (09-15.01.2021)**

**News from Bitter Winter**

**14.01.21 - Chinese spies tried to create false "Uyghur terrorists" in Afghanistan**

Ten Chinese agents were arrested and quietly expelled after trying to establish a false branch of the defunct East Turkestan Islamic Movement.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **13.01.21 - Akida's story: The desperate cry of a Uyghur woman**

"Dear world, please help!" The heartrending plea of a daughter who has been searching in vain for her mother, folklorist Rahile Dawut, for the past three years.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **12.01.21 - British MPs, Jewish leaders ask Twitter to block Chinese embassies' accounts**

They argue that CCP "wolf warrior" diplomats are "not less violent and active in spreading fake news than Trump."

[Continue reading...](#)

### **11.01.21 - China tries to disrupt Tibetan parliamentary elections**

Tibetans abroad vote to elect the members of the Central Tibetan Administration. The CCP mobilizes its spies, and asks friendly governments to harass voters.

[Continue reading...](#)

## **Other sources**

### **14.01.21 - Once imprisoned for fifteen years, Heilongjiang man arrested again**

Having spent 15 years in detention during the past 21 years, a Hegang City, Heilongjiang Province resident was arrested again in a [police sweep](#) for his faith in Falun Gong in mid-December 2020.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **14.01.21 - Uyghurs in Turkey face an uncertain future as Ankara considers the fate of its extradition agreement with Beijing.**

The Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress ratified the extradition agreement signed in 2017 with Turkey on December 26, 2020.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **14.01.21 - 71-year-old woman sentenced to one year for putting up Falun Gong materials**

A Panzihua City, Sichuan Province resident was quickly sentenced to one year after she was arrested in July 2020 after being reported for putting up information about Falun Gong.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **14.01.21 - Christian Bian Bingling & two sons pursued for their belief, husband sentenced 4 years in prison**

Bian Bingling, female, born in 1967, from Weishan county under the jurisdiction of Jining city in the eastern province of Shandong, is a Christian of The Church of Almighty God (CAG). In 2012, she was listed by the police as wanted, and had no choice but to go on the run. The police repeatedly visited her home to arrest her but failed every time.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **13.01.21 - US Coordinator For Tibetan Issues Speaks With Dalai Lama in a Virtual Meeting**

The U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues spoke on Wednesday with the Dalai Lama in a virtual meeting, telling him that Washington will continue to urge Chinese authorities to meet with the exiled spiritual leader or his envoys to find ways to protect the region's culture and religion.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **12.01.21 - Addendum for: CCP authorities sentence house church Pastor Li Juncai to five years in prison plus heavily fine him for refusing demolition of church cross**

On January 11, *ChinaAid* secured a copy of the last page of verdicts for Pastor Li Juncai and three other Christians, Wu Raoyun, Ban Yun, and Ma Yanfang, arrested the same day [February 20, 2019]. *ChinaAid* has not yet confirmed details regarding the detainments of Xiao Guangang, and Meng Guozhen.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **11.01.21 - CCP authorities sentence house church Pastor Li Juncai to five years in prison plus heavily fine him for refusing demolition of church cross**

Recently, Chinese Communist Party (CCP) authorities sentenced Yuanyang County Central House Church Pastor Li Juncai to five years in prison plus ordered him to pay a fine of 210,000 Chinese Yuan (32,423.42 USD). For objecting to the CCP's forcible cross removal and refusing to change a church proclamation "Love God and people" to "Love the country..." authorities accused Pastor Li of 1) embezzlement, 2) obstructing government administration and 3) destruction of accounting records.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **09.01.21 - Beijing authorities use the pandemic to shut down all 155 religious venues, promise to stop illegal gatherings**

The decision was taken despite the fact that religious activities have had "zero infections". Strict measures and continuous controls have led many priests to close their churches at Christmas. On social media, Catholics are accused of spreading the virus, a charge rejected by the Patriotic Catholic Association. The authorities put a stop to "illegal activities" by underground communities.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **08.01.21 - Dozens of Chinese officials raid house church, detain pastor and 5 members**

Local authorities in China's Taiyuan city raided the house church of An Yankui, the preacher of Xuncheng Church during a Bible study. International Christian Concern (ICC) reported.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Polish Supreme Court set to test commitment to rule of law in extradition row**

Safeguard Defenders (11.01.2021) - <https://bit.ly/2LjQCZX> - Unbeknownst to all but a few [link in Polish], Poland has stood as the battleground between Sweden and China in an unfolding extradition case for nearly two years. China seeks former Chinese citizen, now Swedish citizen, Li Zhihui, a Falun Gong adherent, returned to China to stand trial on charges of economic crimes.

The case is set to stand as a precedent on how European countries respond to the severe deterioration of China's already flawed criminal justice system, and to test whether long-standing ignorance to massive changes in China across Europe can be overcome.

Sweden has protested, albeit meekly, via a brief 1.5-page letter that misses all the key points.

In dramatic fashion, the Polish prosecutor's office has switched from supporting, to objecting, and again supporting, the extradition. The Supreme Court is set to take a final decision in less than a week.

On January 15, the Polish Supreme Court will likely seal the fate of Li Zhihui, who left China in 2012 to settle down in Sweden with his Falun Gong-member wife [now divorced]. In 2016, Li became a Swedish citizen, and renounced his Chinese citizenship. Since leaving China, Li, a wealthy businessman, has supported the Falun Gong movement financially in Europe.

Until early January 2021, no Polish, Swedish nor international media has covered this remarkable tale, and the process has been unknown to all but a few

Chinese authorities filed a red notice with Interpol on him in 2017, when Interpol was chaired by Chinese Communist Party member Meng Hongwei – who later dramatically disappeared while visiting China. Li would only become aware of this red notice on March 17, 2019, while transiting at Warsaw's Chopin Airport, en route from Sweden to Bulgaria, and detained by Polish police.

Since his initial detention, the Polish judicial process to test whether he can be extradited has taken numerous and remarkable turns, but it now appears likely that the Supreme Court will uphold the decision taken September 25, 2020, which would see him extradited to China – unless the Minister of Justice intervenes.

Documents reviewed by Safeguard Defenders show that the Polish prosecutor's office seems to be unaware of the situation of the legal system in China, and vaguely worded promises from the Chinese embassy in Warsaw – which has no authority to issue any guarantees about a forthcoming judicial process – has been enough to allay fears of torture and unlikelihood a fair trial in China. In the same communication, the Chinese government

has also levied additional accusations and threats against Li, opening up for at least two additional charges -- belonging to an evil cult, and spreading rumours, which the prosecutor's office has ignored or simply not realized. Neither of these two accusations and possible basis for prosecution constitutes a crime in Poland or Sweden.

New information shows that Li is but one of three people currently being sought for extradition from Poland by China, and the Supreme Court's decision, just like the one in Sweden in 2019, could not only affect all three of them, but all cases of extraditions from countries bound by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) to China in the future.

This analysis will not look into Li's adherence to Falun Gong, or whether he is right or wrong that China initially sought him for his Falun Gong activities in China, but rather look at the astounding legal process ongoing in Poland. Li himself is clear, "In the event of my extradition, my fate will be sealed" ... "if Poland surrenders me to China, I will die". It is also beyond doubt that he has provided significant support to Falun Gong in Europe since his relocation to Sweden. However, as to his activities in China before leaving little is known.

### ***Chinese claims against Li***

The only evidence of China seeking Li's extradition is a provisional arrest request. Polish courts have not received any documentation from the Chinese court system about the investigation against him or anything showing his current status in that investigation. Neither court nor prosecutor has seen fit to ask, taking the Chinese embassy's word instead.

Li, born December 14, 1967 in Nantong, Jiangsu, was targeted in an investigation launched July 8, 2014 – several years after he left China in November 2012. Since Li left, he has never returned, neither before nor after this investigation was launched. It is not known if Li has even been aware that such an investigation has been ongoing.

Along with a man named Zhang Cong – already sentenced - Li is accused of defrauding a business beginning in November 2011. On November 19, 2014, the prosecutor approved Li's arrest. Three years later, on November 8, 2017, a red notice was issued via Interpol.

### ***Initial extradition detention and hearing***

LI was apprehended by Chopin Airport police on March 17, 2019, due to the red Interpol notice. This red notice had been ignored for a year and a half. No other European country had taken any step to detain him during his travels – indicating that his notice was deemed to be political and therefore should not be enforced. Why Polish authorities thought differently remains unknown. Shortly after his detention, after having notified the Chinese authorities, a request for his extradition was filed with Poland.

During the prolonged legal drama, which has seen the prosecutor's office switch sides, Li, now 53, has been kept in 12 sq. metre cell in a detention facility in Warsaw's Białołęka district for some 20 months.

The first hearing, at Warsaw district court, was in August 2019, and concluded on September 25. Judge Dariusz Łubowski deemed that Li could be extradited and that the defence – led by Krzysztof Kitajgrodzki - could not prove that his Falun Gong membership was the reason for the investigation in China against him.

During this period, the Swedish Foreign Ministry filed a letter to its Polish counterpart stating that Li could face the death penalty if returned to China and requested that he not

be extradited. The court noted that the crime Li stands accused of, fraud (article 224), does not carry the death penalty, and that Li's alleged associate in this crime [Zhang Cong] had already been sentenced, to 10 years and 6 months in prison, for this crime. An appeal against the court's decision was filed.

### ***Prosecutor switches side during appeal***

While waiting for a hearing at the appellate court, the prosecutor, Anna Adamiak, on December 13 the same year [2019], switched side in a very rare instance and requested that the court deny the extradition request. The prosecutor argued that the change was because it had become clear that there would be no control over the legal process in China, nor about what stage of the judicial process Li's case was at in China. They also stated that the suspect's human rights cannot be guaranteed if returned to China.

The prosecutor emphasized that Poland would have to count on China's "goodwill to cooperate", and at the same time they emphasized that there was a "justified fear" and a "high degree of probability" that the release of the defendant [to China] "will not guarantee that his rights and freedoms will be preserved".

The court of appeal in Warsaw overturned the decision of the court of first instance and ordered the case to be re-examined by the district [lower] court again.

At the same time, the judgment from Sweden's Supreme Court about the extradition of Qiao Jianjun in 2019, also sought for economic crimes, was being translated into Polish. The defence had already filed this important verdict to support its position, but apparently it had not been translated into Polish and therefore not been used as basis for the court of first instance's initial decision.

### ***China gets prosecutor to switch sides again***

Before the new hearing that had been ordered, the court sent 11 questions to the consular section of the Chinese embassy in Warsaw [This is the same embassy at the centre of the north European refugee espionage story covered by Safeguard Defenders earlier]. The embassy responded to these questions on March 6, 2020.

Safeguard Defenders reviewed the answers provided to these 11 questions.

The answer from the Chinese embassy contains strongly worded and threatening language, and the embassy's response indicates that Li stands the risk of being charged with additional crimes, including for being a member of Falun Gong (article 300). The letter claims Falun Gong "is anti-human, anti-social and anti-scientific. It creates destructive rebel groups". They also stated that "information about the persecution of Falun Gong members was 'deceptive propaganda.'"

The letter also stated that "He [Li] is creating rumours (...) [and] the goal is to cheat, beg for sympathy and support." He is, due to the Chinese government's claim that he is spreading rumours, also at risk of prosecution under the new article 291 (1), and possibly also under article 105."

Considering the recent campaign by Chinese authorities against 'rumour spreading' one would imagine that this language from the embassy would raise alarm bells, but instead the prosecutor was seemingly convinced to about turn around and support the extradition again.

Despite having no legal mandate, as an embassy, or for that matter a representative of the Foreign Ministry, the letter claimed it could promise access to Li while he was in pre-

trial detention, permission for consular staff to attend the trial, and visitation rights if he was sentenced to jail.

The prosecutor's office in Poland entirely missed the new threats made against Li, and took the above promises by the embassy at face value. The embassy has no legal right to make such guarantees because it is the police who decide who can or cannot visit a suspect and it is the court that decides who can or cannot attend a trial. In addition, the promises were worded vaguely – saying only that visitation could be organized, not that it would or that it was mandated to do so, and it also only stated that it would consider consular visitation in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations – again not a guarantee that visitation would be permitted. Even if these were worded as a guarantee, without supporting documents from relevant Chinese judicial authorities, they would have no standing.

The prosecutor seemed unaware that such promises are regularly broken. Even high profile cases, such as fellow EU citizen Gui Minhai, was sentenced at a secret trial where Swedish consular access was denied, and where the Swedish government was not even informed. There is also the continued violation of the Canada-China consular access treaty, which is supposed to guarantee monthly visits to suspects in detention. Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor has now been in custody 25 months, and should in accordance with this treaty have been given 25 consular visits each; in reality, only two such visits each has been allowed. Violations of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations are so common that they are to be expected, and foreign officials are regularly denied access to their citizens in China.

EU, after the 22nd bilateral summit 2020, stressed the issue of the “continued arbitrary detention of Swedish citizen Gui Minhai and two Canadian citizens – Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor”, and “raise[d] its concerns on the deteriorating human rights situation” and on “restrictions on fundamental freedoms”. The EU parliament voted mid-2020 for the EU to take China to the International Court of Justice over its violations of yet another treaty, the international agreement between the UK and China about Hong Kong.

The only clarity the Polish prosecutor seemingly needed to change its mind was that Chinese law does not provide for the death penalty for the accused crime, article 224, as pointed out by the embassy.

However, as the Swedish Supreme Court noticed in its verdict, such claims has been made by China before, and then violated – that is, promises have been made that a person will not face the death penalty, and then such penalty has been issued anyway.

To raise further doubts, Li's supposed ‘associate’, Zhang Cong, according to the provisional arrest request which Safeguard Defenders have reviewed, was sentenced back in 2016 to 10 years and 6 months in prison according to the same charge. Article 224 specifies imprisonment of not more than three years, unless severe, in which case it can be up to 10 years. Only in remarkable situations can someone be sentenced to more than 10 years.

The total amount that Li, Zhang (“and [unspecified] others”) are accused of defrauding is about 7 million RMB, less than 1 million EURO. How many others are involved was not stated, nor their names, but at least four people would be involved in accordance with the information from the Chinese side. Why was his associate sentenced to such an extremely long sentence for what is a very small amount of supposed fraud – 7 million CNY for four (or more people). This should raise real doubts as to whether fraud is the real reason for China wanting Li extradited.

### ***Re-trial***

Before the new hearing, the prosecutor's office switched teams to one led by Alina Janczarska. For the new hearing, the prosecutor stated that Poland may, if it wants to, according to the Chinese side, receive information about the time of the trial, judgment, and place of its execution. China also declared that it could organize the participation of consular representatives at court hearings and visits to the place of Li's detention. As we argued above, the prosecutor badly misinterpreted these promises.

Prosecutor Marcin Saduś from the Regional Prosecutor's Office in Warsaw said that these promises plus China's response to their 11 questions were the basis for the prosecution to revert to the original decision to support the extradition. He said:

"I would like to point out that the position of the prosecutor's office on the withdrawal of support for extradition was justified. However, from that moment on, the court obtained a declaration from the Chinese side, which changed our perception of this case. At the moment when the state applying for the extradition of the detained declares its full readiness to cooperate, there are no grounds for blocking the extradition."

After re-examining the case, the court, chaired by Judge Katarzyna Stasiów, decided that China's willingness to cooperate meant that the extradition should go ahead. Following an appeal, the appellate court, chaired by Judge Ewa Jethon, upheld the decision in August 2020. The court stated there were no grounds for opposing the extradition.

During the re-trial, the verdict from the Swedish Supreme Court was been entered into evidence. It seemingly did not make any difference to the court that evidence presented proving promises from the Chinese side were so vague as to be meaningless and that it showed that such promises have been made and then broken before.

The court also ignored two key considerations -- namely torture and the right to a fair trial, both used extensively by other courts around the world to stop extraditions, and which are legally mandatory for Poland to consider, as they are cornerstones of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) (articles 3 and 6).

The latest report on the issue of torture (and also partly on the right to a fair trial) in China, by the United Nations Committee Against Torture, blasts China's extensive use of torture, its lack of protections against it, the use of coerced confessions. It also brings up the issue of control of the judiciary by organs of the Chinese Communist Party. This report represents the latest report, by the highest organ in the world on the issue, yet has seemingly not been brought to the attention of the court. As Poland and China both are countries that have ratified the Convention Against Torture, it should bear full weight in any consideration.

China's conviction rate in 2019 was, according to data from China's Supreme Court and Supreme Procuratorate, over 99.96%.

### ***Upcoming Supreme Court hearing***

An appeal to the Supreme Court was filed on grounds of article 604 of Poland's criminal procedure law, which prohibits the surrender of detainees to countries where freedoms and rights may be violated. The Supreme Court is scheduled to hold its hearing on January 15. Defender Krzysztof Kitajgrodzki remains Li's lawyer.

Despite the re-trial having taken the Swedish verdict into consideration -- or at least it was translated into Polish for consideration -- the court has so far only cleared -- possibly -- one of three main hurdles for Li's extradition under the ECHR, which is legally binding for Poland, namely the prohibition of the use of, the death penalty. The right to a fair trial and the prohibition of torture remains to be adequately addressed.

Torture is most often used during pre-trial detention, while a suspect is being investigated. On the basis of extensive data, Li will most likely face torture (article 1) and maltreatment (article 16) – violating the Convention Against Torture, which Poland is legally bound to uphold, as well as the ECHR.

The prosecutor has not had to answer why confessions are so rampant and that almost all trials take place with a focus on, or use exclusively of, such confessions – a practice that ties the use of torture, and the absence of any right to a fair trial, nor the 99.96% conviction rate.

An in-depth review of EU-China judicial cooperation and relations summarized the issue neatly, stating “The separation of powers only takes place in terms of organisational structure but not in terms of functions since the legislative process also remains under the control of the Communist Party of China.”

In addition, the role of the Chinese Communist Party’s ‘Political and Legal Affairs Commissions’, a party organ that controls police, prosecutor and courts at every level, from top to bottom, has seemingly been brought up or taken into consideration when assessing the very idea of an independent legal system to handle Li’s case should he be extradited.

Nor has the possibility of Li being forced to ‘confess’ on national TV before any actual trial been brought up. This should also be a key issue with the sentence to death of a man accused of economic crimes just last week, Lai Xiaomin, who, was first in custody of the CCDI/NSC, and then, long before his trial, was paraded on national TV confession to all allegations. Safeguard Defenders have released extensive documentation and reports on this practice, and filed it for review by UN organs.

The Supreme Court will also have to consider the threats made against Li in the Chinese embassy’s response earlier, which the court has so far has failed to address. In addition, if the investigation into economic crimes against him was not at first due to his Falun Gong activities – which remain unknown – there is now such an ample amount of evidence to show that he will suffer both torture and maltreatment due his Falun Gong activities after he left China, and for having it brought up in the judicial process between China and Poland.

Should the Supreme Court fail to address these issues, it will not only fail in its duty but place the fate of Li in the hands of the Polish Minister of Justice, who has final say in the issue. A spokesman for the Minister of Justice recently stated that “We are aware that China is not a fully democratic country”, which shows clearly that the Ministry is either hopelessly ignorant or that they are intentionally turning a blind eye to the reality in China.

Unlike many of its counterparts, the Polish Foreign Ministry has not, it said in response to questions from Safeguard Defenders, released any country report on China, nor any statements as related to the Chinese judiciary, thus giving very little guidance for Polish courts to understand the situation of the criminal justice system in China.

The Ministry of Justice and the International Cooperation Office of the National Prosecutor’s Office admitted that the Polish side did not monitor the conditions under which persons were transferred to the People’s Republic of China under extradition. And even if promises of access were to be given in detail, with legal basis, and which would allow Poland impromptu access without warning, it is unlikely Poland would have the resources to actually carry out such any supervision.

### ***Final consideration***

Li, a businessman, was also a member of the Communist Youth League (CYL). His membership in the CYL, which Li claims he renounced in 2013, opens him up to being handed over to the National Supervision Commission (NSC) (also called Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) when used on party members), which has jurisdiction over all party members, state functionaries, but also any economic crimes committed by anyone if it relates to the State, State-owned entities, or the Party.

The NSC is not, according to Chinese law, a judicial organ, but has mandate to carry out 'investigations', and may during those place suspects into secret custody for up to half a year in the liuzhi system. A report on the system was filed by Safeguard Defenders with the UN late 2019. A letter of allegations from the UN to the Chinese government has gone unanswered ever since.

Such incommunicado detentions, at secret locations, where foreign governments (if concerning foreigners) are not made aware of their whereabouts, nor are their families, constitute enforced or involuntary disappearances according to several statements by UN organs.

Likewise, all placements into Liuzhi must be in solitary confinement, which due to being done during investigation, and for prolonged periods, constitute both torture and maltreatment according to UN statements.

The establishment of the NSC, and it taking over a significant part of investigations into economic crimes which was before handled by the judiciary (prosecutor's office), has added another layer of complexity to any extraditions to China. As it is not part of the judicial system, should the person be taken over and investigated by the NSC, which is standard for economic crimes such as these, extraditions are no longer possible, as extraditions are intended to be from one judicial system and process to another. Handling a party member back to China for investigation by the NSC/CCDI is the equivalent of sending someone back for investigation by a political party's internal police.

China has made no guarantee that Li's case will not be handled by the NSC, nor could they, as only the NSC has mandate to make that decision, not the judicial system, so should such a promise be made, even if from the Prosecutor's office (let alone the Chinese embassy) it would not be legally binding.

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The learning curve for the Polish judicial system for handling this, and forthcoming extradition requests, is indeed steep, as it was in Sweden and is still across Europe, where courts and prosecutors, for understandable reasons, are almost entirely unaware of the functioning of China's judicial system. Considering the expansion of extradition requests, and other forms of judicial- and police cooperation, it is very urgently needed.

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## **Special weekly FoRB newsletter (31.12.2020-08.01.2021)**

**The best news from Bitter Winter**

**01.01.21 - Dr. Gulshan Abbas sentenced to 20 years in jail**

The world has understood. Through this absurd decision, the CCP is punishing her sister Rushan, for her brave campaign on behalf of the persecuted Uyghurs.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **02.01.21 - A great gift idea for the New Year: the CCP anti-Xie-Jiao calendar**

Say good-bye to 2020 and welcome 2021 with something reminding you every day that the persecution of banned religions should be supported—or else.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **04.01.21 - Trade deals and Human Rights: The scramble for high moral ground in dealing with China**

The battle lines are drawn. Europe ignores human rights concerns and finalizes “the trade deals of all trade deals with China,” US and UK try to resist.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **06.01.21 - Church of Almighty God members “deprogrammed” in jail**

Under CCP’s “transformation” program, CAG members are abused and tortured, until they sign the “three statements,” promising to give up their belief.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **07.01.21 - Panchen Lama: Tibetans forced to worship the false one at gunpoint**

Gyaltsen Norbu toured Tibet this year and talked to captive audiences, compelled to listen to him by the CCP security.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **Other sources**

### **31.12.20 - Bishop Andrew Han Jingtao, a ‘giant of culture and faith’ of the underground Church, dies**

A great scholar, he spent 27 years in a forced labour camp, and later taught at a university. He was also appreciated by prison authorities. Upon becoming bishop in 1982, he divided his time between academic and pastoral work.

[Continue reading...](#)

### **31.12.20 - PSB officers raid home Bible study; arrest Xuncheng Reformed Church Pastor An Yankui and five other Christians**

At 10:45 pm on December 30, after Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers raided the home Bible study of Pastor An Yankui, minister of Xuncheng Reformed Church in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, Ms. Yao Congya, Pastor An's wife posted an urgent prayer request.

[Continue reading...](#)

#### **04.01.21 - Chinese Communist Party officials continue to detain two nuns who work in Hong Kong under house arrest in Hebei Province**

Although Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials arrested two nuns visiting their home in Hebei Province in May, this information did not become public until December 30.

[Continue reading...](#)

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## **Call for Signatures: Letter in support of a Chinese citizen facing deportation**

Dear Participant to the FoRB Roundtable Brussels-EU,

Dr Aaron Rhodes, President of FOREF Europe is circulating a letter in support of Baolige Wurina, a Chinese Citizen living in Sweden, who faces deportation.

From Dr Aaron Rhodes:

As you know, China continues what Human Rights Watch has called "the worst human rights crackdown in the post-Tiananmen period. If Wurina is deported to China, he is almost certain to face incarceration and torture, and Sweden will have violated the European Convention on Human Rights.

Baolige fled to Sweden ten years ago from the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China (IMAR), after facing persecution from Chinese authorities for his rights activism. Since arriving in Sweden, Swedish authorities have refused to grant him asylum and ordered his deportation. Baolige and his wife, together with their two children, are waiting now for the Migration Court of Appeal—the last instance to decide on asylum cases in Sweden—to decide whether he will be granted Swedish protection. If the court decides on deportation, the family will be split apart. While Baolige will be sent to China, his wife, who is Mongolian, will be sent to Mongolia with their children.

Swedish authorities claim that Baolige is unable to prove that Chinese authorities constitute a threat towards him personally, even though Baolige has continued his rights activism in Sweden. He has participated in protests against China in front of the Chinese embassy, where he says embassy staff photographed the protesters. Swedish authorities have rejected the claim as "speculation," even though China is known for its surveillance and targeting of citizens who have fled the country.

CALL FOR SIGNATURES

- View and read the original letter with 4 original signatures

- Please let us know if your organization would like to sign on or if you will sign as an individual (with title and organization for identification purposes only), or both, by writing to [contact@forbroundtable.org](mailto:contact@forbroundtable.org).
- The deadline for signatures is the close of business on Monday, February 8, 2021

To inform your decision:

#### Statement of the EU Delegation in China on International Human Rights Day

"The EU... continues to be gravely concerned about the serious deterioration of the human rights situation in Xinjiang, Tibet and Inner Mongolia [our emphasis]. In addition to reports on continued large-scale extra-judicial detentions, severe and systemic restrictions on freedom of expression and association, and on freedom of religion or belief, there are growing concerns about the alleged use of forced labour, forced family separations and forced sterilization."

Source: <https://www.swedenabroad.se/en/embassies/china-beijing/current/news/statement-of-the-eu-delegation-in-china-on-international-human-rights-day/>

#### Activists face imprisonment and police stations in schools

Following the massive civil disobedience movement in Chinese-occupied Southern Mongolia sparked by the Chinese Central Government's renewed attack on the Mongolian language, the authorities' crackdown has intensified. An estimated 8,000–10,000 Southern Mongolians have been placed under some form of police custody since late August.

Source: [https://www.smhric.org/news\\_683.htm](https://www.smhric.org/news_683.htm)

Source of the call: Freedom of Religion or Belief Roundtable, Brussels-EU

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