

UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW 2009

CHINA

NGO: European Centre for Law and Justice
4, Quai Koch 67000 Strasbourg France

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

SECTION 1: *Legal Framework*

I. Chinese Constitutional Provisions

China is a largely authoritarian country, with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) constituting the paramount source of power.¹ While the country is an atheist republic, the government recognizes five major religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. A recent survey indicates that approximately 31 percent of Chinese citizens (300 million) over the age of 16 consider themselves “religious.”² Despite religious persecution, membership within religious groups continues to grow. The Chinese Constitution grants the freedom of religious belief, provided that any religious activities involved are “normal.”³ The Constitution also grants the freedom not to believe.⁴ The State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), which consists mostly of CCP members, “monitors and judges whether religious activities are ‘normal’ and therefore lawful.”⁵ The Constitution prohibits any religious activities that “impair the health of citizens or interfere with the education system of the state.”⁶ “Public security bureau officials monitor religious behavior that violates law or regulation” and ensure “that religious activities do not disrupt public order.”⁷ The Constitution also states that “religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.”⁸ SARA has jurisdiction over the implementation of regulations regarding the role of foreigners in religious activity.⁹

II. Legislation

A. *Regulations on Religious Affairs*

In effect since 2005, the Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) protect religious belief, but fail to protect the *expression* of religious belief. According to the U.S. State Department,

¹ U.S. Dep’t of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2007 China*, (Mar. 11, 2008) [hereinafter, *2007 Country Report*], available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100518.htm>. See also CONST. OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA preamble.

² *2007 Country Report*, *supra* note 1.

³ CONST. OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ch. 2, art. 36.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *2007 Country Report*, *supra* note 1.

⁶ CONST. OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ch.2, art. 36.

⁷ *2007 Country Report*, *supra* note 1.

⁸ CONST. OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ch.2, art. 36.

⁹ *2007 Country Report*, *supra* note 1.

The regulations protect the rights of registered religious groups, under certain conditions, to possess property, publish literature, train and approve clergy, and collect donations. However, the regulations have done little to expand religious freedom, as the activities of unregistered religious groups remain outside the scope of the RRA's legal protection. The regulations provide general protection only for freedom of "religious belief," but not expressions of belief, and merely codify past practices, including restrictions over officially recognized religious communities. The regulations protect only those religious beliefs categorized vaguely as "normal." In practice party doctrine guides the resolution of religious issues and the implementation of regulations. The regulations also give authorities broad discretion to define which religious activities are permissible.¹⁰

Brad Adams, Asia Director of Human Rights Watch, declares that the RRA foster "continued repression of disfavored individuals or groups" and grant "officials the room they need to legitimize closing mosques, raiding religious meetings, 'reeducating' religious leaders, and censoring [religious] publications."¹¹ The U.S. State Department reports that the Chinese Government uses its religious regulations to restrict the "lawful religious practice largely to government-sanctioned organizations and registered places of worship and attempts to control the growth and scope of activities of both registered and unregistered religious groups."¹² By implementing these restrictions, the Government intends to "prevent the rise of religious groups that could constitute sources of authority outside of the control of the Government and CCP." As such, religious freedoms are most threatened for religious organizations that are unable to register with the Government. As unregistered groups, such religious organizations simply may not afford themselves of the religious freedoms "guaranteed" by the RRA.¹³

The Chinese government created in 1957 its own National Church, called the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA). The Catholic Church in China, therefore, has two faces: the government-established Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) that became illegal and was forced underground. The Chinese Government officially recognizes only those pastors who openly declared their independence from the Holy See and takes its orders only from the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau, which is an agency under the United Front Department of the Communist Party.

Despite persistent religious persecution, the number of religious adherents in the country has increased in recent years. Interestingly, "increasing interest in Christianity has resulted in a corresponding increase in the demand for Bibles and other Christian literature."¹⁴

In China, all official religious groups are controlled by the state and political agents. In this way, the state alone selects the clergy or leaders of each religion. This has led to a tremendous growth in the underground churches and religious organizations. Of the estimated 130 million Christians in China, only about 20 million belong to the state Patriotic churches. Of this number, there are believed to be up to 20 million Catholics, with only 5.3 million belonging to the Catholic Patriotic Church.

Pursuant to government regulations governing publications, however, the Chinese Government controls publication of all texts, including religious texts.¹⁵ Under threat of

¹⁰ 2007 Country Report, *supra* note 1.

¹¹ Human Rights Watch, China: A Year After Regulations, Religious Rights Still Restricted, Mar. 1, 2006, *available at* <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2006/03/01/china12740.htm>.

¹² U.S. Department of State, International Religious Freedom Report 2007 (China), *available at* http://beijing.us embassy-china.org.cn/2007irf_china.html [hereinafter, 2007 Religious Freedom Report].

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ Religious Affairs Regulations ch.2, art. 7, *available at* <http://www.orthodox.cn/contemporary/>

detention, arrest and imprisonment, individuals are prohibited from: 1) purchasing religious materials directly from publishing houses, 2) smuggling materials in from outside the country, and 3) publishing materials themselves without government authorization.¹⁶ The Chinese Government regularly arrests and imprisons religious adherents who, in turn, claim that such arrests were based on their religious practices. Reports indicate that the authorities do, in fact, use “an administrative process to punish members of unregistered religious groups.”¹⁷ “According to the *Law Yearbook of China*, 8,224 cases of disturbing the social order or cheating by the use of superstition were filed in 2004, of which 8,116 resulted in formal charges, criminal or administrative punishment.”¹⁸ Additionally, while private prayer meetings and Bible study groups are technically legal, SARA routinely disrupts such private gatherings and arrests participants in such unregistered churches.¹⁹

B. Anti-Cult Law

“In 1999 the Government began banning groups that it determined to be ‘cults,’ without publicly defining the term.”²⁰ Among such groups is Falun Gong, which, at one point, had 70 million adherents in China.²¹ To combat and prevent cults such as Falun Gong, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress adopted a legislative resolution on banning heretic cults in 1999.²² Furthermore, inspired from the French anti-cult law, Article 300 of China’s criminal law provides fixed prison terms for cult members or leaders.²³ Interestingly, the Chinese criminal code also states that government officials who wrongfully deprive citizens of religious freedom may be sentenced to up to 2 years in prison. There are no known cases, however, of officials being punished for such.²⁴

C. Special Administrative Region Legislation

As a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People’s Republic of China, Hong Kong “enjoy[s] a high degree of autonomy except in matters of defense and foreign affairs.”²⁵ With a population of approximately seven million people, approximately 43 percent of Hong Kong residents practice some form of religion, the two most prevalent being Buddhism and Taoism.²⁶ Hong Kong is governed by the Basic Law, which provides for freedom of religion, and the Bill of Rights Ordinance, which prohibits religious discrimination by the Hong Kong SAR government. Unlike mainland China, there have been very few reports of “societal abuses and discrimination based on religious belief or practice” in Hong Kong.²⁷ There have been no reports of religious prisoners or detainees in the region, and the SAR Government generally refuses to “tolerate the abuse of religious freedom, either by government or private actors.” Importantly,

zjshwtli_en.htm.

¹⁶ 2007 Religious Freedom Report, *supra* note 12.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ Joseph Kahn, *Notoriety Now for Movement’s Leader*, N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 1, 2008, available at

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9507E7D9173DF934A15757C0A96F958260>

²² China Issued Anti-Cult Law available at <http://www.chinaembassycanada.org/eng/xw/xwgb/t38871.htm>.

²³ Criminal Law of the People’s Republic of China chapter 6, art. 300, available at

<http://www.com-law.net/findlaw/crime/criminallaw3.html>

²⁴ China Issued Anti-Cult Law, *supra* note 22.

²⁵ 2007 Country Report, *supra* note 1.

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ 2007 Religious Freedom Report, *supra* note 12.

religious entities are not required to register with the Government in Hong Kong. Even the Falun Gong is able to freely practice and organize religious activities in the region—activities that would be punishable by jail time in mainland China.²⁸

Like Hong Kong, Macau is an SAR that is governed by the Basic Law.²⁹ Macau is considerably smaller than the Hong Kong with a population of about 500,000. Approximately 86 percent practice some form of religion, and an overwhelming 79 percent practice Buddhism. The U.S. State Department has found that the “Basic Law, along with the Religious Freedom Ordinance, provides for freedom of religion and prohibits discrimination on the basis of religious practice, and the Macau SAR Government generally respect[s] these rights in practice.” In fact, “there were no reports of societal abuses based on religious belief or practice and only a few reports of religious discrimination.” Macau is very similar to Hong Kong in that it, too, does not require religious groups to register with the government. Macau also allows the Falun Gong to practice freely.³⁰

III. Judicial Decisions

Courts and judges are tightly controlled by the Chinese Government. Reports indicate that closed trials and same-day executions after denial of appeal are commonplace. The U.S. State Department has found that this “lack of due process and restrictions on lawyers further limit[s] progress toward rule of law.”³¹ Notably, in June 2007,

Beijing house church activist Hua Huaiqi was sentenced in a closed trial to 6 months in prison for obstruction of justice. Police reportedly beat him in jail and poured cold water over him in frigid weather. In April 2007 the Beijing Intermediate People’s Court rejected the appeal of Shuang Shuying, the 76-year-old mother of Beijing house church activist Hua Huaiqi. Shuang was sentenced to 2 years in jail for destruction of public and private property. She claimed that she was defending herself from being struck by an oncoming police car when her cane struck the headlights of the car. Shuang was placed in a medical center under police surveillance after being sentenced because she suffered from heart problems and diabetes.³²

SECTION 2: FACTUAL EXAMPLES OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Selected Recent Incidents of Persecution or Discrimination³³

According to International Christian Concern, the Chinese Government “continues to engage in severe violations of religious freedom.”³⁴ Since 2005, there have been literally hundreds of *reported* instances of religious persecution in China.³⁵

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ 2007 Country Report, *supra* note 1.

³² 2007 Religious Freedom Report, *supra* note 12.

³³ Each incident referenced is accompanied by a web link to the news story. The full text of each new story can be found in the Appendix.

³⁴ International Christian Concern, Persecuted Countries: China, <http://www.persecution.org/suffering/countryinfodetail.php?countrycode=16> (last visited Sept. 1, 2008).

³⁵ International Christian Concern, Articles on China, <http://www.persecution.org/suffering/countryinfo/detail.php?countrycode=16#Articles> (last visited Sept. 1, 2008).

Violence against Religious Minorities / Unregistered Religious Groups

1. August 2008 – Prominent house church leader arrested with wife and another pastor.³⁶
2. August 2008 – Two pastors arrested en route to state sanctioned church service.³⁷
3. July 2008 – House church leader evicted with his wife; detained, tortured by authorities.³⁸
4. July 2008 – Pastor sentenced to two years “re-education through labor” in Shandong.³⁹
5. July 2008 – 2 homes raided, religious materials confiscated, homeowner detained.⁴⁰
6. May 2008 – 4 house church leaders arrested and detained in Shandong.⁴¹
7. May 2008 – Authorities raided Christian gathering; pastor and parents detained.⁴²
8. April 2008 – Bookstore owner imprisoned, refused diabetic medication; religious literature confiscated.⁴³
9. April 2008 – Christian sentenced to 2 years “re-education through labor.” In detention, he suffered from injuries, malnourishment.⁴⁴
10. April 2008 – Christian charged with “illegal religious activities,” faces death penalty.⁴⁵
11. September 2007 – Catholic Bishop John Han Dingxian died after two years in solitary confinement.⁴⁶
12. September 2007 – Church leader arrested, two injured in house church raid.⁴⁷
13. September 2007 – 7 churchgoers detained.⁴⁸
14. August 2007 - A 77-year-old woman was severely tortured and sentenced to two years in prison for being a Christian and defending human rights. Prior to her imprisonment, her family’s home was demolished and the family was detained and beaten.⁴⁹
15. May 2007 - 5 house church leaders were detained in Xinjiang. 2 were tortured.⁵⁰
16. May 2007 – 30 Chinese and 4 American church leaders arrested, abused and tortured.⁵¹
17. October 2006 - 2 Catholic priests arrested and detained for travels in Europe.⁵²
18. March 2005 – Catholic bishop arrested and subjected to Chinese reeducation.⁵³
19. May 2005 – 100 house churches raided; 600 churchgoers were arrested and interrogated, 100 sent to detention centers.⁵⁴
20. September 2004 – Pastor kidnapped by Chinese plain clothes officers and tortured with a cattle prod. His wife, brother-in-law, and sister were also arrested.⁵⁵
21. June 2004 – Prisoner Jiaing Zongxiu was beaten to death.⁵⁶

³⁶ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-08-13b.htm>.

³⁷ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-08-13a.htm>.

³⁸ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-07-23b.htm>.

³⁹ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-07-23a.htm>.

⁴⁰ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-07-23a.htm>.

⁴¹ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-05-14.htm>.

⁴² <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-05-14.htm>.

⁴³ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-04-23.htm>.

⁴⁴ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-04-16.htm>.

⁴⁵ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-04-16.htm>.

⁴⁶ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-09-12a.htm>.

⁴⁷ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-09-05.htm>.

⁴⁸ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-09-05.htm>.

⁴⁹ <http://chinaview.wordpress.com/2007/08/31/china-77-year-old-woman-christian-near-death-after-torture-in-jail>.

⁵⁰ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-05-23.htm>.

⁵¹ <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-05-02.htm>; <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-05-09.htm>

⁵² <http://www.persecution.net/cn-2006-10-04.htm>.

⁵³ <http://www.persecution.net/china.htm>.

⁵⁴ <http://www.persecution.net/china.htm>.

⁵⁵ <http://www.persecution.net/china.htm>.

⁵⁶ <http://www.persecution.net/china.htm>.

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APPENDIX

1. Prominent House Church Leader Arrested

August 13, 2008

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-08-13b.htm>

According to an August 6 report from China Aid Association, Pastor Zhang "Bike" Mingxuan, President of the Chinese House Church Alliance, has been arrested along with his wife and another pastor, Wu. Pastor Zhang was on his way to deliver medicine to his ill wife when he was detained. At last report, all three were being held in a Public Security Bureau office in Zhengzhou City, Henan.

2. House Church Leader Escapes from Police Custody

August 13, 2008

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-08-13a.htm>

According to reports from China Aid Association, Pastor Hua Huiqi and his brother, Hua Huilin, were illegally arrested by the Chinese police at approximately 6:00 a.m. on August 10. The brothers were on their way to attend a service at the Kuanjie Church, which President Bush was scheduled to attend, when they were apprehended. During a lapse in security, Hua Huiqi was able to escape police custody around noon. Hua Huilin was released later that afternoon.

3. Chinese House Church Alliance Leader Evicted in Beijing

July 29, 2008

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-07-23b.htm>

Pastor Bike Zhang, Chairman of the Federation House Church and his wife, Xie Fenglan, were evicted from their home in Chaoyang district by Public Security Bureau officials on July 6, according to a July 18 report from China Aid Association. The couple took up residence in a friend's home until they were again evicted by officials and forced to relocate to a hotel in Guo Xian town. On July 14, officials ordered the hotel owner to evict the couple or face incarceration. Zhang and Fenglan then left for the district of Changping but were stopped by police and taken

to a government office where they were interrogated and denied food, drink and rest for several hours. Fenglan eventually collapsed due to the torture.

At last report the couple was living on the streets after police forced them out of two other locations. Their expulsion from Beijing is reportedly in response to Pastor Zhang's meeting with American officials, which Chinese authorities see as "destroying the harmony of the Beijing Olympic Games."

4. and 5. Christian Literature Confiscated, Believer Detained in Shandong Province July 23, 2008

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-07-23a.htm>

Last week it was reported that Pastor Zhang Zhongxin was sentenced to two years "re-education through labour" in the city of Jining, Shandong province on June 4. Several members of his church have since come under fire from authorities, according to a July 21 report from China Aid Association. On July 14, Chinese officials along with an "anti-cult group," seized Bibles and other religious literature from Mr. Lu Xiaoi. That same day, the police broke into the home of Mr. Li Dali in the district of Rencheng and confiscated Christian materials. Also, police detained Mr. Lian Dehai and raided his home for Christian materials.

6. and 7. Churches Raided, Leaders Arrested and Bible School Closed May 14, 2008

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-05-14.htm>

In several locations throughout China, churches were raided and several Christians were detained in recent weeks, according to reports from China Aid Association received on May 8, 12 and 14.

On May 3, four house church leaders -- Ms. Qiao Lei (24), Ms. Wang Qin (24), Mr. Cao Guanggen and Mr. Gin -- were arrested and detained in Yantun village, Shandong province. Lei and Qin were accused of being "evil cult members." Also in Shandong, on May 8, Pastor Zhang Yongliang and his parents were detained on charges of "obstructing justice" when members of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) raided a meeting of over 30 church leaders in Qingahou city, labeling it as an "illegal gathering."

On May 9, Pastor Dong Yatao, one of the leaders of the Beijing City Revival Church, was arrested by PSB members while he was on his way to obtain a shipment of Bibles. He was detained on charges of "receiving illegally printed Bibles and religious literature." That same day, a worship service at Shouwang Church in Beijing was interrupted by police officials who declared the meeting an "illegal gathering." They ordered the church to stop its activities and forced congregants to leave the premises.

On May 12, a house church meeting in the city of Qiqihaer, Heilongjiang province was raided by security officials who claimed it was an "illegal gathering" and distributed papers stating its official closure.

On May 14, a Bible school located in the city of Sanhe, Hebei province was raided by approximately 30 security officers. Three computer hard disks were taken, and the more than 100

students from various provinces in China enrolled in the school were ordered to return to their hometowns.

8. Bookstore Owner Re-arrested

April 23, 2008

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-04-23.htm>

China Aid Association is reporting that the health of Shi Weihang, a Beijing book store owner and house church leader, has been deteriorating since his imprisonment four months ago. Poor prison conditions and refusal of diabetes medication have contributed to Shi's decline. He has reportedly lost more than 10 kg in body weight amidst the constant physical and psychological torture employed by prison officials. Recently Shi was coerced to sign a confession convicting him of "engaging in the printing and distribution of a large number of illegal publications." The charges stem from Shi's printing of Bibles and Christian literature which were sold at his Beijing Christian bookstore, but were deemed "illegal" by Beijing authorities because the books were not printed by the officially registered Three Self Patriotic Movement Church.

9. and 10. Uyghur Christians on Trial

April 16, 2008

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2008-04-16.htm>

Two Uyghur Christians are currently on trial for their faith, according to an April 14 report from China Aid Association.

In September, Wusiman Yiming was sentenced to criminal detention for "divulging State secrets" by the State Security Bureau of Southern Xinjiang in the city of Hetian. Last November, he was sentenced to two years "re-education through labour." His family hired an attorney to file an appeal, which was approved on March 20. His appeal trial is scheduled for April 16 at Kashi People's Court. There is considerable concern for Yiming's health as he suffers from malnutrition and a serious hand injury.

Also in September, Alimujiang Yimiti, a married father of two, was charged with "illegal religious activities" and taken into custody on accusations of "subversion of the National Government and endangering national security." Officials are expected to announce Yimiti's sentence by the end of April. If convicted, he is subject to capital punishment.

11. Imprisoned Catholic Underground Bishop Dies

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-09-12a.htm>

Bishop John Han Dingxian (71), an underground Chinese catholic bishop who was repeatedly detained for his faith since 1960 and who was placed in solitary confinement in an unknown location for the past two years, died on September 9. There is great suspicion regarding the cause of death of this Bishop, because his body was cremated immediately after his death and no clergy were allowed to administer last rites or to attend the funeral service. The Cardinal Kung Foundation questioned the haste behind the cremation and burial and called it "suspicious."

12. and 13. House Church Leaders Detained

September 5, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-09-05.htm>

Eight house church leaders were detained in late August, according to an August 24 report from China Aid Association.

One church leader was arrested and two others were injured during a raid of a house church during a worship service on August 19 in Jianhu, Jiangsu. This church was previously attacked in early July while hosting a children's Bible school program.

On August 21, seven church leaders were detained from a house church meeting in the village of Leizhiwa, Inner Mongolia. Four pastors from Liaoning province, Qin Tao (29), Wang Cong (34), Wang Shengjun (34), and Wang Youjun (47), and three Christian women leaders from Inner Mongolia were taken to the local Public Security Bureau office. At last report, all were still in detention.

14. China: 77-year-old Woman Christian Near Death After Torture in Jail

August 30, 2007

<http://chinaview.wordpress.com/2007/08/31/china-77-year-old-woman-christian-near-death-after-torture-in-jail/>

Shuang Shuying, a 77-year-old Beijing resident, was sentenced to two years in prison this February for defending human rights and insisting on practicing her religion.

Already in poor health, Shuang endured severe torture whilst incarcerated, causing her weight to plummet from roughly 110 pounds down to just 73 pounds.

Shuang has also lost her vision while serving her sentence, leaving her unable to recognize her visiting son. She was left to rely on her limited hearing to communicate.

Family grief

Shuang's father, Shuang Deli was executed for being an anti-revolutionary in 1949 when the Chinese communist regime took power and confiscated the family's property. The family was made to witness his death. Before the family was able to claim the body, they had to pay for the bullet.

History seemed to repeat itself following Shuang's first marriage, as her husband was sentenced to 20 years in a labor camp for being an anti-revolutionary.

To extricate her from the poverty brought about by having her assets taken and family members imprisoned, Shuang married a man named Hua Zaichen. The couple had two boys and one girl.

In 1957, Hua was also sent to a labor camp and imprisoned for 20 years. Shuang was forced to raise the children without a father.

During the Cultural Revolution, officials demanded that she divorce her imprisoned husband, but Shuang refused. For her disobedience, Shuang was beaten while hanging naked from a pillar by local authorities and made to kneel on a triangular frame.

Became a Christian

Shuang's son, Hua Huiqi, became a Christian in 1990. Because of his involvement with the church, he was often followed and beaten by police. Shuang worried about her son's safety, so she accompanied him to his church.

Shuang began to learn about Christianity and was later baptized in 1992. Since then, Shuang turned her dwelling into a boarding house for fellow Christians who came to Beijing appealing for their rights. Her service attracted police surveillance and continued harassment.

House dismantled for 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

Because Shuang's house was very close to Tiananmen Square, officials viewed it as a politically defiant dwelling.

When Beijing authorities won their bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games, they dismantled Shuang's home claiming that it hurt the "New Beijing, New Olympics"—the slogan chosen for the Games.

The family was transferred to another suburb and detained in a facility known as "Guanjiakeng." The police supervised the family 24 hours a day, and frequently beat them.

Imprisoned for appeal

Shuang and her son were beaten by police at the Asian Games Village when they reported the forced demolition of their home before the Beijing People's Representatives Conference. The complaint cost Shuang's son six months secret imprisonment by the Beijing Security Bureau Chaoyang Branch.

Shuang and her husband were also detained when they demanded their rights and appealed for their son's release on February 9. The couple was arrested and convicted for "purposely destroying public and private property." They were sentenced to two years and fined 5000 yuan (US\$662) on February 26.

Shuang was detained at both the Labor Camp of the Chongwen Branch of Beijing Public Security and the Beijing Women's Prison. During her stay, she was injured both physically and mentally as she was not allowed to sleep until 12:00 p.m. every day even though she suffered from serious hypertension, diabetes, cataracts and neuralgia.

Her family members were not permitted to see or offer support of any kind, and were not approved for a visit until five and half months into her sentence.

Hua said that his mother was tortured nearly to death, and was now emaciated—her hands trembled, her face pale, her vision growing worse.

Beijing Games Would Soil Reputation of Olympics

Hua revealed that the Beijing authorities held his mother hostage. Hua said that when he was in prison, Meng Zhuang, the officer in charge of religious issues at Beijing's Public Security Bureau, forced him to cooperate with police and forbid contact with his fellow churchgoers and boarders who were staying at his house appealing in Beijing. "Your mother will not be set free if you refused to co-operate with us," threatened police.

On July 25 Hua was released. One week later, Meng Zhuang came to the house and forced Hua to cooperate with officers by spying, providing the vital contact information of the individuals

staying at his home. Meng Zhuang enticed Hua by promising him that he could visit his mother in prison if he cooperated. "Your mother could be released anytime with just one word from our chief," said Meng. When Hua refused, Meng threatened him again. "You will never see you mother again if you refuse to cooperate with authorities," he said.

Hua accused police of holding his mother hostage to compel him to submit. "The police were worse then a gang of terrorists," he exclaimed. "Even terrorists will free children and the elderly. Yet Chinese officers continue to hold an old woman hostage to coerce me."

Hua said that his house was demolished to make way for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. He said that it smeared the Olympic's reputation to hold the games in a country without human rights. "It will forever remain a stain in the history of the Olympics," he said, much like the Olympics hosted by Hitler in Germany."

15. Recent Update From China

May 23, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-05-23.htm>

a) Father Shao Zhoumin (43) and Father Jiang Sunian, two underground priests from Wenzhou who were arrested in late September, received prison sentences in March after being charged with making "illegal exits" when returning from China to Europe. According to a May 21 report from Zenit, Zhoumin, who was accused of having falsified his passport, has been released one month prior to the end of his nine month prison sentence due to his poor health. He suffers from an illness which he likely contracted during his detention that has left him deaf. Sunian, who is classified as a "repeat offender" due to a prior arrest for illegally publishing hymnals, is currently serving an eleven month prison sentence and is expected to be released in August.

b) After intensive diplomacy and media pressure, the five house church leaders who have been detained in Xinjiang since being arrested on April 19 were released on May 17 and 18, according to a May 18 report from China Aid Association. Family members of the detained pastors were called by the local government to pay 2000 Yuan (\$284 CAD) for the release of each detainee because all of them were "very ill." After payment, the families discovered that most of the pastors were in fine health but two of the male pastors had torture wounds on their arms and legs. The names of the five released leaders are Ms. Xinglan Zhao, Ms. Xiurong Huang, Pastor Tianlu Yang (41) Pastor Chaoyi Wang (41) and Ms. Cuiling Li (48)

16. American and Chinese Church Leaders Arrested

May 2, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-05-02.htm>

Four American Christian leaders, including two pastors, and approximately thirty Chinese house church leaders were arrested and detained during a fellowship gathering in Akesu city, Xinjiang province on April 19. According to an April 25 report from China Aid Association, the Chinese Christians were detained at the Akesu City detention center. Eyewitnesses saw at least two of the arrested with bleeding noses and facial bruises due to torture during interrogation. Several of the detainees have been released over the past week. Six pastors -- Xinglan Zhao, Xiurong Huang, Tianlu Yang, Chaoyi Wang, Cuiling Li, and Sijun He -- received thirty days detention for alleged involvement in "evil cult activities." The pastors also face one to three years re-education

through labour. A couple of years ago, these six pastors were detained for organizing house church activities.

At last report, the Americans, who arrived in Akesu on April 17, were still being held in an undisclosed hotel for questioning along with their translator. The U.S. Embassy is reportedly intervening in the case.

Americans Released, Chinese Leaders Remain Detained

May 9, 2007

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2007-05-09.htm>

After intense international media pressure, the four American church leaders who were arrested along with thirty Chinese church leaders in Akesu city, Xinjiang on April 19 were released last week, along with their translator. According to a May 2 report from China Aid Association, all five have returned home. Several Chinese church leaders, however, remain detained, including six pastors. It is suspected that the six will receive harsh sentences because of their connection with the Americans. Persecution of Christians in the Xinjiang area has reportedly been on the rise since the April 19 arrests.

17. Two Catholic Priests Arrested

October 4, 2006

<http://www.persecution.net/cn-2006-10-04.htm>

On September 25, two priests were arrested in Shenzhen, Guangdong, according to reports from the Cardinal Kung Foundation. Father Shao Zhoumin, the vicar general of the Wenzhou Diocese in Zhejiang province, and Father Jiang Sunian, the chancellor of the Wenzhou Diocese, were arrested as they returned from a trip to Europe. During the arrest, the police confiscated a large number of books and photos that the priests were bringing back from their visit. The priests have been detained in an unknown location and no reasons have been given for their arrest.

Zhoumin and Sunian were previously arrested together on October 27, 2005. Each was also arrested in 1999.

18. through 22. Voice of the Martyrs China Country Report

<http://www.persecution.net/china.htm>

In 1949, The People's Republic of China was formed under Chairman Mao Zedong. He quickly began purging the country of anything that did not coincide with his vision of a communist nation, resulting in millions of deaths.

In 1950, China invaded Tibet, forcing its leader, the Dalai Lama, into exile in India and forcing the communist system on the people of Tibet.

In recent years there has been a move to a free market economy. However, that freedom has not carried over into human rights and religious freedom.

China's human rights record is one of the worst in the world, with a system of "re-education through labour" which detains hundreds of thousands each year in work camps without even a court hearing. There are more Christians in prison in China than any other country in the world.

The only legal churches are those strictly controlled by the government of China. Those who do not wish to follow government policies on religious practice and beliefs must meet in homes and risk being labeled as "evil cults." Such a designation can result in closing down the church, confiscation of property, and charges against the leadership, often resulting in torture, imprisonment and death.

In November, 2004, a new set of regulations was announced which is to govern religious affairs. While they claim that these regulations will bring about significant steps toward religious freedom, it appears that they only serve to codify policies throughout various existing laws. Ironically, it was during the same month that China Aid was able to obtain a document which had been issued on May 27, 2004, outlining their agenda to "boost Marxist atheism research, propaganda, and education." One intention is to "ban all uncivilized conduct in spreading superstitions," causing people to be "educated, spirits enriched, their state of thought improved." Stronger involvement is urged in the media, with particular attention to the Internet as "a new tool to conduct Marxist atheism propaganda and education." While the document purports to support freedom of religion, it calls on officials to make a distinction between religion and "superstition." This designation has been frequently used against religious beliefs which do not support the government's Marxist position. This document helps to explain an increase in government suppression of house churches, the Internet and Christian literature. To view the document online, www.persecution.net/chinadocument1.htm.

A second official Chinese government document outlines a new offensive on underground house churches. In part, the document reads: "We have dealt with the Falun-gong. We have arrested and put their leaders on the run. Now we must resolutely and strongly deal with the unregistered house churches. They are too numerous -- too many. We must deal with them strongly." The document suggests the increased pressure would be from April to August 2005. It was reported that on May 22, 2005 during Sunday worship time, police and Public Security Bureau (PSB) officers simultaneously raided approximately 60 house churches in Changchun, the capital city of Jilin province in northeastern China. In the days following, an additional 40 churches in the area were also raided. More than 600 house church believers and leaders were taken into custody. Most were released after 24 to 48 hours of interrogation, but approximately 100 leaders continued to be held in different detention centers.

During 2004, several mass arrests clarified the government's objectives regarding house churches. In a single raid on a leadership retreat on June 11, 2004 police arrested more than one hundred leaders of the China Gospel Fellowship (CGF) house church movement. Chinese authorities also raided a leadership retreat on July 12, 2004 arresting over one hundred church leaders. Then for the third time in two months, Chinese authorities rounded up large numbers of house church leaders as they gathered together for mutual encouragement and fellowship in August, 2004.

There has been no respite from individual arrests, imprisonment and torture, either. On June 18, 2004 Ms. Jiang Zongxiu was beaten to death while in prison. Despite reports in the Chinese media and several appeals to higher authorities, there was no serious investigation into the case. Initially, the authorities claimed she had died of heart failure, despite the obvious wounds on her body from the beatings.

Later, on September 11, 2004 Pastor Cai Zhuohua was kidnapped by plain-clothed officers while he was waiting for a bus in Beijing. On September 27 his wife, Xiao Yunfei was arrested while in hiding. Her brother, Xiao Gaowen, and sister-in-law, Hu Jinyun, were also arrested.

According to sources close to the Chinese authorities, the central government labeled this case the most serious case of overseas religious infiltration since the founding of the People's Republic of China . According to China Aid, Qiang Wei, deputy General Secretary of Politics and Law Commission of Beijing, issued a handwritten directive "Yan Ban," meaning to deal with this case harshly and severely. It was later learned that Pastor Cai Zhuohua was tortured by police using an electric cattle prod.

The unregistered Catholic Church which maintains allegiance to the Vatican has been subject to a concentrated effort to quash their growth. The Vatican has worked extensively to bring about the release of their clergy, only to have the government respond with yet more repression. AsiaNews reported that the 83-year-old Auxiliary Bishop of Xiwanzi in Hebei Province was detained and subjected to "re-education." The 83-year-old Bishop Yao Liang was arrested on March 31,2005 and then released in mid-April. Soon after his release, he was again detained. The purpose of the "re-education" is undoubtedly to convince the bishop to leave the underground Catholic Church and join the official government church.

These are only a few of the thousands of Christians risking their lives daily in China, whose only crime is faith in Jesus Christ. Thankfully, the government has been responsive at times to international pressure. However, this responsiveness is sporadic and too frequently Western governments have been more obsessed with gaining access into the huge Chinese market than to require basic human rights for the people.

Despite the opposition, the church in China is growing rapidly; something the government is fighting hard to contain. One estimate suggests that six percent of China's population is Christian. By contrast, Tibet has an estimated total of three hundred Christians.