

**The Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing
on
The State of Religious Freedom Around the Globe**

**July 13, 2021–2:00 p.m.
Virtual, via WebEx**

**Statement of Rev. Bob Fu, PhD.,
Founder and President of China Aid Association**

Dear Honorable Cochairmen Representatives Jim McGovern and Chris Smith, members of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, my fellow distinguished witnesses, friends, ladies, and gentlemen,

First, I would like to ask the two Co-Chairmen Congressman MacGovern and Congressman Smith to allow my full written testimony as part of Congressional permanent record.

Today, as the world witnesses the worst religious persecution seen in China since Mao's Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, the rule of man has replaced the rule of law and rule by law. Under China's President Xi Jinping, each month during 2020 at the close of another decade, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) intensified its religious persecution. Implementing the banner of "Sinicization," the CCP launched a wide comprehensive war against all perceived independent faiths. Targeted groups included Catholics, Protestants of both house church traditions, and reportedly, government controlled Three-Self Patriotic churches, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong practitioners, Muslims of Uighurs and Kazarks as well as Hui traditions, and other emerging new sects.

In 2018, under the direction of Chinese President Xi, China's officials began the "Five-Year Plan for the Sinicization of Religion," designed to shape all religious faiths to become compatible with Communism. In the persecution against Christian communities for example, the CCP intends to bring Christianity under the full control of the government. As officials forced Christians in State-run churches, also called Three-Self Churches, to demolish their crosses, they also forced them to fly the Communist Party flag, sing Communist revolutionary songs, and listen to secondary sermons extolling the government from the church pulpit.

The CCP completely outlawed non-government churches, called "house churches." Authorities ordered many to join the official church system and submit to government censorship. In 2020, authorities informed these church leaders that their congregations were "illegal" and accused Christians who attended house churches of various fabricated crimes.

Escalation of Persecution

The CCP persecuted more than 1,000,000 people in 2018, three-and-a-half times more than researchers recorded in 2017. Of those, the Party persecuted more than 10,000 church leaders, five times greater than those recorded in 2017.

Table 3-1: Comparison of persecution by year in six categories

Year	2017	2018
No. of persecution cases	1,265	> 10,000
No. of people persecuted	> 223,200 (church leaders > 1,900)	> 1,000,000 (church leaders > 10,000)
No. of people detained	> 3,700 (church leaders > 650)	> 5,000 (church leaders > 1,000)
No. of people arrested	347	> 500
No. of abuse cases	> 300	> 2,000
No. of people abused	> 2,000	> 50,000

The number of people arrested—more than 5,000—increased 35%. This includes more than 1,000 church leaders, an increase of 54% from 2017.

The CCP sentenced more than 500 people to serve prison terms, an increase of 44% from 2017.

CCP authorities abused more than 50,000 people, constituting an increase of 25% from 2017.

i. Comparison of persecution cases in 2018 and 2017



ChinaAid’s research documented more than 10,000 persecution cases in 2018, 36 times greater than those recorded in 2017.

In 2018, research revealed more than 2,000 abuse cases, including physical, verbal, mental abuse and torture, five times more than in 2017.

ii. Basic annual analysis

When juxtaposed with 2017, information garnered about persecution in 2018 charts an increase of at least 35% in the six categories mentioned above, among which the number of persecution cases and the number of people abused reflect an exponential rise, the number of persecution cases totaling 36 times more, and the number of people abused 25 times greater than in 2017. The number of abuse cases increased five-fold, and the number of people persecuted, especially church leaders, also shows a remarkable growth. Under Xi Jinping's Sinicization, initiated in 2014, one year after he became "President," the severity of the persecution of churches and Christians in mainland China increased with unprecedented, cruel intensity.

iii. Key findings for 2020

As 2020 began a new decade, the novel Coronavirus, which initially broke out in Wuhan, raged throughout the world, causing many to "social distance" and "quarantine" themselves from others. CCP authorities, however, did not distance themselves from nor did they forgo persecuting Christians. Neither did they quarantine themselves from targeting those in mainland China who professed beliefs other than atheism. Instead, CCP authorities continued to increasingly persecute Christians, religious practitioners, and human rights activists.

ChinaAid's research regarding persecution in China during 2020 confirmed the following trends:

- CCP authorities completed nine documented church demolitions, disconcerting more than 5000 members and attendees.
- In addition to demolishing churches, CCP authorities forcibly commandeered and repurposed an unknown number of churches and religious sites.
- As CCP officials worked to more fully control "religion," they ordered Christians in state-run, as well as in house churches, to fly the Chinese flag, and sing patriotic songs in services. Authorities directed ministers and priests to "Sinicize" sermons.
- CCP authorities raided Christian families' gatherings and interfered with parenting decisions. Numerous officials sued Christians for homeschooling their children or sending them to church-run schools.
- CCP authorities persecuted 100% of house churches. Police formally, as well as informally, summoned and questioned every church's main leader.
- Persecution adversely affected more than three million Christians in China during 2020.

Although China attempted to hide its role in Covid-19, the truth revealed that the deadly virus initially spread in Wuhan. Similarly, even though the CCP tries to conceal the brutal reality about its ongoing, intensified religious persecution and human rights abuses, victims and their family members recount real-life, horrendous experiences.

ChinaAid's research for 2020 confirms that China's persecution of Christians and of those professing any belief again exceeded incidents reported for the previous year (2019). As

suppressed facts have emerged from dark, secret places, the fallout from the CCP's persecution, like results from the unchecked Covid-19 pandemic, present a potent, putrid threat to challenge the outside world to pay attention.

Control and Reform of Christianity

With 2020 as the third year of implementing the CCP's "Five-Year Plan for the Sinicization of Christianity," ChinaAid perceives the CCP's persecution of Christianity and Christians as the well rehearsed model for controlling religion in Xi Jinping's New Era. This new era's model, characterized by the ideology that "the CCP rules all" and the implementation of the Regulations on Religious Affairs in 2018, reveals the following trends and characteristics.

i. Alienating Christianity and Faith in Jesus

In China, the government has designated politics to command and lead religion, guiding Christianity and Christians to shift from "Obey the Lord, follow the Lord" to "Obey the Party, follow the Party." Examples of this shift include:

- 1) in Henan Province, due to President Xi's opposition to the first commandment, the Ten Commandments became "the Nine Commandments."
- 2) The CCP's version of the "Three Character Canon" appeared in Jiangxi Province to proclaim and promote the new Regulations on Religious Affairs.
- 3) CCP authorities forcibly removed images of Jesus or Mary in Christians' homes and replaced them with President Xi's photo.
- 4) Officials forcibly revised some churches' worship service in Anhui Province, and at some churches in Henan Province, they posted pictures of Xi Jinping and Mao Zedong on the left and right sides of the cross, with a Chinese flag positioned next to them.

"Red" ideological logos and symbols replaced Christian and Jesus-related symbols, which manifested as the following:

Besides facilitating extensive cross demolitions, CCP authorities forced Christians to remove Christian folk artwork from their homes and forbid them to post Chinese New Year door banners with Christian messages. Officials ordered that Christians remove tiles and door banners with Christian messages from their doorways or paint over them with black paint. They ordered Christians to scratch out the word "Immanuel" posted on walls of their homes. Government authorities confiscated Christian books and publications. They forbid the printing and posting of images of Jesus.

The CCP exercised full control over Three-Self Churches in the name of standardizing management. This included religious activity sites, personnel, funding, and church activities. For example, authorities evaluated evangelists, and placed restrictions on the number allowed. The Party even monitored the method of evaluation, and the content of evangelists' sermons. Party officials asked churches to create a plan for developing new converts. They installed surveillance

cameras in and outside of churches. The Three-Self Church network of Henan Province further proposed “nine forbidden practices.”

ii. Persecution methods: illegal and radical

The use of violence (beating, smashing, and robbing) dramatically rose, and included forcibly demolishing churches, some by dynamite. The CCP routinely and forcibly demolished crosses, setting some on fire. Authorities increasingly, forcibly outlawed and shut down churches, accompanied by raiding, searching, and smashing church buildings, and even openly burning Bibles.

CCP authorities employed “falsified” accusations, and used other completely illegal means, including raiding church gatherings and disrupting church services; summoning and interviewing believers to convey threats; pressuring landlords into evicting churches and openly appropriating church properties. They also fabricated criminal charges to detain, arrest, and sentence church leaders and lay believers, persecuting pro-democracy Christians and Christian dissidents. At times, CCP police kidnapped them, and prevented lawyers from intervening in cases related to churches and Christians.

iii. The CCP perceives Christianity as an enemy

The CCP attempted to eliminate all house churches, including outlawing influential mega house churches across the nation, removing their presence on the internet, and forbidding evangelistic organizations from proclaiming the Gospel online. To exhaust churches financially, authorities required pilot house churches to either join the Three-Self Church or disband. In the name of “illegal religious activities,” they disqualified house church clergy for evangelism, and misappropriated fines and issued additional administrative penalties on house churches.

CCP authorities fostered a discriminatory and even anti-Christian social atmosphere by:

(local governments in many places) forbidding the celebration of “foreign holidays,” particularly Christian holidays and mainly Christmas, and openly forbidding the sale of the Bible in online stores; forbidding citizens to believe in Christianity, which has extended from CCP members, civil servants, and military servicemen to non-CCP members and average citizens, and from inside the government system to outside the government system, and forcing people to sign a statement promising not to follow the Christian faith; dramatically increasing the range of people banned from churches, especially children; placing unprecedented restrictions on schools with a Christian background, forcibly suspending business operations with a Christian background, and imposing restrictions on Christians’ daily living; and discriminating against them in their access to social security, employment, and bank loans. This exposed a comprehensive persecution of Christians in economic, social, and cultural arenas.

The CCP [albeit futilely] attempted to wipe out the Christian faith, as evidenced by “forcing” adult believers to deny their faith and sign a statement promising not to practice it. Authorities even required schools and parents to make children give up their Christian beliefs. Officials also

forbade children's access to the Christian faith on all fronts and entirely deprived them of their right to believe in Christianity.

Key Cases

Gao Zhisheng

As an attorney, Gao served people prosecuted by the Chinese Communist Party for decades. For his work, he was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. China, however, targeted him, and he spent years locked away.

While behind bars, he suffered multiple counts of torture, which he described in his piece "Dark Night, Dark Hood, and Kidnapping by Dark Mafia." In 2009, because of pressure the CCP placed on Gao's family, his wife and children fled to the United States.

Authorities released Gao from one of his sentences in 2014, but authorities monitored him closely in his cave home at his brother's village in Shanxi Province.

On August 23, 2017, two of Gao's supporters smuggled him out of his house and brought him to the neighboring Shanxi province. There, they hid for 23 days, but officials eventually found them, and Gao vanished into police custody again. The year 2021 will mark his fifth year of forced disappearance in China.

Dr. Wang Zhan

Dr. Wang Zhan, an Environmental scientist, Monash University, PhD. (2012-2016), worked as a researcher for Yonsei University (2017-2019) and Finnish Meteorological Institute (2019).

Since 2009, Dr. Zhan has published articles and poems about Manchuria (Northeast China) Independence. In 2014, he started an online group and platform for activists supporting the independence of provinces in China, however, in 2017, the CCP shut the platform down. On October 15, 2019, authorities arrested Dr. Zhan when he visited China accusing him of 'subversion of State power' and detain him in 'The first detention center of Shenyang.' Officials have not yet scheduled a trial and have not allowed his lawyers or family members to meet him.

Independent author Yuan Yefei

Yefei Yuan, served as an important editor of the WeChat public publishing account "Dongchuandou" that spreads disintegrating China and localism, also as one of the assistants of Zhongjing Liu, a historic writer who advocates disintegrating China. In addition to editing Dongchuandou's articles, he provided abundant valuable references and academic sources for Liu's books, published in Taiwan. Taiwan Gusa Publishing Group published his interview with Liu in the name of The Source Code of Evolution of Civilization. Yuan co-authored as an interviewer using his pen name Zhensi Yuan.

As staff of the WeChat public publishing account, Yuan also undertook customer services and account administration. On May 7, 2019, he abruptly lost all contact with the outside world. Later, authorities from a different Province, State Security officers from Jiangyin, Jiangsu questioned and arrested him, accusing him of an economic crime; for collecting membership fees

from readers. Meanwhile, other editors of Dongchuandou (who located in various provinces) experienced the same questionings. Later, officials released Mr. Yuan, based on a bail with trial pending. Nevertheless, he lost all his freedom of communication. Once, when he tried to use VPN to communicate with the outside world using Telegram, the next day, authorities cut off all his communications.

Li Baiguang

Dr. Li Baiguang began defending victims of human rights abuses, such as impoverished farmers, in March 2001. CCP authorities detained him on December 14, 2004. He continued his work after his release on January 21, 2005. That year, when he became a Christian, the Beijing church baptized him.

After his release, Dr. Li accepted more cases, defending some of his fellow persecuted human rights lawyers and members of China's house church. Months before his death, kidnappers dragged him into a forest in Zhejiang Province where they beat and threatened to kill him if he did not leave the area by 10 a.m. the next day. After he reported the case to the police, Dr. Li received anonymous death threats. Nevertheless, he never wavered in his decision to fight the CCP's abuses.

On February 25, 2018, Dr. Li mysteriously passed away hours after being admitted to the hospital for a stomach ache. Medical personnel confirmed his death at 3 a.m. China Standard Time the next day. CCP officials hastily cremated his body before an autopsy could be completed, and despite any previously known medical conditions, claimed Dr. Li died of liver disease.

During his career, Dr. Li traveled numerous times to Washington, D.C. with ChinaAid delegations, meeting with prominent officials, twice with President George W. Bush. His last trip in February occurred just weeks before his death. His legacy as a champion of religious freedom and the rights of minorities, however, lives on.

Pastor John Cao

Pastor John Cao served as a missionary in Myanmar's Wa State, transforming the lives of more than 2,000 impoverished minority children by building 16 schools and working to fight poverty in the region. Chinese officials knew that he repeatedly crossed the border between China and Myanmar because of his work and allowed him to do so for three years.

On March 5, 2017, however, authorities in China's Yunnan province intercepted Cao and his colleague, Jing Ruxia, and placed them in prison on illegal border crossing charges, despite the fact that they had never had trouble before. Later, they changed Cao's charge to "organizing illegal border crossings," and he was sentenced to seven years in prison in March 2018.

When faced with the option of obtaining American citizenship to continue his work in the faith, Pastor Cao, married to an American citizen, Jamie Powell, and a legal resident of North Carolina chose to continue to serve the persecuted Chinese church.

Those observing Cao's case believe that his imprisonment does not come from the violation of any border law, but rather arose from China's ongoing campaign to suppress the Chinese church.

Pastor Wang Yi and Early Rain Covenant Church

Months-long persecution of Early Rain Covenant Church, a large house church in Chengdu, culminated on December 9, 2018, in an overnight mass arrest, with police taking approximately 100 people into custody. Within a week, authorities had imprisoned an estimated 160 members of Early Rain Covenant Church, including several elders, and one of its pastors, Wang Yi, and Jiang Rong, his wife. CCP authorities later placed Pastor Wang under criminal detention for "inciting subversion of State power." The CCP has continued their harassment of members of the Early Rain Covenant Church, arresting 44 more church attendees at two worship venues on February 24, 2019.

Most of the Christians have been released, but on Christmas day in 2019, authorities sentenced Pastor to nine-years in prison for "inciting subversion of State power" and conducting "illegal business operations." Officials accused him of these crimes because of his ministry and opposition to the rule of President Xi.

Police currently monitor Pastor Wang's wife, Jiang Rong, and their son. In addition, authorities closely watch his parents' home.

Prior to his arrest in December 2018, anticipating that he might someday be imprisoned, Pastor Wang Yi penned "My Declaration of Civil Disobedience." He asked that if authorities imprisoned him, this manuscript be distributed for more than 48 hours.

Persecution of Li Chuanliang and his family members

Li Chuanliang, born on September 27, 1963, served as deputy mayor of Jixi City Government and deputy mayor of Hegang City Government in Heilongjiang Province before resigning from public office in May 2014. In 2020, he joined the Chinese Democratic Party (CCP). In China, Mr. Li repeatedly, publicly reported corruption among CCP leaders and cadres. He also insisted on freedom of speech and made political statements regarding the CCP's concealment of the Wuhan virus, which had caused a heavy death toll among the people. Thus, CCP authorities suppressed and persecuted him.

In August 2020, in solidarity with Hong Kong, as Mr. Li adhered to the political view of advancing democracy and freedom in China as well as in the United States, he participated and carried out various pro-democracy campaigns against the CCP's tyranny. Particularly since August 19, 2020, he publicly accepted special interviews from various media, including Radio Free Asia, Epoch Times newspaper, New Tang Dynasty TV (NTDTV), Vision Times newspaper, and China Forbidden News, etc. Using his real name, Mr. Li publicly announced that he relinquished his membership in the CCP. He also disclosed the truth of the Party's concealment of the Wuhan virus. Mr. Li revealed the fact that CCP authorities arbitrarily arrested dissidents. He criticized the CCP's various tyranny routes, dating back to the Cultural Revolution, and exposed the CCP's tyranny system, as well as the tyranny of the political and

legal king of northeast China. He initiated the work of "China Torture Officials Whistleblower Center (CTOWC)."

Since September 2020, in response to Mr. Li's various political activities, CCP authorities have targeted and even more severely persecuted him and his family in China. CCP authorities have illegally arrested Mr. Li's pregnant daughter and son-in-law, as well as his sister and brother. They have illegally arrested and tortured almost all his family members and relatives. CCP authorities have additionally persecuted Mr. Li by making false confessions against him, preparing false charges, seizing private property, announcing a case against him for investigation and a cross-border manhunt. They have arrested his partners. CCP authorities have also arrested Li Jiyang, Mr. Li's pregnant daughter, confiscated her personal belongings, and fabricated charges to persecute her. Officials confiscated personal belongings of Mr. Li's son-in-law, Xiu Jianying, arrested him on false charges, and persecuted him using torture. Authorities have persecuted both Li Chuanhua, Mr. Li's younger sister and Li Chuangang, his younger brother. In addition to arresting/torturing them on fabricated charges, they confiscated their personal belongings and houses.

Conclusion

Regardless of China's attempts to block information on persecution from reaching the outside world, ChinaAid's research shows that religious oppression continues to increase with each passing year since 2017. As China advances its plan to Sinicize Christianity and other religions with forced indoctrination of Communism ideology, authorities all over the country are interfering with normal religious operations and arbitrarily detaining and arresting hundreds of thousands of religious believers purely for peacefully practicing their religious faith. Given the observed universality in which the CCP persecuted both officially sanctioned and independent religions and faiths, ChinaAid has concluded that the CCP's war on religion will continue to grow unless the world intervenes.

Recommendations

To hold the CCP's "bad actors" accountable for their actions. ChinaAid and I urge the United States government to continue to implement and utilize the Global Magnitsky sanctions against the Chinese Communist Party members committing and delegating gross human rights abuses. This should include those who commit violations of freedom of religion and belief in Article 18 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The United States government should continue to work with like minded countries in implementing bilateral sanctions like those announced in March 2021.

I also urge Congress to quickly pass the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in order to confront the vast labor system put in place by the Chinese Communist Party that effectively profits off the genocide of an ethnic and religious minority.

In addition, U.S. Congress should raise the alarm considering the 2022 Winter Olympics hosted in Beijing, China. A country with as poor a human rights record and actively committing genocide should be disqualified from hosting international events such as Olympics. The United

States should boycott the Beijing Olympics and call on other countries who adhere to universal values to do the same.

It is equally important to show solidarity with victims of religious persecution by having members of Congress continue to meet with persecution survivors and adopt Chinese prisoners of conscience through the Defending Freedoms Project. In the Administration, President Biden and Vice President Harris should meet and host the victims of persecution and genocide in public at the White House and the United Nations in New York and Geneva.