

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

### *Findings*

- During the Commission's 2024 reporting year, the Chinese Communist Party and government enacted legal provisions that strengthened control over religious practices, including the Measures for the Management of Venues for Religious Activities and the PRC Patriotic Education Law. Since 2018, the Chinese Communist Party and government have issued several key legal provisions to tighten control over religious activities.
- The five state-recognized religious bodies overseeing Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestant Christianity, and Islam, each published updated Five-Year Plans for "sinicization." Individuals and religious sites were promoted as "models" of sinicization.
- During this reporting year, the Commission observed the Chinese government's efforts to "sinicize" Taoism, emphasizing Party control and alignment with Party ideology rather than religious identity. The government also continued to exert pressure on Buddhism to use historical reinterpretation to promote religious subordination to the Party.
- The Party cracked down on folk religious practices that it views as potentially undermining its authority.
- During this reporting year, four Catholic bishops were consecrated with mutual approval from both PRC authorities and the Holy See, the only appointments made since 2021, while about 40 dioceses remained without leadership. Authorities continued to hold Catholic clergy in detention or forcibly disappear them due to their refusal to join the Christian Council of China, including Catholic Bishop **Shao Zhumin** of the Diocese of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province.
- The PRC government continued its campaign to remove Islamic architectural elements from mosques or demolish them. These policies target Hui Muslims and aim to eradicate religious and cultural distinctiveness while promoting assimilation with Han Chinese culture. Experts commented that this year marked the conclusion of the nationwide mosque "sinicization" campaign, as the last major mosques in China lost their Arabic-style features.
- The Party exerted pressure on Hong Kong religious communities to conform to the "sinicization" policies of mainland China, including through continual trips between mainland China and Hong Kong. Experts on religious freedom and belief also noted the threat posed to the confidentiality of the Sacrament of Penance with the enactment of the *Safeguarding National Security Ordinance*.
- PRC authorities continued to violate Protestants' religious freedom through detention of leaders of unregistered churches, surveillance of activities and participants, and use other legal tools to control and punish church leaders. Authorities continued to order the removal of crosses and other Christian symbols from church buildings.

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- During this reporting year, PRC authorities continued to monitor, detain, and imprison Falun Gong practitioners, Church of Almighty God members, and others for being members of “evil cults” (*xiejiao*, 邪教). In March 2024, the Commission held a hearing in which witnesses expressed concerns about possible forced organ removal from religious and ethnic minorities in China, including Falun Gong practitioners.

## FREEDOM OF RELIGION

### *Introduction*

During the 2024 reporting year, the Commission observed persistent violations of religious freedom by the Chinese Communist Party and government, aimed at consolidating their systemic control over religious practitioners and communities. Authorities undertook such efforts on multiple levels by including a provision in the sweeping PRC Patriotic Education Law addressed to religious groups and institutions; issuing restrictive new regulations governing religious sites; launching individualized Five-Year Plans for the “sinicization” of all five state-sanctioned religious bodies; and harshly repressing unregistered religious believers and communities. The Party and government also leveraged technology-enhanced censorship and surveillance tools, alongside more traditional methods of community-based monitoring, to maintain control over religious practitioners and groups and to identify individuals and content deemed to be threats.

### *International and Chinese Law on Religious Freedom*

International law protects the right to form, hold, and change beliefs without restriction while allowing limited constraints on their outward manifestation in the presence of select justifications.<sup>1</sup> The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) codify these principles.<sup>2</sup> Article 36 of China’s Constitution guarantees “freedom of religious belief” and protects “normal religious activities” but leaves “normal” undefined, allowing the government to stipulate what constitutes “normal” and to circumscribe religious activity beyond what is codified under the UDHR and ICCPR.<sup>3</sup>

Since 2018, the Party and government have issued several key legal provisions to tighten control over religious activities, including:

- **Revised Regulations on Religious Affairs (2018).**<sup>4</sup> These regulations significantly expanded oversight of religious communities, encompassing activities, schools, religious instruction, and international engagement.<sup>5</sup> Many provinces and regions subsequently issued supplementary regulations, further intensifying control over religious groups.<sup>6</sup>
- **Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel (2021).**<sup>7</sup> These measures empowered the National Religious Affairs Administration (NRAA) to exert greater control over religious leaders.<sup>8</sup> The measures mandated the creation of a database<sup>9</sup> of recognized religious personnel who must demonstrate loyalty to the Chinese government by embracing socialism and supporting Communist Party leadership.<sup>10</sup> The measures emphasize resistance to foreign religious influence,<sup>11</sup> explicitly prohibiting Chinese clergy from accepting positions with foreign religious groups or institutions without authorization, or engaging in “any other act that violates the principle of [Chinese] self-determination.”<sup>12</sup>
- **Measures for the Administration of Internet Religious Information Services (2022).**<sup>13</sup> These measures impose strict

regulations on online religious content. They require all groups to register before posting religious material and prohibit foreign entities from disseminating such content within China.<sup>14</sup> The measures also ban a wide range of content deemed to undermine national unity and social stability, or promote extremism, terrorism, separatism, or religious fanaticism, among other types of content.<sup>15</sup>

### *Regulatory and Policy Developments*

During the 2024 reporting year, the Party and government enacted regulations that strengthened control over religious practices. On September 1, 2023, the NRAA implemented new Measures for the Management of Venues for Religious Activities, superseding the 2005 version.<sup>16</sup> These measures impose rigorous controls on religious sites, mandating that all activities align with Party leadership, Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping's ideology, and socialist values.<sup>17</sup> They also require the establishment of study groups to promote Party doctrine, further advancing the Party's agenda of religious "sinicization" (*zhongguohua*, 中国化), characterized in part as strengthening religious believers' allegiance to the "great motherland, the Chinese nation, Chinese culture, the Chinese Communist Party, and socialism with Chinese characteristics."<sup>18</sup>

The PRC Patriotic Education Law, issued in October 2023, further constrains religious freedom in China.<sup>19</sup> While only one article directly addresses religious groups,<sup>20</sup> the National Joint Conference of Religious Groups issued guidelines in January 2024 that significantly impact these communities.<sup>21</sup> These guidelines assert the primacy of the Chinese government over religion, declaring that the authority of the state supersedes religious authority and that state law trumps religious rules.<sup>22</sup> The PRC Patriotic Education Law mandates that all religious institutions engage in patriotic education, emphasizing national consciousness and adherence to socialism.<sup>23</sup> The law compelled various religious communities, including Hui Muslims<sup>24</sup> and Christians,<sup>25</sup> to integrate patriotic elements into their practices by holding meetings to study the law and promoting nationalist songs and sermons.<sup>26</sup>

### **Five-Year Plans Launched for the Sinicization of Religion**

Following the completion of the first Five-Year Plans for sinicization in 2022,<sup>27</sup> PRC authorities continued to advance policies promoting sinicization, as demonstrated in several high-level speeches.<sup>28</sup> In his March 2023 government work report at the National People's Congress, Premier Li Qiang reaffirmed the Party's commitment to religious sinicization, emphasizing the adaptation of religions to China's socialist society.<sup>29</sup> In December 2023, Wang Huning, Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, met with the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (TSPM) and Christian Council of China (CCC) conference, urging them to implement stringent management practices and promote patriotism, cultural appreciation, loyalty to the Party, and "socialism with Chinese characteristics."<sup>30</sup>

**Five-Year Plans Launched for the Sinicization of Religion—  
Continued**

With the new Five-Year Plans, individuals and religious sites were promoted as “models” of sinicization. In May 2024, the TSPM and CCC hosted a seminar to explore Protestant theologian T.C. Chao (Zhao Zichen) as a model for sinicization of Christians.<sup>31</sup> Similarly, in September 2023, Islamic Association of China (IAC) president Yang Faming held up the Jinling School of Islam as a model of sinicization during a speech at the Jinjue Mosque in Nanjing municipality, Jiangsu province.<sup>32</sup> According to one PRC-based scholar, disciples of the Jinling School sought to “affirm the commonality of Islamic and Chinese cultures.”<sup>33</sup> Reporting on Yang’s speech, *Bitter Winter*, an online magazine that reports primarily on religious repression in China, claimed that the IAC was simplifying the Jinling School of thought in order to justify the government’s recent efforts to remove Arabic-style elements from mosques.<sup>34</sup>

The Party signaled its intention to maintain its program of sinicization by issuing new Five-Year Plans for sinicization of Protestant Christianity and Catholicism in China for the years 2023 to 2027.<sup>35</sup> The sinicization plan for the Party-run Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association made no mention of the Pope, the Sino-Vatican Agreement, or the Holy See, among other topics of significance to the Catholic Church in China, whereas mentions of Xi Jinping and “Chinese characteristics” are found several times.<sup>36</sup> As one expert observed, this conveys the sense that the Sino-Vatican Agreement “counted for nothing.”<sup>37</sup> The new Five-Year Plan for Protestants calls for the integration of “core socialist values” into Christian theology.<sup>38</sup> One scholar noted that this new document emphasizes political loyalty to the Party much more than the previous Five-Year Plan.<sup>39</sup>

The Taoist Association of China<sup>40</sup> and the Buddhist Association of China (BAC) have also released sinicization plans. In 2022, BAC launched its “Five-Year Work Plan for Deepening the Sinicization of Buddhism in China (2023–2027).”<sup>41</sup> While the full text remains undisclosed, the BAC president announced in February 2024 that it would integrate patriotic education into Buddhist sinicization efforts.<sup>42</sup>

*Buddhism (non-Tibetan), Taoism, and Folk Religion*

The Chinese government continues to impose sinicization efforts on Taoism and Buddhism, despite the indigenous nature of the former and the previous promotion of the latter as a model for successful sinicization.<sup>43</sup> These initiatives prioritize Party supremacy and employ historical reinterpretation in order to promote religious subordination.<sup>44</sup> In September 2023, the “Buddhist Educational Affairs and Teaching Style Work Training Course” held at Mount Wutai in Wutai county, Xinzhou municipality, Shanxi province, emphasized the imperative for Buddhist monks and devotees to “thoroughly study and implement” Xi Jinping’s teachings and the spirit of the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>45</sup> During the training, BAC President Shi Yanjue highlighted Xi’s 2021 speech advocating for Marxism as an “interpretive tool for religious history and doctrine.”<sup>46</sup> The Party-controlled “Fahua Dojo” Buddhist group produced a video featuring members in Red Army uniforms per-

forming a song that merged Xi Jinping quotes with Buddhist concepts.<sup>47</sup> One publication characterized this as “one of the furthest steps taken by the movement of ‘Sinicization of Buddhism’ in recent years.”<sup>48</sup> The Fahua Dojo further reinforced this alignment by posting over 20 videos dedicated to the 20th Party Congress on their website.<sup>49</sup> [For more information on religious freedom for Tibetan Buddhists, see Chapter 17—Tibet.]

During this reporting year, the Commission observed the Chinese government’s efforts to “sinicize” Taoism, emphasizing Party control and alignment with Party ideology rather than religious identity.<sup>50</sup> In July 2023, the Taoist Association of China organized “Taoism on the Sea: The First Forum on the Theory and Practice of Sinicization of Taoism,” featuring speeches from high-ranking officials and workshops promoting Party loyalty and socialist ideology.<sup>51</sup> The workshops demonstrated patriotic educational activities that participants could bring back to their temples, such as lessons in the history of the Party and of the United Front, as well as Taoist painting, and recommended that in calligraphy classes teachers should encourage students to produce works that showcase “thoughts of loving the Party, the country, and socialism.”<sup>52</sup> *Bitter Winter* noted the “absurd[ity]” of sinicizing Taoism if the term means different faiths adapting to Chinese culture and traditions, highlighting that the real purpose of the sinicization of religion is to make religions “propaganda mouthpieces for the Party.”<sup>53</sup>

Simultaneously, the Party has cracked down on folk religious practices that it views as potentially undermining its authority. For example, when a viral video showed a woman praying at a site commemorating 11th-century magistrate Bao Zheng in Kaifeng municipality, Henan province after her attempt to petition authorities failed, local officials began to surveil worshippers, “identify[ing] those who pray loudly or cry,” according to one source.<sup>54</sup> Petitioners have reportedly come to revere Bao for his stance against injustice and corruption, and authorities may view devotion to Bao as a tacit form of criticism.<sup>55</sup>

### *Islam*

During the 2024 reporting year, the Commission observed the PRC’s use of sinicization policies targeting Hui Muslims, aiming to eradicate religious and cultural distinctiveness while promoting assimilation with Han Chinese culture. The government continued its campaign to remove Islamic architectural elements from mosques or demolish them.<sup>56</sup> Authorities demolished and rebuilt Xiguan Mosque in Lanzhou municipality, Gansu province;<sup>57</sup> replaced a dome and minarets demolished last year with pagodas at Najiaying Mosque in Nagu town, Tonghai county, Yuxi municipality, Yunnan province;<sup>58</sup> and replaced the dome and minarets of the Grand Mosque in Shadian subdistrict, Gejiu city, Honghe Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan, with a pagoda rooftop and pagoda towers,<sup>59</sup> stripping these mosques of traditional Islamic architectural features.<sup>60</sup> The Grand Mosque in Shadian has served as one of the most significant centers of worship for Hui Muslims, known as “the Mecca of the Hui.”<sup>61</sup> Fearing protest, officials went to residents’ homes in Shadian, asking them to sign a letter agreeing “not to take



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pictures of and not to post on social media news about the mosque alteration work.”<sup>62</sup> When rebuilding the Grand Mosque, authorities reportedly installed surveillance cameras inside the mosque’s prayer hall over the objections of the mosque management committee.<sup>63</sup> Experts commented that the reconstruction of the Najiaying and Grand Mosques marked the conclusion of the nationwide mosque sinicization campaign as the last major mosques in China lost their Arabic-style features.<sup>64</sup>

A November 2023 report by Human Rights Watch (HRW) revealed a significant reduction in the number of mosques in Ningxia and Gansu provinces, both with significant Hui Muslim populations, through a process of “consolidation.”<sup>65</sup> Maya Wang, HRW’s acting China Director, asserted that authorities have closed, destroyed, and repurposed mosques as “part of a systematic effort to curb the practice of Islam in China.”<sup>66</sup> Scholars who focus on Hui Muslims estimate that authorities have shuttered approximately one-third of Ningxia’s mosques since 2020.<sup>67</sup>

PRC authorities also tightened restrictions this past year on Muslims’ observance of Ramadan. Authorities in Yuxi municipality, Yunnan, issued prohibitions on the observance of Ramadan, including banning minors from fasting.<sup>68</sup> The notice was issued in the year following the widespread protests that took place over authorities’ planned removal of the Najiaying Mosque’s dome and four minarets.<sup>69</sup> [For more information on Uyghur, Hui, and other Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and other locations, please see Chapter 7—Ethnic Minority Rights and Chapter 18—Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.]

### *Christianity—Catholic*

The 2018 Sino-Vatican Agreement established a mechanism for bishop appointments mutually recognized by the PRC government and the Holy See.<sup>70</sup> Despite many experts claiming unsatisfactory results, the Holy See provisionally renewed the agreement in 2022 to maintain dialogue.<sup>71</sup> As the agreement approaches renewal in October 2024, its effectiveness remained questionable, particularly regarding the “underground” Catholic Church.<sup>72</sup> Critics argue that Chinese authorities seek a state-submissive Church, which would jeopardize its Catholic identity.<sup>73</sup> While some scholars have emphasized the agreement’s potential for creating stability and unity,<sup>74</sup> the past six years have largely been seen as producing disappointing results.<sup>75</sup> During this reporting year, only four bishops were consecrated with mutual approval, the only appointments made since 2021,<sup>76</sup> while around 40 dioceses remain without leadership.<sup>77</sup> Authorities have continued to hold Catholic clergy in detention or forcibly disappear them due to their refusal to join the Party-controlled Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA), including Bishop **Shao Zhumin** of the Diocese of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province.<sup>78</sup>

In July 2023, the Holy See formally appointed Bishop Shen Bin to the Diocese of Shanghai,<sup>79</sup> three months after the Party-controlled Bishops’ Conference of the Catholic Church in China (BCCCC) unilaterally installed him.<sup>80</sup> In May 2024, the Holy See made another overture to China by inviting Bishop Shen to

speak at a high-level conference at the Vatican to commemorate the landmark First Council for China held in Shanghai in 1924.<sup>81</sup> This was the first time a bishop from mainland China attended a Vatican conference.<sup>82</sup> Bishop Shen rebuked Western missionaries for their “superior” attitudes while “protect[ing] foreign powers” in China’s history, defended Chinese authorities’ policies toward the Catholic Church, and advocated for the sinicization of Catholicism in China, urging patriotism and alignment with Chinese society and culture.<sup>83</sup>

In September 2023, during Pope Francis’s visit to Mongolia, PRC authorities limited Chinese Catholics’ access to the Pope, despite the Pope telling Chinese Catholics to be “good citizens.”<sup>84</sup> No mainland bishops were present in Mongolia to welcome Pope Francis.<sup>85</sup> Authorities also detained at least two individuals who had organized a pilgrimage.<sup>86</sup> Many of the Chinese Catholics who were able to attend were afraid to speak to reporters or wore face masks the entire time to conceal their identity out of fear of punishment back in China.<sup>87</sup>

Chinese authorities used “fraud” charges against Catholic religious leaders in 2023. A court punished Father **Joseph Yang Xiaoming**, a Holy See-approved Catholic priest, for “conducting religious activities by deception . . . under the guise of a religious cleric,” and reportedly for refusing to join the Party-controlled CPA.<sup>88</sup> Yang received an administrative punishment that included an “order to cease his (priestly) activities,” the confiscation of more than 28,000 yuan (US\$4,000), and a fine of more than 1,500 yuan (US\$210).<sup>89</sup> Despite being used against leaders of unregistered Protestant churches in the past,<sup>90</sup> “fraud” charges against Catholic clergy have been uncommon.<sup>91</sup> Catholic News Agency claimed that Yang’s case reveals that the database for Catholic clergy launched in May 2023 is “a pretense to strong-arm obstinate clerics into registering with state-sanctioned religious bodies.”<sup>92</sup>

### Religious Freedom Violations in Hong Kong

The Party exerted pressure on Hong Kong religious communities to conform to the sinicization policies of mainland China, including through continual trips between mainland China and Hong Kong. In August 2023, *China Central Television* documented and interviewed a delegation of Hong Kong Islamic organizations who visited the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in order to dissuade the public of its belief in the existence of ethnic tensions, forced labor, or mass internment camps.<sup>93</sup> The interviews, shown with a Mandarin voiceover, showcase the chairman of the Islamic Union of Hong Kong, Azizul Rahman Suffiad, and others claiming that “the ethnic minority compatriots in Xinjiang are very happy and joyful, fully enjoying religious freedom and are well-respected.”<sup>94</sup>



**Religious Freedom Violations in Hong Kong—Continued**

In September 2023, a delegation of Hong Kong clerics and religious sisters visited the Diocese of Beijing where they reportedly had discussions with the National Religious Affairs Administration of the United Front Work Department and the CPA and BCCCC.<sup>95</sup> In November 2023, Archbishop Joseph Li Shan visited Hong Kong at the invitation of Cardinal Stephen Chow Sau-yan of the Diocese of Hong Kong, marking the first official visit by the head of the Catholic Church in China.<sup>96</sup> In April 2024, a delegation of the Diocese of Hong Kong made a second trip to mainland China, one year after Cardinal Chow traveled to Beijing municipality, following nearly three decades in which the Diocese of Hong Kong had not made an official visit to China.<sup>97</sup>

In October 2023, St. John's Anglican Cathedral Church displayed the PRC national flag inside the church, and the Kowloon Mosque and Islamic Center held a flag-raising ceremony of the PRC flag.<sup>98</sup> Commentators suggested that the display and veneration of the PRC national flag by religious communities in Hong Kong may become what is expected.<sup>99</sup>

Furthermore, with the enactment of the *Safeguarding National Security Ordinance*, experts on religious freedom and belief noted the threat posed to the confidentiality of the Sacrament of Penance, known as “Confession.”<sup>100</sup> The Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong said that the legislation would not affect the confidentiality of Confession, but Ronny Tong, an advisor to the city leader, said that religious professionals are not exempt from the requirement to inform authorities of anyone who committed “treason” even if revealed during Confession.<sup>101</sup> Paul Lam Ting-kwok, Hong Kong's Secretary of Justice, said that it would be “very difficult” to make exemptions for religious leaders, although an exemption was made for legal professionals.<sup>102</sup> The new law stipulates that failing to disclose to authorities within a reasonable time information on individuals suspected of committing treason could be punished with up to 14 years in prison.<sup>103</sup> [For more information on the ongoing suppression of civil society in Hong Kong, see Chapter 19—Hong Kong and Macau.]

*Christianity—Protestant*

PRC authorities continued to violate Protestants' religious freedom through suppression of church services, detention of leaders of unregistered churches, and surveillance of activities and participants.<sup>104</sup> Officials continued to employ “fraud” charges against unregistered “house” churches and networks.<sup>105</sup> Ongoing legal proceedings highlighted the use of this charge to suppress unregistered religious activities, including:

- **Ganquan Church.** Authorities in Hefei municipality, Anhui province, detained members of Hefei's Ganquan Church in November 2023 and held five, including Pastor **Zhou Songlin**<sup>106</sup> and Elder **Ding Zhongfu**,<sup>107</sup> on suspicion of “fraud.”<sup>108</sup> Two properties, bought by the church congregation to host worship services and to avoid being forced to relocate, could be used as the basis for fraud charges against the leaders.<sup>109</sup>
- **Living Stone (also known as Cornerstone) Reformed Church.** In April 2023, authorities in Yuhui district, Bengbu municipality, Anhui, detained Pastor **Wan Changchun**,<sup>110</sup> El-

der **Xue Shaoqiang**,<sup>111</sup> **Cao Binting**,<sup>112</sup> and **Wan Chunqin**<sup>113</sup> of Living Stone Reformed Church on suspicion of “illegal business activity”; in May 2023, authorities formally arrested the four and changed the charge to “fraud.”<sup>114</sup> In January 2024, the Yuhui procuratorate indicted the four on the same charge.<sup>115</sup>

• **Green Pastures (Qingcaodi) Reformed Church.** In April 2024, the Jingyang District People’s Court in Deyang municipality, Sichuan province, sentenced Elders **Hao Ming**<sup>116</sup> and **Wu Jiannan**<sup>117</sup> of Deyang’s Green Pastures Reformed Church to three years in prison, suspended for five years, for “fraud.”<sup>118</sup> Chinese authorities have used fraud charges to target church funding structures and to project a veneer of criminality onto normal religious activities such as collecting donations.<sup>119</sup>

Authorities also used other legal tools to control and punish church leaders. After releasing Pastor **John Cao Sanqiang** following a seven-year prison term, authorities prevented Cao from accessing vital government-issued documents, including his national identification card and *hukou*, a household registration permit necessary for access to public services.<sup>120</sup> Authorities imprisoned Cao in 2017 on the charge of “organizing others to illegally cross the border” in connection with his missionary and relief work traveling between China and Burma (Myanmar).<sup>121</sup> While Cao—who is both a Chinese national and U.S. permanent resident—was in prison, his Chinese passport expired, and without official documents, he was unable to renew it.<sup>122</sup>

This past year, PRC authorities continued to order the removal of crosses and plaques inscribed with Christian phrases including “Jesus” and “Christ” from church buildings.<sup>123</sup> For example, in July 2023, the Taizhou Religious Affairs Bureau in Taizhou municipality, Zhejiang province, reportedly sent notices to local churches requiring signs reading “love the Chinese Communist Party, love the country, and love the religion” and “uphold the sinicization of religion” to be displayed.<sup>124</sup> The Shinian Church in Taizhou displayed a hammer and sickle, the Party emblem, at its entrance.<sup>125</sup>

### *Falun Gong*

PRC authorities continued to monitor, detain, and imprison Falun Gong adherents in connection with their practice of Falun Gong.<sup>126</sup> Authorities often detain Falun Gong practitioners for violating Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law, which criminalizes “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law.”<sup>127</sup> The Falun Gong-affiliated website *Minghui* reported the deaths of dozens of Falun Gong practitioners due to mistreatment while in custody and more than a thousand cases of Falun Gong practitioners being harassed or sentenced by authorities.<sup>128</sup> Falun Gong practitioners are often detained multiple times over the course of years, including the following individuals:

• **Hou Lijun.** In May 2023, the Wanbailin District People’s Court in Taiyuan municipality, Shanxi province, sentenced **Hou Lijun** to 10 years in prison.<sup>129</sup> In June 2023, authorities sent Hou to a prison in Jinzhong municipality, Shanxi province,<sup>130</sup> and reportedly tortured him by beating him, forcing him to sit on a small stool for long periods of time, and depriving him

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of sleep and basic necessities.<sup>131</sup> Hou went on a hunger strike in protest and in January 2024, authorities transferred Hou to a PSB hospital in Taiyuan after he became gravely ill.<sup>132</sup> The prison administration denied his family permission to visit him at the hospital.<sup>133</sup> Authorities previously detained Hou in 2000 and in 2002.<sup>134</sup>

- **Lang Dongyue.** Around July 2023, the Xuanhua District People's Court in Zhangjiakou municipality, Hebei province, sentenced **Lang Dongyue** to nine years in prison and imposed a fine of 15,000 yuan (US\$2,100) after authorities had detained her at least five previous times for an aggregate total of 10 years starting in 1999.<sup>135</sup>

- **Wang Yanming.** After multiple previous detentions, public security officials in Daqing municipality, Heilongjiang province, detained **Wang Yanming** in June 2023, claiming that surveillance cameras recorded him hanging up Falun Gong posters, and he was subsequently sentenced on September 25, 2023, to three years and six months in prison and fined 20,000 yuan (US\$2,900).<sup>136</sup>

In testimony provided at a Commission hearing in March 2024, experts expressed ongoing concerns about the possible forced removal of organs from religious and ethnic minorities in China, including Falun Gong practitioners.<sup>137</sup> [For more information on forced organ removal, see Chapter 12—Public Health.]

### *Other Religious Communities*

The Commission documented religious freedom violations against communities outside the five officially regulated religions. While the Chinese government previously tolerated some unregulated groups such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, it designated 22 others, including Falun Gong and the Church of Almighty God (CAG), as “evil cults” (*xiejiao*, 邪教).<sup>138</sup> Authorities regularly prosecute adherents under Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law.<sup>139</sup>

According to a report by CAG, the government significantly increased detention and sentencing of CAG members in 2023.<sup>140</sup> Authorities sentenced thousands of CAG members to imprisonment, and several members died as a result of mistreatment while in custody.<sup>141</sup> In June 2023, authorities reportedly detained more than 1,000 CAG members in Zhejiang province in a single day.<sup>142</sup>

Persecution extended beyond listed “cults.” In December 2023, Taiwan’s Mainland Affairs Council (MAC) advised Taiwanese members of Yiguan Dao, a salvationist religion, against traveling to mainland China, warning that authorities may detain them for crimes under Article 300, among other potential charges, despite the group’s absence from any cult lists.<sup>143</sup> MAC further stated that an individual had been detained in China for bringing in books promoting vegetarianism.<sup>144</sup>

### Notes to Chapter 3—Freedom of Religion

<sup>1</sup> Paul M. Taylor, *Freedom of Religion: UN and European Human Rights Law and Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 19, 24, 203–4.

<sup>2</sup> Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by U.N. General Assembly resolution 217A (III) of December 10, 1948, art. 18; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by U.N. General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of December 16, 1966, entry into force March 23, 1976, art. 18. Article 18 of the ICCPR upholds a person's right to “have or adopt a religion or belief” and the “freedom . . . to manifest [that] religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.” Article 18 also prohibits coercion that impairs an individual's freedom to freely hold or adopt a religion or belief. See also Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, adopted and proclaimed by U.N. General Assembly resolution 36/55 of November 25, 1981. China has signed and stated its intent to ratify the ICCPR, which obligates China to refrain in good faith from acts that would defeat the treaty's purpose. State Council Information Office, “国家人权行动计划（2016–2020年）” [National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2016–2020)], September 29, 2016, sec. 5; United Nations Conference on the Law of Treaties, Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, adopted May 23, 1969, entry into force January 27, 1980, art. 18.

<sup>3</sup> 中华人民共和国宪法 [PRC Constitution], passed and effective December 4, 1982, amended March 11, 2018, art. 36; Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by U.N. General Assembly resolution 217A (III) of December 10, 1948; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by U.N. General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of December 16, 1966, entry into force March 23, 1976.

<sup>4</sup> State Council, 宗教事务条例 [Regulations on Religious Affairs], issued November 30, 2004, amended June 14, 2017, effective February 1, 2018, art. 2. For more information on the impact of the updated Regulations on Religious Affairs, see, e.g., Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2020 Annual Report* (Washington: December 2020), 111–12.

<sup>5</sup> American Center for Law and Justice, “Analysis on China's Revised Regulations on Religious Affairs,” accessed October 23, 2024; Brent Fulton, “New Religious Regulations to Take Effect in February,” *ChinaSource* (blog), September 13, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> For more analysis on the individual provincial and regional Regulations, see, e.g., Martin Lavicka, “A New Round of Restrictions Further Constrains Religious Practice in Xinjiang,” *ChinaFile*, April 19, 2024; “法律法规” [Laws and regulations], National Religious Affairs Administration (website), accessed October 23, 2024. From 2019 to 2024, 30 provinces and regions have published their own additional regulations. See, e.g., National Religious Affairs Administration, 新疆维吾尔自治区宗教事务条例 [Regulations on Religious Affairs of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region], passed December 22, 2023, effective February 1, 2024; National Religious Affairs Administration, 辽宁省宗教事务条例 [Regulations on Religious Affairs of Liaoning Province], passed on November 14, 2023 and effective on January 1, 2024; National Religious Affairs Administration, 黑龙江省宗教事务条例 [Regulations on Religious Affairs of Heilongjiang Province], passed November 2, 2023, effective on January 1, 2024; National Religious Affairs Administration, 宁夏回族自治区宗教事务条例 [Regulations on Religious Affairs of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region], passed August 2, 2023, effective on October 1, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> National Religious Affairs Administration, 宗教教职人员管理办法 [Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel], effective May 1, 2021.

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<sup>10</sup> National Religious Affairs Administration, 宗教教职人员管理办法 [Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel], effective May 1, 2021, art. 3.

<sup>11</sup> National Religious Affairs Administration, 宗教教职人员管理办法 [Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel], effective May 1, 2021, arts. 6.5, 12.3.

<sup>12</sup> National Religious Affairs Administration, 宗教教职人员管理办法 [Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel], effective May 1, 2021, art. 12.3.

<sup>13</sup> National Religious Affairs Administration et al., 互联网宗教信息服务管理办法 [Measures for the Administration of Internet Religious Information Services], passed December 3, 2021, effective March 1, 2022, art. 20.

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<sup>16</sup> National Religious Affairs Administration, 宗教活动场所管理办法 [Measures for the Management of Venues for Religious Activities], passed June 29, 2023, effective September 1, 2023; United Front Work Department of Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, “国家宗教事务局负责人就《宗教活动场所管理办法》答记者问” [State Administration of Religious Affairs official answers reporters' questions on the “Measures for the Management of Religious Activity Venues”], July 31, 2023.

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<sup>20</sup>中华人民共和国爱国主义教育法 [PRC Patriotic Education Law], passed October 24, 2023, effective January 1, 2024, art. 22.

<sup>21</sup>United Front Work Department of Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, “全国性宗教团体联席会议学习宣传贯彻爱国主义教育法” [The National Joint Conference of Religious Groups studied, publicized and implemented the Patriotic Education Law], January 8, 2024.

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<sup>35</sup>“深入推进我国基督教中国化五年工作规划纲要（2023–2027年）” [Outline of the Five-Year Work Plan for Further Promoting the Sinicization of Christianity in China (2023–2027)], *China Christian Council and Three-Self Patriotic Movement Online*, December 21, 2023; “深入推进我国天主教中国化五年工作规划纲要（2023–2027年）” [Outline of the Five-Year Work Plan for Further Promoting the Sinicization of Catholicism in China (2023–2027)], *Catholic Church in China*, December 25, 2023.

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<sup>70</sup>“New Bishop Ordained in China,” *Vatican News*, September 8, 2021. For more on the Sino-Vatican Agreement, see Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2021 Annual Report* (Washington: March 2022), 101–2.

<sup>71</sup>Gianni Criveller, “A Second Renewal of the Agreement on Episcopal Appointments Announced,” *AsiaNews*, October 22, 2022; Francis X. Rocca, “The Vatican’s Gamble with Beijing Is Costing China’s Catholics,” *Atlantic*, May 14, 2024. Analysts have attributed the dissatisfaction to the Party-controlled Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference (affiliated with the official Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association) unilaterally appointing bishops in apparent violation of the agreement. The text of the agreement has not been made public, so it cannot be determined definitively whether the appointments constitute violations of the agreement, but the Vatican has indicated in its statements and official interviews that the content of the agreement governs the appointment of bishops. For more on the Sino-Vatican Agreement, see Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2021 Annual Report* (Washington: March 2022), 101–2.

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<sup>78</sup>“保定教区一神父和平信徒‘失踪’” [Baoding Diocese priest and layman “disappeared”], *AsiaNews*, May 16, 2024; “Bishop Shao of Wenzhou Arrested Again,” *AsiaNews*, January 3, 2024. For more information on Bishop Shao Zhumin, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2005-00232.

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<sup>80</sup>“Pope Approves Shanghai Bishop Appointment After the Fact,” *Al Jazeera*, July 15, 2023; “Chinese Bishop Shen Bin Transferred to Shanghai, Holy See Learns of Move from Media,” *Vatican News*, April 4, 2023; “天主教上海教区举行主教就职仪式” [Catholic Diocese of Shanghai holds ceremony for installation of bishop], *Catholic Church in China*, April 4, 2023; “Shen Bin

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<sup>82</sup>Joseph Shen Bin, "Vatican—Bishop Shen Bin: Rooted in China, To Open New Horizons for the Proclamation of the Gospel," *Agenzia Fides*, May 21, 2024; Nicole Winfield, "Vatican Makes Fresh Overture to China, Reaffirms That Catholic Church Is No Threat to Sovereignty," *Associated Press*, May 21, 2024; "Historic First: Chinese Bishop Addresses Vatican Conference," *Inside the Vatican Magazine*, July 1, 2024; See also Courtney Mares, "Bishop of Shanghai Defends China's Religious Freedom Record at Vatican Conference," *Catholic News Agency*, May 22, 2024.

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<sup>92</sup>Matthew Santucci, "Chinese Priest Convicted of 'Fraud' for Refusal to Recognize State-Sanctioned Church," *Catholic News Agency*, September 15, 2023; "China Launches Database of Christian, Muslim Clergy," *Union of Catholic Asian News*, May 24, 2023.

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<sup>94</sup>["新疆新闻联播] 香港伊斯兰教团体代表团访新疆" [Xinjiang News Network] Hong Kong Islamic Group Delegation Visits Xinjiang, *CCTV*, August 22, 2023. In the video, Azizul Rahman Suffiad is known by his Chinese name, Shi Hui.

<sup>95</sup>Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, "Chronology of Leading Events in the Diocese of Hong Kong—2023"; Beijing Center (@TheBeijingCenter), "天主教香港教区内地交流参访团访问TBC" [Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong exchange delegation to the mainland visits TBC], WeChat, September 29, 2023; Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation, "Hostile Take Over: The CCP and Hong Kong's Religious Communities," January 30, 2024, 21.

<sup>96</sup>Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, "Chronology of Leading Events in the Diocese of Hong Kong—2023"; Kanis Leung, "The Head of China's State-Backed Catholic Church Begins Historic Trip to Hong Kong," *Associated Press*, November 14, 2023.

<sup>97</sup>"Card Chow in Guangdong: New Bridge with Catholics in Mainland China," *AsiaNews*, May 3, 2024; For more information on the increasing exchanges between the mainland and Hong Kong, see also Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2023 Annual Report* (Washington: May 2024), 94.

<sup>98</sup>"HK's Oldest Church Displays Chinese Flag Ignoring Criticism," *Union of Catholic Asian News*, October 2, 2023; Lee Yat Yin, "Patriotic Flag Ceremonies at Hong Kong Mosque 'Shock' Believers," *Radio Free Asia*, October 29, 2023.

<sup>99</sup>Hong Kong Watch, "Sell Out My Soul: The Impending Threats to Freedom of Religion or Belief in Hong Kong," November 7, 2023, 9, 11–12. See also Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation, "Hostile Take Over: The CCP and Hong Kong's Religious Communities," January 30, 2024, 24–25.

<sup>100</sup>Benedict Rogers et al., Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation, "Sixteen International Experts Express 'Profound and Grave Concerns' about Looming Threat to Religious Freedom and Sacrament of Penance in Hong Kong," March 13, 2024; Luke Coppen, "Hong Kong Bill Threatens Confessional Seal, Warn Advocates," *Pillar*, March 13, 2024; Benedict Rogers, "Hong Kong's 'Article 23' is an Implicit Threat to the Sacrament of Penance," *Union of Catholic Asian News*, March 12, 2024, reprinted in *Hong Kong Watch*, March 12, 2024; *Instrument A305 Safeguarding National Security Ordinance* (Instrument A305).

<sup>101</sup>Kanis Leung, "How Will a New National Security Law Affect Different Walks of Life in Hong Kong?," *Associated Press*, March 19, 2024; Matthew Santucci, "Hong Kong's Draconian National Security Law Won't Affect Seal of Confession, Diocese Says," *Catholic News Agency*, March 15, 2024.

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<sup>102</sup>Matthew Santucci, “Hong Kong’s Draconian National Security Law Won’t Affect Seal of Confession, Diocese Says,” *Catholic News Agency*, March 15, 2024; *Safeguarding National Security Ordinance* (Instrument A305), art. 12.3.

<sup>103</sup>*Safeguarding National Security Ordinance* (Instrument A305), arts. 12.1, 12.2; Kanis Leung, “How Will a New National Security Law Affect Different Walks of Life in Hong Kong?,” *Associated Press*, March 19, 2024; Ellen Teague and Patrick Hudson, “Hong Kong’s New Security Law Cause for ‘Grave Concern,’” *Tablet*, March 14, 2024; William Yiu, “Hong Kong’s Article 23 Law: Catholic Diocese to Preserve Integrity of Confession, City’s Top Cleric Says,” *South China Morning Post*, March 29, 2024.

<sup>104</sup>ChinaAid Association, “ChinaAid’s Annual Persecution Report 2023: January–December 2023,” March 1, 2024; Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2023 Annual Report* (Washington: May 2024), 94–95; Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2022 Annual Report* (Washington: November 2022), 103–4; Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2021 Annual Report* (Washington: March 2022), 103–4.

<sup>105</sup>ChinaAid Association, “ChinaAid’s Annual Persecution Report 2023: January–December 2023,” March 1, 2024, 42–49; See also ChinaAid Association, “Crime of Fraud: A New Era of Persecution against Christians by the Chinese Communist Party,” January 26, 2024.

<sup>106</sup>For more information on Zhou Songlin, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2024-00125.

<sup>107</sup>For more information on Ding Zhongfu, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2024-00126.

<sup>108</sup>Huizhong Wu, “Christian Group and Family Raise Outcry over Detention of Another ‘House Church’ Elder in China,” *Associated Press*, December 20, 2023; ChinaAid Association, “Pastor Zhou Songlin and Elder Ding Zhongfu’s Wives Publicly Appeal for Their Innocence,” January 16, 2024; ChinaAid Association, “This Is Actually Political Persecution: Detained Pastor Zhou Songlin Responds to Church Conflict,” May 16, 2024. Earlier that month, church members found cameras hidden inside Ganquan Church. See, e.g., “Surveillance Cameras Installed in Christian Churches,” *Bitter Winter*, May 1, 2018; Dominic J. Nardi, “Religious Freedom in China’s High-Tech Surveillance State,” U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, September 2019, 1–3; Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2021 Annual Report* (Washington: March 2022), 103. In recent years, PRC authorities have installed surveillance cameras at places of worship across the country.

<sup>109</sup>ChinaAid Association, “安徽合肥甘泉教会周松林牧师、丁中福长老的妻子公开呼吁丈夫无罪” [The wives of Pastor Zhou Songlin and Elder Ding Zhongfu of Ganquan Church in Hefei, Anhui, publicly appeal for their husbands’ innocence], January 3, 2024.

<sup>110</sup>For more information on Wan Changchun, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2023-00114.

<sup>111</sup>For more information on Xue Shaoqiang, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2024-00111.

<sup>112</sup>For more information on Cao Binting, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2024-00112.

<sup>113</sup>For more information on Wan Chunqin, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2024-00113.

<sup>114</sup>Rights Defense Network, “安徽蚌埠活石归正教会教案进展通报（2024年5月10日）” [Progress bulletin on case of Bengbu, Anhui’s Living Stone Reformed Church (May 10, 2024)], May 10, 2024; Qian Lang and Liu Bangyu, “中国地方当局加强监控家庭教会” [Local authorities in China strengthen monitoring of house churches], *Radio Free Asia*, May 14, 2024.

<sup>115</sup>ChinaAid Association, “Bengbu Cornerstone Reformed Church Christians Prosecuted on Fraud Charges,” January 21, 2024; Rights Defense Network, “安徽蚌埠活石归正教会教案进展通报（2024年5月10日）” [Progress bulletin on case of Bengbu, Anhui’s Living Stone Reformed Church (May 10, 2024)], May 10, 2024; Qian Lang and Liu Bangyu, “中国地方当局加强监控家庭教会” [Local authorities in China strengthen monitoring of house churches], *Radio Free Asia*, May 14, 2024.

<sup>116</sup>For more information on Hao Ming, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2022-00042. See also Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2022 Annual Report* (Washington: November 2022), 103.

<sup>117</sup>For more information on Wu Jiannan, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2022-00043. See also Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2022 Annual Report* (Washington: November 2022), 103.

<sup>118</sup>ChinaAid Association, “Verdict Announced: Elder Hao Ming and Wu Jiannan Found Guilty of Fraud,” April 18, 2024; Rights Defense Network, “四川省德阳市秋雨青草地归正教会郝鸣长老和武见男长老案宣判：均被判刑3年缓刑5年” [Verdict announced for Elder Hao Ming and Elder Wu Jiannan of Qiuyu Qingcaodi Reformed Church in Deyang municipality, Sichuan: Both sentenced to 3 years in prison, suspended for 5 years], April 10, 2024. The court also ordered Hao and Wu to pay fines of 30,000 yuan (US\$4,200) each.

<sup>119</sup>ChinaAid Association, “律师两次申请会见德阳秋雨青草地教会武见男长老均遭拒” [Lawyer requested meeting with Elder Wu Jiannan of Qiuyu Qingcaodi Reformed Church in Deyang municipality twice, was rejected both times], January 22, 2022; ChinaAid Association, “Verdict Announced: Elder Hao Ming and Wu Jiannan Found Guilty of Fraud,” April 18, 2024. See also ChinaAid Association, “Crime of Fraud: A New Era of Persecution against Christians by the Chinese Communist Party,” January 26, 2024.

<sup>120</sup>Huizhong Wu, “A Chinese Pastor Is Released after 7 Years in Prison, Only to Find Himself Unable to Get an ID,” *Associated Press*, March 25, 2024; CJ Wu, “‘I Knew I Would Pay a Price for My Faith’: China Releases Missionary after Seven Years,” *Christianity Today*, May 10, 2024; ChinaAid Association, “Pastor John Cao: I Have Committed the Crime of Fraud,” May 3, 2024.

<sup>121</sup>Huizhong Wu, “A Chinese Pastor Is Released after 7 Years in Prison, Only to Find Himself Unable to Get an ID,” *Associated Press*, March 25, 2024.

<sup>122</sup>Huizhong Wu, “A Chinese Pastor Is Released after 7 Years in Prison, Only to Find Himself Unable to Get an ID,” *Associated Press*, March 25, 2024.

<sup>123</sup>Gao Zhensai, ChinaAid Association, “快讯：浙江省温州市洞桥教会教堂十字架面临被政府强拆” [Newsflash: Dongqiao Church in Wenzhou municipality, Zhejiang province, is facing cross demolition by government], August 1, 2023; Gao Zhensai, ChinaAid Association, “安徽省淮南市谢家集区望峰岗基督教堂收到拆除十字架通知” [Wangfenggang Christian Church in Xiejiaji district, Huainan municipality, Anhui province, received notice to remove cross], March 8, 2024; Gao Zhensai, ChinaAid Association, “浙江要求所有宗教活动场所设置‘爱党、爱国、爱教’及‘坚持宗教中国化’标语，温岭一官方教会加码：门牌附加中国共产党党徽‘镰刀锤头‘标志’” [Zhejiang requires all religious venues to install slogans “love the Party, love the country, love religion” and “uphold the sinicization of religion”; one official Wenling church goes further: Put Chinese Communist Party “hammer and sickle” emblems on doorplates], July 3, 2023. For more information on past cross removal, see, e.g., “Chinese Province Seeks to Ban Crosses on Church Roofs,” *Guardian*, May 8, 2015; Ian Johnson, “Decapitated Churches in China’s Christian Heartland,” *New York Times*, May 21, 2016; Lu An, “Crosses Removed from Over 250 Churches in Anhui Province,” *Bitter Winter*, June 9, 2020; Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2021 Annual Report* (Washington: March 2022), 104.

<sup>124</sup>Gao Zhensai, ChinaAid Association, “浙江要求所有宗教活动场所设置‘爱党、爱国、爱教’及‘坚持宗教中国化’标语，温岭一官方教会加码：门牌附加中国共产党党徽‘镰刀锤头‘标志’” [Zhejiang requires all religious venues to install slogans “love the Party, love the country, love religion” and “uphold the sinicization of religion”; one official Wenling church goes further: Put Chinese Communist Party “hammer and sickle” emblems on doorplates], July 3, 2023.

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<sup>126</sup>For past Commission coverage of PRC authorities’ efforts to crack down on Falun Gong using Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law, see, e.g., Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2023 Annual Report* (Washington: May 2024), 95–96; Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2022 Annual Report* (Washington: November 2022), 104–5; Congressional-Executive Commission on China, *2021 Annual Report* (Washington: March 2022), 104–5.

<sup>127</sup>中华人民共和国刑法 [PRC Criminal Law], passed July 1, 1979, revised March 14, 1997, amended December 29, 2023, effective March 1, 2024, art. 300.

<sup>128</sup>“Fourteen Falun Gong Practitioner Deaths Due to Persecution Reported in November 2023,” *Minghui*, December 17, 2023; “Reported in 2023: 6,514 Falun Gong Practitioners Arrested or Harassed for Their Faith,” *Minghui*, January 17, 2024; “Reported in 2023: 208 Falun Gong Practitioners Die in the Persecution of Their Faith,” *Minghui*, January 9, 2024.

<sup>129</sup>“Shanxi Man Gets Ten Years Without a Trial, in Serious Condition after Two-Month Hunger Strike,” *Minghui*, July 3, 2023; “被迫流离失所20年 侯利军被劫持到山西男子监狱” [Forced to flee for 20 years, Hou Lijun was abducted to Shanxi men’s prison], *Minghui*, June 11, 2023; “In Prison for His Belief, Shanxi Man in Life-Threatening Condition due to Hunger Strike and Torture,” *Minghui*, January 11, 2024. For more information on Hou Lijun, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2024-00174.

<sup>130</sup>“In Prison for His Belief, Shanxi Man in Life-Threatening Condition Due to Hunger Strike and Torture,” *Minghui*, January 11, 2024; Rights Defense Network, “获刑12年的山西太原市法轮功学员侯利军监狱遭残酷迫害 生命危急” [Falun Gong practitioner Hou Lijun, who was sentenced to 12 years in prison in Taiyuan municipality, Shanxi, was brutally persecuted in prison and his life is in danger], January 11, 2024; “被迫流离失所20年 侯利军被劫持到山西男子监狱” [Forced to flee for 20 years, Hou Lijun was abducted to Shanxi men’s prison], *Minghui*, June 11, 2023.

<sup>131</sup>“法轮功学员侯利军狱中遭迫害 生命危急” [Falun Gong practitioner Hou Lijun was persecuted in prison and his life is in danger], *Epoch Times*, January 11, 2024.

<sup>132</sup>“In Prison for His Belief, Shanxi Man in Life-Threatening Condition Due to Hunger Strike and Torture,” *Minghui*, January 11, 2024.

<sup>133</sup>Rights Defense Network, “获刑12年的山西太原市法轮功学员侯利军监狱遭残酷迫害 生命危急” [Falun Gong practitioner Hou Lijun, who was sentenced to 12 years in prison in Taiyuan municipality, Shanxi, was brutally persecuted in prison and his life is in danger], January 11, 2024.

<sup>134</sup>Rights Defense Network, “获刑12年的山西太原市法轮功学员侯利军监狱遭残酷迫害 生命危急” [Falun Gong practitioner Hou Lijun, who was sentenced to 12 years in prison in Taiyuan municipality, Shanxi, was brutally persecuted in prison and his life is in danger], January 11, 2024; “法轮功学员侯利军狱中遭迫害 生命危急” [Falun Gong practitioner Hou Lijun was persecuted in prison and his life is in danger], *Epoch Times*, January 11, 2024.

<sup>135</sup>Rights Defense Network, “维权网：中国大陆在押政治犯、良心犯月度报告（2024年1月31日）第100期（共 1682人）（四）” [Rights Defense Network: Monthly report on political prisoners and prisoners of conscience detained in mainland China (January 31, 2024) no. 100 (total 1,682 persons) (4)], January 31, 2024; “郎东月” [Lang Dongyue], *Minghui*, accessed October 24, 2024. For more information on Lang Dongyue, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2024-00071.

<sup>136</sup>Rights Defense Network, “获刑3年6个月的大庆法轮功学员王彦明的案情及简历” [The case and background of Daqing Falun Gong practitioner Wang Yanming, who was sentenced to 3 years and 6 months in prison], February 8, 2024; “大庆法轮功学员王彦明被构陷到检察院” [Daqing Falun Gong practitioner Wang Yanming was framed and sent to the procuratorate], *Minghui*, September 1, 2023; “大庆第十采油厂王彦明被非法判刑三年半” [Wang Yanming, who worked at Daqing No. 10 Oil Production Plant, was illegally sentenced to three and a half years in prison],



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<sup>137</sup> *Stopping the Crime of Organ Harvesting—What More Must Be Done?*, Hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 118th Cong. (2024) (testimony of Matthew Robertson, Doctoral candidate, Australian National University (Canberra) and co-author, “Execution by Organ Procurement: Breaching the Dead Donor Rule in China,” *American Journal of Transplantation*); *Stopping the Crime of Organ Harvesting—What More Must Be Done?*, Hearing of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 118th Cong. (2024) (submitted testimony of Cynthia Sun, Researcher, Falun Dafa Information Center).

<sup>138</sup> Edward A. Irons, “China’s Blacklist of Forbidden Religions—The Chinese Communist Party’s War on Religious Liberty,” *Foref Europe (blog)*, October 15, 2018. See also Ministry of Public Security, “公安部关于认定和取缔邪教组织 若干问题的通知” [Notice of the Ministry of Public Security on Several Issues Concerning the Identification and Prohibition of Cult Organizations], *China21.org*, April 30, 2000; Dui Hua Foundation, “Identifying Cult Organizations in China,” July 10, 2014.

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<sup>140</sup> Jiang Tao, “CCP Launches 3-Year ‘Tough Battle’ Against The Church of Almighty God,” *Bitter Winter*, April 2, 2024; Church of Almighty God, “2023 Annual Report on the Chinese Communist Government’s Persecution of the Church of Almighty God,” February 7, 2024; Jiang Tao, “Post-COVID Purge: Over 2,100 Church of Almighty God Members Arrested in Two Provinces,” *Bitter Winter*, September 7, 2023.

<sup>141</sup> Church of Almighty God, “2023 Annual Report on the Chinese Communist Government’s Persecution of the Church of Almighty God,” February 7, 2024.

<sup>142</sup> Church of Almighty God, “2023 Annual Report on the Chinese Communist Government’s Persecution of the Church of Almighty God,” February 7, 2024; Jiang Tao, “China: New Massive Wave of Persecution Against the Church of Almighty God,” *Bitter Winter*, August 11, 2023.

<sup>143</sup> Mainland Affairs Council, Republic of Taiwan, “兩岸大事記：民國112年” [Mainland policy and work: Year 112 of the Republic of China], December 26, 2023; 中华人民共和国刑法 [PRC Criminal Law], passed July 1, 1979, revised March 14, 1997, amended December 29, 2023, effective March 1, 2024, art. 300; Yu-fu Chen and Shelley Shan, “New China Laws Risky for Taiwanese,” *Taipei Times*, June 11, 2024; Zhao Zhangyong, “Taiwan’s Yiguandao Believers Arrested as ‘Cultists’ when Visiting China,” *Bitter Winter*, January 5, 2024.

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