

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

International and Chinese Law on Religious Freedom

Both Chinese and international law provide guarantees of religious freedom. Despite these guarantees, the Commission continued to observe widespread and systematic violation of the principles of religious freedom during the 2018 reporting year, as Chinese authorities exercised broad discretion over religious practice.

Under international law, freedom of religion or belief encompasses both the right to form, hold, and change convictions, beliefs, and religions—which cannot be restricted—and the right to outwardly manifest those beliefs—which can be limited for certain, specific justifications.¹ These principles are codified in various international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).² China has signed³ and stated its intent to ratify⁴ the ICCPR, which obligates China to refrain in good faith from acts that would defeat the treaty’s purpose.⁵

Article 36 of China’s Constitution guarantees citizens “freedom of religious belief” and protection for “normal religious activities.”⁶ With essential terms such as “normal” undefined, it is unclear whether China’s Constitution protects the same range of belief and outward manifestation that is recognized under international law.⁷ In other ways, however, China’s Constitution and other legal provisions⁸ join the ICCPR in prohibiting discrimination based on religion⁹ and loosely parallel the ICCPR’s prohibition on coercion¹⁰ by forbidding state agencies, social organizations, and individuals from compelling citizens to believe or not believe in any religion.¹¹

China’s Constitution prohibits “making use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt social order, impair the health of citizens, or interfere with the educational system of the State.”¹² The ICCPR does allow State Parties to restrict outward manifestations of religion or belief, but such restrictions must be “prescribed by law and . . . necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.”¹³

Policies and Regulations Pertaining to Religious Freedom

The importance of “religious work”¹⁴ to the Chinese Communist Party agenda has undergone an “unprecedented increase” with “major innovations” under Party General Secretary Xi Jinping, according to an article published a few weeks before the October 2017 19th Party Congress¹⁵ in the major Party journal Seeking Truth (*Qiushi*). Party and government officials emphasized several key policy principles in religious affairs during this past year:

- **“Actively guiding religions to adapt to socialist society.”**¹⁶ As explained by Party and government sources, this means “guiding” religious groups to support Party leadership and the political system.¹⁷ The State Council Information Office stated in an April 2018 white paper that this principle also includes ensuring that religious believers are “subordinate to and serve the overall interests of the nation and the Chinese people.”¹⁸

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- **“Sinicization.”** Party and government officials continued to develop and promote policies aimed at shaping religious practice in China to promote and assimilate to a Chinese cultural identity.¹⁹ One policy document from the State Administration for Religious Affairs called for interpreting religious teachings and doctrines in ways that conform to “China’s outstanding traditional culture,” promoting patriotic education and activities within religious communities, and impelling the religious communities to exhibit Chinese “characteristics” and “style” in religious thinking, institutions, rituals, behavior, and architecture, among other aspects.²⁰ Party and government officials also continued to develop policies to resist the perceived threat of foreign forces that use religion to “infiltrate” Chinese society.²¹ According to international experts on Chinese religion, officials view Christianity, Islam, and Tibetan Buddhism as retaining undue foreign influence while considering Chinese Buddhism and Taoism to be integrated with Chinese culture.²² Official pronouncements also identified “extremism” as a particular problem that officials should address within Islam.²³

- **Promoting religion as an instrument for implementing official policy objectives.** Party and government policy encouraged use of religious groups to facilitate communication and connection with other countries, particularly those hosting Belt and Road Initiative projects.²⁴ Policy plans included cooperation with Russia and Central Asian countries on “anti-extremism” efforts.²⁵ In addition, Party and government policy documents directed officials to encourage religious groups to provide social services to complement central government poverty alleviation efforts.²⁶

The increased attention to religious affairs under Party General Secretary Xi Jinping is part of a “hardline turn” in the Party’s “united front work,” according to an Australian scholar specializing in Chinese political institutions.²⁷ Led through the Party’s United Front Work Department (UFD), “united front work” involves bringing elements of society outside of the Party under its control with the aim of preventing the independent organization of civil society.²⁸ The Party under Xi has viewed “united front work” with renewed urgency given the increased complexity of society and the growth of new groups such as religious communities²⁹ in the decades since China’s economic marketization.³⁰ A Hong Kong-based scholar notes, for example, that Party officials have concerns about the growing number of Christian believers in China and the level of organization within the community.³¹

In March 2018, the Party’s sweeping reorganization plan for Party and government institutions included a provision directing the Party’s UFD to take over the government agency responsible for religious affairs at the national level, making the national-level UFD directly responsible for administering policies pertaining to religion in China.³² The UFD would continue to use the government agency’s name—the State Administration for Religious Affairs—when interacting with outside entities.³³ The stated rationale for the restructuring was to unify and strengthen the Party’s control over “religious work.”³⁴ Even prior to the change, the UFD, under the Party’s Central Committee, had been responsible

for developing Party policies on religion and connecting with religious groups and leaders on behalf of the Party.³⁵ At a July 2018 meeting involving key leaders of the UFWD and state-sanctioned religious groups, the latter issued a proposal for religious venues to fly the Chinese flag and organize activities involving the flag to encourage religious believers to “strengthen their identification with the Party and the nation in politics, thought, and feeling.”³⁶

As of September 2018, the Commission did not observe reports of changes in responsibility for religious affairs administration at the local level, where local government bureaus have been responsible for managing religious affairs.³⁷ These religious affairs agencies have effective authority over the state-sanctioned “patriotic” religious associations that act as liaisons between the government and practitioners of the five “main” religions in China,³⁸ while the UFWD vets the association leaders.³⁹ Public security bureaus are generally responsible for enforcement of laws against religious activity authorities deem illegal.⁴⁰

The Chinese government’s regulatory framework for religion imposed increased restrictions on religious freedom after revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs took effect on February 1, 2018.⁴¹ The revisions increased official control and scrutiny over religious activity, including newly explicit prohibitions on groups, schools, and venues from engaging in or hosting religious activities unless they have been officially designated as religious (Article 41) and on clergy acting as religious professionals without official certification (Article 36).⁴² The revisions also established new legal responsibilities and penalties for violations of the regulations, including fining those who “provide the conditions” for unauthorized religious activities (Article 71).⁴³ Religious believers⁴⁴ and academic experts⁴⁵ predicted that the restrictions would increase official pressure on religious groups, particularly those not registered with the government—many groups refuse to register because registration requires submitting to the direction of a state-sanctioned patriotic religious association.⁴⁶ In contrast, some registered religious groups may be able to operate more independently of patriotic religious associations due to the revisions allowing registered religious groups to apply for status as legal persons, according to one U.S.-based scholar of Chinese religion and society—without separate legal identities, registered groups have relied on their affiliated patriotic religious association to open bank accounts and sign contracts on their behalf.⁴⁷ In addition, one expert on Chinese religion opined about the potential for increased control over the religious gatherings of non-Chinese citizens in China after the State Administration for Religious Affairs released a draft revision to the provisions regulating such activities in May 2018.⁴⁸ The proposed revisions would restrict foreign citizens’ religious freedom by, for example, requiring their religious activities to be approved and facilitated by state-sanctioned religious organizations and registered with local religious affairs administrators if they involve more than 50 people; the revisions would also prohibit Chinese citizens from participating excepting those chosen by state-sanctioned religious organizations to jointly administer such activities.⁴⁹

Other laws and Party policies also continued to restrict citizens’ freedom to hold religious beliefs and practice religion. For example,

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Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law criminalizes “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law,”⁵⁰ and the PRC National Security Law prohibits “the use of religion to conduct illegal criminal activities that threaten state security.”⁵¹ The latter also contains mandates to “maintain the order of normal religious activities,” “oppose the interference of foreign influence into domestic religious affairs,” and “suppress cult organizations.”⁵² State media declared the importance of adhering to the long-standing⁵³ ban on religious belief for Party members,⁵⁴ warning that religious beliefs had been implicated in many Party discipline cases in recent years.⁵⁵ Local-level Party organizations issued notices warning Party members and their families that they would face sanctions for participating in any event related to Christmas Eve or other activities associated with “Western religions,”⁵⁶ with prohibitions reportedly extending to state-owned enterprise employees.⁵⁷ One international law expert has noted that because Party membership to a large degree determines the extent to which citizens may participate in public life, the ban constitutes discrimination against religious believers and a violation of freedom of religious belief.⁵⁸

Buddhism (Non-Tibetan) and Taoism

Government and Party officials rarely targeted Chinese Buddhist and Taoist communities with direct suppression—both are considered to be relatively compliant with Party and government leadership, and compatible with the official promotion of traditional Chinese culture.⁵⁹ A large number of Chinese citizens engage in Buddhist and Taoist practices, with estimates of around 244 million Buddhists as of 2010,⁶⁰ and 173 million citizens engaging in some Taoist practices as of 2007.⁶¹ [For information on Tibetan Buddhism, see Section V—Tibet.] Chinese Buddhist and Taoist communities are subject to extensive regulation and control by officials: government authorities connected with local religious affairs bureaus are involved with the administration of officially sanctioned temples; all candidates for the clergy must obtain the approval of the local patriotic association and religious affairs bureau for ordination;⁶² and Buddhist ordinations themselves are restricted by the state-run patriotic associations.⁶³ The head of the Buddhist Association of China (BAC), the national-level patriotic association for Buddhists, Shi Xuecheng, resigned in August 2018 after two female supervisory chancellors released a report documenting claims that he had sexually harassed female disciples.⁶⁴ The State Administration for Religious Affairs directed the BAC to subject Xuecheng to severe disciplinary sanctions after verifying some of the harassment claims and announced that local authorities would continue to investigate other allegations of illegal building construction, mismanagement of funds, and sexual assault.⁶⁵ International media reported that official control over ordinations and resources for religious institutions has created disparities between different Buddhist traditions driven by official political priorities, noting that Theravada Buddhist temples and schools in particular are under-resourced and lacking in clergy.⁶⁶

Official regulations also included restrictions that may violate state neutrality with regard to religion—in November 2017, the

State Administration for Religious Affairs and 11 other central Party and government departments issued a joint opinion on combating commercialization in Buddhism and Taoism to avoid negative effects on “the healthy development of [the two religions] dissemination.”⁶⁷ The opinion outlined a series of measures such as prohibitions on commercial investment in religious venues, construction of large outdoor statues, and local government promotion of religious sites for tourism and economic development purposes.⁶⁸ Overseas observers noted that the campaign against commercialization in religion demonstrates shifting government priorities under Xi Jinping away from economic development⁶⁹ and toward bolstering the credibility of Buddhism and Taoism so that indigenous religions embodying Chinese culture and values may serve as a bulwark against “infiltration” of other values via religions perceived as foreign.⁷⁰ One human rights expert has noted that when a state distinguishes between proper and improper conduct in order to uphold religious standards or to enhance the legitimacy of particular religions as against others, it violates the state neutrality necessary to maintain the free exercise of religious freedom.⁷¹

Christianity—Catholicism

The number of Catholics is estimated to be around 10.5 million,⁷² with the State Council Information Office reporting in 2018 that 6 million Catholics were part of officially sanctioned congregations.⁷³ Chinese officials impede the freedom under international standards⁷⁴ for Chinese Catholic congregations to be led by clergy who are selected and who conduct their ministry as called for by Catholic religious beliefs. Officials continued to insist that bishops be “self-selected and self-ordained”⁷⁵—that is, selected through patriotic religious organizations in consultation with government and Party officials, and then ordained by Chinese bishops.⁷⁶ Many Chinese Catholics, sometimes known as “underground Catholics,” avoid the ministry of such bishops because they believe legitimate ecclesiastical authority can be conferred only by the Pope’s mandate,⁷⁷ and they also object to affiliation with the patriotic religious association for Chinese Catholics, the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA).⁷⁸ The Holy See has declared the CPA “incompatible with Catholic doctrine” because it claims authority over Chinese bishops and their church communities while being backed by the Chinese government and maintaining independence from the Holy See.⁷⁹ Foreign media reported that local officials pressured underground Catholic leaders to join the CPA in Fujian, Gansu, Hebei, and Zhejiang provinces, in some cases by holding bishops in official custody for periods ranging from one to seven months.⁸⁰

The Chinese government and the Holy See continued⁸¹ negotiations regarding control over the system of bishop appointments. In September 2018, the Wall Street Journal reported that an agreement was imminent.⁸² Under the deal, Chinese authorities would nominate future Chinese bishops that the Holy See would be able to veto.⁸³ The Holy See would also recognize seven “illegitimate bishops” approved by the state;⁸⁴ the Holy See had directed two underground bishops to step down to make way for two of these state-backed bishops in December 2017.⁸⁵ Both sides reportedly agreed not to publish the agreement after its signing.⁸⁶ As of mid-

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September the deal was not yet finalized, but Chinese Catholics had expressed concerns in reaction to earlier reports of an impending agreement that the Holy See would make concessions that would weaken and further divide the Chinese Catholic community.⁸⁷

Authorities in some locales took repressive actions against state-sanctioned Catholic communities. In June 2018, religious affairs officials recommended that the diocese for Shijiazhuang municipality, Hebei province, disqualify a priest for leading a pilgrimage, citing the government's "sinicization" campaign and the revised Regulations on Religious Affairs' prohibition on "unauthorized religious activities."⁸⁸ In June through August, officials dismantled a popular pilgrimage site in Henan province⁸⁹ and demolished two Catholic churches in Jinan municipality, Shandong province.⁹⁰ At the national level, the two state-sanctioned national religious organizations for Catholics issued instructions to all local dioceses under their purview to report on local plans for implementation of the five-year plan passed in May 2018 to "sinicize" Catholicism in China.⁹¹ The "sinicization" of Catholicism has been described by one top government official as adapting interpretations of Catholic doctrine to what is required by Chinese development and traditional culture.⁹²

Christianity—Protestantism

Party and government officials maintained restrictions on the religious activities of Chinese Protestants, estimated to number around 60 to 80 million,⁹³ with some believers facing harassment, surveillance, detention, imprisonment, and other abuse because of their religious activities. A U.S.-based organization that advocates for religious freedom, ChinaAid Association, reported that both instances of official persecution and the number of believers affected had increased in 2017 from the prior year.⁹⁴ Academic experts on Chinese religion and society stated that the continued escalation of repression was due in part to concern by Party officials that Christian communities pose a challenge to the Party's monopoly on political power.⁹⁵

Under the "sinicization" campaign promoted by Chinese Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping, officials have sought to bring Protestant communities into alignment with Party interests and ideology by tightening control over registered, state-sanctioned Protestant groups and using harsh measures to pressure unregistered groups into submitting to government scrutiny and regulation. Measures implemented that have increased official control over officially sanctioned Protestant churches in some local areas included the installation of surveillance cameras,⁹⁶ ordering cross removals from church buildings,⁹⁷ and the establishment of official village-level groups to monitor religious activities.⁹⁸ Under Xi's leadership, officials planned to extend further influence over religious affairs and activities of registered Protestant communities.⁹⁹ In March 2018, for example, the two state-sanctioned national religious organizations for Protestants released a joint five-year plan to promote the "sinicization" of Protestantism that included developing theological interpretations of the Bible compatible with the Chinese political system and training "politically reliable" and

“morally convincing” religious leaders.¹⁰⁰ In a move affecting both Catholic and Protestant Christian believers, Chinese officials reportedly issued a notification to large online retailers prohibiting sales of the Bible beginning March 30, 2018.¹⁰¹ A number of leaders of officially sanctioned Protestant groups who had been prosecuted and sentenced after protesting official measures against their churches in the past remained in prison.¹⁰²

Unregistered church communities (commonly referred to as “house churches”) faced additional persecution as officials sought to pressure them into registering under the auspices of a patriotic religious association.¹⁰³ As in previous years,¹⁰⁴ Protestant house churches continued to face raids during church gatherings¹⁰⁵ and eviction from meeting spaces.¹⁰⁶ In January 2018, authorities in Shanxi province demolished the Golden Lampstand Church, with a congregation of 50,000.¹⁰⁷ In Henan province, authorities reportedly banned at least 100 house churches from meeting after the revised Regulations on Religious Affairs went into effect in February 2018, and also destroyed religious iconography in believers’ homes.¹⁰⁸ In July 2018, the Beijing municipal government reportedly issued an order for lower-level governments to conduct investigations of Protestant churches with the cooperation of local public security officials.¹⁰⁹ Authorities also reportedly subjected some believers to harassment¹¹⁰ and detention.¹¹¹ Also in July, officials in Xinyu municipality, Jiangxi province, reportedly ordered house churches to remove crosses and hang the national flag or portraits of Xi Jinping within their buildings, while also banning minors from attending church.¹¹² In one major incident in May 2018, local authorities detained more than 200 members of Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu municipality, Sichuan province, prior to a planned memorial service for the victims of the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in Wenchuan county, Aba (Ngaba) Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan.¹¹³

In several instances, authorities in Yunnan province continued¹¹⁴ to detain and prosecute house church members on charges of “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law,” under Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law. Since October 2016, around 200 people reportedly have been detained, six of whom were sentenced in December 2017.¹¹⁵ In a report directed at the Yunnan province-level group responsible for Party discipline inspection, one county-level Party committee described cult prevention activities as one of several measures aimed at “rectifying the inadequate implementation of the ideological work responsibility system.”¹¹⁶ Other measures in the same category included a “clean-up campaign aimed at foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations.”¹¹⁷ In May 2018, the provincial state-sanctioned religious organizations for Protestants in Zhejiang province issued a statement banning one house church for promoting an “illegal” religion.¹¹⁸

Falun Gong

As in previous years, authorities continued to detain Falun Gong practitioners and subject them to harsh treatment.¹¹⁹ Due to government suppression, it is difficult to determine the number of Falun Gong practitioners in China.¹²⁰ Authorities commonly pros-

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ecute Falun Gong practitioners under Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law; the U.S.-based NGO Dui Hua Foundation noted that Falun Gong practitioners made up the majority of the 800 people convicted under the provision in cases from 2017 available in judicial databases.¹²¹ Human rights organizations¹²² and Falun Gong practitioners documented coercive and violent practices against practitioners during custody, including physical violence,¹²³ forced drug administration,¹²⁴ sleep deprivation,¹²⁵ and other forms of torture.¹²⁶ In December 2017, the Epoch Times, a U.S.-based news organization affiliated with Falun Gong, reported 29 confirmed deaths of Falun Gong practitioners in 2017 due to abuse by officials.¹²⁷

Several international organizations expressed concern over reports that numerous organ transplants in China have used the organs of detained prisoners, including Falun Gong practitioners.¹²⁸ Medical professionals and international advocacy organizations disputed Chinese health officials' claims that organ procurement systems have been reformed in compliance with international standards, citing ethical concerns about organ sourcing raised by short wait times for organ transplants and discrepancies in data on organ transplants.¹²⁹

Islam

This past year, official restrictions on the religious freedom of the 10.5 million¹³⁰ Hui Muslim believers increased.¹³¹ In a speech before the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the head of the China Islamic Association (IAC),¹³² the patriotic religious association for Chinese Muslims,¹³³ stressed the importance of "sinicizing" Islam, which he described as adapting Islamic religious practice to support patriotism and the realization of the "great rejuvenation of Chinese civilization" and the "Chinese dream" while rejecting extremism.¹³⁴ In Yinchuan municipality, the capital of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, a region with a high concentration of Hui Muslim believers, the local government reportedly launched a "rectification campaign" that has included the removal of "Arabic style" domes and décor from mosques and other buildings, prohibitions on calls to prayer, removal of the Quran and books on Islam from retail shops, and the closure of schools teaching Arabic.¹³⁵ In Linxia Hui Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu province, local officials signed a pledge to prevent individuals or groups that would otherwise "support, permit, organise or guide minors towards entering mosques for Koranic study or religious activities"; local Hui Muslim believers expressed distress that their religious traditions might not be passed on to future generations because of the prohibition.¹³⁶ A local county government in Gansu also banned children in a heavily Muslim area from attending religious events, reading scripture in classes, or entering religious venues over the winter holiday, and instructed students and teachers to "strengthen political ideology and propaganda."¹³⁷ The Dui Hua Foundation reported in March 2018 that 14 online judgments it had discovered showed that Hui Muslim believers in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region had been sentenced for "cult" or other offenses for "privately preaching the Quran."¹³⁸ [For more information on Uyghur, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Hui, and other Muslim

believers, see Section IV—Xinjiang. For more information on Hui Muslim believers, see Section II—Ethnic Minority Rights.]

Ongoing policies included measures requiring Islamic religious leaders and lay believers to demonstrate their political reliability. To be officially certified, imams and other religious personnel must be educated at one of 10 state-sanctioned Islamic schools or otherwise obtain equivalent education,¹³⁹ and be vetted by the local religious affairs bureau and the IAC.¹⁴⁰ After certification, religious leaders are required to continue attending political training sessions.¹⁴¹ An official media outlet reported in August 2018 that Chinese Muslims seeking to carry out the Hajj pilgrimage would take patriotic education classes required by Chinese regulations in order to “enhance their awareness about safeguarding national unity and resisting separatism and religious extremism.”¹⁴² According to an official media report, around 11,500 Chinese Muslim believers made the Hajj pilgrimage in 2018, of whom around 3,300 participants received GPS tracking devices as part of a pilot program allowing IAC organizers to monitor their location in real time throughout the pilgrimage.¹⁴³ According to the manufacturer, the device was jointly designed by the State Administration for Religious Affairs and the IAC.¹⁴⁴

Other Religious Communities

Religious communities outside of the five religions that are the main objects of official regulation¹⁴⁵ continued to exist in China, with some continuing to enjoy tacit recognition and support. For example, the government acknowledged in a 2018 report on freedom of religious belief that “large numbers” of Chinese citizens hold folk beliefs,¹⁴⁶ and some local governments have taken measures to recognize folk religious sites.¹⁴⁷ Eastern Orthodox Christian communities have also been recognized to varying degrees at the local government level.¹⁴⁸ Other religious groups, such as The Church of the Almighty God, faced suppression from authorities—in July 2018, a local court in Heilongjiang province tried an unknown number of believers from this group for “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law.”¹⁴⁹

Notes to Section II—Freedom of Religion

¹ Paul M. Taylor, *Freedom of Religion: UN and European Human Rights Law and Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 19, 24, 203–04.

² Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by UN General Assembly resolution 217A (III) of 10 December 48, art. 18; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 66, entry into force 23 March 76, 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, proclaimed by UN General Assembly resolution 36/55 of 25 November 81.

³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 66, entry into force 23 March 76; United Nations Treaty Collection, Chapter IV, Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, last visited 29 June 18. China has signed but not ratified the ICCPR.

⁴ State Council Information Office, "National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2016–2020)" [Guojia renquan xingdong jihua (2016–2020 nian)], 29 September 16, sec. 5. The Chinese government stated its intent to ratify the ICCPR in its 2016–2020 National Human Rights Action Plan. See also State Council Information Office, "Progress in China's Human Rights in 2012," May 2013, chap. VI; People's Republic of China and European Union, "Joint Statement of the 12th China-EU Summit," reprinted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 November 09, para. 8.

⁵ United Nations Conference on the Law of Treaties, Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, adopted 23 May 69, entry into force 27 January 80, arts. 18, 26.

⁶ PRC Constitution, issued 4 December 82, amended 12 April 88, 29 March 93, 15 March 99, 14 March 04, 11 March 18, art. 36.

⁷ *Ibid.*; Liu Peng, "Crisis of Faith," *China Security*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Autumn 2008), 30.

⁸ PRC Constitution, issued 4 December 82, amended 12 April 88, 29 March 93, 15 March 99, 14 March 04, 11 March 18, art. 36; State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, amended 14 June 17, effective 1 February 18, art. 2; PRC Labor Law [Zhonghua renmin gongheguo laodong fa], passed 5 July 94, effective 1 January 95, art. 12.

⁹ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 66, entry into force 23 March 76, art. 26.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, art. 18(2).

¹¹ PRC Constitution, issued 4 December 82, amended 12 April 88, 29 March 93, 15 March 99, 14 March 04, 11 March 18, art. 36; State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, amended 14 June 17, effective 1 February 18, art. 2.

¹² PRC Constitution, issued 4 December 82, amended 12 April 88, 29 March 93, 15 March 99, 14 March 04, 11 March 18, art. 36.

¹³ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 66, entry into force 23 March 76, art. 18; UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 22: Article 18 (Freedom of Thought, Conscience or Religion), CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.4, 30 July 93, para. 8.

¹⁴ Party Organization, Theory Study Center Group, State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Innovations in Religious Work Theory and Practice Since the 18th Party Congress" [Dang de shibada yilai zongjiao gongzuo lilun he shijian chuangxin], Seeking Truth, 15 September 17. See also Ray Wang and Gerry Groot, "Who Represents? Xi Jinping's Grand United Front Work, Legitimation, Participation and Consultative Democracy," *Journal of Contemporary China*, Vol. 27, Issue 112 (2018). The term "religious work" refers to the Communist Party's united front work targeting religious groups. "United front work" is the Party's term for activities aimed at facilitating the controlled participation of different social groups to promote Party goals.

¹⁵ "Enthusiastic Congratulations to the Chinese Communist Party for the Victorious Commencement of the 19th Party Congress" [Relie zhuhe zhonggong shijuda shengli zhakail], *People's Daily*, 20 October 17.

¹⁶ Party Organization, Theory Study Center Group, State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Innovations in Religious Work Theory and Practice Since the 18th Party Congress" [Dang de shibada yilai zongjiao gongzuo lilun he shijian chuangxin], Seeking Truth, 15 September 17; State Council Information Office, "China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief," 3 April 18, sec. I.

¹⁷ Party Organization, Theory Study Center Group, State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Innovations in Religious Work Theory and Practice Since the 18th Party Congress" [Dang de shibada yilai zongjiao gongzuo lilun he shijian chuangxin], Seeking Truth, 15 September 17; State Council Information Office, "China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief," 3 April 18.

¹⁸ State Council Information Office, "China's Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief," 3 April 18.

¹⁹ Party Organization, Theory Study Center Group, State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Innovations in Religious Work Theory and Practice Since the 18th Party Congress" [Dang de shibada yilai zongjiao gongzuo lilun he shijian chuangxin], Seeking Truth, 15 September 17; State Administration for Religious Affairs, "State Administration for Religious Affairs 2018 Work Objectives" [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju 2018 nian gongzuo yaodian], 14 February 18. See also Yao Songshu, "China Religious Studies Expert Professor Zhang Zhigang Discusses: The Three Questions of Sincization of Religion" [Zhongguo zongjiaoxue zhuanjia zhang zhigang jiaoshou tan: zongjiao zhongguohua de san ge wenti], *Christian Times*, 6 November 17; Gerry

- Groot, "The Rise and Rise of the United Front Work Department Under Xi," Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief*, Vol. 18, Issue 7, 24 April 18.
- ²⁰ State Administration for Religious Affairs, "State Administration for Religious Affairs 2018 Work Objectives" [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju 2018 nian gongzuo yaodian], 14 February 18.
- ²¹ Party Organization, Theory Study Center Group, State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Innovations in Religious Work Theory and Practice Since the 18th Party Congress" [Dang de shibada yilai zongjiao gongzuo lilun he shijian chuangxin], *Seeking Truth*, 15 September 17; State Administration for Religious Affairs, "State Administration for Religious Affairs 2018 Work Objectives" [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju 2018 nian gongzuo yaodian], 14 February 18.
- ²² Cyrille Pluyette, "En Chine, le Pouvoir Renforce son Contrôle sur les Religions," *Le Figaro*, updated 12 December 17, translated in Marc Alves, "In China's Crackdown on Religions, Buddhism Gets a Pass," *Worldcrunch*, 5 February 18; Eleanor Albert, Council on Foreign Relations, "Religion in China," 15 March 18.
- ²³ State Administration for Religious Affairs, "State Administration for Religious Affairs 2018 Work Objectives" [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju 2018 nian gongzuo yaodian], 14 February 18; "CPPCC Member Yang Faming: Maintain China's Sinicization of Islam" [Yang faming wei yuan: jianchi woguo zhongguohua fangxiang], *Xinhua*, 10 March 18.
- ²⁴ Party Organization, Theory Study Center Group, State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Innovations in Religious Work Theory and Practice Since the 18th Party Congress" [Dang de shibada yilai zongjiao gongzuo lilun he shijian chuangxin], *Seeking Truth*, 15 September 17; State Administration for Religious Affairs, "State Administration for Religious Affairs 2018 Work Objectives" [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju 2018 nian gongzuo yaodian], 14 February 18.
- ²⁵ State Administration for Religious Affairs, "State Administration for Religious Affairs 2018 Work Objectives" [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju 2018 nian gongzuo yaodian], 14 February 18.
- ²⁶ Party Organization, Theory Study Center Group, State Administration for Religious Affairs, "Innovations in Religious Work Theory and Practice Since the 18th Party Congress" [Dang de shibada yilai zongjiao gongzuo lilun he shijian chuangxin], *Seeking Truth*, 15 September 17; State Administration for Religious Affairs, "State Administration for Religious Affairs 2018 Work Objectives" [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju 2018 nian gongzuo yaodian], 14 February 18.
- ²⁷ Gerry Groot, "The Rise and Rise of the United Front Work Department Under Xi," Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief*, Vol. 18, Issue 7, 24 April 18.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*
- ²⁹ Ian Johnson, "How the Top-Heavy Catholic Church Is Losing the Ground Game in China," *America*, 18 September 17; Eleanor Albert, Council on Foreign Relations, "Religion in China," updated 15 March 18.
- ³⁰ Gerry Groot, "The Rise and Rise of the United Front Work Department Under Xi," Jamestown Foundation, *China Brief*, Vol. 18, Issue 7, 24 April 18.
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¹³⁵Nectar Gan, “How China Is Trying To Impose Islam With Chinese Characteristics in the Hui Muslim Heartland,” South China Morning Post, 14 May 18.

¹³⁶Becky Davis, “We’re Scared, Very Scared”—Muslims in China’s ‘Little Mecca’ Fear Eradication of Islam,” Agence France-Presse, reprinted in Hong Kong Free Press, 16 July 18.

¹³⁷Christian Shepherd, “Muslim County in China Bans Children From Religious Events Over Break,” Reuters, 17 January 18.

¹³⁸Dui Hua Foundation, “NGO Submission for the Universal Periodic Review of the People’s Republic of China,” March 2018.

¹³⁹State Council Information Office, “China’s Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief,” 4 April 18.

¹⁴⁰China Islamic Association, Measures for Confirming the Credentials of Islamic Professional Religious Personnel [Yisilan jiao jiaozhi renyuan zige rending banfa], issued and effective 7 August 06, art. 3; Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 76.

¹⁴¹Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 76.

¹⁴²Li Ruohan, “Chinese Muslims Say They Feel a Stronger Sense of National Identity During Pilgrimage to Mecca,” Global Times, 2 August 18.

¹⁴³Li Ruohan, “GPS Cards Aid Chinese Muslims on Hajj Pilgrimage,” Global Times, 31 July 18.

¹⁴⁴Eva Dou, “Chinese Surveillance Expands to Muslims Making Mecca Pilgrimage,” Wall Street Journal, 31 July 18.

¹⁴⁵State Council Information Office, “China’s Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief,” 4 April 18. The central government has referred to the five religions as China’s “major religions,” stating that the religions citizens “mainly” follow are Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. See, e.g., Henan Province People’s Congress Standing Committee, Henan Province Regulations on Religious Affairs [Henan sheng zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 July 05, effective 1 January 06, art. 2; Shaanxi Province People’s Congress Standing Committee, Shaanxi Province Regulations on Religious Affairs [Shaanxi sheng zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 23 September 00, amended 30 July 08, effective 1 October 08, art. 2. Some local regulations on religious affairs define “religion” to mean only these five religions.

¹⁴⁶State Council Information Office, “China’s Policies and Practices on Protecting Freedom of Religious Belief,” 4 April 18.

¹⁴⁷Ibid. See, e.g., Zhejiang Province Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee, Zhejiang Province Measures for the Management of Registration of Venues for Folk Belief Activity [Zhejiang sheng minjian xinyang huodong changsuo dengji bianhao guanli banfa], issued 19 October 14, effective 1 January 15; Taizhou Municipal Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau, Circular Concerning the 2016 Launch of Registration Work for Venues for Folk Belief Activity [Guanyu kaizhan 2016 minjian xinyang huodong changsuo dengji bianhao gongzuo de tongzhi], issued 13 April 16; Hunan Province People’s Government, Hunan Province Measures for the Management of Registration of Venues for Folk Belief Activity [Hunan sheng minjian xinyang huodong changsuo dengji guanli banfa], issued and effective 24 August 09; Shaoxing Municipal Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau, Shaoxing Municipal Implementing Plan for Registration of Venues for Folk Belief Activity [Shaoxing shi minjian xinyang huodong changsuo dengji bianhao gongzuo shishi fang’an], issued 14 May 15.

¹⁴⁸See, e.g., Harbin Municipal Measures for the Management of Venues for Religious Activity [Ha’erbin shi zongjiao huodong changsuo guanli banfa], issued 30 July 09, effective 10 September 09, reprinted in State Administration for Religious Affairs, 5 April 17, art. 2; State Council Information Office, “The Situation of Religious Freedom in Xinjiang” [Xinjiang de zongjiao xinyang ziyou zhuangkuang], reprinted in Xinhua, 2 June 16, secs. 1, 3.

¹⁴⁹“Harmful Religious Doctrines Poison, Harm Society—Exposing the Truth Behind the ‘Church of the Almighty God’” [Xieshuo guhuo qianghai shehui—jiekai “quanneng shen” xiejiao zhen mianmu], Xinhua, 12 August 18.