

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Regulatory and Policy Framework for Religion

During the Commission's 2015 reporting year, the Chinese government and Communist Party continued to restrict freedom of religion in China. China's Constitution guarantees "freedom of religious belief"¹ but limits protection of religious activities to "normal religious activities."² This narrow protection contravenes international human rights standards. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)—the latter of which China has signed³ and stated its intent to ratify⁴—recognize not only an individual's right to adopt a religion or belief, but also the freedom to manifest one's religion in "worship, observance, practice and teaching."⁵

The Chinese government continued to recognize only five religions: Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, Protestantism, and Taoism. The 2005 Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) require groups wishing to practice these religions to register with the government and subject such groups to government controls.⁶ The government and Party control religious affairs mainly through the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) and lower level religious affairs bureaus under the State Council,⁷ the Party Central Committee United Front Work Department (UFWD),⁸ and the five "patriotic" religious associations—the Buddhist Association of China (BAC), the Catholic Patriotic Association of China (CPA), the Islamic Association of China (IAC), the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China (TSPM), and the Chinese Taoist Association (CTA)⁹ among other government and Party organizations.¹⁰ As documented in this section, members of both registered and unregistered religious groups who ran afoul of state-set parameters continued to face harassment, detention, imprisonment, and other abuses.¹¹

Authorities continued to carry out a crackdown against groups they deemed "cults." The crackdown spanned multiple provinces¹² and targeted different religious communities, including Buddhists,¹³ Protestant house churches,¹⁴ and practitioners of Falun Gong¹⁵—a spiritual practice that the government continued to outlaw.¹⁶ The crackdown began in 2014,¹⁷ but new legislation this year bolstered official efforts to target "cults." For example, in July 2015, the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC) passed the PRC National Security Law,¹⁸ which explicitly banned "cult organizations."¹⁹ In August 2015, the NPCSC passed an amendment to the PRC Criminal Law that increased the maximum possible sentence for "organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law"—a crime under Article 300²⁰—from 15 years to life in prison.²¹

This past year, the government and Party continued to call on officials and religious groups to ensure that religious doctrine and practices adhered to government policy and Party goals. For example, at a May 2015 UFWD meeting, President and Party General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized that "religious work . . . should comprehensively implement the Party's policy on freedom of religious belief" and to "proactively guide religion to be in keeping with

socialism.”²² Xi also called for “leading religion to strive to promote the service of economic development, social harmony, flourishing of culture, ethnic solidarity, and unification of the motherland.”²³ Officials also called for strengthening the role of laws and regulations in governing religious practices, property, and sites of worship. For example, a January 2015 SARA document outlining SARA’s work in the upcoming year called for strengthening the role of laws and regulations in its work,²⁴ as well as an improvement in guiding opinions regarding the management of sites of worship.²⁵ Other official statements echoed similar themes.²⁶

Buddhism (Non-Tibetan)

This past year, the Chinese government and Communist Party continued to take steps designed to ensure that Buddhist doctrine and practices in non-Tibetan areas of China conformed to government and Party policy. [For information on Tibetan Buddhists, see Section V—Tibet.] In April 2015, the state-controlled Buddhist Association of China (BAC) convened its Ninth National Conference in Beijing municipality,²⁷ during which authorities selected new BAC leadership.²⁸ Yu Zhengsheng, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party Central Committee, met with the new BAC leadership and called on them to work towards government and Party goals, including “[having] a firm and correct political orientation” and “comprehensively implementing the Party’s basic policy on religion”²⁹ Yu’s remarks echoed similar themes from the 2010 BAC Eighth National Conference³⁰—for example, that Buddhist clergy should be “politically reliable” and that Buddhism should follow the Party’s policy on religion³¹—as well as statements by government and Party officials in other settings.³²

Authorities continued to take steps to bring registered and unregistered Buddhist monasteries under stricter government and Party control,³³ as outlined in the 2012 Opinion Regarding Issues Related to the Management of Buddhist Monasteries and Taoist Temples, a joint opinion issued by 10 government and Party offices.³⁴ For example, in March 2015, officials from the bureau of ethnic and religious affairs, public security bureau, and Buddhist association in Yuhang district, Hangzhou municipality, Zhejiang province, conducted a “surprise inspection” of Buddhist monasteries and folk religious sites in Yuhang in part to investigate the registration status of religious personnel.³⁵ In another example, authorities in Chongqing municipality reportedly carried out a campaign that would publicly distinguish registered Buddhist monasteries from unregistered Buddhist monasteries by hanging placards on registered monasteries.³⁶

On July 14, 2015, the Zhuhai Intermediate People’s Court, in Zhuhai municipality, Guangdong province, tried Wu Zeheng, founder of the Buddhist group “Huazang Zongmen,”³⁷ for “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law,” rape, fraud, and producing and selling toxic and dangerous food products, and tried four others for similar crimes.³⁸ Central government news agency Xinhua quoted anonymous sources—reportedly former followers of Wu—as corroborating the charges against him.³⁹ Wu’s lawyer Lin Qilei and international observers reportedly character-

ized the case as religious persecution.⁴⁰ Authorities criminally detained Wu and over 10 of his followers in July 2014,⁴¹ during a crackdown on “cults.”⁴² The Zhuhai Municipal People’s Procuratorate subsequently returned the case at least twice to the public security bureau for supplementary investigation.⁴³

Catholicism

OFFICIAL HARASSMENT AND DETENTION

This past year, the Chinese government and Communist Party continued to harass, detain, or hold incommunicado Catholics who practiced their religion outside of state-approved parameters. For example:

- **Cao Jianyou and Quan Xiaoyun.** On March 22, 2015, authorities in Harbin municipality, Heilongjiang province, detained two unregistered priests—Cao Jianyou and Quan Xiaoyun—as the two officiated a mass.⁴⁴ Authorities reportedly detained the two priests on suspicion of “holding illegal religious activities at an unregistered worshipping venue.”⁴⁵
- **Peng Weizhao.** In November 2014, authorities in Linchuan district, Fuzhou city, Jiangxi province, released underground bishop Peng Weizhao,⁴⁶ whom they detained in May 2014 after the Holy See appointed him a bishop without approval from Chinese authorities.⁴⁷ After Peng’s release, authorities reportedly ordered him to report to local authorities periodically, not leave Jiangxi, and not carry out his episcopal duties.⁴⁸
- **Shi Enxiang.** A relative of Shi Enxiang, an unregistered bishop whom authorities detained in Beijing in 2001 without disclosing charges,⁴⁹ reportedly said officials in Baoding municipality, Hebei province, informed Shi’s family on January 30, 2015, that Shi had died in custody.⁵⁰ Officials in Baoding reportedly said later that this was “false information” spread by a “drunkard.”⁵¹ The Commission has not observed any reports from Chinese authorities regarding Shi’s status.⁵²
- **Su Zhimin and Ma Daqin.** According to a November 19, 2014, Asia News report, authorities continued to hold Bishops Su Zhimin and Ma Daqin in custody.⁵³ Authorities detained Su, an underground bishop, in 1997.⁵⁴ The Commission has observed no information from Chinese authorities regarding charges against Su or his location.⁵⁵ Authorities detained Ma after he announced publicly during his July 7, 2012, ordination ceremony that he planned to leave the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA).⁵⁶ Authorities then placed Ma under extralegal confinement at the Sheshan seminary in Shanghai municipality.⁵⁷
- **Demonstration in Linxi county.** On August 15, 2014, public security officials in Linxi county, Chifeng municipality, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, reportedly used force—including pepper spray—against a group of “several hundred” Catholics who gathered outside an office of the Linxi County People’s Government to protest local officials’ plans to build housing on the property of a local Catholic church.⁵⁸ The U.S.-based non-governmental organization ChinaAid reported that

over 10 of the Catholics were injured, including 6 with “serious” injuries.⁵⁹

CHINA-HOLY SEE RELATIONS

During this reporting year, Chinese and Holy See authorities reportedly discussed potential changes to China’s state-controlled system of bishop appointments but did not reach an agreement,⁶⁰ leaving in place the system in which the state-controlled CPA and Bishops’ Conference of the Catholic Church in China (BCCCC) can select and ordain bishops without approval from the Holy See.⁶¹ In November 2014, the Hong Kong-based newspaper *Wen Wei Po* cited an anonymous “authority” as saying that China had proposed a system in which Chinese and Holy See authorities must jointly agree to any bishop appointment, and that neither side would unilaterally appoint bishops in China.⁶² The same source reportedly said that the Holy See wanted an agreement that would address the possible dissolution of the CPA and the possible cancellation of the National Conference of Chinese Catholic Representatives (NCCCR),⁶³ which authorities reportedly forced some bishops to attend against their will when the NCCCR last convened in 2010.⁶⁴ According to the charter of the state-led BCCCC, the NCCCR convenes every five years,⁶⁵ and in March 2015, the Hong Kong-based newspaper *Ta Kung Pao* cited the same anonymous source as the *Wen Wei Po* report as saying that “this year’s NCCCR” would be a “touchstone” for China-Holy See relations.⁶⁶

Falun Gong

Government and Party officials continued a campaign—initiated in 1999—of extensive, systematic, and in some cases violent efforts to pressure Falun Gong practitioners to renounce their belief in and practice of Falun Gong.⁶⁷ For example:

- **Kong Qiuge.** In October 2014, Falun Gong practitioner Kong Qiuge, in her late 60s, reportedly died in a prison hospital in Urumqi municipality, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region,⁶⁸ after authorities detained her on suspicion of a “cult”-related crime.⁶⁹
- **Wang Zhiwen.** In October 2014, authorities released Falun Gong practitioner Wang Zhiwen—sentenced to 16 years in prison in 1999 on “cult”-related charges⁷⁰—from Qianjin Prison in Beijing.⁷¹ Authorities reportedly then transferred him to a “transformation through reeducation center”⁷² (or “brainwashing center”)⁷³—a facility where authorities allegedly pressure Falun Gong practitioners to renounce their belief in Falun Gong.⁷⁴ Authorities released Wang from the “transformation through reeducation center” on October 24, 2014.⁷⁵ Wang reportedly suffered various forms of torture during his time in prison and was in poor physical and mental condition upon release.⁷⁶
- **Zuo Kangwei.** On August 22, 2014, the Qinghe District People’s Court, in Huai’an city, Jiangsu province, reportedly sentenced 55-year-old Falun Gong practitioner Zuo Kangwei to three years’ imprisonment.⁷⁷ Officials in Huai’an detained Zuo on March 5, 2014, in apparent connection to her practice of

Falun Gong,⁷⁸ and on March 17, 2014, the Qinghe District People's Procuratorate approved indictment on charges of "organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law,"⁷⁹ a crime under Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law.⁸⁰

• **Li Guifang, Meng Fanli, Wang Yanxin, and Shi Mengwen.** On May 21, 2015, the Jiansanjiang Agriculture Reclamation People's Court, in Fujin city, Jiamusi municipality, Heilongjiang province, sentenced Falun Gong practitioner Shi Mengwen to three years' imprisonment and Falun Gong practitioners Li Guifang, Meng Fanli, and Wang Yanxin each to two years' imprisonment for "organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law."⁸¹ Authorities in Jiansanjiang detained the four on March 21, 2014, for joining rights lawyers and others on March 20, 2014, outside a "legal education center" in Jiansanjiang where authorities had arbitrarily detained Falun Gong practitioners.⁸² In 2015, the practitioners' lawyers filed an appeal, but the Heilongjiang Agriculture Reclamation Intermediate People's Court, in Harbin municipality, Heilongjiang, reportedly informed the practitioners' lawyers that the appeal would not be heard in court.⁸³

Prior to the March 2015 National People's Congress and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) meetings (Two Sessions), authorities in Tianjin municipality reportedly detained at least 20 Falun Gong practitioners and confiscated literature, computers, and other personal items from Falun Gong practitioners as part of a coordinated crackdown.⁸⁴ According to Minghui (or Clear Wisdom), a U.S.-based news organization affiliated with Falun Gong, Zhao Fei—head of the Tianjin Municipal Public Security Bureau⁸⁵—offered cash rewards to officials who detained Falun Gong practitioners.⁸⁶ Officials reportedly detained at least some of the practitioners in connection to their speaking to others about Falun Gong or possessing Falun Gong literature.⁸⁷ Those reportedly detained include Zhuge Yufang and her daughter Chen Ruoming, Fu Shaojuan, Zhang Cuihuan, Zhao Manhong, Song Yunling, Qu Lingyun, Tang Yuehua, Li Hongji, Li Jianmin, Zheng Qinglan, Niu Shuhua, Zhao Yuehua, Song Huichan, Wang Huizhen, Li Shanshan, Liu Qiong, Yang Hong, Jiang Yahui, and "Lu Jie" and "Xiao Gao"—names that may be pseudonyms.⁸⁸ Rights lawyers Tang Jitian and Cheng Hai both reportedly told the Epoch Times—a New York-based newspaper linked to Falun Gong and known for its critical coverage of China—that the Tianjin officials' actions had no legal basis.⁸⁹

This past year, authorities continued to harass, detain, and sentence family members, lawyers, and others who had contact or were affiliated with Falun Gong practitioners. For example, on April 15, 2015, the Qiaodong District People's Court, in Shijiazhuang municipality, Hebei province, sentenced Bian Xiaohui, the daughter of Falun Gong practitioner Bian Lichao, and Falun Gong practitioner Chen Yinghua to prison terms of three years and six months and four years, respectively.⁹⁰ On March 12, 2014, officials in Shijiazhuang detained Bian Xiaohui and Chen Yinghua on suspicion of "organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law"⁹¹ after Bian held up a sign that said "I want to see my father" outside Shijiazhuang Prison where her

father was serving a 12-year sentence.⁹² Chen took a photo of Bian's protest and posted it online.⁹³ Following those detentions, officials detained Bian Xiaohui's mother Zhou Xiuzhen when Zhou went to report the disappearance of her daughter.⁹⁴ On August 5, 2014, the Lu'nan District People's Court in Tangshan municipality, Hebei, reportedly tried Zhou,⁹⁵ but sources did not provide information on formal charges or sentencing of Zhou.⁹⁶ In July 2015, authorities launched a crackdown against rights defense lawyers that resulted in the detention of multiple lawyers who had defended Falun Gong practitioners.⁹⁷ Wang Yu and Wang Quanzhang, who had defended Li Guifang, Meng Fanli, Wang Yanxin, and Shi Mengwen in the case described above,⁹⁸ were among those detained in the July 2015 crackdown.⁹⁹

In December 2014, Huang Jiefu, a CPPCC Standing Committee member and head of the Human Organ Donation and Transplant Committee,¹⁰⁰ reportedly announced that China would stop using organs from death row inmates for organ transplantation,¹⁰¹ a practice that international observers asserted continues to affect Falun Gong practitioners.¹⁰² State-run media reported harvesting organs from executed prisoners would end in January 2015 with a move to a fully voluntary organ donation system,¹⁰³ but international medical professionals¹⁰⁴ and human rights advocates¹⁰⁵ raised doubts about the "voluntary" nature of such donations, and emphasized the use of prisoners' organs violates international ethical standards in transplantation.¹⁰⁶ [For more information, see Section II—Public Health.]

Islam

The Chinese government and Communist Party continued to call for Muslims in China to practice Islam in conformity with government and Party priorities. For example, during an April 2015 "Hajj pilgrimage work meeting," Jiang Jianyong, Deputy Director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), instructed participants to "make political security and personal security a top priority in Hajj pilgrimage work from start to finish . . . , to continue to consolidate the results of the work of controlling unauthorized Hajj pilgrimages, and to prevent backlash from unauthorized Hajj pilgrimage events."¹⁰⁷ During a May 2015 event focused on interpretation of the Quran in Qianxi'nian Buyi and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou province, Wu Jianmin, Deputy Head of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission of Guizhou Province, told participants that the event was a "concrete manifestation" of Islam's "patriotism," among other attributes.¹⁰⁸

Authorities in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) continued to enforce measures directed at "terrorism" and "religious extremism" that had the effect of restricting peaceful religious practices. [For more information, see Section IV—Xinjiang—Freedom of Religion.] In December 2014, the Standing Committee of the Urumqi Municipal People's Congress passed regulations intended to curb "religious extremism"¹⁰⁹ that banned the wearing of full facial or body coverings in public,¹¹⁰ practices that have become more common among Muslim women in the XUAR.¹¹¹ In January 2015, the XUAR People's Congress Standing Committee approved the regulations.¹¹² The regulations follow other official ef-

forts in recent years to prevent Muslim women from wearing veils and Muslim men from wearing beards, practices that authorities in some cases identified with “extremism.”¹¹³ Authorities in the XUAR also continued to call for minors not to enter sites of worship¹¹⁴ and forbade fasting during Ramadan.¹¹⁵ Authorities in Yining (Ghulja) municipality, Ili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture, XUAR, reportedly ordered local residents to surrender their passports or face cancelation of their passports.¹¹⁶ In April 2015, authorities in Aktash village, Laskuy township, Hotan county, Hotan prefecture, XUAR, ordered local shopkeepers to sell alcohol and cigarettes—the use of which many local Muslims considered a “sin” and “self-destructive,” respectively¹¹⁷—as well as to display the alcohol and cigarettes prominently.¹¹⁸ Adil Sulayman, Secretary of the Aktash Village Party Committee, reportedly said that XUAR authorities considered abstaining from smoking to be a “form of religious extremism” and that increasing “religious sentiment” was “affecting stability.”¹¹⁹ Describing the order, Sulayman reportedly said, “We have a campaign to weaken religion here and this is part of that campaign.”¹²⁰

Protestantism

The Chinese government and Communist Party continued to restrict freedom of religion for Protestants in China. For example, officials in various locations in China called on the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and China Christian Council (CCC)—the official organizations that manage registered Protestants under the leadership of the government and Party¹²¹—to work toward government and Party goals, such as to “hold on to a proper political orientation,”¹²² to facilitate and liaise about the Party’s policy on religion,¹²³ and to assist with economic and social development.¹²⁴

OFFICIAL HARASSMENT AND DETENTION

Authorities continued to harass and detain registered and unregistered Protestants who worshipped outside of state-approved parameters. For example:

- **Zhao Weiliang and Cheng Hongpeng.** Authorities sentenced Zhao Weiliang and Cheng Hongpeng, members of a house church in Cao county, Heze municipality, Shandong province,¹²⁵ to four and three years in prison, respectively, on charges of “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law” following a May 27, 2015, trial.¹²⁶ Authorities reportedly determined Zhao and Cheng were members of the “Full-Scope Church” (or “All-Scope Church”), which authorities had officially designated a “cult.”¹²⁷
- **Liu Fenggang, Lu Jingxiang, and Yan Jinwei.** In March 2015, authorities reportedly refused to issue entry-exit permits to several house church pastors—including Liu Fenggang of Beijing municipality and Lu Jingxiang and Yan Jinwei of Anhui province—to attend a religious meeting in Hong Kong.¹²⁸ Lu’s wife reportedly said that public security officials told Lu they could not process his permit because he was affiliated with a house church.¹²⁹

- **Guo Yongfeng and Cai Yongsheng.** In January 2015, religious affairs officials in Shenzhen municipality, Guangdong province, reportedly took into custody Pastor Cai Yongsheng when democracy advocate Guo Yongfeng attempted to meet with him for Bible study.¹³⁰ Guo reportedly posted a message for help online, after which authorities allowed Cai to return home.¹³¹ On January 23, domestic security officers (*guobao*) reportedly went to Guo's house and told him not to participate in religious activities but told him he could go to TSPM churches.¹³²
- **Langzhong house church.** In December 2014, officials in Langzhong city, Nanchong municipality, Sichuan province, reportedly detained members of the Langzhong house church (an unregistered Protestant church) as church members prepared for a Christmas celebration and ordered them to serve administrative detention.¹³³ The detentions occurred at a time when authorities reportedly interfered with Christmas activities in multiple locations.¹³⁴ In January 2015, officials in Langzhong reportedly disrupted another meeting of the Langzhong house church and ordered five members to serve 15 days of administrative detention for "illegal assembly."¹³⁵
- **Zhang Shaojie and Zhang Lingxin.** In October 2014, the Nanle County People's Court in Puyang municipality, Henan province, reportedly notified family members of Zhang Shaojie, a registered pastor, that their home would be auctioned to pay a fine Zhang received in a July 2014 sentence.¹³⁶ Authorities ordered them to vacate the house by October 26 or face forced eviction.¹³⁷ In early November 2014, authorities in Nanle took into custody Zhang's daughter, Zhang "Shanshan" Lingxin; they reportedly beat her and held her in a guest house, and then released her the following week.¹³⁸

CHURCH DEMOLITIONS IN ZHEJIANG

This past year, authorities in Zhejiang province continued to target Protestant churches as part of the three-year (2013–2015) "Three Rectifications and One Demolition" campaign.¹³⁹ While the campaign's stated aim was to address "illegal structures,"¹⁴⁰ official rhetoric appeared to reflect an intention to target religious sites, especially Christian sites, for demolition.¹⁴¹ In a July 10, 2015, open letter to the Zhejiang Provincial Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee, the Zhejiang Provincial Christian Council claimed that authorities had removed over 1,200 crosses since February 2014.¹⁴² Authorities reportedly removed crosses from both registered and unregistered churches,¹⁴³ and Christian Solidarity Worldwide reported 35 whole or partial demolitions of churches and church-owned buildings in Zhejiang between October 2013 and May 2015.¹⁴⁴ Authorities in Zhejiang also reportedly drafted legislation that would limit the size, location, and colors of crosses on churches.¹⁴⁵

Authorities also detained and harassed people who protested, questioned, or disseminated information about the campaign. For example, on July 14, 2015, authorities in Shitang town, Wenling city, Taizhou municipality, Zhejiang, reportedly beat Christians who protested the removal of a church cross.¹⁴⁶ On March 24,

2015, the Pingyang County People's Court in Wenzhou municipality, Zhejiang, sentenced Huang Yizi, a registered pastor, to one year in prison in connection to his participation in a July 2014 protest over the removal of a church cross and for allegedly "frequently express[ing] his opposition to the provincial government's church-and-cross demolition campaign."¹⁴⁷ On March 25, 2015, the Yongjia County People's Court in Wenzhou, Zhejiang, reportedly sentenced eight people associated with the Sanjiang Church—which authorities demolished in April 2014¹⁴⁸—to varying prison terms,¹⁴⁹ all with suspended sentences,¹⁵⁰ for "gathering a crowd to disturb public order" and "illegal occupation of farmland."¹⁵¹ All eight reportedly participated in demonstrations against the demolition.¹⁵²

Taoism

In January 2015, the Chinese Taoist Association (CTA) began preparations for its Ninth National Conference, which reportedly would be held later in 2015.¹⁵³ According to the CTA, Jiang Jianyong, Deputy Director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), attended a planning meeting as a representative of SARA and the Party's United Front Work Department (UFW), in order to "guide" [the meeting].¹⁵⁴

Authorities in multiple locations carried out campaigns that distinguished registered and unregistered Taoist temples by publicly hanging placards on registered temples. For example, in May 2015, authorities in Beijing municipality hung a placard on the Dongyue Temple.¹⁵⁵ Zhu Weiqun, Chairperson of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Ma Jiye, Head of the UFW, Wang Xiaodong, Director of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the Beijing Municipal People's Consultative Conference, and Li Shengyong, Deputy Director of the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Religious Affairs, reportedly performed the unveiling of the placard.¹⁵⁶ Authorities in Chongqing municipality reportedly also carried out a campaign to hang placards on registered Taoist temples.¹⁵⁷

Other Religious Communities

During the reporting year, the Chinese government maintained its framework that extends official recognition only to five religions for limited government protection.¹⁵⁸ Provisions allowed foreign religious communities, including communities not recognized as domestic religions by the government, to hold religious services for expatriates but forbade Chinese citizens from participating.¹⁵⁹ Despite lacking formal central government recognition, some religious communities have been able to operate inside China.¹⁶⁰ In May 2015, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department of External Relations, and SARA officials reportedly agreed to the ordination of an ethnic Chinese Eastern Orthodox priest to serve in Harbin municipality, Heilongjiang province, and to send two others to Russia to study "with a view to their possible ordination."¹⁶¹

Notes to Section II—Freedom of Religion

¹PRC Constitution, issued 4 December 82, amended 12 April 88, 29 March 83, 15 March 99, 14 March 04, art. 36.

²Ibid.

³United Nations Treaty Collection, Chapter IV, Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), last visited 23 June 14. China signed the ICCPR on October 5, 1998.

⁴See, e.g., State Council Information Office, “Progress in China’s Human Rights in 2012,” reprinted in *Xinhua*, 14 May 13, chap. VI; Permanent Mission of the People’s Republic of China to the UN, “Aide Memoire,” reprinted in United Nations, 13 April 06, para. IV; State Council, European Council, Prime Minister’s Office of Sweden, and European Commission, “Joint Statement of the 12th China-EU Summit,” reprinted in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 November 09, para. 8. Upon presenting its candidacy for the 2013 UN Human Rights Council elections, China reportedly promised to “further protect civil and political rights,” although it did not specifically state intent to ratify the ICCPR. UN General Assembly, Sixty-Eighth Session, Item 115(c) of the Preliminary List, Elections To Fill Vacancies in the Subsidiary Organs and Other Elections: Election of Fourteen Members of the Human Rights Council, Note Verbale Dated 5 June 2013 from the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the General Assembly, A/68/90, 6 June 13.

⁵Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by UN General Assembly resolution 217A (III) on 10 December 48, art. 18; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) on 16 December 66, entry into force 23 March 76, art. 18.

⁶State Administration for Religious Affairs, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, arts. 6, 12.

⁷Yang Fenggang, *Religion in China: Survival and Revival Under Communist Rule* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 78–84.

⁸Ibid., 78–79.

⁹Ibid., 69.

¹⁰Ibid., 78.

¹¹See, e.g., “Buddhist Wu Zeheng and Others Detained for Eight Months, Lawyer Says Case Qualifies as Religious Persecution” [Fojiao tu wu zeheng deng ren bei ju ba ge yue, lushi zhi anjian shu zongjiao pohai], *Radio Free Asia*, 19 March 15; “China Authorities in Harbin Detain Two ‘Underground’ Priests,” *UCA News*, 23 March 15; Michael Forsythe, “Questions Rise on Fate of Chinese Bishop,” *New York Times*, 13 February 15; “Yujiang’s Underground Bishop Released but Under Police Surveillance,” *Asia News*, 19 November 14; ChinaAid, “Inner Mongolia: Catholic Believers Gather at County Government To Defend Rights, Demand Return of Church Property” [Neimeng: tianzhujiao xinzhong xian zhengfu jihui weiquan, yaoqiu guihuan jiaochan], 4 September 14; “Sichuan Police Attack House Church, Detain Over 20 People” [Sichuan jingfang chongji jiating jiaohui, zhua 20 duo ren], *Voice of America*, 24 January 15; Minnie Chan, “Huang Yizi, Detained Pastor in Wenzhou, Knew Risks in Fighting Removal of Crosses,” *South China Morning Post*, 17 August 14; “Pastor Huang Yizi Opposes Forcible Demolition of Church, Sentenced to One Year in Prison” [Huang yizi mushi fandui qiangchai jiaotang huoxing 1 nian], *Radio Free Asia*, 24 March 15.

¹²Tom Phillips, “Chinese Christians Under Pressure From ‘Anti-Cult’ Campaign,” *Telegraph*, 30 October 14; Zhuhai Municipal People’s Procuratorate, “‘Huazang Zongmen’ Case Begins Trial of First Instance in Zhuhai Intermediate Court” [“Huazang zongmen” an zai zhuhai zhongyuan yi shen kaiting], 14 July 15; “Ms. Zuo Kangwei of Huai’an City, Jiangsu Illegally Sentenced to Three Years Again” [Jiangsu huai’an shi zuo kangwei nushi zai bei feifa panxing san nian], *Minghui (Clear Wisdom)*, 27 August 14; “Ms. Zuo Kangwei Sentenced Second Time to Three Years in Prison,” *Minghui (Clear Wisdom)*, 3 September 14; Rights Defense Network, “Bian Xiaohui Sentenced to Three Years and Six Months, Chen Yinghua Sentenced to Four Years in Trial of First Instance in Bian Xiaohui Case” [Bian xiaohui an yi shen bian xiaohui bei pan 3 nian 6 ge yue, chen yinghua bei pan 4 nian], 15 April 15; “Falun Gong Practitioner’s Wife and Daughter Falsely Accused, Daughter To Be Sentenced After Asking To See Father” [Falun gong xueyuan qi nu zao wuhai nuer qiu jian fu yao panqiu], *Radio Free Asia*, 16 April 15.

¹³Zhuhai Municipal People’s Procuratorate, “‘Huazang Zongmen’ Case Begins Trial of First Instance in Zhuhai Intermediate Court” [“Huazang zongmen” an zai zhuhai zhongyuan yi shen kaiting], 14 July 15.

¹⁴Tom Phillips, “Chinese Christians Under Pressure From ‘Anti-Cult’ Campaign,” *Telegraph*, 30 October 14.

¹⁵“Ms. Zuo Kangwei of Huai’an City, Jiangsu Illegally Sentenced to Three Years Again” [Jiangsu huai’an shi zuo kangwei nushi zai bei feifa panxing san nian], *Minghui (Clear Wisdom)*, 27 August 14; “Ms. Zuo Kangwei Sentenced Second Time to Three Years in Prison,” *Minghui (Clear Wisdom)*, 3 September 14; Rights Defense Network, “Bian Xiaohui Sentenced to Three Years and Six Months, Chen Yinghua Sentenced to Four Years in Trial of First Instance in Bian Xiaohui Case” [Bian xiaohui an yi shen bian xiaohui bei pan 3 nian 6 ge yue, chen yinghua bei pan 4 nian], 15 April 15; “Falun Gong Practitioner’s Wife and Daughter Falsely Accused, Daughter To Be Sentenced After Asking To See Father” [Falun gong xueyuan qi nu zao wuhai nuer qiu jian fu yao panqiu], *Radio Free Asia*, 16 April 15.

¹⁶See, e.g., China Anti-Cult Association, “China Anti-Cult Association: Be Highly Vigilant About Various Cults That Harm the Public” [Zhongguo fan xiejiao xiehui: yao gaodu jingti weihai gongzhong de gezhong xiejiao], reprinted in Kai Wind, 3 June 14; Human Rights Watch, “Dangerous Meditation: China’s Campaign Against Falungong,” January 2002. Local government offices published similar “anti-cult” reports during the 2015 reporting year, reflecting the ban on organizations designated as “cults.” See, e.g., Sha County News Net, “Anti-Cult Knowledge—I Know” [Fan xiejiao zhishi—wo zhidao], 28 May 15; KaiWind, reprinted in Anhui Provin-

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¹⁸PRC National Security Law [Zhonghua renmin gongheguo guojia anquan fa], passed and effective 1 July 15.

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²²“Xi Jinping: Consolidate and Develop the Most Extensive Patriotic United Front” [Xi jingping: gonggu fazhan zui guangfan de aiguo tongyi zhanxian], Xinhua, 20 May 15. Xi further elaborated that religion must move in the direction of “Sinicization” (*zhongguohua*). Similarly, later in Xi’s speech, he encouraged the cultivation of non-Party members to “unswervingly walk along the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics” (*jianding buyi de zou zhongguo tese shehui zhuyi daolu*). For additional sources on the issue of “adapting to socialism” or “socialist society,” see, e.g., “Five Major Sects of Tibetan Buddhism Discuss How To Adapt to Socialism,” China Tibet News, 1 July 15; “Stand Firm on Atheism, Guide Religion To Adapt to Socialism, Communist Leaders Say,” UCA News, 14 December 01; Ye Xiaowen, “China’s Religions Retrospect and Prospect,” 19 February 01, reprinted in China Internet Information Center, 11 October 02.

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