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. 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). 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.

Article 36 of China's Constitution guarantees citizens ''freedom of religious belief'' and protection for ''normal religious activities.'' 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. In other ways, however, China's Constitution and other legal provisions join the ICCPR in prohibiting discrimination based on religion and loosely parallel the ICCPR's prohibition on coercion by forbidding state agencies, social organizations, and individuals from compelling citizens to believe or not believe in any religion.

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.'' 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.''

Policies and Regulations Pertaining to Religious Freedom

The importance of “religious work” 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 Congress 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.”** As explained by Party and government sources, this means “guiding” religious groups to support Party leadership and the political system. 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.”
Freedom of Religion

- “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. 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. Party and government officials also continued to develop policies to resist the perceived threat of foreign forces that use religion to “infiltrate” Chinese society. 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. Official pronouncements also identified “extremism” as a particular problem that officials should address within Islam.

- 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. Policy plans included cooperation with Russia and Central Asian countries on “anti-extremism” efforts. In addition, Party and government policy documents directed officials to encourage religious groups to provide social services to complement central government poverty alleviation efforts.

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. Led through the Party’s United Front Work Department (UFWD), “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. 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 communities in the decades since China’s economic marketization. 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.

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

for developing Party policies on religion and connecting with religious groups and leaders on behalf of the Party. 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.”

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. 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, while the UFWD vets the association leaders. Public security bureaus are generally responsible for enforcement of laws against religious activity authorities deem illegal.

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. 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). 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). Religious believers and academic experts 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. 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. 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. 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.

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

Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law criminalizes “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law,” and the PRC National Security Law prohibits “the use of religion to conduct illegal criminal activities that threaten state security.” 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.”

State media declared the importance of adhering to the long-standing ban on religious belief for Party members, warning that religious beliefs had been implicated in many Party discipline cases in recent years. 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,” with prohibitions reportedly extending to state-owned enterprise employees. 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.

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. A large number of Chinese citizens engage in Buddhist and Taoist practices, with estimates of around 244 million Buddhists as of 2010, and 173 million citizens engaging in some Taoist practices as of 2007. [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; and Buddhist ordinations themselves are restricted by the state-run patriotic associations. 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. 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. 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.

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.” 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. Overseas observers noted that the campaign against commercialization in religion demonstrates shifting government priorities under Xi Jinping away from economic development and toward bolstering the credibility of Buddhism and Taoism so that indigenous religions representing Chinese culture and values may serve as a bulwark against “infiltration” of other values via religions perceived as foreign. 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.

**Christianity—Catholicism**

The number of Catholics is estimated to be around 10.5 million, with the State Council Information Office reporting in 2018 that 6 million Catholics were part of officially sanctioned congregations. Chinese officials impede the freedom under international standards 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” that is, selected through patriotic religious organizations in consultation with government and Party officials, and then ordained by Chinese bishops. 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, and they also object to affiliation with the patriotic religious association for Chinese Catholics, the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA). 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. 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.

The Chinese government and the Holy See continued negotiations regarding control over the system of bishop appointments. In September 2018, the Wall Street Journal reported that an agreement was imminent. Under the deal, Chinese authorities would nominate future Chinese bishops that the Holy See would be able to veto. The Holy See would also recognize seven “illegitimate bishops” approved by the state; the Holy See had directed two underground bishops to step down to make way for two of these state-backed bishops in December 2017. Both sides reportedly agreed not to publish the agreement after its signing.
Freedom of Religion

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
“moral convincing” religious leaders. 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. 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.

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. As in previous years, Protestant house churches continued to face raids during church gatherings and eviction from meeting spaces. In January 2018, authorities in Shanxi province demolished the Golden Lampstand Church, with a congregation of 50,000. 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. 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. Authorities also reportedly subjected some believers to harassment and detention. Also in July, officials in Xinyu municipality, Jiangxi province, reportedly subjected some believers to harassment and detention. 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.

In several instances, authorities in Yunnan province continued 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. 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.” Other measures in the same category included a “clean-up campaign aimed at foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and foundations.” 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.

**Falun Gong**

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

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. Human rights organizations and Falun Gong practitioners documented coercive and violent practices against practitioners during custody, including physical violence, forced drug administration, sleep deprivation, and other forms of torture. 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.

Several international organizations expressed concern over reports that numerous organ transplants in China have used the organs of detained prisoners, including Falun Gong practitioners. 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.

Islam

This past year, official restrictions on the religious freedom of the 10.5 million Hui Muslim believers increased. In a speech before the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the head of the China Islamic Association (IAC), the patriotic religious association for Chinese Muslims, 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. 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. 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. 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.” 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.” [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


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

4. Ibid., art. 18(2).

5. 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 18, effective 1 February 18, art. 2; PRC Labor Law (Zonghua renmin gongheguo laodong fa), passed 5 July 94, effective 1 January 95, art. 12.


7. Ibid., art. 18(2).

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.

9. 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.

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

11. 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; 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. 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; 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.

13. 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.


15. Enthusiastic Congratulations to the Chinese Communist Party for the Victorious Commencement of the 19th Party Congress” [Relie zhuhle zhonggong shijuida shengli zhaokai], People’s Daily, 20 October 17.


Freedom of Religion

11


36 United Front Work Department, “National Religious Organizations Jointly Propose Raising the National Flag at Religious Venues” [Quanguoxing zongjiao tuanti gongtong changyi zai zong jiao huodong changzuo shenghuo gongti], 31 July 18.


38 Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, The Religious Question in Modern China (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 153–54, 330. The “patriotic” religious associations are state-controlled institutions that represent the five “main” religions of China: the Buddhist Association of China, the China Islamic Association, the China Taoist Association, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, the National Conference of Bishops (an organization led by Catholic clergy), the Three-Self (for “self-governing, self-financing, and self-expanding”) Patriotic Movement, and the Chinese Christian Council (the latter two organizations have overlapping membership and represent Protestants). According to Goossaert and Palmer, although “nominally independent,” the “patriotic” religious associations are effectively under the authority of the State Council’s agency for religious affairs.

39 Ibid., 154.


41 Li Keqiang Signs State Council Order Issuing Revised ‘Regulations on Religious Affairs’” [Li keqiang quanshu guowuyuan lian gongzhu xiuding hou de zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], Xinhua, 10 March 18.


44 Brent Fulton, “New Religion Regulations To Take Effect in February,” ChinaSource Blog, 13 September 17; “Regulation on Religious Affairs To Be Implemented Next Month; Religious Freedom Further Restricted” [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiyue shushi zongjiao ziyus jinyi shou zhai], Radio Free Asia, 9 January 18; Wang Lude, “Some Perspectives and Analysis From Sev-
Freedom of Religion

12


48 State Administration for Religious Affairs, Measures on the Management of the Religious Activities of Foreigners in the People’s Republic of China (Draft for Solicitation of Comments) [Zongjiao shiwu ju guanyu ‘zongjiao shiwu tongzi xuexue zuozi ju jiazhe zuojia tuozi de guanli yuan’], issued 15 September 00, amended 3 November 11, 20 September 16.


50 PRC Criminal Law [Zhonghua renmin gongheguo xing fa], passed 1 July 79, amended 14 March 97, effective 1 October 97, amended 25 December 99, 31 August 01, 29 December 01, 28 December 02, 28 February 05, 29 June 06, 28 February 09, 25 February 11, 29 August 15, 4 November 17, art. 300.

51 PRC National Security Law [Zhonghua renmin gongheguo zongjiao shiwu tongzi xuexue zuozi ju jiazhe zuojia tuozi de guanli yuan’], passed and effective 1 July 15, art. 27.

52 Ibid.


54 Chen Xi, “Must Use Exceptional Political Standards To Cultivate Top Cadres” [Peiyang xingyi gongchandang yuan tongzi buzhe xingyi zongjiao], People’s Daily, 16 November 17.

55 Yu Qingchu, “How Can One Worship Ghosts and Spirits While Believing in Marxism-Leninism?” [Xin maiqi ni neng hui guishen], People’s Daily, 12 October 17.


57 Xiao Yu, “No Doing as One Pleases on Christmas Eve; CCP Members Strictly Prohibited From Celebrating ‘Western Holidays’” [Ping’an ye bude renxing, zhonggong yuanjin danyang yuan tongzhi], People’s Daily, 12 October 17.


60 Pew Research Center, “Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project—China,” last visited April 17. See also Zhe Ji, “Chinese Buddhism as a Social Force: Reality and Potential of Thirty Years of Revival,” Chinese Sociological Review, Vol. 45, No. 2 (January 2012), 10–12. Quantitative assessments for the total number of Buddhists are difficult because Buddhist religious identity does not need to be formalized within a particular institution and may overlap with other religious practices.


62 State Administration for Religious Affairs, National Measures for Regulating Buddhist Temples and Monasteries [Quanguo hanhuan fojiao siyuan guanli banfa], issued 15 September 00, amended 3 November 11, 20 September 16.

63 Buddhist Association of China, Measures for the Management of Monastic Vows in National Chinese Buddhist Monasteries [Quanguo hanhuan fojiao siyuan chuanhe shantian daige guanli banfa], issued 15 September 00, amended 3 November 11, 20 September 16.
Freedom of Religion

13

64 Echo Huang, “The Most Influential Man Taken Down by China’s #MeToo Movement So Far Is a Monk,” Quartz, 15 August 18; Mandy Zuo, “Top Chinese Buddhist Monk Xuecheng Faces Police Investigation After #MeToo Sexual Harassment Claims Upheld,” South China Morning Post, 23 August 18.

65 State Administration for Religious Affairs, “Regarding the Status of the Investigation and Verifying Reports of Problems Concerning Xuecheng and Beijing Longquan Temple” [Guanyu dui jiaozheng xuecheng he beijing longquan si youguan wenti de diaocha he zhengzhi], 23 August 18.


67 State Administration for Religious Affairs et al., “State Administration for Religious Affairs Among 12 Departments To Jointly Issue Document To Resolve Question of Commercialization of Buddhism and Taoism” [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju deng 12 bumen fa wen zhili fojiao daojiao shangyehua wenti], 20 November 17.

68 Ibid.


70 “China’s Holy Sites List on the Stockmarket,” Economist, 26 April 18; China Digital Times, “China’s Holy Sites List on the Stockmarket.”


74 Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 36/55 of 25 November 81, art. 6(6).


76 China Catholic Patriotic Association and Bishops’ Conference of the Catholic Church, Provisions for Selecting and Ordaining Bishops [Zhujiao tuan guanyu xuan sheng zhujiao de guiding], 8 April 13; Li Zhao, “China Commemorates ‘Self-Selection, Self-Ordination’ of Bishops for 60 Years in the ‘Independent’ Church’ [Zhongguo jiang jinian ‘duli’ jiazhui de ‘zixuan zisheng’ zhujiao liushi zhounian], AsiaNews, 10 February 18.


78 Eva Dou, “For China’s Catholics, State-Controlled Church Is ‘Like a Tree With No Roots’,” Wall Street Journal, 14 February 18; Rachel Xiaohong Zhu, “The Division of the Roman Catholic Church in Mainland China: History and Challenges,” Religions, Vol. 8, No. 3 (March 2017), 7; Ilaria Maria Sala and Isabella Steger, “Some Catholics Are Deeply Disturbed That the Vatican Is Cozying Up to China’s Repressive Regime,” Quartz, 25 August 16.


80 Eva Dou, “For China’s Catholics, State-Controlled Church Is ‘Like a Tree With No Roots’,” Wall Street Journal, 14 February 18; “Msgr. Peter Shao Zhumin of Wenzhou Freed After 7 Months,” AsiaNews, 1 April 18.

81 State Administration for Religious Affairs et al., “State Administration for Religious Affairs Among 12 Departments To Jointly Issue Document To Resolve Question of Commercialization of Buddhism and Taoism” [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju deng 12 bumen fa wen zhili fojiao daojiao shangyehua wenti], 20 November 17.


83 Ibid.


87 Mimi Lau, “Betrayed and Abandoned: Why China’s Underground Catholics Feel Like Jesus on Good Friday,” South China Morning Post, 30 March 18.


90 “Second Shandong Church Demolished ‘For Urban Reasons,’” AsiaNews, 16 August 18.

91 China Catholic Bishops’ Association and Catholic Patriotic Association Issue Orders To Implement Five-Year-Plan To Sinicize Catholicism” [“Yihui yituan” xiang quanguo jiaojiao xiangqu liushi zhounian], AsiaNews, 10 February 18.
Freedom of Religion


95 See, e.g., ChinaAid, “Police Question 13 Christians for Holding Church Services,” 17 November 17; Qiao Nong, ChinaAid, “Ningling, Henan Forcibly Demolishes Cross; More Than 100 House Churches Banned From Meeting” [Henan ningling qiang chi shizhijia yu bai jiating jiaohui bei jinzhi daili jiao’an], 29 May 18.

96 See, e.g., ChinaAid, “Beijing Government Issues Notice To Deal With Protestant Churches; Guanzhoupai Prohibited From Representing Religious Cases” [Beijing zhengfu xing bian mengtou jiaohui shi tai muzhi bu huan jiaohui], 29 May 18.

97 See, e.g., ChinaAid, “Police Question 13 Christians for Holding Church Services,” 17 November 17; Qiao Nong, ChinaAid, “Beijing Government Issues Notice To Deal With Protestant Churches; Guanzhoupai Prohibited From Representing Religious Cases” [Beijing zhengfu xing bian mengtou jiaohui shi tai muzhi bu huan jiaohui], 29 May 18.


101 ChinaAid, “China Issues Total Ban on Selling the Bible; Already Taken Offline by Online Retailers; Henan Requires Protestant Believers To Adhere to ‘Nine Prohibitions’” [Zhongguo quanmian jinshou "shengjing" wangdian yi xiajia henan dui jidutu ti yaoqiu "jiu ge wujian gongzuo guihua"], 14 December 17.

102 For more information on some of these individuals, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database records 2014-0126 on Zhang Shaojie, 2016-00088 on Bao Guohua, and 2016-00089 on Xing Wenzhang.


108 Qiao Nong, ChinaAid, “Ningling, Henan Forcibly Demolishes Cross; More Than 100 House Churches Banned From Meeting” [Henan ningling qiang chi shizhijia yu bai jiating jiaohui bei jinzhi daili jiao’an], 29 May 18.

109 Qiao Nong, ChinaAid, “Beijing Government Issues Notice To Deal With Protestant Churches; Guanzhoupai Prohibited From Representing Religious Cases” [Beijing zhengfu xing bian mengtou jiaohui shi tai muzhi bu huan jiaohui], 29 May 18.


Freedom of Religion

15

97, effective 1 October 97, amended 25 December 99, 31 August 01, 29 December 01, 28 December 02, 28 February 05, 29 June 06, 28 February 09, 25 February 11, 29 August 15, 4 November 17, 23 December 18. For more information, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database records 2017-00144 on Tu Yan and 2017-00145 on Su Min.


117Shizong County Communist Party Committee, “Report on Status of Rectifications Pertaining to Inspection” [Shizong xianwei guanyu xunshi zhengai zhengong de tongbao], reprinted in Qujing Municipal Discipline Inspection Commission, 12 March 18, item 1(5).

118“China’s Policy Tightened Again; Another Church in Zhejiang Is Banned” [Zhongguo zongjiao zhengzhi zai zhejiang yu yi jiaohui bei jin], Radio Free Asia, 22 May 18.

119For information on suppression of Falun Gong practitioners from previous years, see, e.g., CECC, 2017 Annual Report, 5 October 17; CEC, 2016 Annual Report, 6 October 16, 125–27; CECC, 2015 Annual Report, 8 October 15, 123–25. See also “Communist Party Calls for Increased Efforts To ‘Transform’ Falun Gong Practitioners as Part of Three-Year Campaign,” Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 22 March 11.


121Dui Hua Foundation, “NGO Submission for the Universal Periodic Review of the People’s Republic of China,” March 2018, para. 14; PRC Criminal Law [Zhonghua renmin gongheguo fazhi], passed 1 July 79, amended 14 March 97, effective 1 October 97, amended 25 December 99, 31 August 01, 29 December 01, 28 December 02, 28 February 05, 29 June 06, 28 February 09, 25 February 11, 29 August 15, 4 November 17, 4 April 18. For more information, see the Commission’s NGOs and Foundations in China: Monitoring and Research Project, 2018-00130 on Zhang Shaocai.


Freedom of Religion

...assuming that all people of Hui ethnicity are Muslim believers, and that no people of Han, Tibetan, or other ethnicities are Muslim.


145 Ibid. 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 [Gaoyuan kaizhan 2016 minjian xinyang huodong changsuo dengji bianhao guanli gongzuo], issued 14 May 15; 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 guanli bunan], issued 14 May 15.

146 See, e.g., Harbin Municipal Measures for the Management of Venues for Religious Activity [Harbin 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.

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