

U.S. Congressional Hearing

I was born in the north of China — Fangzheng County, Heilongjiang Province. In 1986, I was admitted to Peking University, where I experienced the Tiananmen incident during my time there. Not long afterward, I became a Christian with the help of some fellow believers. In 1992, I was admitted to Yanjing Theological Seminary in Beijing, and after graduating I stayed on to teach there for six years. In 2001, I was ordained as a pastor by a church in Beijing. In 2002, I resigned and went to the United States to study. From 2002 to 2007, I studied at Fuller Theological Seminary in the United States and earned a Doctor of Ministry degree.

After returning to China in 2007, I founded Beijing Zion Church. The church grew rapidly. But we also experienced all kinds of persecution from the government. For example, the government put pressure on the landlords to terminate our leases, police came to stop church activities and demanded that attendees register their ID cards, police came and cut off the water and power of our meeting place. But amid all this pressure, the church kept growing. By 2018, it had grown into a congregation of 1,500 people.

In March 2018, the local government wanted to install 24 surveillance cameras in the sanctuary, which the church resisted for the sanctity of the Church and the protection of our congregants. Because of this, the relationship between the church and the government fell into conflict. On the afternoon of September 9, the government mobilized several hundred police to forcibly shut down the Zion Church sanctuary, and the congregation was scattered.

Starting in 2018, believers under persecution organized gatherings and spread the gospel in various ways. After the pandemic began, the church started using Zoom and other online means to hold worship, teaching, and prayer meetings. Believers scattered across different cities preached the gospel and organized gatherings; pastors traveled around to strengthen believers' faith and began planting new churches. By 2025, we had expanded to nearly a hundred meeting points across 40 cities.

On July 2, 2024, China's Ministry of Public Security set up a special task force to investigate and apply pressure. Starting on October 9, 2025, arrests were carried out simultaneously in 11 cities across the country. Around 30 pastors and church leaders were taken by the public security bureaus. In the end, 18 pastors and church leaders were criminally detained at the detention center in Beihai city, Guangxi Province.

During detention, our basic rights were severely restricted. We were not able to have normal correspondence with our families. The only channel for communicating with the outside world was through lawyers. But the lawyers we hired were subjected to ongoing persecution. Some lawyers had their licenses revoked, and even their law firms were shut down or ordered to suspend operations for "rectification." Some lawyers were intimidated and one even ultimately decided to go into exile abroad. In recent days our lawyers have again been persecuted — at least three lawyers were forced to withdraw from defending our pastors and co-workers.

I was not mistreated during my detention, most likely because Secretary of State Rubio issued a statement within three days after the incident, and 33 members of Congress publicly issued statements and expressed concern.

When we were arrested, the charge was “illegal use of the internet.” But by the time our cases were referred to the prosecutor’s office, the charges had been changed to “illegal business operations” and “fraud.” They treated the church’s internal leadership training activities as illegal business operations, and treated believers’ offerings and support for pastors as fraudulent activity. This is a tremendous insult and a vicious attack on the Christian faith.

On July 3, without any notice whatsoever, I was taken out of the detention center and brought to Guangzhou Airport, where the prosecutor’s office withdrew the indictment against me, and I was put on a plane bound for the United States. It was only through the U.S. Embassy’s consular officer that I learned this happened because President Trump had specifically requested my release from President Xi Jinping during his visit to China!

Reuniting with my family after eight years apart, and watching the fireworks together on America’s 250th Independence Day, felt like a dream. Even as I enjoy such freedom and joy with my family, I still cannot stop thinking of and worrying about my eight co-workers who remain imprisoned. There are also quite a few pastors I know from the other churches who are still imprisoned.

I sincerely hope that members of Congress will continue to pay attention to religious persecution and human rights within China. I hope that this meeting between the two heads of state can produce genuine consensus and breakthroughs in improving China’s human rights situation and ending the persecution of religious believers.

Jin Mingri (Ezra Jin)

美国国会听证会

我出生在中国的北方-黑龙江省方正县。1986 年考入北京大学，在校期间经历天安门事件，不久之后通过一些基督徒的帮助成为基督徒。1992 年考入北京的燕京神学院毕业后留校任教 6 年。2001 年在北京基督教会按立为牧师，2002 年辞职赴美留学。2002-2007 年在美国富乐绅学院（Fuller Theological Seminary）学习，并获得教牧学博士学位。

2007 年回国后创立北京锡安教会（Beijing Zion Church），教会发展迅速，也经历各样从政府那里来的逼迫，如给房东施加压力解除租赁合同，教会活动时警察来叫停，并要求参加人登记身份证等。但教会在各样压力中持续增长。2018 年成长为 1500 人会众的教会。2018 年 3 月地方政府要在礼堂里装 24 个摄像头，遭到教会的抵制，政教关系陷入冲突。9 月 9 日下午政府动用几百警力强行关闭锡安教会礼堂，信徒分散各处。

2018 年开始受逼迫的信徒用各样方式组织聚会，传播福音。疫情发生后，教会开始使用 Zoom 等线上方式组织礼拜、教育和祷告会。分散各处的信徒在不同的城市传福音、组织了聚会，牧者们巡回各处，坚固信心，开始植堂。到 2025 年我们在 40 个城市，拓展将近一百个聚会点。2024 年 7 月 2 日中国公安部设立专案组进行调查并施压。2025 年 10 月 9 日开始在全国 11 个城市同时展开抓捕行动。30 多位牧者和同工被带到公安局。最后，18 位牧者同工被刑事拘留到广西省北海市看守所。

在羁押期间，我们的正常的权利严格被限制。我们不能正常的与家人有通信往来。唯一能够与外界沟通的途径是通过律师。但聘请的律师受到持续的迫害。有些律师的律师证被吊销，甚至律师事务所也被关闭，或停业整顿。有些律师被恐吓，最后决定流亡海外。近几天我们的律师再次被迫害，有至少三位律师被逼有需要推出为我们牧者同工辩护。

我在羁押期间没有受到虐待，很可能是因为国务卿卢比奥在事发之后 3 天发出声明，还有国会 44 位议员公开发表声明和关注。

我们被逮捕时的罪名是非法使用网络罪，但起诉到检察院时改称非法经营罪和诈骗罪。他们把教会内部的领导力培训活动当作非法经营，把信徒的奉献与对牧者的供养活动当作诈骗活动。这是对基督信仰的极大的侮辱和恶毒的攻击。

7月3日我被完全没有告知的情况下，从看守所提出，带到广州机场，被检察院撤销起诉，放进飞往美国的飞机内。通过美国大使馆的领事才知道因特朗普总统在访中期间特别向习近平主席要求释放而发生此事！

与阔别8年的家人相遇，一同观看美国250周年独立日烟花时，我如同做梦一样。当我享受如此自由和与家人的欢乐时，我仍然挥之不去还在监禁中的我的八位同工的思念和挂虑。还有不少我认识的教会的牧者还在监禁中。

我衷心盼望，各位议员继续关注中国国内的宗教迫害和低人权状况。希望这次两国元首的会晤能对改善中国的人权状况，终止对宗教信仰者的迫害的事上有真实的共识和突破。

金明日