

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

International and Chinese Law on Religious Freedom

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

Under international law, freedom of religion or belief encompasses both the right to form, hold, and change convictions, beliefs, and religion—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 Chinese 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

Religious Affairs Regulations and Policy

Religious affairs in China are administered by a network of Party committees, government agencies, and official religious organizations under the direction of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party Central Committee Political Bureau (Politburo).¹⁴ The United Front Work Department (UFWD), under the Party's Central Committee, develops and oversees implementation of Party policies on religion and monitors religious groups and leaders on behalf of the Party.¹⁵ The government agency responsible for religious affairs at the national level is the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) under the State Council, while sub-national bureaus manage religious affairs at lower levels.¹⁶ 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,¹⁷ while the UFWD vets the association leaders.¹⁸ Public

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security bureaus are generally responsible for enforcement of laws against religious activity deemed illegal.¹⁹ The “610 Office” is a working group, made up of officials from a number of Party and government agencies, that was originally established in 1999 to coordinate and execute operations for campaigns aimed at eliminating the practice of Falun Gong.²⁰ In 2003, the “610 Office” was authorized to target other religions as well.²¹

The Chinese government’s regulatory framework for religious affairs imposes numerous restrictions on religious freedom. The 2005 Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA), in effect during this reporting period, protect “lawful” religious rights.²² “Lawful” is not defined, and religious activity is subject to extensive government approvals and restrictions.²³ These include official guidelines for the content and distribution of religious publications, restrictions that limit religious activities to government-approved sites, and requirements that religious personnel be approved by local religious affairs authorities.²⁴

Current regulations require religious groups to register with the government, and legal protection of religious activities is contingent on complying with registration requirements.²⁵ Registration requirements can be burdensome and sometimes impossible for religious groups to fulfill—for example, smaller groups may not have the requisite 50 individual members²⁶ or the resources to complete complex financial reporting requirements.²⁷ Officials will deny registration applications of religious groups that are not affiliated with a state-sanctioned patriotic association.²⁸ This poses a challenge for the registration of religious groups that refuse to join patriotic associations; some groups prefer not to join due to their desire to maintain autonomy or their view that doing so would violate their religious beliefs.²⁹ Registration and the regulatory system that it facilitates impose restrictions³⁰ on rights to religious freedom or belief recognized under international law, such as the right to meet as a religious group,³¹ the right to determine religious leadership,³² and content of worship,³³ the right to religious education,³⁴ the right to publication and dissemination of religious materials,³⁵ and the right to international communication and exchange.³⁶

Unregistered groups and registered groups alike operate in an environment that is uncertain, as officials may tolerate or punish them depending on whether their activities align with government and Party interests. In practice, experts observe that officials may tolerate the religious activities of unregistered groups,³⁷ especially if officials believe that the activities promote social or economic development interests.³⁸ Unregistered religious and spiritual communities are vulnerable to government harassment, detention, and other abuses,³⁹ yet groups may be sanctioned regardless of registration status when officials view them as posing a challenge to government authority or the Party’s interests,⁴⁰ with some religious groups and practices banned outright.⁴¹ The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief has stated that “registration as a precondition for practicing one’s religion or belief” is a limitation interfering with the right to freedom of religion or belief.⁴²

Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs

The Chinese government released draft revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs in September 2016,⁴³ soliciting public comment for a one-month period.⁴⁴ In a written explanation, the government highlighted objectives that included addressing the use of religion to threaten national security, strengthening the role of patriotic religious organizations, regulating religious content on the Internet, allowing religious groups to register for legal status and obtain property rights over their assets, and combatting commercialization in the religious sector.⁴⁵ Some Chinese religious believers and scholars viewed a few of the proposed changes as potential improvements on current regulations, particularly the provision allowing religious groups to register for legal status.⁴⁶ The draft revisions also included new provisions codifying the role of public security in the implementation of religious affairs regulations⁴⁷ and increased government scrutiny of religious groups,⁴⁸ prompting observations that such measures would serve to increase government control of religious groups.⁴⁹ The draft revisions also included new penalties for those “providing facilities” for unauthorized religious activities,⁵⁰ which experts believed might be used to target unregistered Protestant groups.⁵¹ Observers also noted that the draft revisions failed to clearly define some important terms, such as “extremism,” “normal,” and “abnormal,” thus giving authorities broad discretion to restrict citizens’ religious rights.⁵² One Muslim leader said that such discretion over the definition of “extremism” in local regulations had already led to large-scale repression of religious freedom in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.⁵³ The release of the draft revisions followed a major leadership conference on religious policy convened by President and Party General Secretary Xi Jinping in April 2016,⁵⁴ during which Xi promoted the “sinicization” of religion in China, a term that officials have used often in recent years to encourage the adaptation of religious beliefs and activities to align with government and Party interests.⁵⁵ One international rights organization characterized the revisions as “implementing the new ideology [of sinicization] on a legislative level.”⁵⁶ The revisions are in line with a long-term Party policy of using religion as an instrument for promoting national unity and social stability,⁵⁷ although commentators also drew parallels with recently implemented restrictions on civil society groups through legislative measures such as the PRC Law on the Management of Overseas Non-Governmental Organizations’ Activities.⁵⁸ In January 2017, the SARA included implementation of revisions to the RRA in its 2017 Work Objectives, stating that it would hold meetings and trainings regarding implementation and provide guidance to local governments to align local regulations with the revisions.⁵⁹

On September 7, 2017, the State Council issued revisions to the RRA, to take effect on February 1, 2018.⁶⁰ The final revisions contained few changes from the draft released for public feedback.⁶¹ One scholar stated that he believed some of the “candid” recommendations offered by lawyers and legal scholars went unconsidered and that the final revisions were “more restrictive” than the draft version.⁶²

Other laws and Party policies also continued to restrict citizens’ freedom to hold religious beliefs and practice religion. Article 300

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of the PRC Criminal Law criminalizes “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law.”⁶³ In January 2017, the Supreme People’s Court and the Supreme People’s Procuratorate issued a joint interpretation of Article 300 that set out new sentencing guidelines and expressly criminalized certain forms of Internet usage to disseminate information about a “cult,” among other revisions.⁶⁴ One international rights organization speculated that the new sentencing guidelines might reduce the length of sentences under Article 300, yet also expressed concern about the authorization of new penalties, such as deprivation of political rights.⁶⁵ The revised interpretation took effect in February 2017.⁶⁶ In addition, the PRC National Security Law stipulates that “the use of religion to conduct illegal criminal activities that threaten state security” must be prevented and punished.⁶⁷ The law 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.”⁶⁸ The long-standing⁶⁹ ban on religious belief for Party members remained in effect; SARA Director Wang Zuo’an reiterated the ban in a July 2017 article for a major Party journal,⁷⁰ noting that in recent years, certain high level officials had been found to believe in religion and that officials with religious beliefs would “undergo education to relinquish their beliefs” or face punishment.⁷¹

Chinese Buddhism (Non-Tibetan) and Taoism

While government and Party officials rarely targeted Chinese Buddhist and Taoist communities with direct suppression, they nonetheless continued to subject these religions to extensive regulation and control. A large number of Chinese citizens engage in Buddhist and Taoist practices, with estimates of around 244 million Buddhists as of 2010,⁷² and 173 million citizens engaging in some Taoist practices as of 2007.⁷³ [For information on Tibetan Buddhism, see Section V—Tibet.]

Government regulations continued to require Taoist and Buddhist temples to register with their local religious affairs bureau,⁷⁴ and to forbid unregistered sites from conducting religious activities and collecting donations.⁷⁵ Despite this prohibition, numerous active Buddhist and Taoist sites have not registered.⁷⁶

The government and Party continued their wide-ranging control and support of officially sanctioned practice of Chinese Buddhism and Taoism. In addition to maintaining extensive regulations,⁷⁷ authorities continued to exercise control over sanctioned practice by, for example, administering sanctioned sites in conjunction with religious leaders.⁷⁸ Authorities ensure the political reliability of Taoist religious leadership by requiring all candidates for the clergy to obtain the approval of the local patriotic association and religious affairs bureau for ordination.⁷⁹

Chinese officials continued to hold the leader of the Buddhist Huazang Dharma group, Wu Zeheng,⁸⁰ and several followers in custody. Authorities sentenced Wu to life in prison in 2015 on charges of “organizing and using a cult to undermine implementation of the law,”⁸¹ rape, fraud, and the production and sale of poisonous or harmful food.⁸² In November 2016, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued opinions concluding that the

Chinese government arbitrarily detained Wu and his followers for “legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of religion and freedom of association,” opining that Wu and the other detainees should be released immediately and compensated for the violations of their rights.⁸³ Wu served an 11-year sentence from 1999 to 2010 for “economic crimes” after openly criticizing official restrictions on religious freedom in China.⁸⁴

Christianity—Catholicism

The Chinese government maintained measures that impede the freedom under international standards⁸⁵ of Chinese Catholic congregations to be led by clergy who are selected and who conduct their ministry according to Catholic religious beliefs. The number of Catholics is estimated to be around 12 million, with the State Administration for Religious Affairs reporting that 5.7 million Catholics were part of officially sanctioned congregations in 2014.⁸⁶ The government continued to push for Chinese Catholic bishops to be “self-selected and self-ordained”⁸⁷—selected through the patriotic religious organizations in consultation with government and Party officials, and then ordained by Chinese bishops without the involvement of the Holy See.⁸⁸ Many Chinese Catholics, sometimes known as “underground Catholics,” avoid the ministry of these bishops because they believe legitimate ecclesiastical authority can be conferred only by the Pope’s mandate.⁸⁹ Many Chinese Catholics also object to bishops who are members of the patriotic religious association for Chinese Catholics, the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA).⁹⁰ 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.⁹¹

The Chinese government and the Holy See were reportedly close to an agreement about the system of bishop appointments in China in October 2016,⁹² but the potential agreement was in question after Paul Lei Shiyin, an excommunicated bishop ordained without papal approval, participated in two ordination ceremonies for Chinese bishops later in the year.⁹³ Local observers reportedly believed that Lei’s inclusion in the ordinations was directed by the Chinese government to signal its ultimate authority over the Catholic Church in China.⁹⁴ A Catholic news media outlet reported that a round of talks in June 2017 “was not smooth,” ending with “no open gesture from either side.”⁹⁵

Government officials continued to detain or otherwise restrict the freedom of Catholic leaders in both the underground and official church. In April 2017, officials reportedly detained two underground Catholic bishops in undisclosed locations—Peter Shao Zhumin of the Diocese of Wenzhou in Zhejiang province⁹⁶ and Vincent Guo Xijin of the Diocese of Mindong in Fujian province.⁹⁷ The bishops were unable to preside over Easter services, and Catholic news media reported that the local governments intended to pressure the bishops into joining the CPA.⁹⁸ Guo was reportedly released in May 2017; Shao was released after five days in detention, but detained again in May 2017.⁹⁹ According to the Catholic news outlet LaCroix, this was the fourth time authorities had detained Shao since he became the Bishop of Wenzhou after his predecessor

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passed away in September 2016.¹⁰⁰ As of August 2017, the Commission had not observed any reports as to the whereabouts or condition of Shao or of several underground Catholic leaders from Hebei province, including Coadjutor Bishop Cui Tai, Bishop Cosmos Shi Enxiang, and Bishop James Su Zhimin.¹⁰¹ A bishop in the official church, Thaddeus Ma Daqin of the Diocese of Shanghai, remained under surveillance and extralegal confinement at Sheshan seminary in Shanghai municipality, although he reportedly re-joined the Shanghai branch of the CPA by January 2017.¹⁰² Authorities had restricted Ma's freedom of movement and communication after his public resignation from the CPA during his ordination ceremony in July 2012.¹⁰³

Christianity—Protestantism

Chinese government and Communist Party officials continued to subject Protestant Christian belief and practice to a wide range of restrictions, infringing upon the religious freedom of an estimated 60 to 80 million Chinese Protestants.¹⁰⁴

Instances of official persecution of Protestant communities in 2016 reportedly increased from the prior year.¹⁰⁵ International rights organization ChinaAid said that the intensified clampdown of recent years may be due in part to official concern that Protestant communities pose a potential threat to the dominance of the Communist Party because of their size, socioeconomic diversity, independent and decentralized manner of organization, and connections with Christian groups based in foreign, democratic countries.¹⁰⁶ International observers asserted that official hostility toward Protestantism may also be connected to the Party's "sinicization" campaign in recent years aimed at adapting religious belief and practices in China to align with government and Party interests.¹⁰⁷

Officials increased restrictions and monitoring for churches that have joined the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), the state-controlled organization that manages Protestant religious practice.¹⁰⁸ These increased restrictions, commentators noted, continued a trend of expanding the enforcement of repressive policies from house churches to officially sanctioned churches.¹⁰⁹ Such measures included a prohibition on churches organizing summer activities for youth in Henan province¹¹⁰ and a ban on minors participating in any church activities for many churches in Wenzhou municipality, Zhejiang province.¹¹¹ Earlier in the year, the Zhejiang TSPM reportedly issued a written requirement for all churches, including Catholic churches, to install surveillance cameras for the purported purpose of "strengthening anti-terrorism efforts."¹¹² Local officials began the forcible installation of cameras in some churches in March 2017 and reportedly beat those who attempted to oppose their efforts.¹¹³

Chinese officials continued policies aimed at pressuring unregistered Protestant congregations, commonly known as house churches, to join the TSPM.¹¹⁴ As in previous years,¹¹⁵ Protestant house churches continued to face raids during church gatherings,¹¹⁶ eviction from meeting spaces,¹¹⁷ and official bans on worship.¹¹⁸ ChinaAid further reported that authorities forced some churches in Wenzhou to install surveillance cameras for government moni-

toring, in apparent connection with the TSPM notice mentioned above.¹¹⁹ Authorities also reportedly subjected some believers to harassment,¹²⁰ violence,¹²¹ or detention.¹²² In Jiangxi province, local governments reportedly issued directives to forcibly remove crosses and perimeter walls from churches;¹²³ by August 2017, authorities had removed at least 10 church crosses,¹²⁴ leading local religious leaders to raise concerns about parallels to the official cross-removal campaign in Zhejiang beginning in 2014 that ultimately removed more than 2,000 crosses.¹²⁵ The Wenzhou Municipality Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau in Zhejiang announced a new plan for a program that would deploy over 1,500 religious affairs bureau liaisons to monitor the religious activity of all households in Lucheng district, Wenzhou.¹²⁶ In several instances, authorities detained 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.¹²⁷ Some researchers have noted with concern that some Chinese authorities may be applying the criminal “cult” designation to religious groups beyond those officially banned by the government to generally cover all religious organizations not officially registered with the government.¹²⁸ Chinese Protestant communities expressed concern that the revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs¹²⁹ would provide a legal basis for further restricting the activities of unregistered Protestant congregations.¹³⁰

During this reporting year, prominent cases involving the detention of Protestant Christian believers included:

- **Li Hongmin.** Authorities arrested Li Hongmin, a member of a house church in Guangdong province, in July 2016 and tried him for “illegal business activity”¹³¹ in October 2016.¹³² The indictment accused him of printing Christian books without official permission.¹³³ In March 2017, authorities sentenced him to 10 months’ imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 yuan.¹³⁴ Local authorities harassed his wife, Xu Lei, and pressured her landlord to evict her after she attempted to petition authorities in Beijing municipality regarding Li’s detention.¹³⁵
- **Living Stone Church members.** Authorities tried several members of the Living Stone Church, a house church in Guiyang municipality, Guizhou province, after extended periods of detention, including Pastor **Li Guozhi** (also known as Yang Hua, sentenced to two years and six months’ imprisonment in December 2016 for “intentionally leaking state secrets”),¹³⁶ **Zhang Xiuhong** (a church deacon, sentenced to five years’ imprisonment in February 2017 for “illegal business activity,”¹³⁷ later reduced in August 2017 to a three-year sentence, suspended for five years),¹³⁸ and church members **Wang Yao** and **Yu Lei** (tried in October 2016 for “intentionally leaking state secrets,” both had yet to receive a ruling as of August 2017).¹³⁹ In March 2017, Pastor Yang Hua’s lawyers asserted that he urgently needed to be hospitalized for a serious medical condition and asked the procuratorate to review the necessity of his detention.¹⁴⁰ The Guiyang government subjected many other Living Stone Church members to repressive measures such as fines, harassment, surveillance, and detention

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after designating the church an “illegal social group” in 2015.¹⁴¹

- **Zhang Shaojie.** The pastor of a registered TSPM church in Nanle county, Puyang municipality, Henan province, Zhang Shaojie continued to serve a 12-year sentence issued in 2014 for “fraud” and “gathering a crowd to disturb social order.”¹⁴² In June 2017, his daughter reported that authorities were depriving him of sleep, food, and access to the outdoors, and also forbid him from discussing conditions in prison with family members during visits.¹⁴³ Authorities detained Zhang in November 2013, after a group of church members traveled to Beijing municipality to file a petition regarding a land dispute with local authorities.¹⁴⁴

- **Gu Yuese.** Authorities in Hangzhou municipality, Zhejiang province, detained Gu Yuese for a second time in December 2016 and re-arrested him in January 2017 for “misappropriation of funds.”¹⁴⁵ Gu is reportedly the highest level figure within a government-sponsored religious organization to have been arrested in nearly thirty years—he was the leader of China’s largest officially sanctioned church¹⁴⁶ and chairperson of the China Christian Council, a patriotic religious organization, at the provincial level.¹⁴⁷ He was detained in January 2016 and stripped of these positions in February 2016 after he expressed opposition to the ongoing cross-removal campaign in Zhejiang.¹⁴⁸ Authorities had arrested Gu on the same charge in January 2016 and released him on bail in March 2016.¹⁴⁹

Falun Gong

As in previous years, authorities continued to detain Falun Gong practitioners and subject them to harsh treatment.¹⁵⁰ Due to extreme government suppression, it is difficult to determine the number of Falun Gong practitioners in China.¹⁵¹ Officials have reportedly subjected practitioners to extreme physical and psychological coercion, with human rights organizations¹⁵² and Falun Gong practitioners documenting coercive and violent practices against practitioners during custody, including physical violence,¹⁵³ forced drug administration,¹⁵⁴ and other forms of torture.¹⁵⁵ In March 2017, Minghui (Clear Wisdom), a U.S.-based news organization affiliated with Falun Gong, reported 80 confirmed deaths of Falun Gong practitioners in 2016 due to treatment while in custody.¹⁵⁶ Authorities commonly prosecute Falun Gong practitioners under Article 300 of the PRC Criminal Law.¹⁵⁷

International observers continued to express concern over reports that numerous organ transplants in China have used the organs of detained prisoners, including Falun Gong practitioners.¹⁵⁸ International medical professionals were skeptical¹⁵⁹ of a Chinese health official’s claims that organ procurement systems have been reformed in compliance with international standards, noting a lack of transparency¹⁶⁰ and discrepancies in official data.¹⁶¹

Islam

During this reporting year, officials maintained policies exerting strong influence and control over the religious belief and activities

of an estimated 10.5 million¹⁶² Hui Muslim believers. Although policies for Hui Muslims remained less repressive than those affecting Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR),¹⁶³ hostile rhetoric targeting Muslims in general from both officials and the public¹⁶⁴ increased.¹⁶⁵ One expert said that this could increase the likelihood that policies affecting the religious freedom of Hui Muslims may become more restrictive.¹⁶⁶ [For information on freedom of religion for Uyghur and other minority group Muslim believers in the XUAR, see Section IV—Xinjiang.]

Ongoing policies included “political reliability” and “patriotic education” requirements for religious leaders. To be officially certified, imams must be educated at state-sanctioned Islamic schools and be approved by the local religious affairs bureau and the Islamic Association of China, the patriotic religious association for Chinese Muslims.¹⁶⁷ After certification, imams must continue to attend political training sessions.¹⁶⁸ Both the Islamic Association of China (IAC) and the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) continued to promote interpretations of Islamic law and belief that support the Chinese political system.¹⁶⁹ All Chinese Muslims seeking to carry out the Hajj pilgrimage must fulfill requirements for “political reliability,” including taking “patriotic education” classes, obtaining approval from their local religious affairs bureau, and participating only through tours arranged by the IAC.¹⁷⁰

This past year, officials made a number of statements claiming a need to counter an alleged increase of Muslim extremist influence in Chinese society, while reportedly tacitly approving anti-Muslim commentary and the harassment of Muslim believers on social media networks. SARA Director Wang Zuo’an stated in November 2016 that Islamic extremism was spreading to China’s “inland provincial areas,” and that authorities should respect Islamic beliefs, but that religious influence on political, legal, or educational affairs would not be tolerated.¹⁷¹ A U.S.-based scholar stated that “interest groups” had used the recently permissive environment for “Islamophobia” online to justify security measures taken against Uyghur communities in the XUAR.¹⁷² Observers also noted a connection with the recent ascendance of Party officials who support hard-line policies on religion.¹⁷³ In one example from December 2016, a propaganda official in the XUAR used inflammatory language in an online post regarding the rebuilding of a historic mosque in Hefei municipality, Anhui province, by the local Hui Muslim community; locals subsequently held demonstrations against the mosque and threatened local Hui Muslim believers.¹⁷⁴ Domestic online commentators have also criticized the Chinese government’s restrictions on Hui Muslim believers for being too lax relative to restrictions on Muslims in the XUAR.¹⁷⁵ One expert stated that the anti-Muslim anxiety generated on social media could put pressure on local officials to respond with policy measures,¹⁷⁶ making Hui Muslim communities vulnerable to increased surveillance and restrictions.¹⁷⁷

Other Religious Communities

Religious communities outside of the five religions that are the main objects of religious affairs regulation¹⁷⁸ continue to exist in China; some enjoy official support, while others face suppression

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from authorities. For example, despite lacking formal recognition at the national level, some folk religious sites¹⁷⁹ and Eastern Orthodox Christian communities¹⁸⁰ are recognized at the local level. In contrast, authorities maintained the restrictions imposed suddenly in 2014 on Jewish religious activity in Kaifeng municipality, Henan province.¹⁸¹ The Chinese government also maintained its official policy of allowing some foreign religious communities to hold religious services for foreign nationals.¹⁸²

Notes to Section II—Freedom of Religion

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

²Universal 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, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 36/55 of 25 November 81.

³International 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 18 July 17. China has signed but not ratified the ICCPR.

⁴State 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 most recently 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," reprinted in Xinhua, May 2013, chap. VI; Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, "Aide Memoire," reprinted in United Nations, 13 April 06, para. IV; State Council and European Union, "Joint Statement of the 12th China-EU Summit," reprinted in PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 30 November 09, para. 8.

⁵United 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.

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

⁷*Ibid.*, art. 36; Liu Peng, "Crisis of Faith," *China Security*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (Autumn 2008), 30.

⁸State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, art. 2(2); PRC Constitution, issued 4 December 82, amended 12 April 88, 29 March 93, 15 March 99, 14 March 04, art. 36.

⁹International 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).

¹¹PRC Constitution, issued 4 December 82, amended 12 April 88, 29 March 93, 15 March 99, 14 March 04, art. 36; State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, art. 2.

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

¹³International 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.

¹⁴China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, "Report on Religious Freedom in Mainland China (2016)," 38–39.

¹⁵*Ibid.*; Carsten T. Vala, "Protestant Christianity and Civil Society in Authoritarian China," *China Perspectives*, No. 3 (October 2012), 46.

¹⁶China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, "Report on Religious Freedom in Mainland China (2016)," 38–39.

¹⁷Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 153, 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-supporting, and self-propagating") 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.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 154.

¹⁹Jessica Batke, "PRC Religious Policy: Serving the Gods of the CCP," *China Leadership Monitor*, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, No. 52 (Winter 2017), 14 February 17, 3; Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 330.

²⁰China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, "Report on Religious Freedom in Mainland China (2016)," 41. See also Sarah Cook and Leeshai Lemish, "The 610 Office: Policing the Chinese Spirit," *Jamestown Foundation, China Brief*, Vol. 11, Issue 17, 16 September 11.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, art. 3.

²³State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05. The Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) contains provisions authorizing official intervention into religious practices, beliefs, and organization, e.g., art. 6 (requiring religious groups to register with the government); art. 8 (requiring institutions for religious education to apply for government approval); art. 11 (requiring hajj, the religious pilgrimage undertaken by Muslims, to be organized through the national religious body of Islam); art. 17 (requir-

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ing sites for religious activities to set up management organizations and exercise democratic management); and art. 18 (requiring sites for religious activities to set up management systems for personnel, finance, accounting, hygiene, and health, among other requirements, all under the supervision of local government agencies).

²⁴Ibid. The Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) contains provisions authorizing official intervention into religious practices, beliefs, and organization, e.g., art. 6 (requiring religious groups to register with the government); art. 7 (providing official guidelines for the content and distribution of religious publications); art. 8 (requiring institutions for religious education to apply for government approval); art. 11 (requiring hajj, the religious pilgrimage undertaken by Muslims, to be organized through the national religious body of Islam); art. 12 (requiring religious activities to be held at state-approved sites); art. 17 (requiring sites for religious activities to set up management organizations and exercise democratic management); art. 18 (requiring sites for religious activities to set up management systems for personnel, finance, accounting, hygiene, and health, among other requirements, all under the supervision of local government agencies); and art. 27 (subjecting religious personnel to qualification by a religious body and subsequent reporting to religious affairs bureaus).

²⁵Ibid., art. 6. Article 6 requires religious organizations to register in accordance with the Regulations on the Management of the Registration of Social Organizations.

²⁶Ibid., art. 10(1).

²⁷Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 16, 32–33.

²⁸China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, “Report on Religious Freedom in Mainland China (2016),” 27.

²⁹“Some Perspectives and Analysis From Several Scholars and House Church Pastors on the Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Deliberation Draft)” [Guanyu “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songsheng gao)” laizi jiwei zongjiao xuezhe yu jiating jiaohui muzhe de guandian yu fenxi], Christian Times, 16 September 16; Huoshi (Living Stone) Church Members, “The Huoshi Church Case—The Typical Pattern of Government Suppression of House Churches,” reprinted in ChinaAid, 13 June 17; Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 53.

³⁰State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, art. 6; State Council, Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations [Shehui tuanti dengji guanli tiaoli], issued 25 October 98, amended and effective 6 February 16, art. 35. Article 6 of the Regulations on Religious Affairs require religious organizations to register in accordance with the Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations, and protects the religious activities of only those religious organizations in compliance with the latter regulations. The religious activities of all other religious organizations receive no such explicit protection under the Regulations and as such may be deemed illegal, resulting in a restriction of certain religious activities. See also ChinaAid, “Church Torn Apart by Abuse Pens Letter Describing Persecution,” 13 June 17.

³¹Declaration 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(a); State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, art. 6; State Council, Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations [Shehui tuanti dengji guanli tiaoli], issued 25 October 98, amended and effective 6 February 16, art. 35. While the Declaration includes the freedom to “worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for these purposes,” Article 6 of the Regulations on Religious Affairs requires religious organizations to register in accordance with the Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations. The latter in turn prohibit activities conducted by unregistered social organizations (art. 35), thus restricting the right of unregistered religious groups to assemble and worship, as well as establish and maintain places for those purposes.

³²Declaration 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(g); State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, art. 27. While the Declaration includes the freedom to “train, appoint, elect or designate by succession appropriate leaders called for by the requirements and standards of any religion or belief,” the Regulations on Religious Affairs permit only those religious personnel approved by the relevant religious associations, referred to as “religious organizations” (zongjiao tuanti), to conduct religious activities (art. 27). China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, “Report on Religious Freedom in Mainland China (2016),” 27.

³³Declaration 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(c), (h); State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, art. 12. While the Declaration includes the freedoms to “make, acquire, and use to an adequate extent the necessary articles and materials related to the rites or customs of a religion or belief” (art. 6(c)), and to “celebrate holidays and ceremonies in accordance with the precepts of one’s religion or belief” (art. 6(h)), the Regulations on Religious Affairs have provisions such as requiring group religious activities to be held at registered sites with “qualified” religious personnel and in “compliance with religious doctrines and canons” (art. 12).

³⁴Ibid., arts. 5(2), 6(e); Ibid., arts. 3, 8, 9, 43. While the Declaration includes the freedom of every child to “have access to education in the matter of religion or belief in accordance with the wishes of his parents” (art. 5(2)), and the freedom to “teach a religion or belief in places suitable for these purposes” (art. 6(e)), the Regulations on Religious Affairs prohibit use of religion to “interfere with the educational system of the State” (art. 3) and require institutions for religious education to be approved at the national level (art. 8).

³⁵Ibid., art. 6(d); Ibid., art. 7. While the Declaration includes the freedom to “write, issue and disseminate relevant publications” (art. 6(d)), the Regulations on Religious Affairs regulate the

contents of religious publications and require compliance with other administrative rules (art. 7).

³⁶Ibid., art. 6(i); Ibid., arts. 10, 11, 22, 43. While the Declaration includes the freedom to “establish and maintain communications with individuals and communities in matters of religion and belief at the national and international levels” (art. 6(i)), the Regulations on Religious Affairs require separate approval for large-scale religious activity that involves those governed by different provincial-level administrations (art. 22) and further require the hajj pilgrimage and religious studies abroad to be arranged by the state-sanctioned national religious organizations (arts. 10–11).

³⁷Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 16; Ian Johnson, *The Souls of China* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2017), 28, 56–57; Tim Oakes and Donald S. Sutton, “Introduction,” in *Faiths on Display: Religion, Tourism, and the Chinese State* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 15–17; Richard Madsen, “Church State Relations in China—Consequences for the Catholic Church,” *Religions & Christianity in Today’s China*, Vol. 5, Nos. 3–4 (2015), 66.

³⁸Tim Oakes and Donald S. Sutton, “Introduction,” in *Faiths on Display: Religion, Tourism, and the Chinese State* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 15–17; Richard Madsen, “Church State Relations in China—Consequences for the Catholic Church,” *Religions & Christianity in Today’s China*, Vol. 5, Nos. 3–4 (2015), 66.

³⁹Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 16, 44.

⁴⁰Ibid., 5–7.

⁴¹Ibid., 2; Maria Hsia Chang, *Falun Gong: The End of Days* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 9, 144–53; Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 339.

⁴²UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Ahmed Shaheed, A/HRC/34/50, 17 January 17.

⁴³State Council Legislative Affairs Office, Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Review Draft) [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)], 7 September 16.

⁴⁴State Council Legislative Affairs Office, Request for Public Comment on “Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Review Draft)” [“Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)” gongkai zhengqiu yijian], 8 September 16.

⁴⁵Department on Legislative Affairs for Politics, Law, and National Defense, State Council Legislative Affairs Office, Explanation Regarding the “Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Review Draft)” [Guanyu “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)” de shuoming], 7 September 16.

⁴⁶Wang Lude, “Some Religious Scholars and House Church Pastors Offer Perspectives and Analyses of the ‘Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Review Draft)’” [Guanyu “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)” laizi jiwei zongjiao xuezhe yu jiating jiaohui muzhe de guandian yu fenxi], *Christian Times*, 23 September 16; Yang Kaile, “Commentary on the ‘Draft Revisions to the Regulation on Religious Affairs (Review Draft)’ (I)” [“Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)” pinglun (yi)], *Pu Shi Institute for Social Sciences*, 23 September 16.

⁴⁷State Council Legislative Affairs Office, Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Review Draft) [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)], 7 September 16, arts. 42, 63, 67, 71.

⁴⁸See, e.g., State Council Legislative Affairs Office, Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Review Draft) [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)], 7 September 16, arts. 6, 9, 33, 35, 65.

⁴⁹“China Amends ‘Regulations on Religious Affairs’ To Expand Authority of Public Security” [Zhongguo xiuding “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli” wei gong’an kuoquan], *Radio Free Asia*, 11 September 16; Wang Lude, “Some Religious Scholars and House Church Pastors Offer Perspectives and Analyses of the ‘Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Review Draft)’” [Guanyu “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)” laizi jiwei zongjiao xuezhe yu jiating jiaohui muzhe de guandian yu fenxi], *Christian Times*, 23 September 16.

⁵⁰State Council Legislative Affairs Office, Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Review Draft) [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)], 7 September 16, art. 68.

⁵¹Guo Baosheng, “House Churches Already Lack Legal Space To Exist—Comments on the Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs” [Jiating jiaohui yi wu falu shengcun kongjian—ping zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an], *Human Rights in China Biweekly*, Issue 192, 16–29 September 16; ChinaAid, “Professor Yang Fenggang Discusses ‘Regulations on Religious Affairs Draft Revisions’” [Yang fenggang jiaoshou tan “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiugai gao”], 10 September 16.

⁵²Li Guisheng et al., “Five Lawyers Challenge ‘Draft Revisions to the Religious Affairs Regulations (Review Draft)’” [Wu lushi tiaozhan “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)”], reprinted in WeChat Bay, 19 September 16; International Campaign for Tibet, “Suffocating Religious Freedom in Tibet: China’s Draft Regulations on Religious Affairs,” 25 October 16.

⁵³Cao Guoxing, “Muslim Scholar Provides Opinion Regarding Chinese Government’s Revisions to ‘Religious Affairs Regulations’” [Musilin xuezhe jiu zhongguo guanfang xiugai “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli” tichu yijian], *Radio France Internationale*, 23 September 16.

⁵⁴“Xi Jinping: Comprehensively Improve Religious Work Standards Under the New Situation” [Xi jinpings: quanmian tigao xin xingshi xia zongjiao gongzuo shuiping], *Xinhua*, 23 April 16. For more information on the April 2016 National Conference on Religious Work, see CECC, 2016 Annual Report, 6 October 16, 122.

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⁵⁵“Xi Jinping: Comprehensively Improve Religious Work Standards Under the New Situation” [Xi Jinping: quanmian tigao xin xingshi xia zongjiao gongzuo shuiping], Xinhua, 23 April 16; CECC, 2016 Annual Report, 6 October 16, 128.

⁵⁶ChinaAid, “2016 Annual Report: Chinese Government Persecution of Churches and Christians in Mainland China,” 1 February 17, 5.

⁵⁷State Council Legislative Affairs Office, Draft Revisions to the Regulations on Religious Affairs (Review Draft) [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli xiuding cao’an (songshen gao)], 7 September 16, art. 4; Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, “The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question During China’s Socialist Period” [Guanyu woguo shehuizhuyi shiqi zongjiao wenti de jiben guandian he jiben zhengce], reprinted in China Ethnicity and Religion Net, 31 March 82; Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and State Council, Document No. 6: On Some Problems Concerning Further Improving Work on Religion, 5 February 91, translated in Asia Watch, “Freedom of Religion in China,” January 1992, 35–42. See also Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 325; State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, art. 3. The RRA states that “Religious organizations, sites for religious activities and religious citizens shall . . . safeguard unification of the country, unity of all nationalities, and stability of society.”

⁵⁸Jessica Batke, “PRC Religious Policy: Serving the Gods of the CCP,” *China Leadership Monitor*, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, No. 52 (Winter 2017), 14 February 17, 4–5; Ian Johnson, “China Seeks Tighter Grip in Wake of a Religious Revival,” *New York Times*, 7 October 16.

⁵⁹State Administration for Religious Affairs, “State Administration for Religious Affairs 2017 Work Objectives” [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju 2017 nian gongzuo yaodian], 26 January 17.

⁶⁰“Li Keqiang Signs State Council Order Issuing Revised ‘Regulations on Religious Affairs’” [Li keqiang qianshu guowu ling gongbu xiuding hou de “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli”], Xinhua, 7 September 17.

⁶¹State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, amended 14 June 17, effective 1 February 18. See also Ying Fuk Tsang, “Is Practicing Socialist Core Values the Core Value of Religious Beliefs?” [Jianxing shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhi guan shi zongjiao xinyang de hexin jiazhi ma?], *Stand News*, 8 September 17; “China Passes New Religious Regulations ‘To Prevent Extremism,’” *World Watch Monitor*, 8 September 17; Bernardo Cervellera, “New Regulations on Religions: Annihilate Underground Communities, Suffocate Official Communities,” *AsiaNews*, 11 September 17.

⁶²“12 Years Later: The New ‘Regulations on Religious Affairs’ Issued by China” [12 nian hou zhongguo gongbu xinde “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli”], *Voice of America*, 9 September 17. For more commentary critical of the revisions to the RRA, see also Ying Fuk Tsang, “Is Practicing Socialist Core Values the Core Value of Religious Beliefs?” [Jianxing shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhi guan shi zongjiao xinyang de hexin jiazhi ma?], *Stand News*, 8 September 17; “Chinese Government Strengthen Control of Religion” [Zhongguo zhengfu qianghua dui zongjiao de guanzhi], *Radio Free Asia* 7 September 17; Wang Yi, “My Five Positions on the New ‘Regulations on Religious Affairs’” [Wo dui xin “zongjiao shiwu tiaoli” de wu ge lichang], Wang Yi’s Microphone, reprinted in Rights Defense Network, 8 September 17; International Campaign for Tibet, “International Campaign for Tibet Statement on China’s Revised Religious Regulations,” 8 September 17.

⁶³PRC 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, effective 1 November 15, art. 300.

⁶⁴Supreme People’s Court and Supreme People’s Procuratorate, Interpretation of Certain Issues Related to Handling Criminal Cases Concerning Organizing, Using a Cult To Undermine Implementation of the Law [Guanyu banli zuzhi, liyong xiejiao zuzhi pouhui falu shishi deng xingshi anjian shiyong falu ruogan wenti de jieshi], issued 25 January 17, effective 1 February 17; Dui Hua Foundation, “Will a New Judicial Interpretation on Cults Lead to Greater Leniency?” *Dui Hua Human Rights Journal*, 24 February 17.

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⁶⁶Supreme People’s Court and Supreme People’s Procuratorate, Interpretation of Certain Issues Related to Handling Criminal Cases Concerning Organizing, Using a Cult To Undermine Implementation of the Law [Guanyu banli zuzhi, liyong xiejiao zuzhi pouhui falu shishi deng xingshi anjian shiyong falu ruogan wenti de jieshi], issued 25 January 17, effective 1 February 17.

⁶⁷PRC National Security Law [Zhonghua renmin gonghe guo guojia anquan fa], passed and effective 1 July 15, art. 27.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Zhu Weiqun, “Communist Party Members Cannot Believe in Religion” [Gongchandang yuan buneng xinyang zongjiao], *Seeking Truth*, 17 December 11.

⁷⁰Liu Caiyu, “Party Members Told To Give Up Religion for Party Unity or Face Punishment,” *Global Times*, 18 July 17.

⁷¹Wang Zuo’an, “Doing Religious Work Well Requires Discussion of Politics” [Zuo hao zongjiao gongzuo bixu jiang zhengzhi] *Seeking Truth*, 14 July 17.

⁷²Pew Research Center, “Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project—China,” last visited 10 June 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 (Winter 2012–2013), 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.

⁷³Katharina Wenzel-Teuber, “2015 Statistical Update on Religions and Churches in the People’s Republic of China,” *China Heute*, No. 1 (2016), translated in *Religions & Christianity in Today’s China*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2016), 25.

⁷⁴State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, art. 15; Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 32–33.

⁷⁵State Administration for Religious Affairs et al., Opinion Regarding Issues Related to the Management of Buddhist Monasteries and Taoist Temples [Guanyu chuli sheji fojiao simiao, daojiao gongguan guanli youguan wenti de yijian], issued 8 October 12; Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 32–33.

⁷⁶Meijiang District People’s Government, “Regional Variations in Chinese Taoism” [Zhongguo daojiao de diyuxing chayi], 6 October 14.

⁷⁷State Council, Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) [Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli], issued 30 November 04, effective 1 March 05, arts. 6, 8, 13–15, 27. See, e.g., RRA, art. 6 (requiring religious organizations to register in accordance with the Regulations on the Management of the Registration of Social Organizations); art. 8 (requiring an application to the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) to establish an institute for religious learning); arts. 13–15 (imposing an application procedure to register venues for religious activity); and art. 27 (requiring the appointment of religious personnel to be reported to the religious affairs bureau at or above the county level and requiring reporting the succession of living Buddhas for approval to governments at the prefecture level or higher, and requiring reporting for the record the appointment of Catholic bishops to SARA). For measures regulating Taoist religious activity, see, e.g., Chinese Taoist Association, Measures for the Management of Taoist Temples [Daojiao gongguan guanli banfa], issued 23 June 10, amended 29 June 15, reprinted in State Administration for Religious Affairs, 15 October 15; Chinese Taoist Association, Measures for the Appointment of Key Religious Personnel in Taoist Temples [Daojiao gongguan zhuyao jiaozhi renzhi banfa], issued 23 June 10, amended 29 June 15, reprinted in State Administration for Religious Affairs, 15 October 15. For measures regulating Buddhist religious activity, see, e.g., Buddhist Association of China, Measures for the Appointment of the Heads of Theravada Buddhist Monasteries [Nanchuan fojiao siyuan zhuchi renzhi banfa], issued 3 November 11, reprinted in State Administration for Religious Affairs, 21 December 11; Buddhist Association of China, Measures for the Management of Monastic Vows in National Chinese Buddhist Monasteries [Quanguo hanchuan fojiao siyuan chuanshou santan dajie guanli banfa], issued 3 November 11, reprinted by State Administration for Religious Affairs, 21 December 11.

⁷⁸Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 32.

⁷⁹Ibid., 33; Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 332–33.

⁸⁰For more information on Wu Zeheng, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2017-00235.

⁸¹PRC 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, effective 1 November 15, art. 300.

⁸²Jared Genser, “The Detention of Wu Zeheng,” *The Diplomat*, 4 February 17; Wei Meng, “Wu Zeheng, Leader of Evil Cult ‘Huazang Dharma,’ Sentenced to Life Imprisonment in First Instance Trial” [Xiejiao zuzhi ‘huazang zongmen’ toumu wu zeheng yishen bei panchu wuqi tuxing], *Xinhua*, 31 October 15.

⁸³UN Human Rights Council, Opinions of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, A/HRC/WGAD/2016/46, 21–25 November 16, paras. 60–66.

⁸⁴Jared Genser, “The Detention of Wu Zeheng,” *The Diplomat*, 4 February 17; Chinese Human Rights Defenders, “Wu Zeheng,” 22 July 16.

⁸⁵Declaration 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(g).

⁸⁶Sarah Cook, Freedom House, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 45.

⁸⁷State Administration for Religious Affairs, “State Administration for Religious Affairs 2017 Work Objectives” [Guojia zongjiao shiwu ju 2017 nian gongzuo yaodian], 26 January 17.

⁸⁸China 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.

⁸⁹Rachel Xiaohong Zhu, “The Division of the Roman Catholic Church in Mainland China: History and Challenges,” *Religions*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (March 2017), 1, 3, 6–7.

⁹⁰“This Year’s Religious Work Agenda: Push ‘Self-Selection, Self-Ordination’ and Celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Catholic Patriotic Association” [Bennian zongjiao gongzuo jihua: tuijin zixuan zisheng ji qingzhu aiguo hui liushi zhounian], *Union of Catholic Asian News*, 14 February 17; Rachel Xiaohong Zhu, “The Division of the Roman Catholic Church in Mainland China: History and Challenges,” *Religions*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (March 2017), 7.

⁹¹Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China, 27 May 07; Rachel Xiaohong Zhu, “The Division of the Roman Catholic Church in Mainland China: History and Challenges,” *Religions*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (March 2017), 7–8.

⁹²Lisa Jucca and Benjamin Kang Lim, “Exclusive: Vatican and China in Final Push for Elusive Deal on Bishops,” *Reuters*, 20 October 16.

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⁹³ Ilaria Maria Sala, “The Warming Relations Between China and the Vatican Seem To Have Gone Cold,” *Quartz*, 22 December 16. See also “A Reminder of Who Is In Charge,” *Sunday Examiner*, 10–16 December 16.

⁹⁴ “A Reminder of Who Is In Charge,” *Sunday Examiner*, 10–16 December 16.

⁹⁵ “Vatican Admits to New Challenges in China Talks,” *La Croix*, 2 August 17.

⁹⁶ Bernardo Cervellera, “Msgr. Peter Shao Zhumin, Bishop of Wenzhou (Underground) Seized by Police,” *AsiaNews*, 13 April 17.

⁹⁷ Wang Zhicheng, “Underground Mindong Bishop Guo Xijin Missing for Four Days,” *AsiaNews*, 10 April 17.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*; Bernardo Cervellera, “Msgr. Peter Shao Zhumin, Bishop of Wenzhou (Underground) Seized By Police,” *AsiaNews*, 13 April 17.

⁹⁹ “Vatican-Approved Bishop Seized for a Fourth Time in China,” *La Croix*, 25 May 17.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ “China: Catholic Priests Missing; Woman Killed in Church Demolition,” *Independent Catholic News*, 19 April 16; Victoria Ma, “Baoding Catholics Call for Safe Return of Missing Father Yang,” *AsiaNews*, 16 April 16. In Hebei province, three underground Catholic priests remained missing after disappearing under suspicious circumstances in April 2016. “Chinese Catholics Appeal for Release of Long-Imprisoned Bishop,” *Union of Catholic Asian News*, 1 September 15; Bernardo Cervellera, “Two Chinese Bishop Martyrs Recognised as ‘Illustrious Unknown’ for 2011,” *AsiaNews*, 30 December 11; Michael Forsythe, “Questions Rise on Fate of Chinese Bishop,” *New York Times*, 13 February 15. Authorities in Hebei have not given any information as to the whereabouts or condition of three underground Hebei bishops: Coadjutor Bishop Cui Tai of Xuanhua district, Zhangjiakou municipality (detained in August 2014); Bishop Cosmas Shi Enxiang (missing since 2001; in February 2015 officials denied an unconfirmed report that he had passed away); and Bishop James Su Zhimin of Baoding municipality (detained in 1996; last seen in public in 2003). For more information, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database records 2004-05378 on Shi Enxiang and 2004-05380 on Su Zhimin.

¹⁰² “Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin Returns to Shanghai CPA, Still Doesn’t Appear Completely Free” [Ma daqin zhujiao chongfan shanghai aiguohei, wei xianshi yi huode wanquan ziyou], *Union of Catholic Asian News*, 25 January 17. See also “Chinese Bishop’s Weibo Account Blocked, Movement Restricted,” *Union of Catholic Asian News*, 3 May 16; John Sudworth, “Missing China Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin ‘Sent to Political Classes,’” *BBC*, 24 December 13; CECC, 2013 Annual Report, 10 October 13, 88–89; CECC, 2014 Annual Report, 9 October 14, 92; CECC, 2015 Annual Report, 8 October 15, 122. For more information on Ma Daqin, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2013-00336.

¹⁰³ “Shanghai Ordination Under Investigation,” *Union of Catholic Asian News*, 11 July 12; “Chinese Bishop’s Weibo Account Blocked, Movement Restricted,” *Union of Catholic Asian News*, 3 May 16; John Sudworth, “Missing China Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin ‘Sent to Political Classes,’” *BBC*, 24 December 13. See also CECC, 2013 Annual Report, 10 October 13, 88–89.

¹⁰⁴ Sarah Cook, *Freedom House*, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 9.

¹⁰⁵ *ChinaAid*, “2016 Annual Report: Chinese Government Persecution of Churches and Christians in Mainland China,” 1 February 17, 34–35.

¹⁰⁶ Sarah Cook, *Freedom House*, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 49–50.

¹⁰⁷ Anna Scott Bell, “Revisionist Religion: Xi Jinping’s Suppression of Christianity and Elevation of Traditional Culture as Part of a Revisionist Power Agenda,” *Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Fall 2016), 79–81; *ChinaAid*, “2016 Annual Report: Chinese Government Persecution of Churches and Christians in Mainland China,” 1 February 17, 9, 14.

¹⁰⁸ See, e.g., Sarah Cook, *Freedom House*, “The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance Under Xi Jinping,” February 2017, 44.

¹⁰⁹ Guo Baosheng, “Analysis of the Movement to Sinicize Christianity” [Jidu jiao zhongguohua yundong pouxin], *China Strategic Analysis*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (15 January 17); “Henan Government Prohibits Churches From Holding Summer Activities for Youth” [Henan zhengfu jinzhi jiaohui juban qingshaonian shuqi huodong], *Radio Free Asia*, 18 July 17; “Zhejiang Repressing Religion Again, Prohibits Minors From Participating in Meetings” [Zhejiang zaidu daya zongjiao jin wei chengnianren canjia juhui], *Radio Free Asia*, 21 August 17.

¹¹⁰ “Henan Government Prohibits Churches From Holding Summer Activities for Youth” [Henan zhengfu jinzhi jiaohui juban qingshaonian shuqi huodong], *Radio Free Asia*, 18 July 17. ¹¹¹ “Zhejiang Repressing Religion Again, Prohibits Minors from Participating in Meetings” [Zhejiang zaidu daya zongjiao jin wei chengnianren canjia juhui], *Radio Free Asia*, 21 August 17.

¹¹² “Forced Installation of Surveillance Cameras at All Churches in Zhejiang, Officials Claim Reason Is ‘Anti-Terrorism’” [Zhejiang ge jiaotang bei qiang zhuang jiankong tantou guan cheng weile ‘fan kong’], *Radio Free Asia*, 25 March 17.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*; *ChinaAid*, “Zhejiang Province Orders Churches To Install Surveillance Equipment,” 2 April 17.

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