

Report

China: Persecution of Protestant Christians in the Approach to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games

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1. Introduction

The approach of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games has been accompanied by a significant deterioration in religious freedom for China's unregistered Protestant Church, also known as the house church.

China continues to seriously restrict religious freedom, requiring religious activity to take place within the confines of the restrictive state-controlled bodies. Those practising their faith outside these bodies risk sanction, with penalties including discrimination, fines, confiscation and destruction of property, arrest, humiliating treatment, torture, imprisonment and forced labour. Alongside these punishments, meetings are raided, Bibles and religious materials are confiscated and churches are destroyed.

2. Background

2.1. Official Churches

Although China permits official, registered churches to function, the government-sanctioned church organisation, the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), suffers restrictions on selection and training of clergy, location of venues, publications, finances and relationships with Christians abroad. There are also restrictions on working with certain classes of people, including those aged under eighteen. Religious education in government-sanctioned seminaries is severely restricted.

2.2. Persecution of the Unregistered Church

As a result of the control exercised by the atheist government over TSPM churches, most Christians choose to worship in unregistered churches. However, those belonging to unregistered, and therefore illegal, groups can face many difficulties, including being harassed, humiliated, fined, tortured, imprisoned and subjected to forced labour. Physical assault has left Christians injured, hospitalised and disabled. Meetings have been forcefully dispersed, unofficial church buildings destroyed and property confiscated. New government regulations that came into force in March 2005 renewed the drive to enforce registration. Members of unregistered churches come under particular attack when they are accused of being part of a cult. As their faith is not recognised as belonging to an official religion, house churches can be classified as cults, along with other less conventional groups, and be subjected to harsh penalties.

2.3. Bibles and Christian Literature

The Chinese Government allows the official printing of a limited number of Bibles. However, supply is insufficient to meet the needs of the house churches. China allows only one publisher, The Amity Foundation in Nanjing, to print Bibles and a limited selection of Christian materials, but production is insufficient to meet the needs of the burgeoning Christian population.¹ The Bibles are only distributed through the official TSPM churches

¹ Precise figures for religious believers in China are impossible to obtain. Estimates of house church figures range from 40 million to over 100 million. In January 2007 CAA issued news that a reliable source had informed that Mr Ye Xiaowen, the director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, had stated in two internal meetings at Beijing University and the Chinese Academy of Social Science that there are now 130 million Christians in China, including 20 million Catholics.

making it difficult for house church Christians to obtain Christian materials. It is illegal to sell Bibles at public bookstores and other public facilities. Pastors who have printed Bibles and Christian literature to fill unmet needs have been arrested and imprisoned for operating illegal business practices.

3. Pre-Olympic Crackdown on Unregistered Protestant Churches

The advent of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games has been accompanied by a disturbing increase in persecution of unregistered Christians, including the largest mass sentencing of house church leaders in 25 years, a level of expulsion of foreign Christians not seen since the 1950s and targeted repression of the Chinese House Church Alliance. At the end of 2007 President Hu Jintao made statements that China has a policy of religious freedom. However, abhorrent abuse of religious believers and regular raids of Christian meetings continue to take place.

In May 2008 two independent sources informed China Aid Association (CAA) that the Ministry of Public Security has received funding from the Chinese Central Government to increase its campaign of eradicating house churches throughout China.

Reports have been received of planned intensified persecution, with greater control and prevention of large Christian gatherings also anticipated. It is feared that harsher persecution will take place after the Olympics.

3.1. Measures Against Unregistered Churches in Beijing

The month of May saw significant measures taken against key unregistered churches in Beijing:

- On 9 May 2008 Pastor Dong Yutao, a leader of one of the largest Beijing house churches, Beijing City Revival Church, was arrested while on his way to collect a shipment of Bibles. He was placed under criminal detention by Beijing Public Security Bureau officials for receiving illegally printed Bibles and religious literature.
- On 11 May 2008 uniformed policemen and plain-clothed detectives broke into the regular worship service at Shouwang Church, in the Huajie Building near the Third Ring Road in Beijing. A plain-clothed law enforcement officer showed his identification from Haidian District Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs and ordered the church to stop its activities. Members of the church were ordered to leave the premises as the gathering was illegal.
- On 25 May 2008, at approximately 9.30am, various house church gathering sites connected to the nearly 1,000-strong Beijing Gospel Church, were raided by officials from four government agencies, including the Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs. The raided sites included those at Longhuayuan Residential Complex, Tiantongyuan Residential Complex, Century Jiayuan Residential Complex, Yangqiao Residential Complex, Ganjiakou Residential Complex and Zhongguancun Residential Complex. Officials forcibly entered and searched the homes of house church members without presenting search warrants or proper documentation and proceeded to confiscate religious materials. Some of those targeted sustained minor injuries from violence by officials. Although the officials' actions were illegal, the house church members complied with their demands, even shaking their hands and pronouncing a blessing on them.

Victims of the attacks described the incident in an open letter to government officials, in which they cite various laws which have been breached.²

While Chinese house churches have long suffered persecution, this is believed to be the first time that the authorities have systematically cracked down on the 'third wave churches'. These are churches amongst the more educated and wealthy sections of society with greater awareness of their rights, which generally meet in urban areas and have been tolerated, even though operating under certain restrictions.

3.2. Increased Measures to Prevent Property Rental

Many house churches were already being pressurised to stop gathering or to leave Beijing by September 2007 when CAA publicised a new restriction imposed by the Beijing Municipal PSB. The measure was reported in the Beijing Evening News of 5 September, which stated: 'The Population Management Office of Beijing Municipal Public Security issued a public notice today that in order to raise landlords' awareness of doing their duties for public security, the police will in the coming days organise the staff in the entire bureau and all the local police stations in an intensive inspection on 'No rental to five types of prospective tenants'. The police remind all owners of rental housing properties that they should on their own initiative refuse to rent their properties to 'five types of prospective tenants'. The specified groups include 'people who engage in religious activities'. Beijing house church leaders identified the move as a new tactic to persecute the house churches before the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

3.3. Prohibition of Religious Groups at the Olympics

According to reliable internal Chinese government sources' disclosures to CAA, the Ministry of Public Security of the Chinese Government issued a general nationwide order in April 2007 that all those from China and overseas who will participate in the Olympic Games, including athletes, media and sponsors, are to be strictly checked. The Ministry of Public Security secretly issued a document entitled 'Notice on Strict Background Check on Applicants for the Olympic Games and the Test Events'. An eleven category blacklist is provided. The third category is given as 'Religious extremists and religious infiltrators'. The categories are further divided into 43 groups and Category Three includes: '1. Members of illegal religious organisations both in China and abroad. 2. Members who have been caught by the Chinese authorities for engaging in religious activities. 3. People who have given illegal sermons. 4. People who illegally distribute religious publications and video/audio materials. 5. People who have illegally established both in China and abroad religious organisations, institutions, schools, sermon sites and other religious entities.' The restrictions also apply to those wishing to attend the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.³

3.4. Forced Labour for Olympic Products

Beijing house church leader Pastor Cai Zhuohua, who was released in September 2007 after serving three years imprisonment for "illegal business practices" for production of Christian literature, was forced to work ten to twelve hours a day making soccer balls for the 2008 Beijing Olympics while in prison.

² For the text of the letter, see <http://chinaaid.org/2008/06/02/beijing-gospel-church%e2%80%99s-public-letter-discussing-the-disruption-of-their-meeting-by-government-officials/>

³ See also the official website of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games at <http://www.beijing2008.cn/news/official/bulletin/official/n214387789.shtml>. The recent document of 57 Q & A further articulates such controls.

4. Trends

In analysing recent measures taken against China's unregistered Christians, a number of trends appear.

4.1. Increased Persecution

In its assessment of the trends of persecution, CAA reported that there was a rise of 18.5% in the numbers of Christians persecuted last year compared with the previous year, with an increase in persecution cases of 30.4%. The analysis highlighted the level of persecution occurring in urban areas, reporting that just under 60% of persecution cases occurred in such areas. The assessment also highlighted the ongoing targeting of house church leaders, with 415 reported arrests of such leaders last year.

4.2. Rise in Persecution of Foreign Christians

China has conducted the largest expulsion of foreign Christians since the 1950s when all foreign missionaries were expelled. In a campaign termed "Operation Typhoon No. 5" over 100 foreign Christians had been arrested, interrogated and expelled from the country by the end of 2007. Most were western, but Koreans and other nationalities were also targeted. Seventy foreigners with secular business operations were expelled from Xinjiang alone. CAA reports an 833% increase in such expulsions compared with the previous year. Amongst the firms targeted was the British company Jirehouse which ran an operation in Xinjiang. The company's Project Manager, Alimujiang Yimiti, a Uyghur Christian, was accused of engaging in illegal religious activities and tried on 27 May 2008 for endangering national security.

4.3. Persecution in Xinjiang

In April 2008 CAA reported that Chinese government officials had launched a strategic campaign, called the "Anti-illegal Christian Activities Campaign", against house church members in Xinjiang. While both Han and Uyghur Christians have been targeted, the plight of the minority Uyghur Christian population is especially harsh as they face persecution on the grounds of both their unusual religious faith and the broader ethnic persecution of the Uyghur people in Xinjiang. Even the limited religious freedoms protected elsewhere in China are further restricted in Xinjiang and there have been repeated arrests and mistreatment of Christians in Xinjiang over an extended period. Of particular concern is the use of national security and separatism charges against religious believers. Prior to the arrest of Alimujiang Yimiti, another Uyghur Christian, Wusiman Yiming, was accused of disclosing state secrets and sentenced. Most recently, on 16 May 2008, Pastor Lou Yuanqi was placed under criminal detention on the charge of inciting separatism, making his the second case of a Christian targeted under separatism charges in Xinjiang.

4.4. Persecution of Christian Publishers

A further trend relates to the treatment of those involved with Christian publications. There have been a series of cases where those involved in producing Christian literature have been accused of illegal business practices. Beijing church leaders Pastor Cai Zhuohua and Mr Shi Weihai have both been targeted in this manner.

4.5. Prevention of Aid

Although China's house church Christians have a strong desire to provide social support and humanitarian aid in China, authorities prevent them from carrying out such work. Government officials have refused aid from house church Christians to help the earthquake survivors in Sichuan Province and even arrested house church members who have volunteered to help those affected by the disaster. Among the cases was the arrest of three Christians in Mao County, Sichuan Province on 31 May while they were carrying out relief work. On 1 June police raided a house church meeting in Taikang County in Henan Province and interrogated participants about which church members would be taking donations to the earthquake affected area. Six members were held in detention under the charge of sending money to a disaster area in the name of a house church. Police and religious affairs officials stated they would not release them until they each paid a 1,000 yuan fine. The restriction on religious believers seeking to help survivors has been highlighted in The Wall Street Journal.⁴

5. Individuals of Concern

The following individuals are of current concern.

5.1. Mr Alimujiang Yimiti

Mr Alimujiang Yimiti (Alimjan Yimit in Uyghur), a Christian Uyghur from Xinjiang, was tried on 27 May 2008 for endangering national security. The court referred the case back to state prosecutors due to "insufficient evidence". The trial hearing ran for six and a half hours, commencing at 10am and concluding at 7.30pm, with a recess from 1pm to 4pm. Although initially denied access to his lawyer, Mr Yimiti was allowed legal representation by two lawyers in court. However, his wife, Gulinuer, who had travelled for hundreds of miles, was prohibited from entering the court on the grounds of the sensitivity of the case. Members of the media were excluded on the same basis. Mr Yimiti was originally accused of engaging in illegal religious activities when authorities targeted the British company, Jirehouse, which he was working for in a series of closures of foreign companies belonging to Christians in September 2007. He was subsequently taken into detention on 12 January 2008. His family have been deeply concerned regarding his fate due to the serious charges of endangering national security, namely instigating separatism and stealing, penetrating, purchasing and illegally providing state secrets or intelligence for overseas organisations and individuals. Mr Yimiti's wife, Gulinuer, has highlighted that he is being persecuted for his faith and that he would not have had access to state secrets as an agricultural worker.

5.2. Pastor Lou Yuanqi

Prominent house church leader, Pastor Lou Yuanqi, is detained under the charge of 'inciting separatism' in Xinjiang, China. Pastor Lou was summoned by the State Security Bureau to Qingshuihe Township Police Station at 1.00pm on Friday 16 May 2008 and interrogated for an hour. At 11.30pm he was transferred to Huocheng County Detention Centre on the charge of "inciting separatism". Pastor Lou, who is a house church leader in Qingshuihe Town, Huocheng County in Xinjiang, has been arrested on several previous occasions. On 20 October 2006 Pastor Lou and three other pastors were detained for organising a house

⁴ See <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121208455251929967.html> or <http://chinaaid.org/2008/05/30/china-aid-relief-effort-reported-by-wall-street-journal-christian-groups-step-delicately-in-sichuan/>

church and held for 32 days, during which time they were severely beaten on a daily basis by guards and inmates. However, the current incident is the first time that Pastor Lou has been detained under criminal detention and he is likely to face a serious indictment in court. Pastor Lou's sixteen year old daughter, Lou Nan, was detained on 28 February 2008 for a day, together with ten other minors, when they were discovered attending a Bible study for children. This is the second time the Chinese Government has used a separatist charge against a house church leader in Xinjiang.

5.3. Mr Wusiman Yiming

Wusiman Yiming (Osman Imin in Uyghur), a 35-year-old ethnic Uyghur, is a former employee of Xinjiang Pacific Agricultural Resources Development Company Ltd. The company was run by an outspoken Christian American businessman who was expelled from China and had his business shut down. The Detention Notice of the Bureau of State Security states that Mr Yiming was put under criminal detention on 19 November 2007 on suspicion of disclosing state secrets and held at Hetian District Detention Centre. On 27 November 2007 the Administration Committee on Re-education through Labour of Hetian District sentenced Mr Yiming to two years of re-education through labour to run until 18 November 2009. The Decision Statement on Re-education through Labour states: "During his work at Luofu County Branch of Xinjiang Pacific Agricultural Resources Development Company, Ltd. from March 1998 to April 2004, he assisted foreigners in illegal activities". Mr Yiming's case was referred to Kashi People's Court for appeal on April 16 before judges from Hetian City, Xinjiang. However his sentence was upheld. Mr Yiming's lawyer, Zhang Kai faced continual harassment as he sought to represent Mr Yiming. Mr Yiming's wife reported that her husband was in a very poor state when she saw him in March as he was suffering from malnutrition and a bad hand injury.

5.4. Mr Shi Weihan

Shi Weihan, a bookstore owner and leader of a house church in Beijing, was arrested on 19 March 2008 for publishing Bibles and other Christian literature. Mr. Shi had been arrested previously on 28 November 2007 but was released on 4 January 2008 due to "insufficient evidence". He was denied family visits and held at the Beijing Municipal Detention Centre as a "dangerous religious element". He was also denied access to his lawyer, until late April when they were finally allowed to meet after long negotiations. During the meeting, Mr Shi was interrupted by guards on several occasions and received a warning. His lawyer reported that Mr Shi, who has chronic diabetes, was in very poor health and that he had allergic symptoms for which there was no explanation. Although his lawyer stated that he is in dire need of medical attention, Mr Shi received no medical care or even basic humanitarian treatment. Mr Shi, whose store is located two miles from the Olympic Village, was printing Bibles and Christian literature without authorisation in response to the great unmet need for such materials in China. Concerns have been expressed that his arrest is part of a wider crackdown on religious groups which the Government fears could voice dissent during the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

5.5. Pastor Dong Yutao

Pastor Dong Yutao, a leader of one of the largest house churches in Beijing, Beijing City Revival Church, was arrested on 9 May 2008 while going to collect a shipment of Bibles. He was placed under criminal detention by Beijing Public Security Bureau officials for receiving illegally printed Bibles and religious literature.

5.6. *Pastor Li Shentang and 20 other prominent house church leaders*

270 house church leaders were arrested on 7 December 2007 in Hedeng District, Linyi City, Shandong Province as they gathered for leadership training. According to an eye-witness, 40-50 policemen from twelve different towns were involved in the mass detention in December. The pastors were handcuffed in pairs and taken to the police station for questioning. Most were fined and released but seventeen male and four female church leaders were sentenced together to re-education through labour. The leaders were accused of holding an “illegal religious gathering” and the 21 labelled as members of an “evil cult”. This is believed to be the largest mass sentencing of house church leaders in China for 25 years. The Linyi City Re-education through Labour Commission in Shandong Province simultaneously sentenced the 21 church leaders to re-education through labour for terms of fifteen months to three years. Amongst those sentenced were Pastor Li Shentang, 53, of Xizhutuan Village, Xianggong Town, Hedong District, Linyi City, Shandong Province and Pastor Ge Xianfu, 59, of Banquan Town, Junan County, Shandong Province, who were sentenced to fifteen months and two years, respectively.

5.7. *Pastor Wang Weiliang, Pastor Shen Zhuke, Mr Feng Guangliang*

Pastor Wang Weiliang, Pastor Shen Zhuke, Mr Feng Guangliang and others were arrested after the destruction of their church in Xiaoshan, Zhejiang Province on 29 July 2006. On 22 December 2006 the People’s Court of Xiaoshan District, Hangzhou City sentenced Pastor Wang Weiliang to three years, Pastor Shen Zhuke to three-and-a-half years and Mr Feng Guangliang to two years imprisonment for resisting the execution of the law by instigating violence. Others received shorter or suspended sentences.

5.8. *Pastor Zhang Rongliang*

Pastor Zhang Rongliang, the leader of the China for Christ Church, is one of the most prominent house church leaders in China. He was arrested without charge on 1 December 2004 in Xuhai village, Zhengzhou, Henan Province. Eventually he was accused of falsifying a passport, obtaining passports through deception for three of his co-workers and illegal border crossing. He had been wanted for his religious activities for years before his arrest and has previously spent twelve years in prison during five separate detentions. Pastor Zhang was sentenced on 29 June 2006 to seven-and-a-half years’ imprisonment for obtaining passports through deception and illegally crossing the national border.

5.9. *Pastor Zhang Geming and Pastor Sun Qingwen*

House church leaders Pastor Zhang Geming and Pastor Sun Qingwen, evangelists from Henan Province, were detained on 15 June 2007 during a worship service in Shandong Province. Four local church leaders were also arrested and then released after paying a 10,000 yuan fine. Pastors Zhang and Sun were sentenced on 29 June 2007 to one year of re-education through labour for using an evil cult to obstruct the law, to be served in the Re-education through Labour Camp of Jining City in Shandong Province, by the Re-education through Labour Management Committee of the People’s Government of Heze City.

5.10. *Mr Daniel Ng, Mrs Eliza Ng and employees of Enoch Group*

Daniel and Eliza Ng are naturalised Australians who were born in Hong Kong and are of Chinese descent. As the owners of Enoch Group, Mr and Mrs Ng have worked in China for over twenty years, using business opportunities to serve the Chinese people. A government investigation into their business began on 21 August 2007. On 12 November Guangzhou

Municipal Administrative Bureau for Industry and Commerce issued a 'Notice of Hearing' announcing that the business licence of the company was revoked. Among the grounds given was that Guangzhou Enoch distributed Christian materials which did not have an approval code from the State. Questioning has focused on religious activities rather than business matters. Interviewees have been beaten. Three members of staff have been detained: Ms Lin Chunmei and Ms Chen Guichan were placed under criminal detention on 29 October and Ms Zhang Qiao was arrested on 7 November. Mr and Mrs. Ng were put under house arrest in Guangzhou on 12 October for 13 days. They were subsequently allowed to travel in China but are not permitted to leave the country. The multimillion dollar company has been closed.

5.11. Pastor Hua Huiqi

Beijing pastor and activist Hua Huiqi was detained on "suspicion of interfering with execution of public duties" and formally arrested by Beijing PSB Chaoyang Branch on 8 February 2007. He was secretly sentenced to six months in prison and released on July 2007. His mother Shuang Shuying, was arrested when she went to visit him and sentenced to two years in prison. Pastor Hua was pressurised to lure Bob Fu, President of CAA, to China and to give names of other Christians and was told that his mother was being held as a hostage and would be released if he co-operated. On 1 October 2007 Pastor Hua was taken by force to a house rented by his father and placed under house arrest. On 11 October, he was beaten unconscious by the PSB and did not recover consciousness until 14 October. He was discharged from hospital on 16 October but beaten again the next day. Authorities have continued to keep him under surveillance.

5.12. Ms Shuang Shuying

76-year-old Shuang Shuying was detained after seeking the release of her son, Hua Huiqi. She was formally arrested on 9 February 2007. She has serious health problems. Shuang Shuying was sentenced on 26 February 2007 for two years by Beijing Chongwen District People's Court for wilfully damaging public and private property.

5.13. Mr Peng Ming

Peng Ming is an official UNHCR refugee from China who was resident in the US from 2001 and has worked for Chinese democracy, freedom and human rights for many years. In May 2004 Mr Peng travelled to Thailand and crossed into Burma, from where he was illegally transported to China. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in October 2005 for engaging in terrorist activities, after a series of varying earlier charges. Mr Peng has very serious health problems. He has suffered with severe kidney stones during his imprisonment, leading to a rapid deterioration in his health. In April 2005 he suffered a massive heart attack. He has not received medical treatment and it is remarkable that he has survived. His lawyer filed for medical parole on 24 December 2007, the second time such an application has been made. His sicknesses have been exacerbated by cruel treatment from prison officials including sleep deprivation and malnutrition. He was severely beaten by a fellow inmate on 11 February 2008. In November 2005 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention adopted an Opinion in which it held that "the deprivation of Mr Peng Ming is arbitrary, as being in contravention of articles 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". The Opinion also states that "the continuously changing charges against Mr Peng...corroborate that the criminal proceedings against him are a sham covering the actual reasons for his detention. Also Mr Peng's previous detention in a re-education through labour camp bears out the political motives behind his detention." Mr Peng's case has also been the subject of repeated representations by US officials and representatives.

He is held in a heavily guarded prison cell in Han Yang Prison No. 19 Prison District, Cai Dian District, Wuhan City, Hubei Province, 43010.

5.14. Mr Gao Zhisheng

Prominent Beijing human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng was secretly removed from his home by Chinese authorities in September 2007 and has been missing since. The incident occurred after Mr Gao issued an open letter to the US Congress and Senate in which he highlighted numerous human rights abuses committed in the approach to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. Mr Gao had been sentenced to three years imprisonment, suspended for five years, in December 2006. He has been disappeared since September 2007.

6. Recommendations

Following his visit to China in 1994, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance⁵ made a number of recommendations which would assist in bringing China's religious law and practice into line with international standards. These recommendations are from an authoritative impartial source and China should be urged to implement them. They include the recommendations that China should:

- Provide an explicit guarantee of the right to manifest religion and, accordingly, amend the pertinent legal texts, including Article 36 of the Constitution, to provide constitutional guarantees of religious liberty that accord with the definition of religious freedom provided in the 1981 Declaration.
- Adopt a specific provision clearly stating that persons under the age of eighteen have the right to freedom of belief, in accordance with China's obligations under the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly those arising under Article 14.
- Adopt a text explicitly recognising the right to freedom of belief for everyone, including members of the communist party and other socio-political organisations.
- Abandon the practice of distinguishing between 'normal' and 'abnormal' religious activities and respect the right of all individuals to freely follow their chosen belief, without interference, subject only to the limitations laid out in international standards, most notably in Article 1(3) of the 1981 Declaration, namely only those that are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
- Release all those detained for religious reasons.
- Provide human rights training, particularly on religious freedom, to state officials and judges.

⁵ The title of the Special Rapporteur has since been changed to Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief

- Post the principal texts on religious freedom in the relevant administrative services concerned, compile and distribute a compendium of texts on religious freedom together with implementation instructions, distribute human rights materials to religious organisations and inform citizens and organisations of appeal procedures available in the event of refusal to register religious organisations.
- Provide education on religious freedom, including at the university level.

In addition it is recommended that China:

- Recognise the right of freedom to choose any religion, including those outside the official organisations and the five recognised religions.
- Rescind the registration system in its present form so that it is no longer a mechanism for controlling religious activity.
- Cease the policy of imposing penalties, including administrative and criminal detention, fines, confiscation of property and destruction of premises, for religious behaviour.
- Establish a dialogue with representatives of the house churches, as requested in the appeal issued by house church leaders on 22 August 1998.
- Maintain follow up contact with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief.
- Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and amend legislation and practice to conform to the rights laid out therein.
- Implement effective protection for religious believers from arbitrary detention and abuse by officials and address the impunity of officials who abuse individuals and groups due to their religious beliefs.
- Allow the free movement of religious materials and personnel into and within the country.