**The Summary of the Chinese Communist Party’s Discrimination in Laws and Practices Against Christians from The Church of Almighty God**

The Church of Almighty God (CAG) is a new Christian church in China and has been under the systematic persecution of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) since its founding in 1991. To completely ban the CAG, the CCP has employed various means such as illegal surveillance, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, sentence and incarceration, forced labor, deprivation of rights to fair trial and medical care, school expulsion, removal from office, and exclusion from social security, which constitutes a gross violation and deprivation of CAG Christians’ basic human rights including rights to religious freedom and survival.

**Sources**

This submission is by The Church of Almighty God and we rely on our own experience and suffering. For general information about the CAG, an Italian scholar has recently published a book with Oxford University Press: Massimo Introvigne, *Inside The Church of Almighty God: The Most Persecuted Religious Movement in China*, New York 2020. Although written by an outsider with a different theological perspective than ours, the book is a good source for our history. Several international bodies have also reported on the persecution we suffer in China. [The **U.S. Department of State Report on International Religious Freedom**](https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/CHINA-INCLUSIVE-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf)for the year 2018, reported claims that in the year 2018, Chinese “authorities arrested 11,111 of its [CAG] members,” and “subjected 525 of its members to ‘torture or forced indoctrination,’” mentioning that some were tortured to death while in custody**.**

The [**U.S. Department of State Report on Human Right Practices**](https://www.state.gov/reports/2018-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/china-includes-tibet-hong-kong-and-macau-china/) for 2018 also mentioned that “members of the Church of Almighty God […] reported systematic torture in custody.”The **USCIRF** (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom) [similarly reported](https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2019USCIRFAnnualReport.pdf) that “in 2018, the Chinese government harassed and arrested thousands of followers of …the Church of Almighty God. Many of those detained during the year… suffered torture and other abuses, in some cases resulting in deaths or unexplained disappearances while in custody.”The **Office of the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights**, [summarizing NGOs claims at the 2019 Universal Periodic Revision of China](https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G18/266/48/PDF/G1826648.pdf?OpenElement), mentioned that “during 2014-2018, the Chinese Communist Party’s monitoring, arrest, and persecution had caused at least 500,000 Church of Almighty God (CAG) Christians to flee their home, and several hundred thousand families had been torn apart.” Italy’s Minister of Internal Affairs [also published in 2019](https://coi.easo.europa.eu/administration/italy/PLib/2019_03_28_Cina__Chiesa_di_Dio_Onnipotente.pdf) a report on the persecution of CAG in China.

What follows is a brief description of the CCP’s discrimination against CAG Christians in laws and practices in four spheres.

**1. The CCP deprives CAG Christians of their rights to religious freedom.**

Since the founding of the CAG, the CCP has issued multiple confidential documents to promote the persecution. In 1995, China’s Ministry of Public Security (MPS) issued an official document to include multiple Christian house churches such as The Church of Almighty God (Eastern Lightning) and the Shouters into its“*xie jiao*” (a Chinese expression indicating banned “heterodox teachings”) list to conduct cruel persecution on them. In April 2000, the MPS sent out documents to demand a nationwide investigation and ban of the CAG. In 2018 and 2019, the CCP issued decrees with clear requirements to set the CAG as the key target of investigation and focus on arresting core leaders, seizing church offerings, and attacking the church both at home and abroad, in order to achieve its goal of “conducting a thorough investigation and ban” of the CAG.

To root out the CAG, the CCP has been carrying out special campaigns to persecute and arrest CAG Christians. In 1996, the CCP launched a crackdown campaign throughout China and arrested a large number of CAG Christians. At the end of 2012, the CCP openly arrested CAG Christians across the country, which caused the arrest of at least 380,380 CAG Christians. In 2014, the CCP mobilized armed police and army troops to carry out a nationwide “Hundred Day Battle” against the CAG. According to the CCP media’s published reports, 1,858 CAG Christians were arrested; and over 16 were persecuted to death. In 2018, the “Operation Thunder” was launched in Liaoning province. At least 700 CAG Christians were arrested and three of them died of persecution. During the coronavirus outbreak in 2020, from January to April, over 581 CAG Christians were arrested.

According to incomplete data, merely from 2011 to date, over 417,353 CAG Christians have been arrested. From the CAG’s establishment in 1991, figures indicate that 166 CAG Christians have been persecuted to death. Many of them died of torture and some have even had their organs harvested. For the cases involving torture and death, we give but one example here each:

On July 23 of 2018, at the side event of the US State Department’s first Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom, CAG Christian Jiang Guimei said, “The police forced me to ‘fly the plane,’ that is, extending both arms forward horizontally while holding a half-squat position, shocked me with a high-voltage electric baton, tied my handcuffs on the heating pipe high above and suspended me for three hours. I was sentenced to two years of re-education through labor on the trumped-up charges of ‘disrupting social order.’”

On January 3 of 2019, the 12th day of her detention, CAG Christian Ren Cuifang, a 30-years-old resident of Karamay city in Xinjiang, was tortured to death. Her family found that “purple marks were around her eyes, a palm-sized, blackish-purple bruise was visible on the left side of her chest, and her legs and arms were covered in round purple and green spots of varying sizes. Her thigh had a burn scar, wrists and heels had bloody lesions, and the nail of her big toe on her left feet had come off.”

**2. The CCP deprives CAG Christians of their rights to judicial protection and fair trial.**

The CCP regards religious groups that grow rapidly beyond its control as threats to its rule and includes them in its “*xie jiao*” list for persecution. Members of those religious groups are deemed as offenders of Article 300 of the Criminal Law and will face prosecution and sentence. According to incomplete statistics, from 2013 to April 2020, over 4,073 CAG Christians were arrested and sentenced simply because of their faith and engagement in regular religious activities such as gathering and spreading gospel. Among them, 2,179 were sentenced to three or more years, 255 seven or more years, 36 ten or more years.

CAG Christians are also deprived of rights to fair trial. In 2018 and 2019, local authorities in Hubei, Henan, and Jilin provinces issued documents demanding that the “supervision and guidance” of attorneys representing religious group members including CAG Christians must be strengthened, that “rights lawyers are absolutely not allowed” to enter a not-guilty plea on their behalf, and that the defense of religious group members’ rights are deemed as attacks on the Chinese government, which must be combated.

When the hearing is held, the court usually does not notify CAG Christians’ family members or allow them to appear in court. CAG Christians are not allowed to hire defense attorneys. When some of them defended themselves, they were beaten by the police. For their appeals filed, the upper-level courts did not accept their cases and their sentences were extended for no reason. Some of them were sentenced without a trial in open court. During their detention or prison time, they were forced to do hard labor without pay. Some of them were injured or seriously ill due to the torture but were deprived of rights to medical care, and were not allowed to be bailed out or serve their sentence outside prison. As a result, their health was declining and some even died. The following are just three cases of them:

On December 15, 2014, the People’s Court in Dafeng city, Jiangsu province held a trial for the case of 11 CAG Christians including Dong Qihong, who defended themselves in the hearing. Due to their defense, their sentences, the longest of which was three years before, were all extended, varying from three years and three months to 12 years.

While CAG Christian Wang Hongli served her sentence in a women’s prison in Yunnan province, she was forced to carry out intensive sewing labor everyday all year round. Prior to her arrest, she had always been in good health. Two years later, her weight dropped from 121 lbs. to 71 lbs. and she suffered from severe myocardial ischemia, a cerebral infarction, and a lung infection. She died on October 1, 2017.

On June 27, 2018, CAG Christian Yu Xiangju was arrested because of her faith by police officers with the Public Security Sub-bureau of Hanbin district, Ankang city, Shaanxi province. The police were well aware that she suffered from serious medical conditions such as dangerously high blood pressure, a heart condition, a cerebral infarction, and critically low potassium levels, but they still forcibly confiscated the medication she carried, which resulted in the worsening of her condition and a recurrence of her cerebral infarction. She became incurable and passed away on March 29, 2019.

**3. The CCP deprives CAG Christians of their basic economic, social, and cultural rights.**

Based on our summary of various cases of human rights violations of CAG Christians, we find that the persecution is conducted in the following ways: The CCP police often conduct illegal search of CAG Christians’ residence by forcibly breaking in to seize and take possession of their personal assets and even confiscate their property and company. When they refuse to give up their faith, many CAG Christians are dismissed in their working unit, expelled from school, and denied access to study abroad. They are discriminated by their work mates and deprived of rights to salary increase, performance evaluation, and position promotion, etc. CAG Christians’ benefits such as housing subsidies, health insurance, pensions, subsistence allowance, and compensation for their land are also canceled. Moreover, the CCP also escalates its repression of CAG Christians’ relatives by depriving their rights to schooling, employment, military service, public positions, and social security. Some CAG Christians’ children committed suicide under the pressure of discrimination and exclusion in school. The Chinese government puts family and social pressure on CAG Christians to force them to renounce their faith. The following are just two cases for example:

In early August 2018, the police officers of Jiangsu province broke into CAG Christian Li Wei’s (pseudonym) house and proceeded to conduct a brazen search, eventually seizing personal and church assets valued over 3,900,000 RMB (about 546,558 USD). The Li Wei couple were sentenced to one year and two years in prison respectively as well as a fine of 30,000 RMB (about 4,184 USD).

Due to her faith in Almighty God, Yan Ping (pseudonym, a teacher), a CAG Christian from Liaocheng city Shandong province, was investigated and designated as a key target for arrest by the police. The leaders of the school she worked at repeatedly pressured her at the request of the Public Security Bureau, in an attempt to force her to renounce her faith. Unable to bear the psychological pressure, she committed suicide by drowning herself in a lake in September 2019.

**4. The CCP deprives CAG Christians of their rights to privacy.**

The CCP has issued multiple documents calling for a thorough investigation on CAG’s organizational structures and members’ personal information. From 1998 to 1999, the MPS issued documents twice to ask all local branches to intensify their investigation on the CAG. Since early 2017, the CCP launched a special household survey in mainland China (“Door-knocking Operation”) and carried out a dragnet investigation on CAG Christians to collect their personal information and build a database. In 2019, decrees were issued by all provincial-level authorities to clearly require more use of Big Data technology and informational means to arrest more CAG Christians in the crackdown campaigns.

To investigate and arrest Christians, the CCP arranges designated personnel in the community and village of provinces and cities in mainland China to investigate door to door and register CAG Christians’ personal information in the name of census and others. Community management personnel, unemployed people and local rogues are employed by the CCP to surveil, follow, and secretly videotape CAG Christians. High-resolution cameras are installed around CAG members’ residence and eavesdropping equipment is secretly installed indoors. Their transportation tools are installed trackers and their phones are wiretapped. Besides, the CCP police often break into CAG Christians’ residence to conduct illegal search, forcibly take pictures and register their bio information (including DNA, Voice sample, Iris scans, and 3D profile). For the released CAG Christians, they are required to keep their cellphones powered on 24 hours a day and be available at all times. They are also forced to wear electronic monitoring bracelet and under the surveillance around the clock, which seriously violates their rights to privacy.

According to incomplete data, merely from 2014 to April 2020, over 54,475 CAG Christians were harassed in various means including being forced to provide their personal and bio information.

There are many cases about the violation of CAG Christians’ rights to privacy. The following are two of them. In December 2012, Gao Yali (pseudonym), a CAG Christian from Gansu province, was arrested by the CCP for spreading gospel and released after 15 days of detention. After her release, the police installed eavesdropping devices at her residence and scanned every room with a detector. The police secretly jumped into the yard of her house by crossing the wall at night and staked out for almost two months. To escape from the CCP’s harassment, the couple had to move to another place. But the police then installed a door with camera and pin code at the entrance to her new house. In the eight years from 2012 to 2020, the CCP police frequently visit them in an attempt to force them to divulge information about their faith and whereabouts, searching their home whenever they want and subjecting them to multiple arrests. Wherever the couple go, they will be followed and monitored.

On August 22, 2015, Luo Jialong, a CAG Christian from Suqian city, Jiangsu province, was arrested for his faith in God by the CCP. Afterward, he was constantly harassed by members of anti-“*xie jiao*” association, security team, and village committee, who required him to register his personal information, closely questioned him about his faith, and forcibly photographed him. From March 25, 2017, to force him to move, eight members of local security team kept a close watch on him for seven days and eight nights consecutively until he moved out of his place.

According to CCP sources, the CCP plans to completely ban the CAG in 2020 and millions of CAG Christians in China are living under a deteriorating situation without religious freedom and facing increasingly great dangers to their rights to survival. Therefore, we sincerely hope the United Nation can focus on CAG Christians’ human rights condition and the persecution they have been suffering.