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THE FACES OF CHINESE PERSECUTION

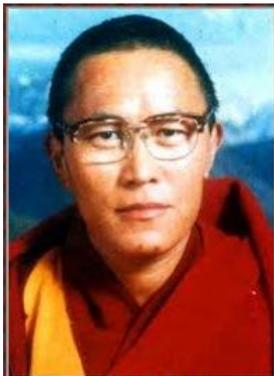
Washington, DC – As the annual U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue begins this week, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) urges President Obama, Secretary Kerry and other U.S. officials to raise during discussions with their Chinese counterparts the cases of prominent religious prisoners and human rights lawyers in China. The continued confinement of thousands of political and religious prisoners in China violates that nation's international obligations and its constitutional protections for human rights and religious freedom

“The Administration needs to be a strong voice for the voiceless and vulnerable in China,” said Katrina Lantos Swett, USCIRF's Chair. “China's imprisoned dissidents stand peacefully for freedom and the rule of law, but Beijing views them as enemies of the state. These continuing human rights abuses fundamentally are at odds with international legal standards that China is obliged to respect. China's continued repression of dissent and restrictions on religious freedom cannot but affect our hopes of finding common ground between our two countries on other important global concerns.”

Dr. Swett concluded, “Because President Xi Jinping's idea of a ‘Chinese Dream’ is a nightmare for those who dare to stand up for human rights, we urge Secretary Kerry to raise prominently the cases of prisoners of conscience.”

USCIRF's 2013 [Annual Report](#) found that poor religious freedom conditions in China have deteriorated significantly, particularly for Tibetan Buddhists and Uighur Muslims. To stem the growth of independent Catholic and Protestant groups, the government has detained and arrested leaders, forcibly closed churches, and selected Catholic bishops without the approval of the Vatican. The Falun Gong and other groups deemed “evil cults” face long-term imprisonments, forced renunciations of faith, and torture in detention.

The prisoners below are some of those featured in USCIRF's 2013 Annual Report. They represent the many prisoners detained in Chinese jails because of their religious activities or religious freedom advocacy.



Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

Current Status: Tenzin Delek Rinpoche was sentenced to death in 2002 on charges of “inciting Splittism.” Following international pressure, his sentence later was commuted to life. Imprisoned by Chinese authorities for eleven years, he is reported to be in poor health.

Background: Tenzin Delek Rinpoche is a Tibetan Buddhist Monk who has sought to reestablish Buddhist practice in Tibetan areas of China. He worked with the Dalai Lama in his exile in India, and established

Buddhist institutions and promoted social activism in Tibet. In 2002, following a bombing in the Chinese city of Chengdu, he and another monk were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the bombings.



Yang Rongli

Current Status: The Chinese authorities have imprisoned Pastor Yang Rongli since 2009 on charges of “gathering people to disturb the public order.”

Background: Along with four other church leaders, Pastor Yang Rongli ran a church in Linfeng-Fushan. Four hundred Chinese police broke up a rally organized by the five church leaders, injuring 30 worshippers. She is scheduled to be released in 2017.



Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the Panchen Lama

Current Status: Missing and incommunicado for the past 16 years, since 1995 when he was six years old.

Background: On May 14, 1995, the Dalai Lama announced from Dharamsala that he had recognized Gendun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, the second most prominent lama of the Gelug sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhists believe that the position of Panchen Lama is passed down by reincarnation. Chinese officials called the selection “illegal and invalid” and took Gedun Choekyi Nyima, then age six, and his parents into custody. Several months later, authorities installed another boy, Gyalsten Norbu, and demanded that the secular and monastic communities accept his legitimacy. The move continues to stir widespread resentment. The United States and other governments have repeatedly have urged China to end restrictions on Gedun Choekyi Nyima and his family and allow international representatives to visit them.



Gao Zhisheng

Current Status: Chinese authorities have held Gao Zhisheng in prison following his disappearance in 2010, accusing him of violating an earlier probation. He reportedly has been tortured since 2005 during his various imprisonments.

Background: A former lawyer and Communist Party member, Gao Zhisheng has worked to provide legal defense to people prosecuted for religious activity. He is a Christian and has defended Christian groups as well as Falun Gong members accused by the Chinese authorities. He has been arrested numerous times since his initial fallout

with the Chinese authorities in 2005. He has been allowed only minimal contact with his family since his last disappearance and imprisonment in 2010.



Bishop James Su Zhimin

Current Status: Bishop Su was arrested in 1996 for unregistered religious activity. He has not been heard from since, despite repeated international inquiries, though he was believed to have been seen in 2003 in a Baoding Hospital.

Background: Bishop Su served as an unregistered Bishop in the city of Baoding in the Chinese province of Hebei. Chinese religious authorities select Bishops over the authority of the Vatican, but Bishop Su recognized only the Catholic Church's authority in this matter. Chinese authorities took him during a religious procession in 1996. Attempts at identifying or memorializing him or holding public events in his honor have met with hostile police action.



Alimujiang Yimiti

Current Status: Alimujiang Yimiti has been imprisoned in China since 2008 under charges of “subversion of the national government and endangering national security,” “suspicion of inciting people to secede from China,” and “illegally providing state secrets to foreigners.” He has been sentenced to 15 years in prison on these charges.

Background: Alimujiang Yimiti is a Uighur Christian businessman who converted from Islam to Christianity and has been actively involved in church activities in Xinjiang. Chinese authorities have accused him of using his business, a food distribution company, as a front to spread Christianity. His sentence has not been reduced on appeal, and in 2013 Chinese prison authorities stopped visits from his family.



Wang Zhiwen

Current Status: Wang Zhiwen has been imprisoned in China since 1999 for his membership in the Falun Gong movement and organizing a protest. He was sentenced to 16 years in prison and four years deprivation of political rights.

Background: Wang Zhiwen is a former engineer in China who became involved in the Falun Gong spiritual movement during the 1990's when the movement was permitted. After the movement was declared to be illegal, Wang was arrested for his alleged

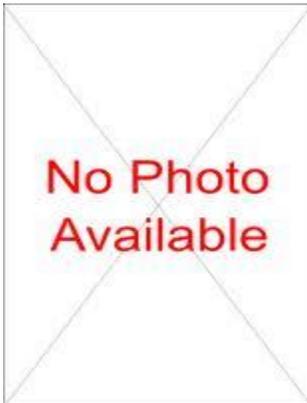
leadership in the Falun Gong, charged with “illegal acquisition of state secrets” and crimes related to organizing a “cult.” He has exchanged some limited communication with his family in the United States, but otherwise has not been heard from since. He is believed to be held in the Tianjin Prison in Tianjin City.



Li Chang

Current Status: Li Chang has been imprisoned in China on charges of “organizing and using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law,” “organizing and using a heretical organization to cause death” and “illegally obtaining state secrets.” He is serving an 18 year sentence and five years deprivation of political rights.

Background: Li Chang is a former Chinese government official who joined the Falun Gong movement during its period of legality in the 1990’s. He is believed to have been a leader of the movement. When Falun Gong was declared to be illegal, he was arrested and is believed to have been forced to confess. He was tried with several other Falun Gong members, including Wang Zhiwen, and sentenced to 25 years imprisonment, later commuted to 18 years. He currently is being held in Tianjin Prison in Tianjin City.



Aminan Momixi

Current Status: Aminan Momixi currently is serving an unknown sentence for “illegally possessing religious materials and subversive historical information.”

Background: On August 1, 2005, authorities in Xinjiang arrested Aminan Momixi, a Uighur Muslim religious instructor, along with 37 of her students. Police arrested her as she was teaching the Koran to students between the ages of seven and twenty. Her students were released after paying fines. She reportedly was denied access to a lawyer and her current whereabouts are unknown.