

We write as an informal coalition of individuals and organizations to call on the Holy See to recognize the serious implications of any agreement with the People's Republic of China. The Chinese Communist Party's continuing war on religion is routinely conducted by means of crimes against humanity. We respectfully suggest that exemplary leadership by the Catholic Church is essential to resolving this tragic situation.

The Chinese authorities have declared their intention to rewrite all religious texts, including the Bible and the Qur'an, to "reflect socialist values" as defined by Chinese Communist Party Secretary Xi Jinping. Not only is the regime committing the ongoing genocide of the Uyghur people, it is also continuing its brutal oppression of Tibetans, Mongolians, citizens of Hong Kong, and all who speak out for human rights including the right of religious believers to practice their faith.

On September 26, 2018 Pope Francis sent a message to the Catholics of China, saying that the Church's aim "in the dialogue with civil authorities is that of 'building a relationship based on mutual respect and deeper understanding'".

While the People's Republic of China has never been truly open to religious practice, in the two years since this message the attitude of authorities in China toward religious freedom has deteriorated significantly. The Beijing regime has no interest in a genuine dialogue with religious believers, and it is painfully apparent that the regime has no respect for the sanctity of any human life. The regime not only persecutes house-church Protestant Christians and "underground" (i.e. faithful) Catholics but imprisons millions of Uyghur Muslims in concentration camps and has been credibly accused of singling out prisoners of conscience who are Falun Gong practitioners for organ harvesting prior to execution.

A decision by the Holy See to regularize the status of the Catholic Church in China by giving official recognition to the government-established and government-controlled "Catholic Patriotic Association" would not only exacerbate the hardships of the Catholic clergy and believers who have courageously resisted the government's pressure to join this organization, but would also increase the suffering of other persecuted religious believers by allowing the regime to tout the agreement as a seal of approval for the regime's approach to religion.

We therefore implore the Holy See not to cede the Beijing government any control over the Church in China. We respectfully request that the Holy See not renew its agreement with the People's Republic of China at least until such time as the authorities discontinue their campaign of genocide, crimes against humanity, and other grave human rights violations against religious believers.

With great concern,

The International Religious Freedom Roundtable

Organizations

1. Alberta Uyghur Association
2. Association for the Advancement of Freedom of Religion or Belief in Vietnam (AAFoRB-VN)
3. Athenai Institute
4. Australian Uyghur Association
5. Australian Uyghur Tangritagh Women's Association
6. Austria Uyghur Association
7. Belgium Uyghur Association
8. Boat People SOS
9. Buddhist Solidarity Association
10. Build Human Rights for Montagnards
11. Campaign for Uyghurs
12. Campaign to Abolish Torture in Vietnam
13. Canadians in Support of Refugees in Dire Need (CSRDN)
14. China Against the Death Penalty
15. China Aid
16. Christian Freedom International
17. Christian Medical & Dental Associations
18. The Church of Almighty God
19. Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
20. Citizen Power Initiatives for China-公民力量
21. Coalition to Abolish Modern-day Slavery in Asia (CAMSA)
22. Committee for Religious Freedom in Vietnam
23. Committee on the Present Danger: China
24. Con Dau Parishioners Association
25. Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberte de Conscience
26. Dutch Uyghur Human Rights Foundation
27. East Turkistan Association of Canada
28. East Turkistan Immigrants Association
29. East Turkistan National Awakening Movement
30. East Turkistan Union in Europe
31. Faith & Liberty D.C.
32. Free Uyghur Student Coalition
33. Freedom2Care
34. GPF Kurdistan
35. Humanitarian China
36. Institute of China Studies (ICS)
37. International Christian Concern
38. International Christian Foundation for Democracy
39. International Support for Uyghurs
40. Japan Uyghur Association
41. Jubilee Campaign USA

42. Justice for Uyghurs
43. Keep Taiwan Free
44. The Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty
45. Minaret Foundation
46. Minh Van Foundation
47. Montagnards Stand for Justice
48. Muslims for Progressive Values
49. The Nation's Mosque
50. Patmos Institute
51. Save the Persecuted Christians
52. South Asia Minorities Alliance Foundation
53. Students for a Free Tibet
54. Sydney Uyghur Community
55. United Macedonian Diaspora
56. Uyghur Academy
57. Uyghur Academy Australia
58. Uyghur Academy USA
59. Uyghur Academy Europe
60. Uyghur American Association
61. Uyghur Association of Victoria, Australia
62. Uyghur Freedom Forum
63. Uyghur Human Rights Project
64. Uyghur Projects Foundation
65. Uyghur Rally
66. Vancouver Uyghur Association
67. Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation
68. Vietnam Coalition Against Torture
69. Vietnamese Women for Human Rights
70. World Uyghur Congress

Individuals

1. Teng Biao, Human Rights Scholar and Lawyer
2. Dr. William Devlin, CEO, Redeem
3. David A. Keene, Editor-at-Large, The Washington Times
4. Imam Dr. Talib M. Shareef, USAF-Retired
5. Fr. Joseph K. Grieboski, Senior Fellow, The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute
6. Greg Mitchell, Chair, International Religious Freedom Forum
7. Leigh Cummins, USA
8. Chaplain Rev. Nguyen
9. Hailong Liu, China
10. Kirsten Barak, Madison, MS, USA
11. John Csukás, United States of America

12. Hon. David Kilgour, J.D., Canada
13. Tanaaz Mistry, Singapore
14. Fiza Farheen, India
15. Md Azhar, India
16. Elizabeth M. Wu, United States
17. Roma Hashime, United Kingdom
18. Yosra Kamel, Egypt
19. Rija Qureshi, United States
20. Ashraf Kapoor, India
21. Isma Zafar, United Kingdom
22. Mahmut Anwar, Australia
23. Aliya Abdukadir, Australia
24. Daniela Wong, Panama
25. Amreen Shaikh, India
26. Roha Abrar, Canada
27. Mevlana Kreka, Switzerland
28. Rebecca Azad, United Kingdom
29. Michelle Seul-Ahmed, United Kingdom
30. Mukhshif Sharik, United States of America
31. Hamid Gharagozloo, International Organization to Preserve Human Rights
32. Luis Lopez, United States of America
33. Michael Hartman, United States of America
34. Mohammad Rahman, United Kingdom
35. Maheen Shakil,
36. Sonu Adal Khan, India
37. Georgia Allen from Belfast4Uyghurs, Northern Ireland
38. Alina Hasan, United States
39. Elizabeth Yore, Yore Children
40. Professor Thomas Kellenberg, Executive Director at Notre Dame Washington Program, United States of America
41. David Anderson, M.P. Canada (retired), Founder and Believer freetobelieve.ca
42. Frank J. Gaffney, President, Save the Persecuted Christians
43. Farahnaz Ispahani, Senior Fellow, Religious Freedom Institute Washington, DC
44. Scott Morgan, United States of America
45. Dan Tran, Chair of All Charitable Foundation, United States of America
46. Paul Nguyen, Catholic, United States of America
47. Peter Trinh, Former Catholic Seminarian and victim of persecution in Vietnam, United States of America
48. Tien Nguyen, United States of America
49. Hien T Ngo, Catholic, Chair Committee for Religious Freedom in Vietnam, United States of America
50. Minh V Nguyen, United States of America
51. Kyle Olbert, United States of America

52. Trang Khanh Tran, United States of America
53. Tuan Nguyen, Catholic, Catholic, United States of America
54. Van Ngo, Catholic, United States of America
55. Pastor A Ga, Former Victim of Religious Persecution in Vietnam
56. Julie Millsap, United States of America
57. Gail Helt, United States of America
58. Stuart Morgan, Australia
59. Dara Davigne, United States of America
60. Reverend Mario Felix Leonart Barroso of the Patmos Institute
61. Matthew Wiszowaty, United States of America
62. Aasiya Shafeek, India
63. Rabbi David Rosen, International Co-President, Religions for Peace, Jerusalem.