

Children Among 100 Christians Arrested at China Church

More than 200 police raided a house church on Sunday, eyewitnesses told International Christian Concern. More than 100 church members, including children, were arrested during the Sunday service in Foshan City, in China's Guangdong Province. As of Monday evening, more than 24 hours later, 30 parishioners still remained in police custody.

"We don't know exactly why they raided our church," a local believer told ICC during an interview. "The government does not want us to get together and worship as a church."

Local believers told ICC that the church was raided without any warning. The police left behind a notice stating that the church members were detained for conducting an "illegal gathering."

All house churches in China are considered "illegal gatherings" and are frowned upon by the government. Any believers meeting together to practice their faith in house churches risk being arrested. ICC has learned that though 30 parishioners remain in police custody, most church members, including the children, were detained for 10 to 20 hours and then released.

The Mount Olivet Church of Foshan City, a house church with 170 members and over 20 years' history, is located in Foshan City of Guangdong Province. Foshan City is one of the most economically prosperous cities in Guangdong province where Deng Xiaoping's open-door policy was first implemented in southern China.

"It is unbelievable that local authorities arrested over 100 church members, including children, in Foshan City," noted Sooyoung Kim, ICC's regional manager for Southeast Asia. "Even

though most people have been released, the experience has been traumatizing. ICC urges local authorities in Guangdong Province to respect its citizens' rights to religious freedom, that the government of China says are upheld, and free these innocent Christians as soon as possible."

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