

China Arrests Christian Church Leaders in Shocking Faith Crackdown

Chinese authorities have formally arrested 18 church leaders from Zion Church, one of the largest underground Christian networks in the country. The action comes one month after 30 members of the church were detained, marking the most aggressive assault on unregistered Christian congregations in over 40 years.

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Zion Church founder Pastor Jin Mingri, also known as Ezra Jin, was inspired to embrace Christianity after witnessing the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. He founded Zion Church in 2007, leaving the state-controlled Protestant church system. Since then, the house church network has grown to serve 10,000 worshippers across 40 cities. Authorities shut down the church's Beijing building in 2018, prompting Jin to briefly relocate his family to the United States for safety.

The latest crackdown follows new regulations adopted by China in September 2025, banning online preaching and foreign religious collaboration. These sweeping rules have provided justification for detaining Christian leaders operating outside the control of the Chinese Communist Party.

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The arrested Zion Church leaders face charges of “illegally using information networks,” according to ChinaAid founder Bob Fu. The detainees, currently held in Beihai, could face up to three years in prison. Nine individuals have been released on bail, including Pastor Jin’s daughter, Grace, who expressed concern about the conditions and lack of legal access for those still in custody.

Jin’s wife, Liu, who lives in the United States, described her husband as a man committed to raising up Christian leaders in a hostile environment. “He poured out his personal resources to support and nurture those willing to serve,” she said.

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This aggressive move underscores China’s growing intolerance toward Christianity outside state control. While 44 million believers worship in sanctioned churches, tens of millions more belong to underground “house churches” now facing severe persecution under the latest wave of repression.

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