

China Hasn't Seen Persecution Like This Since Mao Took Power

Top U.S. trade negotiators are coming off an important meeting with China officials late last week, and the Chinese special envoy charged with negotiating the trade deal is expected to arrive in America this week. Likewise, the Trump administration is claiming victory after China agreed to “treat all variants of the powerful opioid fentanyl as controlled substances,” which makes good on a promise President Xi Jinping made to President Donald Trump late last year.

While both matters are important, Save the Persecuted Christians (STPC), which advocates on behalf of 300 million Christians facing heavy persecution worldwide, wants the focus to also remain on how China treats those who believe in Jesus Christ.

For instance, The Christian Post reported last week that an influential house church in Beijing was “shut down after 20 government and police officials raided Bible classes at two different locations, changed the locks and demanded the 1,000 congregants vow never to worship as a congregation again.” Between 20 and 30 Christians were detained for several hours by police on March 23 after the raid.

Even before the crackdown, STPC Advisory Board member Bob Fu of China Aid had previously warned Congress that religious freedom in China has reached the “worst level that has not been seen since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution by Chairman Mao [Zedong] in the 1960s.”

Additionally, Fu reported that the first commandment is being removed from the list of 10 in Bibles printed in China, and

that a five-year plan is in place to make Christianity more compatible with socialism. That plan, he says, features a “rewrite” of the Bible to “reflect Chinese ethics of Confucianism and socialism.” In China, it is commonplace for Bibles to be burned, churches closed and crosses destroyed, The Christian Post has also reported.

Fu also spoke on the topic of religious freedom in China as part of a Heritage Foundation panel discussion in February. [Read more here.](#)

“China’s Constitution technically claims to offer religious freedom, but all religious expression and worship is strictly regulated and monitored by the state,” added Dede Laugesen, executive director of Save the Persecuted Christians. “It is becoming increasingly difficult for Christians to gather and worship freely in China, and they live in fear of retribution, persecution or worse—simply for having faith in Jesus Christ. Save the Persecuted Christians supports our Chinese brothers and sisters in Christ, and we call on Christians across America to do the same.”

China ranks as No. 27 on the 2019 World Watch List for “very high” levels of persecution according to Open Doors USA, which tracks Christian persecution worldwide. The spot is a significant jump from the No. 43 ranking in 2018. “The management of religious affairs in China lies with the Communist Party now, not just with the government,” Open Doors reports. “And Christians are intensely and increasingly feeling this shift and fear of Christian persecution. Since the Communist Party took over, the implementation of the regulations on religion, the treatment of religious groups, especially Christians, became much harsher across the country.”

Ongoing persecution of Christians in China is illustrated through Save the Persecuted Christians’ traveling exhibit called “The People of the Cross,” which displays heartbreaking

photos and facts about several countries where Christian persecution is commonplace. Specifically, the China banner details how Christians are tracked, as well as the ways Communists are increasingly hostile to people of faith.

“The Communist Party represses its citizens, imprisons human rights lawyers and pastors, demolishes churches and has engaged in large-scale forced abortions and organ harvesting,” the banner reads. “China forbids religious education, collects DNA and biometric data from religious believers, and tortures and kills prisoners of conscience, including many Christians.

Banners in “The People of the Cross” exhibit detail the tragedy that children, women, the elderly and Christians in general experience when persecuted in countries around the world. Each of 24 banners feature images, facts and quotes from recent news stories about the persecution of Christians in multiple countries, such as North Korea, where Christians are tortured or worse; Syria, where Christian girls and women have been sold into sex slavery; East Africa, where terrorists are exterminating Christians with genocidal intent and Nigeria, where two of the world’s most violent terrorist groups surround and slaughter entire villages of Christians. A majority of the countries highlighted in the banners are high on the 2019 World Watch List from Open Doors USA.

The exhibit premiered in July 2018 at the U.S. Capitol as a side event to the first-ever U.S. Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. Since then, it has toured the United States, reaching tens of thousands. “The People of the Cross” exhibit is available for churches, public venues and special events. To learn more about hosting “The People of the Cross,” contact Save the Persecuted Christians or visit the website, where panels are available to view online.

The mission of Save the Persecuted Christians is to save lives and save souls by holding the persecutors accountable and creating costs for their crimes against humanity. To that end,

it will disseminate actionable information about the magnitude of such crimes and bring to bear a movement of concerned Americans determined to hold persecutors accountable for such crimes and create real costs for perpetrating them against those who follow Jesus.

According to Aid to the Church in Need, which released its biannual report on Religious Freedom in the World in November, over 300 million Christians experience persecution. According to Open Doors USA World Watch List, 245 million Christians are victims of high to extreme levels of persecution (i.e., torture, rape, sex-slavery, expulsion, murder and genocide), an increase of 14 percent over 2018. Open Doors also estimates 1 in 9 of the world's Christians experience persecution and that every month: 345 Christians are killed, often in public and without regard to gender or age; 219 Christians are abducted and imprisoned indefinitely without trial; and 106 churches are demolished.

Because most of these crimes are not covered in the media, Save the Persecuted Christians developed a dedicated news aggregator—to capture current instances of persecution and to provide readers an easy way to share these heartbreaking stories with others.

With so much of the world's Christian population being attacked, imprisoned and/or exiled for their beliefs, such as believers in China, the need has never been greater for the sort of grassroots campaign STPC's SaveUs Movement is working to foster. Its efforts are modeled after a miraculously successful one that helped free another population suffering from heavy persecution—Soviet Jews—by penalizing those in the Kremlin responsible for such repression. Through this movement, Save the Persecuted Christians endeavors to provide American policymakers with the popular support they need to effect real change worldwide and alleviate systemically the suffering being experienced by so many of those following Christ.