

China Offers Cash Reward for Turning in Christians

All eyes are on the upcoming meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and People's Republic of China President Xi Jinping. But so much more is at stake beyond trade, says Save the Persecuted Christians, which advocates on behalf of 300 million Christians facing heavy persecution worldwide.

Thousands of Chinese Christians who suffer in silence and live in danger daily at the hands of a communist government in China must also remain at the forefront.

"Christians in China have a price on their head," said Dede Laugesen, executive director of Save the Persecuted Christians. "The Chinese government routinely commits atrocities against Christian believers in China. As part of their 'Return to Zero' campaign, which has been launched to eradicate house churches from China, the CPC has offered a cash reward to those who turn in members of a vast network of underground churches and lead authorities to unofficial places of worship. These cash incentives are also part of a renewed nationwide effort to bring all religious groups under the control of the Communist Party. Additionally, large churches have been shuttered, and pastors are being thrown in prison. China's government is attacking its own people for their faith. While Americans focus on trade wars, we must not turn a blind eye to the war being waged against Chinese Christians."

In May, Save the Persecuted Christians and 45 other civil society leaders representing Christians, Muslims, Falun Gong practitioners, Buddhists and other persecuted faith communities signed a joint letter asking prominent law firm Squire Patton Boggs, LLP, to stop promoting the interests of Communist China—as well as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Palestinian Authority and Cameroon—known for gross violations

of human rights and oppression of religious freedoms. More than 5,000 on Capitol Hill, including representatives, senators, their staff and others, have also received the letter and have been informed about the accountability campaign to implore the law firm to stop its representation of these nations.

“We write to you as advocates for religious freedom out of a shared concern that foreign governments represented by your firm are among the world’s most aggressive persecutors of people of faith,” the letter to Squire Patton Boggs read. “It is deeply troubling to us that your prestigious firm and the many good people it employs are currently associated with and providing legal counsel, representation and other services to such nations.”

For believers in China and around the world, Save the Persecuted Christians seeks to bring awareness about targeted Christians through the “The People of the Cross” exhibit, a series of vertical traveling banners that details Christian persecution in various countries around the world.

The exhibit’s banners feature images, facts and quotes from recent news stories about the persecution of Christians in multiple countries, such as China, where Communists are increasingly hostile to people of faith and churches are demolished; North Korea, where Christians are tortured or worse; Syria, where Christian girls and women have been sold into sex slavery; and Nigeria and East Africa, where terrorists are exterminating Christians with genocidal intent. A majority of the countries highlighted in the banners are high on Open Doors’ 2019 World Watch List.

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, and will be featured at the Ministerial again next month. The exhibit 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% 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.