

China Raid Busts Korean Bible Teacher

Chinese police are holding a South Korean Bible instructor and his wife following a raid on an underground Protestant church, an activist group said Wednesday, as the government pressures Christians worshiping outside the Communist-controlled church.

The instructor, whose Chinese name was given as Jin Yongzhe, was detained Tuesday along with dozens of other Christians during a police assault on a three-floor church building in the central province of Henan's Weishi county, the China Aid Association said.

The church building was searched and thousands of dollars worth of property seized during the raid, which the association said targeted a religious education seminar being held there.

After being held overnight, 49 Chinese citizens and two other South Korean pastors were released, association founder Bob Fu said. He added that he understood the South Koreans had been expelled from China, but South Korea's Foreign Ministry said it had no information to release on the matter.

Fu said Jin and his Chinese wife, Li Sha, had likely been charged with the minor crime of illegal assembly.

South Korean church groups have long maintained close ties with Chinese believers, often operating clandestinely because of Chinese laws against proselytizing. The practice has become so common that South Korean citizens traveling to China have reported having been asked to sign pledges not to engage in missionary or other proscribed religious activity, Fu said.

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