

JOINT STATEMENT:

FAITH UNDER SIEGE

Confronting Religious Persecution and Oppression in China

Washington, D.C. – September 30, 2025

The undersigned organizations gathered in Washington, D.C., on September 30, 2025, convening expert witnesses and survivors to confront the People's Republic of China's (PRC) relentless persecution of faith communities and suppression of religious belief.

This widespread repression stems from the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) obsessive pursuit of power and control. The CCP's hostility toward religion manifests in continuous, often brutal, violations of religious freedom. The scale of this oppression is unparalleled—the CCP is the largest perpetrator of religious persecution in the world today.

And yet, religious communities in the PRC have demonstrated remarkable and inspiring resilience—from surviving the ideological destruction of the Mao Zedong era to enduring the high-tech, deeply invasive repression under Xi Jinping. Despite sustained efforts to co-opt or crush them, these faiths persist and remain vital to the lives of millions under CCP rule.

The international community, including the United States government, the United Nations, and others, has documented the CCP's abuses in detail. The regime systematically destroys places of worship, abducts and detains hundreds of thousands simply for practicing their faith, and demands that all religious institutions pledge loyalty to the CCP above their beliefs, their conscience, and even the law.

In Tibet, the CCP—despite being atheist—claims authority over religious reincarnations, disappeared the 11th Panchen Lama at age six, and systematically works to Sinicize Tibetan religion, culture, and language in order to erase Tibetan identity. In East Turkistan, it has criminalized Islamic practice, including daily prayer and fasting during Ramadan, imprisoning over a million Uyghurs for actions as simple as praying or owning holy texts. In Hong Kong, faith-based schools are now legally required to deliver “national security education” and propagate socialist values—even when they contradict their religious teachings—and authorities have targeted persons of faith by jailing them and restricting their movements. In mainland China, Christian ministers are imprisoned for refusing to conform to CCP ideology, and public access to the Bible is banned. Falun Gong practitioners face mass detention, torture, and forced organ harvesting. These are only a fraction of the crimes committed against religious believers over the CCP's 75-year rule—and under General Secretary Xi Jinping conditions are only worsening.

While believers inside the PRC continue to endure these abuses, many have been forced to flee and now play a crucial role in preserving their faiths abroad—practicing freely in ways their brothers and sisters back home cannot. But the CCP's repression does not stop at its borders. It targets these exiled communities through transnational repression: imprisoning their family members still in China, pressuring host governments to deport or silence activists, and surveilling or intimidating dissidents worldwide. The personal cost of speaking out against the CCP is high.

In response, the undersigned organizations convened a conference in Washington, D.C., titled *Faith Under Siege: Confronting Religious Persecution and Oppression in China*. The goal: to raise public awareness and mobilize action among religious leaders, civil society, the media, and governments in democratic nations.

We call on religious leaders to speak out for those in the PRC who have been denied a voice. We urge Members of Congress and the administration to stand with persecuted faith communities and boldly challenge Beijing to uphold religious freedom. We call on journalists to investigate these abuses—and when Chinese authorities obstruct or intimidate them, to shine a light on that interference. We urge international institutions, including the United Nations, to confront and condemn these human rights violations. And we call on individuals everywhere to educate themselves and stand in solidarity with those who risk everything to practice their faith.

More than 17 percent of the world's population lives under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party. That means nearly one in five people globally are subjected to the CCP's systematic assault on religion. We, the undersigned, call on all who value freedom of belief to stand with the oppressed. In defending the rights of those within the PRC, we help safeguard the freedom of conscience and of faith for all people, everywhere.

International Republican Institute (IRI)

Center for Uyghur Studies

Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong (CFHK) Foundation

International Campaign for Tibet (ICT)

International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summit

Luke Alliance

Office of Tibet

Uyghur American Association