

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

- 1. Please provide up to date information on the situation of unregistered Christian churches in Jilin.**
- 2. Please provide independent non-Christian sources detailing the mass arrests which are said to have taken place in Jilin during 2005.**
- 3. Please provide any other material on unregistered Christian Churches in Jilin dated after 2005.**
- 4. Please provide information on a campaign of arrest in Jilin in the mid 1990s, especially 1995-1996.**

RESPONSE

Background: Statistics on Christians in Jilin

In a summary on Christianity in Jilin Province, Tony Lambert has indicated that in “2000 there were 350,000 Protestants meeting in 1,900 registered churches and meetings-points...over 100 pastors and elders and 1,134 voluntary church workers...At least 35,000 Korean Christians meet in Yanbian in forty-five churches and over 200 registered meeting points...There are also about 80,000 Roman Catholics in the province” (Lambert, Tony 2006, *China’s Christian Millions*, OMF Publications, UK, pp.260-261 – Attachment 1).

- 1. Please provide up to date information on the situation of unregistered Christian churches in Jilin.**
- 2. Please provide independent non-Christian sources detailing the mass arrests which are said to have taken place in Jilin during 2005.**

No non-Christian sources were found which reported on the May 2005 events in Jilin Province independent of the report issued by the China Aid Association on 9 June 2005 (China Aid Association 2005, 'Massive, Coordinated Crackdown on House Churches Christians in China's Jilin Province', 9 June <http://chinaaid.org/2005/06/09/massive-coordinated-crackdown-on-house-churches-christians-in-chinas-jilin-province/> – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 2; the other prominent Christian organisation to report on the Jilin event (with no source acknowledged) is the UK based Christian Solidarity Worldwide: Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2005, 'China: Current Developments and Cases of Concern', November, p.7 <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/country.asp?s=id&urn=China> – Accessed 15 October 2008 – Attachment 3; *Agence France Presse* includes reference to the China Aid Association in its brief reporting of the Jilin events: 'China expanding crackdown on underground Christian churches: rights group' 2005, *Agence France Presse*, 29 June – Attachment 4).

Human Rights Watch (HRW) did include the May 2005 events in a March 2006 report *China: A Year after New Regulations, Religious Rights Still Restricted*:

An unusual series of coordinated raids in May 2005 at 100 locales netted some 600 believers in Jilin province in what is believed to have been an attempt at shutting down growing house church influence on an academic community. A few key house church leaders were detained to ensure their attendance at "study sessions" where they would be subjected to attempts to force them to affiliate with the "Three-Self Patriotic Movement," the official umbrella organization for Protestants. Most of those detained – one gathering involved some 100 pastors; another drew 50 participants from 20 provinces and cities – were released following payment of fines (Human Rights Watch 2006, 'China: A Year after New Regulations, Religious Rights Still Restricted', 1 March http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/03/01/china12740_txt.htm – Accessed 17 March 2006 – Attachment 5).

The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada cited this Human Rights Watch report and that by Christian Solidarity Worldwide (cited above in Attachment 3) for the Jilin events, in research covering raids on Protestant house churches between 2005 and 2007 (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *CHN102492.E – China: Reports of raids on Protestant house churches; frequency and location of raids (2005 – 2007)*, 22 June – Attachment 6).

The President of China Aid Association, Mr Bob Fu, referred to his access to information on Christians in China in an article on the Jilin events for the *Christian World Magazine*, published on 2 July 2005:

Along the road to new freedom, Chinese house-church Christians in northeastern Jilin Province have collided with a communist regime that may still be talking in doublespeak. Government officials proclaimed new freedom for China's religious believers in March, with an unprecedented law that granted rights to religious adherents—even underground house-church worshippers—if they conformed to certain registration requirements. But 600 Christians saw little of that new liberty when police rounded them up and ferried them to detention centers in May.

According to the Texas-based China Aid Association, the sweep against approximately 100 house churches began May 22, on a Sunday morning when authorities knew Christians would congregate for worship.

The raids continued over the next week, targeting homes in Jilin's provincial capital, Changchun. Officials released most of those arrested within two days after detaining and questioning them, but about 100 remain in custody—among them local university professors. Christian influences are strong in Jilin, a province that borders North Korea, where a large group of Korean émigrés have churches. The professors were known to conduct secret Bible study groups, and several university students were also in the group taken into custody. What grabbed the authorities' attention, explained China Aid President Bob Fu, was their bold advertisement of faith. "These university students were actively engaging in evangelism, outreaching to the campus," he said. "They were found distributing gospel tracts."

By the end of June, Mr. Fu was still trying to scavenge information about where authorities were holding the remaining Changchun Christians, and how authorities were treating them. **Mr. Fu, a former house-church leader himself, had to flee to the United States in 1996. He maintains a reliable network of contacts among house churches and even some connections to the Communist Party, though the Chinese government attempts to stymie his advocacy efforts** (Abraham, P. 2005, 'Freedom to Conform', *World Magazine*, 2 July, vol. 20, no. 26, <http://www.worldmag.com/articles/10795> – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 7).

The US State Department included reference to the Jilin events in its *International Religious Freedom Report 2005*: "In May 2005, nearly 500 house Christians reportedly were detained at meetings in Jilin Province. The vast majority was released within a few weeks, but up to 100 reportedly remained detained" (US State Department 2005, *International Religious Freedom Report 2005 – China*, 8 November, 'Abuses of Religious Freedom', – Attachment 8).

3. Please provide independent non-Christian sources detailing the mass arrests which are said to have taken place in Jilin during 2005.

The US Congressional-Executive Commission's *Annual Report* on China (released on 31 October 2008) refers to the closure of churches in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin province with links to South Koreans or other foreign nationals:

The central government ordered provincial religious affairs bureaus to investigate religious communities for signs of involvement with foreign co-religionists. Churches in the Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in Jilin province that were found to have ties to South Koreans or other foreign nationals were shut down (Congressional-Executive Commission on China 2008, *Annual Report 2008*, 31 October, p.17 http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_house_hearings&docid=f:45233.pdf – Accessed 12 November 2008 – Attachment 9).

The US Department of State's *International Religious Freedom Report 2008* on China refers to a 4 May 2008 raid on the Loyalty Christian Church in Yanji operated by Pastor Hao Yujie.

The Government also arrested some individuals on charges of illegal proselytism.

On May 4, 2008, government officials raided the Loyalty Christian Church of Yanji led by Pastor Hao Yujie, according to an overseas NGO. Authorities took Hao for questioning and reportedly beat her in custody. The Government charged her with organizing an illegal religious gathering in violation of Article 33 of the "Regulations on Religious Affairs of Jilin Province." Citing Article 50 of "Regulations on Religious Affairs of Jilin Province," the Government abolished the Loyalty Christian Church of Yanji and ordered Hao to cease her

proselytizing activities (US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2008 – China*, 19 September, ‘Section II: Abuses of Religious Freedom’ – Attachment 10).

A copy of the ‘Advance Notice of Administrative Penalty’ allegedly issued to Pastor Hao Yujie by the Yanji Municipal Bureau for Ethnic Religious Affairs is provided on the China Aid Association’s website in Chinese and English translation (China Aid Association 2008, ‘Advance Notice of Administrative Penalty against pastor Hao Yujie’, 22 May <http://chinaaid.org/2008/05/22/advance-notice-of-administrative-penalty-against-pastor-hao-yujie/> – Accessed 27 November 2008 – Attachment 11).

The 2007 *Annual Report on Persecution of Chinese House Churches by Province*, published by the China Aid Association contains the following table summarising events in Jilin Province between January and December 2006:

Persecution by Province in China (Jilin)

Date	Description	Punishment	Arrests
1-4	A house church in Dehui ...attacked, 40 arrested	Interrogation	40
7-14	A Christian couple ...in Jilin City ...interrogated for 72 hours	Detention	2
10-26	A house church in Jilin City... destroyed	Church destroyed	

Summary: 1 church destroyed, 1 church attacked, 42 arrested, 2 detained (Source: China Aid Association 2007, *Annual Report on Persecution of Chinese House Churches by Province: From January 2006 to December 2006*, January, p.10 http://chinaaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2006_persecution_report.pdf – Accessed 12 June 2007 – Attachment 12).

The China Aid Association website carries separate stories on the above which provide more details on each of the three events in Jilin:

- House church in Dehui: China Aid Association 2006, ‘House Churches in Beijing and Jilin Raided; Public Security Denied Jailed Beijing Pastor to Meet with his Mother; Five Detained Church Leaders in Xinjiang Released’, 16 January <http://chinaaid.org/2006/01/16/house-churches-in-beijing-and-jilin-raided-public-security-denied-jailed-beijing-pastor-to-meet-with-his-mother-five-detained-church-leaders-in-xinjiang-released/> – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 13.
- Interrogation and detention of Christian couple in Jilin city: China Aid Association 2006, ‘19 House Church Leaders Arrested in Henan, Sichuan and Jilin ; House Churches Forced to Close (with Photo of Detention paper by Langzhong City PSB, Sichuan province)’, 14 July <http://chinaaid.org/2006/07/14/19-house-church-leaders-arrested-in-henan-sichuan-and-jilin-house-churches-forced-to-close/> – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 14.
- House church destroyed in Jilin City: China Aid Association 2006, ‘Church building demolished forcefully in Jilin, furniture inside destroyed’, 1 November <http://chinaaid.org/2006/11/01/church-building-demolished-forcefully-in-jilin-furniture-inside-destroyed/> – Accessed 26 November 2008 – Attachment 15.

4. Please provide information on a campaign of arrest in Jilin in the mid 1990s, especially 1995-1996.

No information was found in sources consulted on a campaign of arrests in Jilin in the mid 1990s, especially over 1995 and 1996. *RRT Research Response CHN30803* examined the treatment of Christians in China between 1995 and 1996 (RRT Country Research 2006, *RRT Research Response CHN30803*, 18 October – Attachment 16). This response includes the following reference to the arrest and detention in Jilin of Catholic lay persons and clergy in 2005, taken from Human Rights Watch's *World Report 1996*:

Restrictions surrounding religious practice continued during 1995, and the official drive to register and subject to lay control all congregations, including the smallest family churches, escalated. Harsh crackdowns came in areas where foreigners were active proselytizers and trainers of lay leaders, where evidence of indigenous networks of unofficial churches surfaced, where evangelists were especially active, and where “underground” church members challenged the authorities through public worship. In April, during the Easter season, more than forty Catholics were detained in Jiangxi Province. Most were released, but several were sentenced to terms ranging between two and five years. **At the end of October, Catholic lay persons and clergy arrested between February and June in Hebei, Inner Mongolia, and Jilin Provinces, remained in detention.** But the more usual pattern during 1995 was to detain and physically abuse Catholics and Protestants until their families, the local church community or foreign evangelical organizations paid onerous fines. During a gathering of some 500-600 Protestants in Jiangsu Province in late January or early February, Protestant leaders from the province and from Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province were detained, severely beaten, heavily fined, and released. More than 300 were detained in Yingshang County, Anhui Province, at the end of May (Human Rights Watch 1995, *World Report 1996 – China and Tibet*, December – Attachment 17).

The December 1995 Human Rights Watch (Asia) report, *China: Religious Persecution Persists*, contains details of the arrest and detention of Catholics in or from Jilin:

Curtailing Catholic Networks

In a move to limit contact among underground bishops, Father Wei Jingyi, the thirty-six-year-old secretary-general of the Bishops' Conference organized by the underground church in November 1989, was detained on January 20, 1994, the day after he visited Bishop Su Zhimin in Baoding, Hebei. He had traveled there from **Changchun in Jilin Province** and was on his way to see Bishop Shi Enxiang in Yixian when he was ambushed. Father Wei, originally from Qiqihar, Heilongjiang, was released from Xushui county detention center on April 26. He had earlier served a three-year sentence in connection with the formation of the conference.

...Four nuns from the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Cheng Xiujuan, Chen Suxiang, Zhang Xiaofang, and Xiao Lixin, were arrested in **Jilin Province** on June 16, 1995. As of August 29 they were still in detention (Human Rights Watch – Asia, 1995, *China: Religious Persecution Persists*, December, vol.7, no.16, UNHCR website <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,HRW,,CHN,,3ae6a84f10,0.html> – Accessed 27 November 2008 – Attachment 18).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

United Nations (UN)

UNHCR website <http://www.unhcr.org/>

Non-Government Organisations

China Aid Association website <http://chinaaid.org/>

Christian Solidarity Worldwide website <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/>

International News & Politics

World Magazine <http://www.worldmag.com/>

Search Engines

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Research & Information database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. Lambert, Tony 2006, *China's Christian Millions*, OMF Publications, UK, pp. 232 - 277.
2. China Aid Association 2005, 'Massive, Coordinated Crackdown on House Churches Christians in China's Jilin Province', 9 June <http://chinaaid.org/2005/06/09/massive-coordinated-crackdown-on-house-churches-christians-in-chinas-jilin-province/> – Accessed 26 November 2008.
3. Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2005, 'China: Current Developments and Cases of Concern' November <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/country.asp?s=id&urn=China> – Accessed 15 October 2008.
4. 'China expanding crackdown on underground Christian churches: rights group' 2005, *Agence France Presse*, 29 June. (FACTIVA)
5. Human Rights Watch 2006, 'China: A Year after New Regulations, Religious Rights Still Restricted', 1 March http://hrw.org/english/docs/2006/03/01/china12740_txt.htm – Accessed 17 March 2006.
6. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *CHN102492.E – China: Reports of raids on Protestant house churches; frequency and location of raids (2005 – 2007)*, 22 June.
7. Abraham, P. 2005, 'Freedom to Conform', *World Magazine*, 2 July, vol. 20, no. 26, <http://www.worldmag.com/articles/10795> – Accessed 26 November 2008.

8. US State Department 2005, *International Religious Freedom Report 2005 – China*, 8 November.
9. Congressional-Executive Commission on China 2008, *Annual Report 2008*, 31 October http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_house_hearings&docid=f:45233.pdf – Accessed 12 November 2008.
10. US Department of State 2008, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2008 – China*, 19 September.
11. China Aid Association 2008, ‘Advance Notice of Administrative Penalty against pastor Hao Yujie’, 22 May <http://chinaaid.org/2008/05/22/advance-notice-of-administrative-penalty-against-pastor-hao-yujie/> – Accessed 27 November 2008.
12. China Aid Association 2007, *Annual Report on Persecution of Chinese House Churches by Province: From January 2006 to December 2006*, January http://chinaaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2006_persecution_report.pdf – Accessed 12 June 2007.
13. China Aid Association 2006, ‘House Churches in Beijing and Jilin Raided; Public Security Denied Jailed Beijing Pastor to Meet with his Mother; Five Detained Church Leaders in Xinjiang Released’, 16 January <http://chinaaid.org/2006/01/16/house-churches-in-beijing-and-jilin-raided-public-security-denied-jailed-beijing-pastor-to-meet-with-his-mother-five-detained-church-leaders-in-xinjiang-released/> – Accessed 26 November 2008.
14. China Aid Association 2006, ‘19 House Church Leaders Arrested in Henan, Sichuan and Jilin; House Churches Forced to Close (with Photo of Detention paper by Langzhong City PSB, Sichuan province)’, 14 July <http://chinaaid.org/2006/07/14/19-house-church-leaders-arrested-in-henan-sichuan-and-jilin-house-churches-forced-to-close/> – Accessed 26 November 2008.
15. China Aid Association 2006, ‘Church building demolished forcefully in Jilin, furniture inside destroyed’, 1 November <http://chinaaid.org/2006/11/01/church-building-demolished-forcefully-in-jilin-furniture-inside-destroyed/> – Accessed 26 November 2008.
16. RRT Country Research 2006, *RRT Research Response CHN30803*, 18 October.
17. Human Rights Watch 1995, *World Report 1996 – China and Tibet*, December.
18. Human Rights Watch – Asia, 1995, *China: Religious Persecution Persists*, December, vol.7, no.16, UNHCR website <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,HRW,,CHN,,3ae6a84f10,0.html> – Accessed 27 November 2008.