

In the face of rapidly deteriorating status of human rights, it is time to say “No” to oppressors

Hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held by the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building

DATE: Thursday, December 5, 2013

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

SUBJECT: The Daughters Appeal to Beijing: “Let Our Fathers Go!”

CHAIRMAN: Christopher H. Smith(R-NJ)

Pastor Bob Fu, president of China Aid Association

Honorable Chairman and Vice Chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, members of Congressmen, and friends,

This is the third time in this year that I sit here to testify before the U. S. Congress, the international community, and all the people concerned with China’s human rights condition about the rapid deterioration of human rights condition in China. Having in front of me the five daughters of imprisoned men in China, who were sentenced to long prison terms simply because they held different views, peacefully expressed their views, or peacefully protested against the tyranny of the Chinese Communist authorities, and Chen Guangfu, brother of the Chinese blind rights defender Chen Guangcheng, whose son is still in prison and denied medical treatment he needs for his illness, I can’t express with words the pain and anger in my heart.

China Aid Association has been monitoring China’s human rights condition for 11 years, and because we specifically focus on religious persecution, human rights violations, and the promotion of the rule of law in China, we got to know hundreds and thousands of sons, daughters and family members of the prisons of conscience like Ti-Anna Wang, Lisa Jiayin Peng, Grace Ge Geng, Bridgette Qiao Chen and Danielle Xiaodan Wang.

China’s worsening human rights violations and its notorious human rights record are surely caused by the totalitarianism and wickedness of the Chinese Communist authorities, but are also a result of the loss of some God’s given, self-evident fundamental ideals and principles by some countries like the United States in recent years. These ideals and principles we are so proud of have remained the founding principles of America, a great and free nation, such as the freedom and human dignity we staunchly guard and hold steadfastly. Today, the reality that the Chinese government dares to despise human dignity and

blatantly violate universal values truly has a correlation with the appeasement policy of “harmony diplomacy” adopted by some western democratic societies towards totalitarianism.

Today I will testify about China’s human rights condition and petition to the U.S. government from the following three perspectives.

1. The violation of human rights in China has reached the worst scenario since the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 4, 1989:

On June 6 this year, China Aid Association and other 30 international human rights organizations jointly launched “Free China 18 Campaign,” calling on the release of 18 Chinese prisons of conscience. They are Wang Bingzhang, Peng Ming, Gao Zhisheng, Liu Xiaobo, Guo Quan, Zhu Yufu, Liu Xianbin, Yang Tianshui, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche , Yang Rongli, Alimujiang Yimiti, Wang Zhiwen, Lobsang Tsering, Li Chang, Gulmira Imin, Chen Kegui, Dhondup Wangchen, and Guo Feixiong. They are only the representatives of tens of thousands of political prisoners in mainland China. The majority of them expressed their views or protested against tyranny with peaceful methods, and some were imprisoned because of their religious faith. They are ethnically diverse, including Han Chinese, Tibetans, Uyghur, and other ethnicities.

Wang Bingzhang dedicated himself to promoting democracy in China after he obtained his Ph.D. in Medicine from McGill University, Canada, in 1982. He established China Spring, the first pro-democracy Chinese magazine overseas. He launched the “Union of Chinese Democracy Movement,” the first pro-democracy Chinese organization overseas. He is indisputably the Father of the Chinese pro-democracy movement overseas. In June 2002, he abducted by Chinese secret agents in Vietnam and brought back to China. In February 2003, he was sentenced to life in prison on charges of “conducting espionage for Taiwan and organizing and leading terrorist organizations.” He is imprisoned in Guanjiang Prison in Shaoguan, Guangdong province. He experienced brutal torture and is detained in long-term solitary confinement. His family, including his daughter Ti-Anna Wang, who is present today, is banned from visiting him. His health condition is very concerning. In addition to depression, he suffered a few strokes in the past few years. His mother passed away last year and the Chinese Communist government did not allow him to go home to attend her funeral.

Peng Ming is a prominent and remarkable person of conscience. In October 2001, he founded China Development Union, an organization dedicated to pursuing democratic election and ending the one-party rule in China. On May 28, 2004, he was abducted in Burma by Chinese agents and brought back to China. On October 12, he was sentenced to life in prison by the court of Wuhan, Hubei province, on the charge of “organizing and leading terrorist organizations.” He is imprisoned in Xianning Prison, Hubei province and his sentence remains the same. He also suffers multiple illnesses.

The miserable experience of attorney Gao Zhisheng, a prominent rights defense lawyer in mainland China, is a typical illustration of the condition of human rights and the rule of law in mainland China. He handled Christian persecution case and Falun Gong cases and wrote open

letters to government leaders to call for an end to religious persecution. As a result, on Dec. 22, 2006, he was charged with “inciting subversion of state power” and sentenced to three years’ imprisonment, with a five-year reprieve, and lost his freedom ever since. During his detention and house arrest, he was subjected to brutal torture many times, including toothpicks inserted in his genitals. The account he wrote, “Dark Night, Dark Hood, and Kidnapping by Dark Mafia” was published by the United Press and aroused global attention. Just as his five-year reprieve was about to end, he was thrown in prison in Shaya county, Xinjiang in December 2011. The U.S. Congress and Department of State made multiple requests to the Chinese government for the release of Gao Zhisheng, but the Chinese government never responded to the requests.

Dr. Guo Quan was an assistant professor at Nanjing Normal University. He dedicated himself to defending the rights of various citizen groups. He posted 347 articles on the internet calling on the Chinese Communist government to carry out a democratic political reform. On Oct. 16, 2009, He was sentenced to 10 years in prison by the court of Jiangsu Province on the charge of “subverting state power.” He is currently imprisoned in Pukou Prison, Nanjing.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Liu Xiaobo, is a case familiar to you. He was sentenced to 11 years in prison by the Chinese Communist authorities only because he co-authored Charter 08 and called for political reform. He is imprisoned in Jinzhou Prison, Liaoning Province. His wife Liu Xia has been under house arrest to this day simply because she is Liu’s wife and Liu is a political prisoner.

Another famous prisoner of conscience, Liu Xianbin, was sentenced to 10 years in prison by the court of Sichuan province on March 25, 2011, on the charge of “inciting the subversion of state power,” merely because he had four articles published on media overseas. This is his third prison term.

More ridiculously, Zhu Yufu, a prominent figure of conscience in mainland China, was sentenced to seven years in prison (his third prison term) by the court of Zhejiang province on Feb. 10, 2012, on the charge of “inciting the subversion of state power,” simply because he wrote a poem “It’s time” during the Arab Spring of the Middle East. He has suffered severe persecution in prison and his health condition is very bad, yet he is denied medical care and basic humane treatment.

Yang Tianshui, a prisoner of conscience of Jiangsu province, was sentenced to 12 years in prison on May 16, 2006, by the court of Jiangsu province for the second time on the charge of “inciting the subversion of state power.” He suffers multiple serious illnesses, but the authorities refuse to release him on medical parole.

Simply because he is the nephew of the famous blind activist Chen Guangcheng, Chen Kegui was sentenced to three years and three months in prison by the court of Shandong Province on Dec. 3, 2012, on the charge of “intentionally harming others” as a result of defending himself when local government officials illegally broke into his home and beat up his family members.

Guo Feixiong, another prominent dissenter in mainland China, was secretly seized by the authorities simply because he gave a speech in public to support the Southern Weekly newspaper on the street of Guangzhou. His whereabouts remained unknown for three months until the pressure from the international society continued to build up, especially after ChinaAid held an urgent hearing for him last month. After the pressure, he was allowed to meet with a lawyer approved by the authorities.

The Chinese Communist authorities have implemented a policy of plunder and oppression on minority ethnic groups for over six decades, which has created irreconcilable conflicts between the Han Chinese people and ethnic groups. The authorities have handled minority ethnic issues with blind violence and have embraced policies intended to restrict or eradicate the language and religion of minority ethnic groups, which has caused irreconcilable conflicts between many ethnic groups, such as the Tibetans, Uyghur people, Mongolians, and the Chinese Communist government.

The 18 prisoners of conscience also include Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a Tibetan monk from Garze Prefecture, Sichuan province, who was sentenced to death on false charges; his sentence was later commuted to life in prison.

Due to despair about the rule of the Chinese Communist Party, more than 120 Tibetans immolated themselves in two years, which caught the attention of the whole world. Lobsang Tsering, a 31-year-old Tibetan from Ngaba Prefecture was falsely accused of inciting self-immolation among the Tibetans and sentenced to 11 years in prison. His uncle was sentenced to life in prison on the same charge.

On Dec. 18, 2009, Dhondup Wangchen, a Tibetan filmmaker, was sentenced to six years in prison for filming the documentary “Fear No More” about Tibet.

Gulmira Imin, a woman of Uyghur descent, was falsely accused of involvement in the organization of the July 5, 2009 protests in Ürümqi and sentenced to life in prison. She is currently held in Xinjiang No. 2 Prison.

A few of the China 18 were sentenced to prison terms simply because they were house church ministers or practitioners of Falun Gong. Yang Rongli and her husband were the leaders of Jindengtai (Golden Lampstand) Church in Linfen, Shaanxi province. She and her husband Wang Xiaoguang were sentenced to seven and three years in prison, respectively, on Nov. 25, 2009, by the local court of Shaanxi on false charges.

Alimujiang Yimiti is a Uygur Christian and leader of a house church in Kashgar. On Aug. 6, 2009, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison by Xinjiang Kashgar Court on fabricated charges. He was tried in secret and without a lawyer to defend him. The No. 29 Document issued by the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention in 2008 declared that Alimujiang’s detention was arbitrary.

On Dec. 16, 1999, Falun Gong practitioners Wang Zhiwen and Li Chang were both sentenced to 16 years in prison by the Chinese Communist authorities.

The health condition of many among the China 18 has worsened to a point that requires emergency care. Some of their daughters sitting here with us today have grown into adults while their fathers have been struggling in prison.

The Chinese Communist government made many beautiful promises when it bid for hosting the 2008 Olympic Games and 2010 World Expo, applied for the membership of World Trade Organization, and discussed the “most-favored-nation trade status” with the United States. To attain these goals, the Chinese government released several hundred political prisoners during the administration of Jing Zemin, but during the ten-year administration of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, not only was there little improvement in human rights condition, the government also tightened up on the freedom of speech, cracked down on house churches, and the condition of human rights and rule of law both deteriorated. The Chinese Communist authorities did not release any prisoner of conscience, but rather persecuted political prisoners more harshly. The U.S. and other western countries turned a blind eye to it and did nothing substantial to make the Chinese government feel pressured other than occasional diplomatic platitudes. While the Chinese government aggressively flexes its muscles at democratic countries, western countries agree to put aside human rights and focus only on economic cooperation.

In March this year, the Chinese Communist Party ushered in a new leadership headed by Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang. However, what has happened in the ten months under the new leadership tells the world that the authorities will tightened up the control on media, restrict religious freedom, and suppress minority ethnic groups such as the Tibetans and Uyghurs. Politically, it exercised violence and terrorism. The abuse of violence by the authorities in Tibet and Xinjiang has caused the death and injury of several hundred minority ethnic people.

The authorities also cracked down on people fighting for the civil society and rule of law. According to incomplete statistics, the government arrested several hundred people of conscience who advocated for the civil society and demanded officials to make their assets known to the public, including Mr. and Mrs. Zheng Qiuwu, Zhu Chengzhi, He Zuhua, Zhou Li, Gu Yimin, Deng Zhibo, Huan Tiejun, Ding Jiayi, Zhao Changqing, Sun Hanhui, Wang Yonghong, Qi Yueying, Yuan Dong, Zhang Baocheng, Ma Xinli, Li Wei, Liu Ping, Li Sihua, Wei Zhongping, Zou Guiqin, Su Meisheng, Liu Hui, Yao Baohua, Liu Yuandong, Wei Xianli, Ma Chuanhan, Xie Jian'er, Huang Wen Xun, Yuan Xiaohua, Yuan Fengchu, Huang Yijian, Wang Jian, Chen Wensheng, Lv Cheng, Chen Yulan, Lv Dongli, Zhao Zhenjia, Zhang Fuying, Yang Tingjian, Ren Lacheng, Li Wenxi, Fan Shunhui, Fan Wancheng, Guan Weishuang, Zhang Fuying, Zhao Xiaoshan, Li Yong, Cai Congfu, Yu Quanhong, Fang Bin, Yang Guixiang, Yang Zhiyan, Hu Fuqing, Shi Wei'an, Zheng Bingyuan, Shen Aibin, Wu Ping, Qu Fengsheng, Ding Hongfen, Xu Haifeng, Zhao Aijun, Shen Jun, Zhang Jixin, Zhao Guangjun, Wang Su'e, Bai Yinhong, Chu Dongfang, Yi Lihua, Zhu Pingping, Chen Zaizhong, Li Xiaocheng, Ying Jinxian, Li Guisuo, Yang Guixiang, Huang Dingxiang, Xiao Yulan, Yao Jinlian, Yang Chengxiang, Long Yunxiang, Tang Ying, Zhang Xiangzhong, Li Gang, Li Huanjun, Song Ze, Wei Qin, Wang Kouma, Xu Zhiyong, Shi Genyuan, Zhang Lin, Ma Shengfen, Wu Hongfei, Li Biyun, Wu Jinsheng, Liu Hu,

Liu Jie, Wang Gongquan, Lin Zheng, Dong Liangjie, Yang Xiuqiong, Cao Shunli, Yang Xiuyu, Qin Zhihui, Shao Yunli, etc.

Apparently, the condition of human rights in China has continued to worsen in recent years and has reached the worst scenario since the Tiananmen massacre of June 4, 1989. Likewise, China is regressing in the rule of law and there is no sign of improvement in the short term.

2. The Chinese Communist authorities suppress house churches more harshly; religious persecution is worsening:

The Chinese Communist authorities have persecuted house churches with increasing intensity. House churches in China have grown by leaps and bounds for two decades and the number of Christians in house churches has reached 40-50 million, which strikes great fear into the hearts of the Chinese Communist authorities. We have learned from many sources that the government has made a ten-year action plan to wipe out house churches and has started to take systematic actions of “removal” since last year. As a result, house churches everywhere in mainland China have experienced increasingly intense persecution this year.

The Three-Self churches are completely controlled by the Chinese Communists, accept the leadership of the Communist Party, and pledge their allegiance to the Party and the country. Even Three-Self churches cannot participate in public affairs and only enjoy the freedom of obeying the authority. They are also experiencing more strict control and more intense persecution from the government. This year, more than ten Three-Self churches in Shaanxi province, Henan province, and Shandong province had church properties and assets forcibly seized by the government, which triggered numerous, massive assemblies and protests by believers, such as Anyang Christian Church in Henan province, Taiyuan Christian Church in Shaanxi province, Nanle County Christian Church in Henan province, etc. Buddhism and Daoism have basically become the puppets of the Chinese Communist authorities. Falun Gong, strictly speaking, is not a religion, but rather a practice to nurture physical and spiritual health, and yet the peaceful protests of its practitioners against the evilness of the Communist government invited over a decade of systematic persecution.

Beijing Shouwang Church has had no choice but to worship outdoors for two years. Believers go to different locations every week to attend outdoor worship service, and every week, many of them are seized and taken to police stations by public security agents. A few believers were beaten up and wounded by the police. Pastors and elders of the church are under house arrest on Sundays and banned from preaching and evangelistic activities. Church assets have been frozen by the government. Currently, they are still holding outdoor worship services.

In April of this year, Han Hai and six other Christians from Pingdingshan City of Henan Province were sentenced from three years to seven and a half years of imprisonment by the local court on the crime of being a cult while the real reason is just because they studied the Bible on a Sunday.

On June 17, 2013, Xiaodian District Court of Taiyuan, in the trial of first instance, sentenced Ren Lacheng, a Christian from Enyu Bookstore, to five years in prison and sentenced Li Wenxi to two years in prison on the charge of “illegal business operation.”

On Aug. 31, 2013, Liang Zhongxin, a Christian and a Sunday school teacher in a house church in Shaya County, Xinjiang, and three other people were placed under a 15-day administrative detention and were fined 1,000 yuan for giving Bible lessons to some middle school students.

On July 25, 2013, a court in Inner Mongolia sentenced Christian Hu Gong to nine years in prison and sentenced Wen Weihong and Liu Aiying to eight years in prison on the same charge.

According to incomplete statistics, this year, about a hundred house churches in more than 20 provinces in China have suffered persecution. The gatherings at these house churches were raided, church properties were confiscated, religious books and other items were destroyed, believers were illegally detained and threatened, and pastors were detained.

On Nov. 16, 2013, Pastor Zhang Shaojie and 23 believers from Nanle County Christian Church, Puyang, Henan province were taken into police custody, and the majority of them have not received any legal papers. This case fits with the U.N. criteria for arbitrary detention. This church is a Three-Self church sanctioned by the government, but because believers of the church fight for rights and social justice and offended the local government in a land dispute, the church suffered retaliation from the government.

The Chinese Communist government has always spared no effort in its United Front work through religion and overseas propaganda packed with lies, which has caused the business community and political community of some democratic countries, and even some Christian organizations of these countries to deliberately keep quiet about the reality of religious persecution, contend that there is religious freedom in China, dance with the wolves, and recognize the Three-Self Committee, a government-approved religious organization, as the only representative of churches in China.

As understandable as it may be that Bill Graham Evangelistic Association needed to collaborate with the Chinese Communist government in its disaster relief efforts, this organization, at the “China-USA Protestant Church Leaders Forum” held in Shanghai and Beijing on December 19-20, 2012, according to the news released by the Chinese Communist authorities, recognized the leaders of the Three-Self Committee, a puppet created by the government, as the representative of Chinese churches and said nothing about the religious persecution committed by the Chinese Communist authorities.

The 2014 General Assembly of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) will be held during October 27-31, 2014 in Seoul, South Korea. WEA has sent an invitation to the China Christian Council and the Three-Self Committee, but it is still unknown if it will invite the leaders of house

churches attended by tens of millions of believers who account for the majority of Christians in China.

The top leaders of the Three-Self Committee prioritize their devotion to the Party and government over their devotion to God. They do not dare to speak up against social injustice, but rather praise the totalitarian government and tell believers to obey those in power blindly. I can't help but think of the religious people in German churches who lost principles and courage during the Nazi era; their transgressions cannot be justified. When the Nazi regime fiercely opposed Communism, churches considered Hitler a trustworthy brother, and at least in private, they rejoiced and considered themselves lucky. When Hitler started to persecute Jews, Catholic churches considered the persecution a revenge on the Jews for crucifying Jesus and did not defend their human rights. When Nazi Germany invaded Poland and other eastern European Catholic countries, the Vatican maintained a harmonious, if not a close, relationship with the Nazi regime of Italy. And it did not take advantage of its status as an ally of the Nazi regime to defend the powerless. More incredibly, the Vatican never thought of using a weapon it so often used in the Middle Ages to punish Hitler who was born a Catholic, i.e. discontinuing his partaking of the Holy Communion. Actually, up to his suicide, Hitler had not been excommunicated by the Vatican.

The majority of the Protestant church leaders back then praised Hitler and pledged allegiance to Nazi Germany. They did not oppose principles of the Darwinian evolutionary theory introduced by the Nazi and the notions of "pure breed" and "superior breed" derived from it. We know how churches in Germany became an ally of the Nazi regime, betrayed God, and left a mark of shame in human history.

Likewise, we can see that these organizations, sanctioned by the Chinese Communist government, are doing what German churches did for the Nazi regime: endorsing dictators, testifying falsely for the so-called "harmonious society", and turning away from the principle God asks us to follow, such as sticking fast to justice. Prominent international Christian organizations, such as Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and WEA, choose to cooperate with the Three-Self Committee sanctioned by the Chinese Communist regime while deliberately keeping silent about the persecutions and torture suffered by believers of house churches, and even believers of Three-Self churches in some areas. These harmonized church organizations ought to seriously consider how their names will show in God's account book (Romans 2) and in the presence of martyrs. Are they allies of persecutors and dictators or the voice of martyrs?

The current U.S. administration's policy on China is a typical appeasement policy compromising human rights. In its dealings with the totalitarian Chinese Communist government, America has lost the principles it should adhere to, i.e. staunch and non-negotiable defense of human freedom, dignity, and world justice. As a leader of the free world, America should particularly prioritize the defense of human dignity and universal values over international trade and other things. The China-U.S. human rights dialogue has failed to bring about any practical change since long ago. To China's worsening record and retrogression in human rights, America only responds with diplomatic rhetoric, which gives the Chinese government the impression that

human rights is not a real concern of America. Due to the lack of adequate pressure from the international community, the Chinese Communist authorities are fearless and blatantly violating human rights, and promoting its value system all over the world.

Looking back, we can see that even under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, a ruthless figure in politics, the Chinese Communist authorities made many concessions due to the enormous pressure from the international society after the Tiananmen Square Massacre. But what has happened in the past 10 years? What has America's harmony diplomacy brought about? Nowadays, the Chinese Communist government can totally ignore the appeal of the international society, not only inflicting more severe persecutions on house churches, Falun Gong practitioners and other faith groups, but also suppressing minority ethnic groups, such as Tibetans and Uyghurs, with excessive violence. In the face of all this, what substantial response has the international society, America in particular, given?

3. It is time for America to do something right away and say "no" to dictators:

In the face of China's continuously deteriorating human rights conditions, America should no longer stay silent. It is time for America to loudly say to the dictatorial government, "Free the China 18 right away, without any condition! And furthermore, free all political prisoners; choose peace, rationality, dialogue, and reconciliation based on the rule of law. American people will no longer believe the lies told by a notorious human rights violator again and again unless the violator stops doing evil and makes quick amends." In the face of rapidly deteriorating human rights condition, it is time to say "no" to the oppressors.

In America, this great and free country, we have before us the shining examples of many great heroes: General George Washington, and, sitting on the other end of the Mall as though watching us, is President Lincoln. There's also African-American civil rights leader Martin Luther King as well as President Reagan, who faced up to the Soviet empire and never gave an inch nor ever considered doing so. The indomitable spirit and the commitment to freedom and human rights that they, and many others who went before us, held firm are like a bright torch shining throughout America's history.

Today, let us, the ordinary American people, the Obama administrative, Congress, nonprofit organizations, and social groups stand up together and speak up as representatives of the free people and the government, saying "no" to an oppressive government and demand the release of Wang Bingzhang, Peng Ming, Gao Zhisheng, Liu Xiaobo, Alimujiang, Dhondup Wangchen, and all the illegally detained people of conscience.

Let me make a few suggestions here:

1. I hope the Obama administration will deliver a note to the Chinese government asking for the immediate and unconditional release of the 18 prisoners of conscience. In the meantime, I hope President Obama will meet with the representative family members of the China 18 as soon as

possible, which will send a clear message to the Chinese government that we will not keep quiet about their evil deeds.

2. I hope human rights issues will become an indispensable component in the meetings and strategic dialogues between Chinese and American top leaders and that cooperation in the field of economy, military, and foreign relations will be made contingent on human rights issues so as to compel the Chinese government to quickly improve the human rights condition across the board and advance the rule of law. Abandon appeasement diplomacy of human rights violations—policies not backed up by principles—so that the American people no longer feel ashamed of a government that does not follow basic principles in foreign relations.
3. Broadcast live the annual China-U.S. human rights dialogue on the Internet. Make the dialogue specific in goals and substantial in content. Make evaluations of China binding; don't reduce this highest-level human rights dialogue between China and the U.S. to a useless show. Set minimum goals each year and implement sanctions if the Chinese government fails to fulfill promises. Otherwise, this dialogue has no value.
4. I hope the House Committee on Foreign Affairs will make it mandatory that the officials of the U.S. Embassy in China, especially the visa officers, receive at least 14 days of systematic training on the background of human rights and religious freedom in China. I propose this because at present, many people who can make significant contributions to freedom and the rule of law in China, as well as the communication between China and the U.S., have been denied visas, including some invited by the leaders of the Congress, even though they meet the criteria for entry into the U.S.

At last, I would like to quote Dr. King's famous saying, "And if America is to be a great nation this must become true."