



CATHOLIC LEAGUE

*For Religious
and
Civil Rights*

June 10, 2021

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The Hon. Robert Menendez
Chairman
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As the president of the largest Catholic civil rights organization in the country, I am asking you to conduct hearings on the outrageous persecution of Catholics taking place in the People's Republic of China.

Chinese authorities passed new regulations in January of 2020 that have enabled the regime to suffocate the religious liberty of Catholics and allowed the Chinese Communist Party greater control of the Church.

These regulations have authorized the regime to monitor the movements of the clergy, track all donations to the Church, review every sermon to ensure fidelity to the Party, and control the formation of new priests, essentially brainwashing seminarians to indoctrinate them to promote the party line. Implemented in May of this year, new rules require all clergy to register with the state in order to serve Catholics. While all of these regulations trample the rights of Catholics, they are now beginning to have violent effects on the Church.

On May 21, China deployed over 100 police officers to arrest Bishop Joseph Zhang Weizhu of Xinxiang as well as seven priests and an unspecified number of seminarians. They now face severe retribution. More than likely Bishop Zhang will endure a long prison sentence subjected to all manner of abuse ranging from forced labor to torture. The priests, providing this is their first arrest, may be given an ultimatum to join the Party controlled Patriotic Catholic Association, which emphasizes communism over Christ, or follow their bishop into prison. The seminarians will be forced to renounce their faith.

The Chinese authorities have followed up on these arrests by going door to door in the diocese to search for more seminarians and harass Catholics by removing Bibles and Crucifixes from their homes and imposing substantial fines on them for their faith.

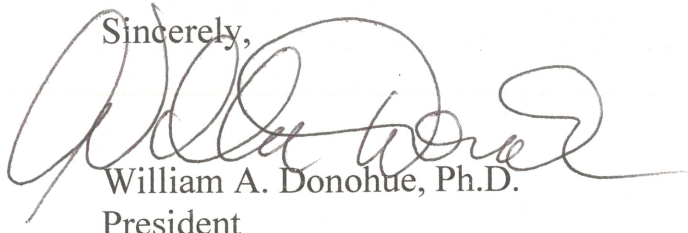
Chinese authorities recently removed Bible apps and printed Bibles that are no longer available for sale online. Also, Catholic WeChat public accounts have been taken down. Chinese authorities have also detained Catholics in secretive, mobile "transformation" facilities to make them renounce their faith.

These are not just different norms. These are egregious violations of human rights.

It is my sincere belief with the power of the United States Senate being brought to bear on the Chinese government that you can hold them responsible and alleviate the suffering of Bishop Zhang and all Catholics living under this tyranny.

Thank you for your diligence in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William A. Donohue", written over a horizontal line.

William A. Donohue, Ph.D.
President

CC Sen. Jim Risch, Ranking Member
Sen. Ed Markey
Sen. Mitt Romney