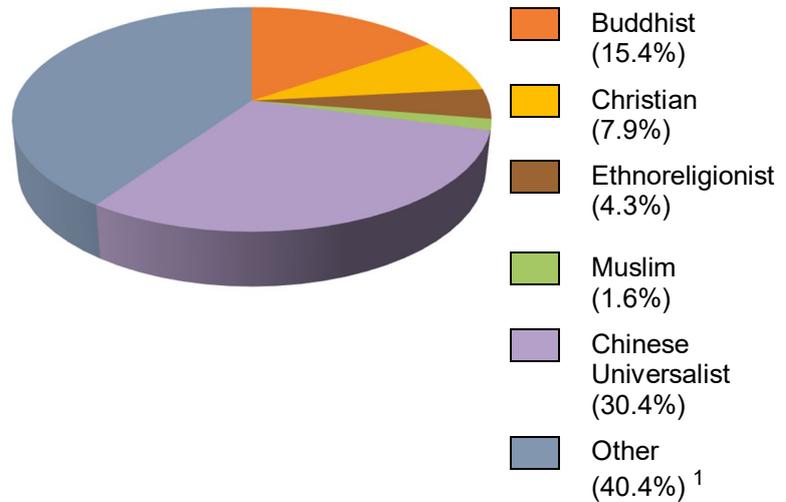


CHINA



Area: 9,597,000 km ²	Population: 1.364 billion	Political system: Autocracy ²	Major Language(s): Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan, Uyghur, Zhuang, others
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Legal framework on freedom of religion and actual application

Although the Chinese constitution states that citizens have “freedom of religious belief”, only “normal religious activities” are allowed, i.e. those which are controlled by the State Administration of Religious Affairs and by the Patriotic Associations (PA), and follow national regulations. This means worshipping in registered places, with registered personnel and accepting the control of PA. Those who worship outside this frame are considered “criminals” and treated as such. However, also officially registered communities are subjected to control, restrictions, prohibitions, if they are perceived as a menace to the State, the Chinese Communist Party or social stability. Only five religious communities are “officially” recognised: Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant.

National Security Law

Since 1st July 2015, the situation has become worse, after the entry into law of the “National Security Law”. Its aim is to protect national sovereignty and Chinese interest but also political and social stability, covering a broad spectrum of areas. The most important include: defence, finance, science and technology, and culture and religions. According to senior officials, the law is necessary to defend the country from “a double threat” – from the outside and the inside.³

During the year, the United Front, a popular front made up of the political parties legally permitted in the country, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), and president Xi Jinping himself, issued guidelines for religions to follow. These imply:

- 1) Sinicisation: a process by which religions must increasingly assimilate Chinese culture and root out “external influences”;
- 2) Independence from foreign influence, including the nomination or ratification of religious appointments (for example, under these guidelines the appointment of Catholic bishops does not require papal approval, as the pope is a leader of a foreign power);
- 3) Submission to the Chinese Communist Party, which has to “effectively” and “forcefully” guide all religions.⁴

Compulsory Atheism for Party members

During the same period, the internal bulletin of the Communist Party Central Commission for Discipline and Inspection issued rules that led to a ban on Party members being affiliated to any religious community. During the era of Chinese Presidents Jiang Zemin's and Hu Jintao, members could practise their faith in private, but not in public ceremonies. The directive issued under the present President, Xi Jinping, is more radical and does not allow the practice of any faith. As a circular from the Party's Organisation Department noted, this even applies when a member retires from the Party.⁵

The Party also issued new internal rules to punish members who believe in "feudal superstitions", such as feng-shui, and attempts to predict the future predictions, which are typical in Taoism and Buddhism. These rules came into force on 1st January 2016 and apply to all 88 million members of the Party. If caught in "organising" or "joining" in religious activities, they can be expelled from the Party.⁶

Christianity as a Western Religion

To combat any "spiritual pollution", or influence of from Christianity, in the period running up to and including Christmas 2014 and 2015 "consumerist" aspects of the "Western" Christmas were forbidden in several cities. Christmas Parties, Christmas trees and greeting cards were also prohibited in universities and schools. Almost as if to confirm these "concerns", on 6th May 2014 the University of International Relations and the Academy of Social Sciences published a "Blue Book". It identifies religion as one of four "severe challenges" to national security, arguing that "hostile western forces are infiltrating the religions of China."⁷

Control of religious "superstitions" and of "Western" and "foreign pollution" extends to the internet. This is why many Christian websites, both Catholic and Protestant, based in China and abroad, have been blocked.⁸

New rules for church building and crosses

In the middle of the campaign for demolition of crosses and churches – which started in 2013 in Zhejiang Province and spread to Henan and Anhui – Zhejiang authorities issued a draft proposal with regulations for religious buildings. The May 2015 regulations specify the colour, size and location of crosses, and height of the buildings – a religious building cannot exceed 24 metres in height; crosses on steeples are no longer allowed, instead the Christian symbol instead has to be inserted into the walls of the building. However, its colour may not stand out, and its length should not exceed one-tenth of the building. The government defended its actions by saying that all crosses and buildings demolished during the campaign violated building codes. Catholics and Protestants stress that many of the buildings issued with demolition notices were built with all the correct permissions and some even received the praise of the local officials. By March 2016 more than 2,000 churches and crosses had been demolished.

The campaign was initiated in 2013 under Xia Baolong, Zhejiang's party secretary who, according to one report, noted that the skyline in Wenzhou, one of the province's cities, had "too many crosses". It is important to remember that in 2013, Zhejiang was expected to become a hub of economic development by 2020. The campaign to "beautify" the region by removing the illegal structures may have been intended to create room for new development. According to the provincial government, these demolitions have affected all communities and citizens without distinction, but data shows that the campaign has mainly targeted Christian sites.

That the demolition of churches is part of wider anti-Christian sentiment in the province was revealed by Zhejiang's Secretary, Xia Baolong, who, in an interview with the Xinhua news agency on the 17th February 2014, announced that "hostile forces of the West" had infiltrated the

province's Christian communities. Previously, in July 2013 he warned the Party of Wenzhou against the influence of the underground Christian community. In Wenzhou, Christians make up 15 percent of the population, mainly belonging to the unofficial communities.⁹

Ethnic Minorities

Minorities in China are often characterised as a source of instability. According to President Xi, in dealing with minorities there are “three evils” that need to be fought: separatism, extremism and terrorism. For China, the most dangerous minorities are Uighurs in Xinjiang and Tibetans in Tibet.¹⁰

In this context, China has tried to obtain help from the United Nations and the international community to fight against the predominantly Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang, accusing them of links with Al-Qaeda, and of having fought in Syria for Daesh (ISIS). At the November 2015 G20 Meeting in Turkey, China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, asked the world to support China in its “own war on terror”, linking it with the terror attacks in Paris.

For Foreign Minister Wang, “The UN's leading role should be brought into full play to combat terrorism, and a united front in this regard should be formed.” In his view: “China is also a victim of terrorism, and cracking down on East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) should become an important part of the international fight against terrorism”. It must be said that in Xinjiang there are groups of Uighurs belonging to the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), fighting for autonomy and sometimes performing violent attacks. However, the majority of the population is non-violent and only asking for real autonomy.¹¹

Tibet

In order to dominate Tibet's population, for decades China has been implementing the colonisation and militarisation of the region, transferring hundreds of thousands of Han Chinese to work on the plateau, which is defended by tens of thousands of Chinese soldiers. Since September 2011, Beijing has launched a campaign to realise “key projects” for the region's development, from the railway sector to dams, through the exploitation of the subsoil and the promotion of tourism. The great economic and tourist development combined with the exploitation of mineral resources is changing the face of Tibet and leading to the marginalisation of the Tibetan people – who are now a minority. This is why many experts say that China is implementing a cultural and religious genocide of Tibet.¹² In April 2015, the State Council Information Office issued a White Paper on Tibet in which it rejected the Dalai Lama's calls for dialogue and signalled its intention of pursuing the official State policy.

Beijing will not even allow the Dalai Lama, the supreme authority of Tibetan Buddhism, to return to Tibet, although he renounced all his political offices and now only claims a religious role. There have been continuous campaigns vilifying the Dalai Lama over the matter of his succession. In March 2015, the newly appointed governor of Tibet, Padma Choling, made a verbal attack on the Dalai Lama, saying he “is profaning Tibetan Buddhism. His positions change constantly, and now he says he will not be reborn in order to avoid political interference. But this is absurd and contrary to religion”. In a September 2014 interview, the leader of Tibetan Buddhism suggested that he will “not be reincarnated when he dies” given that the figure of the Dalai Lama “has had its day.”¹³

On 30th November 2015, Zhu Weiqun, a leading official of the Chinese Communist Party and Chair of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee, said China will never give up the right to ratify future incarnations of the Dalai Lama and other religious figures.¹⁴ In January 2016, the Chinese government set up an online database to “verify” all living Tibetan Buddhas. Only those who are enrolled in the official list can be regarded as genuine “living Buddhas”.¹⁵

This situation results in acts of violence and arrests for those praying or asking for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. This acute pressure on the population and religion has sparked a series of self-immolations, in which people set themselves on fire to protest against the Communist regime

and for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet. Since 2009, when these protests started, until May 2016 there have been 145 suicides.

Hong Kong

Population: 7.324 million

Area: 1,104 km²

Major languages: Chinese, English, Cantonese

Political system: Special administrative region of China

RELIGION¹⁶

Christian: 11.9%

Catholic: 5.4%

Protestant: 6.5%

Ethnoreligionist: 49%

Taoists: 14%

Hindu: 0.5%

Buddhist: 21%

Muslim: 1%

Other: 2.6%

Legal framework on freedom of religion and actual application

Since 1997 Hong Kong has been absorbed back in to China, but its rights and religious freedom have not been affected. There is no specific religious persecution in the territory. However, because of the strong support given to the democratic movement by the Catholic Church, together with the Protestant and Anglican Churches, there have been signs of verbal and physical violence against Church members who have contributed to democratic debate and taken part in demonstrations.

In 2014 and 2015, one of the most important events was the civil disobedience campaign “Occupy Central with love and peace”, later named “Umbrella movement”. Demonstrators held umbrellas to protect themselves against tear gas, pepper spray, and water cannons used by police clearing their sit-ins. Starting on 28th September 2014, the movement occupied key areas in Admiralty, Causeway Bay and Mong Kok which remained closed to traffic for over 70 days. The protests ended on 14th December 2014 without any political concessions from the government, but instead prompted statements from Chief Executive CY Leung and mainland officials about rule of law and patriotism. This was followed by an attack on academic freedoms and the civil liberties of activists.

Incidents

Related to Christianity

Against Catholics

Priest Killed: Father Pedro Wei Heping, a 41-year-old “Underground” priest, died on 6th November 2015 under suspicious circumstances. The clergyman’s body was found floating in a river in the city of Taiyuan, Shanxi Province. The authorities claimed he committed suicide. However, friends and people who knew the priest have stated that it is very unlikely that Fr Wei would have

contemplated suicide. Father Wei's family has called on the Chinese government to thoroughly investigate the cause of his death and publish the findings "quickly and truthfully". But, at time of writing, nothing has been done by authorities. The priest had run the Tianzhujiao Zaixian Catholic website, which translated news from the Vatican – before it was shut down by authorities. Many suspect he was killed because of his opposition to the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association.¹⁷

Priests kidnapped by police: On 22nd March 2015 Chinese police seized two priests in the city of Mutanjiang (Heilongjiang). The two clergymen – Father Shaoyun Quan, 41, and Father Jianyou Cao, 43 – had just celebrated Mass. After their arrest at 10.30 am, they were taken to an unknown location. Father Quan, the parish priest, and Father Cao, his deputy, serve underground communities that are not recognised by the government.¹⁸

Priest arrested: Father Liu Honggeng, vice-rector of Our Lady Queen of China shrine and parish in Baoding, in the central province of Hebei, "was arrested by local authorities, who took him into custody on 7th May 2015 to prevent pilgrimages to his church," according to a local Catholic source. The priest had already spent eight years in prison, having been convicted without trial for refusing to join the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association in 2006. He was released in August 2014.¹⁹

Bishop presumed dead: Bishop Cosma Shi Enxiang's death was released on 30th January, but the authorities retracted the claim some weeks later. The family of the prelate – who disappeared whilst in police custody in April 2001 – is still waiting for his body or at least his ashes to be handed over. Over the years family members regularly asked the authorities for news of their relative, but never received any response. On 30th January an employee of the city of Baoding, the village chief of Shizhuang, was questioned by family and let slip that the bishop had died. Since there seemed to be a delay in the return of the corpse (or ashes) of the bishop, family members of the deceased went to find out more from the Baoding council, which replied that it knew nothing about the death of Bishop Shi and that "the village mayor [who broke the news of the death] was drunk, or heard or understand wrong[ly]."

The authorities' "denial" of Bishop Shi's death has led local Catholics to assume that the government is afraid of the faithful's reaction to the death of a bishop after so many years of imprisonment without trial.²⁰

Bishop at house arrest: For two years running (on 27th April 2015 and 2016), a memorial Mass for the late Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian has been held in the Cathedral of St Ignatius in Xujiahui district, Shanghai, but Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin has not presided. Since 2012, the auxiliary bishop, now the only one in the diocese, has been under house arrest in Sheshan seminary. He was deposed as bishop of the city and forbidden to carry out episcopal duties in private or public because at his ordination – which took place in the church of St Ignatius – he decided to resign his position in the Catholic Patriotic Association.²¹

Bishop obliged to celebrate with illicitly ordained bishops: Bishop Joseph Martin Wu Qijing was installed publicly as the bishop of Zhouzhi, Shaanxi Province, on 10th July 2015. A decade earlier, he had been ordained bishop of Zhouzhi with the approval of the Holy See, but without permission from the government. In September 2007, the police placed him under house arrest in Xi'an. While he can work openly, the Catholic Patriotic Association required him to join in a Eucharistic celebration with an illicit bishop ordained without papal mandate, which is forbidden by Canon Law. Last year, Bishop Wu reportedly concelebrated Mass with Bishop Ma Yinglin, president of the government-recognised bishops' conference.²²

Against Protestants

Woman buried alive: On 14th April 2016, Ding Cuimei, the wife of underground Protestant clergyman Li Jiangong, suffocated to death after she was buried alive while trying to stop her church being demolished. Her husband, who was also buried, managed to survive. The incident occurred in Zhumadian, Henan Province. Following the incident, police opened an investigation and arrested two members of the demolition team, belonging to a businessman who wanted the land for development. On 25th April the authorities issued a report that designates the site for religious use and ruled that the disputed land where the incident took place belongs to the Beitou Church and its pastor.²³

Pastor arrested: On 24th March 2015, Pastor Huang Yizi was sentenced to a year in prison for opposing the removal of the cross from his church. A court in Wenzhou (Pingyang County, Zhejiang Province) convicted the minister of “gathering a crowd to disturb public order”. The clergyman had been arrested on 2nd August 2014 after he and some of his parishioners tried to stop police from taking down the cross from the Salvation Church in Wenzhou. Huang Yizi is the first person to be convicted for opposing the cross demolition campaign.²⁴

Lawyer arrested: On 25th August 2015 Chinese police arrested a Christian lawyer Zhang Kai, 37, and his intern assistant Liu Peng, who were involved in a legal battle against the authorities over the removal of crosses from churches in Zhejiang Province. Zhang Kai, a lawyer from Beijing, had been a counsel to Huang Yizi, the first pastor to be arrested for resisting to the cross demolition of the Salvation Church in Wenzhou. He left Beijing in July to work on cross-removal cases full time in Wenzhou. Last July he started a new group to work on this issue: Lawyers for the Protection of the Cross. Since then more than 100 Churches had sought Zhang’s *pro bono* legal advice in a bid to protect their own crosses. In February 2016, the state-run Wenzhou Online web site accused Zhang Kai of being “the mastermind behind a series of illegal religious meetings”, citing information coming from the City Public Security. The text also accused Zhang of “accepting a foreign training, encouraging people to challenge the government”, and “scamming people for money.” The site describes Zhang as a “criminal suspect” and cites an alleged confession. The lawyer was released on 23rd March 2016.²⁵

Faithful arrested: On 25th October 2015, police arrested four members of Beijing’s unofficial Shouwang Church after the congregation gathered to worship in public and request the return of Church property. The four were given 10 days of administrative detention for “disturbing public order”. In 2005, the Church applied for official registration, but the authorities turned it down. Since 10th April 2011, the faithful have been forced to meet outdoors for their Sunday service.²⁶

Christian students expelled from University: In Mid-December 2015 Shandong Yingcai College, a university-level institute in Shandong Province, expelled five Christian students who were found “guilty” of engaging in prayer in a private room. The five students are Li Binbin, Zhang Yaqi, Chen Huiyun, Ni Wangjie and Chen Ping. A sixth student who was with them, Jia Rong, was not punished. A disturbing aspect of the story is that in all probability a fellow student reported the “guilty” students: local police came to the college after receiving a picture of the group in prayer. The name of the person who took the picture is unknown, but according to some sources, a young man from the Communist Youth League is probably responsible. From a legal standpoint, the expulsions were based on an order issued a few weeks before by the Shandong Provincial Department of Education. The latter informed colleges and universities that “religious meetings involving three or more people” were considered “illegal”. Accordingly, university officials expelled the students for “activity of a religious nature”. This expulsion is part of the more general government campaign against the “spiritual pollution” allegedly coming from the West.²⁷

Related to Taoists

Campaign against feng-shui: In January 2015 the authorities in Shanxi Province began a crackdown against rural feudalism and superstition, primarily targeting feng-shui masters and shamans, typical personalities in traditional Chinese religions. The government targeted specifically rural areas where inspection teams would carry out surprise visits, looking for anything that violates China's religion policies.²⁸

In December 2015, the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection of the Communist Party announced that Bai Xueshan, vice-chairman of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, had “violated political discipline” and engaged in “organised superstitious activities”. He was expelled from the Party. Bai, 54, fell from grace because of his efforts to expand the city of Wuzhong northwards, towards the Yellow River, according to Taoist principles.²⁹

Related to Muslims

Ramadan fasting banned: Civil servants, students and teachers in its Xinjiang region were banned from fasting during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which started on 18th June 2015. Authorities ordered restaurants to stay open. In some counties, religious vigils and activities associated with the month – such as Iftar when the fast is broken by dinner with relatives and friends – were banned.³⁰

“Terrorists” killed: On 14th November 2015, the police in Xinjiang announced that authorities had killed 17 “terrorists” from three families, including women and children. According to the authorities, the 17 persons from the Uighur Muslim group were killed when the military blew up the cave in which they were hiding. The fugitives were wanted in connection with a terrorist attack on the Sogan Colliery that killed 50 people. For nearly two months, police and military sought the 17 suspects. Tursun Jume, 46, Musa Toxtiniyaz, 47, and Memet Eysa, 60, from Chokatal Meadow, in Bay's Kanchi Township were believed to have carried out the attack. The others with them were family members.

Ekber, director of the Terek Township middle school, which was used as a base of operations during the military operation, said: “I received a call from the chief of the Bay County Education Department, who told me that the war had ended with a great victory – that all the terrorists had been killed and that we could return to the middle school. Based on the warrant list, we found out that the 17 suspects included four women and three children, one of which – nine-year-old Munire – was one of our second grade students.” Munire was the adopted granddaughter of Memet Eysa. According to the police, the women and the children were not involved in the terrorist attack.³¹

Related to Buddhists

Cultural and religious genocide: Lobsang Yeshe, a father of eight in his 60s, died on 19th July at Lhasa Hospital, where he had been taken after his health deteriorated in Ngulchul prison in the Chamdo (Changdu) prefecture of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Lobsang Yeshe was the head of Gewar village near where a Chinese mine was being built. He and two other village men were sentenced to two years in jail for their roles in protests a year earlier. None of Lobsang Yeshe's relatives and friends were allowed to see his body.³²

Prison and torture: Tenzin Choewang and Yeshe Tenzin were secretly released in mid-March 2015 but some days later they died from wounds and torture inflicted during their time in prison. The two monks were arrested together on 17th March 2000 in Sog County along with three other monks, Ngawang Gyurmey, Khedup and Tsering Lhagon, as well as lay-man Thagru Yeshe. They were distributing leaflets that read “Long life to the Dalai Lama”, “Tibet is independent” and “China out of Tibet.” All these are “illegal” under the Criminal Code in force in Tibet, which considers them “seditious acts”. The group was judged by the local People's Court: Ngawang Gyurmey and Tsering Lhagon were sentenced to 15 years; Khedup to life imprisonment; Yeshe Tenzin to 10

years; and Thagru Yeshe to seven years. They were formally charged with “disturbing social stability”.³³

On the night of 12th July 2015, Tibetan monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche died. Tenzin, who was 65 years old, had served 13 years of a life sentence in prison in Mianyang, Sichuan Province. The cleric, who was seen as a symbol of the struggle for the liberation of Tibet, has long suffered from heart problems. According to human rights groups, these were never properly treated by his jailors. Two of his relatives had been in Chengdu, Sichuan's capital, for more than a week, hoping to visit the ailing monk in Mianyang jail but authorities did not allow them to see him. He was sentenced to death in December 2002 along with 28-year-old activist Lobsang Dhondup, for an attack in Chengdu that took place in April of the same year. A bomb explosion killed one person and wounded a second. Chinese officials refused to hold an open trial (which violates the legal requirements) or issue the verdict or indictments. Lobsang Dhondup was executed in January 2003, while the monk's sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment.³⁴

On 30th October 2015, the Zhuhai City Intermediate People's Court, in Guangdong Province, convicted Buddhist leader Wu Zeheng on charges relating to his religious group's alleged activities. He was convicted of organising or using an illegal cult to undermine implementation of the law (12 years), rape (life), fraud (14 years), and production and sale of harmful food (six years). Wu was also fined 7.15 million yuan. Wu's beliefs, including his human rights activism, date back to his time as a student leader in the 1989 pro-democracy movement. Known as Zen Master Xingwu, Wu Zeheng founded the Buddhist-inspired Huazang Dharma group in the early 1990s. Inspired by the principles of justice and freedom, the group has attracted thousands of members. Authorities regard it as a subversive group.³⁵

Self-immolations: Sonam Tso, a mother of five, set herself on fire in Dzoegge County to protest against Chinese rule in Tibet and to demand the return of the Dalai Lama. Sonam died on 23rd March 2016 but the news only emerged on 7th May because of the restrictions imposed by the communist authorities on communication channels to and from the plateau region. The protest took place near the Sera monastery. Since 2009, when this kind of protest started, until May 2016, there have been 145 suicides committed by monks, young novices and lay people.³⁶

Prospects for freedom of religion

There is a growing personality cult surrounding President Xi Jinping, as was seen in the case of Mao Zedong, and an increasingly evident struggle between factions within the Communist Party. These factions are linked to personal power groups. Over the next two years at least, it is reasonable to forecast growing rhetoric about “security” and “external enemies.” In this case, religious groups – especially Christians – can be expected to become scapegoats. Evidence points to a tightening of control over religious communities and moves towards their compulsory “Sinicisation”, isolating them from the rest of the world.

¹ http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_52_2.asp. cf. Religions: 7% (unofficial: 85%), Buddhists: 1.4% (unofficial: 18%), Taoists: no official data (unofficial: 14%), Folk religions: no official data (unofficial: 26%), Muslims: 1% (unofficial: 2%), Protestants: 1.1% (unofficial: 3.7%), Catholics: 0.4% (unofficial: 1%), Atheists: 50% (unofficial: 15%) - Blue Book of Religions (2011), Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS); Katharina Wenzel-Teuber, “People's Republic of China: Religions and Churches Statistical Overview 2011”, Religions & Christianity in Today's China, 2.3 (2012) < http://www.china-zentrum.de/fileadmin/redaktion/RCTC_2012-3.29-54_Wenzel-Teuber_Statistical_Overview_2011.pdf>; Tony Lambert, “Religious Statistics in China”, China Sources, 7th January 2013 < <http://www.chinasource.org/resource-library/articles/religious-statistics-in-china>>.

² “Decades of the rigid authoritarian socialism of founder Mao Zedong were followed in China only by economic reforms, but economic change has not been matched by political reform, and the Communist Party retains a tight grip on political life and much of wider society”: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-13017877>, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_Index

³ AsiaNews.it 1st July 2015.

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- ⁴ AsiaNews.it, 21st May 2015; China Christian Net, 23rd November 2015; People's Daily, 24th April 2016; AsiaNews.it, 28th April 2016.
- ⁵ AsiaNews.it, 26th May 2015; AsiaNews.it, 10th February 2016; See also *Global Times*, 14th November 2014.
- ⁶ AsiaNews.it, 4th January 2016.
- ⁷ AsiaNews.it, 14th January 2016.
- ⁸ South China Morning Post, 7th April 2015; BBC Chinese, 7th April 2015; Xinhua, 4th March 2015; China Youth Daily, 3rd March 2015.
- ⁹ AsiaNews.it, 20th May 2014; AsiaNews.it, 24th June 2015; AsiaNews.it, 24th July 2015; China Aid, 15th March 2016.
- ¹⁰ James Leibold, "China's Ethnic Policy Under Xi Jinping" in *China Brief*, 15.20 (2015)
<http://www.jamestown.org/programs/chinabrief/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=44496&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=789&no_cache=1#.V1gTiXJrjcs>; AsiaNews.it, 27th October 2015.
- ¹¹ AsiaNews.it, 16th November 2015.
- ¹² See for example Jens Braarvig, "Iconoclasm – Three Modern Cases" in *Iconoclasm from Antiquity to Modernity*, ed. by Kristine Kolrud and Marina Prusac (Franham : Ashgate, 2014), 153-170, p. 161.
- ¹³ AsiaNews.it, 10th March 2015.
- ¹⁴ Global Times 30th November 2015; AsiaNews.it, 1st December 2015.
- ¹⁵ AsiaNews.it, 16th April 2015; AsiaNews.it, 20th January 2016.
- ¹⁶ Sources: Hong Kong Government Census and Statistics Department; Hong Kong Catholic Diocese.
- ¹⁷ Cardinal Kung Foundation, 14th November 2015; AsiaNews.it, 16th November 2015.
- ¹⁸ AsiaNews.it, 22nd March 2015.
- ¹⁹ AsiaNews.it, 27th May 2015.
- ²⁰ AsiaNews.it, 9th February 2015.
- ²¹ AsiaNews.it, 27th April 2015; Eglises d'Asie, 3rd May 2016.
- ²² AsiaNews.it, 10th July 2015.
- ²³ AsiaNews.it, 19th April 2016; AsiaNews.it, 3rd May 2016.
- ²⁴ AsiaNews.it, 25th March 2015.
- ²⁵ China Aid, 25th August 2015; AsiaNews.it, AsiaNews.it, 28th August 2015; 31st August 2015; AsiaNews.it, 26th February 2016; South *China Morning Post*, 26th February 2016.
- ²⁶ Voice of America, 27th October 2015; AsiaNews.it, 28th October 2015; China Aid, 28th October 2015.
- ²⁷ China Aid, 18th December 2015; AsiaNews.it, 19th December 2015.
- ²⁸ *Shanghai Daily*, 22nd January 2015; AsiaNews.it, 22nd January 2015; Ucanews, 22nd January 2015.
- ²⁹ AsiaNews.it, 29th December 2015.
- ³⁰ AsiaNews.it, 19th June 2015.
- ³¹ Radio Free Asia, 17th November 2015; AsiaNews.it, 18th November 2015.
- ³² AsiaNews.it, 24th July 2015; Radio Free Asia, 27th July 2015.
- ³³ Phayul, 21st March 2015; AsiaNews.it, 24th March 2015.
- ³⁴ Radio Free Asia 13th July 2015; AsiaNews.it, 13th July 2015; AsiaNews.it, 15th July 2015.
- ³⁵ Global Times, 1st November 2015; AsiaNews.it, 6th November 2015.
- ³⁶ AsiaNews.it, 9th May 2016.