

# Faith and Human Rights Leaders Urge United Nations to Stand Against China's Religious Freedom Violations

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, January 11, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Ahead of China's upcoming review before the United Nations Human Rights Council, a group of multi-faith and human rights leaders have written to the Council urging its members to take a principled stand against the Chinese government's "increasingly severe suppression of religious freedom."

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*35+ multi-faith and human rights leaders*

“As leaders and practitioners of differing faiths, we speak in solidarity with all our brothers and sisters enduring the Chinese government's oppression,” the more than 35 faith leaders say in their letter to Council President Omar Zniber. “The United Nations Human Rights Council and every nation within that body has an opportunity, and a profound responsibility, to express that freedom of religion is a universal, foundational right. It must be defended vociferously wherever persecution occurs.”

The letter arrives two weeks prior to China's Universal

Periodic Review (UPR) before the Human Rights Council, scheduled to take place January 23 in Geneva, Switzerland. The UPR is a mechanism for assessing the human rights record of every UN member state and it occurs every four to five years.

In the letter, the leaders, who represent a variety of faith and belief communities, note with alarm that the situation inside China has only gotten worse since the Chinese government's last UPR in 2018. For example:

- China's efforts to erode Tibetan Buddhism are expanding, with the Chinese government demanding the right to approve Buddhist clergy and plotting to appoint a successor to the 88-year-old Dalai Lama.
- China is systematically destroying mosques in the Uyghur region and even trying to rewrite not just the Quran but other essential religious texts as well.
- The nine-year sentence given to Pastor Wang Yi of Early Rain Covenant Church on charges of “inciting subversion of state power” and “illegal business activity” is part of an increasing trend to separate influential leaders from their churches.

Unless the international community takes action, it is certain that millions of people from different faiths and belief traditions will suffer hardship, censure, torture, and even death across China, the letter says.

However, the leaders emphasize that the problem goes beyond China, with religion-based persecution and religious freedom violations rising in many parts of the world. If the Human Rights Council doesn't hold China accountable, that will signal to other regimes that extreme religious freedom abuses will go unchallenged.

"For this reason," the letter says, "it is urgent and imperative that our global leaders and the United Nations itself directly confront the Chinese government's relentless suppression of religious freedom. This must be done not only in the name of reform and progress in China, but also as a call for religious freedom for every faith and every human being everywhere."

View the [full text of the letter and all signatories here](#). For media inquiries or to request interviews with signatories, contact [press@lantosfoundation.org](mailto:press@lantosfoundation.org).

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