

Chinese Christians in Europe—Speak Out in Defense of Human Rights and Repudiation of Persecution

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Good morning! Welcome and thank you for participating in this conference hosted by the Church of Almighty God France and the Church of Almighty God Netherlands—“Chinese Christians in Europe—Speak Out in Defense of Human Rights and Repudiation of Persecution.” I am Monica, a Chinese Christian from the Church of Almighty God (CAG). I am honored to host this conference today. First we will talk about the situation of the asylum applications by Christians of the CAG in France and Netherlands, and then we will come to the question and discussion part, we welcome everyone to ask questions and discuss “how to resolve the asylum issue of the persecuted Chinese Christians.”

Before we talk about our asylum situation, we will first give a brief introduction regarding the CAG.

The CAG was founded due to the appearance and work of the incarnate God of the last days. Since Almighty God incarnate appeared to do His work in mainland China in 1991, He has expressed several million words. All the people in all the sects of the religious world who truly believed in God, who thirsted for God’s appearance and who could discern the voice of God recognized God’s voice from the words of Almighty God. They believed that Almighty God is the return of the Lord Jesus and one after another, they have all returned before Almighty God. This is how the CAG was founded. Presently, in mainland China alone, more than 3 million people have accepted Almighty God’s work of the last days. The CAG has expanded overseas to Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Philippines, the United States and other countries and territories.

As is known to us all, In order to establish China as an atheistic territory and a perpetual dictatorship, since the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) came into power, it has frantically persecuted religious belief and initiated large-scale suppression, persecution and seizures of Christians. That the rapid development of the CAG really gave the CCP a panic. In order to thoroughly ban the CAG, in 2014, the CCP meticulously concocted the “May 28 Shandong Zhaoyuan Case” and shifted the blame on the CAG. Soon after, they initiated a nationwide operation specifically targeting the CAG called “Hundred Days Battle.” After the incident, in just 2 months, between June and August, at least 1,000 innocent Christians of the CAG were apprehended. It is well documented that at least 6 people were cruelly tortured to death. (In regard to the truth of May 28 incident, we attach links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcH8LGHN8YU&t=13s>;

<https://freedomofbelief.net/articles/xie-jiao-in-china-the-church-of-almighty-god>)

In this situation, a number of our brothers and sisters were forced in 2015 to flee to France and apply to the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA) for political asylum. In the Refugee Agencies it was the first time for us to openly describe the persecution that we have faced and how we earnestly hoped that we would receive protection. However, because the CCP made use of media to fabricate the rumors and defame the CAG to the overseas, resulting in the French Refugee Agencies are hard to know the facts of the persecution suffered by CAG, so we met many difficulties. Because every Christian of the CAG that has fled to France has personally endured persecution at the hands of the CCP. For example, Brother Zhang Yong’s father was reported in 2007 by evil people for spreading the gospel. Luckily, he was not

caught by police. After the police issued an order for his arrest, his father left home to go into hiding. During the hiding, he developed an illness and because there was a delay in diagnosis, he passed away in August, 2011. During this period of time, the police frequently searched Zhang Yong's family's house for his father either late at night or early on the morning. They even started to monitor his family; Brother Yan Su and a few brothers and sisters were gathering in a house when they were arrested by police armed with truncheons and guns who barged in willfully; Brother Xiaojie was arrested when he was 12 for spreading the gospel and once more at 22 years of age. He was illegally imprisoned for more than 3 months. To evade capture by the CCP, his mother went deep into the mountains to hide and later died of illness. His father and brother have been seized before for believing in God and to this day are hiding in some place. They have a home but they cannot return to it..... These are the facts of their persecution, yet their political asylum were denied by the National Court of the Right to Asylum (CNDA) .

So far, only three persons have been granted asylum to-date, with about 48% of the applicants have ended their asylum application (in the past three months , among those whose asylum application were completely rejected, 61% of the applicants have been directly rejected by CNDA without giving a chance of Public Hearing), and the other 52% of the applicants still pending for processing, in whom more than a half has been rejected by the OFPRA, waiting the chance of public hearing of the CNDA. According the French law, the rejection of CNDA means the asylum application ended completely. The completely rejected people have lost the rights to stay in French territory.

As to the reasons the Refugee Agencies gave for rejecting our applications, We found the most common reasons and listed them below along with our own comments.

1. Refugee Agencies admitted that some of their members might be persecuted because of their activities. However, the Refugee Agencies said there exist variations in the implementation of the law according to the cities and the visibility of the targeted followers, the level of tolerance changing according to the local strategies of the authorities.

In response to this article, in order to ban the CAG, the CCP has labeled the church as an evil cult. In the 300th clause of "People's Republic of China Criminal Law," it stipulates the penalties for evil cult: fines, confiscation of property, detention, and imprisonment. Prison sentence can be up to life imprisonment. Since the CCP has given the church this designation, then all the members of the church became the targets of the CCP suppression and persecution at any time. This is because the CCP first designates a target for their suppression with a serious criminal charge and soon afterward adopts all kinds of heavy-handed methods of suppression, and all those who have been designated under these charges as criminals can at any time face serious persecution. This is similar to the shocking Tiananmen Incident on June 4, 1989. The CCP labeled the students as "counterrevolutionaries" and then publicly massacred and suppressed them. Subsequently, there were large scale arrests of demonstrators and supporters. According to a report by Amnesty International in 2017, families that had lost children during the incident were still monitored and harassed. This year, in March, four activists who merely sold liquor on the internet with pictures related to the Tiananmen incident were charged with "incitement to subvert state power" and sent to prison for 15 years.

Another aspect is that China is a dictatorship ruled by one political party. It is different from democratic countries. All levels of the government must do things completely in accordance with the instructions of the Party Central Committee. When the CCP designates the CAG as an evil cult and formulates and sends out documents that specifically suppress the church, all levels of government must implement to the letter what is written in those documents. Nationwide without variations.

2. Refugee Agencies use “DIDR, L'organisation millénariste Almighty God, 4 février 2016” as a main reference to recognize the identity of our Christian

For this point, we want to say that most information sources in the DIDR report are from the CCP's false report, which do not meet the objective facts. For example, the CAG was personally established by Almighty God. However, the report states that the founder of the church was simply the man being used by the Holy Spirit. Almighty God's word clearly states that the three stages of God's work are as follows: the Age of Law, the Age of Grace and the Age of Kingdom. In contrast, the report states that the three stages are: creation, salvation and destruction/final judgment. From which we can see that it is inaccurate to recognize the identity of Christians of the CAG based on this report.

3. Refugee Agencies in accordance to the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada's report on 6 March, 2014, believes that if someone has been searched or captured before, his personal information would have been collected and inputted into the Ministry of Public Security's online database. If this were the case, these Christians would not be able to apply for a passport or visa, nor would they be able to smoothly cross customs. So it was found that there was no danger due to the applicant have valid visa and passport to go through the customs.

Our response to this is that, even though we could apply for a passport or a visa and we could cross customs, it does not mean that we have not been persecuted and in danger. This is because the CCP captures, imprisons and interrogates the majority of Christians secretly. Therefore, the cases where many brothers and sisters have been illegally imprisoned and fined cannot be found online unless they are wanted nationally. Additionally, there are people who had been captured and sent to labor camps to be reeducated but who have crossed customs and left China. Such examples can attest to this situation.

4. The statement of personal persecution is simple, and does not have any convincing evidence to prove.

First of all, generally our interview in the OFPRA only last 1-2 hours, which also includes the time to check personal information and to translate, therefore we don't have enough time to present the details of our experience.

About the evidence: The legal provisions of the CCP's control and repression of the house church are open to the public, the reports of the US State Department, the Freedom House, etc, also refer to the fact that the CAG was persecuted, and some brothers and sisters have submitted fact reports of religious persecution of areas where they live. In addition, most brothers and sisters have testimonies from their church members, which can prove the persecution they have suffered in China.

Recently, some brothers and sisters who have been rejected by CNDA but who have not yet received an official departure order have received several SMS from the immigration department urging them to leave France. Some have received the SMS ten times, each time they receive these SMS, they become particularly distraught and frightened. All the brothers and sisters who have been rejected by CNDA are afraid of going outside. They are worried the police will check their identity. They do not have a life source and their living conditions are very difficult. All they rely on is help from their brothers and sisters to make it through this difficult situation. They miss their homes and their families but they are afraid that they would be captured, tortured and even crippled or killed if they return.

It can be seen through the recent news reports that the CCP has escalated the repression on the CAG. In July 2017, in the Fuyang district of Zhejiang, in the Xianju County and Changxing County,

several arrest campaigns were carried out successively against the believers. Particularly in the Fuyang district, a force of 320 policemen, divided into 66 teams, were dispatched, and in total they arrested 76 members of our Church. And this is just what we have learned from the Internet. There are certainly other events of this kind, which we do not know the existence! In addition, we have learned from the internal documents of CCP that the CCP has not only enhance the construction of overseas secret forces, it attempts to investigate in detail the situation of the members of the CAG in all countries. In 2015 they launched a new political movement called "Two Investigations, One Project" to find out all those who fled overseas because of faith. On May 18, 2015, when a Christian of the CAG named Li ZhenYuan returned from South Korea to Yanji City in China, he was arrested by the Yanji police. After cruelly torturing him for six days and nights by the police, he pretended to act as an undercover informant of the CAG in South Korea and finally escaped the persecution of CCP. In February of 2015, the CAG Christian Zhang Fu fled to South Korea due to his being persecuted in China. In May of 2016, the CCP incited Zhang's wife, coming to South Korea with an agent of the CCP. They in an attempt to forcibly abduct him back to China to convict and persecute him. Fortunately, Brother Zhang Fu made a narrow escape at the airport. This undoubtedly makes our situation even worse. Faced with the repression of the CCP, we are eager to get political asylum, because once we are expelled to China, the persecution will be more serious.

Facing these difficulties, we have experienced disappointment, but we never give up. We cherish every opportunity of public hearing from CNDA, trying to explain clearly how we were persecuted. We have made great efforts to ask human rights organizations and activists for help. Because we hope to get the attention of the French authorities. Moreover, we learn French assiduously, and we actively doing volunteer work. We distribute the food to those homeless; clean up the garbage in refugee reception area; sort out the clothes that need to be distributed to refugees in refugee service institution; and we do long-term volunteers in several churches, etc. We have also participated in some human rights activities, and we cherish the life in France very much. Our brothers and sisters who have fled to other countries are also do volunteer work and participate in human rights activities. With the passing of time, the outside world begins to know our Church. Some media in South Korea and an European NGO have published objective reports about our Church. The documentary entitled "Chronicles of Religious Persecution in China" and the Musical drama entitled "Xiaozhen's Story" produced by our Church, were selected and awarded by some film festivals in countries, including several Christian Film Festivals.

At last, In regard to our circumstance as refugees, we have the following few requests:

1. Hope the French authorities get further information on the difficult situation that we are presently dealing with, and grant us refugee status or provide subsidiary protection and not send us back.
2. Hope to provide each of us an opportunity of Public Hearing of CNDA.
3. Hope to use the information found on the website of the CAG and our church testimonial as a reference when verifying our members' identities.
4. Hope to evaluate the truth of the CAG in China in accordance with the report on religious belief and freedom and the evidence we provide of suppression of religious belief in China.

Thank you for your patient listening.

The following is a talk delivered by Christian from the Church of Almighty God Netherlands:

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen!

My name is Vivian, I am here to inform you about the situation of the asylum applications by Christians of the Church of Almighty God in the Netherlands:

Of the current applications for asylum by Christians of the Church of Almighty God in the Netherlands, 26 per cent are approved, 5 per cent pending and 69 per cent rejected by the immigration authorities. The main reason for rejection is that the immigration authorities do not believe the applicants are Christians of the Church of Almighty God. The general reasons why they are rejected by immigration officers are listed here:

First, some immigration officers rely on information obtained from open source on the doctrine of the Church of Almighty God, which is in fact disinformation disseminated in the public domain by the Chinese Communist government. Ironically, when asylum applicants reply to questions according to the authentic version, the discrepancies are misconstrued by immigration officers as the applicants' lack of basic understanding of the Church of Almighty God.

Second, the immigration officers deem the applicants' narratives of their faith lack details and specificity. Thus they regard the applicants' experience of faith in God as untrue.

Third, some officers reason that since the Church of Almighty God is severely oppressed by the Chinese Communist Party, it is inconceivable that its members can leave China by lawful means. Hence the fact that they have been persecuted in China is not recognized.

The three points above are the main reason why the immigration authorities have rejected the Christians of the Church of Almighty God in the Netherlands. With the assistance of their lawyers, the applicants submitted their arguments to the immigration authorities. Today we want to make the following comments:

Pertaining to the first point, some immigration officers rely on the disinformation disseminated in the public domain by the Chinese Communist government. For example, the fact that the Church of Almighty God was founded in 1991 is well documented on its official website. However, in one rejected case, the immigration officer based his findings on unverified open source information that the Church of Almighty God was established in 1989 instead, and rejected the applicant's correct answer of "1991." Accordingly, the lawyer provided information from the Church of Almighty God's official website to confirm that the applicant's previous answer was correct. But the immigration officer countered that there were other sources of information indicating the Church of Almighty God was established in 1990, and again denied the fact that the Church of Almighty God was established in 1991.

Moreover, contrasting the cases of rejection and approval by immigration officers where the applicants have answered the same questions identically according to the church's doctrine, some applicants were approved while others were inexplicably denied by immigration officers.

Second, in fact, during the hearing process, anywhere from twelve- to thirty-hours of communication was conducted between the applicants and immigration officers in which many details were elaborated upon the applicants' belief and the process of their studies, but the immigration authorities still felt it was insufficient.

Third, in China, many people are pursued, secretly detained and fined by the Chinese Communist Party without being officially wanted. So their names do not appear on the "blacklist" of the Public Security Bureau and Customs' network systems. For this reason, some people who had been arrested were able to flee from China. Although we were able to obtain passports and visas, it does not prove that we have not been persecuted by the Chinese Communist Party.

Let us refer to two cases whose subjects were persecuted by the Chinese Communist Party but able to lawfully leave China:

(1) A Family of Five Catholics Fled Mainland China to Take Refuge in Third Country

(2) Human Rights Defenders:

Next, let me introduce three cases belonging to our church that were rejected. Taking into account the security of the brothers and sisters of the church, their real names will be replaced by pseudonyms.

Case 1: Ma Lin, male, 30 years old, artistic professional; applied for asylum in April 2016. His application was rejected by the immigration authorities in July 2017 who did not recognize him as a Christian of the Church of Almighty God. Ever since his flight to the Netherlands, Ma Lin has been writing video titles for the Church of Almighty God. His works include From the Throne Flows the Water of Life. The Main Purpose of God's Work in the Flesh. During the Last Days, God Principally Uses the Word to Accomplish All, and so on. During his application for asylum, he submitted the following documents: 1. video links for the relevant titles; 2. manuscripts for his works; 3. certificate issued by the Church of Almighty God. But he still did not receive the recognition of the immigration authorities.

Case 2: Zhong Cheng, married to Ding Ning; Zhong Cheng, male, 31 years old, and Ding Ning, female, 30 years old. They arrived in Holland at the end of April 2016 and applied for asylum at the beginning of May. In January 2017, the immigration authorities initially rejected their asylum application, the main reason being that they were not acknowledged as being Christians of the Church of Almighty God. The immigration authorities believed that the answers they were given concerning the teachings of the Church of Almighty God did not tally with the information they got from the public domain. In fact, during the hearing, Zhong Cheng and his wife had already submitted the introduction of the official website of the Church of Almighty God, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Almighty God," which was sufficient to show that their answers were in line with the church's teachings. But the immigration official did not consult the information they had submitted from the church's official website, nor was their confirmation letter from the church recognized. They were officially rejected by the immigration authorities in April, and they have now lodged an appeal.

Case 3: Liu Ying, female, 30 years old; fled from China with another female Christian in September 2015. When passing through customs at the airport, her partner was taken away by the Chinese authorities. She escaped from danger by chance. She applied for asylum after she came to the Netherlands in September 2015. In February 2016, the immigration authorities ruled on her application, believing that she was a member of the Church of Almighty God, but refused to recognize that she was in danger and rejected her asylum application. In March 2016, she filed an appeal which was denied by the court. She subsequently appealed to the High Court which ruled in her favor in March 2017. The immigration authorities have taken no actions since the High Court's ruling so far.

To date, 69 per cent of the applications for asylum by Christians of our church have been rejected. Their lives in the Netherlands are very difficult. They cannot work and do not have a source of income. They are particularly frightened when they hear about Christians being arrested by the police for unlawful residency, and they especially fear for their own arrest. By disclosing our difficulties through the XX Conference, we hope to beckon the attention and concern of the XX Institution and human rights activists. At the same time, we also hope that the Dutch immigration authorities will have a comprehensive understanding of the Church of Almighty God, attach

importance to the fact that Christians of our church are being persecuted and grant them refugee status.

Thank you for your audience and concern for human rights!

May God bless you!