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**Over 2300 believers from The Church of Almighty God in China
desperately beg for political asylum in Europe**

An unprecedented level of state repression against all religions and believers has been raging and escalating month after month in China since Xi Ji Ping has made sure he will be president for life.

Believers belonging to mainline or well-known religions in China are usually granted political asylum when they come to Europe but the world map of religions reveals an infinite diversity of belief systems and people who adhere to them are protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

One of the most persecuted churches in China is The Church of Almighty God which has several million members according to the Chinese authorities themselves. Our organization, *Human Rights Without Frontiers*, has a database of over 4000 documented cases of religious prisoners in the world. More than 2000 are Chinese believers of The Church of Almighty God and it is only the tip of the iceberg.

As of 18 August of this year, believers of The Church of Almighty God fleeing persecution in China were looking for a safe haven in 15 European countries: 14 EU member states and Switzerland.

Finland and Sweden are to be congratulated for their hospitality. Each of them only rejected two cases.

Italy is the country with the highest number of believers of The Church of Almighty God (845) but only 133 were recognized as refugees and 332 got a departure order but nobody has been deported as of today.

In Belgium, the results remain disastrous. The 11 applications last year were all rejected (100%) and departure orders were issued to all the members of the Church of Almighty God. They are now living in hiding.

In France, the situation is particularly dramatic. Out of 444 applications, 406 were rejected (90%) and almost half of them have received a departure order. They live in hiding and in fear of being arrested on the street, as they were doing under the rule of the CCP. They fear deportation back to China where they would be hunted, arrested, jailed and tortured¹ to betray their brothers and sisters in faith.

France has the highest number of departure orders: 236, more than 50% of the applications. These people risk to be sent back into the hands of their persecutors in China.

In Germany, the country of predilection of people from the Church of Almighty God after Italy, Spain and France, 80% of the applications were turned down. Only 20% were granted the status of refugees. Two applicants were deported to China despite the efforts of the German Red Cross. More than a dozen are on a departure list.

In the Netherlands, the situation has slightly improved since we started to inform the delegations here but more progress is still needed. In 2018, only 25% of the applications were accepted and 65% were rejected. This year, around 30% of the applicants were recognized and 40% got a negative answer.

In Switzerland, 25 applications out of 33 were rejected (over 70%) and only 2 were accepted.

European countries should follow the good practice of **New Zealand** which has successfully processed 53 out of 62 applications for asylum at this stage and has

¹ Before taking a decision concerning the applications for political asylum of people from The Church of Almighty God, the state authorities should consult HRWF brochure “Tortured to Death” (<http://hrwf.eu/forb/our-reports/>) which is also available at the OSCE/ ODIHR Human Dimension Implementation Meeting.

not rejected any. **Canada** is keeping its good rate of more than 70% successful applications.

Recommendations

Human Rights Without Frontiers congratulates **Canada, Finland and Sweden** for their enlightened management of the applications for asylum introduced by people of The Church of Almighty God fleeing religious persecution in China.

Human Rights Without Frontiers recommends that these three countries share their experience about this particular group with the delegations of the other OSCE Participating States, including EU countries and Switzerland

Human Rights Without Frontiers recommends that OSCE Participating States give serious and fair consideration to religion-based asylum requests by Chinese refugees, including those from The Church of Almighty God, and that nobody should be deported without seriously evaluating the risks he or she would face in China, which may include incarceration, torture, and even death.

ANNEX I

Countries	Total Applications	Asylum Granted	Asylum Rejected	Departure Order	Deported	18/08/2019
GERMANY	310	64	242	14	2	
FRANCE	444	38	406	236	0	
ITALY	845	133	332	0	0	
GREECE	47	7	29	0	0	
NETHERLANDS	64	21	27	27	0	
CZECH REP	40	3	27	0	0	
FINLAND	39	37	2	0	0	
SWEDEN	9	7	2	2	1	
SWITZERLAND	33	2	30	25	3	
PORTUGAL	12	0	10	0	0	
BELGIUM	11	0	11	11	0	
UK	7	2	2	0	0	
IRELAND	2	0	0	0	0	
AUSTRIA	9	2	7	1	0	
SPAIN	517	0	0	0	0	

TOTAL 2389 81 1127 316 6

Situation as of 18 August 2019

ANNEX II

	Total number of applications	Asylum Granted	Asylum Rejected	Departure Order	Deported
AUSTRALIA	205	7	32	0	0
AUSTRIA	9	2	6	0	0
BELGIUM	11	0	10	10	0
CANADA	223	165	24	5	3
CZECH REP.	42	3	39	0	0
FINLAND	39	9	30	0	0
FRANCE	444	15	419	186	0
GERMANY	300	40	255	1	2
GREECE	48	3	16	0	0
ITALY	702	61	261	0	0
JAPAN	265	0	22	0	0
NETHERLANDS	48	14	31	31	0
NEW ZEALAND	54	42	0	0	0
PORTUGAL	9	0	6	0	0
SAIPAN	187	11	0	0	0
SOUTH KOREA	960	0	614	183	0
SPAIN	294	0	0	0	0
SWEDEN	9	6	2	2	1
SWITZERLAND	33	1	29	24	3
UNITED KINGDOM	1	1	0	0	0
TOTALS	3883	380	1796	442	9

10% 45% 25%

Situation as of 1 September 2018