

In recent years, the Chinese Communist government has stepped up its persecution against the Church of Almighty God, inflicting great suffering and calamity to us. Because of the CCP's arrest and persecution, many Christians have been separated from their family members and rendered homeless. Some Christians were forced to leave their homeland, fleeing to democratic and free countries. In Italy, Christians of the Church of Almighty God have applied for political asylum, but the road to obtaining political refuge has been arduous. To date, of the Christians from the Church of Almighty God who applied for asylum to the Ministry of the Interior in Italy and have received the result, over ninety percent of them have been rejected.

Upon reviewing numerous notifications of denial, we noticed that the Italian Ministry of the Interior had based its rationale for rejection of our asylum applications on inaccurate information about the Church of Almighty God's founding, doctrine, evangelism, and statutory status published by the immigration and refugee committees of some countries. The sources of such information are reports by some foreign news agencies that have never interviewed or understood the Church of Almighty God. They directly cited the seriously slanderous reports of the CCP's media about the Church of Almighty God. As a result, the Ministry of the Interior could not have a true understanding of our church and the persecution we have suffered. At the hearing, the petitioner's statement being inconsistent with media coverage became the reason for denying his application for asylum.

Why do I say that the Ministry of the Interior based its refusal of our asylum applications on misinformation about our church from the false reports by the CCP's media? At this time, I will explain it by citing the "May 28 McDonalds Murder Case of Zhaoyuan, Shandong," in which the Chinese Communist Party framed and smeared the Church of Almighty God most severely.

On May 28, 2014, at around 21:00, in Zhaoyuan City, Shandong Province, a criminal case of homicide assault broke out at a McDonald's fast food restaurant, allegedly resulting from the perpetrators' failed attempt to obtain the victim's telephone number. Surprisingly, three days later, before the case was even heard in a court, the Chinese

Community Party categorized it as a case of religious murder, alleging that all suspects involved were members of the Church of Almighty God, shifting the blame to the Church of Almighty God. Next, let's take a look at what the sober truth is.

Fact no.1: In the statements they gave at trial, the suspects Zhang Lidong and others denied that they were believers of the Church of Almighty God. The so-called “God” they believed in were Lu Yingchun and Zhang Fan, who had nothing to do with the **Almighty** God witnessed by the Church of Almighty God.

Fact no.2: After the incident, the Church of Almighty God conducted a thorough investigation and verification. The names of Zhang Lidong and others did not belong to the Church of Almighty God. Nor was there any **record** of their participation in the church. Even God’s chosen people in the church did not know them. Zhang Lidong and others had nothing to do with the Church of Almighty God.

Fact no. 3: The mental states of Zhang Lidong and others also confirmed that they were not members of the Church of Almighty God. The Church of Almighty God is very principled in spreading the gospel **and admitting people**: They must truly believe in God, have good **humanity** and normal sense **and can understand the truth**. However, it was apparent from the **offenders’** statements that they were incoherent and delirious. They even dared to call themselves “God.” They were obviously mentally impaired. Such people do not meet the criteria for admission to the Church of Almighty God.

From the three points above, it was adequately proven that Zhang Lidong and others were not members of the Church of Almighty God. They were a group of neurotic people. Yet the Chinese Communist Party insisted on incriminating the Church of Almighty God with a completely unrelated criminal case.

Subsequently, through the footage of monitor video images, we **will further study** the veritable fact that the Chinese Communist Party had planted the evidence to smear the Church of Almighty God.

It can be seen that the May 28 Zhaoyuan murder case in Shandong was single-handedly fabricated by the **CCP**.

However, three days after the incident, before any judicial proceedings had been conducted, the official media outlet of the **CCP** government, CCTV’s "Focus Interview" first broadcast interviews of the suspects Zhang Lidong and others. Yet the report focus of this episode was the perpetrators’ religious belief rather than their

criminal activities. As soon as this episode of "Focus Interview" was broadcast, the May 28 Zhaoyuan case was immediately associated with the political campaign to crack down on religious beliefs. Since then, the spearhead has been directed at the Church of Almighty God. Afterward, information platforms such as various networks, newspapers and television channels competed with each other to report this case. Even major overseas media constantly reran the programs. The Chinese Communist Party used the May 28 Zhaoyuan case to wantonly smear and slander the Church of Almighty God, laying the ground work for repressing and banning the Church of Almighty God.

The official media outlets of the **CCP** directly engaged in reporting falsehood, acting as accomplices of the **CCP** against religious beliefs. So how much authenticity and credibility do the Chinese media have under the control of the **CCP**?

In a report entitled "2015 World Freedom—China," the Freedom House pointed out: "All Chinese television, radio, and print outlets are owned by the CCP or the state. Moreover, all media outlets are required to follow regularly issued CCP directives to avoid certain topics or publish content from party mouthpieces." The United States Department of State also mentioned in its "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" of 2016 on China: "In a well-publicized February 19 visit to the three main state and CCP news organizations—the Xinhua News Agency, CCTV, and the People's Daily—President Xi Jinping said, 'Party and state-run media are the propaganda battlefield of the party and the government, [and] must bear the surname of the party.'" The 2017 World Press Freedom Index released by Reporters Without Borders pointed out that of 180 countries, China ranked bottom fifth on the list.

Facts have proven that the media under the dictatorship of the Chinese Communist Party have been completely reduced to the CCP's instruments of disinformation and denigration for the oppression of dissension that are void of any authenticity and credibility. So the Communist media's coverage of the founding, doctrine, evangelism, statutory status and so on, of the Church of Almighty God, is distortion of the facts that aims to attack, smear and seriously undermine the reputation of the Church of Almighty God, which has led to the general misconception of the Church of Almighty God by the public and media reporters.

The Chinese Communist Party's severe persecution against the Church of Almighty God has made us homeless in China. Now as we live in democratic and free countries, the **CCP media's** negative propaganda against our **church** still follows us like a shadow. Regrettably, some renowned overseas media have arbitrarily cited the derogatory reports of the Chinese Communist media without verifying the truth or interviewing the Church of Almighty God, making the Italian Ministry of the Interior unable to objectively understand **the belief of our church and** the fact that Christians are being persecuted in China. This has led to our applications for asylum being rejected, our religious belief disrespected and our human rights unprotected. **The path of asylum application is very hard for us.** In the following, let us understand, **through a short video,** the real situations of members of the Church of Almighty God whose asylum applications have been rejected.

When we are seeking help from human rights lawyers and institutions, we are burdened by misconception and prejudice of the outside world on us. It is difficult to speak about **the pain in our hearts.** Here are the actual experiences of some of our church members.

1. Sister Wei's application was rejected because of the Chinese Communist Party's negative propaganda. She has spent a lot of time on preparing for explanation to her lawyer. When her lawyer read the report on the condemnation of the Church of Almighty God in the sister's rejection letter, he had doubts about the faith of the Church of Almighty God. He retrieved the news reports from an online search about the Chinese Communist Party's slandering and smearing of the Church of Almighty God, and let the sister explain pertaining to the negative news reports in the letter. At that time, she quickly logged on to the Church of Almighty God's official website and showed the lawyer some of the information about our church, struggling to explain to him in halting English. In the end, the lawyer was able to discern the **CCP's** negative propaganda and promised to undertake the sister's appeal.

2. Sister Song recalled, "I was learning Italian at a refugee institution. One day, the Chinese translator of the institution suddenly asked if I was a member of the Church of Almighty God. I answered 'yes.' Then she did not talk to me again, but discussed directly with other volunteers about **our church.** One of them even went on the internet to access the negative news about the Church of Almighty God. For a while, they were widely discussing about me.

They wouldn't even look at me. The distance between us was suddenly widened. I was being neglected, and I was fighting back tears in a corner.... Later on, I learned that a volunteer at the scene directly made a call to a Christian of another denomination from China who was applying for asylum, and inquired with her about the veritable truth behind the "Shandong Zhaoyuan Murder Case." After **this Christian's** exposing **of** the **CCP's** lies, together with our explanations, and the

humanity lived out by all the Christians of the Church of Almighty God at the institution, their misunderstanding and biases on **our church** were dispelled.

In addition, some brothers and sisters voiced their heartfelt pleas: When getting along with foreign friends or seeing psychologists, they are afraid to utter the name of our church because of the overwhelming negative propaganda. They worry that when people make inquiries online, they will fall for the negative news. The psychologists, in particular, think that we are very cloistered and distrustful of them. Looking at the doctors' helpless expressions, we feel very uneasy. It is not that we want to be defensive. But facing the negative propaganda of the media, coupled with our poor foreign language skills, we worry that we will be discriminated by people around us because of our inarticulateness as in China.

Similar incidents keep happening to us.... Although we are living in democratic and free countries overseas, because of the negative media coverage of the Church of Almighty God, our faith is being slandered and our dignity trampled upon.

We hope that by attending the XX conference to tell our story, we can draw more people to understand and pay attention to the problems that Christians of the Church of Almighty God encounter when applying for religious asylum in Italy. We hope that when judging our applications for asylum, the Italian government will no longer rely on unilateral reports by the media as basis for evaluating the faith of Christians of **our church** and **the persecution we have suffered, but will** be able to take various aspects into consideration: be able to reference the Church of Almighty God's official website while evaluating the faith status of Christians, and respect **our** faith, and the fact that **we** have been persecuted by the **CCP**. At the same time, we hope that the major overseas media will try to understand and interview Christians of the Church of Almighty God with an objective, impartial and true principle in order to restore the truth. This is the basic respect for human rights and faith! "Malicious and improper media behaviors undoubtedly undermine reputation." Using testimonies that lack credibility as the basis of reporting to "criticize religion" should be a cause for social alarm!

I have stated the case for the Italian question. Thank you !

