

**L'Église de Dieu Tout-Puissant**

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**OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting**

**Warsaw, Thursday 13 September 2018**

**Working Session 7: Fundamental freedoms 1: Including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief**

**Title: Chinese religious refugees denied political asylum in France**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I want to thank the OSCE/ODIHR for giving me the opportunity to take the floor at this conference. I am talking on behalf of members of The Church of Almighty God (CAG) who came from China to France for political asylum.

Since it was founded in 1991, The Church of Almighty God has always been brutally suppressed and persecuted by the Chinese Communist government. In China, anyone who has owned a book of the Church will be the target of arrest and persecution. In 2014, the Chinese Communist Party once again conducted a nationwide arrest of Christians belonging to our Church, and we were forced to risk our life and flee to France for political asylum. Unfortunately, as of August, 419 of 444 members of our Church applying for the status of refugee have been flatly rejected, and 186 of them have received departure orders. These rejected Christians are now in danger of being deported back to China at any time.

In January 2018, two sisters whose asylum application had been rejected were stopped by the French police for ID checking and were found without a legal residence permit. They were kept in a retention center, facing the danger of deportation back to China. They showed their church membership attestation and some proof persecution of their Church by the Chinese Communist Party. French priests also witnessed for them that they are devoted Christians, and their life would be in danger if they were forcibly sent back to their country. Their lawyer pleaded for them two times, yet the judges confirmed their decision of expulsion. When the 45-day maximum retention period was due, the police had to release them, but a departure order was issued, asking them to leave French territory on their own. During the period of retention, they applied for re-examination of their case to the OFPRA, the French Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons, but their applications were rejected again. This makes the other rejected Christians desperate: They live in fear, do not even dare to go out, and their daily life is severely constrained.

The Chinese Communist Party has repeatedly issued secret documents to identify the members of our Church who have fled overseas. Once members of our Church are sent back to China, they will be arrested and imprisoned for years, or even killed. Wang Aixian, a member of our Church who fled to Switzerland and sought asylum there due to the persecution of the Chinese Communist Party, was denied asylum in March 2017 and then sent back to China. On 7 October of the same year, she was arrested and sentenced to three years in jail. Now she is still serving her prison term. Another member of our Church, Yang Shihua, who returned to China from South Korea in May 2018 for medical treatment because of a serious illness, was arrested the moment she got off the plane at Beijing Airport. There are unfortunately many cases like that. We call on the government of France to pay special attention to the members from The Church of Almighty God, not handing them over to their persecutors by deporting them to China. Thank you very much!

#### **Recommandations**

**We urge the French authorities not to deport the members of The Church of Almighty God but to grant them political asylum. None of them has committed any illegal act in France. At the same time, we call for the support of OSCE, to ensure our basic human rights in France and other OSCE participating states.**