

Reports on Tibet, Hong Kong and Macau are appended at the end of this report.

The constitution protects religious freedom for all citizens but, in practice, the government generally enforced other laws and policies that restrict religious freedom. The constitution states that Chinese citizens "enjoy freedom of religious belief" and "normal religious activities," but does not define "normal." It also bans the state, public organizations, and individuals from compelling citizens to believe in, or not believe in, any religion. Only religious groups belonging to one of the five state-sanctioned "patriotic religious associations" (Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant) are permitted to register and to hold worship services. Religious groups, such as Protestant groups unaffiliated with a patriotic religious association, or Catholics professing loyalty to the Vatican, are not permitted to register as legal entities. In some parts of the country, authorities charged religious believers unaffiliated with a patriotic religious association with various crimes, including "illegal religious activities" or "disrupting social stability." Proselytizing in public or unregistered places of worship is not permitted. Some religious and spiritual groups are outlawed. Tibetan Buddhists in China are not free to openly venerate the Dalai Lama and encounter severe government interference in religious practice (see Tibet section). Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members are discouraged from participating in religious activities.

The government's level of respect for religious freedom in law and in practice declined during the reporting period. The government continued to implement measures that strictly regulated religious activity in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). During the reporting period, the government's repression of religious freedom remained severe in the Tibet Autonomous Region and other Tibetan areas, particularly during "sensitive periods," such as the Shanghai World Expo and the Asian Games in Guangzhou. The central government supported the social service work of registered religious groups by publicly stating the positive role that religious groups can play in society. In its 2009-2010 National Human Rights Action Plan, the government stated that it would "encourage and support religious circles in launching social welfare programs [and] exploring methods and channels for religions to better serve society and promote the people's well-being." Registered religious groups provided social services throughout the country, and certain overseas faith-based aid groups were allowed to deliver services in coordination with local authorities and domestic groups. Some unregistered religious groups reported that local authorities placed limits on their ability to provide social services. Public discussion of house churches in academic conferences continued.

Both Uighur Muslims and Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders reported increased societal discrimination, especially around sensitive periods, including being denied lodging at hotels.

The Department of State, the U.S. embassy in Beijing, and the U.S. consulates general in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenyang, and Wuhan consistently urged the government to expand the scope of religious freedom in keeping with the rights codified in the constitution and internationally recognized norms. U.S. officials criticized abuses of religious freedom and acknowledged positive trends. U.S. officials in the country and in Washington met with religious believers, family members of religious prisoners, and religious freedom defenders. The U.S. embassy protested the imprisonment of individuals on charges related to their religious practices and other abuses of religious freedom. Since 1999 the Secretary of State has designated the country a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) for particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of 3.5 million square miles and a population of 1.3 billion. A 2007 survey conducted by researchers in Shanghai and reported in state-run media concluded that 31.4 percent of citizens ages 16 and over are religious believers. Approximately 200 million respondents to the survey described themselves as Buddhist, Taoist, or worshippers of folk gods. In its report to the United Nations Human Rights Council during its Universal Periodic Review session in February 2009, the government stated there were 100 million religious believers in the country. It is difficult to estimate the number of Buddhists and Taoists because they do not have congregational memberships, and many practice exclusively at home. A 2007 Chinese public opinion polling firm found that 11 to 16 percent of adults identify themselves as Buddhists, and less than 1 percent of adults identify themselves as Taoists. In 2009 the Xinhua news agency estimated there are 100 million Buddhists in the country.

According to the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA), there are more than 21 million Muslims in the country. Other (unofficial) estimates range as high as 50 million or more. According to SARA there are approximately 36,000 Islamic places of worship in the country (more than half of which are in the XUAR), more than 45,000 imams nationwide, and 10 Islamic schools. The government subsidized the construction of state-sanctioned places of worship and religious schools.

There are 10 predominantly Muslim ethnic groups in the country. Certain Muslim communities have adopted the practice of designating separate mosques for female worshippers. According to media reports, the Islamic Association of China licenses female imams. The 2000 census reported a total of 20.3 million members of Muslim nationalities, of which 96 percent belonged to just three groups: Hui 9.8 million, Uighurs 8.4 million, and Kazakhs 1.25 million. Hui Muslims live throughout the country but are concentrated primarily in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Qinghai, and Gansu provinces. Uighur Muslims live primarily in the XUAR.

According to the 2010 Blue Book of Religions, compiled by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' (CASS) Institute of World Religions, Christians number nearly 23 million, accounting for 1.8 percent of the population. The Blue Book--the first official figures compiled on the country's religions--stated that 70 percent of Christians are female and 67 percent have been baptized. Christians between the ages of 35 and 64 account for more than 60 percent of the total number and a quarter are 65 or older. According to official media, the CASS study found that 70 percent of Protestants worship in registered churches and 30 percent worship in unregistered churches, residences of friends, or their own homes.

According to June 2010 SARA statistics, the official Protestant population is 16 million. Government officials stated there are more than 50,000 Protestant churches registered under the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), the state-approved Protestant patriotic association, and 18 TSPM theological schools. The Pew Research Center estimated in 2007 that 50 million to 70 million Christians practice in unregistered religious gatherings, also known as "house churches." A Chinese scholar estimated that the number of Protestants, including those in both registered and unregistered churches, was nearly 90 million.

According to SARA, more than 5.3 million Catholics worship in sites registered by the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA). The Holy Spirit Study Center in Hong Kong estimated in 2009 that there were 12 million Catholics in the country. Official sources reported that the CPA has more than 70 bishops, nearly 3,000 priests and nuns, 6,000 churches and meeting places, and 12 seminaries. Of the 97 dioceses in the country, 40 reportedly did not have an officiating bishop in 2007, and in 2009 there were an estimated 30 bishops over 80 years of age.

Local governments have legalized certain religions and practices in addition to the five nationally recognized religions. Examples include Orthodox Christianity in some provinces, including Xinjiang, Heilongjiang, Zhejiang, and Guangdong provinces. Some ethnic minorities have retained or reclaimed traditional religions, such as Dongba among the Naxi people in Yunnan and Buluotuo among the Zhuang in Guangxi. Worship of the folk deity Mazu reportedly has been reclassified as "cultural heritage" rather than religious practice.

Falun Gong is a self-described spiritual discipline that combines qigong (a traditional Chinese exercise discipline) with the teachings of founder Li Hongzhi. Prior to the government's 1999 ban of Falun Gong, it estimated that there were 70 million adherents.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

Please refer to Appendix C in the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for the status of the government's acceptance of international legal standards <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/appendices/index.htm>.

The constitution protects religious freedom for all citizens but, in practice, the government generally enforced laws, administrative orders, and other policies that restrict religious freedom. The government has signed, but not ratified, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provides the right to belief and manifest belief through "worship, observance, and practice." The constitution protects the right to hold or not to hold a religious belief and protects "normal religious activities," but does not define "normal." It is not possible to take legal action against the government on the basis of the religious freedom protections in the constitution. Religious groups were vulnerable to action by local officials who often regulate through administrative orders. A provision in the criminal law allows the state to sentence government officials to up to two years in prison if they violate religious freedom.

Certain religious and spiritual groups are banned by law. Some individuals belonging to or supporting banned groups have been imprisoned or sentenced to Reeducation Through Labor (RTL) on charges such as "distributing evil cult materials" or "using a heretical organization to subvert the law." The criminal law defines banned groups as "evil cults." A 1999 judicial explanation stated that this term "refers to those illegal groups that have been found using religions, qigong or other things as a camouflage, deifying their leading members, recruiting and controlling their members, and deceiving people by molding and spreading superstitious ideas, and endangering the society." There are no public criteria for determining, or procedures for challenging, such a designation. The government maintained its bans on the Guan Yin (also known as Guanyin Famin or the Way of the Goddess of Mercy), Zhong Gong (a qigong exercise discipline), and Falun Gong. The government also considered several Protestant Christian groups to be "evil cults," including the "Shouters," Eastern Lightning, the Society of Disciples (Mentu Hui), Full Scope Church, Spirit Sect, New Testament Church, Three Grades of Servants (or San Ban Pu Ren), Association of Disciples, Lord God Sect, Established King Church, Unification Church, Family of Love, and the South China Church. Several government websites described a campaign to "transform" the thinking of Falun Gong practitioners. The websites instructed local government officials to form responsible "help education teams" to transform Falun Gong members by hosting legal education seminars for hardcore members and/or by recruiting relatives, friends, and family members to go into households to educate Falun Gong believers.

At the national level, the United Front Work Department, SARA, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs provide policy "guidance and supervision" on the implementation of the 1998 Religious Affairs Regulations and 2005 Regulations on Social Organizations that allow patriotic religious associations to engage in activities such as building places of worship, training religious leaders, publishing literature, and providing social services to local communities. Patriotic religious leaders often have a close relationship with the government and the CCP. Some patriotic religious leaders serve in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, an advisory body that provides non-CCP advice to the central government.

Religious groups independent of the five patriotic religious associations have great difficulty obtaining legal status and can be vulnerable to coercive and punitive action by the Public Security Bureau (PSB) and the Religious Affairs Bureau. In parts of the country, local authorities tacitly approved of the activities of unregistered groups and did not interfere with them, reportedly leading to unregistered churches holding worship services attended by hundreds. In other areas local officials punished the same activities by confiscating and destroying property or imprisoning leaders and worshippers.

Several religious leaders reported that their applications for registration were rejected because they were not affiliated with a patriotic religious association. Some cited the politicization of religion as a reason for their reluctance to affiliate, including reconciling Christianity with socialism. Leaders of unregistered churches expressed concern that they would have to deny certain theological beliefs because of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement/China Christian Council (TSPM/CCC) prohibition on denominations. They also cited reluctance to accept restrictions on evangelism and religious sacraments.

Since 2005 SARA has publicly acknowledged that family and friends have the right to meet at home for worship, including prayer and Bible study, without registering with the government. This statement was posted on SARA's Web site at various times. Respect for this policy at the provincial, county, and local levels was uneven, and there were several reported cases of local officials disrupting religious meetings in private homes. In January SARA issued new temporary measures which exerted more control over the financial affairs of registered religious venues. On March 1, 2010, regulations issued by the State Administration of Foreign Exchange went into effect outlining the process through which all domestic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including religious organizations, can receive donations of foreign currency. The regulation requires documented approval by SARA of donations to religious groups of over one million RMB (\$152,997). To date, the effect of the regulation remains unclear.

Individuals seeking to enroll at an official seminary or other institution of religious learning must obtain the support of the patriotic religious association. The government requires students to demonstrate "political reliability," and political issues were included in examinations of graduates of all religious schools. Both registered and unregistered religious groups reported a shortage of trained clergy. Patriotic-religious-association-approved Catholic and Protestant seminarians, Muslim clerics, and some Buddhist monks were allowed to travel abroad for additional religious study. However, religious workers not affiliated with a patriotic religious association continued to face difficulties obtaining passports or approval to study abroad.

The government and the Holy See have not established diplomatic relations, and there was no Vatican representative in the country. The CPA does not recognize the authority of the Holy See to appoint bishops; therefore, approximately 40 Catholic bishops remained independent of the CPA and operated unofficially. The CPA has allowed the Vatican

discreet input in selecting some bishops, and an estimated 90 percent of CPA bishops have reconciled with the Vatican. Nevertheless, in some locations local authorities reportedly pressured unregistered Catholic priests and believers to renounce ordinations approved by the Holy See. Most of the Catholic bishops previously appointed by the government as CPA bishops were later elevated by the Vatican through "apostolic mandates."

Faith-based charities, like all other charitable groups in the country, were required to register with the government. According to several unregistered religious groups, an additional prerequisite is obtaining sponsorship of the local religious affairs bureau, rather than of a bureau with technical expertise in a relevant field such as health or medicine. These groups were often also required to affiliate with one of the five patriotic religious associations. Unregistered charity groups, of any sort, are not permitted to openly raise funds, hire employees, open bank accounts, or own property.

The government allowed social service work by registered religious groups, including Catholic, Buddhist, and Protestant organizations. Religious groups that sought to provide social services but were not affiliated with an official patriotic religious association reported difficulties registering as NGOs.

Under article 33 of the Regulations on Religious Affairs, if a religious structure is to be demolished or relocated, the party responsible for demolishing the structure is to consult with the religious affairs department and the religious group. If all parties agree to the demolition, the party conducting the demolition should agree to rebuild the structure or provide compensation equal to the appraised market value of the structure. Some religious groups whose structures were demolished claimed that they did not receive adequate compensation.

Registered religious organizations were allowed to compile and print religious materials for internal use. In order to distribute religious materials publicly, an organization must follow national printing regulations, which restrict the publication and distribution of literature with religious content. The government limited distribution of Bibles to TSPM/CCC entities such as churches and seminaries. Individuals could not order Bibles directly from publishing houses. Members of unregistered churches reported that the supply and distribution of Bibles was inadequate, particularly in rural locations. There were approximately 600 Christian titles legally in circulation. According to a foreign Christian source, in the last 10 years, an estimated 200 Christian bookstores had opened in the country and nine domestic Christian publishers.

Under the Regulations on Religious Affairs and other regulations on publishing, religious texts published without authorization, including Bibles and Qur'ans, may be confiscated and unauthorized publishing houses closed. Authorities often confiscated Bibles in raids on house churches. Customs officials continued to monitor the importation of Bibles and other religious materials. In the XUAR government authorities at times restricted the sales of the Qur'an. There were reports that XUAR regulations banned Uighur-language editions of the Bible.

In 2005 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that parents were permitted to instruct children under the age of 18 in religious beliefs and that they may participate in religious activities. The teaching of atheism in schools is allowed. In the XUAR, there were widespread reports of prohibitions on children participating in religious activities. Children have been observed at Friday prayers in parts of the XUAR. The Xinjiang Implementing Measures on the Law on the Protection of Minors instructs those under 18 not to look at materials with content related to "evil cults" and imposes penalties on adults who "force" minors to participate in religious activities.

The law does not prohibit religious believers from holding public office. However, the CCP has stated that its members who belong to religious organizations are subject to expulsion. The labor law states that job applicants shall

not face discrimination in job hiring based on factors including religious belief. However, religious believers reported that employers openly discriminated against them. There were widespread reports that employers, both local and foreign, were discouraged from hiring Falun Gong practitioners. Some Protestant Christians have claimed that they were terminated by their employers due to their religious activities.

Some religious adherents opposed the state's family planning policy for reasons of religious belief and practice. The country still maintains strict birth limitation policies. (See section F of the Country Report on Human Rights Practices, available at www.state.gov.)

In the XUAR the government's concerns over "separatism, religious extremism, and terrorism" contributed to repressive restrictions on religious practices by Uighur Muslims. Authorities often failed to distinguish between peaceful religious practice and criminal or terrorist activities. It remained difficult to determine whether particular raids, detentions, arrests, or judicial punishments targeted those seeking political goals, the right to worship, or criminal acts. In contrast Hui Muslims in Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai, and Yunnan provinces engaged in religious practice with less government interference.

The XUAR held a training course for Islamic patriotic religious leaders on October 8. XUAR Chairman Nur Bekri attended the opening ceremony and encouraged the patriotic religious training course participants to contribute to Xinjiang's development and stability. A member of the Autonomous Regional Party Committee Standing Committee chaired the opening ceremony of the training course and other XUAR leaders also attended.

Uighur Muslims reported difficulties taking part in state-sanctioned Hajj travel due to the political criteria required for participation in the program. Approximately 13,000 Chinese Muslims participated in the Hajj in fall 2010, 11,000 of whom were flown on specially arranged Hajj charter flights. The government took measures to limit the ability of Uighur Muslims to make private Hajj pilgrimages outside of the government-organized program.

Foreign residents who belonged to religious faiths not officially recognized by the government were generally permitted to practice their religions. The constitution states that religious bodies and affairs are not "subject to any foreign domination." According to the Rules for the Implementation of the Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Aliens within the Territory of the People's Republic of China, foreigners may not proselytize, conduct religious activities at unregistered venues, or conduct religious activities with local citizens at temporary religious venues.

The government allowed some foreign educational institutions to continue to provide religious materials which were used by leaders from both registered and unregistered religious groups.

Many prisoners and detainees were not permitted religious observance.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The government generally enforced legal and policy restrictions on religious freedom, particularly in the XUAR and Tibetan areas. Official tolerance for groups associated with Buddhism, except for Tibetan Buddhism, and Taoism was

greater than that for groups associated with other religions. The government continued to restrict the growth of unregistered Protestant church networks and cross-congregational affiliations.

Following the July 2009 unrest, the XUAR government increased political training for imams; tightened restrictions on the religious activities of government workers, teachers, and students; and suppressed "unauthorized" religious activities. Authorities reportedly confiscated the passports of some Uighur Muslims which made it impossible for them to travel to Saudi Arabia for the Hajj.

According to a December NGO report, 78 persons were accused of "engaging in illegal religious activity," including 29 Uighur men who were fined for having mustaches and 38 Uighur Muslim women who were forced to remove headscarves in the Hotan area of southern XUAR. The accused were fined between 200 and 1000 RMB (\$15-30), in accordance with the "rules and regulations for villages and villagers pledge."

According to a July media report, police forced Muslim women in Korla, XUAR, to remove their headscarves under threat of fine or detention.

According to media reports, prior to the Muslim holiday, Eid Qurban, in November, the government reportedly issued notices to government and CCP officials not to attend prayers, and plainclothes security officials reportedly entered mosques. Eid Qurban prayers took place at the largest mosque in the country, Kashgar's Id-Kah mosque on November 17, where an overflow crowd of thousands of worshippers filled the square outside the mosque and performed cultural and religious ceremonies after prayers.

At the end of the year, according to a spokesperson for the XUAR People's Congress, 140 people had been arrested in Yining city, XUAR, for crimes including involvement in illegal religious activities or spreading religious extremism.

In December according to a report from the overseas advocacy group World Uyghur Congress, authorities in the XUAR took steps to eradicate audio-visual materials and books that were not authorized by the Islamic Association of China. Police closed several shops selling Uighur-language religious materials, confiscated 20,000 CDs, and detained seven Uighur individuals.

According to a December media report, in Xayar County, Aksu, XUAR, three people were sentenced to one to three years in prison for engaging in illegal religious activities. Local authorities also levied fines against five people for "illegal religious activities." According to an NGO report, in October school authorities and police raided a Christian student fellowship at Shanxi Agricultural University. The school also disqualified any Christian student taking classes from receiving scholarships.

Tight restrictions on the exchanges of monks among Tibetan Buddhist monasteries impacted the quality of Tibetan religious education. Ethnic Han who wish to study Tibetan Buddhism in Tibetan areas are often denied permission for long-term study there.

Some individuals and groups affiliated with religious communities claimed that the government took their land without adequate compensation per the Religious Affairs Regulations.

In December 2010 law enforcement in Yancheng, Jiangsu province, forcibly evicted a congregation of a TSPM church in the Tinghu district of Chengnan despite an earlier decision by Tinghu District Court in favor of the church. The church claimed that the value of the church building was 5,000,000 RMB (\$768,318) and that it was willing to hold negotiations with a commercial developer and the government, but that their offer of compensation was too low 2,860,000 RMB (\$439,479) and there was no offer of equivalent land. Reports stated that government agencies then harassed the church by cutting off the water supply and electricity. On June 13 Pastor Zhang Mingxuan, leader of the Chinese House Church Alliance, was detained en route to visit the church.

According to an NGO report, in September authorities demolished the Changchunli TSPM church in Jinan, Shandong Province. The Jinan city Middle District People's Court refused to hear a lawsuit by the church against the Jinan TSPM/CCC and the Jinan Urban Renewal Finance Center for compensation. The government did not offer compensation for the church building.

According to news reports, at midnight on June 8, police and civilians destroyed a registered Catholic cathedral in the city of Erdos, Inner Mongolia Autonomous region, to make room for a new road. Authorities detained the priest and lay leader of the congregation for 20 hours. Two priests representing Bishop Paul Meng Qinglu of Hohhot were reportedly trying to negotiate for compensation after the demolition.

Blogs of a number of religious groups and individuals were periodically blocked during the reporting period.

In some instances foreign groups had to apply for special access to religious facilities.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

There were reports of abuses of religious freedom in the country, including religious prisoners and detainees.

During the reporting period, officials continued to scrutinize and, in some cases, harass registered and unregistered religious and spiritual groups. The government detained, arrested, or sentenced to prison a number of religious leaders and adherents for activities related to their religious practice. These activities included assembling for religious worship, expressing religious beliefs in public and in private, and publishing religious texts.

The government denied detaining or arresting anyone solely because of his or her religion. Local authorities often used administrative detention, such as confinement at RTL camps, to punish members of unregistered religious groups. The government also disbarred a number of attorneys who advocated on behalf of religious freedom and imprisoned other religious freedom activists. The family members of some religious leaders and religious freedom activists were also harassed or detained.

According to China News Weekly, the country had 22 ankang institutions (high-security psychiatric hospitals for the criminally insane) directly administered by the Ministry of Public Security. Unregistered religious believers and Falun Gong adherents were among those housed with mentally ill patients in these institutions. The regulations for committing a person to an ankang facility were not clear, and detainees had no mechanism for objecting to public security officials' determinations of mental illness. Patients in these hospitals reportedly were given medicine against their will and forcibly subjected to electric shock treatment. Activists sentenced to administrative detention also reported they were strapped to beds or other devices for days at a time, beaten, forcibly injected or fed medications, and denied food and use of toilet facilities.

The whereabouts of attorney Gao Zhisheng remained unknown at the end of the reporting period. Gao defended Falun Gong members and Christians who worshipped at unregistered churches. He disappeared in February 2009. NGOs and press reports stated that he had been tortured during imprisonment in 2007 and again in 2009. In March 2010 Gao briefly reappeared, but in April disappeared again.

Attorney Guo Feixiong, who defended religious freedom cases, remained imprisoned in Guangzhou's Meizhou Prison at the end of the reporting period. In 2007 he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for the crime of "illegal business activities." Guo's family members reported that prison police tortured him. After a 10-month legal battle, the Guangdong Prison Administration granted Guo's lawyers permission to visit Guo on July 8, for less than an hour.

Several Beijing-based lawyers, who handled religious freedom cases, including Li Subin and Jiang Tianyong, were denied renewal of their professional licenses in the 2009 and 2010 annual review cycles. In May the Beijing Bureau of Justice permanently revoked the licenses of lawyers Tang Jitian and Liu Wei on the basis of their alleged conduct during a Falun Gong-related case.

On August 18, the Haizhu District PSB arrested Guangzhou lawyer Zhu Yubiao, who had previously handled Falun Gong cases. Police also confiscated his computer. At the end of the reporting period, Zhu, whose mother was able to visit him in detention, remained in custody facing charges of "using a cult to undermine the law."

In October authorities undertook measures to prevent a large number of Christian leaders from unregistered churches from traveling to participate in the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (Lausanne Congress) in South Africa. Government officials reportedly discouraged individual invitees from attending. Other invitees reported being subjected to confiscation of passports, beatings, surveillance, and temporary detention. Immigration authorities prevented prospective participants from boarding flights to South Africa.

During the fall, Dr. Fan Yafeng, a house church leader and religious freedom activist, was placed under house arrest several times and temporarily detained in November and December. Dr. Fan believed that his October detention was due to an interview he granted to an overseas radio station about the Lausanne Congress. On November 24, Dr. Fan, his wife, and their three-year-old son were taken to a police station for interrogation. In December authorities took Dr. Fan into custody again and reportedly beat him. He was then placed under house arrest. On December 23, activist Teng Biao, who attempted to visit Fan's mother, was temporarily detained, interrogated, and, according to his account, beaten.

Two of the sons of Uighur Muslim activist Rebiya Kadeer remained in prison.

Prior to the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 2009, unregistered churches in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shanxi reported that authorities pressured them to stop meeting.

In November 2009 PSB and SARA officials ordered the unregistered 1,200-member Wanbang Church in Shanghai to stop holding services, declaring that the church was engaging in "illegal religious activities." Authorities interrogated Pastor Cui Quan and other congregants and pressured them to join a local TSPM/CCC congregation.

During the reporting period, the unregistered Shouwang church remained unable to obtain access to a property it purchased for the purpose of holding religious services; at various times during the year the church's Web site was blocked. In fall 2009 Shouwang lost its lease to the office space it had previously used for services, reportedly due to pressure exerted by officials on its landlord.

In August authorities in Qinggang, Yuhuai County, and Taizhou city, Jiangsu Province, demolished the prayer center of the unregistered Taishan church. In September authorities tore down a structure which the congregation rebuilt on the site of the prayer center.

Pastor Yang Rongli and Zhang Huamei of the Golden Light branch of the unregistered Linfen church network in Shanxi province continued to serve prison sentences, and five members of their congregation continued to serve RTL sentences. They were imprisoned in November 2009 for "illegally occupying agricultural land" and "assembling a crowd to disrupt traffic," charges believed to be related to a dispute with local authorities over the land on which their church was built. On July 12, their attorney, Zhang Kai, was barred by security guards from entering a courthouse in order to file an administrative lawsuit on behalf of the church.

At the end of the reporting period, Pastor Wang Dao was out on bail awaiting trial on charges of "hindering the administration of credit cards." His church in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, was forced to close under pressure from the PSB in August.

Prior to the Asian Games and Paralympic Games held in Guangzhou in November and December, unregistered churches in Guangdong reported authorities pressured them to cease holding regular services through the end of the calendar year. However, authorities indicated that members of the congregations could continue to meet in smaller groups of no more than 10 during that period of time.

In December 2009 Alimjan Hemit, the Uighur leader of an unregistered Christian church, was convicted of "illegally providing state secrets or intelligence to foreign entities" by the Kashgar Prefecture Intermediate People's Court and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment and five years' deprivation of political rights. His appeal was denied in March. In 2008 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled that his detention was in violation of international standards of due process. At the end of the reporting period, Hemit continued to serve his sentence.

At the end of the reporting period, Pastor Zhang Rongliang, head of the Fangcheng Church and the China for Christ unregistered church network, continued to serve a prison sentence of seven and one-half years for "obtaining a fraudulent passport and illegally crossing the border."

Shi Weihai continued to serve a three-year sentence for printing and distributing Bibles and Christian books without government permission.

Some unofficial Catholic clergy remained in detention, in particular in Hebei Province. Harassment of unregistered bishops and priests continued, including government surveillance and repeated short detentions.

In March authorities arrested and/or detained a number of priests operating unregistered Catholic churches in Fuan, Fujian Province. Cases included the March 19 arrest of Liu Maochun and the detentions of Guo Xijin and Miu Yong.

On July 7, Catholic Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo of the Diocese of Zhengding, Hebei Province, was released after his detention on March 31, 2009, the first day of a meeting held at the Vatican for the Commission on the Church in China.

There was no new information about the welfare or whereabouts of unregistered Bishop Su Zhimin, who remained unaccounted for since his reported detention in 1997.

In 2010 the government again restricted Catholic pilgrimages to the Sheshan Marian Shrine.

On August 28, unregistered Bishop Yang Shudao, who spent more than 30 years in prison, died in Lianjiang, Fujian. Sentenced to life in prison in 1955, he was released from prison in 1991 but remained under close monitoring and house arrest until his death. Authorities closely monitored his funeral and did not allow the public to attend, according to an NGO report.

On November 20, the CPA installed Guo Jincai as bishop in the diocese of Chengde, without the approval of the Vatican. On November 24, Pope Benedict issued a communique describing the ordination as "a grave violation of Catholic discipline" and warned Guo that he faced sanction by the Vatican. Media reports alleged that other Catholic bishops and priests were forced by authorities to attend Guo's ordination. On December 28, a Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokeswoman said, "we hope the Vatican can acknowledge the fact of China's freedom of religion and the development of Catholicism."

Yao Liang, auxiliary bishop of Xiwanzi diocese, Hebei Province, remained in detention during the reporting period. Father Li Huisheng from the same diocese in Hebei was also was serving a seven-year term for "inciting the masses against the government."

It remained difficult to confirm some aspects of reported abuses of Falun Gong adherents because they were often prevented from meeting with foreign reporters and officials. NGOs and international media reported that detentions of Falun Gong practitioners increased around sensitive dates. In certain areas neighborhood groups were reportedly instructed to report on Falun Gong members; monetary rewards were offered to citizens who informed on Falun Gong practitioners.

Falun Gong organizations alleged that detained practitioners were subjected to various methods of physical and psychological coercion in attempts to force them to deny their belief in Falun Gong. Falun Gong sources estimated that since 1999 at least 6,000 Falun Gong practitioners have been sentenced to prison. Falun Gong adherents have also been subjected to administrative sentences of up to three years in RTL camps. Falun Gong estimated more than 100,000 adherents in the country have been sentenced to RTL.

There was no new information about Guo Xiaojun, who was detained in January, for possession of Falun Gong materials.

In February Jiang Feng, the husband of a musician in Shen Yun, a Falun Gong-related performing arts show, was reported missing. At the end of the reporting period, his family members had received no information on an arrest, charges, or sentence.

There was no new information on imprisoned Falun Gong practitioner, Cao Junping, or her husband, who were reportedly detained by Shandong provincial authorities in 2008.

On August 26, Guangzhou police took Falun Gong practitioners Zeng Jiagang and Zeng Libo from their homes; computers and books on Falun Gong were confiscated. Their whereabouts remained unknown at the end of the reporting period.

On September 25, Li Jing, a Falun Gong practitioner originally from Hubei Province, was sentenced to one year and nine months in an RTL camp. According to a foreign NGO, on October 4, she was sent to the Guangzhou Women's RTL Institute, where she was tortured by other inmates with the consent of prison guards.

On November 5, Guangzhou resident Tan Kaiqing, a Falun Gong practitioner, was arrested. At the end of the reporting period she was reportedly detained at the Haizhu District PSB.

Guangzhou authorities intensified suppression of the Falun Gong in advance of the November 2010 Asian Games.

Falun Gong-related groups reported several incidents of the government's interference with their activities abroad during the reporting period. According to NGO reports, the Shen Yun Performing Arts Company, and several media outlets, government officials pressured venues and governments in Asia and Europe to limit the broadcast time of Falun Gong-associated radio stations and cancel or otherwise delay Shen Yun performances.

XUAR authorities detained Uighur Muslims for engaging in activities that they government deemed "illegal."

In June 2009 authorities detained 32 women in a Qur'an study group in Bachu (Maralbeshi) County, Kashgar District, according to international media reports, on charges of engaging in "illegal religious activities." Two women of the group were tried on criminal charges, others received fines ranging from 500-5,000 RMB (\$75-750).

The government reportedly sought the forcible return of Uighur Muslims living outside the country, including in Syria

For information on North Korean refugees, please see the U.S. Department of State's 2010 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in China and the 2010 International Religious Freedom Report on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

In May Shanghai authorities permitted the Ohel Rachel Synagogue to receive visitors for the duration of the Shanghai World Expo, which ended on October 31. The synagogue is part of the Shanghai Education Commission compound. At the end of the reporting period the use rights the Shanghai Jewish Community enjoyed during the Expo had not been renewed.

During the reporting period three bishops were ordained with the approval of both the Vatican and the official Chinese Catholic church. On July 10, in Taizhou, Zhejiang Province, Anthony Xu Jiwei was ordained. The diocese in which he assumed leadership had been without a bishop for 48 years. On July 15 in Yan'an, Shaanxi Province, Bishop John

Baptist Yang Xiaoting was ordained coadjutor with right of succession to the elderly and ill bishop of the diocese. The new bishop of Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, was installed on December 23.

In July Beijing's Peking University became the first Chinese university, and the seventh in the world, to partner with the Tony Blair Faith Foundation's Globalization and Faith Initiative, aimed at providing current and future leaders with the tools and analysis to understand the role religion plays in the modern world.

Academic discussions on the subject of religion took place at some universities. On September 21, a conference on "Religion and Urban Culture" was held at East China Normal University. Conference participants also discussed differences between unofficial churches and official churches in East China.

In November Guangzhou authorities announced that the religious services center at the Athlete's Village for the Asian Games would provide a special prayer room for Hindu worshippers in addition to those for the five state-sanctioned religions. However, the religious services center would only be accessible to Asian Games participants, not the general public.

During the reporting period, the Taiwan-based Buddhist NGO Tzu Chi significantly expanded its operations in Fujian Province, with a focus on providing education and public health services. A faith-based aid group opened the country's first food bank in Wuhan in December.

Although CCP members generally are discouraged from participating in religious activities, their attendance at official church services in Guangdong province was reportedly growing as authorities increasingly chose to turn a blind eye to their attendance.

Section III. Status of Societal Actions Affecting Enjoyment of Religious Freedom

Religion and ethnicity are often linked in the country. It is therefore difficult to categorize many incidents solely as examples of ethnic or religious intolerance. Religious and ethnic minority groups, such as Tibetan Buddhists and Uighur Muslims, experienced discrimination throughout the country because of both their religious beliefs and their status as ethnic minorities with distinct languages and cultures. In the XUAR, tension between Han Chinese and Uighur Muslims continued during the reporting period. Tensions also continued among ethnic and religious groups in Tibetan areas, including Han, Hui, Tibetan Buddhists, and Tibetan Muslims.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Department of State, the U.S. embassy in Beijing, and the U.S. consulates general in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenyang, and Wuhan regularly urged government officials at the central and local levels to implement stronger protections of religious freedom. The U.S. ambassador met with members of religious groups and religious freedom defenders and highlighted religious freedom in public speeches and private diplomacy with senior officials. At the same time, host government pressure led some religious leaders to decline requests for meetings with U.S. government officials. The Department of State, the embassy, and the consulates general regularly called upon the government to release prisoners of conscience.

U.S. officials, both in the country and the United States, met regularly with academics, NGOs, members of both registered and unregistered religious groups, and family members of religious prisoners. In September the U.S. ambassador hosted an iftar (evening meal during Ramadan) for Muslim guests including Chinese imams. The Department of State nominated a number of Chinese religious leaders and scholars to participate in International Visitor Leadership Programs related to the role of religion in American society. The Department of State also introduced government officials to officials from U.S. government agencies who engaged with American religious communities and members of those communities.

Since 1999 the Secretary of State has designated the country as a "Country of Particular Concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) for particularly severe violations of religious freedom. The most recent re-designation as a CPC was on January 16, 2009. Economic measures in effect against the country under the IRFA related to restriction of exports of crime control and detection instruments and equipment (Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1990 and 1991, P.L. 101-246).

HONG KONG

The Basic Law, which serves as the constitution of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), as well as other laws and policies, protects religious freedom. In practice, the government generally enforced these protections.

The government generally respected religious freedom in law and in practice. There were allegations that the government denied entry to some travelers from overseas because of their affiliation with the Falun Gong, a spiritual group that is banned in mainland China, raising concerns about pressure from Beijing on Hong Kong's autonomy over immigration matters.

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

The territory has an area of 426 square miles on more than 200 islands and Kowloon and peninsular New Territories, and a population of seven million. Approximately 43 percent of the population practices some form of religion. The two most prevalent religions are Buddhism and Taoism, which are often observed together in the same temple. A local religious scholar in contact with major denominations estimates there are approximately 1.5 million Buddhists and Taoists; 550,000 Protestant Christians; over 400,000 Roman Catholics; approximately 20,000 members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons); over 100,000 Muslims; over 40,000 Hindus; 2,000 to 3,000 Sikhs; and 3,000 to 4,000 Jews. Confucianism also is prevalent in the HKSAR. Although few believers practiced Confucianism as a formal religion, Confucian ideas and social tenets were often blended with Taoism and Buddhism. There are between 300 and 500 Falun Gong practitioners. Falun Gong is a self-described spiritual discipline that combines qigong (a traditional Chinese exercise discipline) with the teachings of founder Li Hongzhi.

There are approximately 600 Buddhist (including temples affiliated with Tibetan schools) and Taoist temples, 800 Christian churches and chapels, five mosques, four synagogues, one Hindu temple, and one Sikh temple.

There are 1,400 Protestant congregations, representing 50 denominations. The largest Protestant denomination is the Baptist Church, followed by the Lutheran Church. Other major denominations include Seventh-day Adventists, Anglicans, Christian and Missionary Alliance groups, the Church of Christ in China, Methodists, Pentecostals, the Salvation Army, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons).

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

Please refer to Appendix C in the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for the status of the government's acceptance of international legal standards <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/appendices/index.htm>.

Since sovereignty was transferred from the United Kingdom to the People's Republic of China (PRC) on July 1, 1997, the Basic Law has provided the legal framework for the HKSAR. It upholds the principle of political autonomy in the HKSAR, often referred to as "one country, two systems." The Basic Law states that residents will have freedom of conscience; freedom of religious belief; and freedom to preach, conduct, and participate in religious activities in public.

The Bill of Rights Ordinance incorporates the religious freedom protections of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These include the right to manifest religious belief individually or in community with others, in public or private and through worship, observance, practice, and teaching. The ordinance also protects the right of parents or legal guardians to "ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) functions as a liaison between religious groups and the government. The government has invited all interested groups, including affected organizations or individuals, to provide views on whether proposed measures discriminated on the basis of religion.

The only direct government role in managing religious affairs is the Chinese Temples Committee, which the Secretary for Home Affairs leads. Its members are appointed by the Chief Executive. Since the 1960s newly established temples have not been required to register under the colonial-era Chinese Temples Ordinance, and the committee at this point oversees only an estimated 24 of the region's 600 temples. The committee oversees the management and use of donations by the 24 temples.

Religious groups were able to apply to the government to lease land at concessionary (less than market value) terms through sponsorship by the HAB. They still must "compete" with any other parties interested in the same land for the grant from the Lands Department. Religious organizations can apply to develop or use facilities in accordance with local legislation. Religious belief was not a barrier to public service and a wide range of faiths were represented in the government, judiciary, and civil service. In addition, the Election Committee Ordinance stipulates that the six largest religious groups in Hong Kong hold 40 seats on the 800-member Election Committee, which was tasked with

nominating and voting for the region's chief executive. The groups represented were the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association, Hong Kong Christian Council (representing Protestant denominations), Hong Kong Taoist Association, the Confucian Academy, and the Hong Kong Buddhist Association.

Religious groups were exempted from the Societies Ordinance, which required that nongovernmental organizations register. Registration for religious groups remained voluntary and was needed only if the group wanted to seek government benefits or receive a grant to provide social services. Spiritual movements are not classified as religious groups, and must register under the Societies Ordinance if they wish to establish offices, collect dues from members, or have legal status.

During the reporting period, Falun Gong maintained approximately 16 regular information displays in high-traffic areas and regularly conducted public protests against the repression of fellow practitioners outside the HKSAR. Other spiritual movements, including Xiang Gong and Yan Xin Qigong, were free to practice.

A large variety of faith-based aid groups, including Protestant, Muslim, and Catholic groups, provide education services. The government sometimes funded the operating costs of schools built by religious groups.

Schools that accepted government funds were governed by the 2004 Education (Amendment) Ordinance (the "Ordinance"), which mandated that the schools establish an "incorporated management committee." Teacher and parent groups elected 40 percent of the members of the committee, and the sponsoring religious community appointed 60 percent of the members. The Catholic Diocese challenged the incorporated management committee requirement on the grounds that it could adversely affect the religious identity of their schools. Other groups, including the Sheng Kung Hui (Anglicans) and the Methodist Church expressed similar concerns. The Catholic Diocese sued the government on the basis that the ordinance violated a provision in the Basic Law, which states that religious organizations should be allowed to run educational institutions and other social services "according to their previous practice" prior to Hong Kong's return to the PRC. The diocese lost its appeal in the case at the High Court (Court of Appeal) on February 4, 2010. However, on December 13, the diocese won leave to appeal to the Court of Final Appeal. The case will be heard in 2011.

Catholic and Protestant clergy from the region were invited by the state-sanctioned patriotic religious associations on the mainland to teach at religious institutions. There were also student exchanges between state-sanctioned religious groups on the mainland and Hong Kong-based religious groups.

Hong Kong's Buddhist, Taoist, Muslim, Catholic, and Protestant communities participated in a range of social services including welfare, elderly care, hospitals, and other charitable activities. They were eligible to receive government funding to provide primary and secondary education. While such schools cannot bar students based on religion, they were permitted to provide religious instruction as part of their curriculum.

The Hong Kong Diocese recognizes Pope Benedict XVI as the head of the Roman Catholic Church. A bishop as well as priests, monks, and nuns served Catholics and maintained links to the Vatican.

The government observes Christmas and the birth of Buddha as public holidays. The Taoist community has requested that Lao-tse's birthday be made a public holiday, and the imam of one of Hong Kong's major Muslim communities suggested in the media that Eid al-Fitr be made a public holiday as well.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The government generally respected religious freedom in law and in practice. Under the Basic Law, the HKSAR has autonomy in the management of religious affairs. The Basic Law calls for ties between the region's religious organizations and their mainland counterparts to be based on "nonsubordination, noninterference, and mutual respect."

Falun Gong representatives asserted that mainland authorities pressured the HKSAR to restrict their activities in the region. The PRC banned the Falun Gong under an "anti-cult" provision in the criminal law in 1999. Falun Gong members also reported checks on their identity documents by police, whom they reported were checking for practitioners from Taiwan. Falun Gong practitioners from outside Hong Kong, visiting as tourists, were generally allowed to enter the territory, but local groups alleged that some Taiwan practitioners who reported a Falun Gong-related purpose in applying for entry documents were refused for that reason. Practitioners also reported that relevant authorities consistently denied them access to public facilities they wished to rent for functions, usually because administrators reported the facilities to be previously booked.

The Epoch Group, a media organization with ties to Falun Gong, was granted a judicial review of the January 2010 refusal by the Immigration Department to grant visas to technical staff supporting the Shen Yun Performing Arts troupe by the High Court (Court of First Instance) April 30. The case was scheduled to be heard in January 2011. Shen Yun also references the mainland government's treatment of the Falun Gong. The Immigration Department stated that the visas were refused in accordance with laws protecting the employment of local workers, and that the troupe could hire competent staff locally. Epoch Group contended that local staff could not replace the specialized expertise of its staff. The refusals led Epoch Group to cancel the planned performances.

The Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese accused the Home Affairs Bureau of denying them access to a facility for an October 16 "Stations of the Cross" march to show solidarity with religious practitioners on the mainland. The Commission said a staff member at the Bureau had initially told them their application was denied owing to the "sensitive" nature of their activity. HAB denied this allegation, stating instead the facility requested was too small for the projected crowd, and offering a far larger venue as an alternative. In the end, the Commission chose to convene their march at the original facility, to which HAB acquiesced.

There were no reports of abuses, including religious prisoners or detainees, in the special administrative region.

Section III. Status of Societal Actions Affecting Enjoyment of Religious Freedom

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice, and prominent societal leaders took positive steps to promote religious freedom. Senior government leaders often participate in large-scale events held by religious organizations.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. Consulate general officers have made clear U.S. government interest in the full protection of freedom of

religion. Consulate general officers at all levels, including the consul general, met regularly with religious leaders and community representatives through attendance at community functions and invitations to religious leaders to consulate functions. The mission supported the community service work of faith-based organizations.

MACAU

The Basic Law, which serves as the Constitution of the Macau Special Administrative Region (Macau SAR), and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally enforced these protections.

The government generally respected religious freedom in law and in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period.

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice.

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

The region has an area of 11.3 square miles and, according to official statistics in 2008, a population of 549,200. Buddhism, which is practiced by nearly 80 percent of the population, is the predominant religion. Approximately 5.2 percent of the population is Roman Catholic and more than 1 percent is Protestant. Smaller religious groups include Bahais (estimated at 2,500 persons); Muslims (estimated at 100 persons); and a small number of Falun Gong practitioners.

There are approximately 40 Buddhist temples, 30 Taoist temples, 18 Catholic and approximately 70 Protestant churches, four Bahai centers, and one mosque. Approximately 50 percent of primary and secondary students were enrolled in schools operated or funded by religious organizations. These schools may provide religious education, but the government does not maintain statistics on this subject.

Many Protestant denominations are represented, including Baptist, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Pentecostal churches. Evangelical denominations and independent local churches also exist in the region. The Reformed Theological Seminary enrolled students in virtual seminary programs.

As of December 2008, an estimated 70 Protestant churches with 10,000 members conducted services in Chinese; approximately 5,000 worshippers attended every Sunday. An estimated 500 Protestants attended services conducted in foreign languages.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

Please refer to Appendix C in the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for the status of the government's acceptance of international legal standards <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/appendices/index.htm>.

The Basic Law, which serves as the Constitution of the Macau SAR, and other laws and policies protect religious freedom and, in practice, the government generally enforced these protections.

Article 34 of the Basic Law states that "Macau residents shall have freedom of religious belief, and freedom to preach and to conduct and participate in religious activities in public." Furthermore, Article 128 of the Basic Law stipulates that "the government, consistent with the principle of religious freedom, shall not interfere in the internal affairs of religious organizations or in the efforts of religious organizations and their believers to maintain and develop relations with their counterparts outside Macau or restrict religious activities which do not contravene the laws of the Special Administrative Region."

The 1998 Freedom of Religion and Worship Law (the "Freedom of Religion Law"), which remained in effect after the 1999 transfer of sovereignty to the People's Republic of China (PRC), provides for freedom of religion, including privacy of religious belief, freedom of religious assembly, freedom to hold religious processions, and freedom of religious education. The government generally respected these rights in practice.

The Freedom of Religion Law allows religious organizations to register directly with the Identification Bureau, which was required under the law to receive and process registrations. Applicants needed to supply their name, identification card number, contact information, organization name, and copy of the group's charter to register. Religious entities can apply to media organizations and companies to use mass media (television, radio, etc.) to preach, and such applications were generally approved. Registration was not required to conduct religious activities, and registration does not automatically confer tax-exempt status or other advantages.

Falun Gong, which has approximately 15 active members, is not registered with the Identification Bureau. While the bureau has not issued instructions regarding Falun Gong, senior officials have stated that Falun Gong practitioners may continue their legal activities despite the lack of registration. Falun Gong members regularly set up their informational sites in public venues.

The Freedom of Religion Law also stipulates that religious groups may develop and maintain relations with religious groups abroad. The Catholic Church, which is in communion with the Vatican, recognized Pope Benedict XVI as the head of the Church. In 2005 the Holy See appointed the current Bishop for the diocese. Beginning in September 2007, the Macau Inter-University Institute (now re-named the University of Saint Joseph), affiliated with the Catholic University in Portugal, offered a Christian studies course that involved Catholic seminary students from the mainland.

Many religious groups, including Catholics, Buddhists, Protestants, and Bahais, provided extensive social services to communities in Macau. The government provided financial support for the establishment of schools, childcare centers, clinics, homes for the elderly, rehabilitation centers, and vocational training centers run by religious organizations. Many organizations, working in partnerships with mainland organizations, provide social services on the mainland.

The government observes Christmas, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception and the birth of Buddha as public holidays.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The government generally respected religious freedom in practice. There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the government during the reporting period. Under the Basic Law, the government of the Macau SAR (not the Government of the PRC) controls religious practices in the region. Religious organizations coordinate their relations with coreligionists in the PRC through the Central Government Liaison Office (CGLO). Religious communities report CGLO supported these activities and exchanges. CGLO also maintained dialogue with religious organizations in the SAR.

There were no reports of abuses of religious freedom in the SAR, including religious prisoners or detainees.

Section III. Status of Societal Actions Affecting Enjoyment of Religious Freedom

There were no reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Relations among the various religious communities were good, and citizens generally were tolerant of the religious views and practices of others. Public ceremonies and dedications often included prayers by both Christian and Buddhist groups.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. Officers from the U.S. consulate general in Hong Kong met regularly with leaders of all religious groups and spiritual organizations in the region.

TIBET

The United States recognizes the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), and Tibetan autonomous prefectures (TAPs) and counties in other provinces, as part of the People's Republic of China. The Department of State follows these designations in its reporting. The United States continues to be concerned for the preservation and development of the Tibetan people's unique religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage and the protection of their fundamental human rights.

The constitution protects religious freedom for all citizens but, in practice, the government generally enforced other laws and policies that restrict religious freedom. The constitution states that Chinese citizens "enjoy freedom of religious belief." It bans the state, public organizations, and individuals from compelling citizens to believe in, or not believe in, any religion. The constitution protects "normal religious activities" but does not define "normal."

The government's level of respect for religious freedom remained poor in the TAR and other Tibetan areas. Repression was severe, particularly during "sensitive periods" such as the Shanghai World Expo or the Asian Games

in Guangzhou. The government continued to blame the Dalai Lama publicly for instigating the March 2008 unrest and repeatedly stated that all reincarnations of Tibetan Buddhist lamas would have to be approved by the government. Chinese authorities often associated Tibetan Buddhist monasteries with pro-independence activism; disagreement with government strictures on religious practice and education are often assumed to be simply expression of separatist attitudes. Control over religious practice and the day-to-day management of monasteries and other religious institutions continued to be extraordinarily tight. Monks and nuns reported that government restrictions continued to interfere with their ability to carry out the teaching and practice of Tibetan Buddhist religious traditions. Throughout the year, authorities limited the ability of monks from outside the Yushu TAP in Qinghai Province to travel to areas to assist in earthquake relief reconstruction. There were reports that large religious gatherings for earthquake victims were not permitted so as to "protect social order."

During the reporting period, residents continued to face societal discrimination, including, for example, being denied rooms at hotels in large cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, and Chengdu, during the 2010 Shanghai World Expo (April 30 to October 31, 2010).

The U.S. government encouraged the government and local authorities to respect religious freedom and allow Tibetans to preserve and develop their religious traditions. U.S. diplomatic personnel visited the TAR twice during the reporting period. TAR officials restricted U.S. diplomatic personnel's ability to talk openly with persons in Tibetan areas. The U.S. government protested religious persecution and discrimination, discussed individual cases with the authorities, and requested further information about specific incidents. U.S. government officials continued to urge government leaders to engage in constructive dialogue with the Dalai Lama and his representatives and address policies in Tibetan areas that have created tensions due to their effect on Tibetan religion, culture, and livelihoods, as well as the environment.

Section I. Religious Demography

Tibetan areas total 871,649 square miles, nearly one quarter of the territory of the country. According to recent official estimates, the ethnic Tibetan population within the TAR was approximately 2.7 million and outside the TAR was an estimated 2.9 million. Most of these ethnic Tibetans reside in Tibetan autonomous prefectures and counties of Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces. Well over 500,000 non-Tibetans live in the TAR, including other minorities and large numbers of migrant workers who have lived in the TAR for several years but are not counted in the permanent population. Most ethnic Tibetans practice Tibetan Buddhism, although a sizeable minority practices Bon, the related traditional Tibetan religion, and a very small minority practices Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Many Tibetan government officials and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members are religious believers, despite government and CCP prohibitions against officials practicing religion.

Other residents of traditionally Tibetan areas include ethnic Han Chinese, many of whom practice Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and or traditional folk religions; Hui Muslims; ethnic Tibetan Muslims; and Christians. Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 Muslims worship at mosques in the TAR. There is also a Catholic church with 560 members located in the traditionally Catholic community of Yanjing in the eastern TAR. Tsodruk, in Dechen TAP, Yunnan Province, is also home to a large Tibetan Catholic congregation. The TAR is home to a small number of Falun Gong adherents, as well as unregistered Christian churches.

According to the June 21, 2009 People's Daily (the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party), there are 3,000 Tibetan Buddhist monasteries with 120,000 monks and nuns in the TAR and Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces. The same source states that there are 1,789 monasteries with 46,000 monks and nuns in the TAR. However, according to statistics collected by the China Tibetology Research Center, a CCP affiliated research institution, there are 1,535 monasteries in Tibetan areas outside the TAR.

The number of monks and nuns in monasteries and nunneries continued to fluctuate significantly, due in part to "patriotic education campaigns" and other political campaigns, as well as the practice of moving between monasteries for education. The widespread practice of monasteries accepting unregistered novices and other monks compounds the difficulty in estimating the true number of practicing Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns. Authorities in the TAR and other Tibetan areas tightened enforcement of longstanding regulations that forbid monasteries and nunneries from accepting individuals under the age of 18, hindering the traditional practice of sending young boys and girls to monasteries and nunneries for religious training. However, there were monks as young as eight years of age observed at some monasteries. Many monks studied and worshiped within their monasteries and nunneries without being "registered" or obtaining an official monastic identification card issued by religious affairs authorities. Hence, two population figures exist for many monasteries and nunneries: the official number reflecting the number of monks allowed by the government, and the actual figure, which may be twice the official number or even higher and includes both registered and unregistered monks. The number of resident monks was less than the official figure in some monasteries which were placed under greater political pressure that included intensified patriotic education campaigns in 2008-2009. Some monks fled their monasteries to avoid being forced to denounce the Dalai Lama.

Section II. Status of Government Respect for Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

Please refer to Appendix C in the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for the status of the government's acceptance of international legal standards <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/appendices/index.htm>.

The constitution protects religious freedom for all citizens but, in practice, the government generally enforced other laws and policies that restrict religious freedom. The constitution states that Chinese citizens "enjoy freedom of religious belief." It bans the state, public organizations, and individuals from compelling citizens to believe in, or not believe in, any religion. The constitution protects "normal religious activities," but does not define "normal." The constitution states that religious bodies and affairs are not to be "subject to any foreign control."

The government's 2005 White Paper on Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities states, "Organs of self-government in autonomous areas, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution and relevant laws, respect and guarantee the freedom of religious belief of ethnic minorities and safeguard all legal and normal religious activities of people of ethnic minorities." Organs of self-government include governments of autonomous regions, prefectures, and counties.

At the national level, the CCP organization--The United Front Work Department (UFWD)--and the government unit--the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA)--with support from the various officially recognized Buddhist, Catholic, Islamic, and Protestant "patriotic religious associations" were responsible for developing religious

management policies. Local branches of UFWD, SARA, and the Buddhist Association of China coordinated implementation of religious policies by Democratic Management Committees (DMCs) in monasteries. Regulations restricted leadership of DMCs to "politically reliable, patriotic, and devoted monks, nuns and government officials." At some monasteries the government established police stations in the monasteries. The government also supported the development of the "3+1" education model in some monasteries. Under this model, local village committees, family members, and DMCs ensure that monks and nuns cooperate with regular political education.

The last round of talks between officials from the UFWD and envoys of the Dalai Lama was in January 2010. As of 2007 approximately 615 Tibetan religious figures held positions in local National People's Congresses (NPCs) and committees of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in the TAR. The CPPCC is a political advisory body that nominally serves to allow non-CCP delegates to participate in the administration of state affairs. Although CCP officials are not permitted to practice religion, Tibetan religious figures who hold government positions (for example on the local NPC or CPPCC) are permitted to practice Buddhism. The government-recognized 11th Panchen Lama, Gyaltzen Norbu, is the vice president of the Buddhist Association of China and a member of the CPPCC.

Rules and regulations provided a legal basis for government control over Tibetan religious traditions. The Management Measures on Reincarnation, issued by SARA, codified government control over the selection of Tibetan religious leaders, including reincarnate lamas. The regulations stipulate that city governments and higher political levels can deny the required permission for a lama to be recognized as a reincarnate, or "tulku." Without official permission, the lama may not function as a "tulku" in a community. Provincial-level or higher governments must approve reincarnations, while the State Council reserves the right to deny the recognition of reincarnation of high lamas, often referred to by the Chinese term "Living Buddhas," of "especially great influence." Regulations state that no foreign organization or individual can interfere in the selection of reincarnate lamas, and all reincarnate lamas must be reborn within the country. A registry of officially recognized reincarnated lamas was established by the government.

The TAR Implementation of the Religious Affairs Regulations (the Implementing Regulations), also issued by SARA, continued to assert state control over all aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, including religious groups, venues, and personnel. The TAR government also has the right under the Implementing Regulations to deny any individual's application to take up religious orders. The Implementing Regulations codified the practice of controlling the movement of nuns and monks, requiring them to seek permission from county-level religious affairs officials to travel to another prefecture or county-level city within the TAR, study, or teach.

In Tibetan Buddhism, visiting different monasteries and religious sites both in the region and abroad for specialized training by experts in particular theological traditions is a key component of religious education. When monks travel across county or provincial lines for religious teaching or study, permission is required from the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) of both the sending and receiving counties. In addition, these restrictions sometimes apply to monks visiting other monasteries within the same county for short-term study or teaching.

The Implementing Regulations also gave the government formal control over the building and management of religious structures and over large-scale religious gatherings. Official permission was required for all monastic construction. Likewise, monasteries must request permission to hold large or important religious events. The TAR

government also controlled the use of Tibetan Buddhist religious relics tightly, maintaining that the relics, along with religious institutions themselves, are state property.

In March 2010 the newly appointed TAR Chairman described the Dalai Lama as "the most important cause of instability in Tibet." Some government officials maintained there was no law against possessing or displaying pictures of the Dalai Lama, but rather that most Tibetans chose not to display his picture. However, multiple sources noted that officials removed pictures of the Dalai Lama from monasteries and private homes and that open veneration of the Dalai Lama remains prohibited. The government also continued to ban pictures of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, whom the Dalai Lama and the overwhelming majority of Tibetan Buddhists recognize as the 11th Panchen Lama. The Implementing Regulations state that "religious personnel and religious citizens may not distribute books, pictures, or other materials that harm the unity of the nationalities or endanger state security." Some officials deemed photos of and books by or about the Dalai Lama and Gendun Choekyi Nyima as materials that violated the Implementing Regulations.

Nevertheless many Tibetans displayed photos of the Dalai Lama and Gendun Choekyi Nyima in their homes, in lockets, and on cellular telephones. The ability of Tibetans to display the Dalai Lama's picture varied regionally and with the political climate. In major monasteries, especially those that attract large numbers of tourists, pictures of the Dalai Lama were not openly displayed. His picture also could not be purchased openly in the TAR or other Tibetan areas of China. Merchants who ignored the restrictions and sold Dalai Lama-related images and audiovisual material reported that authorities frequently imposed fines on them. In Tibetan areas outside the TAR, visitors to several monasteries saw pictures of the Dalai Lama prominently displayed, although monks reported that they would temporarily remove such photos during inspections by officials from the local RAB or other agencies. Visitors to Tibetan areas outside the TAR similarly observed pictures of the Dalai Lama displayed in Tibetans' homes. Authorities appeared to view possession of such photos or material as evidence of separatist sentiment.

Authorities prohibited the registration of names for children that included one or more of the names of the Dalai Lama or certain names included on a list of blessed names approved by the Dalai Lama. As a result, many Tibetans have a name they use in daily life and a different, government-approved name for interactions with government officials.

There were no official religious holidays in China.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Although authorities permitted many traditional religious ceremonies and practices as well as public manifestations of belief during the reporting period, they rigorously confined most religious activities to officially designated places of worship and maintained tight control over religious leaders and religious gatherings of laypeople. The government suppressed religious activities it viewed as vehicles for political dissent or advocacy of Tibetan independence.

The government stated there were no limits on the number of monks in major monasteries and that each monastery's DMC could decide independently how many monks the monastery could support. In practice, however, the government imposed strict limits on the number of monks in major monasteries, particularly in the TAR and Sichuan's Ganzi (Kardze) TAP. One method used by local authorities to restrict the growth of the number of monks was to impose restrictions on the construction of new housing in the monastery, forcing each dwelling to bear an address

plate issued by the local government. Local RABs also frequently refused to issue official clergy permits or monk permits.

While the form, content, and frequency of "patriotic" education at monasteries varied widely, the conduct of such training was a routine part of monastic management. Increasingly "legal education" was a major theme of the training. Authorities often forced monks and nuns to denounce the Dalai Lama and study materials praising the leadership of the CCP and the socialist system. Authorities also pressured monks and nuns to express allegiance to the government-recognized 11th Panchen Lama. Monks and nuns reported that patriotic education campaigns detracted from their religious studies, and some fled from their monasteries and nunneries because they faced expulsion for refusing to comply with the education sessions. According to sources, the overall numbers of monks and nuns in monasteries and nunneries remained at significantly lower levels than before the riots in March 2008. Government selected monks had primary responsibility for conducting patriotic education at each monastery. In some cases the government established "official working groups" at monasteries, and religious affairs and public security officials personally led the patriotic education.

Since the unrest in March 2008, monks in several Tibetan areas reported they were unable to leave their home monasteries. These restrictions had a negative impact on monks' access to opportunities for advanced religious education. These restrictions, along with regulations on the transfer of religious resources between monasteries, also weakened the strong traditional ties between large monasteries in the TAR and affiliated monasteries in other Tibetan areas. An international nongovernmental organization (NGO) reported that monks and nuns who travelled to India claimed that among their main reasons for choosing to leave Tibet was the desire to continue their studies and obtain a blessing from the Dalai Lama and other key religious leaders.

In many areas during the reporting period, Public Security Bureaus (PSB) refused the passport applications of Tibetans, even as citizens from other ethnic groups were able to receive passports from the same offices without undue delays. Many Tibetans sought to travel to India for religious purposes, including an audience with the Dalai Lama, which is an important religious rite for Tibetan Buddhists, or to join religious communities and escape the increased controls over their religious practice at monasteries and nunneries in Tibetan areas. Some attributed the passport restrictions to an official effort to hinder travel for those purposes. There were also instances in which authorities confiscated previously issued passports of Tibetans. In some cases high-ranking religious figures were able to obtain a passport only after promising not to travel to India. In other cases Tibetans were only able to obtain passports after paying substantial bribes to local officials. Many other passport applications were simply denied. Monks and nuns have experienced greater difficulty obtaining passports since the March 2008 unrest.

Nevertheless, during the reporting period, hundreds of Tibetans, including monks and nuns, traveled to India via third countries, and most of them sought refugee status in India. The number of Tibetans who returned to the country after temporary stays in India was unknown but reportedly declined significantly from previous years. Some Tibetans who traveled to India without passports were reportedly subject to lengthy interrogations by Chinese public security bureau officials upon their return.

Sources report that on the Tibet-Nepal border, the government increased its border forces to prevent Tibetans from crossing the frontier without permission and exerted pressure on the Government of Nepal to forcibly return Tibetan refugees. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees reported that 838 Tibetans arrived at the Tibet

Reception Center in Nepal in 2009, an increase from 2008, but still significantly below historical levels. In 2010 the number was 874.

Travel restrictions for foreign travelers to and within the TAR and other Tibetan areas continued during the reporting period, and the government tightly controlled visits by foreign officials to the TAR. Foreign visitors are required by regulation to obtain official permission letters issued by the government before entering the TAR. Foreign media were barred from the TAR, with the exception of a small number of closely monitored government-organized trips. Foreigners reported being denied entry at police roadblocks or denied bus tickets in Tibetan areas outside the TAR, ostensibly for safety reasons, while Chinese tourists passed unhindered. Local government officials were reluctant to acknowledge whether travel bans were in effect.

In the TAR and in Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province, the government reportedly continued to remove monks under the age of 18, unregistered monks and nuns, and monks and nuns from outside of the TAR and Ganzi (Kardze) Prefecture from monasteries. Furthermore, they also continued to remove school children from schools attached to monasteries. Some of the children were placed in public schools to receive compulsory education, but many others were provided with no alternative arrangements. During the reporting period, local authorities frequently pressured parents, especially those who were CCP members or government employees, to withdraw their children from monasteries in their hometowns, private schools attached to monasteries, and Tibetan schools in India. In some cases local authorities confiscated identity documents of parents whose children were studying at Tibetan schools in India as a means of forcing the parents to make their children return home. Without documents the parents were vulnerable to losing their jobs.

Authorities closely supervised the education of lamas approved by the government. The education of the current Reting Rinpoche, who was born on October 3, 1997, differed significantly from that of his predecessors. Historically, the Reting Rinpoche occasionally acted as the regent and had a role in the recognition of the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama. For the current Reting Rinpoche, government officials, rather than religious leaders, managed the selection of his religious and lay tutors, in a major deviation from the traditional pattern.

The quality and availability of high-level religious teachers in the TAR and other Tibetan areas remained inadequate. Many teachers were in exile in India and elsewhere, older teachers were not replaced, and those who remained in Tibetan areas outside the TAR had difficulty securing permission to teach in other parts of China, abroad, or even within the TAR. Monks who were expelled from their Lhasa monasteries after March 2008 have not returned. The heads of most major schools of Tibetan Buddhism--including the Karmapa, Sakya Trizin, Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche, and Gyalwa Menri Trizin--all reside in exile and maintain close ties with the Dalai Lama. The Karmapa, leader of Tibetan Buddhism's Karma Kagyu school and one of its most influential religious figures, stated he left because the government controlled his movements and refused to allow him to go to India to be trained by his spiritual mentors or allow his teachers to come to him.

In recent years DMCs at several large monasteries began to use funds from the sale of entrance tickets or pilgrims' donations--and, in some cases, DMC-run hotels, shops, and restaurants--for purposes other than the support of monks engaged in full-time religious study under the government policy of monastery self-sufficiency. According to sources, although local government officials' attempts to attract tourists to religious sites provided some monasteries with extra income, such activities also deflected time and energy from religious instruction.

In March 2010 a public notice in Dorje Drak and Lhamotse monasteries stated that monks venturing outside of the monasteries must obey an 8 p.m. curfew. This curfew was still in effect at the end of the reporting period.

Spiritual leaders reportedly encountered difficulty reestablishing historical monasteries in rural areas, due to a lack of funding and government denials of permission to build and operate religious institutions. Officials in some areas contended that these religious venues drained local resources and served as a conduit for political infiltration by the Tibetan exile community. However, in some areas, the government restored monasteries to promote tourism and boost revenue.

At Drepung Monastery and other religious sites, security forces continue to limit the number of times per week Tibetans could enter the monastery to worship. Such restrictions, however, were less prevalent than in the immediate period following the March 2008 unrest.

Since the outbreak of violence in March 2008, security forces continue to block access to and from important monasteries including those in the Lhasa area. A heavy police presence in the monasteries restricted the movement of monks and prevented "unauthorized" visits including those by foreign journalists.

According to numerous Tibetan monks in China, UFDW and RAB officials frequently pressure monks to attend sessions presided over by the government-recognized Panchen Lama, who also conducted prayer services in Yushu following the April 2010 earthquake.

The prohibition against celebrating the Dalai Lama's birthday on July 6 continued during the reporting period. Authorities in many Tibetan areas confiscated or defaced his photographs in monasteries and private residences.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

There were reports of abuses of religious freedom in the country, including religious prisoners and detainees.

In March 2008 monks and nuns from a number of monasteries in Lhasa and other Tibetan communities mounted peaceful protests, asking for religious freedom and the return of the Dalai Lama. After four days the protests and security response devolved into rioting by Tibetans and a violent police crackdown in Lhasa. Some protesters resorted to violence, in some cases deadly, against ethnic Han and Hui residents. The ensuing police actions resulted in an unknown number of deaths, injuries, arrests, and human rights abuses. Over the next few months, there were a number of protests across the Tibetan plateau involving monks, nuns, and laypeople, the vast majority of which were peaceful. In the weeks following the unrest, there were reports of mass detentions of monks and of police and military personnel sealing off monasteries. Cellular phone and Internet access were routinely blocked and "patriotic education" campaigns intensified.

Following the March 2008 protests, the government further tightened its already strict control over access to and information about Tibetan areas, particularly the TAR, making it difficult to determine the scope of religious freedom violations. These controls remained in place during the reporting period. Respect for religious freedom in the TAR and other Tibetan areas deteriorated in the months following the violent unrest and remained poor throughout the reporting period. Authorities curtailed or tightly controlled numerous religious festivals and celebrations out of fear that

these events would become venues for antigovernment protests. During 2009 and 2010, many relatively small-scale protests took place in the TAR and in Tibetan areas of Sichuan, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces.

The number of monks and nuns at several monasteries decreased after the protests of Spring 2008. Information about the locations of many who had been arrested was difficult to confirm, and according to many sources, the monks and nuns released from prisons must live in their home villages and cannot return to their monasteries or nunneries. Released monks and nuns, according to some reports, require permission from village or county-level authorities to leave their homes even to seek medical treatment.

Many Tibetans traveled to Nepal en route to India because of the increased restrictions on religious practice, particularly in monasteries and nunneries; a desire to study with Tibetan Buddhist religious teachers in India; or a desire to receive a blessing from the Dalai Lama. There were continued reports that the government detained Tibetans seeking to cross the border from Tibet to Nepal. Such detentions reportedly lasted as long as several months and sometimes took place without formal charges. Chinese police sought to prevent Tibetans from crossing the Tibet-Nepal border and reportedly crossed into Nepal to pressure government officials to forcibly return Tibetans. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees documented the forcible return of three Tibetan Buddhists, including one monk, in June 2010. According to a report by an international NGO, two of the three were sent to prison following their return to China. There were persistent and credible reports among Tibetans, based on information from cross-border guides, of asylum seekers being forcibly returned to the country.

As of September 1, 2010, the U.S. Congressional Executive Commission on China's Political Prisoner Database contained records of 824 Tibetan political or religious prisoners believed to be currently detained or imprisoned. Of those 824 Tibetans, 479 (approximately 58 percent) are Tibetan Buddhist "religious professionals" (monks, nuns, and tulkus).

At the end of the reporting period, many monks and nuns remained in detention because of their involvement in the March 2008 protests. Several monks also reportedly committed suicide as a result of the harsh conditions and religious restrictions in monasteries that were imposed after March 2008. According to numerous sources, many of those detained were subjected to extrajudicial punishments, such as beatings and deprivation of food, water, and sleep for long periods. In some cases detainees reportedly suffered broken bones and other serious injuries at the hands of People's Armed Police (PAP) and PSB officers. According to sources who claimed to be eyewitnesses, the bodies of some persons, including monks and nuns who were killed during the violence or who died during interrogation, were disposed of secretly rather than being returned to their families. More than 80 nuns reportedly were detained in Sichuan Province after March 2008; their whereabouts were still unknown.

Limited access to information about prisoners and prisons made it difficult to ascertain the number of Tibetan prisoners of religious conscience or to assess the extent and severity of abuses.

In May 2010 a monk from Aba (Ngaba) Gomang Monastery in Sichuan Province named Dokru Tsultrim was rearrested, after having been arrested in March 2009 for writing articles in support of the Dalai Lama. Family members have reportedly been barred from visiting him.

In the winter of 2009 there were two protests calling for the release of prominent Buddhist figure Tenzin Delek Rinpoche who remained in a Sichuan prison on firearms charges. Sources claim that the firearms were left at his temple by a group who had renounced hunting.

In January 2009 Yangkyi, a nun at Dragkar Nunnery in Ganzi (Kardze), Sichuan Province, was sentenced to one year and nine months in prison for her role in a May 12, 2008 protest.

Also in January 2009, three nuns were each sentenced to two and a half years in prison for staging a protest in Ganzi (Kardze) County, Sichuan Province, on June 18, 2008. The three nuns, Poewang, Lhamo, and Yangzom, were being held in a prison in Chengdu. Sources reported that at least 44 other nuns were being held in the same prison.

In January 2009 seven monks, including chant leader Nima Tsering, were arrested in connection with a protest against the creation of the holiday Serf Emancipation Day by an estimated 300 monks at the Den Choekhor Monastery in Jomda County. In February 2009 nine monks from the Samye Monastery were sentenced to prison terms varying from two to 15 years for their participation in the March 2008 protests at the government administrative headquarters in Dranang County. A tenth monk was reported to have committed suicide.

In March 2009 two Tibetan women, a nun and a layperson, were detained following protests in Kardze (Ganzi) in Sichuan Province. The two women staged separate protests, handing out leaflets and calling for the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet, respect for Tibetans' human rights, religious freedom, and the release of the Panchen Lama and Tibetan prisoners. Their current whereabouts are unknown.

In March 2009 nearly 100 monks from the Ragya Monastery rioted in the Guoluo (Golog) TAP of Qinghai Province. International media reported that the riot started after a local monk who was questioned for advocating Tibetan independence ran away from the police station and jumped into the Yellow River to commit suicide.

In March 2009 according to an NGO report, two nuns from Dragkar Nunnery in Ganzi (Kardze), Sichuan Province, Yangkyi Dolma and Sonam Yangchen, were detained and beaten for staging a protest at the Ganzi (Kardze) County market square. Yangkyi Dolma allegedly distributed a handful of handwritten pamphlets, and both nuns shouted pro-Tibet slogans before PAP officers beat them and took them away. Yangkyi Dolma died in a Chengdu hospital from unknown causes in December 2009.

In March 2009 four nuns from the Puru-na Nunnery in Ganzi (Kardze), Sichuan Province, were sentenced to prison for their role in a 50-person protest at county headquarters on May 14, 2008. Tashi Lhamo, Youghal Khando, and Serka were each sentenced to two years in prison. Rinzin Choetso received a three-year sentence. The whereabouts of seven other nuns involved in the protest remained unknown.

Also in March 2009, according to an NGO, PSB personnel beat to death Phuntsok, a monk from the Drango Monastery in Ganzi (Kardze), after he passed out leaflets calling upon local Tibetans to forego crop cultivation as a gesture of mourning for monks who were tortured and imprisoned after the March 2008 unrest.

In April 2009 PSB officers in Nagchu County reportedly detained Khensur Thupten Thapkey, a former abbot of Shapten Monastery, and scripture master Geshe Tsultrim Gyaltzen. They allegedly also detained a third monk, Tsundue, of Shapten Monastery's Democratic Management Committee.

In May 2009 monk Tsultrim Gyatso from Lhabrang Monastery in Gansu was sentenced to life imprisonment for allegedly "endangering state security" by organizing a peaceful protest opposing religious freedom restrictions.

In July 2009 Jamyang Tenzin, a Tibetan monk from Lithang county, Kardze Prefecture, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment for opposing a patriotic education campaign in his monastery.

In November 2009 Kunga Tsayang, a monk from the Amdo Labrang Tashi Kyii Monastery, was sentenced to five years in prison on charges of disclosing state secrets in his Internet writings.

In December 2009 Tulku Phurbu Tsering Rinpoche was sentenced to eight years and six months in prison. In April 2009 he went on trial for weapons charges related to protests that took place in 2008 in Ganzi (Kardze) County, Sichuan.

No information was available on the fate of monks who protested in front of a group of foreign journalists at Lhasa's Jokhang Temple on March 27, 2008. Monks involved in a similar protest in front of foreign journalists at the Labrang Monastery in Gansu Province on April 9, 2008, were reportedly arrested. Five of the Labrang monks later escaped to India.

Tibetan monk Jigme Guri (also commonly known as Golog Jime or Jigme Gyatso) from Labrang Monastery, who was detained in March 2008, was released from prison in May 2010.

In June 2008 the Intermediate Court in Lhoka, TAR, sentenced nine monks to prison for two to 15 years in connection with protests at a government building in Dranang County, Lhoka, on March 18, 2008. Those sentenced included Tenzin Bhuchung of Langthang Monastery and Gyaltzen of Samye Monastery, who each received 15-year sentences. Tenzin Zoepa of Jowo Monastery was given a 13-year sentence. Nima Tashi and Phuntsok, also of Samye Monastery, were each sentenced to 13 years in prison.

No new information was available on Rongye Adak, who was arrested in August 2008 in Ganzi (Kardze) County, Sichuan Province, after calling for the Dalai Lama's return. He was convicted of inciting separatism and sentenced to eight years in prison.

In October 2008 two monks from the Ratoe Monastery in Chushul County were sentenced to prison for their role in the March 15 riot at the Chushul County government headquarters. According to the Xinhua news agency, Lobsang Tsephel was sentenced to nine years and Tsenam to five years.

In November 2008 Dorje Kangzhu, a nun from Ganzi (Kardze) County, Sichuan Province, was sentenced to seven years in prison for allegedly "inciting secession" after being arrested for distributing Tibetan independence leaflets and shouting support for the Dalai Lama in May 2008.

The whereabouts of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, recognized by the Dalai Lama and the vast majority of Tibetans as the Panchen Lama, remained unknown. The government refused requests by international observers to visit Nyima, who turned 21 years old on April 25, 2010. In October 2009 government officials in Tibet told a visiting foreign delegation that Nyima was "growing up very well, loves Chinese culture, and is enjoying his life." The officials asserted that his identification as the 11th Panchen Lama was "illegal." The government continued to insist that Gyaltzen Norbu, whom it selected in 1995, is the Panchen Lama's 11th reincarnation. The government did not provide any information on Lama Chadrel Rinpoche, who reportedly remained under house arrest for leaking information about the selection of the Panchen Lama.

The government also severely restricted contact between several important reincarnate lamas and the outside world. For example the 11th Pawo Rinpoche, whom the 17th Karmapa recognized in 1994, remained under official supervision at Nenang Monastery. Foreign delegations have repeatedly been refused permission to visit him.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

Authorities in the Yushu TAP, Qinghai Province, often tolerated the display of the Dalai Lama's photo in temporary shelters and in shrines erected to mourn the dead following the earthquake. Foreign visitors to Yushu in September saw photos of the Dalai Lama widely displayed on vehicle windshields and on amulets and, in one instance, in a monastery temple.

Since 2008 about 50 Tibetan monks who are resident in India but originally from Diqing Prefecture, Yunnan Province, have been given permission by Chinese authorities to return to Yunnan to visit relatives and friends. Diqing, which did not have violent confrontations after the 2008 Lhasa riots, is considered by the government to be a model Tibetan Prefecture and was given permission to accept larger numbers of monk visitors from India.

Section III. Status of Societal Action Affecting Enjoyment of Religious Freedom

Since ethnicity and religion are often interlinked in many parts of the country, it is difficult to categorize many incidents solely as ethnic or religious intolerance. Tensions among ethnic groups in Tibetan areas, including the Han, the Muslim Hui, and others remained high during the reporting period. Tensions between individuals of different religious beliefs – such as between Tibetans, ethnic Hui in the TAR, and TAPs – also were related to economic competition. Many ethnic Han Buddhists were interested in Tibetan Buddhism and donated money to Tibetan monasteries and nunneries. Tibetan monks frequently visited inland Chinese cities to provide religious instruction to Han Buddhists. In addition, a growing number of ethnic Han Buddhists visited Tibetan monasteries in the summer, although the central government imposed restrictions that made it difficult for ethnic Han Buddhists to do long-term study at monasteries in ethnic Tibetan areas.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The Department of State, the U.S. embassy in Beijing, and the U.S. consulate general in Chengdu made a concerted effort to encourage greater religious freedom in Tibetan areas, using focused pressure in cases of abuse. Embassy and consulate general officials expressed concern and sought further information on cases whenever there were credible reports of religious persecution or discrimination. U.S. diplomatic personnel in the country maintained

contacts with a wide range of religious leaders and practitioners in Tibetan areas to monitor the status of religious freedom. After the outbreak of unrest in the TAR and other Tibetan areas in March 2008, U.S. government officials repeatedly requested diplomatic access to affected areas. The rate of approval of such requests increased over this reporting period in comparison to 2008-2009, but the majority of requests were denied, and visits to the TAR were closely controlled and monitored. Unpublished restrictions on travel by foreigners into the TAR and other Tibetan areas imposed in March 2008 often resulted in U.S. diplomats and other foreigners being turned back at police roadblocks, ostensibly for their own safety, or being refused transportation on public buses to Tibetan areas outside the TAR that were officially open to foreign visitors.