

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	341
Land:	Kina
Kilde:	Radio Free Asia
Titel:	Christians Released, Pastors Still Detained After Stand-Off
Udgivet:	26. december 2013
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	2. juli 2014

[EN](#) | [DE](#)

- **Source:**
RFA - Radio Free Asia
- **Title:**
Christians Released, Pastors Still Detained After Stand-Off
- **Publication date:**
26 December 2013
- **ecoi.net summary:** Henan Province: Authorities release a number of Christians recently detained for calling for release of detained pastor and his aides [ID 266239]
- **Countries:**
China
- **Original link** <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/christians-12262013143054.html>

Recommended citation:

RFA - Radio Free Asia: Christians Released, Pastors Still Detained After Stand-Off, 26 December 2013 (available at ecoi.net)
http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/266239/380243_en.html (accessed 05 May 2014)

Christians Released, Pastors Still Detained After Stand-Off

Authorities in the central Chinese province of Henan on Thursday released a group of Christian worshipers detained in a pre-Christmas crackdown as well as their lawyers who attempted to visit them, but continued to keep two pastors in custody, church members said.

Government-hired thugs blocked, held and assaulted worshipers who went to Henan province's Nanle county earlier this week to rally support for pastor Zhang Shaojie and more than a dozen of his aides detained by police about a month ago, and denied access to their lawyers.

Among those held and beaten was pastor Cao Nan from Shenzhen in southern Guangdong province.

"Today all of our lawyers, including rights activists, were safely released from detention," Shandong-based pastor Yan Shen'en told RFA's Mandarin Service. "We all left [Nanle county] at around 9:00 a.m."

Yan said local officials had denied detaining either the dozens of Christian worshipers who converged on Nanle county to support its embattled congregation at Christmas, or their lawyers.

"They said it was the local people who detained them," Yan said. "But they didn't. The government sent officials from village and township levels to detain us."

Meanwhile, Cao Nan, who spoke out about his mistreatment in police custody on Wednesday, is still in detention, fellow worshipers said.

"I was just at the Nanle County Detention Center, and Cao Nan is currently being held under observation in there," Wang Fengrui, wife of Nanle-based pastor Zhang, said.

"I took him a quilt, but I didn't get to see him because they wouldn't let me visit him," Wang said.

Zhang remains incommunicado at an unknown location following his detention on Nov. 16.

Several of his family members and congregation were subsequently detained, also at an undisclosed location.

Repeated calls to Cao and Zhang's cell phones went unanswered on Thursday.

Christmas rally

Hundreds of Protestant worshipers from Shenzhen, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Hebei, Shandong and Beijing converged on Nanle county last week to show support for the state-sanctioned Protestant church after Zhang's detention amid a property dispute with local officials.

But they were banned from using the church premises, which have been sealed off by local officials, who are watching the buildings to prevent anyone going in, local congregation members said.

Nanle church-goers have previously accused the government of targeting the church's property under the guise of other charges.

On Monday, dozens of people were surrounded by more than 100 police after they tried to hold a Christmas service in the open air instead.

Lawyers for a group of Protestant church members detained on public order offenses were beaten by government-hired thugs and detained, after they protested being denied the right to visit their clients.

Earlier this month, more than a dozen lawyers called on authorities to allow them to meet with Pastor Zhang Shaojie of the officially sanctioned "Three-Self" Nanle church and 20 members of his congregation who have been held since November.

The church members were detained by Nanle authorities last month after they protested outside the county police department for the release of Zhang, who was detained by police in a Nov. 16 raid on the church, according to the U.S.-based Christian rights group ChinaAid.

Zhang and 23 of his congregation have been detained for more than three weeks on charges of "obstructing official duty" and "gathering a crowd to disturb public order," ChinaAid said in a statement on its website.

The crackdown is rare for a state-sanctioned church. Chinese authorities officially allows Christians to only worship in such churches, while unregistered congregations tend to be harassed.

Pastor Zhang was detained by police who raided the church and tied him up, without showing any legal documents, ChinaAid said last month.

No formal arrest notices have been issued and the church's bank account has been frozen, it said.

Police surveillance

Wang said Zhang's elderly parents had both been taken ill since their son's detention, but had been denied permission to go to the local hospital.

"These two elderly people cannot be moved, and they are in imminent danger," she said. "They won't let our vehicles in, and they won't let the hospital treat them."

She said an unqualified doctor from a nearby village was currently administering limited treatment to the couple.

Wang said local officials had repeatedly warned the Nanle worshipers not to send out tweets on popular social media platforms.

"They are threatening us, saying that if we send any more, things won't go well for Zhang Shaojie," she said.

Wang said the Zhang family home is currently under close surveillance.

"There are two cars outside, and about seven or eight people there," she said.

Zhang's daughter Zhang Yunyun said she had called on the Patriotic Three-Self Association for assistance in a recent letter, but had been given a dismissive response.

House churches

The ruling Chinese Communist Party wields tight control over religious activities and has launched a nationwide campaign in recent months to force unofficial "house churches" to join the officially sanctioned "Three-Self Patriotic Association" for Protestant churches.

Protestants and Catholics practicing outside of state-controlled churches are typically targeted for harassment and detention by local police and religious affairs officials.

Churches that attract a wide following and set up in their own premises are often forced to leave or give up their buildings, but are forbidden from organizing open-air gatherings in public either, Chinese Christians report.

Officially an atheist country, China has an army of officials whose job is to watch over faith-based activities, which have spread rapidly in recent decades amid sweeping economic and social change.

Party officials are put in charge of Catholics, Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, and Protestants. Judaism isn't recognized, and worship in nonrecognized temples, churches, or mosques is against the law.

Reported by Xin Lin for RFA's Mandarin Service. Translated and written in English by Luisetta Mudie.

Copyright © 1998-2010, RFA. Used with the permission of Radio Free Asia, 2025 M St. NW, Suite 300, Washington DC 20036.

published on  European Courts of Origin Information Network