

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 29, 2025

The Honorable Marco A. Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio,

We write urging you to directly address the People's Republic of China's (PRC) ongoing persecution of Christians and other religious minorities during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit this week. This should include raising the case of recently detained Pastor Ezra Jin Mingri this week, imposing *Global Magnitsky Act* sanctions on PRC officials responsible for religious freedom abuses in China, and elevating religious freedom and human rights violations within trade negotiations. These would be critical steps in addressing the PRC's unfettered and ongoing persecution of Christians and other religious minorities.

Sanctions under the *Global Magnitsky Act*, alongside diplomatic pressure, have served as important tools in responding to violations of religious freedom around the world.

The arbitrary detention¹ of two dozen house church Christian pastors and leaders, including Pastor Ezra Jin Mingri, on October 11, 2025 marks the PRC's most recent crackdown on freedom of religion in China. Today, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continues to arbitrarily hold religious leaders including: Pastor Zhang Shaojie², a Three-Self church pastor from Nanle County in central Henan who was sentenced in July 2014 to 12 years in prison for "gathering a crowd to disrupt the public order"; Pastor Wang Yi³ of the Early Rain Covenant Church, who was arrested and sentenced to 9 years in prison for "inciting to subvert state power" and "illegal business operations"; and the 11th Panchen Lama who has been held captive since 1995⁴.

As you know, the PRC only recognizes five official religions, and only groups belonging to one of these "sanctioned" religions are permitted to register with the Government and hold religious services. The PRC stringently restricts these groups' freedom of religion and often

¹ Laurie Chen, *China Detains Dozens of Underground Church Pastors in Crackdown*, REUTERS (Oct. 14 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/china-detains-dozens-underground-church-pastors-crackdown-2025-10-13/>.

² United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Zhang Shaojie," *Religious Prisoners of Conscience – Victims Database*, <https://www.uscirf.gov/religious-prisoners-conscience/forb-victims-database/zhang-shaojie>.

³ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Wang Yi," *Religious Prisoners of Conscience – Victims Database*, <https://www.uscirf.gov/religious-prisoners-conscience/forb-victims-database/wang-yi>.

⁴ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Gedhun Choekyi Nyima," *Religious Prisoners of Conscience – Victims Database*, <https://www.uscirf.gov/religious-prisoners-conscience/forb-victims-database/gedhun-choekyi-nyima>.

abuses religious groups not sanctioned by the government such as Protestant Christians, Catholics, Muslims, Buddhists and Falun Gong practitioners through arbitrary detention, forced labor, and serious restrictions on freedom of religion or belief⁵.

The United States was founded on the principle of Americans having the right to practice their faith freely, with no fear of persecution by their government or anyone else. Given American leadership on the world stage, the United States has and continues to serve a crucial role in promoting religious freedom around the world through the Department of State and the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

The ongoing brutality against Christians and other religious minorities and the PRC's disdain for religious freedom requires a strong, multi-pronged response. Given the PRC's most recent crackdown on religious freedom in China, we urge you to consider leveraging numerous tools at your disposal, including sanctions and diplomatic engagements this week at the APEC Summit in response to religious freedom abuses in China.

Sincerely



Ted Budd
United States Senator



James Lankford
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Scott Bessent
Secretary of Treasury

⁵ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, *China 2025 USCIRF Annual Report* (April 2025), <https://www.uscirtf.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/China%202025%20USCIRF%20Annual%20Report.pdf>.