



## **ERLC Calls for the US Government to Hold China Accountable for Religious Freedom Abuses**

**The freedom of religion and belief is a fundamental human right.** The right to believe, practice, and live according to one's own religious faith is a God-given, fundamental human right. The government only officially recognizes five religious entities, all of which face significant pressure and are aggressively monitored and regulated. The Chinese government continues to commit serious violations of freedom of religion and belief with the goal of conforming religious belief and practice to Chinese communist ideology. In 2019, Southern Baptists passed a resolution that “condemned” the Communist Party of China for their “extreme religious persecution and flagrant human rights violations.”

**Since 2015, the Chinese government has escalated its persecution of religious minorities.** In 2015, President Xi announced a new policy to “sinicize” religious practice in China, officially requiring religious teaching and practice to conform to China's socialist core values. The government continues to destroy religious symbols on houses of worship, burn Bibles, confiscate religious materials, and close houses of worship.

**The Chinese government has detained more than a million Uyghur Muslims in reeducation camps.** In March 2019, Ambassador Sam Brownback argued that Uyghur Muslims have been detained for arbitrary reasons, “including common religious practices, such as having a beard, wearing a veil, attending services, observing Ramadan, sharing religious writings, or even praying.” To date, the Chinese government has not allowed independent observers and experts into the country to inspect these reeducation camps.

**Chinese Christians face threats to freedom of assembly and the right to practice religion in community.** The Chinese government treats large groups—even those peacefully gathered and maintained—as a disruption to public order unless registered and controlled. To that end, the government deploys surveillance devices capable of facial recognition in state-sanctioned and unregistered houses of worship as a means of control and intimidation.

**The ERLC calls on the U.S. government to prioritize international religious freedom in all aspects of its foreign policy with China and to counter China's moral and human rights narrative.**

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