

# **Christian and ethnic persecution in China a ‘nightmare’**

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WASHINGTON (BP)—Christians and ethnic minorities are living a “nightmare” in China under President Xi Jinping, a congressional commission report released Oct. 10 documents.

Jinping’s unmerciful program to “Sinicize” religion into a government-controlled framework, marginalize ethnic minorities including Uyghur Muslims, and redefine human rights intensified in 2018, making life a nightmare for civilians, U.S. Representative Chris Smith said in releasing the 2018 Annual Report of the [Congressional-Executive Commission on China](https://www.cecc.gov/) (<https://www.cecc.gov/>)

“If you don’t comport with the Communist Party principle about everything you do to the ideology of Xi Jinping, you are going to be arrested, you are going to be tortured, and in many cases you are going to be killed,” said Smith, co-chair of the commission.

“When Bibles are burned and Tibetan monks burned themselves in protests, when a simple prayer over a meal in public may be considered illegal religious gathering, when mosques and churches are demolished in Uyghur and Kazakh Muslims are forced to denounce their faith, the China dream is a nightmare for millions upon millions of Chinese citizens.”

## **Crackdown on religion**

The 405-page report covering a one-year span ending in September

documents “unprecedented repression of ethnic minorities” in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, “dramatic increases” in Communist Party control of government, society and business, and the increased use of technology as a repression tool.

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, co-chair of the commission, said the crackdown on religion in particular, through the increased scope of the United Front Work Department in overseeing religious affairs, underscores “the party’s enduring fear that the growth of religious belief is a threat to its grip on power.”

A political prisoner database, political prisoners of particular concern and recommendations for the Trump administration and the United Nations are included in the report.

Former political prisoner and ethnic Uyghur Rebiya Kadeer, who fled China in 2005 after securing a “compassionate release” from prison, was among audience members Rubio and Smith said had been personally and tragically affected by China’s oppression.

## **‘Increasingly aggressive’**

Under Jinping, China is more aggressive at home and abroad, the commission said in summarizing its findings.

“We see an ascendant and increasingly aggressive China, seeking to take center stage in the world, and in so doing, determined to shape new global norms on development, trade, the internet, and even human rights,” the commission reported. “All the while, the fundamental authoritarian character of China’s political system remains the same.”

Rubio commended Chinese pastors and lay leaders who signed a “joint declaration for the sake of the Christian faith” in August and stated “their

willingness to bear all losses,” including freedom and life. More than 400 have signed the statement which remains active, Rubio said.

“We must also remember the brave Chinese citizens who are voicing dissent in the face of expanding domestic oppression,” Rubio said. “At the heart of the CECC’s annual report lays this enduring truth—pressing for China’s adherence to universal standards advances not only American national security, economic interests and moral values; it advances the aspirations of Chinese citizens eager for peace, protection of their most basic rights and genuine political reform to accompany their economic ascent and progress.”

## **Among the commission’s recommendations are:**

- Advocating publicly and clearly for political prisoners, including the appointment of a special adviser for religious and political prisoners to coordinate interagency efforts on prisoners’ behalf.
- Demanding that China “guarantee to all citizens freedom of religion in accordance with its international human rights obligations, enforcing sanctions against individuals guilty of oppressive acts.”
- Encouraging China to end its population control policies including forced abortions, decades of which “have exacerbated China’s demographic challenges, which include a rapidly aging population, shrinking workforce, and sex ratio imbalance.”
- Pulling the 2022 Winter Olympics from Beijing.