

## 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Human Rights Council

**Agenda Item 6:** UPR Outcome, China

**Organisation:** Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)

**Speaker:** Claire Denman

**Position on List of NGOs:** 20



Thank you Mr President,

We read this statement in honour of Cao Shunli and all individuals unjustly detained in China for the peaceful exercise of their rights.

CSW welcomes the high number of recommendations relating to freedom of religion or belief made during China's UPR, including those made with regard to the human rights crisis in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

CSW remains concerned by the deterioration in human rights and freedom of religion or belief that has been observed in China since the country's previous UPR.

We are particularly concerned by the situation in Xinjiang, where it is estimated that over one million predominantly Muslim Uyghurs, Kazakhs and members of other ethnic minorities have been detained without charge in so-called 'political re-education' camps since 2017. Conditions in these camps are dangerously unsanitary and overcrowded; detainees are subject to beatings, sleep deprivation and solitary confinement.

There is also a clear religious element to the detentions, with people being detained for participating in everyday religious activities, and reports of detainees being required to renounce Islam and promise not to follow religion.

CSW therefore calls for the establishment of an independent international fact-finding mission to be conducted in the region, with additional measures taken by the Council if the findings of the mission suggest it would be appropriate, or if the mission is restricted in any way.

Other religious groups throughout China have also faced severe persecution, which has heightened since the introduction of revised regulations on religious affairs in February 2018. Over the past year, both registered and unregistered churches have faced forced shutdown, demolition of religious buildings, harassment and physical attacks against congregants, and a ban on under-18s attending church services.

On 9 December, police arrested over 100 members of Early Rain Church in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. Some members remain in detention, including Pastor Wang Yi; others have continued to face surveillance and harassment since their release.

We call on the government to release Wang Yi and all those detained in connection with their religion or belief in China, and to cease its harassment of Early Rain Church and other churches and religious groups in the country.

Thank you