

## FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Peaceful Worship Is A Crime In China

Knut Holdhus  
January 10, 2026



*Lu Chia-chen (left) and Chang Pi-hsien*



[ChinaAid](#)

### **Human rights group: Taiwanese Family Federation believer sentenced in Xiamen under China's "cult" law after organizing private worship services**

In an [article](#) published on 8th January 2026, [China Aid](#), an international Christian human rights organization focused on religious freedom and the rule of law in China, reported on the sentencing of a Taiwanese [Family Federation](#) believer in the large coastal city of Xiamen, Fujian Province. The case illustrates the continuing use of Communist China's criminal law to penalize unregistered religious activity and highlights the increasing risks faced by foreign and Taiwanese nationals engaged in faith-based

activities on the mainland.

See also [China's New Crackdown: War on Foreign Christians](#)



*Chinese crackdown on believers.  
Illustration: Grok xAI*

According to [China Aid](#), a married couple from Taiwan – Chang Pi-hsien and Lu Chia-chen – were subjected to criminal prosecution for their involvement with the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#) (formerly the [Unification Church](#)). While Chang Pi-hsien was released on bail pending trial in February 2025, his wife, Lu Chia-chen, has since been sentenced to one year and six months' imprisonment by the Siming District People's Court in Xiamen. Her sentence runs until July 12, 2026.

Publicly available information indicates that Lu Chia-chen first traveled to Xiamen in 2006 for employment and subsequently became a long-term resident. Beginning in 2018, she assumed a leadership role within the local [Family Federation](#) community. In this capacity, she regularly organized small religious gatherings in private homes, where participants engaged in prayer, hymn singing, study of texts of the [religious organization](#), and the listening of sermons. These activities were conducted discreetly and, according to reports, had not previously been the subject of explicit warnings or prohibitions from local authorities.

On 12th January 2025, police interrupted one such gathering and took Lu Chia-chen away for investigation. Several other attendees were also questioned, and the following day public security

authorities issued formal detention notices. Multiple mainland Chinese participants were subsequently placed under detention. The sudden enforcement action marked a turning point, transforming what had been long-standing private religious meetings into a criminal case.

Chinese authorities accused both Lu Chia-chen and her husband of violating Article 300 of the Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China, commonly described as the offense of "using a cult organization to undermine the implementation of the law". This provision is one of the most frequently invoked legal tools in cases involving religious groups deemed undesirable by the state. In practice, the charge does not require evidence that the accused actually obstructed specific laws or legal processes. Instead, once an organization is officially labeled a "cult" by the government, participation in or organization of its activities can itself be treated as sufficient grounds for criminal liability.

The [Family Federation](#) was placed on China's official list of "cult organizations" in 1997. For years, the [Federation](#) operated quietly in several Chinese cities, often avoiding public visibility. Its designation as a cult, however, has meant that any religious activity associated with it is vulnerable to prosecution under Article 300, regardless of whether such activity is peaceful or private.

[China Aid](#) notes that this case is not an isolated incident. In recent years, authorities have intensified enforcement actions against members of various Christian, Buddhist, and other religious groups under similar charges, contributing to a steadily shrinking space for religious expression. The report also references separate incidents involving Taiwanese members of I-Kuan Tao, an indigenous religious movement, who were detained in Guangdong on suspicion of "organizing and using secret societies to undermine law enforcement".

Together, these cases underscore broader concerns about the expansive and ambiguous application of criminal law in matters of belief, particularly where foreign or cross-strait religious connections are involved. From the perspective of human rights advocates, the prosecution of Lu Chia-chen exemplifies how legal mechanisms designed to protect public order are increasingly used to suppress peaceful religious practice, raising serious questions about religious freedom and legal proportionality in contemporary Communist China.



*Bob Fu testifying about religious liberty issues before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee October 2, 2018*

According to its website, [ChinaAid](#) has for 20 years "worked to expose human rights abuses and promote truth, justice and freedom by advocating for religious freedom". The organization was founded by Bob (Xiqiu) Fu who was a student leader during the famous Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989 when according to Red Cross figures more than 2,000 democracy activists were killed by the Communist regime. For the last 20 years, [ChinaAid](#) has been based in Midland, Texas, USA.

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## Shared Prison Experience: Resonance Of Two Souls

- January 9, 2026
- Knut Holdhus



As Mother Han has spent more than 100 days in a tiny detention cell, a former political prisoner from Czechia draws a striking parallel to his own experience of 3 years and 2 months in a communist prison

### My Dream

A reflection from Prague, Czechia by PhDr. Juraj Lajda (Doctor of Philosophy), lecturer and publisher, former political prisoner under the communist regime in

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Artistic impression of **Mother Han** in detention cell. Illustration: Grok xAI.

As we write 4th January 2026, **Mother Han** – called “True Mother” by many – has been in **pretrial detention** in Seoul for more than 100 days. All hopes for her release have so far gone unfulfilled. She is enduring circumstances that few can truly imagine unless they have experienced them firsthand.

I deeply wish to express my support and to be close to her. The truest way would have been in person – to meet her, to stand by her side, and even to endure the same suffering she is facing, to take her place in the **detention cell** if that were possible.

But this is not possible. I live in Prague, and we are separated by great physical distance. Even entering her cell in *Seoul Detention Center* is beyond reach. The power of prayer alone cannot bring my physical body to her side.

Before Christmas, however, I had a very special, vivid, and intense dream. In this dream, I found myself in the detention center where **True Mother** is being held. She approached me and embraced me warmly. This was not merely a physical embrace, but an inner one – rooted in deep understanding and profound empathy, where no words were needed. Words so often lead to misunderstanding, yet in this moment, without words, we understood each other completely. It was a state of inner resonance – resonance between two souls in harmony, on the same frequency. In such a state, a single look is enough to convey meaning, feeling, and closeness.

This deep sense of empathy arose from my own experience more than 50 years ago, when I went through circumstances similar to those **True Mother** faces now. I, too, lived through a time of persecution and danger.

More than half a century ago, under a communist regime in what was then called Czechoslovakia, I experienced severe persecution. Along with **18 other members** of the **Family Federation** there, I was sentenced to several years in prison on fabricated and false charges. The situation created a profound sense of shared understanding and belonging with **True Mother** – an understanding born of having faced the same threatening and oppressive environment.

In this way, I received an answer to my question and a fulfillment of my desire: how to express my support for **True Mother** and draw close to her during this time.



The place where Dr. Lajda was imprisoned from 1973 to 1976 – the **Palace of Justice** in Bratislava, Slovakia. Photo: Laurenc Klas

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Had vivid and intense dream: PhDr. Juraj Lajda (Doctor of Philosophy), here 15th Oct. 2007. Photo: Personal

I want her to know that I am with her and thinking of her – not only in the general sense, as millions around the world surely are – but in a deeper way. I want to convey that I understand her feelings, her experience, her

disappointments, and the realities of daily life in the detention center, because I lived through them myself more than 50 years ago. In total, I spent three years and two months in prison, including one year in pretrial detention.

We were accused of subverting the republic because of our faith in and devotion to **True Parents**, and for spreading ideas deemed anti-Marxist. In our search for truth, we inevitably came into conflict with communist laws.

Similarly, I believe that **True Mother** now pursues a path toward world peace and is being unjustly persecuted for doing so.

Under communist regimes, the persecution of religious leaders was, to a certain extent, expected. However, it is deeply troubling that in a democratic country such as the *Republic of Korea*, religious persecution can still occur, and believers can be put behind bars.

In conclusion, I wish to affirm my faith and conviction that **True Mother** knows I am with her. I wish that this closeness were not only experienced in a dream, but also in reality. At the same time, I hold firm hope and belief that she will be released from detention soon.

See also: [Peaceful Worship Treated as Crime in China](#)

**Text:** Dr. Juraj Lajda

**Featured image** above: Mugshot of Juraj Lajda from 1973. Photo: Archive of the Prison and Judicial Guard Corps of the Slovak Republic.

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