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China House Church Prosecutions 2026: Fair Trial Rights Trampled as Pastors Face Fraud Charges

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"Chinese authorities are trampling fair-trial rights in a wave of house church prosecutions across three provinces, according to a report published on 19 November 2026 by Chinese Human Rights Defenders"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

Chinese authorities are trampling fair-trial rights in a wave of house church prosecutions across three provinces, according to a report published on 19 November 2026 by Chinese Human Rights Defenders. In Xi'an, Light of Zion Church pastors are being tried on fraud charges over offerings their congregations gave freely; in Kaili, four Christians have spent eight months in detention without seeing their case files; and in Shenyang, four young believers face trial on cult charges next week. The report, drawing on the Rights Defense Network, says the pattern is the same in each place: the law used as a weapon, and the defence pushed aside.

Pastor Gao Quanfu stood in a Xi'an courtroom on 12 November, accused of defrauding the very people who call him their pastor, and his wife Pang Yu followed him into the dock five days later. Neither of them has heard a verdict yet. And in the prosecution's own paperwork, 235 people are listed as victims of a crime that, the family says, nobody ever asked them about.

His lawyers did not even get to watch the trial in peace. Lu Siwei and Wang Yu were seized by police at the courthouse on 12 November and held untill the evening - on the day their client was on trial. When a pastor's defenders are dragged away from the courtroom door, the trial stops looking like a trial at all.

China House Church Prosecutions: Fraud Charges Over Church Offerings

The charge against the Light of Zion leaders turns something ordinary into something criminal: congregants gave offerings to their church, and the state now calls those gifts fraud. The pastors did not take the money by trickery - the people who gave it knew exactly where it was going. That leaves one simple question: who, exactly, was defrauded?

The prosecution's answer is a list of 235 names, people it calls victims. But the family alleges that prosecutors never questioned those 235 people at all. If the so-called victims were never asked whether they felt cheated, then the case rests on paper, not on people.

The trials are not over. Pastor Tang Bingyi, another Light of Zion leader, is due to face trial on 30 November, and the court has still given no verdict in the cases of Gao Quanfu and Pang Yu. Bail restrictions have been lifted for four Zion Church members, though eight pastors remain detained, as we reported in China Lifts Bail Restrictions for 4 Zion Church Members as 8 Pastors Remain Detained.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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