

Ambassador Cui Tiankai
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
3505 International PI NW,
Washington, DC 20008

06/01/2020

Dear Ambassador Tiankai,

We ask you to release Qin Derfu, a deacon in the Early Rain Covenant Church (ERCC).

The ERCC has endured significant harassment in recent years on account of their faith. Qin was arrested during the Chinese government's 2018 crackdown and has been in detainment ever since. Of the 150 individuals detained during that crackdown, Qin is one of only two individuals still being held.

Qin was sentenced on November 29, 2019 on the accusation that he was conducting an illegal business—an allegation that he steadfastly denies. His own assigned lawyer was not allowed to attend the hearing, although his wife was permitted to witness the proceedings.

The judge on Qin's case sentenced him to four years in prison despite promising earlier to release him if he agreed to be represented by government attorneys rather than his own personal lawyer. Qin had agreed to this arrangement, which the judge ignored in the final ruling.

The hearing attempted to sidestep the issue of Qin's faith, instead focusing on pamphlets that Qin had printed for his fellow church members and claiming that this printing required authorization from a government administration. While the prosecutor attempted to cast the case as non-religious, the mass arrests of ERCC members in 2018 makes it clear that Qin's real crime was his faith—not his printing.

In his closing statement, Qin said, "I am a Christian, and I serve at my church, according to my congregation's needs. With the understanding of an ordinary citizen, I have done nothing illegal or contrary to law, I believe having [Christian] faith is not a crime."

We respectfully ask that you release deacon Qin Derfu and commute his remaining sentence.

Sincerely,

International Christian Concern