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CHINA | CSW Welcomes Inquiry on Human Rights

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) welcomes a new report by the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission on the crackdown on human rights in China.

The report, entitled “The Darkest Moment: The Crackdown on Human Rights in China 2013-2016,” focuses on the period since Xi Jinping became President. It includes information on the right to freedom of religion or belief for Christians and other religious communities, the ongoing repression in Tibet and Xinjiang, the deteriorating political situation in Hong Kong, the crackdown on human rights lawyers and related human rights issues.

CSW gave both written and oral evidence to the Commission on the treatment of religious communities, including the cross demolitions in Zhejiang, the detention and harassment of Catholic clergy, and restrictions on religious practice in Tibet and Xinjiang. CSW agrees with the Commission’s finding that “An unprecedented crackdown on civil society, human rights defenders, freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief [...] is unfolding” in China under President Xi Jinping.

CSW endorses calls for greater transparency on the part of the British government on the UK-China relationship and for regular engagement between the FCO and human rights organizations working on China. The report also makes specific recommendations on support for human rights lawyers and on the annual human rights dialogue between China and the UK. CSW further welcomes comments from Lord Patten, former Governor of Hong Kong (1992-1997) and Chair of the Conservative Party (1990-1992), recommending that the UK does more to raise questions about dissidents and religious freedom when engaging with Chinese officials.

CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, “At a time when the UK is pursuing a closer relationship with China, CSW believes that promoting rule of law and guaranteeing human rights is in the interests of both nations as they seek to build a strong, stable and more innovative partnership. CSW continues to call on the government of China to end practices and policies which violate the right to freedom of religion or belief and other human rights. The UK

government must ensure that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has the resources to support human rights defenders and monitor human rights abuses, to review its annual human rights dialogue, and to raise human rights cases both in public and in private with the Chinese authorities.”