



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

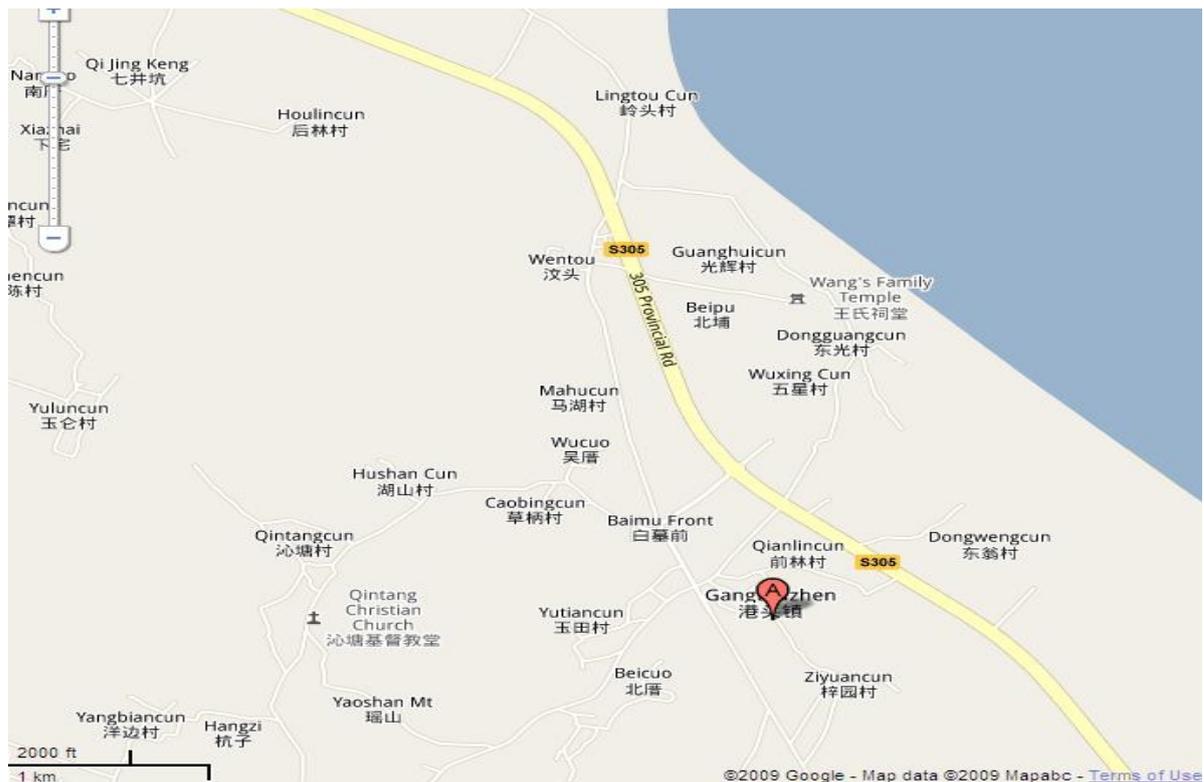
China

China – CHN37779 – Fujian Province –
Lingtou Village – Gangtou – Christians –
House churches – Internal relocation

2 December 2010

1. Please provide a map showing the location of Lingtou Village, Gangtou Town in Fuqing City. If practical, please locate the Gangtou Police Station on that map.

An RRT research response dated 24 November 2009 provides information on churches in Gangtou Town.¹ The research response includes the following map showing the locations of Lingtou and Gangtou in Fuqing.²



¹ RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response CHN35719*, 24 November, (Questions 1 & 2) – Attachment 1

² 'Gangtouzhen, Fuqing, Fuzhou, Fujian, China' 2009, Google maps website http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&q=Gangtouzhen,+Fuqing,+Fuzhou,+Fujian,+China&ie=UTF8&cd=2&geo_code=FfHZhQEd9jwfBw&split=0&sll=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=23.875,57.630033&hq=&hnear=Gangtouzhen,+Fuqing,+Fuzhou,+Fujian,+China&ll=25.553205,119.484215&spn=0.040421,0.066004&z=14&pw=2 - Accessed 23 November 2009 – Attachment 2

A map showing the location of Gangtou police station was not located in a search of the sources consulted. An RRT research response dated 7 March 2008³ refers to information provided to the Tribunals by the Senior Chinese Librarian for the Asian Collections at the National Library of Australia, which includes the addresses in Chinese of police stations in Fuqing City.⁴ A translation of the addresses by the Research & Information section includes reference to Gangtou Police Station in Gangtou Township, Fuqing at No. 125 in the list of police stations.⁵

2. What is the current situation for house-church Christians in Fuqing particularly and Fujian province more generally?

It is reported that in October 2010, the authorities took away a worker and sealed three venues used for church gatherings of a church in Fujian described as having “a strong heart for evangelism”.⁶ Other recent reports do not refer to the situation of house church Christians in Fuqing and Fujian.

The US Department of State report on religious freedom in China released in November 2010 does not refer to house church Christians in Fuqing or Fujian province.⁷ The 2010 annual report of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom also does not specifically mention house churches in Fuqing or Fujian.⁸ Both reports refer to the treatment of unregistered religious groups varying between different parts of the country.^{9,10}

The Congressional Executive Commission on China 2010 annual report, which indicates that the authorities continued to harass and arbitrarily detain members of house churches throughout China and interfered with their places of worship, does not refer to house churches in Fuqing or Fujian.¹¹ The previous Congressional Executive Commission on China annual report for 2009 refers to reports from two localities in Fujian province that the Local Church, which is a banned Protestant group that officials refer to as the Shouters, was a target for public security forces to “strike hard” against.¹²

A 2009 report on the Protestant Church in Fujian Province in a Global Chinese Ministries newsletter indicates that there are large numbers of independent house churches in Fujian.

³ RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN32936*, 7 March, (Question 2) – Attachment 3

⁴ Senior Chinese Librarian, National Library of Australia 2008, Email to RRT ‘RE: Information Request about Detention Centres in Fuqing’, 14 February – Attachment 4

⁵ RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN32936*, 7 March, (Question 2) – Attachment 3

⁶ ‘Abduction and Building Closures in Fujian’ 2010, China Aid website, 19 October

http://www.chinaaid.org/qry/page.taf?id=105&function=detail&sbtblct_uid1=1582&nc=8e483cd76c2e159254f7a7430ec53b24 – Accessed 14 October 2010 – Attachment 5

⁷ US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2010 – China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau)*, November – Attachment 6

⁸ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, ‘Annual Report 2010’, USCIRF website, May <http://www.uscirtf.gov/images/annual%20report%202010.pdf> – Accessed 31 May 2010 – Attachment 7

⁹ US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2010 – China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau)*, November, Section II – Attachment 6

¹⁰ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, ‘Annual Report 2010’, USCIRF website, May, p. 104 <http://www.uscirtf.gov/images/annual%20report%202010.pdf> – Accessed 31 May 2010 – Attachment 7

¹¹ Congressional Executive Commission on China 2010, *Annual Report 2010*, 10 October, p. 109 – Attachment 8

¹² Congressional Executive Commission on China 2009, *Annual Report 2009*, 10 October, pp. 138-139 – Attachment 9

The report also indicates that “[i]n general, local government in Fujian seems fairly tolerant of unregistered believers as it is rare that one reads of cases of persecution of house-church Christians in this province.”¹³

The China Aid Association annual report on government treatment of house churches in China for the period January-December 2009 does not include Fuqing or Fujian in the list of municipalities where house churches suffered ill-treatment in mainland China during 2009.¹⁴

It has also been reported, however, that in June 2010 correspondence, the President of the China Aid Association indicated that it was incorrect to find there was religious freedom in Fujian and Guangdong provinces, and “house churches in Fujian and Guangdong, like all of China, face the constant and fearful risk of being closed and its members punished.”¹⁵

A recent RRT country advice dated 30 November 2010 includes information on the treatment of unregistered house churches by the authorities in Fujian.¹⁶ An RRT country advice dated 26 October 2010 includes information on the situation of Christian churches in Fujian province, whether the authorities allow unofficial Christian churches to operate, and the treatment of people who attend them.¹⁷ Another RRT country advice of the same date also looks at the situation of house churches in Fujian.¹⁸

3. Are there any reports of house-Church Christians being ill-treated in Gangtouw Town, Fuqing City or Fujian province?

It is reported that in October 2010, the authorities took away a worker and sealed three venues used for church gatherings of a church in Fujian described as having “a strong heart for evangelism”.¹⁹ Other recent reports do not refer to the treatment of house church Christians in Gangtouw Town, Fuqing City or Fujian province.

Earlier reports on the treatment of house church Christians in Fujian province include the 2007 US Department of State report on religious freedom in China, which indicates that “[p]olice sometimes closed unregistered places of worship, including Catholic churches and Protestant house churches with significant memberships, properties, financial

¹³ Global Chinese Ministries 2009, ‘The Protestant Church in Fujian Province’, OMF (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) International website, April http://www.omf.org/omf/us/resources_1/newsletters/global_chinese_ministries/gcm_newsletter_2009/global_chinese_ministries_apr_09/the_protestant_church_in_fujian_province - Accessed 2 November 2009 – Attachment 10

¹⁴ China Aid Association 2010, *Annual Report of Persecution by the Government on Christian House Churches within Mainland China January 2009—December 2009*, January – Attachment 11

¹⁵ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *CHN103500.E – China: Situation of Protestants and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2005 – May 2010)*, 30 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453033&l=e – Accessed 26 July 2010 – Attachment 12

¹⁶ RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN37814*, 30 November, (Question 2) – Attachment 13

¹⁷ RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN37524*, 26 October, (Questions 1-3) – Attachment 14

¹⁸ RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN37494*, 26 October, (Question 1) – Attachment 15

¹⁹ ‘Abduction and Building Closures in Fujian’ 2010, China Aid website, 19 October http://www.chinaaid.org/qry/page.taf?id=105&function=detail&sbtblct_uid=1582&nc=8e483cd76c2e159254f7a7430ec53b24 – Accessed 14 October 2010 – Attachment 5

resources, and networks. The Government closed churches in Zhejiang, Jilin, and Fujian Provinces during the reporting period.”²⁰

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to information request on reports of raids on Protestant house churches in China between 2005 and 2007 makes one mention of Fujian, in relation to a China Aid Association report which indicates that there were reports of house churches being destroyed in Jilin and Fujian provinces during 2006.²¹ The China Aid Association report refers to a house church in Pingtan, Fujian being destroyed on 1 September 2006.²² An *Asia News* report also refers to Pingtan police destroying an unofficial church on 1 September 2006.²³

A 2006 report indicates that “[i]n general, the official religious policy has been applied relatively liberally in Fujian, although there have been occasional crackdowns on house churches and ‘underground’ Catholics.”²⁴ Another report from September 2005 refers to the executive secretary of the Hong Kong Christian Council commenting that Fujian and Guangdong had “the most liberal policy on religion in China, especially on Christianity”. He had met local authorities who usually tolerated the activities of unregistered Christian groups. Authorities were more tolerant in rural areas than in urban centres, and would usually take steps to discourage religious activity linked to groups outside China. He also indicated that where arrests had been made, groups like the Shouters and the Eastern Lighting, which were considered heretical by many Christians, had been targeted.²⁵

A previously mentioned RRT country advice dated 26 October 2010 includes information on the treatment of unofficial Christian churches in Fujian province from 2000 onwards.²⁶ Another RRT country advice dated 1 February 2010 looks at the attitude of the local authorities towards persons who attended unregistered churches in Fujian during 2004-2005.²⁷ A further RRT research response dated 22 September 2008 provides information on the treatment by the authorities of house churches in Fujian.²⁸

4. Deleted.

²⁰ US Department of State 2007, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2007 – China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)*, September, Section II – Attachment 16

²¹ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *CHN102492.E - China: Reports of raids on Protestant house churches; frequency and location of raids (2005 - 2007)*, 22 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451338 – Accessed 24 November 2008 – Attachment 17

²² China Aid Association 2007, *Annual Report on Persecution of Chinese House Churches by Province: From January 2006 to December 2006*, January, p.13 http://chinaaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2006_persecution_report.pdf – Accessed 12 June 2007 – Attachment 18

²³ ‘Church destroyed in Fujian, another to follow shortly’ 2006, *Asia News*, 4 September <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=7112#> - Accessed 6 December 2007 – Attachment 19

²⁴ Lambert, T. 2006, *China’s Christian Millions*, Monarch Books, Oxford p. 241 – Attachment 20

²⁵ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *CHN100387.E – China: Situation of Protestants and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2001-2005)*, 7 September – Attachment 21

²⁶ RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN37524*, 26 October, (Questions 1-3) – Attachment 14

²⁷ RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN36072*, 1 February, (Question 2) – Attachment 22

²⁸ RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN33721*, 22 September, (Question 1) – Attachment 23

5. What information is there about the ability of a house church Christian to relocate to another part of China?

The law in China is reported to provide for freedom of movement within the country, emigration, foreign travel and repatriation, but these rights were generally not respected in practice by the government. The government maintained restrictions on the freedom of people to change residence or workplace, although there continued to be changes to the *hukou* or national household registration system “and the ability of most citizens to move within the country to work and live continued to expand.” Many rural residents who moved to the cities, however, were unable to “officially change their residence or workplace within the country.” There were annual quotas for new temporary residence permits issued in most cities, and all workers had to compete for a limited number of permits. Rural residents had particular difficulty in obtaining household registration in more economically developed urban areas.²⁹

Chinese citizens are classified as either urban or rural *hukou* holders under the *hukou* regulations and local governments have, based on this classification, restricted access to some social services. Rural *hukou* holders who migrate to urban areas are discriminated against by the application of the regulations, which significantly restrict their ability to obtain education, healthcare benefits and other social services in the urban locations where they reside, but lack legal residency status.³⁰

In relation to areas in China which might be more tolerant of house church Christians, it is reported that the treatment of unregistered religious groups in China varies between different regions and provinces. Religious and spiritual groups that fail to meet registration requirements or choose not to register reportedly risk arrest, detention, harassment, and closure of worship and meeting places. It is also reported that “[r]epression of unregistered religious activity varies by region, province, politics, and ethnicity. In some localities, officials arbitrarily implement national government policy and allow some unregistered groups to carry out worship activities openly.”³¹

The most recent US Department of State report on religious freedom in China indicates that “[i]n some parts of the country, local authorities tacitly approved of the activities of unregistered groups and did not interfere with them. In some rural areas, unregistered churches held worship services attended by hundreds. In other areas, local officials punished the same activities by confiscating and destroying property or imprisoning leaders and worshippers.” The report refers to house churches in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shanxi reporting that authorities pressured them to stop meeting prior to the 60th anniversary of the founding of the PRC on 1 October 2009. In December 2009, a Uighur Christian house church leader in Xinjiang was sentenced to 15 years in prison for “illegally providing state secrets or intelligence to foreign entities”. Some unofficial Catholic clergy remained in detention, particularly in Hebei Province.³²

²⁹ US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009 – China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)*, March, Section 2(d) – Attachment 24

³⁰ Congressional Executive Commission on China 2010, *Annual Report 2010*, 10 October, p. 123 – Attachment 8

³¹ United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, ‘Annual Report 2010’, USCIRF website, May, p. 104 <http://www.uscifr.gov/images/annual%20report%202010.pdf> – Accessed 31 May 2010 – Attachment 7

³² US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2010 – China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau)*, November, Section II – Attachment 6

The China Aid Association annual report on government treatment of house churches within China for the period January-December 2009 includes a list of municipalities where house churches suffered ill-treatment in mainland China during 2009.³³

A June 2009 UK Home Office operational guidance note on China indicates that because they fear ill-treatment by the state authorities, relocation to a different area of China to escape this threat was not feasible for persons who fear ill-treatment from the Chinese authorities because of their involvement with religious organisations.³⁴

An RRT country advice dated 8 October 2010 provides information on the difficulty a young woman who was a member of a local church in Fujian province would have in relocating to another province in China.³⁵

An RRT country advice dated 2 February 2010 includes information on the ability of a person from a village in Fujian province to relocate elsewhere in China, and the effect of the type of *hukou* the person possesses and local *hukou* regulations in the destination city on a person's ability to relocate.³⁶

Attachments

1. RRT Research & Information 2009, *Research Response CHN35719*, 24 November.
2. 'Gangtouzhen, Fuqing, Fuzhou, Fujian, China' 2009, Google maps website <http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&q=Gangtouzhen,+Fuqing,+Fuzhou,+Fujian,+China&ie=UTF8&cd=2&geocode=FfHZhQEd9jwfBw&split=0&sll=37.0625,-95.677068&sspn=23.875,57.630033&hq=&hnear=Gangtouzhen,+Fuqing,+Fuzhou,+Fujian,+China&ll=25.553205,119.484215&spn=0.040421,0.066004&z=14&pw=2> - Accessed 23 November 2009.
3. RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN32936*, 7 March.
4. Senior Chinese Librarian, National Library of Australia 2008, Email to RRT 'RE: Information Request about Detention Centres in Fuqing', 14 February.
5. 'Abduction and Building Closures in Fujian' 2010, China Aid website, 19 October http://www.chinaaid.org/qry/page.taf?id=105&function=detail&sbtblct_uid1=1582&nc=8e483cd76c2e159254f7a7430ec53b24 – Accessed 14 October 2010.
6. US Department of State 2010, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2010 – China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau)*, November.
7. United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2010, 'Annual Report 2010', USCIRF website, May <http://www.uscirf.gov/images/annual%20report%202010.pdf> – Accessed 31 May 2010.
8. Congressional Executive Commission on China 2010, *Annual Report 2010*, 10 October.
9. Congressional Executive Commission on China 2009, *Annual Report 2009*, 10 October.

³³ China Aid Association 2010, *Annual Report of Persecution by the Government on Christian House Churches within Mainland China January 2009–December 2009*, January – Attachment 11

³⁴ UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note – China*, 10 June, Paragraph 3.8.8 – Attachment 25

³⁵ RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN37475*, 8 October, (Question 1) – Attachment 26

³⁶ RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN35911*, 2 February, (Question 3) – Attachment 27

10. Global Chinese Ministries 2009, 'The Protestant Church in Fujian Province', OMF (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) International website, April http://www.omf.org/omf/us/resources_1/newsletters/global_chinese_ministries/gcm_newsletter_2009/global_chinese_ministries_apr_09/the_protestant_church_in_fujian_province - Accessed 2 November 2009.
11. China Aid Association 2010, *Annual Report of Persecution by the Government on Christian House Churches within Mainland China January 2009—December 2009*, January.
12. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *CHN103500.E – China: Situation of Protestants and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2005 – May 2010)*, 30 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453033&l=e – Accessed 26 July 2010.
13. RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN37814*, 30 November.
14. RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN37524*, 26 October.
15. RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN37494*, 26 October.
16. US Department of State 2007, *International Religious Freedom Report for 2007 – China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)*, September.
17. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2007, *CHN102492.E - China: Reports of raids on Protestant house churches; frequency and location of raids (2005 - 2007)*, 22 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451338 – Accessed 24 November 2008.
18. China Aid Association 2007, *Annual Report on Persecution of Chinese House Churches by Province: From January 2006 to December 2006*, January http://chinaaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/04/2006_persecution_report.pdf – Accessed 12 June 2007.
19. 'Church destroyed in Fujian, another to follow shortly' 2006, *Asia News*, 4 September <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=7112#> - Accessed 6 December 2007.
20. Lambert, T. 2006, *China's Christian Millions*, Monarch Books, Oxford.
21. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *CHN100387.E – China: Situation of Protestants and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2001-2005)*, 7 September. (REFINFO)
22. RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN36072*, 1 February.
23. RRT Research & Information 2008, *Research Response CHN33721*, 22 September.
24. US Department of State 2010, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2009 – China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)*, March.
25. UK Home Office 2009, *Operational Guidance Note – China*, 10 June.
26. RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN37475*, 8 October.
27. RRT Country Advice 2010, *Country Advice CHN35911*, 2 February.