The Chinese communist government has put eight Christians on trial for "riot", after a church they had built illegally was demolished. The Chinese Christians were unable to obtain permission from the government to build the church, as their gathering is not approved by the state.

Quote: *"The trial of eight Christians who allegedly led a violent clash with police in an attempt to prevent the demolition of a partially built church in eastern China started Friday, a court official said. The Christians face charges of inciting a crowd to resist law enforcement, said an official at the 10th Xiaoshan District People's Court in the coastal city of Hangzhou who would only give his surname, Cui. He said the trial started Friday morning but refused to give details of the case or name the defendants. It was not immediately clear what penalties they face if they are convicted.*

Only several mainstream branches of Christianity are recognized by the government, and all are controlled by the government. It is estimated there are at least 10,000 Christians for every 1 trained Pastor in China. Millions of Chinese Christians gather in house-churches in complete secrecy. They don't carry Bibles because many don't have the luxury of owning one. Instead they copy down Scriptures on pieces of paper at their meetings. The gatherings are often raided by the secret police, their Bibles destroyed, and their leaders beaten, arrested or executed. Just a few months ago, two Chinese women were arrested by police for handing out Bibles. They were accused of *"spreading of rumour and disturbing the social order"*, and were beaten to death.

Quote: *"But it was not enough for the PSB to arrest and beat these two Christian women for the crime of passing our Christian literature. In the afternoon of June 18th, Mrs. Jiang Zongziu was pronounced dead by the PSB office of Tongzi County. They claimed she died of "natural causes." The fact is she was beaten to death. The Voice of the Martyrs has received video testimony from the surviving family, photos of Jiang's bruised body, and a copy of the actual arrest document. All of this had to be smuggled out of China as the authorities continue to attempt to hide their systematic persecution of Christians.*

Here is a video of the destruction of the Chinese Church in July. Friends, we often wonder whether or not we will face persecution before the Lord returns to take us home. We need to remember that there are Christians across the world in various countries who are suffering terribly for their faith in Christ. We are privileged to be living in lands where the Bible has given us tremendous freedoms. It wasn't always that way. Just four hundred years ago, you could be arrested in England for preaching without a licence from the Church of England. One such Christian was John Bunyan, who was imprisoned for 12 years for his faith. During that prison experience he wrote the book, Pilgrim's Progress. After the Bible was

widely published in our land, our freedoms increased. If our nation turns its back on God once again, our freedoms will also disappear. We need to remember our Chinese brothers and sisters in prayer, and continue serving God no matter what opposition faces us. It is said of the tribulation saints, they loved not their lives to the death. Can we do no less?

Revelation 12:11
And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

Source International Herald Tribune , Mosaic Church , Zippy Videos , Sky News