

Statement from Fraternite Notre Dame

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Fraternite Notre Dame solicits the attention of the Council on Human Rights in Geneva, on the religious discrimination and xenophobia in Mongolia, whose Constitution guarantees religious freedom.

In 1997, His Excellency Bishop Jean Marie opened a NGO in Mongolia, and an agreement was made with the Government to take care of a crumbling hospital running at the time with great difficulties; Fraternite Notre Dame, with the assistance of the US Marine Corps and other NGOs, restored this hospital.

Back then, the Religious people of Fraternite Notre Dame started helping very destitute sections of the population, as many families used to live in the city sewers.

In 2002, Most Reverend Bishop Jean Marie opened an orphanage, and the first abandoned children were taken in, rescued from the garbage dumps or entrusted to the Religious people by the City district's Police. City trucks at the time were picking up the corpses of children, who in the winter, had died in the streets from the cold and starvation.

Since March of 2011, insidious and incessant persecutions have multiplied, in attempts to close the orphanage and get rid of the religious people running it. Religious freedom is severely threatened in Mongolia, both for Fraternite Notre Dame and for other Christian organizations, who complain about constant pressure.

Mongolian Department of Social Services inspectors, as in the old days of Stalinism, are acting like a police of extermination of Christians. Under alleged pretexts of cleanliness which have turned into obsessional requirements, these Communist inspectors from the Mongolian Department of Social Services multiply extravagant rules and regulations.

The requirements are inappropriate, considering that the Mongolian State lives in insalubrious hygiene conditions, and allows many children to die from the cold and starvation in the streets or sewage system of its Capital City.

The 23 children that are being helped at Fraternite Notre Dame's orphanage live in 3 restored buildings. In October of 2011, they were again denied an agreement, because inspectors claimed that the buildings did not comply with their standards; on the occasion, a female inspector wrote up a completely false report.

Never were the children asked any questions on their school progress, physical or mental health or development. The questions asked always dealt with religion.

Early in 2012, other works were demanded in the premises, to be performed within a 3-month period, with the children being taken away to another orphanage.

It just feels like our religious people in Mongolia are experiencing again the Stalinian purges: the Department of Social Services requires that the nuns no longer wear a Religious Habit. A few months earlier, inspectors had them remove all religious statues or religious items from the orphanage's premises.

A Catholic religious authority in the area explained to us that the young people helped at their own orphanage had been scattered out by the same Department of Social Services.

Other orphanages, particularly insalubrious, were immediately awarded their agreement from this Communist Department of Social Services, by giving them money.

This disastrous situation has become a major concern as regards the implementation and future of religious freedom in Mongolia.

[End of Fraternite Notre Dame's Statement]