

# Freedom of religious belief protected in Xinjiang

A white paper released on Thursday said China has fully implemented the policy of freedom of religious belief in Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, protecting normal religious activities and ensuring the public's freedom of religious belief.

Normal religious needs of local people have been satisfied, according to the white paper titled "Human Rights in Xinjiang – Development and Progress," which was issued by the State Council Information Office.

Xinjiang has published translations of the religious classics of Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity in multiple languages, it said, adding 1.76 million copies of the Quran and Selections from Al-Sahih Muhammad Ibn-Ismail al-Bukhari have been printed and distributed.

Religious organizations have organized training courses on religious knowledge and etiquette for citizens with religious beliefs.

"Legitimate rights of religious organizations have been effectively safeguarded," the white paper read.

Xinjiang has 112 religious organizations, which receive help from the government to improve their conditions and allow them to play a broader role, it said.

Steady improvements have been made in the training system to cultivate clerics, by offering them systemic training, enhancing their overall qualities, and raising religious organizations' capacity of self-management, the white paper said.

It noted that overseas religious exchanges have been conducted in increasing depth. Xinjiang's religious circles have sent delegations to international academic exchanges and seminars, and its clerics and students at religious institutes have won prizes in competitions for reciting the Quran.

Since 2001, Xinjiang has sent more than 70 clerics and students from the Islamic Institute to study at institutions of higher learning in Egypt, Pakistan, and other countries, and has set up scholarships to award those who achieve outstanding performance, said the white paper.

Moreover, the local government has implemented a policy for planning and organizing pilgrimages to Mecca, and has strengthened services to ensure that all such pilgrimages are safe and orderly, it said.