

Mr. Li Hai

Falun Gong practitioner and former member of Department of Treaty and Law, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China



On January 12, 2012, Mr. Li Hai fled China and arrived in the United States after enduring over twelve years of persecution for his spiritual belief in Falun Gong and participation in grassroots activism. A lawyer by training, Li served in the Department of Treaty and Law in China's Ministry Foreign Affairs from August 1997 to 2000. He represented China in bilateral and multilateral negotiations, including for United Nations treaties and Portugal's handover of Macau to Chinese sovereignty.

In 1995, Li began practicing Falun Gong, a meditation and spiritual discipline of the Buddhist school, while pursuing a masters' degree in international law. After the Chinese Communist Party launched a campaign to persecute Falun Gong in 1999, Li took part in numerous peaceful appeals calling for religious freedom, release of prisoners of conscience, and redress for Falun Gong. He joined an underground effort to produce and distribute 100,000 video CDs that provided information about the practice and the persecution, as well as debunked Communist Party propaganda. For these activities, he was detained four times, tortured, and sentenced following an unfair trial to nine years in prison. He was held at Qianjin prison near Beijing from 2004 to 2010, where he experienced further beatings and psychological abuse.

Li obtained a LL.M in private international law from Beijing Foreign Affairs College in 1997, and earned a LL.B from Shandong University's School of Law in 1994. He currently resides in New York with his wife and daughter.