

FROM THE DESK OF
CONGRESSWOMAN GWEN MOORE

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There has been much discussion about China recently. And it is easy during these different debates to lose sight of its government's longstanding attacks on fundamental human rights, including the rights of individuals to "practice freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

As you know, starting in 1999 and now stretching for over two decades, Falun Gong practitioners in China have been subject to severe forms of persecution as part of an organized effort to "eradicate" it. Those who practice Falun Gong and other religious practices in China continue to face arbitrary detention, lengthy prison sentences, physical and mental abuses, and even worse. Unfortunately, it appears that we may know little about some of the worse abuses, like organ harvesting, given the government's attempts to suppress that information.

These inhumane state-sponsored policies and persecution of peaceful individuals choosing to exercise their internationally recognized rights—including the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners—must end. As we approach another anniversary of this egregious crackdown, we must never give up on calling for the Chinese Government to stop its unjust campaign of terror targeting Falun Gong practitioners, tactics it is now using against other religious and ethnic minorities.

Our consciences must remain seared and our determination steadfast until China stops torturing, imprisoning or "re-educating" pro-democracy activists, human rights lawyers, journalists, labor leaders, religious believers, ethnic minorities, among many others simply trying to peacefully exercise basic rights.

So I am pleased to stand with you and my colleagues in the House who have repeatedly joined in condemning China's horrendous human rights record. To quote Speaker Pelosi "To honor all who have been persecuted, we must renew our commitment to speaking out against China's human rights abuses... We must do the right thing..."

We have not forgotten. We will not forget.

And I look forward to the day when all those living under the rule of the Chinese Government, including Falun Gong practitioners, can actually live freely and practice their religious beliefs freely.

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