



FALUN GONG: 25 YEARS OF PERSECUTION, 25 YEARS TOO LONG

Acknowledgments

This report was authored by Levi Browde, executive director, as well as Cynthia Sun and Nick Haley, researchers at the Falun Dafa Information Center. It was copyedited by Milène Fernández. Many of the cases and data contained in this report were documented by volunteers working on the ground in China. These heroic individuals often took great personal risks in collecting this information to make it available for human rights workers worldwide.

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Cover photo: Falun Gong practitioners carry a banner in a May 13, 2024 procession in New York commemorating the anniversary of Falun Gong's introduction to the public. (Source: Tuidang Center)

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

“Make full use of legal weapons and methods to ... severely crack down on the activities of Falun Gong.”

—Zhao Kezhi, then-China’s Minister of Public Security, August 2020

- ▶ **Ongoing repression:** A quarter century after its launch, the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) persecution of Falun Gong practitioners remains one of the largest and most severe human rights crises in China today. The regime has redoubled its efforts to monitor, imprison, and “transform” Falun Gong practitioners even after the 2022 death of Jiang Zemin, the former CCP chief who launched the ruthless campaign 25 years ago.
- ▶ **Steadfast resilience:** Despite the regime’s massive investment in crushing the practice, Falun Gong survives—and even thrives—in China and globally, bringing health, hope, and peace of mind to tens of millions of people. Falun Gong practitioners across China distribute information exposing the horrors of CCP rule, constituting one of the largest grassroots civil disobedience movements in the world.
- ▶ **Top CCP priority:** Dozens of leaked internal speeches and government websites indicate that Falun Gong remains a top target for the regime’s security apparatus within China and in the “overseas struggle,” even above other policy priorities.
- ▶ **Large-scale imprisonment:** Since January 2022, over 1,700 Falun Gong believers have been sentenced to prison terms of up to 15 years following sham trials. Thousands more have been detained for studying spiritual texts or sharing information on censored topics. These detainees join tens of thousands Falun Gong practitioners currently being held across China and millions detained over the past 25 years.

- ▶ **High-tech surveillance:** Tools like comprehensive databases and facial recognition-enabled cameras in public spaces amplify the regime's ability to monitor Falun Gong practitioners, often leading to detentions and torture.
- ▶ **Deaths from persecution:** At least 369 Falun Gong practitioners are known to have died since January 2022 due to the CCP's violence. The number of Falun Gong believers documented to have died due to persecution reached 5,069 in May 2024, although the true figure is likely larger due to the regime's censorship.
- ▶ **Forced organ harvesting:** New academic research and recent accounts by Falun Gong survivors add to prior evidence that Falun Gong practitioners have been, and continue to be, killed to harvest their organs.
- ▶ **Propaganda and disinformation at home and abroad:** Information manipulation remains central to the CCP's crusade against Falun Gong. In 2023, the regime deployed the popular WeChat application for a nationwide campaign so tens of millions of Chinese would view anti-Falun Gong propaganda and sign a petition against the group. The CCP's propaganda has also spread internationally, while some Western media outlets have echoed inaccuracies about Falun Gong beliefs and other problematic CCP narratives.
- ▶ **Transnational repression:** The CCP's pursuit of Falun Gong extends far beyond China's borders. The regime and its diplomats have engaged in a systematic global campaign to stymie Shen Yun Performing Arts, many of whose artists practice Falun Gong. Chinese nationals deceived by CCP propaganda have physically assaulted Falun Gong practitioners outside China.
- ▶ **International action:** National and local governments have enacted laws to combat forced organ harvesting. Democratic governments have also imposed sanctions on Chinese officials for abuses in China and arrested perpetrators of transnational repression to better protect the Falun Gong community.

FEATURED ESSAY

25 Years On, Falun Gong Still Firmly in Beijing's Repressive Sights

How the Chinese regime's own internal documents reveal its most candid assessment

By Levi Browde and Larry Liu

In July 1999, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) launched one of the most wide-ranging political campaigns since the end of the Cultural Revolution—a comprehensive effort to eliminate Falun Gong, a meditation and spiritual discipline practiced by tens of millions of Chinese citizens.¹ The crusade had all the usual trappings: public book burnings, 24/7 demonizing propaganda, mass arrests, and soon, an insidious obsession with forcing practitioners to renounce their faith, including by means of torture.²

At the time, few would have imagined that Falun Gong would survive, and that this violent persecution would be ongoing 25 years later. Yet, that is the reality today.

Moreover, in recent years the regime has redoubled its efforts to monitor, detain, imprison, and “transform” Falun Gong practitioners in China and to surveil, harass, silence, and malign believers around the world. This has continued even after the November 2022 death of Jiang Zemin, the former CCP chief who launched the ruthless campaign.³

The regime's propaganda against Falun Gong typically tries to belittle its importance, presenting it as a marginalized part of society, rather than a focus of the security apparatus's work. This view is often echoed by scholars or journalists,

either explicitly or implicitly, that Falun Gong was “crushed” years ago, that it is an old story no longer worthy of global attention, one irrelevant to understanding today's China.

Chinese government and party sources tell a very different story. They indicate that internally the campaign to eradicate Falun Gong is viewed as a central component to the CCP's efforts to control the population, maintain political power, and retain ideological supremacy, both within China and among the Chinese diaspora.

In recent years the regime has redoubled its efforts to monitor, detain, imprison, and ‘transform’ Falun Gong practitioners in China.

Indeed, dozens of leaked internal speeches, publicly available local government websites, and other Chinese language sources identified by the Falun Dafa Information Center indicate that Falun Gong remains a top priority for the security apparatus as it implements Xi Jinping's vision for maintaining “national political security,” a euphemism for the CCP's hold on power. This prioritization extends beyond China's borders, as speeches by top security officials and notices on provincial websites dating since 2015 specifically

identify the “overseas struggle” as a weak spot in the regime’s anti-Falun Gong campaign, urging additional action to close this gap.

These documents demonstrate a high degree of strategizing on the part of both officials in Beijing and at provincial and local levels. They articulate perceived cracks in effectiveness and propose areas for renewed focus and implementation. Such is the language one would expect for a high-priority, live, and evolving campaign of suppression, reinforcing that this is precisely what the CCP’s anti-Falun Gong crusade remains. Moreover, the effects of such directives are reflected daily in real-world activity and repressive CCP action targeting Chinese people—and even non-Chinese—who persist in practicing Falun Gong and speaking out against the abuses facing believers.

On the following pages, we invite you to set aside prior misconceptions on the campaign’s trajectory and consider honestly the implications of Chinese officials’ own words—for China and the world.

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS REVEAL: WITHIN THE CCP, FALUN GONG IS NO MINOR TARGET

A review of key documents from within the regime’s security apparatus reveals that the crackdown on Falun Gong has been cited as a top priority for the central leadership and local authorities in numerous work reports, speeches, and directives since 2017.

In August 2020, for example, then Chinese Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi delivered a speech to the leaders of China’s rubber-stamp parliament, highlighting work conducted from 2016 to 2019.⁴ Zhao noted that during that time the public security apparatus had strived to:

... make full use of legal weapons and methods to ... severely crack down on the activities of ‘Falun Gong’ [...] and resolutely defend the country’s political security.⁵

Notably, Zhao highlighted measures to suppress banned religious groups like Falun Gong before mentioning other actual security concerns, including those related to anti-corruption and counter-terrorism.

This explicit mention of Falun Gong and its prioritization among perceived threats to the regime has appeared in other speeches and reports, including three press conferences held by the Ministry of Public Security since 2021. That year, the targeting of Falun Gong was mentioned ahead of repressive policies in Tibet and Xinjiang or other enforcement areas such as online offenses, economic crimes, and the pursuit of former officials abroad via the “Fox Hunt” campaign.⁶

Dozens of leaked internal speeches and Chinese government websites indicate that Falun Gong remains a top priority for the regime’s security apparatus.

More broadly, references to Falun Gong on local government websites throughout the country demonstrate how ingrained the campaign against the group remains in the regime’s overall security machinery, and Xi Jinping’s comprehensive national security framework in particular. Between 2019 and 2023, directives, work reports, and development plans issued by local governments in at least 12 provinces and cities across China



Official CCP document that mentions explicit intent to persecute Falun Gong practitioners from January 24, 2019, titled “2019 Changli County People’s Procuratorate Work Report” by the People’s Procuratorate of Changli County in Hebei Province. (Source: Website of the People’s Procuratorate of Changli County Hebei Province)

linked crackdowns on residents who practice Falun Gong with safeguarding “national security,” “political security,” “national political security,” and/or “state security.”⁷

NATIONWIDE ANTI-FALUN GONG SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN, OFFERS OF MONETARY REWARDS

In another tell-tale sign of the importance placed by the CCP on persecuting Falun Gong, the regime periodically launches new initiatives to shore up the long-standing crusade. During the years 2020 and 2021, many government websites referenced a “zero-out” campaign that involved security agents and CCP representatives going door-to-door to the homes of known Falun Gong practitioners or their relatives to get them to renounce their faith, lest they face arrest or other reprisals.⁸

More recently, in early 2023, the regime launched a new nationwide campaign to spread disinformation that demonizes the practice and encourages—even



Police in Fukang County, Xinjiang Province solicit signatures for the anti-Falun Gong petition in April 2023. Similar actions by police or local party officials to provoke citizens to sign the anti-Falun Gong petition were found in other provinces, including Henan, Liaoning, and Guangdong. (Source: Tianjin Public Security Bureau)

forces—Chinese citizens to join in denouncing those who practice Falun Gong.⁹

At the center of the campaign is an interactive petition with animated characters housed on the ubiquitous WeChat app, a messaging and e-commerce application developed by Chinese tech giant Tencent that is integral to daily life in China. The anti-Falun Gong petition features cartoon characters such as a miniature warrior, a cute bunny, and WeChat badges aimed to appeal to users of all ages. It is activated through a QR code, which directs users to the profile page of the China Anti-Cult Association, a CCP organization that has long been at the forefront of the regime’s efforts to demonize and persecute Falun Gong.

Institutions throughout Chinese society—including CCP neighborhood committees, local police, and educational institutions—have been mobilized to spread the petition. Thousands of schools, from primary schools to universities, are estimated to have implemented this signature campaign.



Falun Gong is listed as the first of 25 banned spiritual groups targeted in a recent nationwide CCP petition campaign, according to a graphic on the WeChat app, which houses the petition launched by the party-affiliated China Anti-Cult Association. (Source: Website of the Tianjin Public Security Bureau)

Research by the Falun Dafa Information Center identified references to the campaign on Chinese government or other official websites in 30 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions. Chinese state media and police pressure on users to sign the petition have also boosted its nationwide reach. As a result, official websites and Falun Gong sources in China report that tens of millions of signatures have been obtained.

The signature drive is just one example of the regime investing massive resources into its effort to marginalize and persecute Falun Gong practitioners. Another such instance evident from official websites is the use of monetary rewards to ordinary citizens who report Falun Gong practitioners to security agents. One set of 2022 regulations from the autonomous region of Ningxia offers monetary incentives ranging from 200 yuan (\$27 USD) up to 50,000 yuan (\$6,900 USD).¹⁰

The rules, issued jointly by the regional public security and finance departments, consist of 19 articles and state that they were formulated to “mobilize social forces extensively to participate in the ... struggle [against] Falun Gong” and other banned religious groups. They include a specialized “public hotline” number to call and offer prize money for actions such as promptly reporting “pictures, leaflets, newspapers, books, journals, audio tapes, CDs” or other materials related to Falun Gong or for providing “clues” to identify those posting, hanging, or distributing such information so they might be detained. The higher range awards are reserved for tips that facilitate “cracking the case of influential counter-propaganda production.” References to similar reward programs have since appeared elsewhere in China,¹¹ with one in Jilin province dated as recently as April 25, 2024.¹²



A Chinese citizen in Jiamusi, Heilongjiang Province, reads a banner hung by Falun Gong practitioners in 2018 that reads “Kidnapped by Authorities” detailing persecution cases in the area (Source: Minghui)

FALUN GONG DISSENT IS NOT DEAD

Through these new initiatives, the CCP is implicitly admitting to an embarrassing reality—its efforts to wipe out Falun Gong have categorically failed.¹³ On the contrary, the repressive campaign has galvanized tens of millions of ordinary Chinese people into becoming grassroots human rights and freedom of information activists.

For years, Falun Gong practitioners throughout China have printed and disseminated underground leaflets and banners countering CCP propaganda and exposing abuses, spoken discretely to acquaintances or members of the public about the reality facing Falun Gong practitioners, and shared tools for jumping the so-called “Great Firewall” to access uncensored information on Falun Gong and other topics.¹⁴

In 2009, the Minghui website counted 200,000 underground Samizdat-like sites in China that

connected to their website for downloading and printing materials, serving tens of millions of Falun Gong practitioners who then disseminate them. More recently, in early 2024, Freedom House’s *China Dissent Monitor* cited Falun Gong cases as being the largest contingent among dissent incidents related to religious believers in China, consisting of 163 out of the 200 they documented since June 2022.¹⁵

Over time, the information shared by Falun Gong practitioners with other Chinese people has expanded to include topics like the CCP’s broader brutal history of persecuting Chinese people.¹⁶ During the COVID-19 pandemic, some practitioners emerged as whistleblowers and citizen journalists who provided otherwise unavailable information on conditions in locked down areas to domestic and international audiences.¹⁷ However, even as these activities have broadened Chinese citizens’ access to information, they have also galvanized the CCP’s security apparatus into cracking down

with even greater focus on information-sharing networks run by Falun Gong practitioners.

Through these new initiatives, the CCP is implicitly admitting to an embarrassing reality—its efforts to wipe out Falun Gong have categorically failed.

The regime’s specific recommendations for WeChat petition signatories to reject materials distributed by religious believers and the desperate use of monetary rewards to incentivize reporting of Falun Gong content dissemination indirectly acknowledge the scale and potency of Falun Gong practitioners’ information-sharing. They demonstrate how seriously Chinese security forces are trying to keep up with Falun Gong practitioners’ own nationwide, grassroots campaign to counter the regime’s demonizing propaganda, debunk falsehoods, and expose rights abuses.

HOMING IN ON THE “OVERSEAS STRUGGLE”

The CCP’s intense targeting of Falun Gong is not limited to the borders of the People’s Republic of China. Since the early days of the persecution, it has extended to countries around the world. Still, leaked speeches by top officials indicate a dissatisfaction with the regime’s limited ability to silence Falun Gong globally.

Thus, in December 2015, then-public security chief Meng Jianzhu noted the urgent need to “coordinate the domestic and foreign fronts” and to “treat the countries and regions with serious Falun Gong activities such as the United States as the main battlefield.”¹⁸ He specifically cited the “overseas struggle” and “online struggle” as the “weak parts”

of the regime’s anti-Falun Gong campaign, calling on officials to “tackle key problems” in these areas.

Over the following years, multiple speeches and documents by officials at the local or provincial level have echoed these sentiments, while articulating specific tactics and strategies for carrying out the directives from Beijing. Two key areas of activity emerge from these documents.¹⁹

First, Chinese security agencies clearly target individual Falun Gong practitioners living overseas, especially those active in exposing the persecution or countering the CCP’s propaganda. Leaked documents from Henan, Shaanxi, Hubei, Jiangxi, and Hunan provinces from 2015 to 2018 specifically cite efforts to conduct “in-depth investigations” of overseas practitioners from these provinces and to collect “intelligence” about them. This includes gathering extensive personal and biographical details, as well as information about relatives remaining in China, and orders to establish databases with these details.²⁰

There are then references to actions that Chinese security agencies can take using this information. These include carrying out “cross-ocean calling” to harass and intimidate overseas practitioners, restricting their ability to return to China, and using a combination of “carrots and sticks”—including limiting access to pension funds, real estate, and bank accounts still in China—to pressure them to stop their activities and their Falun Gong practice. Some documents call for local agents to develop an “individually customized work plan” for targeting a specific overseas practitioner. The above tactics are precisely the types of harassment that many overseas Falun Gong practitioners have experienced, which have been highlighted in recent years in the growing body of work by human rights groups on “transnational repression.”²¹

Second, many of the documents make explicit reference to taking advantage of growing political ties and economic leverage vis-à-vis powerful institutions in the West in order to harness their influence towards restricting Falun Gong activities and spreading CCP propaganda. In Meng's 2015 speech he states that:

*We must seize the opportunity of Western countries' rising demand for us [i.e., closer economic and political ties with China] and push the concerned countries to ban or restrict the activities of "Falun Gong" ... and strive to eliminate their [Falun Gong's] long-term operational bases, sponsors, and partners.*²²

Subsequent provincial and local party-state websites build upon this idea in more detail. A set of 2017 directives from Henan province urge the use of sister city relationships and the leveraging of overseas business entities to "effectively reduce Falun Gong activities outside China."²³ They also call for "cultivating non-governmental forces" such as scholars, experts, journalists, and overseas Chinese community leaders to "speak for us [i.e., the CCP]" and to "make more foreign media publish more reports favorable to us." A similar 2017 document from Shaanxi province echoes these tactics, calling on local officials to use the "opportunity of visiting foreign officials" for anti-Falun Gong propaganda work and to deploy "our city's business entities outside China to suppress the business and cultural entities" run by Falun Gong practitioners.²⁴

Such instructions are not taken lightly within the regime's top-down bureaucracy and authoritarian political system. Rather, they are acted upon vigorously, even when foreign interlocutors may not always be aware of the influence they are under. Implementation of the CCP's foreign-facing

"We must seize the opportunity of Western countries' rising demand for us and push the concerned countries to ban or restrict the activities of 'Falun Gong.'"

—CCP security chief Meng Jianzhu
in 2015 speech to fellow cadres

anti-Falun Gong campaign has been evident in several indictments issued over the past two years by the U.S. Department of Justice. The arrests and corresponding charges refer to agents of the Chinese regime organizing counter-protests to Falun Gong peaceful appeals, monitoring American Falun Gong practitioners,²⁵ or even attempting to bribe a person they believed to be an officer of the Internal Revenue Service to strip a "Falun Gong organization" of its non-profit status.²⁶ On the media front, one of the accused had also been directed to "publish materials in newspapers against the Falun Gong" community.²⁷

In the context of such instructions, it becomes much less surprising that since 2015, misinformation and falsehoods depicting Falun Gong negatively have appeared with greater frequency in Western news outlets and global social media platforms than previously. In a recent Congressional testimony, one expert offered U.S. media's internalization of demonizing CCP labels on Falun Gong as an example of the regime's effective "political warfare" targeting the United States.²⁸ Nor is it coincidental that Shen Yun Performing Arts—an artistic initiative founded by Falun Gong practitioners that presents an alternative depiction of Chinese culture to the CCP's—has had perfor-

mances canceled in a number of countries after local governments or theater managers conceded to political and economic pressures from Chinese diplomats.²⁹

CONCLUSION

The above analysis and citations—mostly drawn from the CCP’s own words in its internal speeches, work reports, and government websites—highlight how seriously the regime continues to take its project of eliminating Falun Gong and how central this issue remains to understanding today’s China and the country’s international relations. This is the case despite the fact that many Western scholars relegate the anti-Falun Gong campaign to a passing footnote and international media rarely report on the human rights crisis facing practitioners. That such a misperception could be so widely accepted alone demonstrates how effective the CCP’s propaganda and media influence efforts can be, raising questions about the potential for other important China news stories to be buried.

Meanwhile, the regime’s intense focus on Falun Gong has real-life repercussions. The above directives have correlated to intensified persecution observed by the Falun Dafa Information Center and others during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic,³⁰ as well as ongoing large-scale arbitrary detention, torture, and deaths from abuse in custody of people in China who practice Falun Gong.³¹ On a daily basis, new reports emerge of retirees taken away by police, young people suffering debilitating injuries from torture, and families separated for years, all because of the CCP’s endless crusade to stop Chinese people from practicing—or even talking about—Falun Gong.

The 25-year campaign has also had wide-reaching implications far beyond the Falun Gong commu-

nity. Actions and tactics deployed initially against Falun Gong—be they reinforcing the so-called Great Firewall,³² developing the first surveillance databases to track individual Chinese citizens inside or outside China,³³ or refining torture and “transformation” techniques³⁴—all of these have subsequently been used and expanded to restrict the freedoms of other Chinese citizens, foreigners visiting the country, and even refugees who have escaped overseas.

The regime’s intense focus on Falun Gong has real-life repercussions.

This suggests that, as was the case 25 years ago, those who wish to truly comprehend today’s China, must also understand the lived reality of Falun Gong and its millions of believers in China and around the world.

You needn’t take our word for it. Just look at what CCP officials say to each other away from the international spotlight.

Levi Browde is executive director of the Falun Dafa Information Center. Larry Liu is deputy director for government and advocacy.



UNDERSTANDING THE BACKSTORY

What is Falun Gong?

Falun Gong (also called Falun Dafa) is an ancient spiritual practice in the Buddhist tradition. Falun Gong combines meditation and gentle exercises (similar to yoga or tai chi) with a moral philosophy centered on the tenets of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance (or in Chinese, Zhen 真, Shan 善, Ren 忍).

In traditional Chinese culture, the process of perfecting and refining mind and body is called “cultivation.” Modern language calls this *qigong*. The practice of Falun Gong consists of four *qigong* standing exercises that include stretching movements, still positions, and slow movements that lead energy through the body. It also includes a sitting meditation.

What differentiates Falun Gong from other forms of *qigong* is its emphasis on morality and the cultivation of virtue. At the core of Falun Gong’s spiritual teachings are the values of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Forbearance, which serve as a guide for Falun Gong practitioners in their daily lives. Practicing Falun Gong is a process of striving to embody these values by letting go of unhealthy habits and pursuits. When encountering hardships or conflicts, Falun Gong teaches to search within oneself for causes instead of blaming others and to identify one’s shortcomings and improve oneself in the process.

This process of self-cultivation, supplemented with Falun Gong’s unique set of energy exercises and meditation, can lead to improved health, inner peace, increased wisdom, and, in advanced stages, to various levels of spiritual awakening.



Falun Gong practice site in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province in 1998, before the persecution began. (Source: Minghui)

As a spiritual practice, Falun Gong is always taught free of charge, typically by volunteers at meditation sites located around the world. There is no formal membership, clergy, or religious hierarchy.

A NEW QIGONG SPREAD IN CHINA AND GLOBALLY

Falun Gong was introduced to the public in May of 1992 by Mr. Li Hongzhi and quickly became widely popular. The health benefits reported by people who took up Falun Gong were often immediate and many times dramatic, with some patients even recovering from severe illnesses.³⁵ In addition, many people in China recognized in Falun Gong an authentic representation of the spiritual traditions which were almost lost after decades of communist rule. This sparked a wave of excitement in China during the 1990s, and the practice grew rapidly across the country.

During this time, Chinese officials praised Falun Gong for lowering health care costs and offering

people a principled way to live. Mr. Li was invited to give seminars at government venues, such as the Ministry of Public Security and the Chinese Embassy in Paris, France.³⁶

By 1998, just six years after its first introduction to the public, official Chinese state estimates reported 70 to 100 million people had taken up the practice, making Falun Gong the fastest growing, most popular form of *qigong* in Chinese history.

Although Falun Gong originated in China, today people all around the world practice—transcending class, ethnicity, and education levels. The practice has spread to more than 100 countries, and its teachings have been translated into more than 50 languages. Volunteer practice sites where people come together to practice Falun Gong’s slow-moving exercises and sitting meditation are found, for example, on the campuses of Ivy League universities in the United States just as they are found on the sandy beaches of coastal Africa.



Chinese police arrest Falun Gong practitioners protesting in Tiananmen Square. (Source: Associated Press)

Why the Persecution in China?

Just seven years after being introduced to the public in China, Falun Gong went from being widely popular throughout the country to becoming the number one target of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

In July 1999, the CCP launched a brutal campaign to wipe out Falun Gong, targeting 100 million people practicing at the time as well as their relatives, friends, and coworkers. In a draconian crackdown not seen since the Cultural Revolution, book burnings, mass-arrests and imprisonment, torture and forced reeducation were unleashed across China. Virtually everyone in China was either targeted or forced to be complicit. But why?

Four key motives prompted the regime's persecution of Falun Gong:

- 1. Surpassing CCP membership:** By 1999, the number of Falun Gong practitioners exceeded CCP members. A 1998 study by China's State Sports Commission estimated more than 70 million practitioners, while state-run TV reported "over 100 million people are learning Falun Gong." In a country of 1.3 billion, this meant 1 in 13 people were practitioners. Such large numbers, surpassing the CCP's own 60 million members at the time, were viewed as a significant threat by some CCP leaders.

- 2. Independence from the party-state:** Initially registered under the state-run China Qigong Science Research Association, Falun Gong withdrew in 1996 due to pressure to establish a Communist Party branch and charge fees. The practice's founder, Li Hongzhi, insisted on keeping the practice free of political influence, without formal membership, and always shared free of charge. This independence made Falun Gong the largest civil society group outside CCP control, a degree of autonomy the regime would not tolerate.
- 3. Incompatible ideologies:** Falun Gong's principles of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Forbearance clashed with the CCP's atheist, materialist, and combative ideology. Since 1949, the CCP had forcibly imposed communist ideals, especially during the Cultural Revolution, replacing traditional spiritual values. Falun Gong's revival of these values, promoting spiritual development and belief in the divine, directly opposed the CCP's enforced atheism and materialism.
- 4. Jiang Zemin's personal motives:** Former CCP leader Jiang Zemin, who became the party leader in 1989 due to his support of the Tiananmen Massacre, faced internal and public ridicule. His position was unstable, and he saw Falun Gong's popularity as a threat to his power. According to the *Washington Post*, "The crackdown [against Falun Gong] was undertaken to demonstrate and solidify the power of the Chinese leadership ... Communist Party sources said that the standing committee of the Politburo did not unanimously endorse the crackdown and that President Jiang Zemin alone decided that Falun Gong must be eliminated."

Yet none of these reasons can justify the violent persecution that has unfolded over the past quarter century.

Key Statistics

The CCP has gone to great lengths to hide the scale and severity of human rights abuses being committed against people who practice Falun Gong in China, even detaining, jailing, and torturing those who have tried to investigate or document the persecution. In some cases, Falun Gong practitioners have even been sentenced to long prison terms on charges of “divulging state secrets” for actions like speaking to foreign journalists or sharing internal government documents related to the persecution.

Yet, by pulling together reports from the United Nations, the U.S. government, human rights organizations, and a few quality pieces of investigative journalism, the real scope and scale of this persecution campaign emerges with much clarity. The following are key indicators quantifying this human rights crisis.

- **70 to 100 Million Falun Gong Practitioners**
There were 70 to 100 million people practicing Falun Gong in China before July, 1999. While some have attributed this estimate to Falun Gong sources, the number actually originates from a survey conducted by the Chinese government in 1998, as well as Chinese state media reports.³⁷
- **Several Million Detained**
Over the past 25 years, multiple indicators suggest that the total number of people detained in China in connection with their practice of Falun Gong is at least several million. For example, Ethan Gutmann’s 2014 book *The Slaughter* estimates that from 2000 to 2008, an average

of 450,000 to a million Falun Gong practitioners were detained in forced labor camps at any given time, suggesting 2 to 4 million detentions during those eight years alone.³⁸ Similarly, a 2013 Amnesty International report noted that Falun Gong practitioners constituted from one third to 100 percent of the population in certain labor camps.³⁹

After the abolition of the labor camp system in 2013, the mass detention of Falun Gong practitioners continued in other facilities such as prisons and informal detention centers. Every year, Minghui.org, an overseas Falun Gong website that receives first-hand accounts from Falun Gong practitioners in China, documents thousands of new detentions. Due to the risk involved in collecting and reporting such information, many cases likely go unreported. These data points collectively suggest that several million Falun Gong practitioners have been detained since 1999, with likely several hundred thousand currently detained.

- **Hundreds of Thousands Tortured**
Since early 2000, the use of torture on Falun Gong detainees has been widely documented by major media, human rights organizations, Chinese lawyers, and the United Nations. There are at least 100,000 cases of torture documented by Minghui.org, and reasons to believe the actual number is several times higher.
- **Over 5,000 Documented Deaths from Torture and Abuse**
More than 5,000 cases of Falun Gong practitioners who died from torture and abuse in custody since 1999 have been documented. Discovering and verifying information inside

China related to wrongful deaths is difficult and dangerous. Therefore, it is widely believed that this number is just the tip of the iceberg.

- **Killed on a “Significant Scale” for Organs**
Estimates from multiple independent reports indicate hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners may have been killed for the extraction of their vital organs to fuel a booming organ transplantation business in China.⁴⁰

On June 17, 2019, an independent tribunal in London—chaired by Sir Geoffrey Nice QC, who worked at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and led the prosecution of Slobodan Milosevic—released its Short Form Conclusion and Summary Judgment.⁴¹ The judgment states:

Forced organ harvesting has been committed for years throughout China on a significant scale and that Falun Gong practitioners have been one—and probably the main—source of organ

supply.... The Tribunal has had no evidence that the significant infrastructure associated with China’s transplantation industry has been dismantled and absent a satisfactory explanation as to the source of readily available organs concludes that forced organ harvesting continues ‘till today.

- **20 to 40 Million Engaged in Civil Disobedience Across China**

There are an estimated 20 to 40 million people in China practicing Falun Gong and actively engaged in civil disobedience. In May 2009, Falun Gong’s main Chinese-language website, Minghui.org, reported that approximately 200,000 underground “materials sites” exist across China. Materials sites are places where Falun Gong practitioners print leaflets, produce DVDs, etc., the content of which unveils the persecution and debunks anti-Falun Gong propaganda. These sites operate at a grassroots level across China and are usually located in the back rooms of private residences.



A banner displayed in Heilongjiang Province in 2017 that reads “Falun Dafa is Good, Commemorating May 13, World Falun Dafa Day”, a date celebrated to mark the practice’s introduction to the public in 1992. This is just one of the many methods of information-sharing and civil disobedience that Falun Gong believers across China engage in. (Credit: Minghui.org)

False Labels

In its effort to justify a violent campaign against innocent people meditating, the CCP has deployed various false and demonizing labels against Falun Gong. The most prominent has been the claim that Falun Gong is a so-called “cult.” Yet, journalists and scholars in the West have found that the label is merely a propaganda tool for the CCP to advance its violent persecution.

FROM THE PRIDE OF A NATION TO A “CULT”

Throughout the 1990s, Falun Gong was widely popular in China and garnered praise from civil society, government officials, and state media. It was not until many months after the CCP launched the violent campaign against Falun Gong that state-run media first deployed the “cult” label.

Furthermore, when the term was applied, it was not the outcome of measured analysis, investigative findings, or theological debate. It was neither arrived at by religious scholars, nor sociologists, nor psychologists, nor was it the consensus of the government. Rather, it was a political move, one engineered by Jiang Zemin, then head of China’s Communist Party. According to a November 9, 1999 report by *The Washington Post*, “It was Jiang who ordered that Falun Gong be labeled a ‘cult,’ and then demanded that a law be passed banning cults.”⁴²

The label appeared at a time when the CCP’s nascent anti-Falun Gong crusade had grown into a bumbling public relations mess. Not only was Falun Gong standing up to the regime, but the

violent means being used against it—such as torture and public shows of police brutality—were turning the tide of public opinion in Falun Gong’s favor. The Chinese public was growing increasingly sympathetic to the group’s plight, even as Party propaganda was repeatedly ratcheted up. From the point of view of the CCP, something had to be done to save the campaign from becoming an embarrassing and costly failure. The legitimacy of Jiang’s rule was being called into question—rightly—by many. He desperately needed to curb the tide of support for the peaceful meditators. It was under these circumstances that the cult label emerged in October 1999, months after the regime initially announced its ban on Falun Gong.

CHINA SCHOLARS, JOURNALISTS WEIGH IN ON “RED HERRING”

David Ownby, a scholar of Chinese religion, wrote in his book, *Falun Gong and the Future of China*, “The entire issue of the supposed cultic nature of Falun Gong was a red herring from the beginning, cleverly exploited by the Chinese state to blunt the appeal of Falun Gong and the effectiveness of the group’s activities outside China.”⁴³

The same conclusion has been affirmed by human rights organizations like Freedom House and Amnesty International, as well as journalists who came to know Falun Gong practitioners through in-depth reporting on the persecution. Ian Johnson, who won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting on abuses suffered by Falun Gong practitioners, wrote:

The group [Falun Gong] didn’t meet many common definitions of a cult: its members marry outside the group, have outside friends, hold

*normal jobs, do not live isolated from society, do not believe that the world's end is imminent and do not give significant amounts of money to the organization. Most importantly, suicide is not accepted, nor is physical violence... [Falun Gong] is at heart an apolitical, inward-oriented discipline, one aimed at cleansing oneself spiritually and improving one's health.*⁴⁴

DISTURBINGLY EFFECTIVE

Despite the reality described above, the CCP's propaganda efforts have nevertheless been largely effective in attaching the "cult" label to Falun Gong, with it even popping up in auto-complete on international search engines. Western media in their reporting have often inaccurately and carelessly written that Falun Gong was banned in 1999 by the Chinese government as an "evil cult," giving no explanation as to why the label is false or acknowledging that it emerged months after Falun Gong was banned. Many have also appeared to internalize other false narratives about Falun Gong.

Additionally, the CCP has expanded its propaganda campaign to promoting carefully attuned claims about Falun Gong that relate to sensitive topics in the West, which entices some Western media companies to adopt these narratives in attacking Shen Yun by association. Examples of this include the false accusation that Falun Gong is racist because it "forbids interracial marriage." This narrative first appeared in English language versions of Chinese government websites (this narrative is noticeably absent from the disinformation about Falun Gong spread inside China where race relations is not a dominant social issue).⁴⁵ It was picked up by several small or specialized outlets before appearing in some mainstream Western media publications. This, despite the fact that mixed race families are

common in Falun Gong communities, and no such prohibition exists in any Falun Gong teaching. As with the cult label, reality plays no part; the only consideration is whether the label is potent enough to engender disdain, or at least apathy, toward Falun Gong in the international community.

FACT-CHECK: IS FALUN GONG "RIGHT WING"?

In recent years, some mainstream media have broadly characterized Falun Gong as "right-wing" due to perceived affiliation between Falun Gong and *The Epoch Times* newspaper. This characterization is inaccurate when taking into account two facts:

Origins and diversity: Falun Gong originated in China with a cosmological view that is authentically Chinese and entirely distinct from Western political thought. Furthermore, people in more than 100 countries around the world practice Falun Gong, representing a wide variety of ethnicities, cultures, professions, and political viewpoints. This diversity far exceeds the spectrum of U.S. political classifications, let alone a singular label.

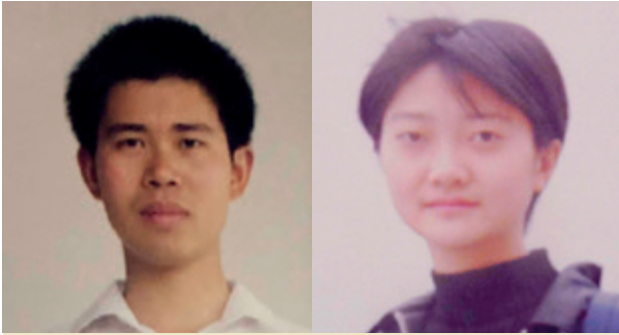
Personal views: While *The Epoch Times* was founded by a small group of people that practice Falun Gong, the editorial direction of the paper neither represents nor speaks for the Falun Gong faith, or its practitioners; as *The New York Times* does not speak for the Jewish faith of its publisher.



Entrance to Heilongjiang Women's Prison, a prison notorious for torturing female Falun Gong practitioners, with at least two deaths taking place due to abuse there in 2024 (Source: Bitter Winter)

Key Tactics of Persecution Today

For 25 years, the CCP has been deploying massive resources to persecute—and ultimately try to eliminate—Falun Gong. Touching every corner of China, and even reaching overseas, the regime's agents have used arbitrary detention, torture, demonizing propaganda, and other forms of manipulation and coercion to target Falun Gong. They aim to force practitioners to betray their beliefs and abandon their activism, while trying to ostracize them from would-be supporters in China and elsewhere. The following pages spotlight six key tactics of persecution used by the CCP to target Falun Gong in recent years and the latest available information on the scale, scope, and nature of their implementation. They shed light on an often overlooked yet significant human rights crisis centered in the world's second largest economy, one whose tentacles of repression and propaganda reach far beyond China's borders.



He Binggang 何冰钢

Zhang Yibo 张轶博

Birthyear: 1977, 1979 respectively

Current Status: Sentenced to six years and five years, respectively, held in Changning District PSB Detention Center

Detention Date: October 9, 2021

Location Detained: Shanghai

Reason for Detention: Developing and maintaining firewall circumvention software

He Binggang and his fiancée, Zhang Yibo, were sentenced to six and five years on June 12, 2023, in connection with developing and maintaining the firewall circumvention software oGate. They were arrested on October 9, 2021, during a mass arrest of Falun Gong practitioners thought to be involved in the project. Their homes were raided, and their property seized. Detained in the Changning District Detention Center, He Binggang's paralysis has worsened, leaving him completely unable to walk. He's also suffering from severe dizziness, headaches, insomnia, and incontinence.

1. LARGE-SCALE DETENTIONS AND PROSECUTION

From the first days of the crackdown, China's security forces have had no qualms about detaining and even sentencing to long prison terms Chinese citizens who persist in practicing Falun Gong or sharing information that runs counter to the regime's narratives. Since 1999, millions of Falun Gong practitioners have been jailed in a variety of detention facilities.⁴⁶

The U.S. State Department's 2009 Human Rights report, for example, stated that: "Some foreign observers estimated that Falun Gong adherents constituted at least half of the 250,000 officially recorded inmates in RTL [re-education through

labor] camps."⁴⁷ Even after the abolition of the camp network in 2013, Falun Gong detainees were not necessarily released en masse. Amnesty International found that:

*[Security forces] now routinely seek to detain Falun Gong practitioners as they are released from RTL camps in order to send them to 'brain-washing centres', detention centres, or prison.*⁴⁸

Today, Falun Gong practitioners across China continue to be detained on a large scale and are given some of the longest prison terms meted out to political and religious prisoners. Between January

2022 and April 2024, at least 7,620 practitioners were documented to have been unjustly detained. Moreover, at least 1,761 were sentenced to prison terms of up to 15 years after sham trials.⁴⁹ Cases of detention, prosecution, and torture were recorded in all 31 of China's provinces and special municipalities. Yet, the persecution has been the most severe in Jilin, Shandong, Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Hubei, Hebei, and Sichuan Provinces.⁵⁰

The latest detainees join an estimated tens of thousands—or even more—Falun Gong practitioners being held in police stations, extralegal detention facilities, and prisons. Many others were sent to extralegal brainwashing centers or forced to flee their homes to avoid detention. Moreover, these cases are only those documented by the Minghui website. Given the information blockade imposed by the Chinese government, which severely restricts the transmission overseas of timely information on prosecutions, the actual number is very likely larger.

Reporting on Falun Gong prisoners by human rights groups and government sources also points to the large-scale nature of detentions and prosecutions, even relative to other harshly persecuted communities in China and worldwide. The Rights Protection Network (Weiquanwang), a website that aggregates reports of abuse from human rights defenders across China, has compiled hundreds of Falun Gong cases over the past two years.⁵¹ The NGO Human Rights Without Frontiers estimated that in 2022, the government imprisoned 2,649 individuals for exercising their right to freedom of religion or belief, 2,102 (79 percent) of which were Falun Gong practitioners.⁵² More recently, on the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom's *global* list of victims of religious persecution as of the end of 2023, Falun Gong practitioners

made up 10 percent of those listed, with 217 cases documented by the commission.⁵³

Punished for practicing Falun Gong, sharing information

An analysis of available cases and verdicts indicates that Falun Gong practitioners arrested and imprisoned in China face such punishments for:

1. simply being known to police as a Falun Gong believer, possessing spiritual texts, or gathering with fellow practitioners to read them; and/or
2. sharing information with fellow Chinese citizens about Falun Gong, the persecution faced by adherents, or other sensitive and heavily censored topics.

In recent years, Chinese police have conducted raids on private gatherings of Falun Gong practitioners reading the practice's teachings, in some cases arresting dozens of people at once, with some later being sentenced to long prison terms. Judges throughout China, acting under the political orders of CCP committees, sentenced even elderly practitioners to years in prison for simply associating with fellow believers.

A typical such case is that of 62-year-old Zhou Deyong, the father of Florida resident Zhou You, who was arrested in April 2021 along with 10 other Falun Gong practitioners and their family members who had gathered together to read Falun Gong spiritual teachings. On April 22, 2023, Zhou was sentenced to eight years and fined 100,000 yuan (approximately \$14,000 USD) for possessing Falun Gong books.⁵⁴ "They wanted to make this a big case, and they deemed my father the so-called 'organizer'," Zhou You said about his father's sentence. "My father is an innocent and



Liu Yan 刘艳

Birth Year: 1974

Current Status: Sentenced to 3.5 years in April 2022, detained at Yunnan Province No. 2 Women's Prison

Detention Date: September 30, 2021

Location Detained: Yunnan

Reason for Detention: Being a Falun Gong practitioner

Reports of Torture: No

Family Abroad: Daughter in Canada

On September 30, 2021, Chinese authorities arrested Liu Yan, mother of Canadian resident Lucy Liu, after a taxi driver reported her for practicing Falun Gong. She was detained at the Kunming City Detention Center, denied visitation, and sentenced to 3.5 years and fined 5,000 yuan in April 2022. Liu and her family have faced repeated persecution since 1999, including previous arrests and imprisonment. Her husband spent four years in prison, and she served a three-year sentence in 2015. Her daughter, studying in Toronto, urgently calls for her mother's immediate release.

kind-hearted man, but these people are going after him like this?"

Alongside such prosecutions, a growing number of practitioners have been detained and punished for exercising their right to free expression and/or access to information. This has coincided with adherents responding to the CCP's persecution, censorship, and propaganda with nationwide grassroots efforts to educate the Chinese public about rights violations and the CCP's falsehoods, as well as to share uncensored information with contacts outside China.

Close analysis of legal cases—especially prosecutions resulting in prison sentences—reveals that many, if not most, Falun Gong practitioners in China who have been sentenced to prison in

recent years were jailed for sharing information otherwise censored by the CCP. For example, a 2017 Freedom House study on religion in China, cites in its chapter on Falun Gong that:

In a sample of 59 available court verdicts from 2016 analyzed by Freedom House, all of the Falun Gong activists sentenced to prison were punished for exercising their right to free expression or access to information. Their alleged "crimes" included leaving voicemail recordings, posting messages to the social media platforms WeChat or QQ, using a virtual private network (VPN) to download content from Minghui.org, or simply possessing large numbers of leaflets or discs for apparent dissemination.⁵⁵

This trend continues today, with numerous Falun



Fang Bin 方斌

Birthyear: Unknown

Current Status: Released following three-year sentence

Detention Date: After February 9, 2020

Location Detained: Hubei

Reason for Detention: Uploading videos of the pandemic situation in Wuhan to YouTube

Reports of Torture: Yes

While the CCP downplayed the scale and severity of the COVID-19 pandemic in Wuhan in early 2020, Fang Bin exposed the reality through videos on YouTube, showing overcrowded hospitals and body bags. His videos, starting from January 25, 2020, went viral internationally, undermining official narratives. Authorities detained and released him several times in early February. His last YouTube video was uploaded on February 9, 2020, after which he disappeared. Without any public knowledge that he had been put on trial, Fang Bin was released on April 30, 2023, after serving a three-year sentence. He is reportedly under constant surveillance and his family has been pressured not to take him in.

Gong practitioners since January 2022 being detained and sentenced for sharing information about the practice and rights abuses suffered by adherents. In one example, Ms. Qin Xiujian, a 69-year-old woman living in Wuhan city, Hubei Province, was detained at her son's home on February 3, 2023, after police claimed she hung Falun Gong posters in a subway station days prior. At the time of her arrest, Ms. Qin was watching her five-year-old granddaughter who police left alone in the home. The police did not notify Ms. Qin's son and daughter-in-law, who were working out of town at the time, until two days later. In early April 2024, a judge from the Hanyang District Court sentenced Ms. Qin to three years and four months.⁵⁶ In another case, a judge from the Dadong District Court in Shenyang City, Liaoning Province sentenced Ms. Yu Guichun, a 72-year-old woman, to eight years in prison on February 28, 2024.⁵⁷ Police arrested Ms. Yu when she went to

meet another practitioner to pick up flash drives with internet circumvention software.

COVID-19 whistleblowers, anti-censorship activists jailed

During the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns, several practitioners faced jail terms for sharing information related to the pandemic as well. The most prominent is Fang Bin, whose videos of deaths during the first days of the pandemic in Wuhan gained international attention.⁵⁸ Fang was subsequently sentenced to three years in prison; he was released on April 30, 2023, but due to ongoing harassment has reportedly been unable to stay with his family or settle permanently. In another high-profile case, Ms. Xu Na was sentenced in January 2022 to eight years in prison for sending photos and information about pandemic restrictions in Beijing to an overseas website.⁵⁹ In



Xu Na 许那

Birthyear: 1968

Current Status: Detained in Beijing, sentenced to 8 years

Detention Date: July 19, 2020

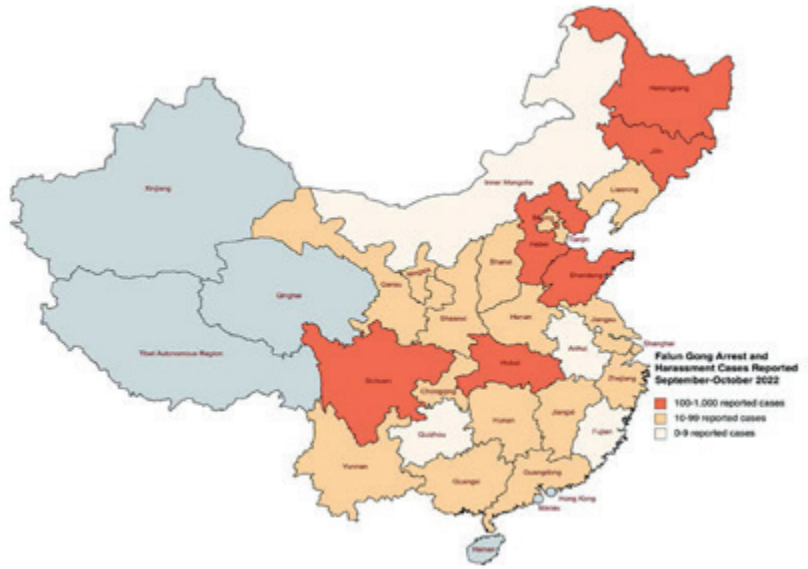
Location Detained: Beijing

Reason for Detention: Publishing photos and articles online that exposed the severity of the pandemic and lockdowns in China

Reports of Torture: Yes

Xu was arrested alongside ten other citizen journalists in Beijing for publishing photos online of Beijing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their lawyers were denied certain rights protected by Chinese law. Xu was indicted on April 2, 2021, and detained at Beijing Women's Prison until receiving an eight-year sentence on January 14, 2022. She attempted to appeal the sentence, but it was rejected by Beijing Second Intermediate Court on May 18, 2023. Xu's exact whereabouts are unknown, after March 2024 reports that she had been removed from Beijing Women's Prison. Xu's husband was killed in police custody in 2008 after being detained for practicing Falun Gong ahead of the Beijing Olympics.

May 2023, a court in Beijing rejected her appeal and upheld the sentence. In March 2024, Weiquanwang (a blog that aggregates reports of abuses relayed by activists in China) reported that Xu was abruptly taken out of Beijing Women's Prison and her whereabouts are unknown.



Left: Hikvision surveillance cameras. The firm's cameras are widely used in China, including for monitoring Falun Gong practitioners. (Source: Ruslan Lytvyn via Canva) Right: Hotspot map showing the 29 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions where cases of Falun Gong persecution occurred leading up to the CCP's 20th Party Congress in October 2022.

2. ENHANCED SURVEILLANCE CONTRIBUTES TO DETENTIONS

As the CCP has expanded the surveillance state over the past two decades, Falun Gong practitioners have been a key target for invasive government monitoring through a combination of traditional and advanced surveillance techniques. Neighbors, local CCP committees, and security agents keep a close watch on known practitioners in their communities, reporting any activities related to Falun Gong.

Politically sensitive dates trigger surveillance

Intense monitoring and harassment of Falun Gong practitioners often accompanies sensitive dates

and major political events when security forces increase surveillance under the pretext of pre-emptively restricting an expected source of dissent. This occurred, for example, in the run-up to the CCP's five-year Communist Party Congress held in October 2022, at which Xi Jinping was anointed for an unprecedented third term as the CCP leader. As early as February 2022, local government websites were already announcing actions to closely monitor Falun Gong believers in preparation for the Party Congress.⁶⁰ This also occurred in locations far from Beijing, where the Congress was taking place, including in Shanghai and Northeast China. Additional upticks occurred in March and April

2023, possibly triggered by two events deemed sensitive by the CCP—its annual political meetings in March and Falun Gong’s 24th anniversary of a peaceful demonstration by 10,000 practitioners that took place on April 25, 1999.⁶¹

But even as part of routine work by the regime’s security forces, Falun Gong practitioners are consistently under pressure. A total of 7,147 Falun Gong practitioners are documented to have been harassed by police between January 2022 and April 2024 via home visits, warrantless searches, physical monitoring, or financial extortion. Given the systematic nature of the Chinese regime’s security force harassment and monitoring of Falun Gong believers, the actual number of those targeted by such measures is most likely larger.

Even such low-tech monitoring can lead to extralegal detention and prison sentences. In July 2022, the mother of two U.S. citizens, Mrs. Aihua Liu was arrested after neighbors reported that she was distributing Falun Gong pamphlets. As a result, she received a four-year prison sentence in March 2023, with the materials found in her possession cited as evidence against her in a copy of the verdict viewed by the Falun Dafa Information Center.⁶² “There is no hope for justice in China,” said Liu’s daughter Lydia during a U.S. Congressional briefing on May 23, 2023. “Even if my mother was allowed fair representation, changing the court-determined verdict is impossible. I do not know when this persecution will end. I do not know when I will see my mother again.”



Ms. Liu Aihua 刘爱华

Birth Year: November 12, 1954

Current Status: Sentenced to four years and detained at the No. 4 Detention Center of Changsha City

Detention Date: July 7, 2022

Location Detained: Hunan

Reason for Detention: Liu has been detained numerous times for distributing informational pamphlets about Falun Gong and the persecution, and it is likely she was detained for the same reason this time.

Reports of Torture: Yes

Family Abroad: Son and daughter in New York

Ms. Liu Aihua has spent the past twenty years of her life in and out of prisons and labor camps, persecuted for practicing Falun Gong. Her husband, Mr. Guanghui Wang, passed away in 2009 after his health declined due to years of torture and abuse during past detentions. Ms. Liu was most recently sentenced to four years on March 10, 2023 following her 11th arrest, and was last held in the No. 4 Detention Center of Changsha City. Family members in the U.S. suspect she may also have been targeted because of their activism as her son is a dancer with Shen Yun Performing Arts. Her case is documented in USCIRF’s database.

Advanced surveillance technologies—including comprehensive databases and facial recognition—are utilized by Chinese security forces to track Falun Gong practitioners.

High-tech innovation drives arrests

Meanwhile, digital surveillance plays an increasingly significant role in monitoring Falun Gong believers across China. Advanced technologies, including comprehensive databases, are utilized by Chinese security forces to track and monitor practitioners. From January 2022 to April 2024, 142 Falun Gong practitioners are known to have been detained after being caught by cameras engaging in peaceful practice of their belief or information dissemination.⁶³ According to independent researchers, these systems have been in use for years, initially targeting Falun Gong before expanding to encompass other groups.⁶⁴

Facial recognition technology is also employed to identify Falun Gong practitioners involved in activism or disseminating information in public spaces. The surveillance research firm, IPVM discovered in December 2022 that Hikvision’s smart policing software included features to alert authorities of Falun Gong practitioners’ activities and locations through surveillance camera footage.⁶⁵

A notable example of surveillance contributing to mass arrests of Falun Gong believers occurred on February 19, 2023 in Changchun City, where local police detained 17 Falun Gong practitioners and their family members. Reports from within China revealed that police set up surveillance

cameras outside one practitioner’s residence, monitoring their activities and interactions with other practitioners. During the detentions, homes were searched, and information materials were confiscated.⁶⁶ The same day, three other practitioners were also arrested in the nearby city of Yushu, and less than one week later, 11 more practitioners were arrested in another nearby city, Dehui. At least three of the practitioners were later sentenced to prison terms of up to four years.⁶⁷ The lieutenant governor and director of the Public Security department of Jilin Province, He Zhiliang reportedly gave the orders for these mass arrests.⁶⁸

报警ID	报警类型	报警名称
809	涉赌类	Gambling
810	涉毒类	Drug-related
811	假币类	Counterfeiting
812	诈骗类	Scams
813	法轮功等邪教类	Falun Gong and other

List of alarms in Hikvision’s Infovision IoT smart policing software, including an alarm for Falun Gong and other banned religious groups arbitrarily deemed “cults” by the CCP. (Credit: IPVM)



A sample of Falun Gong practitioners killed in the persecution in recent years. (Source: Minghui)

3. 5,000 DOCUMENTED FALUN GONG DEATHS DUE TO THE CCP'S VIOLENT REPRESSION

Ms. Chen Ying was 17 years old when she died in August 1999, becoming the first documented Falun Gong practitioner to have lost her life in the persecution. She would have been 41 years old this year. Yet her death is one of many that have occurred over the past 25 years. In a tragic milestone, in June 2023, the total number of Falun Gong believers documented to have died due to persecution surpassed 5,000. As of May 2024, the total of documented Falun Gong deaths due to persecution since July 1999 had reached 5,069, as recorded by Minghui.org. The actual number of those killed for practicing Falun Gong

is believed to be much larger, reflecting the difficulty of obtaining detailed information, including countless victims targeted for organ harvesting.

The latest contingent of these deaths, recorded by a network of citizen journalists in China and transmitted overseas, includes 369 cases that occurred between January 2022 and May 2024 of Falun Gong practitioners dying in custody or due to abuse after being released.

One of the victims was Pang Xun, a 30-year-old radio host in Sichuan, who distributed Falun Gong



Screenshot from a video shared by a former classmate on Twitter showing the body of Pang Xun (L), a 30-year-old Falun Gong practitioner killed in custody in December 2022, and Pang before his death (R). (Source: Twitter)

In a tragic milestone, in June 2023, the total number of Falun Gong believers documented to have died due to persecution surpassed 5,000.

flyers.⁶⁹ After police arbitrarily arrested him on his way to work, Mr. Pang was detained in Leshan Prison and beaten to death by guards within approximately four months. His case was made public in February 2023, when a friend uploaded a graphic video to Twitter showing the markings on Pang Xun’s corpse, which appeared to result from electric baton torture, beatings, and bindings. The post went viral, garnering over half a million views in one week, spreading awareness of Pang Xun’s unjust death, and drawing coverage from international news outlets like Radio Free Asia and rights groups like Freedom House.⁷⁰

Such cases represent the extreme end of a wider range of persecutory tactics—including large-scale arrests and systematic torture—deployed by security forces in China against those known to practice Falun Gong. For example, some prisons have become known for being particularly brutal—and deadly—for Falun Gong practitioners held there. Heilongjiang Women’s Prison is notorious for its horrific treatment of female Falun Gong practitioners. Many female Falun Gong practitioners have died in this prison, and at least two additional deaths occurred in 2024. An April 19 article in *Bitter Winter*, an online magazine on religious freedom issues, featured Liu Jinping, a 43-year-old practitioner currently detained there.⁷¹ Liu managed to share the harsh realities inside, reporting that inmates, instigated by prison staff, use torture and sleep deprivation to force practitioners to denounce Falun Gong. Liu herself was forced to sit on a stool for hours until sores formed; if she moved, she was beaten.



Sir Geoffrey Nice QC (left), Andrew Khoo (center), and Nicholas Vetch (right), three of seven members of the Independent Tribunal into Forced Organ Harvesting from Prisoners of Conscience in China (China Tribunal), at the release of the tribunal's final judgement in London on June 17, 2019. (Source: screenshot via China Tribunal)

4. EVIDENCE OF ONGOING ORGAN TRANSPLANT ABUSES

Evidence suggests that Falun Gong detainees, along with other prisoners of conscience, continue to be killed for their organs to fuel China's organ transplant business, an atrocity that has been ongoing for almost two decades.

In 2006, reports first surfaced of Falun Gong practitioners being subjected to systematic medical testing and subsequently killed for their organs to be used in China's rapidly expanding transplant industry. Since then, numerous independent investigations and academic studies have shed light on the details of these abuses and their links to

the Chinese party-state. Testimonies from former prisoners, doctors, and new research published in recent years indicates that the practice continues despite Chinese official denials and claims of transitioning to a voluntary organ-donation-based system.

Based on available research, Chinese hospitals collude with police departments and the justice system to hold prisoners of conscience against their will.⁷² The victims are then subjected to blood-tests and other medical examinations to assess organ compatibility, after which they are



Ji Yunzhi 季云芝

Birth Year: 1957

Current Status: Died in custody on March 20, 2022

Detention Date: February 01, 2022

Location Detained: Inner Mongolia

Reason for Detention: Authorities attempted to silence her before the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics

Reports of Torture: Yes

Family Abroad: Son in New York

On February 1, 2022, police in Inner Mongolia detained Ji Yunzhi ahead of the Beijing Winter Olympics for possessing Falun Gong materials. Previously detained multiple times for her faith, Ji endured severe abuse. During her latest detention, she went on a hunger strike and was tortured and force-fed. She lost consciousness and was hospitalized, handcuffed for 39 days. On March 20, police informed her husband she was in intensive care, and she died the next day. Her body, showing signs of abuse, was cremated under police guard, preventing her family from seeing it again.

matched with patients requiring organs. At the allotted time, the prisoners are killed, and their healthy organs are systematically removed to meet the demands of international “organ tourists” and Chinese patients in a rapidly growing industry. Victims’ bodies are then typically cremated—a practice reportedly aimed at erasing evidence of transplantation abuse, according to families of Falun Gong prisoners believed to have been subjected to organ harvesting.⁷³ It is via this reverse-matching and forced procurement of organs that Chinese hospitals are able to provide patients with extremely short wait times, far shorter than what is possible in countries with voluntary donor-based systems.

Among the primary targets of this practice in China are Falun Gong practitioners, with credible estimates suggesting the number of victims could

be in the tens of thousands annually.⁷⁴ In recent years—even after Chinese health authorities claim to have switched to a voluntary donor system in 2015—substantive reports from whistleblowers, victims’ families, and independent investigators have emerged, rendering the position of the CCP and its defenders, who seek to deny the claims, increasingly untenable.⁷⁵ According to a Freedom House 2017 report:

[The] organ transplant industry in China remains enormous and growing, even as the number of judicially executed prisoners has declined over the past decade... a review [of available information] found credible evidence suggesting that beginning in the early 2000s, Falun Gong detainees were killed for their organs on a large scale. There are reasons to believe that such abuses continue.⁷⁶

Recent findings

The final judgment of the China Tribunal in 2019, a panel of independent experts who listened to days of testimonies, similarly found that, “Forced organ harvesting has been committed for years throughout China on a significant scale and that Falun Gong practitioners have been one—and probably the main—source of organ supply.”⁷⁷

Unlike the voluntary donor system in the United States, non-consensual blood testing and extensive medical examinations of people held in Chinese custody suggest “extrajudicial organ sourcing from these populations are the most plausible and parsimonious explanation” for the rapid availability and extraordinary growth of China’s market, according to a 2020 report by Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.⁷⁸ In June 2021, U.N. independent experts also expressed concern that:

*[prisoners of conscience in China are] forcibly subjected to blood tests and organ examinations such as ultrasound and X-rays, without their informed consent; while other prisoners are not required to undergo such examinations. The results of the examinations are reportedly registered in a database of living organ sources that facilitates organ allocation.*⁷⁹

Recent academic publications have reinforced these concerns. One 2022 article published in the *American Journal of Transplantation* documented 71 instances of dead donor rule violations in organ transplant surgeries conducted in China based on publications by Chinese doctors, suggesting that physicians in China may have participated in executions by organ removal, supporting existing evidence of forced organ harvesting on Falun Gong practitioners.⁸⁰ In addition to concerns raised over abuses within China, some recent investigations

Falun Gong survivors of Chinese incarceration continue to report suspicious blood testing and medical examinations in custody, alluding to reverse and unethical donor matching.

have also looked into the complicity of Western institutions in these crimes, such as training Chinese doctors or selling pharmaceuticals to Chinese transplant hospitals. An article in the *Telegraph* on March 9, 2024 found that Oxford University was providing training to Chinese medical professionals accused of being involved in organ harvesting, raising glaring ethical concerns.⁸¹

Evidence the atrocity continues

Falun Gong survivors of Chinese incarceration continue to report suspicious blood testing and medical examinations in custody, alluding to reverse and unethical donor matching. This is evident from documented cases on Minghui.org published since 2018 and personal interviews conducted by the Falun Dafa Information Center in 2023 and 2024. Over a dozen survivors who emigrated from China attest to extensive physical examinations and frequent blood tests conducted at detention facilities or prisons by third-party affiliated nurses or medical staff. One interviewee experienced this as recently as 2022, while others’ testing ranged from 2002 to 2018.

Interviewees consistently report that Falun Gong practitioners were singled out and transferred as a group to a local hospital for testing or escorted individually into a blacked-out van parked in front

of the prison, accompanied by nurses wearing unmarked scrubs and medical equipment. Other detainees were reportedly not targeted for such medical procedures, nor were they escorted to other locations or subjected to the same frequency of medical check-ups.

Other incidents of **suspicious medical testing** have been recorded by Minghui.org, often consisting of Falun Gong detainees (who are typically mistreated in custody) being taken unexpectedly to hospitals for medical examinations that might be done on particular organs such as lungs, hearts, or corneas rather than medical care offered to the detainee.

For example, on February 22 and 23, 2023, senior citizen Ms. Li Shoulun was detained at Railroad Hospital and Gaoxin Police Department in Shaanxi Province, where she was forced to undergo a comprehensive physical exam, including a blood test, an electrocardiogram, and an eye exam. This included a lengthy and unusual cornea examination conducted by medically unlicensed police officers using a device similar to an ophthalmoscope.⁸²

Similar incidents involving CT scans, chest X-rays, or electrocardiograms were reported in Shandong in November 2021,⁸³ Hubei in August 2022,⁸⁴ and Jiangsu in October 2022.⁸⁵ In all cases, the detainees were taken by police to at least one hospital facility nearby for testing and nearly all for collection of blood samples as well. The victim in the Shandong case—Ms. Ji Yingmei—subsequently died in custody at the age of 45, though further details of her death are unknown.

Even when not subjected to a full medical exam, many former detainees report having blood samples collected, sometimes forcibly. According to a Falun Gong practitioner now residing in New Zea-

land, two practitioners that she knew personally were taken into custody by police in Shandong Province in 2020; within the first 24 hours of their detention, police collected biometric information, including their blood samples. One of the practitioners pulled his arm away before the needle was injected in an attempt to resist. At this point, four police officers tackled him to the ground to forcibly extract his blood. His finger was sprained in the process.⁸⁶ Mr. Huang Liwu, now living in Australia, was sentenced to two years in Fanjiatai, Hubei Province in connection with his practice of Falun Gong. From July 2016 to September 2018, he reported having his blood drawn four times.⁸⁷

In some cases, reports have emerged of police attempting to draw Falun Gong practitioners' blood even when they have not been taken into custody. Multiple practitioners from Shandong province reported to Minghui.org that in the weeks around the annual legislative meetings in Beijing in March 2023—a politically sensitive period when police often harass known practitioners—local police stopped practitioners on the street or in their homes and attempted to draw blood from them.⁸⁸

The scale of medical testing of Falun Gong practitioners is likely much broader than these documented cases, but obtaining information under the regime's tight censorship is extremely difficult. Nevertheless, these cases indicate that in many parts of China, Falun Gong practitioners—especially those in detention—continue to be subjected to forced blood withdrawals and other medical examinations, presumably as pre-screening for organ matching with potential patients, placing these detainees at risk of being killed for their organs.



On May 23, 2023, students in Linye Primary School in Heilongjiang province listened to a lecture demonizing Falun Gong and banned religious groups. More than 150 students and teachers signed the propaganda banners, and more than 400 people signed a CCP petition online. (Source: Huanan County People's Government)

5. PROPAGANDA AND DISINFORMATION AT HOME AND ABROAD

Propaganda has been a cornerstone of the CCP's campaign against Falun Gong from its inception. Following the onset of the crackdown in 1999, state-run media across television, radio, and print aggressively disseminated defamatory content aimed at vilifying the spiritual group. For example, just one program on state-run broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV), an "investigative" show called *Focus Talk* known for attacking CCP enemies—ran 28 long-form episodes slandering Falun Gong in the first 32 days of the persecution.⁸⁹ The constant bombardment of false propaganda effectively turned large swaths of the Chinese public against Falun Gong.

Anti-Falun Gong narratives bolstered by censorship, new propaganda campaigns

The effect of the CCP's propaganda is exacerbated by the regime's strict censorship of Falun Gong-related content, which remains among the most censored topics on the Chinese internet. Terms related to Falun Gong are regularly used as a litmus test by researchers investigating Chinese censorship practices.⁹⁰ Various algorithms on social media applications and search engines systematically filter out content and keywords related to Falun Gong, preventing any sympathetic or neutral portrayals of the group from reaching the general

populace.⁹¹ As mentioned earlier, these restrictions are reinforced by the severe legal penalties—and even prison time—meted out to those who share information about Falun Gong. Some of the black-lists have been found by researchers to affect search engines and devices even outside China.⁹² The regime periodically revitalizes its anti-Falun Gong propaganda, often using new technologies. In early 2023, it initiated a nationwide effort to get users of the popular WeChat mobile phone application to view anti-Falun Gong propaganda and sign a petition against the group. According to references on local government websites, members of CCP neighborhood committees set up booths at major supermarkets, public squares, parks, and medical clinics to solicit signatures in places like Jinzhou City of Liaoning province and Tianhe District of Guangdong province, or Erjia Town in Jiangsu province.⁹³ The regime’s campaign also extended to rural villages and ethnic minority regions, with activities organized by village committees in Sichuan province and the public security bureaus in Qinghai and Ningxia Autonomous region.

Some of the most robust documentation of the campaign appears in Tianjin, where the extra-legal police task force “610 Office” is headquartered, responsible for carrying out the mission of eliminating Falun Gong both within China and via transnational repression abroad. The local Public Security Bureau website published a total of 41 articles to promote the petition between April 2023 and December 2023.

This followed another signature campaign launched in 2017.⁹⁴ The new initiative employs interactive elements and animated characters designed to attract users from various demographics. But it also rehashes many of the same falsehoods and demonizing labels that have been used since the



The digital badge received upon signing the CCP’s petition demonizing Falun Gong and other banned religious groups, captioned “Congratulations on receiving the ‘Anti-Cult Guardian Medal of Honor!’” (Source: Shandong Foreign Trade Vocational College)

start of the persecution, like fabrications of Falun Gong being dangerous or long debunked claims that in 2001 a group of believers set themselves on fire in Tiananmen Square.⁹⁵ The latest campaign—and actions taken to disseminate it via educational institutions from elementary schools to universities—introduces such harmful content to a new generation of Chinese who were not even born in 1999. They are then prompted to sign a petition, reject any material shared by practitioners, and actively engage in persecution by reporting Falun Gong believers to authorities. These actions are incentivized through rewards on the platform, such as digital badges and certificates.

Global reach

The CCP’s tactics for spreading propaganda using modern technologies and the global information

environment have also spread internationally. Over the last year, there has been a significant increase in inauthentic activity on platforms like X (formerly Twitter), where the Falun Dafa Information Center has identified hundreds of fake accounts.⁹⁶ These accounts, created specifically to post negative and false information about Falun Gong, reply to tweets about the practice and often use specially designed memes to attack not only the group itself but also anyone expressing support or sympathy towards them. This example forms part of a broader pattern of attempts by CCP proxies or pro-Beijing actors to muddy international understanding of Falun Gong and stifle support for the persecuted community.

International experts have found that over the past decade “party leaders have overseen a dramatic expansion of efforts to shape media content around the world, affecting every region and multiple languages,” including on topics like Falun Gong.⁹⁷ This influence extends through various channels, including direct pressure on media outlets or individual journalists and via indirect economic incentives that encourage silence on the persecution of Falun Gong or the spreading of false information aligned with the CCP. The CCP’s pressures behind the scenes have over the years contributed to self-censorship and misunderstandings on the Falun Gong issue, further marginalizing Falun Gong and obscuring the reality of the persecution faced by those who practice.⁹⁸

The regime and its proxies have also tried to spread manipulated narratives, framing Falun Gong with politically and culturally charged accusations, such as labeling it as “anti-China” or falsely claiming Falun Gong forbids interracial marriage and is hence “racist.” These assertions, prominently placed on official Chinese diplomatic websites and amplified through controlled or co-opted media outlets, are designed to exploit sensitive societal issues, thus

driving a wedge between potential supporters and Falun Gong practitioners.⁹⁹ In one 2020 incident in Argentina, for example, at least three media outlets were approached by a local intermediary of a Chinese agent to publish a questionable article in Spanish that vilified Falun Gong practitioners as a threat to public health during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁰⁰ This tactic matches a directive sent to a Chinese agent indicted by the U.S. Department of Justice in April 2023, who was told to “publish materials in newspapers against the Falun Gong” community.¹⁰¹ In the Argentina incident, the editors rejected the offer, but that is not always the case.

Alarming, some Western media outlets and institutions have echoed problematic CCP narratives by, perhaps inadvertently, incorporating derogatory terms into their reporting. Others have repeated inaccuracies such as referring to Falun Gong as a “sect,” downplaying the scale of persecution in China, or repeating a supposed prohibition on interracial families, despite these being extremely common among the Falun Gong community. In testimony before the House of Representatives in April 2024, former General Robert Spalding used the apparent internalization of negative CCP labels about Falun Gong among U.S. media and academics as an example of the effectiveness of the regime’s “political warfare” and of its “controlling our own narratives within the United States.”¹⁰²

As Falun Gong continues to face relentless persecution, the CCP’s use of propaganda, both within China and internationally, has proven to be both sophisticated and disturbingly effective. The systematic vilification campaign has not only influenced public opinion but also significantly hindered the global understanding and response to the human rights abuses faced by practitioners.

The *New York Times*' Falun Gong Distortion

The CCP's campaign to eradicate Falun Gong is one of the most serious human rights crises in China, affecting tens of millions of people and costing billions of dollars. Yet it has been severely underreported and its victims largely discarded and maligned. The Falun Dafa Information Center examined the *New York Times*' coverage of Falun Gong and found significant and irresponsible distortions of the nature of Falun Gong and the extent of the persecution.

Frequent inaccuracies & negative characterizations

The *Times*' coverage of Falun Gong is riddled with **factual errors**, from relatively benign assertions to more damaging labels that fuel hatred toward the group. The portrayal of Falun Gong teachings and beliefs is predominantly inaccurate and negative, **often mirroring CCP propaganda**. The paper has uncritically repeated and seemingly internalized key aspects of the regime's framing of the persecution.

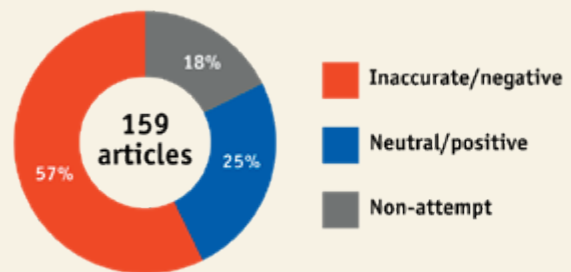
- Negative terms like "cult," "dangerous," or "secretive," appear in 72 articles, while other articles contained additional inaccuracies.
- The inaccurate label "sect" appeared in 48 headlines out of a sample of 159 articles.

The image of Falun Gong that emerges from the coverage is at odds with the lived reality of practitioners and evaluations of China experts.

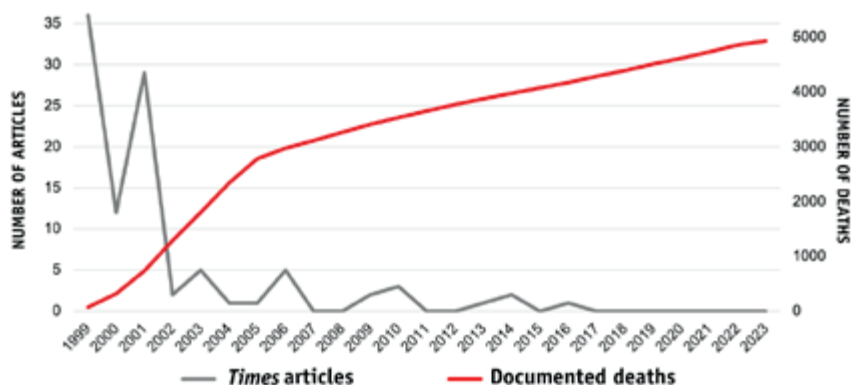
Increasing distortions over time

In recent years, *The New York Times*' coverage has become even more problematic. Alongside complete silence on rights abuses facing Falun Gong practitioners, the few articles it has published on Falun Gong have been openly hostile, targeting organizations founded by practitioners. These negative articles repeat prior inaccuracies, incorporate new ones, and in practice, serve the CCP's goals of maligning Falun Gong and stymying the party's critics.

Descriptions of Falun Gong in the *New York Times* 1999-2023



Cumulative deaths of Falun Gong practitioners documented vs. New York Times articles per year



Deafening silence on persecution

For the past 20 years, *The New York Times* has been exceptionally silent on atrocities against Falun Gong practitioners, even as it has covered other human rights crises in China. When it comes to Falun Gong:

The Times has published **no news story** focused on rights abuses facing practitioners in China since 2016, despite ongoing large-scale violations. The paper **ignored major reports** by human rights groups and the 2019 London China Tribunal on forced organ harvesting, as well as high-profile individual cases of prison sentences and deaths in custody.

At least one former *New York Times* journalist reported being **barred by editors from investigating** organ transplant abuses against Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience.

Beneficiary of *The New York Times*' distortions?

The CCP has benefited immensely from *The New York Times*' coverage, gaining traction for its agenda to marginalize Falun Gong and obscure the crackdown against it, while also providing credibility to anti-Falun Gong propaganda domestically and globally. This complicity not only undermines journalistic integrity but also enables continued human rights abuses, hindering efforts to hold the CCP accountable.

Key Inaccuracies About Falun Gong Appearing in *New York Times* Coverage

False “cult” label:

The most common derogatory phrase—central to the Party-state’s anti-Falun Gong propaganda—is “evil cult” (*xiejiao* in Chinese). This term appeared in 40 *Times* articles.

FACT-CHECK: Numerous scholars and experts on Chinese religions have affirmed that Falun Gong does not bear the characteristics of a cult. Moreover, that the application of such a demonizing label by the regime has been a “red herring from the very beginning.”

False “sect” label:

The *New York Times* has inaccurately labeled Falun Gong a “sect” over 60 times. This term was used in 48 headlines, such as “Beijing Protest By Falun Sect Brings Arrest Of Hundreds.”

FACT-CHECK: The term “sect” is a pejorative term that often refers to a group regarded as “extreme or dangerous.” It also implies that a faith is part of or an offshoot of an existing religion. Falun Gong has remained entirely peaceful despite widespread violence used against it in China. It is also an independent spiritual practice separate from other religions, though its teachings refer to principles from Buddhism and Daoism.

False “racist” label:

Several articles falsely claim or imply that Falun Gong “forbids interracial marriage.”

FACT-CHECK: Falun Gong does not forbid interracial marriage. In fact, interracial marriages and multi-racial families are extremely common in the Falun Gong community.

Erroneous depictions of exercises:

Multiple articles describe Falun Gong exercises as “deep breathing” practices.

FACT-CHECK: Though a relatively benign inaccuracy, practicing Falun Gong does not involve “deep breathing”—a mistake that indicates the author has little-to-no understanding of Falun Gong itself.

Faulty figures:

New York Times articles inaccurately represent the number of Falun Gong practitioners in China as being 2 million or claim Chinese government estimates had been 20 million in the late 1990s.

FACT-CHECK: Multiple Chinese government sources in the late 1990s asserted that 70 to 100 million people were practicing Falun Gong. Initially, the *Times* appropriately cited these figures, but subsequent reports adopted the government’s sharply reduced figure of 2 million without acknowledging the change from the *Times* own prior reporting.

Falun Gong “crushed” in China:

The *Times* repeatedly portrayed Falun Gong as having been “crushed” by the CCP, later stating that it was “based largely in the United States.”

FACT-CHECK: Nearly 25 years after the CCP banned Falun Gong, the practice survives in China, where the largest proportion of believers live. In a 2017 report from Freedom House, researchers estimated that 7-20 million continued to practice in the country, representing a “striking failure” of the regime’s campaign to wipe out the practice. Only an estimated 10,000 reside in the United States.

For references regarding specific examples cited in this chart, see The New York Times’ Falun Gong Distortion. faluninfo.net/new-york-times-falun-gong-distortion/



Zheng Buqiu attacks a Falun Gong information booth in Flushing, New York, on February 10, 2022.
(Source: Screenshot via The Epoch Times)

6. REPRESSION TARGETS FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS GLOBALLY

The CCP's repression of Falun Gong and others extends far beyond China's borders. In a 2021 report, Freedom House found that the Chinese regime engages in the "most sophisticated, global, and comprehensive campaign of transnational repression in the world" and that among its targets are Falun Gong practitioners.¹⁰³

Practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual movement banned in China, also face regular reprisals from China and from Chinese agents. These include frequent harassment and occasional physical assaults by members of visiting Chinese

delegations or pro-Beijing proxies at protests overseas, as in cases that have occurred since 2014 in the United States, the Czech Republic, Taiwan, Brazil, and Argentina. Media and cultural initiatives associated with Falun Gong have reported suspicious break-ins targeting sensitive information, vehicle tampering, and pressure from Chinese authorities for local businesses to cut off advertising or other contractual obligations with them. Multiple Falun Gong practitioners in Thailand have also faced detention, including a Taiwanese man involved in uncensored radio broadcasts to China and

several cases of Chinese refugees formally recognized as such by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In October 2017, a Falun Gong practitioner who had survived a Chinese labor camp and become a high-profile informant on CCP abuses—sneaking a letter into a Halloween decoration when detained and later filming a documentary with undercover footage—died of sudden kidney failure in Indonesia. Some colleagues consider his death suspicious, but no autopsy was performed.

Indeed, the CCP and its proxies have been carrying out a campaign of transnational repression against Falun Gong for over two decades, expanding and refining the tactics, mechanisms, and apparatuses that today target a far wider array of victim communities.

Four dimensions of the regime’s transnational repression against Falun Gong are especially notable and have gained international attention since early 2022:

- First, CCP-backed individuals or misinformed Chinese nationals have **physically assaulted** Falun Gong practitioners in the United States and other countries who were trying to raise awareness about violations of freedom of belief in China. For example, a Chinese national, Qi Zhongping, physically assaulted a Falun Gong practitioner in Flushing, New York on February 18, 2023. Qi has a history of harassing volunteers at their Falun Gong booths. Police arrested and charged Qi with third degree assault.¹⁰⁴ Additional incidents occurred in Australia and the United Kingdom.
- Second, ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese Falun Gong practitioners on **university campuses** across the United States have

reported incidents of surveillance, slander, and censorship by Chinese officials, CCP proxies, or other China-linked individuals.¹⁰⁵ In one notable incident, the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA) at the University of Pennsylvania conducted a month-long campaign to prevent the Falun Dafa club at the university from accessing campus resources.¹⁰⁶ CSSA members presented university administrators with false information about Falun Gong and claimed that the club’s activities spread “anti-Asian hate.”

- Third, the CCP has engaged in a systematic **campaign against Shen Yun Performing Arts**. An examination of this campaign published by the Falun Dafa Information Center in January 2024 documented more than 130 incidents of interference by Chinese officials or their proxies targeting Shen Yun across 38 countries since 2007. In addition to these incidents, Dragon Springs, a campus established by Falun Gong practitioners in New York that houses a Buddhist-style temple, an accredited college, and the training facilities for Shen Yun Performing Arts, faces ongoing frivolous lawsuits and surveillance directed by individuals with public ties to Chinese companies.¹⁰⁷ In March 2024, the campus, as well as several theaters scheduled to host Shen Yun performances, received a series of emails with bomb threats and mass shooting threats.¹⁰⁸ Law enforcement confirmed that all of the bomb threats were fake and no real danger was found in any theaters. All shows proceeded as scheduled and without incident. These actions are in line with leaked CCP documents from 2015 that reference Dragon Springs and Shen Yun, mandating officials to “treat the countries and regions with serious ‘Falun Gong’ activities such as the United States



A Zhen-Shan-Ren Art exhibit hosted by the Falun Dafa Club at a Texas university in 2020. The Chinese Student and Scholars Association, an organization typically under the influence of the local Chinese consulate, tried to have the same exhibit at Ohio State University canceled in 2017 (Source: Minghui).

as the main battlefield...carefully organize the strategy to strike and divide them.”¹⁰⁹

- Fourth, CCP agents have attempted to **infiltrate foreign governments** to influence decisions pertaining to Falun Gong. For example, on May 26, 2023, two suspected Chinese agents, acting directly on the order of a CCP official, were charged for attempting to bribe a U.S. official with tens of thousands of dollars in a scheme attempting to strip a Falun Gong-run entity of its tax-exempt status. The plot was one of the CCP’s most brazen influence operations in the United States to date, attempting to subvert U.S. tax authorities. It was foiled because the targeted official was

an undercover FBI agent.¹¹⁰ In Germany, a staffer for a German member of the European Parliament, Jian G., was arrested and charged on April 22, 2024, for sharing internal information about negotiations and decisions with a Chinese intelligence service. According to German news outlet *Der Spiegel*, this included information about a parliamentary motion for a resolution on the persecution of Falun Gong.¹¹¹

Additionally, authoritarian, or even democratic, governments susceptible to CCP influence have acted on behalf of the CCP to detain and even prosecute Falun Gong practitioners in their countries. On May 3, 2024, Russian security officials detained three Falun Gong practitioners and one

family member for practicing Falun Gong and organizing activities to raise awareness of the Chinese government's human rights abuses.¹¹² The following day, a judge from the Tushinsky District Court in Moscow ordered that one of the practitioners, Natalya Minenkova, 46 years of age, be held for one month and 25 days.¹¹³ Her case is pending investigation, and she then faces trial and potential imprisonment, simply for practicing and organizing activities related to Falun Gong. On May 7, 2024, Serbian police detained six Falun Gong practitioners and two relatives to prevent them from protesting during Xi Jinping's visit to Belgrade.¹¹⁴ The practitioners were then released in the evening of May 8 after Xi left Serbia on a plane to Budapest. Falun Gong practitioners have also faced detention and prosecution in countries like North Korea and Vietnam for practicing their faith or for their efforts in raising awareness of the CCP's persecution.

As noteworthy as these attacks on Falun Gong abroad have been, the strong action taken by democratic governments to unveil and punish these attacks over the past two years has been just as significant. [See International Response section for details]

Beijing's Global Drive to Stop Shen Yun

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is targeting Shen Yun Performing Arts, a U.S.-based non-profit, with the most aggressive global campaign of Beijing-driven artistic censorship documented to date. The effort is a key dimension of the regime's broader transnational repression aimed at Falun Gong practitioners, their peaceful activism, and their supporters around the world.

TACTICS

Diplomatic pressure
on theaters and local governments

Spreading disinformation
about Shen Yun and Falun Gong

Tampering
with Shen Yun's tour buses

Threatening or imprisoning
relatives of performers in China

Central CCP order

Internal party documents reveal that instructions to sabotage Shen Yun come from the very top of the CCP. Central authorities have issued directives that deem suppressing Shen Yun to be "an important part of the ... struggle against Falun Gong." Indeed, in 81 out of 135 cases, Chinese diplomats were the main actors in attempts to silence Shen Yun.

Key actors silencing Shen Yun

Chinese diplomats
60%



Other actors
40%

Global phenomenon: 135 incidents in 38 countries



Democratic resilience

Most theater managers and government officials around the world have rebuffed pressure from the CCP. Yet, a few theaters—especially in countries with strong ties to the CCP—have caved to the pressure and cancelled or rejected Shen Yun performances.

Why the effort?

The CCP views Shen Yun as a serious threat to its power. The CCP has spent nearly 25 years trying to eradicate and demonize Falun Gong and even longer to destroy China's traditional culture. All these efforts can be unraveled by a Shen Yun performance, which showcases authentic Chinese culture, world-class artistry by talented Falun Gong practitioners, and storylines about the CCP's

deadly religious persecution. The CCP cannot abide having its crimes exposed or its lies about Falun Gong undermined, so it is responding with this unprecedented campaign.

Why does it matter?

The regime's crusade to stop Shen Yun is a test case for how well the United States and its democratic allies are able to protect free expression from the CCP's authoritarian manipulation.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

Voices of Support

In facing the CCP's brutal persecution, Falun Gong practitioners have not been entirely alone. Almost immediately, as the world learned of the Chinese regime's brutal crackdown and the true, peaceful, and kind nature of Falun Gong believers, international support for practitioners' right to freedom of belief emerged. Leaders—from presidents to prime ministers to parliamentarians and other elected representatives from across the political spectrum—have issued statements, adopted resolutions, written letters, and taken other actions to condemn and call for an end to the persecution of Falun Gong. United Nations experts, major international human rights groups, and other opinion leaders have joined such calls.



Antony Blinken, U.S. Secretary of State

2021

"Today, the United States designated a Chinese Communist Party official for his involvement in the arbitrary detention of Falun Gong practitioners. We will continue to promote accountability for those responsible for religious freedom [violations]."



Mike Pompeo, Former U.S. Secretary of State

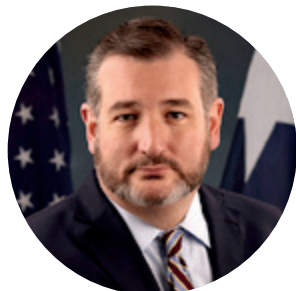
2020

"We call on the PRC government to immediately end its depraved abuse and mistreatment of Falun Gong practitioners, release those imprisoned due to their beliefs... and address the whereabouts of missing practitioners."



Nancy Pelosi, Former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives (D-CA), 2023

“I applaud your tireless work defending religious freedom and bringing awareness to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. America’s commitment to human rights in China is bipartisan, bicameral, and unwavering – and we always remain vigilant in defense of human rights around the world.”



Ted Cruz, U.S. Senator (R- TX) 2022

“There’s a distinct irony about the propaganda being dispersed by the CCP to characterize Falun Gong as an evil religion. Focused on preaching the values of tolerance, compassion, truth, and benevolence, Falun Gong is decidedly not a threat. It is the Chinese Communist Party that infringes on human rights, including, horrifically, by harvesting organs from imprisoned Falun Gong and without remorse.”



Chris Smith, U.S. Congressman (R-NJ), Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China

“Falun Gong practitioners have been great witnesses of courage and peace. Many members of Falun Gong are great heroes of Internet freedom.”



Eleanor Holmes Norton, D.C. Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives (D-DC), 2023

“I stand in solidarity with the many Falun Gong practitioners who fight for the freedom to speak and practice the religion of their choice. I hear you, and I stand with you.”



Nina Shea, Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Religious Freedom at Hudson Institute 2022

“Policymakers should clearly condemn this persecution against Falun Gong and declare it a genocide.”



Freedom House

2017

“Despite a 17-year Chinese Communist Party (CCP) campaign to eradicate the spiritual group, millions of people in China continue to practice Falun Gong, including many individuals who took up the discipline after the repression began. This represents a striking failure of the CCP’s security apparatus.”



Amnesty International

2018

“Falun Gong practitioners continued to be subjected to persecution, arbitrary detention, unfair trials and torture and other ill-treatment.”



Wu Shaoping, Chinese human rights lawyer

2021

“No matter what excuse the Chinese Communist Party uses to arrest Falun Gong practitioners, it is illegal. It has no legal basis whether it’s in China or internationally.”



Masamune Wada, Member of Japan’s House of Councilors

2021

“We will testify more loudly against the CCP, and we must condemn it more loudly, both diplomatically and in Japan. We must stop this genocide [against Falun Gong] by the Chinese Communist Party.”



Melissa Lantsman, Canadian Member of Parliament

2024

“I pledge my full support, as I always have, in our fight together for human rights and a more secure world for Falun Dafa and persecuted groups around the world. I pledge to continue my work as one of your loudest, most strident voices for freedom and liberty on Parliament Hill.”



Rachel Thomas, Canadian Member of Parliament
2024

“The free teachings of Falun Dafa have helped people around the world improve their lives by promoting the values of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. Your work has helped to create a healthier and more harmonious society... I stand with you in condemning all human rights violations conducted against Falun Dafa. Your courage is commendable.”



Michael Gahler, German Member of the European Parliament
2024

“It [Falun Gong] is a practice that doesn’t harm anyone, that is not a danger to the state, but apparently the Party considers it—or has been considering it since 1999—a threat to their ideology. [Falun Gong practitioners] need to be released unconditionally and allowed to practice their faith or to practice their culture, as it is also enshrined in the Chinese Constitution.”



Patrick Grady, United Kingdom Member of Parliament
2024

“Please be assured of my ongoing solidarity with Falun Gong and Falun Dafa practitioners in China and around the world, and with all those persecuted and oppressed by the Chinese Communist Party. The Government of China must be held to account for human rights abuses, including abuses of the right to freedom of religion and belief.”



Jean-Luc Lagleize, Former French National Assembly Representative
2020

“Falun Gong is a discipline that combines meditation with slow, gentle physical exercises and self-improvement. Therefore, I believe that France and Europe must use all means to exert pressure on China so that China respects human rights in its country.”



Michael Gahler, a German member of the European Parliament, poses for a photo with Ding Lebin, son of a Falun Gong practitioner imprisoned in China, after the European Union's passage of a resolution condemning the persecution of Falun Gong in China, on January 18, 2024. (Source: Ding Lebin)

International Action

In a notable development, as democracies around the world have come to recognize the authoritarian nature of the CCP more clearly and its threat to freedom globally in recent years, such expressions of support for Falun Gong and condemnation of the persecution have been joined by concrete actions to deter, mitigate, and punish those involved in suppressing Falun Gong practitioners both within China and abroad. These efforts demonstrate a growing global commitment to holding the CCP accountable and supporting the rights of Falun Gong practitioners, highlighting a unified stance against these injustices.

Five key dimensions of these responses are especially significant:

1. Sanctions imposed on Chinese officials for abusing Falun Gong

After years of rights groups calling for Chinese officials who have persecuted Falun Gong to face sanctions, beginning in 2021, the United States government has finally done so. On December 9, 2022, the U.S. Department of State imposed sanctions on Tang Yong, former deputy director of the Chongqing Area Prisons “for his involvement in gross violations of human rights, namely arbitrary detention of Falun Gong practitioners, which also amount to particularly severe violations of religious freedom;” the sanctions included visa restrictions on Tang and his family members rendering travel to the United States more difficult.¹¹⁵

Wu Yingjie, Party Secretary of the Tibetan Autonomous Region from 2016 to 2021, faced similar sanctions. In addition to suppressing ethnic Tibetans, during Wu’s time in office, Falun Gong practitioners in the region were also severely persecuted for their belief, and he was named as a key perpetrator of the persecution by Minghui.org.¹¹⁶ This round of sanctions was the second time that the Department of State under the Biden Administration had sanctioned a CCP official for gross violations of human rights against Falun Gong and the third time in total, as one official was sanctioned during the Trump administration in 2021.¹¹⁷

2. Legislation to limit organ harvesting complicity

The growing body of evidence and international recognition of organ transplant abuses in China has spurred action from parliaments, seeking to reduce incentives for patients from their country to travel to China for organ transplants. In the United Kingdom, an amendment to the Health and Care Act 2022 in May of that year prohibits commercial organ tourism to China and other countries; in Canada, Bill S-223 passed in December 2022 addresses forced organ harvesting in the same way.¹¹⁸ In Taiwan, legislators have proposed a Bill of Combating and Preventing Forced Organ Harvesting.¹¹⁹

In the United States, two pieces of national legislation have been introduced. The bi-partisan Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Bill, introduced in February 2023, was passed by the House of Representatives on March 27, 2023, with a 413-to-2 vote.¹²⁰ Its Senate companion bill remains pending in the Committee on Foreign Relations. The Falun Gong Protection Act, re-introduced in June 2023, is pending a vote in the House as of May 2024.¹²¹ If adopted, the two bills would impose sanctions on perpetrators (individuals and entities) involved in forced organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience.

At the state level, a bicameral, bipartisan initiative passed in the Texas Legislature and went into effect on September 1, 2023. It aims to end health insurance coverage for organ transplants obtained in countries known to have forced organ harvesting, including China. Indeed, the bill affirms that “organs [in China] may have been harvested from hundreds of thousands of incarcerated

people, mainly Falun Gong practitioners.” The law marked the first legislation in the United States to enact complicity prevention measures for American patients.

In 2024, other U.S. states have followed suit by introducing or passing legislation that likewise prevents insurance companies from covering organ transplants in China or any other country known to participate in forced organ harvesting. Missouri introduced the “End Organ Harvesting Act of 2024” in February, while Utah and Idaho unanimously passed such legislation in March and April respectively.¹²² The Utah legislation went into effect on May 1, and the Idaho legislation goes into effect on July 1, 2024.

3. Medical journals and associations address organ harvesting

In the medical sector, in 2022, the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation (ISHLT) became the first medical organization to prohibit article submissions “related to transplantation and involving either organs or tissue from human donors in the People’s Republic of China” from *The Journal of Heart and Lung Transplantation* and ISHLT symposia.¹²³ Additionally, an article in the above journal cautioned fellow medical professionals against training visiting physicians or surgeons who could use the gained knowledge in “transplants based on organs from executed prisoners or any other transplant-related crime” in their home countries.¹²⁴

In November 2022, the Academy of Forensic Nursing (AFN) and Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH) hosted the first inaugural Nurses Summit to Combat and Pre-



Texas State Senator Lois Kolkhorst speaks at a press conference for a Texas bill aiming to combat the Chinese regime’s forced organ harvesting on March 29, 2023. (Credit: The Epoch Times)

vent Forced Organ Harvesting.¹²⁵ The summit was dedicated to preventing global collusion with the Chinese forced organ harvesting industry and offered solutions for protecting ethical medical practices. In July 2023, the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons published a statement, asserting that the “United States government and American physicians should refuse to condone, enable, facilitate, or participate in forced organ harvesting, as by: educating or training personnel from a totalitarian country like...China.”¹²⁶

4. Government action to rescue jailed Falun Gong practitioners

As the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners continues in China, the international response has provided critical support for affected families. Many individuals whose loved ones were detained in China in connection with Falun Gong have sought help from government officials. In response, numerous officials worldwide have taken action, demonstrating a strong and coordinated effort against these human rights abuses.



Mr. Ding Yuande 丁远德

Birth Year: 1955

Current Status: Sentenced to 3 years in December 2023, detained at Shandong Province Prison in Jinan

Detention Date: May 12, 2023

Location Detained: Shandong

Reason for Detention: Practicing Falun Gong

Reports of Torture: No

Family Abroad: Son in Germany

On May 12, 2023, Ding Yuande and his wife Ma Ruimei were arrested on their tea farm in Rizhao City, Shandong Province, amid a mass crackdown on Falun Gong practitioners. While Ma was released due to international pressure, Ding was sentenced to three years in prison on December 15, 2023. His son, Ding Lebin, a Berlin resident, led advocacy efforts in Europe, resulting in the European Parliament passing a resolution on January 18, 2024, demanding Ding's release and condemning the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.

In Europe, dozens of officials have joined German resident Ding Lebin in the call for his father's release. His father, Ding Yuande, was detained on May 12, 2023, and sentenced to three years in prison by the Wulian County People's Court on December 15, 2023. On January 18, 2024, the European Parliament passed a resolution calling for the release of Ding Yuande and an end to the persecution of Falun Gong.¹²⁷ "He has not committed any crime. He is innocent. And the only reason why he is arrested is that he is practicing Falun Gong," said German politician Michael Gahler, a sponsor of the resolution who has been particularly active in calling for the release of Mr. Ding. Echoing Mr. Gahler, Slovak lawmaker Miriam Lexmann called for stronger action from the European Union to hold Beijing accountable.

Elected officials in the United States, from both the Democratic and Republican political parties, have also acted on behalf of detained Falun Gong practitioners. In September 2023, U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-California) wrote to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken requesting that he contact his Chinese counterparts and the associated judicial agencies "in the strongest terms" to secure the release of Falun Gong practitioner Ms. Kong Qingping, the mother of a California resident, who is incarcerated in China for her faith.¹²⁸

Likewise, Senator Marco Rubio led a bipartisan delegation of eight Florida representatives to advocate for the release of Mr. Zhou Deyong, who was sentenced to eight years in April 2023 and whose wife and son reside in the state.¹²⁹ Speaking of the rights abuses faced

by practitioners, the delegation's letter to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said:

These are heinous human rights abuses that likely constitute crimes against humanity. We ask that you employ the tools available to you to sanction CCP and PRC officials responsible for the horrific human rights abuses targeting Falun Gong practitioners.

5. Countering transnational repression

As the CCP's transnational targeting of Falun Gong practitioners gained more attention, foreign government agencies have responded to CCP officials' and proxies' attempts to silence Falun Gong practitioners outside of China by issuing public statements condemning these efforts, raising these issues with Chinese officials, or prosecuting criminal activities such as assault, espionage, or bribery.

Since 2022, several individuals have been arrested for engaging in transnational repression against Falun Gong, in addition to other groups. In April 2023, U.S. law enforcement arrested two individuals who, according to the indictment, were instructed to get anti-Falun Gong articles published in U.S. newspapers, gather personal information, and pay protesters to target Falun Gong events.¹³⁰ The indictment also details an army of China-based agents attacking Falun Gong online. Less than one month later, two more individuals were arrested for attempting to bribe a purported IRS official to strip a Falun Gong-affiliated non-profit of its tax-exempt status.

As mentioned earlier in this report, a staffer for a German member of the European Parliament



The FBI New York Field Office holds a press conference on April 17, 2023, regarding the arrest of two men for setting up a Chinese "police station" in New York and charges filed against 40 Chinese public security officials for a campaign to monitor and harass U.S.-based dissidents, including Falun Gong practitioners. (Photo by ANGELA WEISS/Getty Images)

was arrested on April 22, 2024, for sharing internal information about negotiations and decisions with a Chinese intelligence service, including about a motion for a resolution on the persecution of Falun Gong. Since 2022, local authorities in the United States and Australia have charged at least three individuals for physically assaulting Falun Gong practitioners who were raising awareness about the persecution or criticizing the CCP.¹³¹

Direct responses to transnational repression against Falun Gong have also taken the form of local governments and theaters resisting pressure from Chinese diplomats to not host or to cancel Shen Yun performances.¹³² Over 50 such instance of resistance and pushback have taken place in 21 countries since 2007.

Meanwhile, NGO's have documented instances of the CCP's transnational repression campaign against Falun Gong and provided suggestions to policy makers on how to respond. A 2021 report from Freedom House examined the scope and scale of transnational repression against



Mr. Zhou Deyong 周德勇

Birth Year: 1961

Current Status: Sentenced to 8 years on April 20, 2023, detained at Binhai Detention Center

Detention Date: April 23, 2021

Location Detained: Shandong

Reason for Detention: Possessing Falun Gong books and materials

Reports of Torture: No

Family Abroad: Son and wife in Florida

Mr. Zhou Deyong, a senior geological engineer from Shandong Province, was arrested on April 23, 2021, alongside 10 other Falun Gong practitioners and their families. Police denied Mr. Zhou access to his lawyer, who attempted visits in early May 2021. Mr. Zhou's son in Florida contacted the Dongying District Procuratorate, mentioning that Florida Congressman Gus Bili-rakis had written to Xi Jinping about the case. Shortly after, the detention center permitted Mr. Zhou's lawyer to meet him. Yet after two years of detention, Mr. Zhou was sentenced on April 20, 2023, to eight years in prison for possessing Falun Gong books and organizing group readings of Falun Gong teachings.

Falun Gong, finding that the global campaign against the group extends back to the early 2000's and consists of a wide range of tactics.¹³³ The human rights organization Safeguard Defenders has reported on several cases of transnational repression against Falun Gong, including multiple incidents of involuntary returns.¹³⁴

Additionally, governments such as the United States and Canada have conducted hearings to better understand transnational repression faced by Falun Gong practitioners and others to inform appropriate policy responses. Hearings conducted by the U.S. government's Congressional Executive Commission on China and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in 2023 featured statements from the Falun Dafa Information Center, while Canada's

Foreign Interference Commission featured a Falun Gong witness in a hearing in March 2024.¹³⁵



Annual July 20 rally in 2019 at the Capitol Building, featuring congressional advocates and human rights experts who spoke to condemn the persecution of Falun Gong.

Recommendations

The CCP's ongoing campaign against Chinese citizens who practice Falun Gong remains one of the most severe human rights crises in China today. The people of China cannot make meaningful advances toward religious freedom, free expression, or the rule of law until Falun Gong practitioners are free. In this context, the Falun Dafa Information Center urges policymakers and members of civil society to take the following steps to condemn, deter, and prevent rights violations against Falun Gong believers in China and around the world.

FOR POLICYMAKERS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WORLDWIDE:

A) VOCALLY CONDEMN THE PERSECUTION OF FALUN GONG IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

- 1. Make public statements on key anniversaries:** Government agencies, high-level officials, and elected representatives should make public statements on key anniversaries—such as May 13 (World Falun Dafa Day) and July 20 (the date of the CCP’s launch of its violent persecution)—that express support for Falun Gong victims and condemn ongoing persecution.
- 2. Condemn violence against individual practitioners:** Government agencies, high-level officials, and elected representatives should make public statements condemning the persecution of individual Falun Gong practitioners and their families, including those highlighted in this report.
- 3. Raise Falun Gong in private meetings with top Chinese officials:** In meetings with Chinese counterparts, officials should call for the release of imprisoned Falun Gong practitioners, including at the highest levels of diplomacy. Officials should raise points of information related to Falun Gong in discussions on topics such as high-tech surveillance, forced labor, and rule of law reforms, in addition to discussions on religious freedom or human rights.
- 4. Raise Falun Gong in meetings with lower-level Chinese officials:** When preparing to meet with provincial or local-level officials in China, make use of publicly available resources or queries to the Falun Dafa Information Center

to ascertain conditions in the location for Falun Gong practitioners. Highlight the names of jailed believers whose circumstances are particularly precarious.

B) MEET WITH VICTIMS OF PERSECUTION OUTSIDE CHINA

Diplomatic staff: Ambassadors and other diplomatic staff should meet with Falun Gong representatives, torture survivors, and relatives of jailed practitioners outside China. This enables them to receive up-to-date information about conditions in China. Given the severity of the persecution in China and risk of reprisals, it is too dangerous for local adherents to meet with foreign government officials inside the country. As such, diplomatic staff should make a particular priority of meeting with Falun Gong practitioners prior to traveling to China or during visits to their home country.

Top officials: High-level officials, including presidents, vice presidents, prime ministers, secretaries of state, and religious freedom ambassadors should meet with Falun Gong torture survivors or relatives of jailed practitioners to better understand conditions in China and signal support for their freedom.

C) ASSESS THE EXTENT TO WHICH INTERNATIONAL CRIMES (INCLUDING CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND/OR GENOCIDE) HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY CHINESE LEADERS IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST FALUN GONG

Like the U.S. Rohingya Genocide Determination

Act of 2021 and the designations by the United States and other democracies regarding genocide committed against Uyghurs in China, the United States and other democratic governments should formally evaluate and consider a determination of whether crimes against humanity and/or genocide have been committed against Falun Gong.

D) IMPOSE SANCTIONS ON HIGH- AND LOW-LEVEL CHINESE OFFICIALS WHO HAVE ACTIVELY PERPETRATED SEVERE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS

Building upon earlier rounds, the United States imposed sanctions in 2022 against Chinese officials who perpetrated rights violations against Falun Gong, most notably the former Deputy Director of Chongqing Area Prisons, Tang Yong, and former Party Secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region, Wu Yingjie. To maximize their deterrent effect and target those most responsible for abuses against Falun Gong, the United States and other democratic governments should impose additional sanctions on central, provincial, and local government and party officials.

Officials to consider should include a higher ranking central official (such as Zhao Leji on the Politburo Standing Committee, Vice Minister of Public Security Chen Siyuan, and Secretary of the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission Chen Wenqing), those involved in organ transplant abuses (such as Zheng Shusen), and/or those driving the persecutory campaign in Heilongjiang, Liaoning, Jilin, or Shandong provinces (such as Deputy Secretary of Political and Legal Affairs Committee of Shandong Province Fan Huaping), the regions of the country with large concentrations of Falun Gong practitioners and where the persecution has long been especially harsh and lethal. Sanctions should also be considered

against those involved in individual cases, such as the officials responsible for the death in Inner Mongolia of Ji Yunzhi, mother of a New York resident, in 2022.

E) THE US CONGRESS AND OTHER PARLIAMENTS SHOULD INCLUDE FALUN GONG IN RELEVANT LEGISLATION, HEARINGS, AND OTHER ACTIONS

1. Include Falun Gong-related witnesses in any hearing or roundtable regarding religious persecution, information controls in China, or transnational repression targeting the Chinese diaspora.
2. Adopt resolutions condemning the persecution of Falun Gong and calling for sanctions against Chinese officials.
3. Adopt legislation to create institutional mechanisms that would hinder unethical organ transplants and minimize potential international complicity in organ transplant abuses, including in China. In the United States, the Senate should adopt the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act, which passed the House of Representatives in 2023; both the House of Representatives and Senate should pass the Falun Gong Protection Act.

F) TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT FALUN GONG COMMUNITIES FROM TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION AND OTHER FORMS OF PERSECUTION OUTSIDE CHINA

1. Punish diplomats and Chinese officials who engage in intimidation, harassment, surveillance, or in pressuring members of the Chinese diaspora to marginalize Falun Gong or attack practitioners.



Chen Yang 陈阳
Cao Zhimin 曹志敏

Current Status: Mr. Chen is being held at Wangling Prison. Ms. Cao is being held at the Hunan Province Women's Prison. The lengths of their sentences are not known.

Detention Date: October 27, 2020

Location Detained: Hunan

Reason for Detention: Participating in a

reading group for Falun Gong teachings, akin to Bible study

Reports of Torture: Yes

Family Abroad: Daughter in New York

Grace Chen, an 18-year-old American resident, has been unable to contact her parents since 2020. They were among over 20 Falun Gong practitioners detained on October 27, 2020, for group study of Falun Gong teachings. The sweep was based on long-term internet and telecommunication surveillance of the group. Their arrests were approved on December 5, 2020, and they were sentenced on December 21, 2021, to prison terms of unknown lengths. An insider revealed the court hearing was a formality with predetermined sentences, and lawyers were pressured not to represent Mr. Chen and Ms. Cao.

2. Identify and investigate proxy groups, such as the 610-Office-linked Anti-Cult Association that are at the forefront of harassing Falun Gong practitioners in locations such as Flushing, New York.
3. Investigate digital surveillance of Falun Gong communities. Pressure China-based companies like Tencent or ByteDance to be transparent about moderation policies and data collection. Urge them to avoid censorship and surveillance of Falun Gong-related information on popular apps such as WeChat and TikTok outside of China. Prosecute anyone who assaults Falun Gong practitioners who peacefully exercise their right to free speech, as authorities in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia have done. Ensure local Falun Gong community representatives are aware of any available channels to report incidents of transnational repression.
4. Ensure that expanding activities to monitor and prevent transnational repression include Falun Gong. Relevant actions could include making sure that those working on transnational repression receive minimal education on Falun Gong, that engagement with vulnerable communities to collect incidents includes Falun Gong, and that transparency enforcement for foreign agents includes additional entities that demonize or harass Falun Gong believers.
5. Actively welcome and support Falun Gong refugees fleeing China, including by ensuring that asylum officers and others in the immigration system evaluating applications receive a minimal education on Falun Gong.

FOR INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY AND SCHOLARS:

A) INCORPORATE FALUN GONG RELEVANT INFORMATION IN APPROPRIATE RESEARCH, CONFERENCES, OR PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS

When researching or writing about restrictions on freedom of religion, crackdowns on free expression, high-tech surveillance, or transnational repression, include research questions, open-source documentation, and interviews with Falun Gong experts and refugees. When convening a conference or panel regarding the above topics, incorporate a Falun Gong expert, refugee, or relative of a jailed practitioner in China among the speakers.

B) VOCALLY CONDEMN THE PERSECUTION OF FALUN GONG IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

Make public statements on key anniversaries, such as May 13 (World Falun Dafa Day) and July 20 (the date of the CCP's launch of its violent persecution)—that express support for Falun Gong victims and condemn ongoing persecution.

C) ASSESS THE EXTENT TO WHICH INTERNATIONAL CRIMES (INCLUDING CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY AND/OR GENOCIDE) HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY CHINESE LEADERS IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST FALUN GONG.

D) ADVOCATE FOR THE RELEASE OF IMPRISONED FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE WITH FAMILY MEMBERS RESIDING OUTSIDE CHINA.



Wang Meihong 王楣泓

Birth Year: 1958

Current Status: Sentenced to 4 years in May 2021, held at Heilongjiang Women's Prison

Detention Date: November 23, 2020

Location Detained: Heilongjiang

Reason for Detention: Talking about the persecution of Falun Gong

Reports of Torture: Yes

Family Abroad: Daughter in the United Kingdom

Ms. Wang Meihong, a resident of Heilongjiang Province and the mother of British resident, Amy Yu, was arrested on November 23, 2020, for talking to people about the persecution of Falun Gong near Heilongjiang University in Harbin City. She was held at Haxi Police Station for 15 days before being transferred to a detention center without her family's knowledge. Ms. Wang was later sentenced to four years by the Daoli District Procuratorate on February 2, 2021.

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