



# The Persecution of Falun Gong in China and the UK

By the Falun Dafa Association UK

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## Contents

Foreword.....	3
1. Background.....	4
History.....	4
The practice of Falun Gong.....	5
Presence outside China.....	5
2. Persecution in China.....	6
Start of the persecution.....	6
Persecution methods.....	6
3. Current data on the persecution in China.....	12
Each category explained with examples.....	12
Summary of the current persecution in China.....	17
4. Transnational repression in the UK.....	18
Chinese embassies “wage war” on Falun Gong.....	18
UK practitioners.....	19
5. UK nationals testimonies of persecution in China.....	28
Calls to action for the UK government.....	45

## Foreword

For many in the West, the first mention of Falun Gong was the propaganda from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) at the start of the crackdown. Luckily there were a few human rights organisations who saw through the slander. For example Amnesty International said in March 2000:

*“The crackdown is politically motivated, and the vast majority of its victims are ordinary people who merely exercised peacefully their fundamental rights to freedom of belief, association and expression.”*

Jump to more than twenty years later and Western nations are still being lied to about Falun Gong and Chinese nationals are still subject to misinformation and incitement to hatred. As with other CCP campaigns, the state manipulates and fabricates information about Falun Gong in order to dehumanise the group and justify human rights atrocities.

In China today, Falun Gong practitioners are the largest faith group being persecuted. These peaceful people experience brutal treatment if they do not renounce their faith. They don't have any civil rights, even the right to appeal to the government. If they are killed while in detention, it is not a crime in China and no one is held accountable for their death.

The Chinese government estimated that 70 million people were practising Falun Gong in 1998. In April 1999, the New York Times said, *“even by Chinese Government estimates [Falun Gong] has more members than the Communist Party.”* Certainly the immense size combined with the Communist Party's intolerance of faith is enough to account for their extreme measures taken against Falun Gong. This was, and is, such an important issue for the CCP that they created an entire government department with a thousand offices across the country. This department, called the 610 Office, has official powers to use “every means necessary” to eradicate Falun Gong.

Many Falun Gong practitioners are indeed killed by the CCP. How many? We don't know exactly because the CCP shrouds itself in dense secrecy. Based on third-party investigative reports, however, the death toll is estimated in the tens of thousands each year and one-half to one million are imprisoned at any one time.

You may ask “Why haven't I heard about this atrocity?” Good question.

As Richard Madsen wrote in *Understanding Falun Gong*, *“the American political centre does not want to push the human rights issue so hard that it would disrupt commercial and political relations with China. Thus, Falun Gong practitioners have largely had to rely on their own resources in responding to suppression.”*

The Chinese regime's influence in democratic nations, however, has reached a stage where these nations are starting to recognise it as a threat. This is a welcome awakening since nothing less than our values and freedoms are at stake.

# 1. Background

## History

In the early 1990s qigong was very popular in China. Qigong is a general term used for practices that include gentle body movements alongside spiritual growth. Parks in China were filled with people doing qigong exercises every morning.

Falun Gong is categorised as a qigong practice. More accurately, however, it is a traditional Buddhist discipline. It was introduced to the public in China by Mr. Li Hongzhi in 1992. Mr. Li taught Falun Gong in the form of lectures for two years around the country. He charged only a small fee to cover the venue costs. His talks were unlike those of other qigong teachers because of his unwavering focus on moral standards and self-improvement.

Within five months of its introduction, Falun Gong was recognised by the state-run Qigong Science Research Association. Mr. Li was formally declared a “Master of Qigong” and received a permit to teach Falun Gong nationwide. Falun Gong grew quickly by word of mouth and was initially given support from Chinese authorities; winning awards and praise.

- 1993 — On Sept 21, The People's Public Security Daily, a publication of the Ministry of Public Security, commended Falun Gong for "*promoting the traditional crime-fighting virtues of the Chinese people, in safeguarding social order and security, and in promoting rectitude in society.*"
- 1993 — At the Asian Health Expo in Beijing, 11-20 December, Li Hongzhi was proclaimed the "Most Acclaimed Qigong Master." Falun Gong also received the "Special Gold Award" and award for "Advancing Frontier Science."
- 1997 — The newspaper Medicine and Health ran an article titled “Falun Gong: Top Choice for Healing and Fitness”. A reporter from the paper visited a Falun Gong practice site in Shenyang City on 8 November 1998 and collected dozens of stories of practitioners whose health had improved significantly from the practice.
- 1998 — China's National Sports Commission launched an investigation into Falun Gong in May 1998 and commissioned medical professionals to conduct interviews of over 12,000 Falun Gong practitioners in Guangdong province where 97.9% of respondents said Falun Gong improved their health. The investigation concluded: "*We're convinced the exercises and effects of Falun Gong are excellent. It has done an extraordinary amount to improve society's stability and ethics. This should be duly affirmed.*"

By 1999, according to China's official estimates, 70 million to 100 million people were studying Falun Gong, not counting the many more who practised it for a short time. This amounted to approximately 1 in every 13 people in China. In many cases, entire families across generations took up the practice after seeing the positive changes it engendered among their friends and relatives. Virtually everyone knew someone who practised Falun Gong.

## **The practice of Falun Gong**

Falun Gong is a faith from the Buddhist discipline and like many traditional faiths it consists of two components, mind and body. For the mind there is refining one's character, or self-improvement, through the study and practice of the teachings. For the body there are gentle exercises and meditation.

Falun Gong is also known as Falun Dafa. Since it was introduced to the public when qigong was very popular, the name Falun Gong was used. However Falun Dafa or even just "Dafa" is used to refer to the faith. Dafa means "Great Way" or "Great Law" where law is referring to universal principles.

Like other traditional faiths that came out of China, there is a belief that the mind and body are connected to the universe. Falun Gong teaches that the nature of the universe is kind and benevolent, and its fundamental characteristics are truthfulness (zhen), compassion (shan) and forbearance (ren). So the practice of Falun Gong encourages people to align with these characteristics or principles, namely to be more truthful, more compassionate and more forbearing. In short, practitioners aspire to be good and kind.

People who practice Falun Gong often experience dramatic health improvements but more importantly feel that they have found a deeply rewarding spiritual path.

The teachings of Falun Gong are contained in the book Zhuan Falun. The book is available on the [falundafa.org](http://falundafa.org) website for free and can also be found in book stores. The exercises and meditation can also be learned from the [falundafa.org](http://falundafa.org) website or from local classes for free.

Falun Gong does not contain any religious ritual or worshipping, it does not impose any rigid rules for participation, nor does it retain any register. The practice is a very personal spiritual path and each person practices it according to their own understanding.

## **Presence outside China**

Mr. Li started teaching internationally in 1995. The first lecture was given in Paris at the Chinese embassy, initiated at the invitation of China's ambassador to France. A seven-day class was taught in Paris, followed by a series of classes in the Swedish cities of Gothenburg, Stockholm, and Uddevalla. He gave further lectures and classes in the US, Australia, Germany, New Zealand, Canada, Singapore, and Switzerland.

Falun Gong is now practised outside China in 80 countries on five continents and Mr. Li's teachings have been translated into over 40 languages.

In the UK, it first appeared in 1996. Classes are offered for free throughout the UK, and there are periodic meetings for sharing experiences in order to learn from each other.

Falun Gong has received many awards conferred by government officials and a variety of organisations around the world. The practice's founder, Mr. Li Hongzhi, is a five-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee and was nominated by European Parliament for the Sakharov Prize For Freedom of Thought. He is also the recipient of Freedom House's International Religious Freedom Award.

## 2. Persecution in China

### Start of the persecution

Although widely popular and openly celebrated by state authorities throughout the 1990s, the Chinese Communist Party began a violent campaign against Falun Gong in 1999. This was due to Falun Gong's growing popularity, its size (70-100 million) and because of Falun Gong's emphasis on moral living and traditional Chinese culture. Falun Gong may have appeared as a threat to the Communist Party because all traditional faiths (Buddhist, Taoist and Confucianist) were uprooted during the Cultural Revolution and declared to be "superstition". Traditional faith and traditional culture was replaced with Party Culture and the official state faith of atheism. Although freedom of religion is stated in the Chinese constitution, in practice religions are not tolerated.

Throughout the spring of 1999, a series of events unfolded. In late April, a letter by then-Party-leader Jiang Zemin was circulated among the key Party leadership with instructions to study and implement his directives. The letter characterised Falun Gong as a state enemy which must be monitored and controlled to protect the safety of the Communist Party.

Jiang Zemin declared that if the Communist Party could not defeat Falun Gong then the Party would become "*a laughing stock*". During a meeting of senior Communist Party cadres, Jiang Zemin gave the directive to "*Destroy their reputations, cut them off financially and eradicate them physically*".

On 10 June 1999, the Politburo Standing Committee created the 610 Office as a subdivision of the Party with extra-legal force. Jiang Zemin granted them the power to "*use every means necessary*". The sole purpose of the 610 Office was to monitor, track, and persecute practitioners of Falun Gong.

On 20 July, 1999, hundreds of Falun Gong adherents were taken into custody by security forces. Two days later, on 22 July, the ban on Falun Gong was officially declared.

Overnight, tens of millions of citizens in China lost all of their civil rights and were targeted for eradication by their own government.

### Persecution Methods

#### National propaganda campaign

An enormous propaganda campaign, which incites hatred, has been central to the persecution of Falun Gong by the Chinese Communist Party.

Under the direction of the aptly named Ministry of Propaganda, Chinese state-run television immediately launched disinformation marathons, broadcasting defamatory attacks on Falun Gong 24 hours a day.

To target the entire society, the propaganda was spread across every medium: state-run radio stations, newspapers, billboards, comic books, posters, films, school curriculum, work places, a TV series, and even theatrical plays.

The main overseer of the persecution was and is the 610 Office. Local 610 Offices exist at provincial, district, municipal and neighbourhood levels, and are estimated to be about 1,000 across the country.

Along with the 610 Office personnel, Jiang Zemin engaged police, and public security departments to persecute Falun Gong. It has been estimated that more than a few million people across the country were focused on this campaign.

Moreover, Jiang spent huge amounts to expand forced labour camps, build brainwashing centres and surveillance systems. He also used monetary incentives to encourage greater numbers of people to participate in persecuting Falun Gong. In many areas, the prize for arresting a Falun Gong practitioner was several thousand and even ten thousand yuan.

A Hong Kong newspaper reported that 50,000 individuals were detained in the first week of the crackdown. During the first few weeks, Falun Gong practitioners were rounded up and held in stadiums because the sheer number of detainees could not fit in China's vast array of detention centres and prisons.

By the middle of 2000, Falun Gong practitioners were being routinely tortured in detention facilities across China, and in many cases, people were dying from torture. Furthermore, the freedom to "*use every means necessary*" to force Falun Gong practitioners to give up their faith was resulting in widespread atrocities.

## **Physical**

Police raid homes, confiscate valuables, destroy Falun Gong materials and haul people away to detention centres or forced labour camps. Many are not given a trial, or they are given a show trial where the verdict is predetermined.

Perhaps the most prominent feature of the persecution campaign has been its prevalent use of extreme torture. Torture of Falun Gong practitioners is documented in each of China's provinces, in jails, labour camps, brainwashing centres, and schools across China's cities, towns, and villages.

Common torture techniques include shocking with electric batons, burning with irons, tying the body in painful positions for prolonged periods, force-feeding saline solutions through a plastic tube inserted up the nose, and prying out fingernails with bamboo shoots, to name a few. Rape and sexual torture of Falun Gong practitioners in detention is prevalent as well.

For millions of people in China, refusing to give up their faith in Falun Gong means long periods of detention in "reform through labour" camps or prisons. There they are usually forced to work 20 hours per day without pay, and with very little food or sleep. Those who refuse are tortured.

Be it in labour camps, jails, or in special re-education centres, all detained Falun Gong practitioners are forced to undergo what can only be described as brainwashing. The Chinese Communist Party's goal is to force them to renounce their spiritual beliefs, denounce Falun Gong as dangerous, and turn in others who practice Falun Gong.

## **Forced organ harvesting**

Forced organ harvesting is the extraction of organs from of a living person, without consent, for use in transplantation. The organs are sold for huge profits and the body of the victim is incinerated.

Since 2006, independent investigators have gathered evidence showing that Falun Gong prisoners of conscience are being killed in huge numbers to fuel the state-run organ transplantation industry.

Prior to the crackdown on Falun Gong, it was internationally known and written in Chinese law, that executed prisoners' organs were used for transplantation. As early as 1994, Human Rights Watch reported that: "*Political offenders and other non-violent criminals*" were being used as sources for organs, Chinese doctors participated in "*pre-execution medical tests*" and matching of prisoners with recipients, "*often on a first-paid, first-served basis*". And executions were deliberately mishandled to ensure that prisoners were "*not yet dead when their organs were removed*".

From the year 2000, when the mass incarceration of Falun Gong began, the number of transplant operations increased at a phenomenal rate despite China not having any national organ donor system. Many hospitals built new transplant facilities, vast numbers of transplant staff were trained, and Chinese citizens and foreigners could receive a transplant in record time, often in just a few weeks; including heart transplants being scheduled in advance. In addition to this, multiple lines of evidence rapidly emerged from human rights investigators, including undercover phone calls, witness testimonies, and statistical analysis.

After 12 months of assessing all available evidence, the China Tribunal, led by Sir Geoffrey Nice KC, unanimously concluded in 2019 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.*" The Tribunal also stated "*...forced organ harvesting continues till today*".

In June 2021, 12 United Nations Special Procedures mandate holders raised the issue of forced organ harvesting with the Chinese Government, in response to the credible information that Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghurs, Tibetans, Muslims and Christians are killed for their organs in China.

This year, the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons (APSS) issued a statement condemning the CCP's forced organ harvesting and stated "*There is overwhelming evidence that by the authority of the Chinese Communist Party, which holds absolute power in China, members of the Chinese Communist Party have arrested Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghurs, Christians and others in China, incarcerated them, done medical testing without consent for the purpose of matching their organs with transplant recipients, and removed their organs for transplantation, killing them in the process of doing so, engaging in 'transplant tourism' for money*".



## Disappeared

When a Falun Gong practitioner is arrested in China, the family may or may not be notified. The same is true when practitioners are brought to trial, sent to forced labour camps, or sentenced to prison. There are laws requiring notification but these regulations are often ignored. In many cases when someone disappears, the family doesn't know why or where they may be and have to go to numerous police stations and detention centres in search of their loved ones. Often, detained practitioners refuse to reveal their names in order to protect their families and employers from government retribution under the established "implication" system. This policy is guilt by association, a method used to control people by punishing their family members or the companies they work for if they do something the government doesn't like. Although the exact number of Falun Gong practitioners that have disappeared during the persecution is not easily determined, it is believed to be in the tens of thousands. It is feared that many of these missing practitioners are likely to have been victims of state-run forced organ harvesting.

## Electronic surveillance

The Chinese Communist Party also uses surveillance to persecute Falun Gong practitioners. It is very aggressive in bugging phones, using mobile phone tracking, video and internet surveillance.

In May 2000, China began to implement its national information filtering and monitoring system, commonly referred to as the Great Firewall which is still used very heavily today.

The equipment and technical support from major technology companies include Cisco Systems Inc., Nortel Networks Corporation and Huawei Technologies Co Ltd.

The leading NGO for electronic freedom, EFF, stated in 2016, "*Cisco custom-built the Great Firewall of China, also known as the 'Golden Shield'. This system enables the Chinese government to conduct Internet surveillance and censorship against its citizens.*

*"Company documents also revealed that, as part of its marketing pitch to China and in an effort to meet its customers needs, Cisco built a special Falun Gong module into the Golden Shield that helped the Chinese authorities identify, locate, and ultimately persecute practitioners of that religion by, for example, creating profiles of them that could be used during interrogations and forced conversions (i.e., torture)."*

In 2018 a 172-page internal Huawei document was leaked on the internet. According to Chinese commentator Chen Simin, this leaked document shows Huawei's deep involvement with the CCP's surveillance programs "Golden Shield", which is used to block access to information, and "Skynet System," used for surveillance of the whole society.

The surveillance tools Huawei has helped to develop are used for many purposes, but among them is the tracking of Falun Gong practitioners.

Chen said that the initial demands for the Golden Shield project came from the Public Security Bureau and the 610 Office, the Communist Party executive commission tasked with carrying out the persecution of Falun Gong.

Chinese video surveillance company Hikvision created “alarms” on surveillance software that can track Falun Gong practitioners and notify police.

In 2022, the surveillance research firm IPVM, Internet Protocol Video Market, published a report that states “A Hikvision software platform for PRC police has alarms for Falun Gong practitioners, protestors, and religion” after they discovered a series of alarms listed in a technical document on Hikvision’s website for its “smart policing” software, Infovision IoT. The list included alarms such as “Falun Gong,” “religion,” and several alarms related to protesting.

## **Financial**

Police raids of Falun Gong practitioners’ homes can happen at any time and they can confiscate anything they want. Usually they take money, computers, printers and even cars.

Most companies and factories terminate Falun Gong employees or require them to stop practising, some even require a signed statement that they will not practice Falun Gong before they will be hired.

Many people lose their healthcare, pensions, salary and benefits (which may include their home) because they practise Falun Gong.

School and University enrolment also stipulate that students are not allowed to practise Falun Gong or they will be expelled.

## **Social**

At the beginning of the persecution, trucks drove through the streets with mounted loud-speakers that pierced the air with denunciations of Falun Gong.

Extreme violence against a group of people usually begins with dehumanising that group of people. The Communist Party is tireless in their propaganda effort – both in China and elsewhere. The regime is determined to paint Falun Gong practitioners as dangerous, deviant, and abnormal people in order to justify their brutal actions.

Anyone who practised Falun Gong was stigmatised socially.

The state also engages the practitioner’s family to assist in persecuting them. Just like in the days of Mao, “guilt by association” is used. It is expected that a family member will turn-in or pressure the Falun Gong practitioner to give up their faith. If the pressure from family members does not work then family members might lose their own job, benefits, expelled from university or be threatened by police. As a result, Falun Gong practitioners who do not give up their faith may experience the destruction of their family and may end up homeless or abused.

Many Falun Gong practitioners voluntarily leave their home so that their family is not implicated or persecuted by the state. If practitioners are caught and imprisoned, often they will not use their family name so that their family is protected.

From the first day of the suppression, the CCP banned all books and information discussing Falun Gong positively. All websites relating to the practice were immediately blocked. Millions of Falun Gong books were forcibly seized and burned publicly.

These censorship efforts extend to cyberspace, thanks in no small part to Western companies like Cisco who have enthusiastically sold internet surveillance technology to the Communist Party. As a result of the state-imposed censorship, Chinese people are now imprisoned for posting evidence of torture online, sending emails or simply downloading articles about Falun Gong.

## **The persecution of Falun Gong - Is it Genocide?**

The Genocide Convention adopted by the UN in Paris in 1948 defines genocide as any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

According to many legal and academic experts, along with notable investigative journalists, the on-going, nationwide campaign in China to eliminate Falun Gong, a spiritual practice of 70-100 million people, constitutes genocide.

Nina Shea, Senior Fellow at the Hudson Institute has stated, *"Secretary of State Blinken should promptly act to include Falun Gong in the departments genocide determination citing China."*

Terri Marsh, Executive Director of Human Rights Law Foundation said, *"There is clear evidence that the CCP is committing genocide against Falun Gong."*

Dr David Matas, International Human Rights Lawyer stated, *"the mass murder of Falun Gong is a cold genocide, inflicted slowly, inexorably over many years."*

### 3. Current data on the persecution in China

#### 2023 Data

As a result of the persecution of Falun Gong by the Chinese Communist regime, Minghui verified the following reports of abuses so far this year:

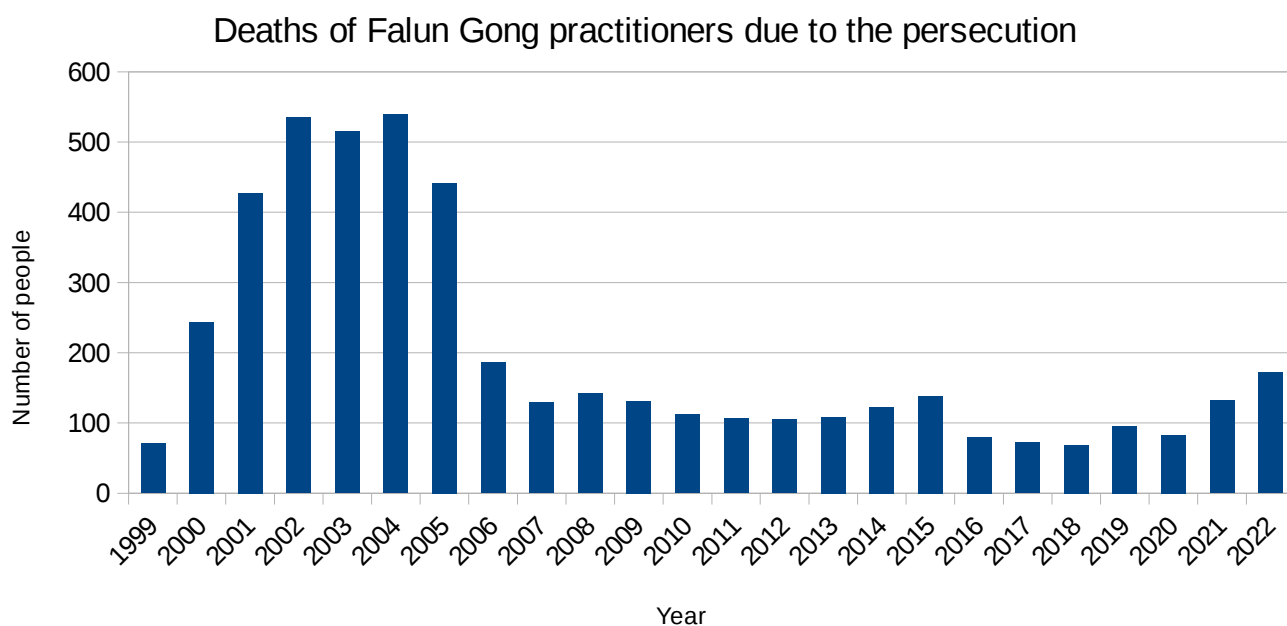
- **104 Deaths** (January - May)
- **1,752 Arrested** (January - June)
- **604 Sentenced** (January - May)
- **1,381 Harassed** (January - June)

*Note that all data in this section is sourced from the central Falun Gong website, Minghui.org, which verifies reports received through the information blockade (the Great Firewall) of China. These numbers show only what has courageously leaked out and does not show the full scope and scale of the persecution. Many people are not able to get information out through the blockade, or they fear getting caught or they may simply disappear into China's vast prison system.*

#### Each category explained

##### Deaths

According to Minghui, there are over 5,000 documented cases of Falun Gong practitioners who have died as a result of abuse in police custody since July 1999. In 2023, 104 deaths were reported. This number does not represent the total number of deaths due to the persecution, but merely displays that the trend of killing Falun Gong practitioners because of their faith has not stopped.



### **One example, Ji Yunzhi:**

On 1 February authorities arrested Falun Gong practitioner Ji Yunzhi in her home. They beat and physically abused her while in custody and she died in a hospital in Chiefeng City, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, seven weeks later. When Ji went on a hunger strike to protest this treatment, authorities reportedly force-fed her and repeatedly slapped her in the face. Upon her death, authorities transferred her body under armed guard to a crematorium against the family's wishes.

### **Arrests and detention**

At any time, police can arrive at a Falun Gong practitioner's home or workplace and take them away. Some have been abducted right off the street after shopping or dropping off their children at school. Once taken into custody, they are interrogated at length about their faith and other Falun Gong contacts, and their homes are usually ransacked while looking for 'evidence' like Falun Gong books or leaflets. They can be detained indefinitely, tortured, held in detention centres, forced labour camps, prisons, psychiatric hospitals and "black jails" which are extrajudicial facilities for political indoctrination (also known as "brainwashing centres").

*"At least 43 psychiatric hospitals all over China are being used to detain and torture [Falun Gong] practitioners. ... We know some of the drugs the hospitals force on sane individuals in an attempt to destroy their will and spirit. ... We know of the widespread use of psychotropic drugs by ordinary police in jails, brainwashing centres, and labour camps."*

- Abraham L. Halpern, M.D. Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry

In the first half of 2023, 1752 Falun Gong practitioners were arrested. The targeted practitioners came from all walks of life and included a college professor, a government employee, a former music teacher, and an artist.

### **One example, Mr. Yang Shiyi:**

Having served one labour camp term and two prison terms totalling 17 years, a Xiangtan City, Hunan Province resident was arrested again in 2023 for his faith in Falun Gong.

Several officers broke into Mr. Yang Shiyi's home on 20 February 2023 and took him to the Xiangtan City Detention Centre. The police called his son the next day and asked him to bring clothes for his father.

Mr. Yang had been interested in spiritual practice since he was young. When Falun Gong was introduced to the public in 1992, he was drawn to its profound teaching and began the practice. His mother, a former nun who was forced to get married during a communist regime's political campaign, was very happy for him.

After the persecution started, Mr. Yang spent very limited time with his family due to repeated arrests and incarceration for his faith. When he was not in detention, he and his family faced non-stop harassment from the authorities.

Mr. Yang was given a 1.5-year term at Xinkaipu Forced Labour Camp for talking to people about Falun Gong in 2000. He was arrested again in March 2003 for distributing Falun Gong materials and sentenced to eight years in Wangling Prison. He was held at a brainwashing centre for a month after another arrest on 27 September 2011. His next arrest was on 14 January 2013, for passing out Falun Gong materials, resulting in a 7.5-year sentence at Wangling Prison. His mother was heartbroken and passed away a year later.

When Mr. Yang was released in July 2020, he took on the responsibility of caring for his 98-year-old father as well as his son, who has a mental disorder.

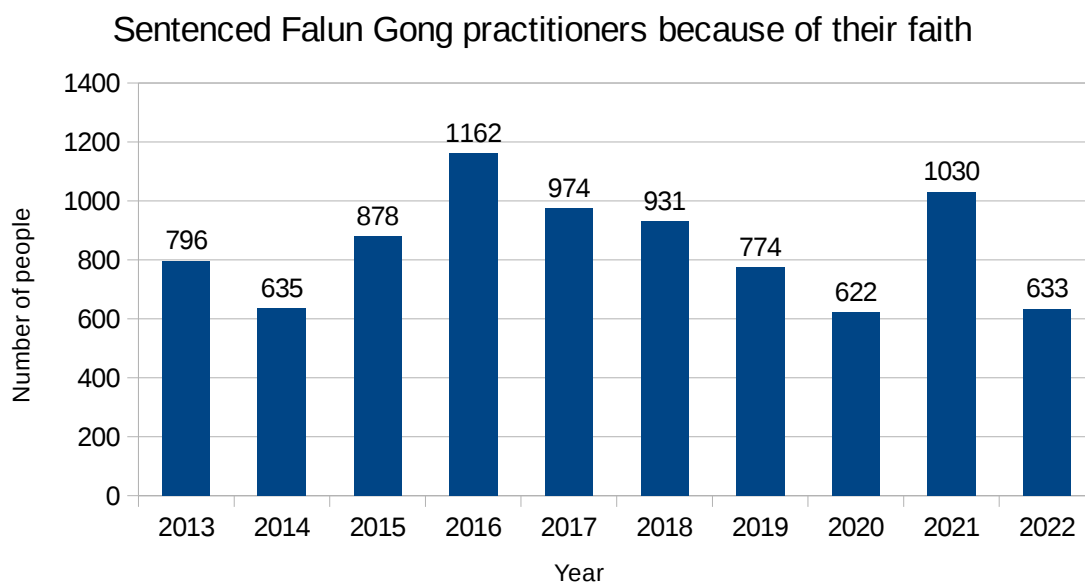
Mr. Yang's father broke his hip and was bedridden in early 2022. Mr. Yang cleaned him and cooked for him, without seeking help from his brother and sister-in-law. Two months after his father passed away, Mr. Yang was arrested again for his faith.

## Prison sentencing

If a Falun Gong practitioner is sentenced in court, the trials lack due process and violate Chinese law. Communist Party committees advise and manipulate judges to arbitrarily impose prison terms. There is no legal instrument in China making Falun Gong illegal to practice so the standard pretext used to sentence Falun Gong practitioners is the charge of "undermining law enforcement with a cult organisation", even though Falun Gong is a traditional Buddhist discipline and is not a cult.

The 604 Falun Gong practitioners sentenced in the first 5 months of 2023 nearly equal the entire number of sentenced practitioners for 2022. We can conclude from this data that the court system, which is a reflection of CCP directives, shows no sign of easing the persecution of Falun Gong.

The prison terms for 2023 ranged from six months to eight years, with an average of two years and ten months per person.

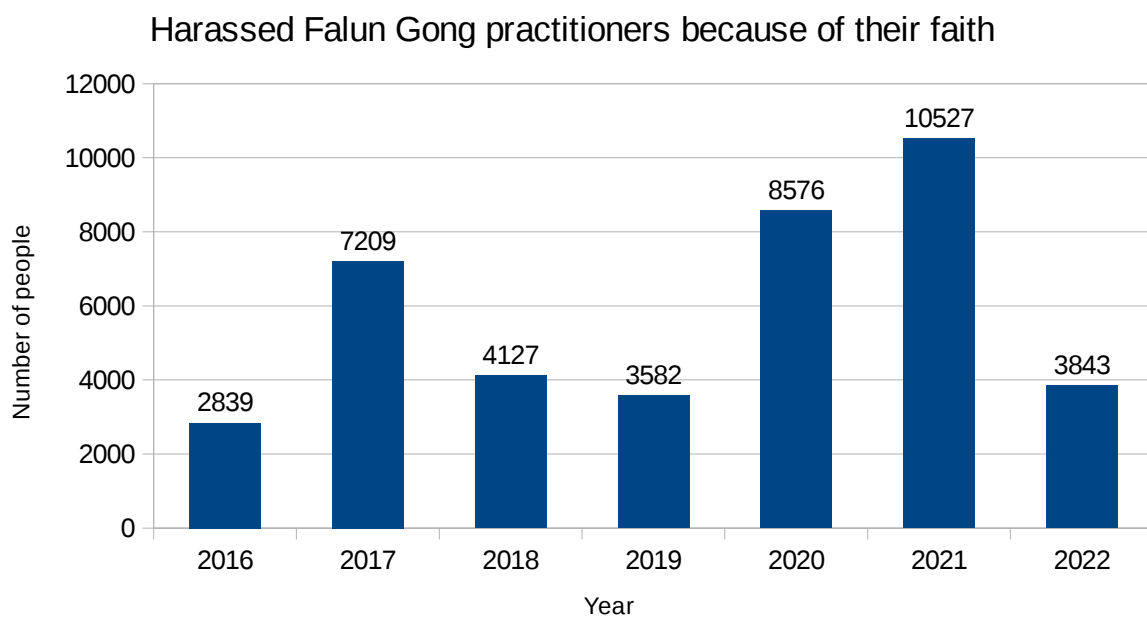


## Harassed

For people who practice Falun Gong in China, they are persecuted for their faith in many different ways. Aside from being arrested, tortured and killed, they can lose their job, pension, housing, schooling or even lose their family.

Police are allowed to ransack and extort money from Falun Gong practitioners. Police have taken computers, books, phones, printers, money and even cars.

In the first half of 2023, 1381 Falun Gong practitioners were harassed because of their faith. The targeted practitioners included some small business owners, including a textile factory owner and a former glass shop owner.



### One example, the Guo family:

Since the onset of the persecution of Falun Gong in 1999, Mr. Guo Deyou, a former model worker in Tianjin, his wife, and their daughter have been repeatedly targeted. The total time they have been incarcerated adds up to 31.5 years.

Just months after their daughter Ms. Guo Chengru, 58, was released after serving a five-year term because of her faith, Mrs. and Mr. Guo were harassed again while caring for their daughter who had become emaciated and was in a delirious state due to torture suffered in police custody.

On 15 October 2022, only two months following Ms. Guo's release, her father Mr. Guo, 86, and his wife Mrs. Han Yuxia were arrested while visiting another local practitioner. Over ten officers ransacked their home and confiscated their Falun Gong books, computer and printer.

The police showed up at the couple's home again on 5 December and ordered Ms. Han to go to the Hexi District Court. She went there, only to be tried for her faith.

The police came again on 14 December and announced a fine for the couple of 1,000 yuan each, because of the Falun Gong books found at their home in October. The couple refused to pay the fine.

Two officers harassed the couple again on 13 February 2023. They said that Mr. Guo had been placed on conditional bail and that he wasn't allowed to leave Tianjin without the police's permission. They also warned him not to have illegal items at home.

Mr. Guo questioned the police what was considered to be "*illegal*" items. One officer replied, "*Cult.*" Mr. Guo clarified that no law labels Falun Gong as a cult in China. The police accused him of not cooperating with them and threatened to report him to their supervisor.



## Summary of the current persecution in China

For the tens of millions of people trying to practise their peaceful faith of Falun Gong in China, the brutal persecution by the Chinese Communist Party shows no sign of abating this year.

Targeted practitioners came from all walks of life, including former government employees, professors, company managers, teachers, doctors, engineers, and accountants.

Minghui, a website that validates and records Falun Gong abuses, stated that police often use violence during arrests of Falun Gong practitioners and that individuals die under mysterious circumstances while in custody during the year. In multiple instances, authorities reportedly refused to release the bodies of the deceased to their families, instead having the bodies cremated without the families' consent.

Authorities also continued to collect blood samples and medically examine Falun Gong practitioners against their will during the year, with some practitioners suspecting that this was part of a continued effort by the government to collect medical information for an organ-matching database which is used in the state-run forced organ harvesting of prisoners of conscience.

The Chinese Communist Party does not allow any independent third-party investigation of the issue of forced organ harvesting and merely denies it with words, rather than facts.

The international community has paid attention to the crime of forced organ harvesting. The European Parliament adopted a resolution on 4 May 2022 finding that *"the organ transplant system in China does not comply with the W[orld] H[ealth] O[rganization]'s requirements for transparency and traceability in organ procurement pathways, and [...] the Chinese government has resisted independent scrutiny of the system."*

David Matas, international human rights lawyer, stated in January *"The evidence of the mass killing of prisoners of conscience for their organs in China is overwhelming. The victims have been, since the early 2000s, primarily practitioners of the spiritually based set of exercises Falun Gong."*

The Chinese Communist Party has not stopped the violence and killing of people who practise Falun Gong in China. Since they also continue to collect blood and secretly cremate the bodies of practitioners who die in custody, it is reasonable to assume that the atrocity of forced organ harvesting also continues to this day.

## 4. Transnational repression in the UK

While Falun Gong practitioners in China continue to face horrific abuse, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been systematically slandering and marginalising Falun Gong overseas. To achieve this end, the CCP uses the representatives and agents of the Chinese regime to violate diplomatic norms and exert pressure from all fronts on government offices, individuals and organisations in the UK. Their aim is to marginalise Falun Gong and crush the spirit of practitioners and supporters so that the CCP may continue their persecution and trade deals unhindered.

According to leaked CCP documents, congressional testimonies from former Chinese diplomats, and third-party investigations, the transnational repression of Falun Gong practitioners is an orchestrated campaign and priority of the CCP.

### Chinese embassies “wage war” on Falun Gong

Mr. Chen Yonglin, the former first secretary of the Chinese Consulate in Sydney, Australia, who defected to Australia in 2005 was the first to reveal the full scope of the CCP's actions abroad. He testified before US Congress that the top priority of every Chinese consulate and embassy around the world is to systematically “wage war” against Falun Gong outside of China. He said, *“Each consulate and embassy has a ‘Special Anti-Falun Gong Working Group’ that works closely with the United Front Work Department, an organisation under the CCP. The United Front uses the overseas Chinese diaspora, including students, businesspeople, media, and so-called ‘Chinese community groups’ to influence, manipulate, and pressure foreign citizens, politicians, and business leaders to toe the party line on Falun Gong.”*

Mr Chen notes that each Chinese consulate or embassy implements many tactics to block support for Falun Gong, including:

- Widely spreading anti-Falun Gong propaganda in host countries to demonise Falun Gong;
- Funding, and otherwise controlling, Chinese-language publications within the local Chinese community;
- Using Chinese immigrants and students to monitor and report on Falun Gong activities in local communities and on campuses;
- Pressuring local officials and subjecting them to economic threats or incentives. This includes writing letters demanding that officials not support Falun Gong and to exclude their constituents who practice Falun Gong from all civic activities, including parades, holiday celebrations, press conferences, and academic events.

Actions taken against Falun Gong overseas have included; physical assaults, online monitoring and surveillance, cyberattacks, database collection, being blacklisted from travelling to China, diplomatic pressure, propaganda, manipulation and coercion of media to publish anti-Falun Gong columns.

Recently the US has responded to this “war”. In April 2023, two US citizens were arrested by the FBI for operating as foreign government agents under the CCP since at least 2015 and committing obstruction of justice, for monitoring and harassing Falun Gong practitioners on US soil.

## **UK practitioners**

Falun Gong practitioners first appeared in the UK in 1996 when Mr Peter Jauhal read about it on the internet. *"It appealed to me because it was free, its teachings were written down - not hidden and gradually revealed by some teacher - and you could do it on your own,"* he told BBC News Online.

Since 1996 the number of Falun Gong practitioners in the UK expanded to a few hundred, many of the practitioners come from China and nearly every Falun Gong practitioner is targeted by the CCP while living in Britain.

The Chinese embassy and its agents subject British nationals and residents to surveillance, collecting personal data illegally, threats, harassment, slander, spearphishing malware, hacking email accounts and withholding benefits or assets. The violations are ongoing.

## **Physical attacks and threats**

A number of physical attacks have taken place in the UK.

Over the course of April and May 2021, He Renyong came to the Falun Gong booth in London's Chinatown with several other people, threatening to kill and beat up the volunteer practitioners; he also spit on them. On one occasion, he threw a can of soda at a Falun Gong practitioner named Peng, hitting him in the calf. Members of the public who witnessed He Renyong's violent behaviour called the police. When the police arrived, the instigators with He ran off, leaving He to be handcuffed and taken away in a police vehicle.

The case was heard in a local Westminster court on 3 February 2022. He Renyong denied the charges and claimed he was instigated. Police invited two practitioners to give testimony and played the video recording of He's assault in Chinatown. The Westminster court sentenced He Renyong to 16 weeks in prison for assaulting and harassing Falun Gong practitioners in Chinatown. He was charged with threatening, abusive, humiliating speech, and action, harassment, beating, and assault.

On 20 August 2018 outside the British Museum, where Falun Gong practitioners were handing out leaflets, Ms Jinghua Fu was meditating when a Chinese man attacked her. She was injured so badly that she could not stand and an ambulance had to be called.

Across from the Chinese embassy in London is an ongoing peaceful vigil to stop the persecution of Falun Gong in China. In January 2006 Ms Yudong Gao, a Falun Gong practitioner, was meditating silently across the street from the embassy when a man stormed out of the Chinese embassy and punched her in the face.

## **Surveillance**

Staff of the Chinese embassy in London continue to be seen discreetly videotaping Falun Gong

practitioners who attend the peaceful vigil on the opposite side of the street. Practitioners also see Chinese men with video cameras during parades and rallies, videotaping faces of practitioners. Such actions still happen whenever there are peaceful protests in the UK.

Ms Jun Xu, now a British citizen, was a UK resident in 2013. Her family members live in China. A local Chinese police officer visited her family in China, inquiring about Ms Xu's activities and those of the UK Falun Gong practitioners. The officer further pressured the family to persuade Ms Xu to give up the practice. It was disclosed in the police conversation with the family that the officer had received reports from their information sources in the UK about Ms Xu being a Falun Gong practitioner.

Mr Paul Liu came from China and was studying for his PhD at Cambridge University. One day, when handing out leaflets in Cambridge about Falun Gong, he noticed a Chinese person was taking his picture in a covert way. After living in Cambridge for a while, more Chinese people knew that Mr Liu was a Falun Gong practitioner. One day in July 2009, 15 days before his wife was to join Mr Liu to live in the UK, his wife received a phone call from the Chinese National Security Bureau. His wife was asked to meet with these agents three times. The agents asked his wife to pass their threatening messages to Mr Liu. They said it would bring "negative effect" to Mr Liu if he continued attending Falun Gong anti-persecution activities in the UK. At that time, Mr Liu worried that they would not allow his wife to come to UK. Luckily, they did not stop her. After she arrived in the UK, the agents wrote to Mr Liu's wife via email to get information about UK Falun Gong practitioners. Mr Liu feels that he cannot safely go back to China now.

Ms Ling Dee is a British national with her parents and brother living in China. When Ms Dee's parents needed their passports re-issued, they went to the local police station in China. While at the police station, the officer told Ms Dee's parents that they knew all about Ms Dee's activities in the UK and threatened her parents that they should not participate in any Falun Gong activities while in the UK otherwise they would harm their son (Ms Dee's brother in China). Since the police knew about Ms Dee, she could not go back to China when her mother and brother passed away, for fear that she was blacklisted and would be imprisoned for her faith in China.

## **Recruiting spies**

At the Glasgow Falun Gong class Ms Williamson met a Chinese woman who became a friend (for her safety we will refer to her as Ms X for this report). When Ms X went back to her home town in China for a visit, agents of the local 610 Office called her in for a meeting. The agents told her to renounce Falun Gong otherwise they would destroy her Chinese passport so she could not return to the UK. The agents mentioned something that they could only have known about if they had opened and read the letters she sent to her Mum. Out of fear she signed the statement to renounce Falun Gong. The agents required another meeting before she left China. This time they asked for her email address and told her they would inform her of UK Falun Gong meetings or events. Ms X was asked to find out who went to the meeting, who were the organizers and what was discussed and she was to email this information back to the agents in China. Ms X was also told that she would get paid at the Chinese Embassy in the UK every time she reported information about UK Falun Gong events. Ms X

was scared, so she gave them her email address. When she returned to the UK, the agents did send her emails telling her when and where there would be Falun Gong meetings and the agent told her to attend and report back information. Ms X ignored the emails and changed her email account.

Ms X knew that the CCP agents would try to punish her so she didn't dare go back to visit her Mum in China. However when her Mum was sick, at that time she had a British passport so she risked going back to China. At Chinese customs, she showed her British passport. She was then asked to show her Chinese passport. A customs officer put her Chinese name in the computer and looked at the computer for a while and then asked her to wait. She was taken to a room where she waited for a long time. Finally a person in uniform came in and announced that she had done something against China and she was not welcome in China. She was sent back on a flight to London.

Ms X went to the Chinese embassy in London to complain. She told them that she didn't practice Falun Gong any more. She was advised to call the 610 Office agents she met in China. She did, and they said she could go back to China as long as she gave up Falun Gong and they would delete her name from their list. They stipulated, however, that she must let them know when she would go to China since they wanted to meet with her. She didn't tell them when she went to China, as she just wanted to see her Mum. She didn't realise that the agents had her flight details and met her when she landed in China. They took her by car from the airport to the 610 Office and interrogated her. This time she was shown a list of UK Falun Gong practitioners' names (both Chinese and Western practitioners' names). They asked her if she knew any of the UK practitioners. Ms Williamson's name was on the list. Again Ms X was told to pass information about UK Falun Gong events directly to them when she returned to the UK. When the friend arrived back in the UK she told all this to Ms Williamson and broke off their friendship and communication because Ms X did not want to report anything about UK Falun Gong practitioners back to the agents in China.

## **Chinese embassy pressuring UK theatres**

Shen Yun is a performance company created by Falun Gong practitioners in New York. This show tours globally in an effort to revive traditional Chinese culture through the beauty of dance and music. There have been many recorded cases where the CCP and its "diplomatic missions" have attempted to harm performers, coerce or intimidate venues to cancel the show or interfere in other ways.

In the UK, venues that host Shen Yun have received phone calls and requests for a meetings from the Chinese embassy. Embassy officials then slander the performers because they practise Falun Gong, and pressure the venues to close the show.

In 2014 at the ICC in Birmingham, the venue manager even received a phone call telling her that her family might be hurt if she did not cancel the performance.

At the ICC in Birmingham in 2019, a director was contacted by the Chinese embassy for a business meeting. When the meeting began, they did not discuss business but instead proceeded to slander Falun Gong and Shen Yun. The director of the ICC stopped the meeting and told them to leave because they had deceived her for their own agenda to defame Falun Gong and Shen Yun.

In 2008, one London venue received a call saying that there would be a protest outside their venue if they did not cancel the Shen Yun performance. The venue ignored the threat and there was no protest.

In 2019, the Chinese embassy threatened a London venue with cancelling a contract if their demands were not met. Also in 2019 CCP agents emailed other UK venues asking for appointments to discuss Shen Yun using anonymous hotmail or gmail accounts.

The CCP also spreads slander in the UK about Shen Yun and Falun Gong by posing as audience members and leaving comments or contacting venues with extremely critical views of Shen Yun that echo the hate-propaganda of the CCP, using the exact same phrases and words.

In 2017 the Daily Telegraph, which ran the China Daily paid supplements, carried a full-page article slandering Shen Yun. It also appeared on their on-line media. The format was misleading and appeared like an article written by the Daily Telegraph. China Daily is the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party. The article's intent was to incite hatred against Falun Gong and slander Shen Yun. The Falun Dafa Association UK contacted the Daily Telegraph and they removed the article from their online media.

### **Harassing phone calls**

In 2018, Ms Yang received a threatening phone call a few days before she testified before the China Tribunal as a witness. A man phoned many times claiming that he was from the DHL delivery company. He said that Ms Yang sent a parcel to China which had lots of money inside. She hadn't sent any parcel to China at that time. The voice on the phone was a Chinese man's voice. He said he wanted to talk to her. Since she knew his story was not true she hung up the phone.

Ms Yang kept receiving harassing phone calls from different phone numbers every few minutes. She reported it to her local police station, and the officer told her that the phone numbers he checked were probably from the same place using different numbers generated on the internet. Since she reported it to the police, the harassing phone calls stopped.

In 2006, Falun Gong practitioner Ms Williamson, and other practitioners who teach Falun Gong classes in the UK, started receiving harassing phone calls at all hours of the day and night. Ms Williamson's first call was after 2am on her home phone. A man with an English accent said he received Ms Williamson's number from the Jasmine International Dating club. Ms Williamson never joined this club and she asked him not to call again. But the calls kept coming, with just silence at the other end of the phone. Ms Williamson's husband called back the offending phone number a few times and a Chinese person answered the phone. Ms Williamson got a new mobile number and sent her new number to friends via email but then she started to receive harassing calls on her new mobile as well as her home phone. She spoke with other Falun Gong practitioners in the UK and some were also receiving harassing calls. One of them, Ms Man who lives in Leeds, was also getting the same type of harassing phone calls from the same mobile phone number. Ms Williamson called and visited her local police station in Glasgow and the police reference number is CA05070606.

## **Interfering with UK university events**

According to former Chinese diplomat Mr. Chen Yonglin, the main task of the Chinese diplomatic mission's Education Department is to control and manage overseas students in order to help the consulate suppress organisations and individuals targeted by the Chinese regime. He adds that groups like the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA) in particular are extensions of Chinese Communist Party (CCP) agencies overseas.

At Durham University in early 2017, the CSSA notified the Chinese embassy about an upcoming appearance by Chinese-Canadian human rights activist and Miss World Canada, Anastasia Lin. Miss Lin speaks openly about the human rights abuses happening to Falun Gong practitioners in China and she was invited to join a debate on whether China was a threat to the West.

The Chinese embassy called the debating society at Durham University and warned them against giving a platform to Miss Lin because it would “*threaten UK-China relations*”.

The CSSA also filed a complaint with the student organisation that Miss Lin was in “*violation of the belief and feelings of Chinese students*”.

Despite additional efforts by Chinese students who tried to block access to the venue, the debate event went on as planned, and Miss Lin was able to participate.

## **Withholding scholarship funding**

In 2017, the Chinese embassy stopped Mr Yang's scholarship fund from the Chinese Scholarship Council (which was £1,100 per month) because they noticed Mr Yang's involvement in Falun Gong in the UK. Mr Yang was a student at King's College London, and he was regularly contacted by the Chinese embassy in London by email and phone. In February 2017, they asked for a meeting with Mr Yang but didn't explain the reason. Mr Yang thought it might be related to his studies since the person who called him was from the Department of Education at the embassy.

After arriving at the embassy, two officers had a closed meeting with Mr Yang. They said that someone reported him to them after seeing his involvement in some peaceful Falun Gong activities in the UK. In the end, they made it clear that they had already stopped his scholarship fund and Mr Yang would not receive any more unless he stopped participating in Falun Gong activities in the UK.

## **Vodafone UK blocking Falun Gong websites**

In 2020, UK Falun Gong practitioner, Ms Mo, applied the “Adult” filter on her Vodafone home broadband – because she has young children and she was advised to do so by their school. Applying the Adult filter, however, also blocked 17 different Falun Gong web site domains.

Falun Gong is a traditional moral practice that does not have any sexual content on any of its websites. There is no chance that 17 Falun Gong sites could have accidentally been misunderstood as pornography.

Ms Mo called Vodafone to explain that there must be an error in their Adult filter. She spoke with a customer service representative from the Directors Office who followed up with an email saying: *“the router is managed via an external company, which Vodafone have no control over.”*

When Ms Mo asked the Vodafone representative for the name of the “external company” that defines Falun Gong websites as pornography the representative did not answer the question.

This resembles an attempt in 2009, when the Communist Party initiated the Green Dam project. This was software to be installed on every computer claiming to be a filter to block pornography.

According to the Global Internet Freedom Consortium (GIFC), Green Dam did not effectively block pornographic content, as was its stated purpose, but rather it blocked human rights related websites, particularly those relating to Falun Gong.

Luckily, a few days before Green Dam was due to launch, GIFC launched Green Tsunami which was software designed to detect and defeat Green Dam – which it did successfully.

Returning to Vodafone: Including Falun Gong in pornography filters is not a new tactic of suppression for the CCP. And since the list of websites which are blocked include many Chinese websites as well as Falun Gong human rights websites, this appears startlingly similar to the Green Dam project.

According to media reports, Vodafone uses Huawei equipment. In China, Huawei censors anything related to Falun Gong and is funded by the Chinese regime. It may be that Huawei is technically implementing the control of the “Adult” filters in British Vodafone households but in any case it seems likely that the source of the blocking is ultimately coming from the Chinese regime.

Another Falun Gong practitioner in the UK who has a Vodafone mobile also found that Falun Gong websites were blocked on his mobile. Vodafone claims to have 19.5 million customers in the UK and 444 million customers in the world. Although Ms Mo spoke with their representative for over 50 minutes to try and explain how serious this issue is, Vodafone have brushed it aside and closed Ms Mo’s case.

These are the Falun Gong websites currently being blocked by Vodafone using their “Adult” filter:

falundafa.org, falungong.org.uk,  
faluninfo.net, tiantibooks.org,  
minghui.org, zhengjian.org,  
pureinsight.org, chanhkien.org,  
zhengjian.or.kr, yuanming.net,  
clearharmony.net, mhradio.org  
guangming.org, zhuichaguoji.org,  
fgmtv.org, xinsheng.net,  
zhengwunet.org

The Falun Dafa Association UK notified Ofcom of this violation, though nothing has come of it.





## **Refusing passport renewals**

Ms Mo, now a British citizen, was a Chinese national holding a student visa in 2004. She was working on her master's degree in the UK. The Chinese Embassy in London refused to renew her passport which was expiring that year. Two years prior, the Chinese embassy refused to issue a passport for her two-year-old daughter unless Ms Mo denounced Falun Gong in writing first.

In April 2002, Dr Liu, the Chairman of The Falun Dafa Association UK, sent his Chinese passport for renewal to the Chinese Consulate in Manchester. The Consulate told him to denounce the practice of Falun Gong in writing. Dr Liu did not cooperate with the Consulate and never received his new passport as a result. With the help of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Dr Liu was able to extend his UK visa. However not having a passport meant he could not travel overseas for work or leisure for many years, until he received his British citizenship.

In 2001, Ms Ze, a British-Chinese Falun Gong practitioner applied for a visa to visit her elderly parents in China. Her application was denied by the Chinese Embassy. She sought assistance from the UK government, but the efforts were not successful.

Ms Wenjian Liang, the younger sister of a British national, Ms Jenny Liang, was arrested in China in 2000 for practising Falun Gong. Ms Wenjian Liang was sent to Guangzhou labour camp for two years where she was tortured and forced to work long hours. Ms Jenny Liang, a resident of Nottingham, applied for a Chinese visa to visit her sister but it was turned down.

## **Blacklisting**

In 2001, Dr Li Shao and his wife, both British nationals, flew to Hong Kong to join a peaceful demonstration against Jiang Zemin. They were detained at the Hong Kong Airport by Hong Kong Immigration authority, and subsequently deported back to the UK. The couple carried nothing that indicated they were Falun Gong practitioners and did nothing to justify a deportation. Both Dr Li and his wife did participate actively in Falun Gong events in the UK so they suspect they are on a "blacklist" of the CCP.

In 2002, when Jiang Zemin visited Iceland, he pressured the Icelandic government to ban Falun Gong practitioners from entering Iceland to peacefully protest the persecution of Falun Gong. Practitioners flew to Iceland from all over the world, including the UK. The Communist Party supplied the Icelandic government with a list of names of Falun Gong practitioners who live outside China. These people were not allowed to board Icelandic Air flights, and if they arrived in Keflavik airport they were detained. After realising what happened, Ossur Skarphedinsson, Icelandic Minister of Foreign Affairs, apologised on behalf of the Icelandic Government for the treatment that Falun Gong practitioners endured.

## **Recruiting a Western practitioner**

In 2009 UK Falun Gong practitioner Ms Dumont lost her permanent job due to the recession. In the years that followed, she struggled to find any meaningful paid work and over time her CV ended up being registered on many recruitment platforms. Naturally, Ms Dumont was sometimes contacted by recruiters in the UK trying to assess her availability and suitability for specific vacancies. Yet a few years ago (2015 or 2016) she received a curious email from a Chinese company offering her a job to teach English at an international school in Hangzhou, China. She found it odd, as neither was she looking for a job abroad, nor did her profile match that of a potential teacher. The email message made no mention of her fluency in French either – which was a logical skill listed on her CV for this type of position. Her only link to China was her faith in Falun Gong and her regular attendance at the peaceful vigil opposite the Chinese embassy in London. Therefore when she received the job offer in China she believed it likely that the Chinese embassy may have been involved. It is obvious that they take photos and videos of practitioners at the peaceful vigil across the street from the Chinese embassy. She believed that they had found her name and email address and were trying to lure her to Chinese territory, where she would of course be more vulnerable to their approaching her for their purpose. Despite this, she did consider taking up the offer, as the company was promising teacher training and she thought she might have opportunities to do some good for Falun Gong if physically present in China. However she dropped the idea after thinking on it further.

This was not the only job offer in China Ms Dumont received. Although she did not receive them frequently, she did receive more of them. Usually there was very little information on what the job entailed. Ms Dumont believed that her being out-of-work for an extended period of time made her appear as an easy and vulnerable target for the Chinese Communist Party to try to manipulate.

One particular attempt stands out for Ms Dumont. In 2019, a woman emailed her from China stating she was the representative of a company which Ms Dumont had never heard of. The woman said she had a brilliant job to offer Ms Dumont. The woman gave no information about the company or what line of business the company was in, and there was no job description attached to the email – as is customary when head-hunting potential candidates. So Ms Dumont did not give it a second thought, she deleted the email without responding. Over the course of the next few weeks, however, this woman insisted on chasing Ms Dumont and scolding her for not replying. This very odd behaviour and unprofessional tone reassured Ms Dumont in her belief that this job offer is indeed related to the CCP and they were desperately trying to coerce her. Ms Dumont deleted all further communications from that person as soon as they arrived.

## **Cyber targeting**

UK Falun Gong practitioner Ms Williamson's email account has regularly been hacked over the years despite her taking rigorous precautions. A few years ago Ms Williamson received an email containing malware that claimed it was from a fellow Falun Gong practitioner called Mr He. Ms Williamson was in frequent contact with Mr He, and the subject of this nefarious email was a frequently discussed topic between them.

As soon as Ms Williamson opened the email, her computer went black and emitted a strange sound. Ms Williamson called Mr He but he said that he didn't send this email to her. Mr He asked Ms Williamson to forward this email to him so that he could learn more from it, but this email disappeared from Ms Williamson's email inbox.

After the malware, Ms Williamson set up a new Gmail account. She received a warning email from the Google Accounts Team saying that someone from Kowloon, Hong Kong, tried to hack into her new Google account. She changed the password but a few months later she was not able to login to her email account as someone else had changed her password. She suspected that she may have spyware on her computer so she asked her husband to erase the whole computer and reinstall it.

Several other UK Falun Gong practitioners told Ms Williamson that they had the same experience.

### **Chinese embassy sending letters to MPs**

In the 2001-2002 session of Parliament, EDM #1320 tells of a letter from the Chinese Embassy to MPs which slandered Falun Gong. The EDM stated, *"That this House notes that the Chinese Embassy has circulated unsolicited material to honourable Members regarding Falun Gong; notes the discourtesy of the Chinese Embassy in failing to reply to letters from honourable Members in relation to human rights for Falun Gong practitioners in China which calls into question the sincerity of the message from the Chinese Ambassador in the document commemorating the 30th Anniversary of the establishment of China - UK ambassadorial diplomatic relations, that constructive dialogue on the basis of mutual respect and equality is the only positive way in handling differences; and calls on the Government to seek assurances from the Chinese Ambassador that points of concern raised by honourable Members will receive a considered response."*

In addition, the Chinese Embassy also sent information packets to UK councils defaming Falun Gong.

## 4. UK nationals' testimonies of persecution in China

### Fei Han

My name is Fei Han. I am a Falun Gong practitioner who has just come out of mainland China. I would like to share my personal experience about the persecution and suppression by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) against Falun Gong practitioners that I have experienced.

During 1997-1998, my mother suffered from multiple health problems, including cerebral thrombosis, cholecystitis, and cystitis, none of which were cured by hospital treatments. Later, my mother-in-law introduced Falun Gong and the book "Zhuan Falun" to my mother. After practising Falun Gong, all these health problems went away, and I witnessed the miraculous power of Falun Gong. Therefore, I began to practice Falun Gong as well. After practising, my own cervical spondylosis, frozen shoulder, and arthritis that had pained me for years were cured. Both my body and mind were healed. At that time, a lot of people practised Falun Gong in China and we genuinely enjoyed following the principles of Falun Gong which are "Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance". My family and I joined in the morning exercises at the local practice site every day. Those were unforgettable and joyful times.

However, just one year later, on 20 July 1999, the Chinese Communist Party began its total suppression of Falun Gong.

As a Falun Gong practitioner, I understood clearly that Falun Gong (aka Falun Dafa) has been teaching people how to become a kind person. Falun Gong shouldn't been banned. Therefore, I decided to use my personal experiences to let people know that Falun Gong is good. In April and May 2000, I went to Tiananmen Square twice to tell the Chinese government and ordinary people about the truth of Falun Gong and I held up a banner that said "Falun Dafa is Good". I was arrested by the police and detained in a local detention centre for almost two months. When we practised the Falun Gong exercises in there, the guards told other inmates to beat me. One prisoner hit my face with a slipper, causing it to swell and cramp immediately, while those who beat me were laughing.

There were many Falun Gong practitioners who have been sent to detention centres, and some of them started hunger strikes in protest for being imprisoned for their faith. A fellow practitioner named Yulan Mei in the cell next to mine was persecuted to death from force-feeding. After I went on a hunger strike for six days, however, I was released to go home.

In 2008 in the run-up to the Beijing Olympics, the local police from Pingfang Police Station in Chaoyang District and Chaoyang Police Department in Beijing broke into my home at night and searched my house. I was abducted and detained along with other Beijing Falun Gong practitioners at the Chaoyang detention centre in Beijing. After one month's detention, I was informed by the police that I would be sent to Beijing Women's Labour Camp in Daxing District and imprisoned for two years. They asked me to sign acknowledgement of this unlawful sentence, but I refused.

While in the labour camp, I suffered severe mental persecution, such as forced brainwashing and being locked up in solitary confinement. I was not allowed to use the toilet, and was insulted and verbally abused, etc. I was forced to watch videos defaming Falun Gong and only allowed to use icy tap water during the winter. The long-term high-intensity mental pressure caused abnormal physical conditions as well. After almost two years' incarceration in the labour camp, I was released in May 2010.

In the summer of 2012, the local police started to harass me again because of the upcoming 18th National People's Congress. I was very frightened, so I left my home and wandered homelessly. The local police and community authorities continued to come to my house and look for me. They seriously threatened my husband that they would list me as a wanted person online if they couldn't see me in person. I didn't go back home until the local police stopped coming to my house.

In November and December 2019, I was tracked and abducted by the police for distributing leaflets that explained the truth about Falun Gong. On 4 December 2019, a group of local police broke into my house, searched my home and abducted me again. I was detained in Beijing Chaoyang District Public Security Branch Detention Centre. They forcibly collected my blood and interrogated me. My husband was not allowed to visit me. My daughter, who lived in the UK, and many UK Falun Gong practitioners made efforts to help me during my detention. They exposed what happened to me publicly, got support from my daughter's MP and got Amnesty International involved. With the support and effort from these compassionate people, the Chinese police who abducted me felt pressure from overseas and were afraid. I was released after being detained for 24 days.

In the following years, however, the local police and community authorities did not stop harassing and persecuting me. They restricted my personal liberty and stopped me from going outside on "sensitive days", such as the anniversary of peaceful appeal on 25 April, World Falun Dafa Day on 13 May, when the Chinese government launched their brutal campaign against Falun Gong on 20 July, Communist Party conferences, etc. I had been followed and monitored secretly by community authorities, plainclothes police, neighbours, social idlers, etc.

On 22 April 2022, I was abducted again by the local 610 Office (Chaoyang Sub-bureau of the National Security Bureau) and the police from Pingfang Police Station in Chaoyang District. They handcuffed my arms behind my back and drove to a hospital. Three police collected my blood by force. I refused to do any physical examination because I knew that the Chinese regime has been using prisoners of conscience (like Falun Gong practitioners) as an organ donor pool and killing them for their organs. I didn't want my blood information to be collected by them. One bald policeman put his arms around my neck and strangled me and forced me to allow the physical examination. He nearly suffocated me. I was released after one day because UK Falun Gong practitioners reacted quickly after learning what happened to me and exposed it in the media and newspapers.

In 2023, I was able to get to the UK. After being persecuted for so many years, I truly appreciate how precious freedom is. This persecution has lasted for 24 years. I hope that the international community can raise awareness of the plight of Falun Gong practitioners in China and help call for an end to this persecution as soon as possible.

## Xuanming Hu

My name is Xuanming Hu, I am currently studying Electric Vehicle Systems at Brunel University in London. My mother, Mrs Pintong Liu, who was arrested on 3 February 2023 for the second time, is currently imprisoned in China. She started to practise Falun Gong in 1997 for health reasons and her health has improved tremendously since she began the practice. I started to practise in 2004.

Since July 1999, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been persecuting Falun Gong practitioners, subjecting them to all forms of inhuman treatment, including imprisonment, forced labour, torture and forced organ harvesting.

My mother was arrested on 3 March 2012, and was sentenced to eight years simply for peacefully raising awareness about the persecution of Falun Gong. While in prison, she suffered numerous abuses, including being slapped in the face, kicked, and having her hair pulled during interrogations, as well as being threatened with a longer prison term if she had a “bad attitude” (for example, by saying “Falun Dafa is good”). At Dandong City Detention Centre, my mum was then subjected to brutal torture and forced to work for long hours without pay.

By the time she was taken to the Liaoning Province Women’s Prison on 11 December 2012, she was suffering from a severe neck problem, she had numbness in her limbs and dizziness. She was subjected to torture, such as long hours of standing, and sitting on a small stool with spikes on its surface. She was humiliated, deprived of sleep and denied use of the toilet and washing facilities.

On a very cold winter’s day, she was forced to stand on a concrete floor for a long time. She was having her menstrual period at the time, but the guards didn’t allow her to use the bathroom so the blood just ran down her legs.

My mother suffered kidney failure on 14 October 2014 and was taken to the 739 Hospital in Shenyang, the designated hospital for the prison. The guards tied her in a spread-eagle position on the bed. Her hands and feet became extremely swollen. She was emaciated and didn’t even have the strength to greet her sister when she came to visit her.

The prison refused to release my mother on medical parole. They claimed that since she was having kidney failure, they would count her as a natural death if she died and they wouldn’t bear any responsibility for it.

After one week at the hospital, my mother was taken back to the prison. The 4,000 yuan her sister deposited for her to buy additional food was confiscated and her family wasn’t allowed to visit her for two months. The guards kept her tied up in a spread-eagle position and force-fed her for two months.

During the years my mother was imprisoned, my grandparents looked after me. I went to see my mum during my school holidays. Each time I needed to get permission and could only see my mum for 30 minutes.

I had very little money that my mum had left me. In order to conserve the money, in my school I would wait for other students to finish their meals in the cafeteria, then I ate the leftover food from their plates.

When I was studying at university, I achieved the highest academic ranking which secured a position for me to study for a Master's Degree without participating in exams. However, during the political review process, I was asked if I had any relatives practising Falun Gong. Under tremendous pressure, worrying that I would lose my opportunity, I did not go to the prestigious universities recommended, but remained at the same university where I studied for my undergraduate degree.

The Chinese Communist Party's campaign to eradicate Falun Gong and destroy practitioners' lives has been relentless for 24 years and continues to this day. Too many innocent people have been imprisoned, tortured, brainwashed, raped, and killed simply because of their beliefs.

In February this year, my mother was arrested for the second time and was sentenced to three to five years again. I am extremely worried about my mum's safety. Every day my mother's life is in danger.

## Yankai Cao

My name is Yankai Cao. I started to practice Falun Gong in 1998 together with my father. Since childhood I had been physically weak and often sick. In just a few weeks of practising Falun Gong, I found that I was no longer sick and the bedwetting symptom that had been bothering me for so long was gone. I knew that Falun Gong had changed my life.

In 1999, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) publicly and comprehensively began to suppress Falun Gong, and my family was also implicated without exception. The authorities targeted my father as a local Falun Gong activist. Our home was monitored and frequently visited. All Dafa books, videotapes, computers, and printers were taken. In December 1999, my father was sentenced to a re-education-through-labour camp for one year and dismissed from his job (vice president in a state-owned enterprise) for peacefully petitioning for Falun Gong in Tiananmen Square. In 2001, my father was sentenced to another three years in prison for his faith and was forced to give up Falun Gong. Life in the family became very difficult. I was often treated with prejudice and ridiculed by others.

In 1997, my mother-in-law was displaying symptoms of leukemia. As it was difficult for her to get medical treatment, she started to practice Falun Gong. Her health improved dramatically and her leukemia symptoms went away just nine days after starting the practice. Her daughter, Yannan Pang, now my wife, also started to practice Falun Gong in 1997.

In December 2000, my mother-in-law was sent to a re-educated-through-labour camp for three years because of her faith. Ten months into her detention, she was persecuted so badly that she became paralysed. She was released home, so she began the Falun Gong exercises again and recovered her health in two weeks.

In 2002, my mother-in-law was arrested again because of her faith. She was five months pregnant. Because of the Chinese Communist Party's one-child policy she was brought in for an abortion. Abortion is killing a life which is against our belief. So she managed to escape from the Detention Centre. When she returned home in 2004 the child was already over one year old.

In 2008, just before the Beijing Olympics, police forcibly broke into my mother-in-law's house, raided her home, took her away and threatened her 6-year old son, and her 15-year-old daughter, Yannan



Pang (my future wife). A few days later, Police raided their house for a second time. After 12 days, my mother-in-law was tortured to the point of bleeding in her uterus and was returned home in critical condition.

In 2007, I started working in Dubai and began to practise Falun Gong again in 2012. In August 2019, when my wife and I returned to China to visit relatives, the police forcibly took us to a hotel without showing any documents, interrogated us, and we were told that we were not allowed to tell anyone what they did. My wife was detained for one day. They repeatedly threatened her that she must obey otherwise she would never see me again. I was detained for three days. They constantly interrogated me about my work experience abroad, my overseas social media account and password, whether I had friends from Hong Kong, Macao or Taiwan, which countries I had traveled to and so on. A total of 13 of them repeatedly interrogated me and threatened me and my family's safety. I was physically and mentally exhausted by their torment. My wife, fearing that they would secretly transfer me, told them she would let everyone in the hotel know that they were illegally interrogating me and would fight them at the risk of her own life. Under pressure, they finally ended their three-day interrogation but ordered me to meet them again the day before flying back to Dubai and to not tell anyone.

Because of the 2019 anti-extradition movement in Hong Kong, many students were missing and killed. Our families were worried that we would also go missing so we were forced into hiding until October 2020 when we were finally able to escape from China.

The CCP's persecution of Falun Gong has lasted for 24 years, and there are thousands of people like me and my wife who grew up during the persecution. We have had our homes raided and been intimidated continuously since we were children, watching our families being brutally persecuted and repeatedly separated, treated with prejudice and abused by the people around us again and again. From worrying about the persecution of our family members when we were young, to our own persecution, we have endured too much pain created by the CCP for no good reason.

Now we live in Britain, we hope that the international community will pay attention to the tragic suffering of Falun Gong practitioners and end this 24-year-long cruel persecution as soon as possible. We must safeguard human rights in the world and restore the dignity that all human beings deserve.

## **Xiaotong Qin**

My name is Xiaotong Qin. Since 1999, my mother, and my whole family have suffered the most cruel, and senseless persecution of Falun Gong in China.

My mother was detained and arrested multiple times and has endured more than 10 years in prisons and labour camps. Her crime is simply telling people the truth about the persecution of Falun Gong and for her belief in the principals of "Truthfulness, Compassion, Forbearance".

Over the last 20 years, my family life has been torn apart and I've hardly seen my mother. In 2018 my mother was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for passing out two brochures about the persecution and for her faith in Falun Gong. She suffers torture, abuse and illegal detention in China.

My 64-year-old mother, Yujue Wang, was abducted on 22nd January 2018, by two plainclothes officers while she was handing out brochures about the persecution of Falun Gong. She was detained for six months at the Zhoukou City Detention Centre in Henan province without the right to see family or friends.

On 16th May, the Huaiyang County Court held a hearing without informing our family. The officials even declared that there was no need to notify our family or legal representatives. One of my family members, however, was listed as a prosecution witness without his knowledge.

In June 2018, her lawyer was eventually allowed to see her. She showed physical signs of abuse and beatings and she confirmed that she had been tortured and bullied. While in detention, my mother's head was seriously injured, causing her to fall into a coma. But no one in the detention centre informed our family about her injury, the police even refused to allow her family to visit her.

On 25 July, the second hearing was held by the Huaiyang county court in Henan province. One day before the hearing, we were informed that my mom's lawyer's license had been cancelled and he was not allowed to work on her case. Even worse, the police fabricated evidence in order to convict my mother.

My mother was sentenced to three and a half years in prison and was sent to the Xinxiang city women's prison in Henan province. At this point she is unable to walk by herself, has serious health problems and is in a poor mental state. The prison tried to send her back home, but the Zhoukou city Intermediate Court in Henan province rejected the request and was merciless to a dying old lady.

My mother is back home now. However, after the brutal treatment in prison, she now has a serious eye disease and severe lower back pain. She can barely walk and cannot see clearly.

Since 1999, when the persecution began, my mother has now endured more than 10 years in prisons and labour camps. She also lost her job and had our home illegally ransacked multiple times by authorities. When I was in primary school, my parents were forced to get divorced because of the political pressure. My own education suffered at secondary school level and higher education - including some awards that were retracted because of my mother's faith in Falun Gong.

My mother's case is not unique or singular. Today, millions of people in China are still facing detention, torture, abuse, separation, the breakup of their families and even death - simply for wanting to have freedom of belief and expression.

I hope people around the world can come and stand together to condemn this cruel and heartless persecution and help bring it to an end.

## **Zhenbai Li**

My name is Zhenbai Li. I am a Falun Gong practitioner and I live and work in the UK. I wish to document my parents' experiences as Falun Gong practitioners and how they were persecuted in China for their beliefs.

In August 1998, my father (Changgeng Li), mother (Yaoli Zhang), grandmother (Guizhi Jiang) and I started to practise Falun Gong together.

I remember my parents used to be poorly quite often, but after they started practising Falun Gong they fully recovered their health. I also saw they were happier in their family life and work after embracing the principles of "Truthfulness Compassion and Forbearance". I often joined them when they introduced Falun Gong to other family members, co-workers and neighbours.

Based on our own experience, it was very clear to us that Falun Gong is a truly wonderful practice.

By 1999, there were 70-100 million Falun Gong practitioners in China. That year, former Communist Party Leader Jiang Zemin launched a systematic campaign to eradicate Falun Gong.

I have witnessed and experienced, directly and indirectly, numerous unlawful acts of persecution committed by the local authorities against my parents, me, and the rest of my family.

In December 1999, in order to appeal for a peaceful and lawful environment with which to continue practising, my parents and I decided to risk our personal safety and went to demonstrate in Tiananmen Square in Beijing.

There, we did the Falun Gong exercises together for a short while before plainclothes officers stopped us and took us to the Chaoyang Detention Centre. We were held for a few hours before being transferred to Changsha Centre in Beijing and detained for three days.

Around 13 May 2000, my mother was arrested again. In the detention centre, she was interrogated nonstop for 23 hours and ended up giving out the names of other Falun Gong practitioners and their activities.

In July 2000, she was arrested again and held in the Changsha Detention Centre. I visited her during this period. The unit she was detained in had a locked iron gate.

In December 2000, my mother, grandmother, and I went to Beijing again to demonstrate and appeal for Falun Gong. Plainclothes officers stopped us and put us in a police van.

On Chinese New Year's Eve in 2001, police raided our flat in Baotashan and arrested my mother.

The Head of Students at my school, Changsha 31st Junior School, told me that my parents were both on a blacklist for practising Falun Gong. The stress on my parents made them decide to move to Shenzhen in 2001, and I was transferred to Shenzhen Buxin Junior High School.

There, I was once followed by two plainclothes officers after school. They tried to find out from the Head of Students and the Head of Class to find out where my parents lived.

In July 2009, the authorities raided my parents' flat, detained and sent my mother to a forced labour camp in Shanghai for a year and a half.

Through the decade of persecution, my parents continued practising their faith and stood up for Falun Gong with dignity. They worked to raise awareness about Falun Gong and to bring the persecution to an end.

During this time, I wasn't yet 18 and suffered greatly from having to relocate and being followed and harassed. As a consequence, I could not make a living, and other relatives had to take me in. After our move from Changsha to Shenzhen, I had to stay with my classmates in their apartments so the authorities wouldn't find out where my parents lived.

I was lucky to find a placement at the Glasgow School of Arts from 2012-2014. When I wanted to invite my parents to my graduation ceremony, I realised that neither of them would be able to get passports and visas due to their ongoing restrictions, even after they had announced to the authorities that they no longer practised Falun Gong.

We also realised that my mother was still under surveillance. The letters I had sent to her through the Royal Mail in 2016-2017 were held by the local post office. She was alerted that the letters contained uncensored information and was told to collect them from the local authorities.

My family is one of the millions who have suffered in this persecution. Only by taking measures to increase pressure or carry out more direct actions to end the persecution in China can we fundamentally resolve the problem, provide a safe living environment for Falun Gong practitioners and their families in China, and protect their basic human rights.

## **Hongbo Liu**

My name is Hongbo Liu and I began practising Falun Gong on 26 July 1997. When I read the book "Zhuan Falun", I was very excited because I knew that this is exactly what I had been searching for. Through practising Falun Gong, I came to understand the truth of life and the purpose of living. I felt my life was finally being fulfilled.

In May 1999, an article slandering Falun Gong was published in a local newspaper the Nan Chang Evening Post. Local Falun Gong practitioners went to explain the truth about Falun Gong to the newspaper editor but we were told that the article was ordered from above and there was nothing they could do.

My parents, my husband and I, together with my two-year-old daughter, planned to go to Beijing to try to explain the truth, and clear up the misunderstanding about Falun Gong. But we were stopped at the train station and detained for a day. Our nightmare began from that day onward. Every day and night, the local district police would come to my home and threaten us. On 16 October 1999, we managed to go to Beijing, but we were arrested and detained for ten days at first, which extended to one month of detention, before we were finally released to go back home.

One day in July 2001, a few policemen came to my home and asked my husband if he was still practising Falun Gong. When my husband said "yes", they took him away. In August of the same year, I was arrested while at my brother's home, also because of my faith. My husband and I were detained in the First Detention Centre, then transferred to No2 Detention Centre because we refused to renounce our belief. Then we were transferred again to the 'Brainwashing Class' for another few months. We were not released until the end of 2001.

On 20 July 2003, our phones started being monitored by the police. They found out that we were going to Anyi County and they arrested us again en route. They sentenced us to three years for our faith.

We were locked up separately in small cells, guarded by two criminals, and not allowed to do any reading or exercises. If they saw my lips moving, they would slap my face. If I did Falun Gong exercises, they would beat me up. Day and night they played videos slandering Falun Gong and arranging people who tried to convince me to renounce my faith. If I did not renounce my faith and tried to explain the truth about Falun Gong, I would be beaten up by the criminal guards because they would get their sentences reduced if they succeeded in 'transforming' Falun Gong practitioners. In the winter they poured cold water on us from head to toe and punished us by making us stand barefoot. In the hot summer, we were forced to stand under the baking sun and not allowed to sleep. They would torture us to our breaking point in order to get us to 'transform'.

All of us Falun Gong detainees were used as free labour for industrial and manufacturing production. We were forced to get up at 3:00 am and work until midnight without any break, apart from lunch. Summer in Nanchang is extremely hot. There was no air-conditioning, only one electric fan. In the winter, if I was forced to sit for a long period of time, it was so cold that I got frostbite on both of my hands and feet. Even though I had frostbite, I still had to work quickly to meet deadlines and quotas. If I slowed down a bit, I would be scolded. The cruel criminal guards sat opposite me, insulting me with extremely rude language. When I had a shower, they would pour soapy water on the floor beforehand. The floor was so slippery that I kept falling and they would kick my hands and arms. When I recall the suffering of those days, very often I can't stop crying.

In 2015, my husband, my daughter and I participated in the global lawsuit against Jiang Zemin for the persecution of Falun Gong. Although Jiang Zemin initiated the persecution, we felt it was our responsibility to bring him to justice. But the 610 Office, which is an extralegal organisation in China specifically created to persecute Falun Gong practitioners, told us to choose between our jobs and Falun Gong. We said we would not give up our faith. So in 2016, we were dismissed from our jobs for refusing to give up practising Falun Gong.

For over 20 years, police would come to our home to harass us whenever the 'sensitive' days (politically sensitive anniversary dates) arrived until we came to the UK.

I feel so lucky to have come to the UK, where there is respect for human rights and respect for people's beliefs. I can tell people about the inhuman suffering I experienced and endured. I sincerely hope all governments in the West and all kind people will stand up to the Chinese Communist Party and tell them to stop their brutal persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. Let the evil not continue. Let justice shine.

## **Destiny Tang**

My name is Destiny Tang and I am a Falun Gong practitioner. I came to the UK in 2013 for university studies and later established my own business. The persecution of Falun Gong has had a direct impact on myself and my business partner, Keying Xiao.

In 1995, I witnessed the transformative power of Falun Gong when my father, suffering from chronic insomnia, found relief and improved health after three months of practising. The principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance, which guide Falun Gong practitioners, made a deep impression on our family and we could see that it is a good faith.

Since 1999, the persecution of Falun Gong in China profoundly affected my life. My family faced routine harassment by local authorities, and my father was arrested five times between 2000 and 2013 because of his faith. In detention he was subjected to inhumane treatment, including sleep deprivation, forced feedings, beatings, and torture. The detention left him physically weakened, mentally impaired, and he lost his sight.

The persecution has disrupted my family and my own pursuit of a peaceful and normal life. I experienced the persecution of my loved ones as a teenager, and it left me to fend for myself without means for my education. Witnessing the plight of Falun Gong practitioners in China, I have seen individuals go missing, suffer mental illness, and face torture leading to their deaths.

In 2018, my business partner's mother, Wang Cuilan, was arrested from her home for her faith and received a three-and-a-half-year prison sentence. She endures intensive brainwashing and physical punishment. Similarly, my ex-mother-in-law, Yuqing Zhong, faced continued harassment, forcing her to flee her home. These cases are typical and highlight the ongoing plight of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

By speaking out against this persecution, we can work towards ending the suffering endured by tens of millions of Falun Gong practitioners and their families, securing their freedom of belief, and ensuring justice.

## **Meiyin Song**

My name is Meiyin Song. I am from Beijing and I am a Falun Gong practitioner. I have suffered severe persecution by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) due to my belief in Falun Gong.

I began to practice Falun Gong in 2001. Shortly after beginning this practice, I experienced dramatic changes in my mind and body. I became healthier, calmer and more peaceful in my daily life.

I was forcibly removed from my home on 7 May 2010 by local authorities and was taken to the Detention Centre of Chaoyang District, Beijing. I was given a detailed medical examination of my body, including an X-Ray of my lungs, blood tests and a check of my female organs. They even examined my skin all over, looking for any small scars. On 4 June 2010, I was again given a detailed medical examination the same as before. I wasn't given any explanation and I was not told the result.

On the morning of 8 June 2010, I was transferred to Beijing Women's Forced Labour Camp and I was forced to go through yet another detailed medical examination of my body, same as before. I was immediately put into the so-called Intensive Enforcement Group.

I was moved to the No.1 Group which is specifically for Falun Gong detainees. I was locked in a cell, alone, for nearly eight months during this period. I was told to sit on a small child-sized stool. I had to

close my fingers tightly and put them on my knees. I had to keep my two heels close together. I was ordered to get up early and go to bed late. I had to immediately follow any orders from the prison guards. Even sitting for one hour in this position is very painful.

Soon my legs and feet became swollen, my back and waist ached, and my bottom became rotten and tender. I felt like I was sitting on top of needles. Every moment was too painful to bear. The cell where I was kept isolated was dark and cold. I felt very cold even after I put on all the clothes sent to me by my family.

After eight months of torture, I was forced to do extremely heavy physical labour, such as carrying clay and soil, doing farm work, and so on.

Through all of this my family, including my husband and daughter, suffered terribly too.

On the day of my release, the local policemen from Shuangjing police station informed me that my home landline and my husband's mobile were under Chaoyang District 610 Office's monitoring and control. They didn't even try to hide their continuous control and persecution of me.

Meanwhile, I was prevented from returning to my legal profession after the Chinese Communist Party's illegal detention.

I have suffered deeply from these two years of imprisonment. Even though I escaped from China and live in the UK for nearly ten years now, I still have nightmares about the Chinese Communist Party's authorities breaking into my home in the UK. The psychological harm of the persecution is so severe that I still have nightmares about the persecution.

### **Dongfei Yan and Yongfang Qiao**

My name is Dongfei Yan and my husband's name is Yongfang Qiao. We began practising Falun Gong in June 1998 for health reasons. Soon after starting the practice, my health improved significantly and I became a healthy and happy person again.

On 8 June 2009, local police raided my home in Huhehot. They took away my Falun Gong books, computer, printer, mobile, CDs and 7,000 yuan in cash. Then they forced us into their car and took us to the police station. We were arrested without being given any documents. I was sentenced to one year and two months and my husband was sentenced to three years because of our faith.

We were locked up in the First Huhehot Detention Centre in Inner Mongolia. In prison, both my husband and I suffered brutal torture and inhuman treatment. We were tied on the 'tiger chair' for hours and hours. Once we were tied to sit on it for over 30 hours. The room was less than 30 sqm, but sometimes there were as many as 18 prisoners in it. The room was dark and damp. We did everything in that small cell: sleeping, eating, forced labour and using the toilet. Some of the labour work was so dusty we couldn't keep our eyes open. We were forced to do long hours of work, over 10 hours a day, while wearing chains on our arms and feet.

After a long day's labour, very often we would be questioned if we still wanted to practice Falun Gong. If we refused to renounce our faith, we would be forced to stand for hours facing the wall or deprived of meals.

They tortured us by forcing us to bend 90 degrees for long hours. I almost lost my eyesight and for a long time, I couldn't bend. Once there was no water for two days. Otherwise we hardly had any water to drink, and couldn't have a shower. Regularly, they did a 'body search' on us, which was more about sexual harassment and degrading treatment than looking for something. Being beaten up was normal. Very often the guards would beat us using a bundle of keys, blood dripped down our faces. We were forced to have blood tests twice a year, but they never told us the result or why they were doing it.

Once my husband was forced to wear a black headcover and was taken far away where they tortured him, trying to force him to renounce Falun Gong. They tied him on the 'tiger chair' and tortured him for three days and nights, pulling his hair, breaking off his fingers (they called it 'Eating the Trotters'), etc.

The inhuman treatment we suffered has caused a lot of damage both mentally and physically. The Chinese Communist Party must be held accountable for the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China which has been going on for 24 years now. People should not be tortured for their faith.

## **Suqing Bi**

My name is Suqing Bi, I am from Anshan City, Liaoning Province, China. I was persecuted in China because I practice the peaceful meditation called Falun Gong.

I started practising Falun Gong in May 1995. At that time, my health was very poor. I was suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, bad wind, sciatica, kidney stones and many other physical problems. Medicine would only relieve the pain temporarily but the pain would recur very quickly. Seeing all my ailments, someone recommended that I try Falun Gong.

After reading Falun Gong books and doing the exercises for about six months, there were obvious changes in my body and the health problems that had troubled me for years disappeared. I felt energised from head to toe and my face became rosy. I felt years younger. I realised that to be a truly good person means we should measure our behaviour by Falun Gong's principles of Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance all of the time. We should consider others before ourselves and be honest. Seeing the significant changes in me, many people in my work place became interested in Falun Gong and started to practice too.

Before I started practising Falun Gong, sometimes my husband would come home so drunk that he would smash the furniture. After I began practising Falun Gong, my husband also decided to start the practice, and soon after, his bad habits disappeared. A tumour on his face disappeared magically and without having an operation.



On 20 July 1999, the brutal crackdown of Falun Gong began. Practitioners were arrested and their homes were searched. From that day onward, we could no longer do the Falun Gong exercises in the park and the Falun Gong reading sessions at our home stopped.

On 23 December 2000, I went to Beijing with three other practitioners to peacefully appeal on behalf of Falun Gong. In Tiananmen square, I took out my banner that said "Falun Dafa is Good", but before I could unroll it, a plain-clothes policeman with a baton in his hand caught me and pushed me into a police van waiting in the square. Then I was taken to the Tiananmen Square police station and quickly taken to a prison in a suburb of Beijing.

In order not to implicate my relatives, I refused to tell them my name. According to the policemen, over one thousand practitioners were arrested and thrown into prison every day. A policeman took me into the interrogation room, tied me to an iron chair and tried to force me to tell him my name, address and he wanted me to write a guarantee that I would stop practising Falun Gong. I refused to answer him or write a guarantee, so he beat me.

He then burnt my face with a lighter and threatened to strip off my clothes and torture me until daybreak. His purpose was to force me to renounce my faith in of Falun Gong. I told him that Falun Gong had brought benefits to society and was harmless and that I myself had benefited from it. I said I had not done anything wrong by following the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance. He said that the government said it was not allowed, so I should not practice it. If I practice Falun Gong then I was against the Party and society. He beat me and abused me until he was tired and then he took me back to the cell.

I was transferred to Qinghe Prison in Beijing where I suffered further persecution. A few days later, I was taken to No. 5 detention centre of Shenyang with seven other Falun Gong practitioners. The police interrogated me and the torture continued. They stepped on my fingers with their shoes, and inserted chopsticks into my mouth.

In May 2001, I was taken to Longshan labour camp. I was forced to sit on a small plastic stool with two prisoners sitting next me, who were there to watch me. At midnight, a prison guard brought food to the prisoners who were watching. In prison, those prisoners who did well in helping police to force Falun Gong practitioners to give up our faith would be released early and that is why those prisoners would make all efforts to persecute Falun Gong practitioners.

They did not allow me to sleep for eight days and nights continuously. As soon as I closed my eyes they would use toothpicks to prop-up my eyelids. I said as I had done to the policeman before, it was not wrong to practice Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance and to be a good person. The prison guard said if the state did not allow you to practice it, you should not practice it and you would be imprisoned for the rest of your life and there was no place for you to appeal. If you were beaten to death, it would merely be counted as a suicide. Then I started a hunger strike to protest against the persecution. After a few days, my face turned pale.

Longshan labour camp was afraid of taking responsibility and in mid-May I was returned to the same cell in Shenyang No.4 detention centre where I had been detained before.

Prison guards and police came in every few days to interrogate me. They tortured me again, stepping on my fingers with shoes, used clothes hangers with sharp points to prick me, and smeared phlegm from a spit box on my mouth.

In June 2001, I was sent to Liaoyang Detention centre. I was illegally sentenced to three years imprisonment by Liaoyang Detention centre and was sent to the now notorious Masanjia labour camp. They told five prisoners to hold me down and used a dirty tube with flies on it to force-feed me. They did not take the tube out from my stomach and this caused my stomach to bleed. After more than 20 days of hunger strike, I was in a coma and was moved to a hospital. The doctor said my life was in danger. Masanjia Labour camp found my local police station and my relatives and asked them to pick me up.

Back at home, in July 2001, I started to do Falun Gong exercises again and read Falun Gong books and in about two weeks time, I regained my health.

After my release, local police and the residential committee authorities often came to my home and harassed me.

I fled China and came to the UK in July 2008. When I first arrived in the UK, if I heard a police siren I felt scared and wanted to hide. My daughter grabbed me and said, "*you do not need to feel scared, you are in the UK now and this is a country where human rights and beliefs are respected*". Then I felt happy and secure.

Because of this brutal persecution, I cannot go back to China to see my loved ones again. Not only me, but many thousands of Falun Gong practitioners were exiled. This persecution must stop and let families reunite and live a peaceful, fear-free life and enjoy freedom of belief.

## **Annie Yang**

My name is Annie Yang and I was arrested and sentenced to two years in Beijing Women's Forced Labour Camp because of my belief in Falun Gong. Here is my story.

On the 1st of March 2005, I went to a Falun Gong practitioner's home to give her some Falun Gong information materials around 7:30pm, a few minutes after I entered her home, there was a knock on the door. She opened it and a group of people in plainclothes burst into the room. They did not show any ID or paperwork. They separated us into different rooms and started searching her home. They took all her Falun Gong books and a printer. One of them tried to take my house keys from my hand, but I refused give it to him. He then held my collar with one hand and tried to slap my face with the other hand.

After her home was searched, we were put into different police cars. The other practitioner was taken to the local police station. I was driven to my home.

Once they entered my home, they started searching. They took all my Falun Gong books, a computer, and two printers. When they finished, it was early in the morning, about 1 am. They took me to the local police station and left my 16-year-old son at home alone.

A police officer whose name is Dafeng Liu, interrogated me each night. One night, after he interrogated me, he told me to sign a paper, but I refused. He grabbed my coat and pushed me against the wall, and kicked my legs.

Without a lawyer or court trial, 40 days after my arrest, I was told I was sentenced to two years of forced labour.

In order to force me to renounce my belief at the labour camp, they deprived me of all my basic human rights. I did not get enough food to eat. At each meal I was only given a small Chinese bun, equivalent to a slice of bread. It was a dark colour and tasted sour. I was also given about two tablespoons of Chinese porridge, which is made of rice and water.

I was allowed only 500ml of water each day. The temperature in the building was 40°C. So when I felt thirsty, I only had enough water to wet my lips. I was not allowed to wash my hair, clothes, or shower even though it was 40°C for two weeks. And I was only allowed to after I started a hungry strike.

Because I refused to renounce my belief, I was forced to sit on a small plastic stool every day. The rules were: the knees must be close; my back had to be straight; my eyes were not allowed to close, and I had to rest my hands on my knees for more than 20 hours each day. If I wanted to drink, I had to request permission from the drug addict who was monitoring me. If I got permission, I could take the cup and drink. When I had finished drinking, I needed to ask for permission to put the cup back. Every movement needed permission. After a week, the skin on my bottom split.

When I wanted to go to the toilet, I had to ask for permission. I was deliberately forced to wait for long periods of time, from two hours to half a day before they would let me go. This led to my bladder being in pain. Later, I did not have any feeling whether I had urinated or not.

Because of the little amount of food, sleep and nutrition, my whole body became swollen. Furthermore, the mental torture was unbearable and my mind was on the brink of collapse.

During my incarceration at the labour camp, I was taken to the police hospital for a full body check. It included, a blood test, chest X-ray, urine test, ultrasound on my liver and kidney, among other things.

Even though I now do not live in China, my family is still harassed by the police. They call my parents regularly, asking where I am.

When I came to the UK, I was interviewed by media to tell them what happened to me in China. When my interview was published, I believe my computer was also hacked.

In 2020, I was invited to the China Tribunal to give testimony of the medical checks given to me while I was incarcerated because the checks may have been for organ harvesting. After my testimony, I received a few threatening phone calls, which I reported to the police.

A few years ago a UK practitioner went back to China to visit her family. She was taken into custody at the airport in China. The police asked her about me, wanting information from her.

More recently I put an advertisement in the Epoch Times newspaper. People started calling me at unsociable hours, making strange noises. One time I asked why they rang, and they told me because I advertised in the Epoch Times, which is run by Falun Gong practitioners.

Even though I live in a free society in the UK, I still feel targeted for my faith by the Chinese regime.

## Yulian Xia

My name is Yulan Xia and I started to practice Falun Gong in April 1998. One morning, when my husband and I went out for a mountain walk, we saw some people doing the exercises. Out of curiosity, we stood there and watched. A gentleman came up to us and told us it is called Falun Gong, which is very good for improving health and is free.

During the cultural revolution, I was sent to the countryside to work as a labourer and I developed a kidney problem while working on the farm. Hearing that Falun Gong can improve health, we began to learn the practice.

After doing the exercises for one month, my health improved a lot: my legs were no longer swollen, I felt much stronger and was much happier.

After 20 July 1999, when the persecution of Falun Gong began in China, the local police asked us many times to write a guarantee that we would renounce Falun Gong. As we refused to do it, my husband was sent to the building site to do manual labour and I was forced to give up my job, and they told me it was because I had “retired”.

The first time I was arrested was on 26 June 2004. July 20<sup>th</sup> is considered a “sensitive date” by the government so the 610 Office would start to arrest Falun Gong practitioners around this time. All those whose names were on the 610 Office’s list were arrested. After I was arrested, Peijie Zhang from the 610 Office and local police raided my home and took my computer, printer, paper, Falun Gong books and cash (1500 Yuan). Which they still have not returned to me. I was sent to Si Shui Bridge Detention Centre. Every day, I had to do forced labour and every week I would be interrogated and told to sign a guarantee to renounce Falun Gong, but I refused.

While in the Detention Centre, every day I had to put together 10 neon lights where each neon light required 100 bulbs. Therefore, I could only have about 3-4 hours of sleep apart from time for meals and ‘brainwashing’ sessions that I was forced to endure. As too many people were locked in one small room, half of us had to sleep on the hard concrete floor. I slept just next to the toilet. There was no door for the toilet, and very often the floor was covered with water. Food was mostly just salted water with some rice and very little vegetables.

During that month, I had a lot of health problems. By the end of July, my whole body was so swollen that my clothes couldn’t button up. The Detention Centre worried that I would die, so they asked my sister to pay 4000 yuan and they released me. They never showed me any documents for arresting me or releasing me.

My husband, who had already been transferred from doing office work to a building site to do manual labour, was constantly threatened with dismissal from his job if he continue to refuse to sign a guarantee to renounce Falun Gong. He was under tremendous pressure because his job was the only income we had to live on. He couldn't sleep. Very often when I woke up during the night, I saw him standing on the balcony. On 19 July 2001, he went to work in the morning. I received a call in the afternoon that he had been taken to hospital. When I got to the hospital, he had already passed away. The reason for his death was not clear.

In June 2004, my daughter also faced persecution for her faith. She was detained for three days. The authorities said said that she was helping me to print 'illegal documents'. An officer from 610 Office and police went to my daughter's school personnel office and they took away her file, removing all her school records. As a result, no university could enroll her even though she achieved high grades on the entrance exams.

My story and suffering is only a very small fraction of the suffering of millions of Falun Gong practitioners who have been persecuted these past 24 years.

Please help to stop this brutal and inhuman persecution. We are only trying to be kinder and healthier people by following the principle of Truthfulness, Forbearance and Compassion.

## Calls to action for the UK government

We are encouraged by the UK government's willingness to take legislative steps to prevent complicity in China's forced organ harvesting. Most notably the Health and Care Act last year, which added extraterritorial provisions to the Human Tissue Act, prohibiting commercial organ tourism (to countries such as China).

There is however, much more that the UK government can do to help Falun Gong practitioners facing persecution in China.

We urge the UK government:

- To impose effective and targeted Magnitsky-style sanctions on Chinese officials responsible for human rights atrocities against Falun Gong.
- To publicly recognise China's persecution of Falun Gong as genocide.
- To prohibit UK companies from supplying organ transplantation equipment, devices, or immunosuppressant drugs to China.
- To prohibit UK medical personnel from travelling to China to train or collaborate in organ transplantation.
- To prohibit Chinese medical personnel from any involvement in organ transplantation or transplant training in the UK.
- To put diplomatic pressure on the Chinese regime to end the persecution of Falun Gong.

