

**Human Rights Report on
persecution of Falun Gong in China
2013-2016**

for
The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

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Foreword

The Data

The information and data in this report came entirely from Minghui.org, the central Falun Gong website, except where cited that the information came from elsewhere.

Although this data is not comprehensive it still serves to show the scale and continuation of the persecution in China.

An unknown number of cases remain unreported likely due to victims' fear of reprisal against themselves and their families if they speak up; or the “Great Firewall of China” Internet censorship program has blocked the report; or for other reasons.

About Falun Gong in China

Falun Gong (also known as Falun Dafa) is an ancient Buddha School practice. At its core are the values of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance. Falun Gong teaches that these are the most fundamental qualities and takes them to be a guide for daily life and practice. There are also slow-moving exercises and meditation which improve health as well.

The practice was introduced to the public in China in 1992 by Mr Li Hongzhi and it spread rapidly by word of mouth.

In May 1998 China’s National Sports Commission launched an investigation into Falun Gong, and commissioned medical professionals to conduct interviews of over 12,000 Falun Gong practitioners in Guangdong province. 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."[1]

By 1998 the State Sports Commission estimated that upwards of 70 million people in China were practising Falun Gong.[1]

During a July 1999 meeting of senior Chinese Communist Party (CCP) cadres, Jiang Zemin’s decision to eradicate Falun Gong was announced. He gave the directive to *“Destroy their reputations, cut them off financially, and eradicate them physically.”* [2]

The *Washington Post* reported that members of the Politburo Standing Committee did not unanimously support the crackdown, and that *"Jiang Zemin alone decided that Falun Gong must be eliminated."*[3]

There is no legal instrument in China making Falun Gong illegal to practice. The CCP carries out the persecution of Falun Gong without any legal basis or accountability.

Summary Report for 2013

Statistical Overview

This is a summary based on reports from Minghui.org. The actual numbers are likely much larger than these confirmed numbers.

- 4,942 practitioners were arrested
- 108 practitioners were confirmed to have died due to the persecution*
- 737 practitioners were detained in brainwashing centres
- 16 practitioners were detained in forced labour camps
- 796 practitioners were unlawfully tried and sentenced to prison

* 74 were confirmed to have died in 2013, 34 had died previously but were confirmed in 2013. [4]

Re-Education Through Labour Camps

Chinese authorities announced at the beginning of 2013 their intent to close down the forced labour camp system by year-end. The forced labour system has played a key role in the persecution of Falun Gong. According to a December 2013 report by Amnesty International, *“Falun Gong constituted on average from one third to in some cases 100 per cent of the total population of certain RTL [re-education through labour] camps.”*[5]

However, abolishing the labour camp system appears to be *“a cosmetic change just to avert the public outcry over the abusive RTL system where torture was rife,”* stated Corinna-Barbara Francis, Amnesty International China researcher, *“It’s clear that the underlying policies of punishing people for their political activities or religious beliefs haven’t changed. The abuses and torture are continuing, just in a different way.”* [6]

The December 2013 Amnesty report states that 610 Office staffers routinely show up at the local labour camps on the day Falun Gong practitioners are released to transfer them directly to brainwashing centres and continue with the torture and other indignities typically forced upon them. Practitioners have been detained at the same facilities with different names such as *“drug rehabilitation centres.”*[7]

While the regime tries to claim human rights are being better served since the forced labour system has been wound down, many of the abuses that used to occur in labour camps are now being diverted to prisons, black jails, brainwashing centres, psychiatric hospitals and other facilities.[8]

National Policies

Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin initiated the persecution of Falun Gong in July 1999 and established an extra-legal security agency called the “610 Office”. The main responsibility of this office is to coordinate and execute the persecution of Falun Gong,

directing other state and party organs to this means.

The campaign against Falun Gong has, from the start, been driven by the highest levels of the Party-state through directives, decisions, notices and policies.

Following after the three-year-campaign known as “The Decisive Battle” from 2010-2012, in 2013 a new three-year-campaign against Falun Gong practitioners was initiated. These major campaigns have specific numerical targets for “transformation” which directly affect the careers and bonuses of tens of thousands of local party and government officials, police, public security bureau officials, as well as camp and prison staff.

“Top-down pressure on camp authorities to achieve high rates of compliance in the 're-education' process, including specific quotas for 'transformation' of Falun Gong practitioners, coupled with the dehumanization of the members of many of these groups in state-sponsored media, contributes to a permissive atmosphere which facilitates their torture and other ill-treatment.”[5]

Summary Report for 2014

Statistical Overview

This is a summary based on reports from Minghui.org. The actual numbers are likely much larger than these confirmed numbers.

- 6,415 practitioners were arrested in 2014, a 29.8% increase from 2013
- 123 practitioners were confirmed to have died due to the persecution*
- 969 practitioners were detained in brainwashing centres, 31.5% increase from 2013
- 983 practitioners were tried in 2014, 635 were sentenced, with at least 65 (10.2%) sentenced to seven years or longer. The average sentence for each practitioner was about 4 years.

* 91 were confirmed to have died in 2014, 32 died previously but were confirmed in 2014
[9][10]

Brainwashing Centres

After the Chinese regime shut down its labour camps in 2014, they were replaced by “black jails,” or extralegal detention centres, as documented by Amnesty International's December 2013 report. In other words, the same human rights abuses continue, but simply changed facilities.

Falun Gong practitioners have gathered extensive, firsthand information about brainwashing centres, a common type of black jail and a strange industry of its own. These brainwashing centres are established to “transform” Falun Gong practitioners, i.e. force them to renounce their beliefs through coercion, and physical and psychological torture.

This “brainwashing industry” in China is policy-driven and state-run. The execution and operations involve officials at each government branch, all the way to the lowest level in counties and villages. While brainwashing of Falun Gong practitioners has also been carried out in detention centres, prisons, and labour camps, this summary focuses only on dedicated brainwashing centres.

The major sources of money circulated in the brainwashing industry include government appropriations (mainly in the form of construction funding), bonuses paid by the government based on the number of “transformed” practitioners, “education fees” paid by the practitioners' employers, and ransoms paid by practitioners and their families. Some of the income goes directly to staff members' personal accounts and does not appear in a brainwashing centre's budget.

It is estimated that the Chinese government has invested 1.18 billion yuan in brainwashing centre construction projects, and paid 226 million yuan in bonuses to the centres' staff for forcing Falun Gong practitioners to renounce their beliefs.

For every employed practitioner detained at a brainwashing centre, his or her employer is forced to pay the centre an average of about 20,000 yuan per month as the total of an "education fee" (9,450 per practitioner) and "companion fee" (10,800 for two "companions" per practitioner). Income through this channel sums up to 3.37 billion yuan from 1999-2014.

Moreover, the centres usually refuse to release practitioners unless their families pay the centre an average of 7,000 yuan. Given 131,000 estimated detentions, the centres have extorted approximately 95 million yuan from Falun Gong practitioners and their families.

Since the persecution began, brainwashing centres have been a major income source for officials, both in the police and domestic security system, and the 610 Office, a gestapo-like organisation created to oversee the persecution of Falun Gong.

Encouraged by government policy, officials chase after fortunes to be made from brainwashing centres. The head of a centre can typically accumulate tens of millions of yuan in "side" income.

Minghui concludes that conservatively, the total amount of money circulated in this strange industry since the inception of the persecution is at least 4.87 billion yuan.

All the data used in the estimates are from published articles on the Minghui website. Due to the heavy censorship of information in China, the estimate is approximate, and may reflect only a fraction of the whole picture.[11]

Summary Report for 2015

Statistical Overview

This is a summary based on reports from Minghui.org. The actual numbers are likely much larger than these confirmed numbers.

- 3,726 practitioners were arrested from January through July 2015
- 140 practitioners were confirmed to have died due to the persecution
- 878 practitioners were unlawfully tried and sentenced to prison, a 38% increase from 2014. The lengths of sentence ranged from four months to twelve years, with an average term of three years and eleven months.

[12][13][14][15]

December reports

The total number of arrests in 2015 has not been compiled as yet by Minghui. So I compiled the statistics from the daily reports in order to present recent information.

The reports below cover the period of 1-27 December 2015 as a sample. The total reports received in this period was 861 (average of 32 reports per day).

Taking a count of *only* the named individuals:

- 1,008 practitioners were arrested and detained for an indefinite period or whereabouts unknown
- 408 practitioners were arrested and detained for a shorter period of 30 days or less
- 156 practitioners were harassed or only had their homes ransacked by police
- 41 practitioners reported being tried or facing trial
- 6 practitioners were unable to return home

Summary of December reports:

The abuse of Falun Gong practitioners in China does not appear to be easing.

Where the reason for arrest was given, many reported it was due to their filing criminal complaints against Jiang Zemin, or because they were giving out Falun Gong materials (like calendars or leaflets) or talking to people about Falun Gong.

Many of the people who were detained also had their homes ransacked by police, where computers, books, phones, printers, money and even cars were taken.

On some occasions, when police visited the home of a Falun Gong practitioner but didn't find them home, they would arrest one or more family members until the Falun Gong

practitioner came to the police station to be arrested themselves.

The longest sentence was 8 years (given to 4 people in this period).

One worrying aspect is the continued reports of physical examinations, blood samples taken, x-ray, and ultrasound tests done on practitioners who are arrested.

Largest group of prisoners of conscience in China

According to the January 2015 Freedom House special report: *“The CCP devoted considerable resources to suppressing Falun Gong and coercing adherents into renouncing their beliefs, typically through the use of violence.”*

“Hundreds of thousands of adherents were sentenced to labor camps and prison terms, making them the largest contingent of prisoners of conscience in the country.”[16]

It should be noted that despite how violent, illegal and brutal the persecution is Falun Gong practitioners' response has always been non-violent.

Forced Organ Harvesting update

Since 2006, independent human rights investigators around the world have gathered evidence that Falun Gong practitioners are the major source of organs for China's lucrative transplantation industry. The exponential growth of China's transplantations coincides exactly with the onset of the persecution of Falun Gong in China. To this day, Falun Gong practitioners are still being medically scanned and their blood samples forcibly extracted. [17][18][19][20]

European Parliament

The 2013 European Parliament resolution on organ harvesting in China *“expresses its deep concern over the persistent and credible reports of systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience in the People’s Republic of China, including from large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners imprisoned for their religious beliefs, as well as from members of other religious and ethnic minority groups.”*[21]

Crime against humanity

In 2014 Prof Jacob Lavee, director of the Heart Transplantation Unit at Israel's largest medical centre who also lead Israel to legislate against organ tourism to China strongly condemned the process China uses for procuring organs.

“The transplants committed in China thrive on transplant tourists,” he said.

But that's not enough. *“Because even if there will be no single transplant tourist coming to China, still, local candidates for organs could get organs from executed prisoners and prisoners of conscience,”* he said.

“They’re acting against every convention and against every basic principle of ethics that conducts the entire business of transplants worldwide. The basic principle is that organ donation should be done only, only on the free will of the donor or his family. And they’re breaching this principle. Once that’s breached, it becomes a crime against humanity.”

He calls for all countries to work together to *“make parliaments press politically and diplomatically through their own connection with China and through the United Nations so that the process will stop in China altogether.”* [22]

Government action 2015

The first half of 2015 saw positive government action on the issue of forced organ harvesting which included: a Canadian House of Commons statement; the Italian Senate passing a bill to criminalise organ trafficking; the Council of Europe treaty against forced

organ harvesting; Taiwan passing legislation to ban organ tourism to China and US House Resolution 343. [23][24][25][26][27]

Significant research data

A draft of significant research data on this issue from the World Organisation to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong (WOIPFG) was released on August 2015. Their research began in March 2006 and includes thousands of calls to China obtaining testimonies and information. [28]

Based on this large body of research information, award winning investigative journalist and author, Ethan Gutmann, analysed their data and has revealed a startling conclusion. Namely that the number of transplants that China claims to do each year is false and the real number is likely to be 300% higher. Therefore prisoners of conscience who are at risk of forced organ harvesting should not be counted in the tens of thousands but in the hundreds of thousands. [29]

Transparency

One of the serious problems with China's transplantation system is that it is not transparent, as is demanded by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in their Guiding Principles on Transplantation. [30]

In March 2016 an investigative report in the Epoch Times delves into the details of China's transplantation system. It quotes from Dr Huang Jiefu, the Chinese official who serves as the voice of China's transplant policy, who replied to a reporter asking questions about organ transplants:

“The issue you are talking about is too sensitive. That’s why I cannot tell you that clearly. If you think about it, you will understand. Because the country has no transparency, you don’t know how the organs were obtained; the number of performed transplantations was also a secret.”[31]

Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting

The medical NGO, Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting (DAFOH), has been a significant influence in revealing the unethical nature of China's organ procurement process. Their work has been recognised with a 2016 Nobel Peace Prize nomination.

Their 2016 report analyses China's Transplant Numbers and Unethical Organ Procurement from Prisoners of Conscience in China. One of the conclusions is:

“The network to procure organs from prisoners of conscience must be systematic and consistent with rapid access to a steady source of healthy, tissue matched organs in order

to accommodate transplant tourists within 2-4 weeks or even with prescheduled surgery appointments. This framework requires an organized infrastructure for access to organ sources. The only group that is subjected to such a mechanism of persecution that is systematic and nationwide is Falun Gong.

“Taking the aforementioned aspects into consideration, it is statistically plausible that Falun Gong prisoners of conscience are the largest group exploited for their organs and are at the highest risk to be the source of organs for the transplant numbers as outlined”[32]

Recommendations for the UK Government

- Hospital confidentiality on organ tourism makes it impossible to know how many UK nationals are travelling to China as organ tourists. We know some have volunteered this information so we are sure they are going. But to what extent are we unknowingly complicit in the killing of innocent people in China?

We recommend therefore that anyone taking organ anti-rejection drugs must disclose the source of their organ and that this information is not held as confidential.

- Inform UK nationals through travel advisory web pages and NHS that organ transplants in China are sourced almost entirely from executed prisoners and non-consenting prisoners of conscience. This practice violates international ethical standards for organ transplantation since prisoners are deprived of their freedom, are not free of coercion and therefore are unable to give free, voluntary consent which is a foundation for organ transplantation ethics set out by the World Medical Association.
- Enact legislation banning transplant tourism which penalizes any transplant patient who receives an organ without consent of the donor where the patient knew or ought to have known of the absence of consent.
- Prohibit UK pharmaceutical companies from exporting or testing transplantation drugs in China until China has a transparent donor system as demanded by the WHO.
- Prohibit UK medical personnel from travelling to China to train or collaborate in transplantation until China has a transparent donor system as demanded by the WHO.
- Require from Chinese medical personnel who come to the UK for transplant training or collaboration to sign an agreement that they won't use organs from non-consenting donors in China.

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