Escalated Campaign against Falun Gong in China Before and After the Olympics

Falun Dafa Information Center Annual Report on Falun Gong in 2008

The Falun Dafa Information Center
February 2009
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“Persecution cases of Falun Gong practitioners across the country have noticeably increased recently, and I think this deserves attention. Freedom of religious belief is being violated even more severely during such a special period [of the Olympic Games], and citizens’ constitutional rights and universal values are under attack in China.”

—Prominent Chinese lawyer Jiang Tianyong, August 2008

“Falun Gong practitioners were at particularly high risk of torture and other ill-treatment in detention... During the year [2007] over 100 Falun Gong practitioners were reported to have died in detention or shortly after release as a result of torture, denial of food or medical treatment, and other forms of ill-treatment.”

—Amnesty International 2008 Annual Report

“The central government intensified its nine-year campaign of persecution against Falun Gong practitioners in the months leading up to the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games... Official accounts of the crackdown were publicly available on Web sites for all 31 of China’s provincial-level jurisdictions in 2007-2008.”

—Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 2008 Annual Report
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*The Falun Dafa Information Center, February 2009*

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Executive Summary/Recommendations

The suppression of Falun Gong in mainland China escalated sharply in 2008. A significant body of evidence—including first-hand accounts of adherents, official Chinese government statements and, reliable third party sources—indicate that the escalation was largely made possible by the Beijing Olympics. Chinese officials, under the auspices of “ensuring a smooth Olympics,” utilized the environment of heightened security to arbitrarily detain, torture, and sentence Falun Gong adherents throughout China to re-education through labor camps for up to 2 ½ years or to prison for up to 13 years.

In total, the Falun Dafa Information Center received reports of over 8,000 practitioners having been detained in 2008. Reports of deaths from torture or other abuses in custody continue to flow from China on a nearly daily basis.

As such, those who practice and support Falun Gong inside China continue to be deprived of a wide range of rights guaranteed by the country’s constitution and under China’s international obligations. The following is an abbreviated list of the key developments surrounding Falun Gong inside China in 2008:

Large-scale arbitrary arrests
Thousands of adherents were detained around the country throughout 2008. Most were arrested on the basis of their being known to the authorities as Falun Gong adherents, even if this identity consisted of studying Falun Gong tenets and practicing its meditation exercises in the privacy of their homes. In many cases, adherents were arrested for possessing Falun Gong books and related materials, often after door-to-door searches by security agents. Once detained, the pattern of subjecting adherents to severe torture—including sexual abuse and shocks with electric batons—to force them to disavow their faith remained commonplace.

Increase in sentencing, including to long prison terms
There was an increase in prison and labor camp sentences given to adherents, following unfair judicial proceedings or none at all. Many sentences were handed down towards year’s end after the conclusion of the Olympics and following months of pre-trial detention. Most sentences ranged from one and a half to five years in length, but sentences as long as thirteen years were also recorded.

Over 100 deaths
The Falun Dafa Information Center documented the deaths of 104 adherents in 2008 because of severe abuse or neglect in police custody. During the 16 days of the Olympics alone, ten Falun Gong adherents are confirmed to have died. Additional information pointing to systematic forced organ removal from Falun Gong prisoners of conscience also emerged in 2008, particularly the prevalence of suspicious medical testing.

Nationwide effort
While large numbers of adherents were detained, harassed, and tortured in Beijing and other cities hosting Olympics venues, reports of abuse and official directives to target Falun Gong emerged across the country. According to the Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC): “Official accounts of the crackdown were publicly available on Web sites for all 31 of China’s provincial-level jurisdictions in 2007-2008.” Indeed, one of the deadliest provinces was Heilongjiang, which hosted no Olympic events.

Role of the 6-10 Office
The 6-10 Office, an extralegal security agency created in 1999 to lead the campaign against Falun Gong, played a central role in prompting and coordinating actions taken against the group in 2008, including monitoring and detentions. According to the CECC, in April, the central 6-10 office issued “an internal directive to local governments nationwide mandating propaganda activities” against Falun Gong.
Executive Summary/Recommendations

Defense lawyers harassed
Throughout the year, a small group of approximately 20 lawyers continued to defend Falun Gong adherents, despite Party directives banning such action. On repeated occasions in 2008, lawyers defended practitioners in court, presenting detailed arguments as to their innocence and the broader need to observe the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion. In all cases, the adherents were sentenced anyway, and many of the lawyers known to represent Falun Gong adherents and take other sensitive cases continued to face harassment, monitoring, disbarment, and even detention or torture at the hands of the authorities.

Media and Internet taboo:
Falun Gong remained one of the most taboo topics of coverage for both Chinese and foreign news organizations reporting from China in 2008. The pre-Olympic crackdown included the detention and sentencing of adherents found to be possessing, producing, or distributing underground leaflets in accordance with their right to freedom of expression. Throughout the year, Falun Gong and related websites remained among the most systematically and hermetically blocked by China’s Great Firewall, including during the Olympics.

Despite the ongoing violence by the authorities, 2008 also saw some encouraging developments on the part of the international community and certain segments of Chinese society. In response to the violence used against adherents, Amnesty International published urgent actions on behalf of individual practitioners at risk of torture, while the UN Committee Against Torture issued a binding decision calling for an independent investigation into abuse of Falun Gong adherents in custody. Following letter-writing campaigns from Western government officials and ordinary citizens around the world, two adherents with relatives in the United States were freed from detention. Within China, as mentioned above, the trend that began in recent years of prominent lawyers increasingly willing to take a public stand on behalf of Falun Gong adherents continued.

One of the key reasons for both the ongoing ferocity of the campaign and the increased support from society would appear to be adherents’ continued ability to distribute at a grassroots level large amounts of printed materials disclosing details of the persecution as well as the CCP’s crimes against its citizens more broadly. Thus, while some observers have cited the Party’s efforts to silence dissent surrounding the Olympics as the primary cause for the 2008 crackdown, this does not seem to fully explain the measures taken against Falun Gong adherents. Given the trend of sentencing those arrested during the pre-Olympic period to terms stretching forward several years, it would appear rather that the Party seized on the need to hold a “safe” Olympics as a means to further advance the near decade-long persecutory campaign, limit the distribution of information deemed threatening to its rule, and move closer to the aim of “eradicating Falun Gong.”
Executive Summary/Recommendations

Recommendations
Given the above findings, the Falun Dafa Information Center makes the following recommendations to the international community:

- **Governments must ensure engagement does not yield grave human costs:**
  Nations should do a thorough review of their engagement with the current Chinese regime and ensure that no policies facilitate or serve as a catalyst for Chinese officials to further the suppression of Falun Gong. The findings of this report show that the CCP will use opportunities like the Olympics to advance its agenda of wiping out Falun Gong.

- **Governments and NGOs must ensure Falun Gong remains a key component of any legitimate discourse on or action concerning human rights in China.**
  Falun Gong adherents remain the largest population of prisoners of conscience in China today. The CCP’s absolute position of not reversing its policy to persecute Falun Gong cannot be permitted to generate an exception to advancing the rights of a large segment of Chinese citizens. To do so, would be to allow the CCP to dictate the terms of human rights policy.

- **Human rights workers should pursue all possible avenues of investigation into the persecution.**
  Such leads have grown steadily in recent months. Notably, Chinese lawyers in growing numbers are publicly defending Falun Gong in Chinese courts and often attest to the abuses suffered by their clients.

- **Other countries should offer protection to Falun Gong refugees:**
  Governments must ensure their mechanisms for receiving and providing safe harbor to victims of religious persecution are made fully available to Falun Gong practitioners. This report clearly shows the danger Falun Gong adherents face in China, including those who practice their beliefs in the privacy of their own homes. Several of those tortured to death in 2008 were individuals originally detained not for any action they took, but merely for being identified as a Falun Gong adherent.

- **Mainstream media should investigate and report on the Falun Gong story.**
  The issue transcends the plight of Falun Gong practitioners themselves, shedding important light on the broader conditions of life in modern China, its people and its influence on the international community. Most media missed several critical stories surrounding the Olympics-related mass arrests and detention of Falun Gong adherents, and what they meant for the direction of the modern Chinese state.
About the Falun Dafa Information Center (FDIC)

The Falun Dafa Information Center is both the official press office for Falun Gong as well as a primary resource for information about the human rights abuses Falun Gong practitioners face at the hands of the Chinese Communist regime.

The Information Center began informally in July of 1999 with the banning and persecution of Falun Gong in China. The initial incarnation of the Center in July of 1999 was the brainchild of a small group of Falun Gong adherents in New York City. The group was particularly informed about the practice and its intricate predicament in Mainland China, its constituents having traveled there and spent time with practitioners there. Two of the individuals had spent most of their lives in the mainland. The Center was formally incorporated in the spring of 2000, and has from that time been granted the privilege of formally representing or speaking on behalf of the practice.

The aim of our work and the impact we strive for is as follows:

- To document human rights abuses specific to Falun Gong in China, as well as coercive tactics and intimidation by the PRC state directed at Falun Gong elsewhere around the world.
- To disseminate such information to all relevant entities, including media, government, NGOs, research institutes, and educational institutions.
- To serve as a resource to journalists, investigators, scholars, and educators who seek to learn more about Falun Gong and its plight in China.
- To monitor and analyze news coverage and representations of Falun Gong in the press, as well as catalogue and organize key reporting.
- To ensure the voice of Falun Gong practitioners is represented in an official and clear capacity to journalists and media organizations.
- To advocate for the rights of Falun Gong adherents inside China, particularly under the continued circumstance in which they are denied legal representation or fair trials.
- To support grassroots advocacy work related to Falun Gong, such as by producing informational leaflets and video documentaries.
By the Numbers: The Persecution against Falun Gong in China 2007-2008

- **500,000** – number of yuan (~$70,000) offered as a reward by Beijing’s Public Security Bureau for information leading to the arrest of Falun Gong practitioners during the Olympic period, among other “security threats.” (Xinhua)
- **8,000+** - number of Falun Gong adherents detained across China between January and June 2008. (FDIC)
- **6,744** – number of chat messages containing the word “Falun”, found to have been filtered and logged by the Chinese version of Skype out of a sample of 96,000, the largest number of any specific term. (OpenNet Initiative)
- **3,242** – total number of Falun Gong adherents documented to have died from persecution between 1999 and 2008 (FDIC)
- **1,600** – number of Falun Gong adherents reported to have been targeted for “reeducation” and “reprimand” in Anhui province’s Yingshang county, (Fuyang City) (CECC)
- **600** – number of Falun Gong adherents in Wuling district of Changde city, Hunan province targeted for close monitoring by police, neighborhood committees, and their own relatives, according to online information by the local Communist Party Political-Legal Committee. (CECC)
- **208** – number of Falun Gong adherents arrested in Beijing from January to June 2008 by public security agents from all 18 districts and counties in the municipality (FDIC).
- **104** – number of Falun Gong adherents who died from abuse or neglect in custody in 2008 (FDIC)
- **62** – number of adherents reportedly detained in Miyi county in Sichuan province as part of its “strike hard” campaign in 2007, according to official websites (CECC).
- **53** – number of Falun Gong related leaflets found in the car of Beijing adherent, Ms. Xu Na, which were the basis of her being sentenced to 3 years in prison. (Amnesty International)
- **31** – number of provincial level jurisdictions whose websites featured official reports of a pre-Olympics crackdown on Falun Gong (CECC)
- **25** – number of Falun Gong practitioners reportedly arrested in Xinjiang in a crackdown on underground publishing operations in July 2008. (Xinhua)
- **13** – number of years in prison that Liu Fengmei, a resident of Jinzhou city, Liaoning province was sentenced to within days of the Olympics closing ceremony, because of her practice of Falun Gong (FDIC).
I. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

The Falun Dafa Information Center received reports of 104 Falun Gong deaths between January and December 2008, resulting from severe abuse in police custody or other forms of persecution. During the 16 days of the Olympics alone, ten Falun Gong adherents are confirmed to have died from abuse in custody.

A complete table of the names and available details surrounding these known cases is enclosed in Appendix B. The table was compiled from a variety of sources, including testimony of relatives or friends of the deceased, photographic evidence, and follow-up phone calls made by researchers to the relevant police or prison authorities. In total, since 1999, the Falun Dafa Information Center has documented the cases of 3,242 Falun Gong practitioners who have died as a result of various forms of persecution. Due to the secrecy surrounding such cases, the actual death toll is most likely much higher.

A large number of the deaths reported in 2008 occurred weeks, days, or hours after the Falun Gong adherent was detained, and frequently accompanied reports of torture in custody. The provinces of Liaoning and Heilongjiang were the deadliest for adherents, accounting together for 35 of the 104 documented cases. The following are a sample of particularly notable cases:

Yu Zhou

Mr. Yu Zhou, 42, a popular folk musician who was arrested on his way home from a concert in Beijing on January 26, 2008. Yu was killed after eleven days of detention at the Tongzhou District Detention Center, as detailed by the Times of London and Agence France Presse, as well as reported to the United Nations by Amnesty International.

Amnesty International: “Recent examples of death in custody include Yu Zhou, a well-known folk singer, graduate of Beijing University, and reportedly a Falun Gong practitioner, who was arrested in Tongzhou District, Beijing, on 26 January 2008, along with his wife, Xu Na, a poet and painter. On 6 February 2008, the authorities notified the family to come to the Qinghe District Emergency Centre, where they learned that Yu Zhou had already died. A family member recounted how his body was covered by a white sheet, and only his eyes were visible. The family was told that Yu had died from either diabetes or from a hunger strike, although he had been perfectly healthy at the time of his arrest. The staff at the Emergency Centre refused the family’s request to view the body and for an autopsy to be performed, and the authorities refused to hand over Yu’s body to the family.”


See also: http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/china/article3779899.ece
I. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

Zong Xiuxia

Among those killed almost immediately after their initial arrest was Ms. Zong Xiuxia, age 55. According to sources inside China, on the morning of February 22, 2008, Zong was distributing literature about the persecution of Falun Gong in Weifang City, Shandong province, when she was reported to the police. At approximately 11:00 a.m. she was taken to Guangwen Police Station for interrogation. She was killed within hours of her arrest, and later that evening her family was notified to come down to the police station to identify and claim her body.

See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/766/

Wang Guiming

Mr. Wang Guiming, age 38, of Changchun city, Jilin Province, was arrested on Feb. 13, 2008, while discussing the persecution of Falun Gong with customers at his sweet potato stand. He was taken to the Xinzhan Police Station to be interrogated, and was subsequently transferred to the Chaoyanggou forced labor camp, where he was reportedly force-fed and shocked with electric batons. He died on February 29, 2008, 16 days after his arrest.

See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/770/?cid=150

Zhong Zhenfu and Liu Xiumei

 Reuters: “Two members of the banned Chinese spiritual sect Falun Gong were tortured and died in police custody in Shandong province in July, the group said.Zhong Zhenfu, 58, died of injuries sustained in police custody after being held along with others from Pingdu, in Shandong, since May, the group said in a statement. Liu Xiumei, a woman from Zhucheng, Shandong, was detained in July and died 17 days later, it said, without giving further details...Officials from Shandong province were not immediately available for comment.”


See also: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/799/?cid=84.

Forced Organ Removal

Additional information pointing to systematic forced organ removal from Falun Gong prisoners of conscience emerged in 2008, particularly the prevalence of suspicious medical testing.

Canadian investigators David Kilgour and David Matas concluded in 2006 that organ harvesting allegations were true. In recent years, a growing body of evidence has emerged indicating that Falun Gong prisoners of conscience have been killed so that their organs could be used in transplant operations. In addition to a significant increase in transplant procedures since the launch of the campaign against the group in 1999, recordings of Chinese doctors admitting to the use of Falun Gong organs in transplant operations are among the most compelling details that have raised concerns within medical and human rights circles. In 2006, an independent investigation by Canadians David Kilgour and David Matas concluded the allegations were true. In 2008, the following developments occurred with regards to this and other investigations into the issue:

- Following a series of hearings, in July 2008, a special Israeli rabbinical council similarly ruled that it believed the Chinese regime had been responsible for the killing of Falun Gong practitioners, perhaps because of material benefits derived from organ harvesting.

See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/750/?cid=84
I. Arbitrary or Unlawful Deprivation of Life

Forced Organ Removal

- In November 2008, the Weekly Standard, reported findings of research by author Ethan Gutmann, indicating that Falun Gong prisoners of conscience had been subjected to systematic and suspicious medical testing while in custody, strengthening concerns that they were targeted for forced organ removal.

See: http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/015/824qbcjr.asp

- Also in November, David Matas asserted in a submission to the United Nations Committee Against Torture (UNCAT) that the Chinese government had yet to provide information that would substantively contradict the pieces of evidence used in the 2006 report he co-authored which reached the conclusion that organs were harvested from Falun Gong prisoners of conscience.

See: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/docs/ngos/II_China_41.pdf

II. Disappearance

The year saw continued reports of Falun Gong disappearances. Since 2006, the editors of Minghui.org, a Chinese-language website run by overseas Falun Gong practitioners with an extensive network of sources inside China, have maintained a database of practitioners reported missing by friends and relatives. Of these, many were disappeared following arrest and detention, and others disappeared after being forced to go underground to flee persecution. Since Minghui began work on the database, they have compiled some 1,300 cases.

Photos of Falun Gong practitioners Gao Shuming and Gao Qinming, who were illegally arrested by the CCP on April 14, 2008.
III. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The use of torture against Falun Gong practitioners remains commonplace and continued throughout 2008. Amnesty International published several urgent actions on behalf of adherents at risk of torture, while the UN Committee Against Torture issued a binding decision calling for an independent investigation into abuse of Falun Gong adherents in custody.

United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak

In a report on his 2005 mission to China, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, stated that 66 percent of the reports of torture in China that his office received had Falun Gong practitioners as victims. Photographic evidence from inside China, statements of former prisoners of conscience, investigations by Chinese human rights lawyers and testimonies from former security personnel indicate the widespread use of torture against Falun Gong adherents for the purposes of forcing them to renounce their beliefs or extracting information about other practitioners. The most commonly used torture methods include beatings, electric baton shocks, injections with psychotropic drugs, forced-feeding, rape and other forms of sexual abuse. As detailed in the previous section, over 100 adherents died during the year, often as a result of injuries incurred from abuse in custody.

Amnesty International Urgent Action:
Fear of Torture, Chen Zhenping (F):

“Falun Gong practitioner Chen Zhenping was arrested without a warrant on 9 July [2008] at her home in the city of Zhengzhou, Henan province. Her family have not been allowed to visit her, and it is unclear where she is now held. She is in grave danger of torture...

- “She was first held for 10 days at Matougang Village Detention Centre, and then moved to Zhengzhou City No.1 Detention Centre. Zhengzhou City Jingshui People’s Court officials told one of her relatives on 10 October that Chen Zhenping had been sentenced to between seven and 15 years’ imprisonment. However, the family have not been served an official notification of a trial by court authorities.... According to a fellow inmate, Chen Zhenping has been held in a cell with over 30 people and forced to sleep on the floor. She was reported by a former cell-mate to have been forced to work up to 19 hours a day producing rugs, Q-tips and other goods, with strict production targets: if she did not meet these targets she was beaten and otherwise ill-treated.”


Hu Yuyuan

Chinese lawyer Jiang Tianyong described in an interview with overseas Chinese language radio station Sound of Hope the abuse suffered by one of his Falun Gong clients from early August 2008: “When I met Hu Yuyuan, he described how he was treated after he was arrested: Guards put a head bag to wrap around his head, and use plastic bottles filled with water to beat his head. Then, they wrapped electrical wires around his fingers and turn on the switch. After electrically shocking one hand, they moved on to shock the other hand in the same manner.”

Chen Jie

In a recent article in the New Statesman magazine, Leeshai Lemish writes of interviews he and Ethan Gutmann recently conducted for an upcoming book: “Chen Jie [a Falun Gong adherent who recently escaped to Thailand] said: ‘Their [other practitioners’] bellies, chest and backs were ... covered with black bubbles from...”
III. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

being shocked with cattle-prods. *The over 100 people we interviewed, and the torture scars some showed, left no ambiguities – this persecution is ongoing and nationwide.*


**Liu Qi**

Contributing to a culture of impunity surrounding such abuses was the appointment of former Beijing mayor Liu Qi as head of the Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) and his general acceptance as a legitimate host by the international community. This was despite his having been found liable in 2004 for the torture of Falun Gong adherents by a San Francisco court.

According to the Center for Investigative Reporting, which publicized the case in April 2008: “In an extensive legal opinion, the U.S. District Court in San Francisco determined in 2004 that Liu Qi was responsible for the illegal detention and torture of two Chinese nationals and a sexual assault against a French woman in China... The plaintiffs, who were represented by the Center for Justice and Accountability, presented evidence that as mayor, Liu directed security forces to violently crush Falun Gong. In addition, police under his command subjected the plaintiffs and other Falun Gong adherents in Beijing to severe beatings, sexual abuse, and ‘electric shocks through needles placed in [the] body.’

See: http://centerforinvestigativereporting.org/node/3625

**United Nations Committee Against Torture – Fourth Periodic Review of China**

In November 2008, the United Nations Committee against Torture (UNCAT) evaluated the Chinese authorities' adherence to the 1984 Convention against Torture, which the PRC ratified in 1988. Submissions to the committee by Amnesty International, the Conscience Foundation, Chinese Human Rights Defenders, and Interfaith International cited persistent reports of torture and death in custody of Falun Gong practitioners in recent years, as well as the culture of violence and impunity surrounding them.

- Chinese Human Rights Defenders, in particular, highlighted the complete absence of redress mechanisms for Falun Gong torture victims: “In theory, Falun Gong practitioners can petition its Letters and Visits Office or sue Office 610 for torture. In practice, even these limited complaint mechanisms are closed to Falun Gong practitioners because they are treated as a special category and their complaints are not accepted by government offices. Falun Gong practitioners rarely lodge official complaints for fear of being subjected to even worse persecution due to their membership in [Falun Gong]. It is believed that Office 610 is responsible for the torture and cruel treatment of many Falun Gong practitioners and that its officers are never punished or held legally responsible for their crimes.”

See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/828/?cid=84

- In a legally binding decision issued on November 21, the UNCAT expressed its concern over information received that “Falun Gong practitioners have been extensively subjected to torture and ill-treatment in prisons and that some of them have been used for organ transplants (arts. 12 and 16).” It further stated that: “The State party should immediately conduct or commission an independent investigation of the claims that some Falun Gong practitioners have been subjected to torture and used for organ transplants and take measures, as appropriate, to ensure that those responsible for such abuses are prosecuted and punished.”

See: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cat/docs/CAT.C.CHN.CO.4.p
IV. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

The year 2008 witnessed a systematic and nationwide increase in arbitrary arrests and detention of Falun Gong adherents, apparently as part of a clean-up effort ahead of the Beijing Olympics. Upon conclusion of the games, adherents continued to be sentenced without trial to “re-education through labor” for up to 2.5 years (see next section for sentencing to prison).

- The Congressional Executive Commission on China noted that: “Official accounts of the [pre-Olympic] crackdown were publicly available on Web sites for all 31 of China’s provincial-level jurisdictions in 2007-2008.”

- Two adherents with relatives in the United States were freed from detention following international campaigns calling for their release.

From the months of December 2007 to May 2008, the Falun Dafa Information Center received reports of over 8,037 Falun Gong adherents being taken into detention. According to the reports, many of the arrests follow a common pattern, whereby officers from the local police station or Public Security Bureau (PSB) branch come to the adherent’s home or workplace, conduct a search for any Falun Gong-related materials, and take the individual into custody at the district detention center. In some cases, family members or co-workers who do not practice Falun Gong have been taken into custody as well. At least nine adherents were killed within days or weeks of their arrest.

See: [http://www.faluninfo.net/article/11/](http://www.faluninfo.net/article/11/)
See also: [http://www.faluninfo.net/article/721/?cid=111](http://www.faluninfo.net/article/721/?cid=111)

- Beijing arrests: In Beijing, where at least 208 Falun Gong adherents were detained in the months ahead of the Olympics, the Public Security Bureau offered awards of up to 500,000 Yuan for information leading to the arrest of Falun Gong practitioners, among other “security threats.”


- Of the 208 practitioners arbitrarily arrested in Beijing ahead of the Olympics, at least 30 were sentenced to reeducation-through-labor for terms of up to two and a half years. Others were held in pre-trial detention before being sentenced judicially to prison terms (see Denial of Fair Public Trial), and many others are awaiting sentence.

  See: [http://www.faluninfo.net/article/721/?cid=111](http://www.faluninfo.net/article/721/?cid=111)

Yu Zhou and Xu Na.

**Xu Na**

Typical among these was Xu Na, widower of musician Yu Zhou. Both were arbitrarily arrested on January 26, 2008, in Beijing while on their way home from a concert. Yu Zhou was reportedly tortured to death within eleven days of his detention, while Xu Na was held in pre-trial detention for over nine months before her trial. (see next section for details of her trial and sentencing).

The crackdown on Falun Gong ahead of the Olympics would appear to be part of a centrally coordinated effort directed by the Public Security Bureau. According to Amnesty International, in preparing for the Games, Former Public Security Minister Zhou Yongkang issued the following order in the context of “successfully holding the 17th Communist Party Congress [in October 2007] and the Beijing Olympic Games”: “We must strike hard at hostile forces at home and abroad, such as ethnic separatists... and ‘heretical organizations’ like the Falun Gong.”

IV. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

Role of 6-10 Office

The pre-Olympic crackdown was coordinated with the help of the Falun Gong Control Office, or the 6-10 Office, as it is otherwise known. In its 2008 Annual Report, the Congressional Executive Commission on China noted the role of the 6-10 Office in the pre-Olympic campaign and the circulation of its orders nationwide:

- “In April 2008, the central government 6-10 Office issued an internal directive to local governments nationwide mandating propaganda activities to prevent Falun Gong from ‘interfering with or harming’ the Olympics. References to the directive appear on official Web sites in every province and at every level of government. Most official reports focus on demonstrating that local authorities have stepped up security and fulfilled the requirement to ‘educate’ target audiences on the directive’s content. Local authorities distributed the directive widely in an effort to raise public awareness.”

Reports posted by regional 6-10 Offices offer an indication of how the policy against Falun Gong was to be prosecuted, as reported by the CECC:

“According to Nanjing City Public Security provisions published in June 2008, the 6-10 Office is at the forefront of organizing and leading the struggle against Falun Gong. Its responsibilities include directing investigations into significant cases, ‘digging deep to uncover covert plots and organizers,’ ‘gathering intelligence,’ and ‘organizing and coordinating the prevention, control, and punishment of Falun Gong and other harmful qigong organizations by municipal public security forces.’”

“An April 2008 notice posted on the Gutian county government Web site in Fujian province describes the central government’s ‘basic policy’ outlawing the practice of Falun Gong and outlines five primary tasks to implement: (1) explicitly order the dissemination of information regarding the ban [on Falun Gong]; (2) carry out comprehensive administration [of the policy]; (3) ‘fully utilize all legal weapons, sternly punish the criminal activities of cult ring-leaders and key members,’ (4) do a good job at transformation through reeducation for the great majority of practitioners,’ and (5) ‘prevent external cults from seeping into the area, reduce the conditions that allow cults to propagate.”

“Re-education through labor”

Falun Gong adherents continue to comprise a very high percentage of the population in China’s reeducation-through-labor camps, believed to hold upwards of 500,000 individuals. The year saw a spike in the number of adherents sentenced to RTL, including in the weeks following the Olympics. Individuals can be sentenced without trial to RTL for terms of up to two and a half years for virtually any offense.

By some estimates, Falun Gong prisoners account for half of the RTL population, and some camps are comprised almost entirely of Falun Gong adherents.

Leeshai Lemish, research assistant for an upcoming book on Falun Gong, noted in a recent National Post article, “Last year, the Beijing Female Labour Camp, for example, contained 700 Falun Gong practitioners and only 140 actual criminals.”


Si Miao

Si Miao, female, age 36, Shijiazhuang, Hebei province: At 8am on April 22, 2008, approximately two dozen personnel from the State Security Bureau and local law enforcement agencies arrested Ms. Si Miao and her father Mr. Si Shilin. Ms. Si was arrested directly from her workplace, while Mr. Si was arrested when the officers came to his home, in which they conducted a thorough search, confiscating Falun Gong-related materials, computers and address books. The two were taken separately to a secret interrogation site, whose precise location remains unknown. One week later, Mr. Si was released, while Ms. Si was transferred to a local detention center.

- Thirty days later she was sentenced without trial or legal representation to 1.5 years of “re-education through labor” for practicing Falun Gong to be served at Shijiazhuang Women’s RTL camp. According to
IV. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention

her father Mr. Si, much of the interrogators questions focused on the activities of his son Mr. Si Yang, a U.S. citizens residing in Los Angeles.

See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/767/

Arbitrarily arrested but released following international pressure

Bu Dongwei

Bu Dongwei, male, 40, Beijing, Amnesty International prisoner of conscience, wife resides in California:

- “Bu Dongwei, also known as David Bu, was assigned to two-and-a-half years’ ‘Re-education through Labour’ (RTL) on 19 June [2006] in connection with his activities as a member of the Falun Gong spiritual movement. He is detained at an undisclosed location, and Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience. He is at serious risk of torture or ill-treatment.”

- “Bu Dongwei had been working in Beijing for the US aid organization, the Asia Foundation, before he was detained by around seven police officers at his home in the Haidian District of the capital, Beijing, on 19 May [2006]. According to the decision of Beijing’s RTL committee, which has the power to impose periods of arbitrary detention without charge or trial, he was accused of ‘resisting the implementation of national laws’ and ‘disturbing social order’. The evidence cited was a verbal confession he made to police, and 80 copies of Falun Gong literature that the police discovered in his home. He is due to be released on 18 November 2008.


- Following a widespread letter writing campaign from Amnesty International and others, Bu was released from RTL in July 2008, several months ahead of schedule. According to Amnesty: “Bu Dongwei’s health deteriorated in detention, probably because of malnutrition. He was provided very little food of low nutritional value and was not allowed to buy additional meals himself. He had to attend re-educational classes every day and undertake packaging work.”


Brainwashing” Centers

An additional form of arbitrary detention commonly imposed on Falun Gong adherents was holding them for extended and undefined periods of time at “brainwashing centers” where they are pressured, and in many instances tortured, to renounce their faith in Falun Gong.

Qin Shizhen

Ms. Qin Shizhen, female, age 67. Ms. Qin, whose daughter resides in Albany, NY, was detained by Urumqi police in Xinjiang on March 31, 2008, during a visit to her sister’s home. The two women were followed by police while distributing information about Falun Gong late at night. The police detained Qin’s sister and forced her to unlock the door to her home, which they subsequently searched, confiscating computer equipment and Falun Gong-related materials. The two women were placed under house arrest until May 23. On that date, agents from the 6-10 Office of the Gansu Administration College (Qin’s former employer) and policemen from her home town of Lanzhou arrived in Xinjiang to collect her. They traveled by train for over 24 hours, arriving in Lanzhou on May 24, 2008, when Ms. Qin was immediately placed in Gongjiawan brainwashing center.

- Following a large degree of international pressure – including letters from dozens of New York state elected officials urging her release, Qin was eventually released in October 2008, after over six months in custody.

The year saw an increase in prison sentences given to adherents of Falun Gong, many of them coming after the conclusion of the Beijing Olympics and following months of pre-trial detention. Most sentences ranged from three to five years in length, though sentences as long as thirteen years were recorded. Lawyers who defended Falun Gong adherents continued to face intimidation and harassment.

In almost all instances, adherents were charged under a vague provision of the criminal code for “using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law.”

Legal defense

Throughout the year, a small group of approximately 20 lawyers continued to defend Falun Gong adherents, despite Party directives banning such action and a high degree of harassment for taking such cases. On repeated occasions throughout the year, lawyers defended practitioners in court, presenting detailed arguments as to the innocence of the practitioners in question and the broader need to observe the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion. The attorneys also raised the issue of the highly questionable legality of including personal belief in Falun Gong or related nonviolent acts of free expression under the provision of “using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law.” For an example of such an argument presented in court, see: [link]

The following two sample cases illustrate the above trends:

**Xu Na**

Xu Na, female, age 41—sentenced to three years in prison on November 25, 2008 for “using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law,” as confirmed by her defense attorney. Xu had previously been imprisoned from 2001 to 2006 for offering her apartment to Falun Gong adherents traveling to Beijing to appeal against the persecution.

See Agence France Presse report: [link]
V. Denial of Fair Public Trial

Forbearance and does not pose any danger to society. Falun Gong should be a new, legal religious form, and its followers’ religious activities should be protected by the law.’


Liu Fengmei

Liu Fengmei, female, 43—detained on February 25, 2008 together with three other adherents and held in pre-trial detention until the first week of August, when the Taihe District Court of Jinzhou City, Liaoning province put the four practitioners on trial.

- Liu was represented by Beijing attorney Li Heping who entered a “not guilty” plea on her behalf. Despite evidence that Liu and others had suffered severe torture during pre-trial interrogation, including their displaying injuries in court, the presiding judge denied the attorney’s request for a medical examination for their clients.

- On August 27, 2008, within days of the Olympics’ conclusion, Liu was sentenced to 13 years in prison.


Intimidation and harassment of lawyers

Lawyers known to represent Falun Gong adherents and take other sensitive cases continued to face harassment, monitoring, disbarment, and even detention or physical abuse at the hands of the authorities.

- An April 2008 report by Human Rights Watch, Walking on Thin Ice, highlighted, among others, the cases of two lawyers punished by the authorities after they represented Falun Gong:

  “Chinese lawyers who take cases seen by the government as politically sensitive or potentially embarrassing face severe abuses ranging from harassment to disbarment and physical assaults…. On October 19, 2005, one day after Gao [Zhisheng] published a scathing open letter to the top state leaders about abuses against religious and Falun Gong practitioners, he received an anonymous threat by phone…. An attorney from impoverished Guangxi province, Yang Zaixin, was dismissed from his law firm in January 2006 after he took a series of sensitive cases, including those of defendants accused of being members of the banned Falun Gong.”

  For a comprehensive account of these two cases as described in the HRW report, see:
  http://www.faluninfo.net/article/802/?cid=83
  http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/china0408/

- In August 2008, the Evening Standard reported on the 24-hour surveillance faced by above-mentioned Beijing lawyer Li Heping, as well as an incident from 2007 when he was abducted and shocked with electric batons: See: http://www.thisislonon.co.uk/sta ndard/article-23541200-details/Lawyer+Li+and+the+goon+squad/article.do

For the original report, see:
http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/china0408/
Reports from China indicate that many of the Falun Gong adherents detained ahead of the Beijing Olympics were taken directly from their homes or workplaces to detention centers and labor camps. Homes were frequently searched without warrant in order to find evidence that would implicate the Falun Gong practitioner, such as books of Falun Gong teachings or photos of its founder Mr. Li Hongzhi. Adherents also frequently reported that security officers confiscated electronic goods during home searches.

Falun Gong adherents continued to face regular and often highly intrusive surveillance by Chinese security officials, including 24/7 home surveillance, as well as the monitoring of telephones and email correspondence. Such surveillance appeared to increase in the months surrounding the Olympics, in part due to central government orders to lower level security forces to carry out such actions.

Reports from Falun Gong adherents in China frequently refer to surveillance by security forces, particularly the 6-10 Office. The Congressional Executive Commission on China found evidence of internal orders stipulating the nature of surveillance to be carried out against Falun Gong:

- “The Wuling Party Political-Legal Committee [in Changde, Hunan Province] describes having implemented a set of three ‘responsibility measures’ to ensure that more than 600 Falun Gong practitioners’ are closely monitored by the district police, neighborhood committee, and their own relatives. The Committee also instructs security officials to organize an ‘inspect and control’ system whereby local police are to conduct home ‘visits’ of Falun Gong practitioners three times per day. In order to monitor more ‘die-hard’ practitioners, public security forces are to form an ‘inspection and control small group’ to carry out ‘24-hour surveillance.’ A county report from Jiangxi province also stresses the need to ‘dispatch inspection and control personnel’ during ‘important periods of time’ in order to ascertain a practitioner’s ‘movement 24 hours a day,’ and report ‘unusual situations’ in a timely manner to the 6-10 Office. In addition to surveillance, the 6-10 Office is also required to develop broad ‘intelligence channels’ that allow them to ‘know whenever the enemy moves’.”

Among the most vulnerable to regular harassment by security officials are those who had previously been released from detention centers and labor camps. In several instances during the year, elderly Falun Gong adherents were released from detention in deteriorating health, having endured torture and other forms of abuse. Upon their return home, they were subject to continued surveillance and home visits from police. Several Falun Gong adherents are said to have passed away under these circumstances, including the following:

**Zhang Mingtong**

58-year-old Zhang Mingtong had been detained at a forced labor camp in Xuchang City, Henan Province, where he performed hard labor and was regularly beaten. He was released early from a 21-month sentence on account of his rapidly deteriorating health. Following his release, family members say his health had begun to improve and he regained mobility. As the Beijing Olympics approached, however, security agents began visiting his home frequently, sometimes threatening to arrest him again if he persisted in practicing Falun Gong. He passed away on October 2, 2008.

**Huang Guixi**

69-year-old Huang Guixi of Jilin Province served one year at the Yinmahe Forced Labor Camp in 2004-2005, during which time he was reportedly deprived of sleep, severely beaten, and burned with cigarettes. By the time he was released he was emaciated and in poor health. Following his return home, police regularly entered his home without notice to search for Falun Gong materials. In May, 2006, police found him to be in possession of a photo of Falun Gong’s founder, Mr. Li Hongzhi, and imprisoned him for 40 days. On another occasion, police reportedly confiscated the family’s television, copy machine, and other private belongings. The stress caused by the continued harassment reportedly exacerbated Mr. Huang’s health problems. He passed away on Sept 25, 2008.
VII. Freedom of Speech and Press

Falun Gong remained one of the most taboo topics of coverage for both Chinese and foreign news organizations reporting from China in 2008. The pre-Olympic crackdown included the detention and sentencing of adherents found to be possessing, producing, or distributing underground leaflets in accordance with their right to freedom of expression.

For domestic journalists, it remained clear that the only reporting permitted on the topic was that which was directed by the Central Propaganda Department—this included a prohibition on reporting the arrest, sentencing, or torture of adherents or their acts of peaceful resistance coupled with directions during certain periods to convey anti-Falun Gong propaganda.

Anti-Falun Gong propaganda ahead of Olympics

In an apparent attempt to justify the pre-Olympics crackdown on adherents, according to the CECC, 2008 saw an “increase in anti-Falun Gong propaganda ahead of the Olympics—Chinese security officials made statements prior to the Olympics that sought to link Falun Gong with terrorist threats, but produced no evidence to substantiate these claims.”

“In April 2008, the central government 6-10 Office issued an internal directive to local governments nationwide mandating propaganda activities to prevent Falun Gong from “interfering with or harming” the Olympics. References to the directive appear on official Web sites in every province and at every level of government. Local authorities distributed the directive widely in an effort to raise public awareness. References can be found on various Web sites ranging from public entities with indirect relations with the state (state-run enterprises, public schools, universities, parks, TV stations, meteorological bureaus, etc.) to commercial and social entities with no obvious ties to the state.”

- For foreign journalists, despite regulations ostensibly loosening restrictions on their access to information, according to the Foreign Correspondent’s Club of China in its online “Reporter’s Guide,” when it comes to Falun Gong, the recent trend had been that there is “No access,” the only subject described in such absolute terms.

Crackdown on distribution of underground leaflets

Given the inability of mainstream Chinese media to report truthfully on Falun Gong, adherents around the country continued a strategy of producing homemade underground leaflets and DVDs with information on the practice, rights abuses, and the broader history of the Chinese Communist regime. Despite the peaceful and constitutionally enshrined nature of such actions, the arrest and sentencing of Falun Gong adherents for possessing, preparing, or distributing such literature was widespread and systematic, particularly in the months leading up to and immediately following the Olympic games. A large percentage of those detained in the months prior to the Olympics were arrested without a warrant from their home or workplace, often accompanied by the ransacking of their residence by police and the confiscation of computer equipment and printed matter related to Falun Gong.

- A Chinese government website in Beijing’s Liulitun neighborhood described a January 2008 meeting of local officials on how to deal with Falun Gong before the Olympics. Among the directives issued at the meeting was the need to “mobilize the power of the masses of residents to report promptly if they find anyone handing out [Falun Gong] materials.” In the months following the meeting, at least 36 adherents were detained in the surrounding area. A screenshot of the website is attached as Appendix B.

As reported by the CECC:

- “In July [2008], Chinese state media reported the arrest of 25 Falun Gong practitioners and the destruction of 7 Falun Gong publishing operations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.”

See: http://www.fccchina.org/sensitiveareas.html
VII. Freedom of Speech and Press

- **Religious prisoners:** "Ha Jingbo and Jiang Ruoling," two middle school teachers from Dongfeng county in Jilin province, whom authorities detained in June 2008 for distributing educational leaflets about Falun Gong. After taking the two women to the Dayang Public Security Bureau, male officers severely beat them in an attempt to coerce confessions. The women are currently held in Dongfeng County Detention Center on unknown charges.

- **Religious prisoner:** "Yang Xiya," a 68-year-old resident of Yanshan county in Hebei province, whom authorities detained on May 20, 2008, after raiding his home and confiscating Falun Gong publications. Yang served 6 years of a 10-year prison sentence in Baoding Prison from 2000 to 2006 for professing belief in Falun Gong. Officials released him in 2006 to receive medical treatment for heart palpitations and injuries reportedly caused by torture. Yang is once again in Baoding Prison. It is unclear whether he is continuing to serve his existing sentence, or if officials extended his sentence as a result of new criminal charges.

For full CECC excerpts on Falun Gong, see: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/843/?cid=76

**Zhang Xingwu**

Mr. Zhang Xingwu, a 67-year-old retired physics professor at Jinan Normal University in Shandong province, and his wife, Ms. Pinjie Liu were arrested from their home on July 16, 2008. In recent years, Mr. Zhang had operated a site for printing underground newsletters and VCDs from his home. The newsletters included the *Minghui Weekly*, a collection of articles on Falun Gong and rights abuses committed against its adherents. Also printed were copies of *The Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party*, an editorial series published by the overseas Chinese-language Epoch Times newspaper. As a result of Zhang's efforts to disseminate such sensitive information, the local police reportedly viewed him as a key target for arrest in the pre-Olympic purge.

According to his daughter who resides in New York, six other local Falun Gong adherents who had distributed materials he prepared were also arrested recently, increasing Zhang's risk of receiving a long sentence.

Two documents obtained by the Falun Dafa Information Center, complete with the official stamp of the local security agency, confirm the couple's arrest. According to one document, Mr. Zhang faces charges of "using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law," a vague provision of the criminal code commonly used to sentence Falun Gong adherents to prison terms of up to 12 years:

For a more complete account of the couple's arrest, see: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/797/?cid=84

As of January 2009, Zhang remained in Jinan City Detention Center, as the authorities reportedly weighed whether to submit his case to the judicial or "re-education through labor" system for possible sentencing. His family was denied access to visit him.

For full CECC excerpts on Falun Gong, see: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/843/?cid=76

**New Tang Dynasty TV broadcast blocked**

In a significant blow to the free flow of information inside China, on June 16, 2008, the broadcast to Asia of New Tang Dynasty Television was shut down. According to the French satellite company Eutelsat, which hosts the station, the alleged cause of the switch off was a technical difficulty. On June 23, however, the press freedom watchdog Reporters without Borders, published the recording of an admission by a Eutelsat employee, implying that the shut down was a deliberate effort to curry favor with the Chinese regime.

For a more complete account of the couple's arrest, see: http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=27818

At year's end, the beam had not been renewed, thereby depriving the station's millions of viewers in China of uncensored information on Falun Gong, Tibet, the Olympics, the tainted milk scandal and other issues vital to Chinese audiences.
VIII. Internet Freedom

Throughout the year, Falun Gong and related websites remained among the most systematically and hermetically blocked by China’s Great Firewall, including during the Olympics. In at least one well-documented case, an adherent was sentenced to prison simply for downloading and circulating Falun Gong-related information from the internet.

In particular, while access to some previously blocked sites was eventually allowed in the Olympic media centers after an international outcry, Falun Gong-related websites—including Faluninfo.net—reportedly remained blocked throughout the games.

- According to the Congressional Executive Committee on China: “In response to foreign reporters’ complaints over blocked Web sites, a Chinese Olympics official publicly acknowledged in late July 2008 that sites relating to Falun Gong were blocked and would remain blocked despite the Olympics. Following those complaints, foreign media reported that some previously blocked sites, including those for Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Radio Free Asia, became accessible at the Olympic village.”

Falun Gong terms targeted for Skype surveillance

“Falun Gong” and other key words related to the group were also found to have been among those most likely to trigger monitoring, censorship, and storage of communication of Tom-Skype users, according to a study conducted by the Information Warfare Monitor and OpenNet Initiative Asia. The study, published in October 2008, found that in addition to filtering communications, Tom-Skype logs were retaining sensitive personal information of users, including usernames, passwords, bank account numbers, and e-mail addresses. Among the 96,499 messages that the researchers were able to access after they had been filtered and logged, “Falun” appeared in 6,744 (6.99%), the largest number of any other specific term (the only two terms with higher recorded numbers were the more vague ‘communist’ and ‘communist party’). The name of Falun Gong’s founder “Li Hongzhi” was detected in 485 of the messages. The prevalence of these terms within the sample would also indicate that Falun Gong is a particularly common topic of conversation among Tom-Skype users, be they Falun Gong adherents or other Chinese.

See: http://www.infowar-monitor.net/breachingtrust

Individuals punished for downloading Falun Gong information

While an increasing number of individuals have been gaining access to proxy servers in recent years and succeeding in circumventing blocks imposed by the Great Firewall, those found to have accessed and downloaded Falun Gong-related information continued to be at risk of arrest and sentencing.

- On November 3, 2008, a Shanghai court sentenced Liu Jin (female) to 3.5 years in prison for downloading information about the practice from the Internet and printing it to distribute to others. Liu, a former librarian at Shanghai Normal University, was sentenced by Fengxian District Court in a trial that lasted less than one day. She was sentenced in spite of statements made to the court in her defense by prominent Beijing rights lawyer Mo Shaoping. According to the Associated Press, Mo confirmed the sentencing. “This is common, Mo, who is well known for defending dissidents in China, said of the case and the sentence.”


- Prior to sentencing, Liu was held in pre-trial detention for nearly a year, having been arrested from her home without a warrant in November 2007, when police confiscated computer equipment and 20,000 yuan (~$3,000)

See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/830/?cid=104
IX. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Adherents of Falun Gong remained unable to peacefully assemble within mainland China for the purpose of protesting the state’s policy of persecution against them, practicing qigong exercises, meeting as a large group in public, etc. On the contrary, according to official directives, local security agencies were specifically tasked with preventing any form of Falun Gong-related appeal during the year, including the legally enshrined right to lodge a petition in Beijing.

“Three zeroes” — According to the CECC: “Several [official] reports [found online] mention ‘three zeroes’ that security officials should aim to achieve. An official report from the Communist Party Political-Legal Committee of Wuling district in the city of Changde in Hunan province urges cadres to ‘resolutely achieve the ‘three zeroes goal’ in 6-10 management work,’ which is defined as ‘no petitions in Beijing, zero incidents of local assemblies and protests, zero incidents of interference with television broadcasts.’”

VIII. Freedom of Religion

The year 2008 saw the increased deprivation of freedom of religion to Falun Gong adherents as many of those detained in the pre-Olympic clean up were arrested for no other reason than that they were known to continue practicing Falun Gong, even if that practice consisted of studying Falun Gong tenets and practicing Falun Gong meditation in the privacy of their homes. In many cases, adherents of Falun Gong were arrested for possessing Falun Gong books, the sale, distribution, or possession of which is prohibited.

“Transformation”

Those who refuse to disavow their belief in Falun Gong were routinely subjected to torture and other abuses in detention as part of a program of forced “transformation.” The transformation process was described in the CECC’s annual report as “a process of ideological reprogramming whereby practitioners are subjected to various methods of physical and psychological coercion until they recant their belief in Falun Gong.”

Falun Gong has never been permitted to register as a religion in China, and the religious rights of adherents as described in the Chinese constitution are thus not acknowledged. Only individuals belonging to one of China’s five officially sanctioned religions are recognized, while other groups—including Falun Gong and house churches—are liable to face severe persecution. For a detailed description of the daily difficulties and dangers faced by adherents, even those who seek to practice only privately.


In 2008, the majority of Falun Gong adherents sentenced to prison terms were charged with “using a heretical organization to undermine the implementation of the law,” referring to article 300 of the criminal code prohibiting xie jiao, or “heretical organizations.” Article 300 predated the campaign against Falun Gong, and the term xie jiao was not specifically applied to Falun Gong until October, 1999, when the National People’s Congress issued a decision to legitimize the campaign by labeling Falun Gong a heretical organization. As Amnesty International noted with reference to the decision: “The official directives and legal documents issued for this campaign undermine rights set out in the Chinese constitution as well as international standards. International standards permit some restrictions on freedom of expression, association and belief, but they do not grant discretion to states to define for themselves the circumstances in which these freedoms can be restricted. Under international standards, such restrictions must be ‘provided by law,’ must be ‘necessary’ and must be in pursuance of a ‘legitimate’ objective, such as the protection of national security, public
X. Freedom of Religion

order, or public health or morals.... Indeed, restrictions must not have the effect of entirely undermining the exercise of fundamental rights. Furthermore, restrictions may not be applied simply to suppress an opinion or belief. In the case of Falun Gong and other groups, the Chinese government’s crackdown and the legislation on “heretical organizations” are being used precisely for this purpose.”


Exclusion from Beijing Olympics

Ahead of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, statements by top officials, as well as an internal document, indicated that Falun Gong adherents from both inside and outside China would be excluded from participation in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, as athletes, coaches, journalists or spectators. Such a policy that discriminates on the basis of religious belief contravenes both the Olympic charter as well as the code of ethics signed in Beijing in April 2007.

In July 2007, Xinhua reported on a briefing given to defense attaches from 54 of China’s overseas embassies by Tian Yixiang, director of the military bureau for the Beijing Olympics’ security command center. According to the article: “...the PLA will be responsible for managing border control and to stop East Turkistan...organizations, Falun Gong adherents, and Tibetan separatists from getting into the games.” [emphasis added] See Xinhua, “PLA fields anti-terror team for Olympics,” 29 June 2007, available at http://www.david-kilgour.com/2007/July_11_2007_02.htm

A more formal statement relating to the specific exclusion of foreigners who practice Falun Gong from attending the games was given by Li Zhanjun, director of the Beijing Olympics media center, in November 2007. While rejecting allegations that the Chinese authorities intended to limit the entry of Bibles for personal use, Li singled out Falun Gong texts as an exception. As reported by the Associated Press: “We don’t recognize it [Falun Gong]... So Falun Gong texts, Falun Gong activities in China are forbidden.”


As an indication of how the Chinese authorities plan to identify those who should be barred, the Public Security Bureau reportedly initiated a surveillance program involving background checks into each individual wishing to attend the games. This included participating athletes, members of the media, Olympic staff members, referees, sponsors, dignitaries and the International Olympic Committee itself. Of the 43 categories of people to be targeted, included are individuals who currently practice Falun Gong, and those who have in the past practiced its exercises.


According to media reports and cited by the CECC: “Chinese public security officials also used supposed security concerns to justify a request made to the government of Japan in which they solicited information on Falun Gong practitioners residing in Japan who might attend the Olympic Games. The Japanese government refused to cooperate.”

See: http://www.istockanalyst.com/article/viewiStockNews/articleid/2407249
XI. Freedom of Movement within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, Repatriation

Adherents in China, as well as several of the attorneys representing practitioners, continued to face significant difficulties obtaining permission to travel overseas, including the issuance of passports. In addition, several incidents indicated increased restrictions on freedom of movement within the country and in particular, efforts by the authorities to prevent adherents from traveling to Beijing surrounding the period of the Olympic games.

As reported by the media and cited by the CECC: “The Shanghai Public Security Bureau sent a warning to Falun Gong practitioners and other dissidents in April 2008 demanding that they remain in the city during the Olympics and report to the public security office at least once a week until the end of October. The notice threatened to detain or punish anyone who violates the order.”

In August, the Falun Dafa Information Center reported that at train and bus stations 70 miles from the heart of Beijing, police had been placing photos of Falun Gong founder Mr. Li Hongzhi on the ground. To exit the station, all travelers were required to stomp on the spiritual teacher’s image. Those who refused were presumed to be Falun Gong adherents and taken away. According to reports received by the Center, at least two Falun Gong adherents in Hebei province’s Chicheng city (70 miles from Beijing) and Huailai county (100 miles) were rounded up this way in late July.

See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/796/

Measures were also taken to prevent Falun Gong adherents from overseas from entering the country during the Olympic period. Several Falun Gong adherents (not of Chinese dissent) reported being denied entry visas to visit China during the period of the Olympics.

XII. Hong Kong

A number of Falun Gong adherents were denied entry to the territory in the weeks surrounding the Olympic games and related events, including an American citizen and a British academic of Chinese descent. At least two Hong Kong residents were sentenced to prison in China during the year for their involvement with Falun Gong.

While Falun Gong continued to be practiced freely in Hong Kong and local adherents were permitted to carry out peaceful protests, the trend from previous years of practitioners from outside the territory being denied entry during “sensitive” times continued in 2008:

- In March 2008, shortly before the arrival of the Olympic torch, several Taiwanese Falun Gong adherents were denied entry, as they sought to join a Human Rights Torch Relay, according to Hong Kong’s Falun Dafa Association spokesman Kan Hung-cheung.

- On July 27, Leeshai Lemish, a U.S. citizen and Falun Gong practitioner who had traveled previously to the territory on multiple occasions, was blocked from entering. According to the Taipei Times, Lemish was coming from Taiwan as part of a research trip through Asia and had traveled to Hong Kong to apply for a visa to another country. After being held at the airport for three hours, he was put on a plane back to Taiwan with no explanation other than that he did not meet “Hong Kong immigration requirements.” Lemish had been traveling as a translator and assistant to author Ethan Gutmann, who is researching the persecution of the Falun Gong.
XII. Hong Kong

During the year, there were at least two reports of Hong Kong residents who had traveled to China being sentenced to prison because of their involvement with Falun Gong:

**Chen Jinshu**

Mr. Chen Jinshu, 49—On January 29, 2008, Bao’an District Court in Shenzhen, Guangdong province sentenced Chen, a Hong Kong resident and Falun Gong adherent, to six years in prison in a closed-door trial. Chen had been detained in April 2007, while visiting his elderly father in China. He was then charged with shipping copies of the *Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party* to the Mainland. The book, an editorial series on the history of the Chinese Communist Party but circulated freely in Hong Kong. Chen’s family and lawyer have denied the charges, stating that the said case had already been closed in 2005 when another Falun Gong adherent was sentenced.

**Lin Lixia**

On January 8, 2008, Lin, a Hong Kong resident and Falun Gong adherent, was reportedly sentenced to three years in prison. Lin was arrested on September 24, 2006 in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, along with several local adherents, but was allowed to leave the police station following international pressure. She subsequently spent most of 2007 under house arrest at a relative’s home. Police confiscated her Home Visit Permit (Mainland travel permit for Hong Kong and Macao residents), and personal ID, thereby preventing her from returning to Hong Kong.

See: [http://english.ntdtv.com/?c=145&a=1777](http://english.ntdtv.com/?c=145&a=1777)
XIII. Reports of Persecution Outside of China

Chinese government efforts to suppress Falun Gong outside of China, and particularly in the United States, increased in 2008. Pro-communist mobs attacked adherents in Flushing, New York, apparently at the instigation of the city’s Chinese Consul General. In September, an arm of the mainland Chinese Anti-Cult Association that has played a central role in the persecution of adherents in China was established in New York City.

Over the past ten years, scores of physical assaults, verbal attacks and death threats against Falun Gong adherents by Chinese government-linked individuals have been recorded in the United States, Europe, Latin America, Africa and elsewhere. According to testimony given to the U.S. Congress in July 2005 by former First Secretary and Consul for Political Affairs for the Chinese Consulate-General in Sydney, Australia, Chen Yonglin, such attacks are part of a far-reaching campaign by the Chinese government to malign and suppress Falun Gong in every country where the Chinese government has a diplomatic presence, with a particular emphasis on democratic countries where human rights workers regularly and publicly highlight the Chinese government’s crimes against Falun Gong. See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/576/

Like the pattern of abuse inside China, the Chinese government’s attempts to suppress Falun Gong in the United States also increased in 2008. Beginning on May 17, a pro-Communist mob of more than 100 people gathered on Main Street in Flushing, New York, assaulting Falun Gong practitioners. Several adherents of Falun Gong, including U.S. citizens, were physically assaulted by the pro-communist crowds, with others receiving threats to their lives. Several Falun Gong adherents reported being pelted with bottles, eggs, and stones, and being spit on by the assembled masses. The mobs continued to assemble for several days, further instigated by fabricated Chinese state-run media reports that Falun Gong adherents were interfering with charity collections for victims of the Sichuan earthquake. More than a dozen assailants were arrested by local police.

Over the following weeks, a climate was created in the area where nearly anyone who self-identified as a Falun Gong adherent risked being surrounded, heckled, and sometimes threatened with violence by ethnic Chinese mobs.

See also: http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/queens/2008/05/30/2008-05-30_falun_gong_supporters_in_flushing_say_th.html

Judy Chen

Judy Chen, a Falun Gong adherent whose two sons were on tours of duty in Iraq, was physically assaulted and threatened on May 17, 2008. Chen reported that the mob cursed at her, calling her a traitor who deserved to die. When she attempted to photograph the scene, a woman grabbed her camera and beat her, leading to bruises on her hand and face. “[The woman] then walked away saying ‘You better be careful, I will kill you. I want to see your face clearly. I want to kill you,’” reported Chen. See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/506/

Wang Weixing

Wang Weixing, a 57-year-old artist from Queens and a practitioner of Falun Gong, was in Flushing May 28, 2008 observing the events. When she picked up a Chinese newspaper whose lead story illustrated the connection between the Flushing mobs and the Chinese consulate in New York, within seconds, Wang found herself surrounded by hecklers. One witness claimed she also saw a man punch Wang in the chest, where she later reported suffering severe pain. See: http://www.faluninfo.net/article/576/

Evidence soon emerged that the mobs were not a spontaneous reaction to Falun Gong by local residents, but rather a sophisticated means for the Party to suppress the group, and particularly adherents’ rights awareness raising activities, beyond China’s borders.
On May 22, the Falun Dafa Information Center obtained a recorded phone conversation with New York City’s Chinese Consul General, Mr. Peng Keyu, in which he confirmed his role in encouraging the mob of several-hundred Chinese immigrants to assail Falun Gong practitioners. “They [mob organizers] came over after they fought with Falun Gong [in Flushing] and I shook hands with them one by one and thanked them,” Peng said during the recorded phone conversation.

- For the full transcript, see: [http://english.ntdte.com/?c=145&a=4645](http://english.ntdte.com/?c=145&a=4645)
- For video footage of the mob attacks in Flushing, New York and the full recording of the Consul General, see: [http://www.youmaker.com/video/sv?id=b8ee83fcb794731814de9230ae03737001](http://www.youmaker.com/video/sv?id=b8ee83fcb794731814de9230ae03737001)

Similar incidents were reported around this time in other cities and New York boroughs:

- On Saturday, May 16, ethnic Chinese assaulted adherents at a “Party-Quitting Station” in Tokyo, Japan. As in Flushing, poster displays were kicked or torn down and individuals assaulted.
- In Los Angeles on May 20, nonviolent Falun Gong demonstrators outside the Chinese consulate were accosted by ethnic Chinese. The perpetrators again tore down banners and destroyed informational materials. See: [http://www.faluninfo.net/article/536/](http://www.faluninfo.net/article/536/)
- In Brooklyn, on June 15, a Chinatown resident attacked Falun Gong adherent John Yu with a steering wheel locking device, breaking his camera and injuring his arm. Later in the month, the assailant was brought up on hate-crime and assault charges by the Brooklyn District Attorney. See: [http://www.nypost.com/seven/06302008/news/regionalnews/gong_assault_hate_crime__da_117853.htm](http://www.nypost.com/seven/06302008/news/regionalnews/gong_assault_hate_crime__da_117853.htm)

Increased police presence in Flushing eventually dispersed the crowds, but several individualso who had helped organize the crowds soon set up “information tables” in Flushing, distributing anti-Falun Gong propaganda to passers-by, and continued to incite members of the community to attack Falun Gong. Several subsequent incidents of small groups and individuals berating Falun Gong adherents in Flushing with obscenities and/or physically assaulting them have been reported.

In September 2008, the anti-Falun Gong actions were formalized when three pro-communist organizers believed to have helped organize the mobs in May established a non-profit organization called the Chinese Anti-Cult World Alliance, Inc. The organization’s bylaws specifically state the target of their activities as Falun Gong.

The newly registered group appears to be an extension of an organization originally established in mainland China on November 13, 2000 as the Chinese Anti-Cult Association (CACA). Although it carries a non-governmental organization title, the CACA is a government agency, specifically a unit of the official China Society and Technology Association (CSTA). The Secretary General and Vice-Secretary General in charge of CACA’s operations are full-time government employees, and all CACA branches have their offices inside government buildings.

According to the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China’s (CECC's) 2008 Annual Report, the CACA “claims to be a ‘non-profit, social welfare organization’...the government’s hand, however, can be clearly discerned in the publications and activities of anti-cult associations.” The CECC’s report also says of the CACA that:

- It “works in concert with the 6-10 Office (an extra-legal Chinese government agency in charge of ‘eradicating’ Falun Gong) to undermine Chinese citizens’ right to believe in and practice Falun Gong...Local anti-cult associations can be found at the provincial, county, municipal, and neighborhood level. Such associations have emerged as a prominent information channel for the government’s campaign against Falun Gong.”
- The primary activities of the CACA in China have been found to go beyond the development and implementation of propaganda against Falun Gong. CACA
XIII. Reports of Persecution Outside of China

staff also oversee and participate in “brainwashing sessions” held in prisons and detention centers throughout China that use a combination of fierce propaganda and brutal torture techniques to “transform” Falun Gong adherents. In 2004, seven human rights lawyers in Geneva filed a criminal complaint for torture against the organization’s vice president, who was attending a United Nations event at the time. He fled the country before the procuratorate could make a decision to arrest him on the charges.

See: http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/11360/

The response of U.S. officials to these events has included calls for an FBI investigation by NYC Councilmember Tony Avella, condemnation of the attacks by U.S. lawmakers, and law enforcement investigations into those responsible for the hate crimes. In an opening statement at a Congressional hearing on the Impact of the Olympics on Religious Freedom in China, Representative Trent Franks remarked:

● “Most of you have probably already heard about the attacks on Falun Gong adherents, human rights and democracy activists in Flushing, New York last month. … As the New York City police look into the attacks on these demonstrators, I am very disturbed to even consider that the Chinese government may have been involved in intimidating these demonstrators here in the United States. Sadly, we have the Tian’anmen Square to remind us of what happens to those who protest inside China, but the freedom to peacefully assemble is a cornerstone to America’s freedom and, at the very least, we must do what we can to protect those who choose to express this right while they are here.”

The attacks against Falun Gong adherents in Flushing and the establishment of a branch of the CACA in New York in the form of a non-profit organization in 2008 pose a significant danger to the freedom of belief, freedom of expression, and right to non-discrimination of Falun Gong believers in the United States.

Appendix A

Screenshot of the Liulitun website
## Appendix B: Documented Falun Gong Deaths in 2008

*Falun Dafa Information Center*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese name</th>
<th>Pinyin name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Date of death</th>
<th>Most recent place of detention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 金德洙</td>
<td>Jin Dezhu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Jilin</td>
<td>Longjing City, Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture</td>
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<td>Ahkesu City</td>
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<td>4 肖玉彬</td>
<td>Xiao Yupin</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>Name (if male)</td>
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<td>Education</td>
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