

CCP Signature Drive Targets Millions, Deploys WeChat to Spread Falsehoods

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Users who sign the WeChat petition defaming Falun Gong receive an award of completion, named the “Anti-Cult Guardian Badge”, and are encouraged to share the petition with their friends and family.



Dear Reader,

In a new attempt to turn the Chinese public against Falun Gong, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is carrying out a massive social media and signature campaign to spread demonizing propaganda and compel Chinese citizens to denounce Falun Gong and other banned faiths. According to government websites and state-run media, the petition has amassed tens of millions of signatures.

In other news:

- A resident in California reunites with her parents after nine years
- A practitioner imprisoned for sharing photos of Beijing during COVID-19 lockdowns is held in solitary confinement
- A Western Falun Gong practitioner in France shares her story of finding spiritual fulfillment

Propaganda campaigns spreading false and fabricated information about Falun Gong, new and old, show the extreme lengths the CCP is willing to go to demonize the group and attempt to justify the regime's horrific persecution. In this issue's featured video, we revisit the staged self-immolation of Falun Gong practitioners carried out by the regime's propaganda apparatus in January 2001, which has also made a reappearance in the above-mentioned signature drive.

FEATURE STORY

CCP Launches Nationwide Anti-Falun Gong Petition Campaign, Deceiving Tens of Millions

What's new?

Since early 2023, the CCP has been mobilizing institutions throughout Chinese society and the ubiquitous WeChat app to spread false propaganda demonizing Falun Gong and to garner millions of signatures on a petition against the faith and other banned religious groups, according to new research by the Falun Dafa Information Center. Police and members of village party committees have been photographed standing over people with their mobile phones, ensuring they sign, while activities targeting students have been held in hundreds of schools.

Tens of millions have signed the petition, according to multiple sources, and references to the campaign were found on Chinese government or other official websites in 30 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions.

Why does it matter?

The signature drive is the latest example of the regime investing massive resources into its effort to marginalize and persecute Falun Gong practitioners. Indeed, it matches other [findings](#) by the Falun Dafa Information Center showing that Falun Gong has emerged as an even higher priority in the CCP's political security efforts than before, according to comments by top officials and local governments since 2020.

Moreover, the tactics used by the CCP and the specific recommendations to petition signatories to reject materials distributed by religious believers demonstrates how security forces are trying to keep up with Falun Gong practitioners' own nationwide, grassroots campaign to counter the regime's demonizing propaganda, debunk falsehoods, and expose rights abuses.

What else do you need to know?

In implementing the campaign, the CCP has made widespread use of Tencent's WeChat app, creating QR codes, cartoon characters, and animated "badges" to reward signatories. In addition, the regime appears to be placing a particular focus on influencing Chinese students in primary and secondary schools across China, trying to turn them against Falun Gong.

This renewed focus on youth may reflect the fact that the CCP's campaign to persecute Falun Gong was launched nearly 25 years ago, long before many current students were born. The current signature drive introduces this new generation to demonizing and false propaganda about Falun Gong, inciting hatred against practitioners among this critical segment of the Chinese population. The campaign also renders them more likely to be fearful of Falun Gong believers, to report them to authorities, and to avoid taking up the practice at a time when many young people have shown renewed interest in spirituality amid record high youth unemployment.

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FAMILY RESCUE

California Resident Successfully Reunites with Her Parents After Nine Years

Yolanda Yao, a California resident featured in the Falun Dafa Information Center's family rescue campaign since 2017, has reunited with her father, Mr. Yao Guofu, and mother, Mrs. Liang Xin, after nine years. From 2015 through 2020, the elderly couple were imprisoned and tortured for their faith in Falun Gong and for possessing flyers and calendars in their home related to the practice and persecution.

After her parents were released from prison in June 2020, authorities in Henan Province continued to harass and threaten Mr. Yao and Mrs. Liang, particularly during festivals or sensitive political events. During the weeks leading up to such events, police would barricade the front door or threaten Yolanda's parents to stay inside their homes. The officers warned the couple to stop raising awareness about the persecution, or risk detention again. After facing intense harassment and house arrest during the 20th Party Congress in October 2022, Mr. Yao and Mrs. Liang decided to flee China for the United States. They successfully reunited with their daughter in early 2023. During their time in custody, groups like Freedom House, Amnesty International, as well as US congressional commissions such as the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, and the US Commission on International Religious Freedom also advocated for their release.

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PERSECUTION IN CHINA

30-year-old Falun Gong Practitioner Imprisoned for Sharing COVID-19 Information Held in Solitary Confinement

Mr. Li Zongze, age 30, is serving a five-year sentence for sharing photos of Beijing during COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020. According to sources in China, he has now been placed in solitary confinement in the Shandong Province First Prison and within just ten days of such treatment, shed approximately 20 pounds. Mr. Li and ten other Falun Gong practitioners in Beijing faced arrest on July 19, 2020, under suspicion of submitting photos to a U.S.-based media company. All eleven were sentenced to two to eight years on January 14, 2022, with their appeals rejected on May 18, 2023. Among the 11 Falun Gong practitioners was Xu Na who has been featured in several US government databases and annual reports, such as by the US Congressional Executive Commission on China and the International Religious Freedom Office at the State Department.

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AROUND THE WORLD

Falun Gong Around the World: Meet Sandra from France

Beyond the persecution in China, Falun Gong is a thriving, global community of people with diverse backgrounds. In this profile we hear from Sandra, a married mother of two boys who works as a makeup artist and seamstress in France. She shares about how she first came across Falun Gong and the impact the practice has had on her life.

“Attempting to embody the principles of Truthfulness, Benevolence, and Tolerance in my daily life has become one of my most significant challenges. I strive to be more tolerant with those around me, including my family. I’ve learned to approach the difficulties encountered in daily life with a lighter perspective and greater detachment. This shift has contributed to a more positive and enjoyable life, fostering positivity even in challenging circumstances.”

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HAVE YOU READ THIS? “The CCP Wages a Second Genocide – against Falun Gong”

In this piece by Nina Shea, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and former commissioner on the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, she calls on the US government to designate the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China as a genocide. She points to several rigorous reports establishing that large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners have been subjected to forced organ harvesting, in addition to mass imprisonment and forced renunciation of their faith through torture. Early CCP documents and speeches from top officials, such as Jiang Zemin, the now deceased general secretary who ordered the crackdown on Falun Gong, explicitly call for the eradication of the group.

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20 minutes

On January 23, five people reportedly set fire to themselves on Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Chinese state media reported the story in record time claiming the individuals were Falun Gong practitioners. Chinese airwaves were inundated with gruesome footage. But investigations by the *Washington Post*, analysis of video footage, and the fact that Falun Gong's teachings forbid suicide and killing pointed to the fact that the people were not Falun Gong practitioners and that the entire event was orchestrated as an elaborate propaganda ploy to turn public opinion against Falun Gong. The falsified event, which resulted in the death of at least one participant, showed the lengths the regime was willing to go to gain momentum in its crackdown on Falun Gong. As the 23rd anniversary of the incident approaches and the falsehoods surrounding it are still used in campaigns like the signature drive mentioned above, the Falun Dafa Information Center is re-posting this award-winning video analysis exposing the lies.

Watch Now

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Hundreds of Shen Yun Artists Join March in New York, Warn of CCP's Repression in America

Shen Yun Performing Arts, joined thousands of Falun Gong practitioners on July 20 in a march through Manhattan's Chinatown to condemn Beijing's persecution of faith and warn Americans about the regime's growing reach on U.S. soil... [Read more](#)



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Watch now: The Persecution of Falun Gong (Why is Falun Gong Persecuted in China?)