

THE FALUN GONG STORY

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Transnational repression is a potent tool of the Chinese Communist Party, used to threaten the freedom and democratic rights of dissent. The CCP currently directs the most targeted, oppressive, and comprehensive campaign of transnational repression in the world against Falun Gong practitioners.

According to leaked Chinese Communist Party documents, congressional testimonies from former Chinese diplomats, and third-party investigations, the CCP has enacted operations around the world to silence, marginalize, and suppress Falun Gong since the launch of the persecution in 1999.

Within the past two years, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has launched more overt campaigns to suppress the Falun Gong diaspora around the world. This is apparent through street violence, attempts at soft power subversion, and attacks on media outlets and organizations founded by Falun Gong practitioners. These operations continue today.



Chinese Regime Directives



First-hand CCP documents show that the transnational repression of Falun Gong practitioners is an orchestrated campaign and top priority of the Chinese Communist Party authorities.

The directive below details the Chinese regime's strategy of maligning, silencing, and suppressing Falun Gong outside China. "Treat the countries and regions with serious 'Falun Gong' activities such as the United States as the main battlefield," commands Meng Jianzhu, then a member of the CCP Central Committee and head of the PLAC.

Actions against Falun Gong overseas have featured:

- Physical assaults
- Online monitoring and surveillance
- Cyberattacks, database collection, and blacklist from traveling to China
- Diplomatic pressure and propaganda
- Obstruction and isolation of Falun Gong practitioners in their communities
- Threats on foreign businesses related or amicable with Falun Gong
- Manipulation and coercion of media to publish anti-Falun Gong columns
- Pressure and threaten human rights leaders, event organizers, persecution testifiers
- Threats and harassment of activists' family members
- United front activities and cultural exchanges
- Hinderances of Falun Gong events and clubs on school campuses and universities
- and more



In each Chinese mission overseas there must be at least one official in charge of Falun Gong affairs. The head and the deputy head of the mission will be responsible for the Falun Gong affairs. I am aware of there being more than 1,000 Chinese secret agents and informants residing in Australia, and they have partaken in efforts to persecute the Falun Gong. The number in the United States should be higher.”

— Former Chinese consul Chen Yonglin testifying before Congress



Aggressive Espionage by Country



Around the world, Falun Gong practitioners are targeted by the Chinese Communist Party for their faith. This phenomena is not limited to refugees who have fled China. Citizens of other nations around the world are also impacted. The repression and large range of intimidation tactics felt by Falun Gong refugees who fled China to escape this persecution includes the following:

1. **Threats**— governments reaching across borders to silence dissent among diasporas and exiles.
2. **Assault**— physical attacks and battery of Falun Gong practitioners outside of China and their personal belongings.
3. **Refugee Espionage**— efforts by state authorities to spy on and control people living overseas.

NOTE: The following are a small sample of the most egregious and prominent cases documented over the past 23 years.



United States



American citizens and residents who practice Falun Gong have faced harassment, heckling, death threats, and physical violence, often from thugs with ties to pro-Beijing “associations.” U.S. government officials, from small town mayors to members of Congress and White House officials, have received pressure, sometimes threats, from Chinese diplomats not to support Falun Gong.

The following are just a few sample cases...

February 2023: Information booth volunteer David Fang was assaulted until he bled by 77-year-old Zhongping Qi, who has a history of verbally abusing Falun Gong booth volunteers. This incident in February was only the latest in a series of incidents where Qi had targeted practitioners. He often cursed and made unprovoked slurs towards the volunteers at the Falun Gong information booths. NYPD arrested him and charged Qi with third degree assault for the incident.

February 2022: CCP ally, 32-year-old Zheng Buqiu, began vandalizing a Falun Gong booth outside Queens Public Library where he tore down a poster before being stopped by volunteers. For a week straight, Zheng destroyed booths across Flushing by punching and kicking display boards, knocking over tables with informational booklets, and breaking their portable speaker by stomping on it.

The attacks continued at three different information booth locations until NYPD officers arrested Zheng on Feb. 15. Police charged him with criminal mischief in the fourth degree and a hate crime, each of which could land him up to a year in jail. One booth volunteer said that Zheng was seen with Li Huahong, the president of an “anti-cult” group linked to the 610 Office, who has herself been arrested four times since 2008 by NYPD for vandalizing Falun Gong booths, indicating Zheng was not acting alone.



Zheng caught on video vandalizing volunteer information booths in New York.

May 2008: Over the course of several days, pro-Beijing mobs harassed and physically assaulted Falun Gong practitioners in the streets of Flushing, New York City. Then-PRC Consul General in NYC, Peng Keyu, was later caught on tape claiming he secretly instructed Chinese “community” groups to carry out the attacks. 16 of the attackers were arrested.

February 2006: Peter Yuan Li was assaulted and robbed by armed Asian men in his Atlanta home. Li was an information technology specialist who had been active in Falun Gong human rights advocacy for over six years. Around noon, an Asian man, feigning a water delivery, appeared on Li’s doorstep.

Before Li knew it, two men had forced their way in, pulled out a gun and knife, and wrapped him up in a blanket, attempting to suffocate him. They then used duct tape to cover his mouth, eyes, and ears, and an extension cord to tie up his arms and legs. The men beat him severely about the head and face, probably with the butt of the gun, Li said. He bled profusely.

Moments later he heard one to two other men enter his home and one of them spoke Mandarin Chinese. Half an hour later, they left. They had overturned his file cabinets and stolen two laptop computers and potentially other important documents, Li says, but no valuables. The wounds on Li’s face required 15 stitches.



After *Forbes* published news on practitioners' success of breaking through China's Internet blockade, three thugs broke into home of Li Yuan, one of the key technicians.



Canada



Canada, like the United States, is home to many Chinese citizens and residents who practice Falun Gong. Similarly, the Chinese Communist Party attempts to control and oppress the communities in the region.

“The repression against Falun Gong extends to Canadian soil...”

Ketty Nivyabandi, the Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada

The following are just a few sample cases...

June 2019: When Falun Gong practitioner Gerry Smith attended the 2019 annual Dragon Boat Festival in a public park in Ottawa, the festival's CEO ordered him to take off a shirt with words 'Falun Dafa' (another name for Falun Gong) and the principles of the spiritual practice: 'Truthfulness, Benevolence, Forbearance.' The CEO of the event said the Chinese Embassy was a sponsor of their event and that his shirt was an “inappropriate political statement.” The CEO also said seven to eight other Falun Gong practitioners who were doing the meditation exercises in the same park needed to leave.

A Chinese-language article about the incident was posted on websites inside China, labeling Falun Gong practices as being political and unwelcome at an event in Canada. The reports quoted the Festival's CEO and repeated anti-Falun Gong propaganda.



Mr. Gerry Smith meditating in the park.

August 1999: William Wang, an aircraft design engineer, went to Beijing for the third time to appeal against the CCP's persecution of Falun Gong with several other practitioners. A couple of days later, they were reported and then abducted by officers from Beijing's Fengtai District Police Department. They were handcuffed all the way back to their hometown.

Mr. Wang said that even after he came to Canada, he could still feel the pressure of the persecution. Shortly after arriving in Canada, the CCP police called and threatened Mr. Wang's father. They said Mr. Wang would lose his job and have no career if he ever returned to China if he continued to practice Falun Gong in Canada. This tactic of pressuring is common and widespread form of reprisal faced by Falun Gong practitioners across the world.

These are just a few notable cases of transnational repression and Beijing's oppression of dissidents in these select few countries. The case studies presented here are not wholly representative or encompassing the countless aggreviances that have occurred and continue to occur worldwide.



Diplomatic Pressure by Country



The Chinese Communist Party uses diplomatic pressure and its multilateral foreign policy channels to restrict or ban Falun Gong in other countries, as Beijing seeks to justify its own brutal persecution and treatment of Falun Gong practitioners within China.

These are just a few notable cases of diplomatic pressure on these select few governments. The case studies presented here are not wholly representative or encompassing the countless aggreviances that have occurred and continue to occur worldwide.



Propaganda and Media Silence



Mixed Early Reporting

When the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) first launched the campaign to eliminate Falun Gong, it did make headline news around the world. In 1999 alone, Falun Gong was featured on the cover of the *New York Times* on six separate occasions, including a top story about a secret press conference held by Falun Gong practitioners on the outskirts of Beijing.

Throughout 2000, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a series of investigative articles that exposed how Falun Gong practitioners were routinely imprisoned and tortured, sometimes to death, around China. These articles won the *Journal* a Pulitzer for investigative journalism.

The *Journal's* series was, however, the exception. Most early coverage was not in-depth, perhaps due to the fact that the spiritual practice was unfamiliar to most Western journalists. Furthermore, many reports continued to base reports around statements from CCP officials and other propaganda produced by China's state-run media. Consequently, many Western media reports carried, to some extent, the CCP's lies and false narratives about Falun Gong.

Beginning in 2002, however, the coverage fell off a cliff.

A Deafening Silence

For the past 20 years, there has been a significant silence on the persecution of Falun Gong in China. Besides a 2008 piece in the *New York Times*, and several articles in the last few years covering forced organ harvesting atrocities, for the past 20 years, there has not been a single significant article in any of the top five U.S. news outlets on the persecution of Falun Gong in China. This, despite the fact that the annual reports by human rights groups and governments around the world have documented millions of Falun Gong practitioners detained, imprisoned, tortured or killed by Chinese authorities.

At the same time, the Center has documented many cases of media outlets killing Falun Gong stories, cancelling Falun Gong interviews, and dubious meetings between CCP officials and major media leaders/publishers (learn more at: [Why haven't I heard about this?](#))

CCP Document Directs Manipulation of Western Media

A 2017 document was leaked from the 610 Office, which clearly outlines the CCP's strategy of mobilizing foreign journalists and international media to report on Falun Gong in a manner that more closely matches Beijing's own demonization of the practice:

“By ... cultivating non-governmental forces, we can fight heretical religions such as “Falun Gong,” thereby mobilizing influential and friendly people such as experts, scholars, journalists, and overseas Chinese community leaders to speak up. We should strive to have foreign media take a tone more favorable to us [on Falun Gong].”

In recent years, the implementation of this directive has appeared to tangibly impact reports by Western media that echo the CCP’s propaganda against Falun Gong: the exact same phrases, heretic slurs, and defaming language used by Chinese state-run media have been included in some Western media reports, and like their Chinese state-run counterparts, pay little heed to reality. For example, in an October 24, 2020 New York Times article, the author propagates the false claim that Falun Gong belief “forbids interracial marriage.” Even the most basic exploration of Falun Gong communities throughout the United States, and indeed around the world, prove this to be false. On the contrary, interracial marriages and families are quite common.

The source for such misinformation likely stems from English-language Chinese government websites and other official sources, which tailor their anti-Falun Gong messaging according to the narratives that have the best chance of striking a nerve in the host country. As racial tensions have soared in the United States in recent years, these Chinese government websites moved “racial discrimination” accusations to the top of their anti-Falun Gong propaganda pages.

It is also worth noting that many Western media companies have majority owners or parent companies with significant business ties with China. At the very least, this represents a significant conflict of interest between profits and candid, fair reporting on the Falun Gong human rights crisis.



Undermining Academic Freedom



Confucius Institutes and Chinese Students Scholars Association are two of the organizations that the Chinese Communist Party’s United Front Department has employed to influence college campuses around the world. Through these organizations, the CCP uses students and faculty to intimidate and harass American students who support Falun Gong, even if they may not practice.

In the United States, several universities with Falun Gong clubs like Columbia, UPenn, Stanford, Harvard, the University of Texas, the University of Arizona, and others have also seen immense ideological pushback and invasive acts of intimidation. Research about this is ongoing as of December 28, 2022.



Harassment of Shen Yun



Another target of the CCP is Shen Yun Performing Arts, the performing arts company celebrated for its world-class performances of classical Chinese dance and music. The performing arts troupe has dozens of recorded cases where the Chinese Communist Party and its “diplomatic missions” has attempted to harm performers, intimidate local venues or government to cancel the show, or interfere in other ways with Shen Yun’s shows around the world.

Many of Shen Yun’s artists have experienced first-hand religious persecution under communist rule in China before they immigrated to New York. For example, the father of principal dancer Steven Wang was imprisoned in China for practicing Falun Gong and tortured to the brink of death; he died shortly after his release. Steven Wang’s mother is now detained for her faith in a Chinese prison. (Updated September 2022)

Dragon Springs, home to the Shen Yun campus and training facilities, has also met with opposition from several local New York residents, who were found to have ties to China, including in the business sector. A key individual is Alex Scilla, 39, an American who runs a nonprofit called NYEnvironcom, and had previously lived in Tianjin for 15 years, with his background posted on the website of the American Chamber of Commerce in China (AmCham China). In recent years, nearly all of Scilla’s non-profit’s advocacy has focused on the Shen Yun campus and a few other real estate projects tied to the Chinese expat community in Deerpark, which one of the documents on the site calls “satellite developments” of the campus. In recent years, surveillance drones, trespassing, and other acts of aggression have occurred with increased frequency as well.

Aside from these attempts to disrupt the training facilities, another method of intimidation targets performance venues and public officials. Theaters worldwide have received threatening letters from Chinese embassies and consulates, warning them not to host Shen Yun lest they antagonize the CCP. Public officials, like senators and state representatives, have received similar letters defaming Shen Yun and urging them not to attend the shows.

Other attacks have physically endangered Shen Yun performers. In 2009, a tire exploded on a Shen Yun bus carrying dozens of dancers from Phoenix, Arizona, to their next performance in California. When the driver brought the bus in for service, the mechanics told him the blown tire had unusual marks on it. Apparently, somebody had used a drill to make a hole halfway through the rubber—not enough for it to deflate, but enough for it to burst once on the road. Several months later, one of the company’s buses was found to have two slashes on its tire, both clearly made with a blade. Within the same week, a tire on another bus burst while en route from Memphis to Little Rock on I-40 West. Two days after the incident, that same bus was found with slashes on one of its tires. In one case, someone poured corrosive chemicals over the brake and accelerator pedal cables of a Shen Yun promotional minivan. The company eventually had to arrange 24/7 security for all its vehicles.

Even personal information, such as the identities and families of the performers, have been exploited by the regime. The parents of one Shen Yun emcee would receive visits from Chinese authorities nearly every weekend. In another case, the husband of an instrumental soloist was monitored and jailed in China. These scare tactics also expanded to America when the home of Shen Yun choreographer and manager Chen Yung-chia was broken into in August 2013. “The intruders seemed to be professionals, as they left no fingerprints. The intruders had a motive [other than simple robbery],” Chen said. “They came here thinking they could gather sensitive information about Shen Yun.” Valuables, such as cash, gold jewelry, and expensive watches were all left untouched. Instead, what was stolen were four laptops and a DVD player.

As recent as July 8, 2022, the last week of Shen Yun’s world tour, groups of pro-Beijing protesters like the CCP Committee Taiwan gathered outside of the venue before showtime and disturbed audience members entering the National Dr. Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in Taipei, Taiwan. In June 2022, a theater crew member in Midwest region of America reportedly told a Shen Yun production personnel that every time Shen Yun leaves, the theater will receive letters from the Chinese consulate. It’s standard procedure for the theater employees now.



Third-Party Research



Practitioners abroad are targeted by the long arm of the 610 Office. The CCP and its agents will monitor, harass, and even physically assault exiled Falun Gong adherents or local non-Chinese citizens who practice Falun Gong. These transnational repression cases are well-documented by human rights organizations and Falun Gong communities in the United States, the Czech Republic, Taiwan, Brazil, Argentina, and more.

Freedom House

Since 1999, Freedom House has been one of the most consistent international voices in support of Falun Gong practitioners’ right to practice their faith without fear of persecution. In 2021, Freedom House issued “Out of Sight, Not Out of Reach: The Global Scale and Scope on Transnational Repression.” In the report’s [China chapter](#), Freedom House details the CCP’s persecution of Falun Gong via transnational repression abroad.

Freedom House found that the Chinese regime “engages in the most sophisticated, global, and comprehensive campaign of transnational repression in the world” and that among its targets are Falun Gong practitioners.

“Anti-Falun Gong activities are led by the 6-10 Office, an extralegal security agency tasked with suppressing banned religious groups,⁴ and the MPS, but local officials from various regions are also involved in monitoring Falun Gong exiles from their provinces. Hackers from the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) run spyware campaigns from within China.”

These reprisals include frequent harassment and occasional physical assaults by members of visiting Chinese delegations or pro-Beijing proxies at protests overseas, as in cases that have occurred since 2014 in the United States, the Czech Republic, Taiwan, Brazil, and Argentina. Media and cultural initiatives associated with Falun Gong have reported suspicious break-ins targeting sensitive information, vehicle tampering, and pressure from Chinese authorities for local businesses to cut off advertising or other contractual obligations with them.

The Freedom House report also noted that practitioners in Thailand had been detained, “including a Taiwanese man involved in uncensored radio broadcasts to China and several cases of Chinese refugees formally recognized as such by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).” Countries besides Thailand where this has happened include India, Serbia, Malaysia, Egypt, Kazakhstan, UAE, Turkey, and Nepal.

“In October 2017, a Falun Gong practitioner who had survived a Chinese labor camp and become a high-profile informant on CCP abuses—sneaking a letter into a Halloween decoration when detained and later filming a documentary with undercover footage—died of sudden kidney failure in Indonesia. Some colleagues consider his death suspicious, but no autopsy was performed.”

IRSEM

In October 2021, the Institute for Strategic Research of the French Ministry for the Armed Forces (IRSEM) published a 646-page report, titled “Chinese Influence Operations: A Machiavellian Moment.” The study details the Chinese Communist Party’s infiltration and influence over international governments in various sectors, including media, diplomacy, economy, politics, education, think tanks, and culture.

According to IRSEM, the CCP’s first goal is to silence Chinese communities abroad, especially dissidents with different opinions, ethnic Chinese who grew up in democratic countries, and religious and ethnic minorities like Falun Gong, Uyghurs, and Tibetans. In terms of implementation of its goal, the CCP monitors these organizations and individuals regardless of their nationality – as long as they are Chinese descendants. The tactics range from information gathering, infiltration, suppression, threat, intimidation, harassment, and even direct violence.

The report highlights 79 instances of the CCP’s persecution of Falun Gong outside China. These include concrete examples of how the CCP bought off overseas Chinese media and Chinese organizations to spread fake information that demonizes Falun Gong and incites hatred. For example, the CCP threatens and intimidates Falun Gong practitioners through the Chinese Students and Scholars Association (CSSA), which often have ties to local Chinese embassies and consulates, individual Chinese students studying overseas, and online trolls.

Bitter Winter

On July 9, 2021, the U.S. Department of State condemned “the designation of the Khakassia regional branch of Falun Gong as ‘extremist’” in a decision where judges “criminalize the peaceful practice of their spiritual beliefs. Russian authorities harass, fine, and imprison Falun Gong practitioners for such simple acts as meditating and possessing spiritual texts.” This decision follows **years of growing relations between Moscow and Beijing**, especially after both regimes paradoxically won seats in the UN Human Rights Council last October.

The DOS continued to state that the court’s decision against Falun Gong “is another example of Russian authorities labeling peaceful groups as ‘extremist,’ ‘terrorist,’ or ‘undesirable’ solely to stigmatize their supporters, justify abuses against them, and restrict their peaceful religious and civic activities. The Russian government has done so against a number of groups, whose members face home raids, extended detention, excessive prison sentences, and harassment for their peaceful religious practices.”

The U.S. Department of State noted that this is just **another example of the Russian practice of misusing the ‘extremist’ designation as a way to restrict human rights and fundamental freedoms**: “*We continue to call on Russia to respect the right of freedom of religion or belief for all, including Falun Gong practitioners and members of other religious minority groups in Russia simply seeking to exercise their beliefs peacefully.*”

Safeguard Defenders

On September 13, 2022, Safeguard Defenders reported that Chinese police are currently running at least 54 “overseas police service centers” in foreign countries, some of which work with law enforcement back home to run operations on foreign soil. The Chinese regime is carrying out this illegal, transnational policing operations across five continents, targeting overseas critics of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for harassment, threats against their families back home and “persuasion” techniques to get them to go back.

U.S arrested Chinese agents for persecution of Falun Gong



On May 26, 2023, the U.S. Department of Justice announced the arrest of two CCP (Chinese Communist Party) agents. They are accused of participating in a plan to persecute Falun Gong practitioners in the United States.... [Read more](#)

Violent Suppression of 100 Million People in China



It's one of the largest campaigns of religious persecution happening in the world over the past 20 years. Millions of innocent people in China have been jailed, tortured, or killed simply for practicing Falun Gong... [Read more](#)

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Short film: Who are Falun Gong practitioners? What motivates them? And how might their struggle to expose the Chinese Communist Party's human rights abuses have far reaching implications for all of us? Learn more at Faluninfo.TV



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