



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
22 February 2024

English only

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## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-fifth session

26 February–5 April 2024

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Written statement\* submitted by Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[5 February 2024]

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\* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



## **The Persecution of Falun Gong: A Case Study of Religious Persecution in China**

Since 1999, the Government of China has engaged in systematic persecution to eradicate the Falun Gong spiritual practice. This campaign involves nationwide harassment and detention of Falun Gong believers, who are then subject to forced conversion via torture—at times resulting in death—and even forced organ harvesting. International human rights experts have deemed this campaign a cold genocide.

For thousands of years, spirituality has been central to Chinese culture. Falun Gong (also called “Falun Dafa”) is a Chinese meditation practice rooted in the Buddhist tradition. Following the practice’s introduction to the public in 1992, many people in China saw it as a revival of traditional Chinese culture. The practice’s core values of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance resonated across the country, and according to Chinese government estimates, 70 million to 100 million people had taken up the practice by 1999.

From 1949 on, the Government of China has sought to control the thoughts of the Chinese people, carrying out campaign after campaign to stamp out ideological diversity. Though Falun Gong was spiritual in nature and focused on improving the character of the individual rather than advocating for societal changes, the then-State and Communist Party leader, Jiang Zemin, gave the order to “ruin their reputations, bankrupt them financially and destroy them physically”. Thus, in July 1999 Chinese citizens who practice Falun Gong across the country, including even members of the Chinese Communist Party and officials, abruptly became targets of the China’s violent suppression.

For nearly 25 years, the human rights atrocities Falun Gong practitioners face in China have continued unabated. In 2023, the number of Falun Gong practitioner deaths documented by Falun Gong sources surpassed 5,000, yet this number is believed to be only the tip of the iceberg. A coordinated, global response to the China’s campaign against Falun Gong practitioners is long overdue.

On January 18, 2024 in Strasbourg, the European Parliament adopted the EU Resolution titled “European Parliament resolution of 18 January 2024 on the ongoing persecution of Falun Gong in China, notably the case of Mr Ding Yuande (2024/2504(RSP))”. The European Parliament condemned the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and other minorities, including Uyghurs and Tibetans by China. It also urged China to end its suppression of religious freedom as well as its transnational repression of Chinese religious dissidents.

While past resolutions, such as European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2013 on organ harvesting in China (2013/2981(RSP)) and European Parliament resolution of 5 May 2022 on the reports of continued organ harvesting in China (2022/2657(RSP)), have mainly address forced organ harvesting, this latest resolution calls for the EU and its Member States to take decisive action against the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. These actions include calling on China to end its persecution, suspending extradition treaties with China, and monitoring trials of Falun Gong practitioners.

Moreover, the European Parliament called for the use the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime and national human rights sanctions regimes against all perpetrators and entities that have contributed to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China and abroad. These sanctions include refusing visas, freezing assets, expulsion from EU territories, criminal prosecution – including based on extraterritorial jurisdiction—and bringing international criminal charges.

In December 2022, the State Department of the United States of America imposed visa sanctions on Zhang Hongbo, Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), China Public Security Bureau director, and Tang Yong, former deputy director of Chongqing city, as well as the Chinese official Yu Hui for human rights and religious freedom violations in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), China and adjacent regions where Tibetans live and against Falun Gong practitioners, respectively.

In 2023, several countries including the United States of America, Canada, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland passed or introduced legislation addressing organ harvesting, such as through criminal punishment of individuals going to China to receive an organ transplant.

In response to the international community's condemnation of the Government of China's human rights abuses, the regime has denied the existence of these abuses or attempted to justify them as legitimate means to maintaining social stability.

As of February 5, 2024, China has not responded publicly to the EU resolution of 18 January 2024 on the ongoing persecution of Falun Gong in China, nor the resolution's call for the release of Falun Gong practitioner Mr. Ding Yuande, who was sentenced to three in prison and fined approximately \$2,100 USD (or 15,000 CNY) on December 15, 2023 by the Wulian County People's Court. Mr. Ding appealed the judgement. On January 29, 2024, his appeal was affirmed by the Rizhao Municipal Intermediate People's Court of Province Shandong.

After the Canadian Delegates urged China to stop the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners at the recent Universal Period Review (UPR), the Chinese delegate kept silent and has not rejected its crimes against humanity of systematically persecuting Falun Gong practitioners.

In the national report submitted by China for the UPR, China did not mention its persecution of Falun Gong and continued to whitewash its abuses against Uyghurs and Tibetans as legitimate means for countering terrorism or maintaining political stability. Furthermore, China continues to deny access for UN and third-party human rights monitors. These actions make it perfectly clear that the horrendous state of human rights in China will not improve out of China's initiative and serious international pressure must be applied.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the UN Human Rights Council to:

1. Publicly condemn the ongoing persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and strongly urge China to immediately end the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghurs, Tibetans, human rights defenders as well as all other innocent persecuted groups of prisoners of conscience.
2. Call for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Ding and all Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghurs, Tibetans as well as other prisoners of conscience in China.
3. Call on China to end its transnational repression against Chinese religious and political dissidents;
4. Strongly urge China to prosecute and punish perpetrators of torture under articles 7 and 12 of the UN Convention against Torture, which China has ratified;
5. Urge China to abide by its obligations under international law and its own constitution to respect and protect human rights;
6. Call on the UN Member States to suspend extradition treaties with China;
7. Call on UN Member States' embassies in China to monitor the court proceedings of Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghurs, Tibetans, Christians and other prisoners of conscience, as well as to visit them in detention centers or prisons; Call on UN Member States' embassies in China for assistance in investigating the forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience;
8. Call on UN Member States to use relevant sanctions against all perpetrators and entities that have contributed to the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China and abroad;
9. Publicly condemn organ transplant abuses in China, appoint a Special Rapporteur on forced organ harvesting of living prisoners of conscience in China, and establish an international criminal tribunal for forced organ harvesting in China.