

Persecution: Background  
Source: Falun Gong Website

## The Persecution of Falun Gong in China

On July 20, 1999, over 100 million good citizens in China were cast in the role of criminals. On that date, the peaceful self-improvement practice of Falun Gong was banned by the government, and a massive campaign of misinformation, intimidation, and brutality spread across the land. In the weeks, months, and years that followed, hundreds of thousands have been rounded up and imprisoned in psychiatric hospitals, forced-labor camps, brainwashing centers, and prisons. As of September 2003, more than four years later, nearly 800 deaths from torture have been verified by outside sources, but experts place the actual number in the thousands. What could have led to such an irrational and incomprehensible campaign of hatred and violence?

Superficially, it appeared that it was the Chinese government's collective decision to eliminate the practice. Emerging evidence reveals, however, that it was China's leader at the time, Jiang Zemin, who was responsible for the persecution. Among the reasons offered by some China watchers, Jiang feared the growing numbers of Falun Gong practitioners and was jealous of the practice's popularity. Unable to crush the millions who had benefited from Falun Gong, Jiang intensified the regime's propaganda campaign to turn public opinion against the practice while escalating the brutality.

The information provided here is intended to serve as a brief outline of the developments that led to the persecution of Falun Gong. For more information, please visit the Falun Dafa Information Center at <http://www.faluninfo.net>. A special in-depth report on this subject may be viewed at <http://www.faluninfo.net/specialreports/jiangpersonalcrusade>.

The Chinese government's initial support

Before the persecution began, Falun Gong practitioners could be seen doing their morning exercises everywhere in major cities across China. Since its introduction to the public in May 1992, the practice had become well known and highly respected throughout the country. Falun Gong's founder, Mr. Li Hongzhi, received many government awards, including the Award for Advancing Frontier Science at the 1993 Oriental Health Expo in Beijing. In 1998, the Chinese government conducted an official survey of Falun Gong practitioners in Beijing, Guangdong, and Wuhan, which concluded that Falun Gong was not only harmless but also beneficial to China in many ways. Along with improving people's health, the practice uplifted moral standards and encouraged social stability. At that time, it was estimated that there were about 70 to 100 million Falun Gong practitioners in China, and billions of Yuan were being saved in national healthcare costs. According to China's Sports Commission, as reported by U.S. News and World Reports in February 1999, each Falun Gong practitioner saved the country 1,000 Yuan each year.

Not only were masses of China's citizenry learning Falun Gong, but reportedly, all seven of the Politburo members (China's highest-ranking government officials) had read Zhuan Falun (the principal book of Falun Gong's teachings). Relatives and friends of government leaders were practicing, and many high-ranking officials in the Party, government, and military attended Mr. Li's lectures of their own accord. Given the level of government monitoring and control over the daily lives of China's populace, it would have been impossible for such a social phenomenon to exist and flourish for seven years without government support.

The onset of secret investigations

Despite Falun Gong's apparent support from all levels of government, incidents involving harassment of its practitioners began to appear in parts of China as early as 1996. The harassment began as isolated beatings by police and increasingly became more public, taking the form of defamatory news articles.

At the beginning of 1997, a high-ranking official and close associate of Jiang Zemin named Luo Gan ordered the police throughout China to conduct secret investigations of the practice. The police reports, however, failed to turn up any incriminating evidence. Nevertheless, in July 1998, through the Public Security Bureau, Luo Gan reportedly issued a document labeling Falun Gong a "cult" and instructing police departments nationwide to systematically plant agents to collect evidence against the practice. These investigations also produced no evidence of criminal activity attributable to Falun Gong.

At the end of 1998, more than a hundred Falun Gong practitioners who were prominent members of their communities jointly submitted a letter to Party leader Jiang and Premier Zhu Rongji. The letter stated that the Public Security Bureau document violated the Chinese Constitution and was illegal. Premier Zhu responded quickly to the letter in a positive way, stating that the Security Bureau should not be harassing Falun Gong practitioners. However, the Premier's response was withheld from practitioners, and sources reveal that it was Luo Gan who secretly withheld it. It was not until April 25, 1999, when Falun Gong practitioners went to the State Council Appeals Bureau and spoke directly with Zhu, that the Premier learned his response had been withheld and practitioners learned of his positive response.

The April 25th appeal

The appeal at Zhongnanhai

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In Mainland China, appeals offices are set up by the government to enable citizens to communicate with officials at all levels of departmental administration and with the Party itself. On April 25, 1999, after hearing the news that police in Tainjin had arbitrarily arrested and beaten around 45 practitioners, approximately 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners from across China journeyed to the State Council Appeals Bureau in Beijing. They hoped to appeal directly to high-level officials in the central government.

Upon seeing the peaceful gathering, Premier Zhu himself requested a meeting with representatives from the crowd. At that meeting, Zhu learned of the beatings in Tianjin and that practitioners had been told by local police that the issue was under the jurisdiction of the central government and could not be resolved locally. Zhu ordered the immediate release of the incarcerated practitioners and suggested that a representative of Falun Gong return the next day to continue discussions with officials. The entire crowd then dispersed quickly and quietly returned to their homes.

The Premier's successful handling of the Tianjin incident and subsequent large-scale appeal in Beijing was praised by the international community. However, sources close to the leadership disclosed that Zhu's actions triggered extreme jealousy on the part of Jiang Zemin. Jiang was also shocked by the seemingly quick mobilization of 10,000 people, and his subsequent actions indicated his level of fear and alarm.

Jiang's plan for persecution  
Falun Gong practitioners being beaten by police on  
Tiananmen Square

On the evening of April 25, Jiang wrote a letter to Politburo Standing Committee members, calling for an emergency meeting to discuss the incident. It is said that during the meeting, he openly reprimanded Zhu Rongji, repudiating the Premier's decision as it was in the process of being implemented and forcing the committee to accept his own mandate for a ban on Falun Gong.

According to an internal party document dated June 7, 1999, Jiang ordered the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee to set up the "Head Office for Handling the Falun Gong Issue," also known as the "6-10 Office" for the date it was officially founded. Jiang personally appointed three chiefs to oversee this Office, one of whom was Luo Gan. A little over a month later, on July 20, Jiang officially launched the nationwide crackdown against Falun Gong.

The Washington Post reported in an article published on August 5, 2001, that according to a government official, the approach used to suppress Falun Gong consisted of three tactics: "violence," "a high-pressure propaganda campaign," and "intense study sessions" or brainwashing classes.  
([http://www.fofg.org/news/news\\_story.php?doc\\_id=178](http://www.fofg.org/news/news_story.php?doc_id=178))

In the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, Jiang has used the "6-10 Office" to carry out orders such as, "Defame their reputations, bankrupt them financially, and destroy them physically." Practitioners have been detained, fired from jobs, expelled from school, evicted from their homes, fined, arrested, beaten, brainwashed, tortured, and even killed. Their family members, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and employers are also implicated by association. The propaganda machine of the entire country is geared to fomenting lies and producing hatred-inciting materials with the intent of forcing the populace into opposing Falun Gong.

#### Sustaining the persecution

On March 20, 2003, the World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong (WOIPFG) issued a report to the Canadian Parliament stating that the Jiang regime has spent 25 percent of the country's financial resources to persecute Falun Gong. WOIPFG reported that funding comes from the diversion of foreign investments and Chinese citizens' earnings, as well as from illegal fines imposed on Falun Gong practitioners and their families or work units.

Funds are used, for example, to beef up security departments, the "6-10 Office," and the foreign affairs department. It is estimated that billions of Yuan are spent on surveillance equipment, propaganda, and maintaining blacklists, and that billions more are poured into building or expanding prisons, brainwashing centers, and especially labor camps. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported in 2001 that "close

to half" of those held in Chinese labor camps were Falun Gong practitioners.

To review the WOIPFG report, "Draining China's Financial Resources" visit <http://www.upholdjustice.org/English.2/draining%20China.htm>.

In September 2003, the Chinese ministry issued a directive stating that China would 'fight Falun Gong to the end', thereby intensifying its brutal campaign. It issued this statement on the heels of another statement urging countries to avoid accepting lawsuits against China's leadership. Since 2001, nearly a dozen lawsuits have been filed in France, Germany, Belgium, Australia, Canada, the United States and other countries, with more planned. The PRC's statements would indicate its deep concern that the crimes of China's leaders will be exposed and that they will be held accountable internationally, and most importantly, by China's own population on the mainland.

Friends of Falun Gong USA will continue to support all efforts to bring the crimes of Jiang and his regime to light, and to hold them accountable for the suffering they have brought to millions of innocent people.

PDF version is here.

On this July 20, the Chinese Communist Party's violent persecution of Falun Gong and Falun Gong practitioners' peaceful resistance will enter their eighth year. (Watch the video on Falun Gong practitioners' Tiananmen Appeal.)

When the CCP launched the persecution, it was looking for a quick kill. The CCP's propaganda machine boasted that it would "completely solve the Falun Gong question in three months." Given how the CCP had been able to annihilate all victim groups in its previous persecutions, some China experts and international observers thought the regime needed just a week. Others predicted that Falun Gong would have to go underground to survive.

A photograph of the Chen family. All six practice Falun Gong: Mr. Chen Yunchuan, the father; Ms. Wang Lianrong, the mother; Ms. Chen Shulan, the elder daughter; Mr. Chen Aizhong, the elder son, who was tortured to death on September 20, 2001; Mr. Chen Aili, the younger son, who was tortured to death on November 5, 2004; and Ms. Chen Hongping, the younger daughter, who was tortured to death on March 5, 2003. Currently, every family member has disappeared.

As history unfolds, what seemed a lopsided onslaught has turned out to be an epic struggle of peace vs. violence, truth vs. lies, and conscience vs. evil.

There is no doubt as to the CCP's ferociousness. In the first couple of years of the persecution, the CCP was able to bring the weight of the entire society down onto Falun Gong practitioners. Every element of society, from government ministries down to neighborhoods, was turned against Falun Gong. Falun Gong practitioners were forced to renounce their belief, or be fired from their jobs, expelled from schools, stripped of business licenses, evicted from their homes, and deprived of retirement payments.

There is also no doubt as to the regime's brutality. Those who refused to yield to the political and social pressure were incarcerated, brainwashed, tortured, and killed. Millions upon millions of Falun Gong practitioners, from young children to pregnant women and the elderly, have been detained and abused; thousands have been tortured to death, with countless others still unaccounted for. Most shockingly, at least one clandestine concentration camp is reported to have extracted vital organs from thousands of Falun Gong practitioners. With the regime's information blockade keeping the full picture hidden, the scope and severity of the atrocities are difficult to fathom.