

PERSECUTION OF FALUN GONG BY THE BEIJING REGIME

Evidence to the London Tribunal under Sir Geoffrey Nice QC December 2018

My name is **Edward McMillan-Scott**, UK citizen. I enclose my CV as annex 1 to this statement.

It is nearly 20 years since the most systematic persecution of one group began in China in 1999.

As a European Parliament Vice-President 2004-2016 I campaigned since 2006 - my last visit to Beijing - to draw attention to the brutal and systematic persecution by the Chinese regime of practitioners of Falun Gong, a Buddha-school spiritual movement with

70 - 100 million adherents in 1999.

I welcome your inquiry into the systematic process of imprisonment without trial, torture and the murder of thousands of innocent people under torture, with the added horror that vital organs are removed from living Falun Gong prisoners for the organ transplant trade, conducted by the People's Liberation Army, usually resulting in death.

Falun Gong is a spiritual and meditation movement that echoes traditional Chinese beliefs that humans are connected to the universe through mind and body. The Chinese Communist Party describes it as a 'cult', whereas international jurisprudence suggest that a 'cult' should include financial commitment, alienation from family, disciplined organisation, brainwashing and anti-social behaviour, none of which apply to Falun Gong. Like all chi-gong (spiritual exercise) groups, Falun Gong has a 'master' whose book of exercises published in 1992 remains the only financial commitment for most of his followers.

On 25 April 1999, 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners spent a day in peaceful protest in Beijing after police brutality against fellow practitioners in Tianjin city. People who were there have told me that the police brutality was almost certainly organized by the security forces as a justification for the persecution which then began.

My campaign began in May 2006, when I visited China on a fact-finding mission in preparation for a report on human rights and democracy for the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee. In Beijing, at great personal risk to them, I interviewed two former prisoners, Falun Gong practitioners Cao Dong and Niu Jinping. Cao Dong was subsequently arrested and convicted of 'meeting a distinguished foreigner'. He was sent to Tianshui prison, being tortured to recant his religious

convictions and to denounce his meeting with me. Niu Jinping appealed to me on behalf of his wife, Zhang Lianying, who had been in Beijing Forced Women's Labour Camp since June 2005, and so severely tortured that she suffered a coma in April 2007. The latter were subsequently re-imprisoned as part of Beijing's pre-Olympic round-up in early 2008.

Another of my contacts was Christian human rights attorney Gao Zhisheng, sometimes known as the 'conscience of China', who represented a number of Falun Gong practitioners after his investigation into their persecution in 2005. Manfred Nowak, then UN rapporteur for torture, met Gao at the US Embassy in Beijing in early 2006, after which a traffic accident involving Gao was staged by the regime. Well-known in China for publicly denouncing the regime, especially for corruption, Gao wrote an open letter to the European Parliament through me in September 2007 and another to the US Congress. He was then sentenced to prison on a charge of "subversion". After being temporarily released into house arrest, he was re-imprisoned and in 2008 so severely tortured that he twice tried to commit suicide. After his wife and children escaped through Thailand to the USA in January 2009, Gao was abducted by security forces. He has subsequently been released once again into the care of his brother.

According to THE CHINA HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS CONCERN GROUP (CHRLCG), Gao is still in enforced disappearance (refer to its submission to the 31st Session of the UN UPR Working Group on China October/November 2018)¹

During a series of parliamentary hearing, speaking tours and individual meetings with former torture victims from 2006 onwards, and in many countries, I can attest to the consistency of their testimony about the regime enforced on (usually anonymous) Falun Gong practitioners.

These are only a few examples drawn from my own experience, but they demonstrate the extent of the Communist regime's paranoia and brutality against any activity which could threaten or destabilise it.

I am in no doubt that the international publicity aroused by the denunciation of the CCP by "Annie" on the White House lawn, coupled with a growing political campaign in which I played a part, and the imminence of the 2008 Beijing Olympics led to the increased repression of FG, and of which practitioners were aware of. In most cases, individuals asked me to keep up the pressure for the sake of wider justice, even if they or those close to them suffered.

¹ {http://www.chrlawyers.hk/sites/default/files/Revised_CHRLCG%20UPR%20full%20submission%202018.pdf}

Falun Gong practitioners are usually imprisoned under 'administrative detention' with no trial: often they refuse to give their names to protect their families. As members of a banned 'evil cult' they suffer particularly harsh treatment, often at the hands of other prisoners and even Falun Gong who have recanted (to demonstrate their rejection of the practice). Ex-prisoners I have met outside China, having recanted, had suffered sleep deprivation for a period of weeks, then forced to stand motionless for several days, being prodded with sharp objects to keep them awake, followed by progressively brutal treatments involving electric prods - always including the genitals - excrement and general beatings. Zhang Lianying, who suffered a coma, wrote me a list of the 50 progressive tortures she suffered, which I submitted to the UN Rapporteurs on Torture and Religious Freedom, Dr Manfred Nowak and Mrs Asma Jahangir, both of whom I have met on a number of occasions.

Manfred Novak has stated following his 2006 visit to Beijing that some two-thirds of those undergoing 're-education through labour' in China's prison camps, are Falun Gong practitioners. In 2018, credible reports that some 1,000 new camps have been constructed to accommodate Uyghur dissidents amplify that crime, because Muslim Uyghurs, who renounce alcohol, are also organ-harvested.

In testimony to the US Congress in 2013, Mr Harry Wu, a former inmate and now director of New York's Laogai Research Center, estimated that there are some 900 such camps with between 3 - 6 million incarcerated. Falun Gong outside China maintain contact with prisoners and record their torture and torturers where either can be identified: records exist of more than 4,236 up to now are confirmed to have died in the persecution of Falun Gong since 1999.

Of particular concern is that only Falun Gong - who neither smoke nor drink - are routinely blood-tested and blood-pressure tested in prison: this is not for their well-being. They thus become the prime source for the live organ transplant trade: more than 40,000 additional unexplained transplants have been recorded recently in China since 2001. More recently, there is evidence that organ harvesting is being practised not only on Falun Gong and Uyghur prisoners, but also on Tibetans, following the 2013 uprising and repression there. (Kilgour/Matas reports).

Although using body parts from prisoners has been routine in China (in one province alone there are 16 specially-converted evisceration buses) many believe, as I do, that live Falun Gong prisoners are quarried for their body parts. Indeed, Cao Dong told me that after his best friend disappeared from their prison cell one evening, the next day he saw his dead

body in the morgue with holes where body parts had been removed.

The campaign of brutal repression of Falun Gong - once encouraged by Beijing for the wellbeing reportedly experienced by its adherents - shows no sign of easing.

There have been a number of initiatives to curb China's organ-harvesting trade, and I have taken part in numerous meetings, including with the Australian transplant profession, who attest to the low grade of surgical skills and poor outcomes in China.

Annex 1

I am a former Member of the European Parliament for Yorkshire & Humber UK (1984-2009 Conservative, then Independent: 2010-2014 Liberal Democrat) and 2004-2014 elected four times as European Parliament Vice-President, latterly holding the Democracy & Human Rights portfolio. In 1990 I founded the EU's Democracy and Human Rights Instrument, aimed at transforming E/Central Europe. Today it is the world's largest such programme with a budget of €165M and worldwide scope.

My EU involvement:

- Following my last visit to Beijing, in May 2006, all the dissidents and former prisoners-of-conscience with whom I had contact were arrested, imprisoned and in some cases tortured. These included the Christian human rights lawyer **Gao Zhisheng** and environmental activist **Hu Jia**.
- I successfully nominated **Hu Jia for the 2008 Sakharov Prize** for Freedom of Expression, awarded annually by the European Parliament.
- Further I was successful in nominating imprisoned Chinese dissident **Liu Xiaobo** for the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize. I represented the EU at the prize-giving ceremony, highlighting the empty chair the prize was awarded to due to Xiaobo's imprisonment.
- In November 2010 I met the dissident artist **Ai Weiwei**, co-designer of Beijing's 'Birds Nest' stadium, who made a highly-critical series of comments about me on YouTube channel. Ai Weiwei later spent some months under house arrest in Beijing. I authored a Parliamentary resolution on Ai Weiwei's case in 2011.
- I have championed the **Falun Gong** Buddha-school spiritual movement, brutally persecuted after 1999 by the Beijing regime because of its popularity. I have met many former prisoners and published accounts of their torture. I have campaigned against the organ harvesting by the

Chinese Peoples' Army, in which thousands of Falun Gong prisoners have been killed for body parts for the lucrative transplant business.

- On 29 January 2013, I organised a conference with the unrepresented Nations and People's Organization (UNPO) in the European Parliament, entitled 'Religious Persecution by China.'² An international panel of experts shed light on live organ harvesting and re-education through labour camps, mainly targeting prisoners of conscience and religious groups. This included a personal testimony by a former surgeon in Xinjiang, China, who participated in live organ harvesting.
- I have written a key report for the European Parliament's foreign affairs select committee, of which, at the time, I was the longest-serving member, on a new EU-China strategy in 1997.
- I initiated a successful campaign aimed at an **EU political boycott of the August 2008 Beijing Olympic Games**. The Presidents of the European Parliament and European Commission boycotted the Games, as did the EU's external affairs Commissioner.
- I was the first politician to visit **Tibet** after a three-year blackout, in 1996. I have subsequently championed the cause of Tibetan independence, taking part in numerous activities to highlight oppression in Tibet. My staff and I have made many speeches and taken part in pro-democracy activities with Tibetan exiles. In March 2012, I organised a seminar entitled 'Tibet in Flames: the unfolding personal and collective tragedy of the Tibetan people' in the European Parliament examining the highlighting the spate of self-immolations in protest at China's cruel occupation. I also co-authored a Parliamentary resolution on the human rights situation in Tibet in June 2012.
- I was the first European politician to visit China for investigating the persecution of Falun Gong, including organ harvesting.
- Further I co-authored a 2006 EP resolution in EU-China relations, which put human rights at the centre for EU foreign policy with China.
- I co-authored 2013 European Parliament urgency resolution on organ harvesting in China.
- The EU holds a bi-annual Human Rights Dialogue with China, but the process is one which I have decried from the outset, because Beijing refuses to conform to the usual protocols, such as disallowing NGOs from attending as observers, exchanges of lists of alleged political prisoner etc, which usually accompany such EU HR Dialogues

² <http://www.unpo.org/article/15404>