



## China - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 14 July 2009

**Information required on Falun Gong membership: Information on its activities, objectives, faith, rituals, leadership, membership, history and current situation in China. Information on the treatment of those who are members or are perceived to be members of the group by the government and/or society. Is there free movement within China, would a Falun Gong member experience any legal or practical problems moving within the country? Would police provide protection/services to a Falun Gong member experiencing problems due to his membership? Is membership of the group a criminal offence in China? Is there any information available, on the treatment of Falun Gong members who have returned to China?**

In a section titled "Section I. Religious Demography" the 2008 *US Department of State* religious freedom report for China states:

"The Falun Gong is a self-described spiritual movement that blends aspects of Taoism, Buddhism, and the meditation techniques and physical exercises of qigong (a traditional Chinese exercise discipline), with the teachings of Falun Gong leader Li Hongzhi. There are estimated to have been at least 2.1 million adherents of Falun Gong before the Government banned the group in 1999. Hundreds of thousands may practice Falun Gong privately." (US Department of State (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor) (19 September 2008) *China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau): International Religious Freedom Report 2008*)

In a section titled "Background Information" an *Amnesty International* report states:

"Falun Gong is a spiritual movement. After a peaceful sit-in on Tiananmen Square in July 1999, the government outlawed the group and launched a campaign of intimidation and persecution, directed by a special organization called the 610 Office. The crackdown on Falun Gong intensified in the lead-up to the Olympics. Falun Gong sources reported over 8000 arrests of Falun Gong practitioners nationwide during this period, and say that in 2007 over 100 died in detention or shortly after being released due to torture, starvation and lack of medicine. Falun Gong practitioners are a primary target of China's system of Reeducation through Labour (RTL), a form of punitive administrative detention in which people can be deprived of their liberty without trial for up to four years." (Amnesty International (19 June 2009) *Incommunicado detention/Prisoners of Conscience/Fear of torture and ill-treatment*, AI Index: ASA 17/029/2009)

In a section titled "Origins and support (paragraph 21.24) the most recent *UK Home Office* country report on China refers to the foundation of Falun Gong as follows:

“As documented by Maria Hsia Chang in her book *The End of Days: Falun Gong* (2004), Falun Gong/Falun Dafa was founded in 1992 by Li Hongzhi. In the early 1990s Li took advantage of a relaxation in the rules governing the regulation and formation of social groups to formulate his own distinctive brand of the ancient Chinese art of qigong (qi gong) or energy cultivation. He fused this with elements of other religions to create a quasi-religious movement, which encompassed a loose hierarchical structure (technically there are no members, only enthusiastic volunteers) and emphasised high moral standards and good health amongst its followers. Pre-ban (July 1999) followers would gather in public parks and squares to practise the five exercises/movements which are central to the teachings of Li Hongzhi, also known to his followers as Master Li.” (UK Home Office Border Agency (16 April 2009) *Country of Origin Information Report: China*, p.80)

In the same section of this report paragraph 21.25 states:

“The same source also noted, ‘Reportedly, the middle-aged and those from the middle class comprised the sect’s main following, although its ranks also included students and the elderly, as well as peasants. They came from all walks of life: teachers, physicians, soldiers, CCP cadres, diplomats posted in foreign countries, and other government officials.’” (ibid, p.80)

A section titled “Guiding principles” (paragraph 21.26) states:

“Falun Gong – which is also referred to as Falun Dafa – is an ancient advanced form of the qigong. Falun Gong consists of gentle exercises combined with a meditation component. Aside from its popularity... what is usually said to distinguish Falun Gong is its emphasis on the practice of refining one’s moral character in accordance with three principles – Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance. These three principles form the backbone of Falun Gong’s philosophy and practitioners of the discipline aspire to live by them in their daily lives, striving to achieve, over time, a state of kindness, selflessness and inner balance.” (ibid, p.80)

In this section paragraph 21.27 states:

“The principles of Falun Gong are captured in the two main books written by Mr. Li Hongzhi: *Falun Gong (Law Wheel Qigong)* and *Zhuan Falun (Turning the Law Wheel)*. *Falun Gong* [the book] is a systematic, introductory book that discusses qigong, introduces the principles of the practice, and provides illustrations and explanation of the exercises... Organized in the form of nine lectures, *Zhuan Falun* is the most comprehensive and essential work of Falun Gong... Both books and instructional videos are available free on the Internet. There is no membership, and no fees collected.” (ibid, p.80)

A section titled “Exercises and movements” (paragraph 21.28)

“As noted in *Healthy Body, Peaceful Heart: Falun Gong – A Path to Your Original, True Self*, a leaflet sent to the Country of Origin Information (COI) Service on 16 August 2005 by the Falun Gong Association UK, ‘Falun Dafa, also known as Falun Gong, is a traditional Chinese self-cultivation practice that improves mental and physical wellness through a series of easy to learn

exercises, meditation and develops one's 'Heart/Mind Nature (Xingxing)'." (ibid. pp.80-81)

Paragraph 21.29 states:

"The five exercises listed on this leaflet are as follows:

Movement Exercises

1. Buddha Showing A Thousand Hands.
2. Falun Standing Stance.
3. Penetrating the Two Cosmic Extremes.
4. Falun Heavenly Circulation.

Sitting Exercise/Meditating Exercise/Tranquil Exercise

5. Way of Strengthening Divine Powers" (ibid, p.81)

A COI seminar report published by the *Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD)*, in a paragraph titled Persecution of Falun Gong adherents (paragraph 3.6.1) quotes country expert Thomas Weyrauch as stating:

"Falun Gong was forbidden after the demonstration in the year 1999. Falun Gong adherents have been persecuted since this time in a very harsh way, many have been killed in prison, many have been tortured, and the prison terms were extremely long sometimes. In other cases there were short prison terms, but people were maltreated very often." (Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) (17 March 2006) *10th European Country of Origin Information Seminar Budapest, 1 – 2 December 2005: Final Report on China*, p.21)

This section of the report also states:

"There is also a persecution for practising Falun Gong at home, if this should be uncovered. Practising Falun Gong abroad can become dangerous, too, because the 'Office 610' has a network in many countries especially to observe Falun Gong activities. There were violent attacks against Falun Gong adherents abroad, too. For instance, in South Africa several Falun Gong adherents were attacked by men from the Office 610." (ibid, p.21)

The treatment of Falun gong practitioners who return to China is commented on in a paragraph titled "Return of Falun Gong adherents to the PRC" (paragraph 3.6.6) which states:

"There is a very interesting case in Germany: a family escaped from China and asked for political asylum in Germany. Their application was rejected. During their stay abroad, they became adherents to Falun Gong. However, this didn't seem credible to the authorities and they were sent back to China. In China they were checked. They were asked questions, but there was no persecution. But then they had telephone calls to Germany, to other Falun Gong adherents. They talked on the phone about their adherence to Falun Gong. The police came, the husband received an administrative sentence, for Re-education Through Labour punishment. The case became known to the German embassy, the man was released for medical treatment and the

embassy will try to take the family to Germany. In this case, there was no persecution directly upon return (because they asked for asylum, for instance), but only after the authorities got knowledge of the family's adherence to Falun Gong through the telephone calls." (ibid, p.24)

An *Irish Independent* article on the alleged mistreatment of a Falun Gong practitioner who returned to China from Ireland states:

"Today, Ming, a 38-year-old Dublin-based web designer, recalls the nightmare of the Chinese justice system for many arrested Falun Gong followers. 'They used electric batons to shock us,' he says. 'They would tie me to a bed-board when giving me the electric shocks. It was incredibly painful -- the skin would go red immediately and the following day it would be black. Fear of the shocks was almost as bad as the shocks themselves.' His quiet, softly spoken voice only serves to heighten the trauma that he describes. He was subjected to regular bouts of sleep deprivation. 'The other inmates would be told not to let me sleep,' he says. 'It was terrible -- I thought I was losing my mind. And that's what they wanted, of course.' And there was worse to come in the Tuanhe 'Re-education through labour' Camp in Beijing. 'They ordered inmates who were there for other crimes to beat me up. They were given special benefits for carrying out the beatings -- sometimes they were released early as a result. Once I was beaten so badly I couldn't walk for two weeks.' Nor was he able to use the toilet. 'My legs were so badly beaten I couldn't squat. It was an evil place.' The physical scars eventually disappeared, but the psychological wounds remain. He looks visibly distressed when recalling the beatings that he was frequently subjected to in captivity." (Irish Independent (6 February 2009) *I went home to China from Trinity -- and was put in a torture jail for two years* Meagher, John)

The *US Department of State* country report on China for the events of 2008 states:

"Public Falun Gong activity in the country remained negligible, and practitioners based abroad reported that the government's crackdown against the group continued. In the past the mere belief in the discipline (even without any public practice of its tenets) sometimes was sufficient grounds for practitioners to receive punishments ranging from loss of employment to imprisonment. Falun Gong sources estimated that since 1999 at least 6,000 Falun Gong practitioners have been sentenced to prison, more than 100,000 practitioners have been sentenced to RTL, and almost 3,000 have died from torture while in custody. Some foreign observers estimated that Falun Gong adherents constituted at least half of the 250,000 officially recorded inmates in RTL camps, while Falun Gong sources overseas placed the number even higher." (US Department of State (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor) (25 February 2009) *2008 Human Rights Report: China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)*)

This report also states:

"Over the past several years, Falun Gong members identified by the government as 'core leaders' were singled out for particularly harsh treatment. More than a dozen Falun Gong members were sentenced to prison for the crime of 'endangering state security,' but the great majority of Falun Gong members convicted by the courts since 1999 were sentenced to

prison for 'organizing or using a sect to undermine the implementation of the law,' a less serious offense. Most practitioners, however, were punished administratively. Some practitioners were sentenced to RTL. Some Falun Gong members were sent to 'legal education' centers specifically established to 'rehabilitate' practitioners who refused to recant publicly their belief voluntarily after their release from RTL camps. Government officials denied the existence of such 'legal education' centers. In addition hundreds of Falun Gong practitioners were confined to mental hospitals, according to overseas groups. Police continued to detain current and former Falun Gong practitioners and used possession of Falun Gong material as a pretext for arresting political activists. The government continued its use of high-pressure tactics and mandatory anti-Falun Gong study sessions to force practitioners to renounce Falun Gong. Even practitioners who had not protested or made other public demonstrations of belief reportedly were forced to attend anti-Falun Gong classes or were sent directly to RTL camps. These tactics reportedly resulted in large numbers of practitioners signing pledges to renounce the movement." (ibid)

In a section titled "Falun Gong" the annual report of the *Congressional-Executive Commission on China* states:

"On June 10, 1999, former President Jiang Zemin and Politburo member Luo Gan established an extrajudicial security apparatus called the '6-10 Office.' This entity was charged with the mission of enforcing a ban on Falun Gong and carrying out a crackdown against its practitioners, which commenced on July 22, 1999, when the government formally outlawed the movement. Falun Gong practitioners describe it as a 'traditional Chinese spiritual discipline that is Buddhist in nature,' which consists of 'moral teachings, a meditation, and four gentle exercises that resemble tai-chi and are known in Chinese culture as 'qigong.'" Tens of millions of Chinese citizens practiced Falun Gong in the 1990s and adherents to the spiritual movement inside of China are estimated to still number in the hundreds of thousands despite the government's ongoing crackdown." (Congressional-Executive Commission on China (31 October 2008) *Annual Report 2008*, p.87)

This section of the report also states:

"The central government intensified its nine-year campaign of persecution against Falun Gong practitioners in the months leading up to the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympic Games. Chinese security forces continued to detain and imprison Falun Gong practitioners and subjected some who refused to disavow the practice to torture and other forms of abuse in reeducation through labor (RTL) camps and other detention facilities. In September 2007, Zhou Yongkang, then-Minister of Public Security and current member of the Politburo Standing Committee, ordered that all police and public security forces 'strike hard on overseas and domestic hostile forces, ethnic splittists, religious extremists, violent terrorists, and the Falun Gong cult' to safeguard 'social stability' for the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress and the Olympics. 120 Official accounts of the crackdown were publicly available on Web sites for all 31 of China's provincial- level jurisdictions in 2007-2008." (ibid, pp.87-88)

This section refers to the detention of Falun Gong practitioners as follows:

“Since the government outlawed Falun Gong in July 1999, it has detained thousands—most likely hundreds of thousands—of practitioners. Chinese government Web sites regularly report detentions of Falun Gong ‘criminal suspects’ and some provincial and local authorities offer rewards as high as 5,000 yuan (US\$732) to informants who report Falun Gong ‘escaped criminals.’ In July, Chinese state media reported the arrest of 25 Falun Gong practitioners and the destruction of 7 Falun Gong publishing operations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. In 2007, Yingshang county government in Anhui province revealed that it had detained 13 “Falun Gong and other cult criminals,” held another in ‘public security detention,’ and ‘reeducated and reprimanded’ more than 1,600. During the same period, Miyi county in Sichuan province recorded detentions of 62 practitioners as part of its ‘strike hard’ campaign and claimed to have ‘transformed’ 14 of them. Relying on reports from practitioners and their families in China, sources outside of China, not all of whom are themselves Falun Gong practitioners, estimate that Chinese authorities detained ‘at least 8,037’ practitioners between December 2007 and the end of June 2008 in a nationwide pre-Olympics crackdown. International observers believe that Falun Gong practitioners constitute a large percentage—some say as many as half—of the total number of Chinese imprisoned in RTL camps. Falun Gong sources report that at least 200,000 practitioners are being held in RTL and other forms of detention. As of April 2008, Falun Gong sources in the United States had documented over 3,000 deaths of practitioners as a result of government persecution as well as over 63,000 cases of torture since 1999. From 2000 to 2005, Falun Gong practitioners accounted for 66 percent of all cases of alleged torture by Chinese authorities reported to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture.” (ibid, p.88)

*An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* response to a request for information on the treatment of children of Falun Gong practitioners states:

“Two reports released in 2005 by Falun Gong sources also indicate that children of Falun Gong practitioners in China are mistreated (GMR 20 Mar. 2005; FoFG USA 15 Jan. 2005). A 20 March 2005 report by the Global Mission to Rescue Persecuted Falun Gong Practitioners (GMR), an international non-governmental organization established in 2002 to raise awareness of the ‘persecution’ of Falun Gong practitioners, states that

many children [of Falun Gong practitioners] have been directly targeted and tortured to death or thrown into prisons and labor camps. Hundreds of thousands of children have been forced to slander Falun Gong or, upon refusal, [have been] expelled from school. (GMR 20 Mar. 2005, 1)

A 15 January 2005 article by Friends of Falun Gong USA, a ‘US-based non-profit human rights organization founded in the year 2000 by Americans concerned about the persecution of Falun Gong (FoFG USA 20 Feb. 2007), similarly indicates that children of practitioners have been “persecuted” at school, as well as incarcerated, ‘tortured,’ and killed by the authorities.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (26 June 2008) *CHN102867.E – China: Treatment of children of Falun Gong practitioners...*)

See also *Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada* response which refers to the treatment of persons accused of assisting Falun Gong practitioners as follows:

“The Representative of the Falun Dafa Association of Canada noted in her correspondence that there have been reports that persons who assist Falun Gong practitioners could face fines, threats and ‘harassment,’ even though they themselves are non-practitioners (8 June 2007). The Representative provided an example of a woman who was arrested for renting living space to Falun Gong practitioners.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (11 July 2007) *CHN102560.E – China: Treatment of family members of Falun Gong practitioners by the Chinese authorities...*)

An *Associated Press* report states:

“Followers say the crackdown cost the lives of 3,200 practitioners, including 104 last year. The government says some Falun Gong followers have died in detention because of hunger strikes or refusing medical help. But it denies any have been intentionally killed. U.S.-based spokesman Levi Browde said since 1999 the group has recorded more than 87,000 cases of torture and estimates that anywhere from 200,000 to 1 million practitioners have been detained for various lengths of time.” (Associated Press (24 April 2009) *China's decade-long ban on Falun Gong holds firm* Olesen, Alexa)

*Amnesty International* refers to fears for a Falun Gong practitioner detained by the authorities as follows:

“This is the third time Ouyang Wen has been persecuted for her religious beliefs. She was arrested in November 2000, when she and a few friends flew a banner reading ‘Falun Gong is Good’ in Tiananmen Square, in the centre of Beijing. Police searched her home but found insufficient evidence to prosecute her. She was held without charge until a family friend persuaded the police to release her, after 24 days. She was arrested again in November 2001, with 14 other Falun Gong practitioners. She was held at Xicheng District Dewai Police Station for one month, and in protest at her treatment began a hunger strike with the other practitioners. In response the authorities handcuffed her to a bed, attached a drip to her arm and force-fed her. As she refused to give up Falun Gong, she was moved to Xicheng Law Center and tortured until she signed a letter renouncing Falun Gong and promising never to practice it again. She was verbally abused for hours at a time, and made to sit for 12 hours with her legs and arms crossed and tied tightly, causing extreme pain. Two weeks after she signed the letter, Ouyang Wen was released, in January 2002.” (Amnesty International (2 March 2009) *Medical concern/fear of torture or other ill-treatment* AI Index: ASA 17/008/2009)

In a section titled “10-Month Pre-Trial Detention” a document published by the *Congressional – Executive Commission on China Virtual Academy* states:

“Xu had been detained by police for 10 months in the lead-up to her recent sentencing. Authorities initially took Xu and her husband, folk musician Yu Zhou, into custody at a police checkpoint while they were driving to their Beijing home after a concert on the night of January 26, 2008. The couple's detention coincided with a pre-Olympics crackdown that resulted in the detention of more than 8,000 Falun Gong practitioners, according to a July 7 FDIC report. The verdict handed down on November 25 marks the second time in eight years that Xu Na has been sent to prison for her association with Falun Gong. In 2001, Xu was given a five-year sentence for renting a room to

Falun Gong practitioners who came to Beijing from other provinces, according to the RFA report. While serving her first sentence, Xu was reportedly beaten, deprived of sleep, force-fed, and tied down in uncomfortable positions for hours at a time, according to the November 26 FDIC report. Falun Gong has been outlawed in China since the Ministry of Civil Affairs issued a decision in July 1999 calling it an 'illegal organization' that 'harms society.'" (Congressional – Executive Commission on China Virtual Academy (14 January 2009) *Manipulation of the Criminal Law to Penalize "Cults" Continues in Case of Painter and Popular Musician*)

An *Amnesty International* alert on the detention of Falun Gong practitioner Chen Zhenping states:

"Chen Zhenping has not been seen by her family since she was detained without a warrant on 9 July 2008. Her family were not informed until October that her trial and sentencing had already taken place. Chen Zhenping had no legal representation during her trial. Since learning of their daughter's sentencing her parents have hired a lawyer on her behalf. Chen Zhenping's lawyer went to ask the Jingshui District People's court in Zhengzhou, Henan province, about her case in November 2008. A court official told him that Falun Gong practitioners did not have the right to hire lawyers." (Amnesty International (22 January 2009) *Further information on UA 305/08 (ASA/17/103/2008, 3 November 2008) – Fear of torture/incommunicado detention* AI Index: ASA 17/002/2009)

The annual report published by the *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom* comments on the imprisonment of Falun Gong practitioners as follows:

"The Chinese government continues to maintain a harsh campaign against adherents of the Falun Gong spiritual movement, which it considers an 'evil cult' and has banned since 1999. Police continued to detain current and former Falun Gong practitioners and to place them in re-education through labor camps (RTL) without trial or in mental health institutions. There is no credible information on just how many Falun Gong practitioners were imprisoned over the past decade, but some international observers claim that they may be as many as half of the total number of the 250,000 Chinese detained in RTL camps. Provincial officials reportedly offer sizable rewards to anyone who provides information leading to the arrest of a Falun Gong practitioner. In the year before the Olympic Games, police waged a concerted campaign to harass and detain known Falun Gong practitioners and brutally suppress their activity, an estimated 8,037 Falun Gong were detained between December 2007 and August 2008. In February 2008, Falun Gong practitioner Yu Zhou died in police custody. Police claimed that he died of complications related to diabetes, but his family claims he was healthy before his arrest and they were denied an autopsy. In November 2008, Xu Na, a member of Falun Gong, and her husband were detained for possessing Falun Gong materials, which is considered a criminal offense. Her husband died after 11 days in detention, and Xu Na was sentenced to three years in prison. In May, 2008 Yang Xiyao of Yanshan county, Hebei province, was detained after police raided his home and found Falun Gong publications. Most recently, in July 2008, Chen Zhenping was arrested and tried in secret without legal representation for being a Falun Gong practitioner. She was sentenced to eight years imprisonment." (United States Commission on International



This report also refers to the alleged activities of the 6-10 Offices, stating:

“The 6-10 Offices throughout China are tasked with surveillance, investigations, ‘transformation,’ and detention of Falun Gong practitioners. The 6-10 office reportedly has extrajudicial detention facilities used exclusively to hold Falun Gong practitioners who have completed RTL terms, but who are still considered harmful. Imprisoned Falun Gong reportedly are subject to mistreatment and torture. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture reported that Falun Gong practitioners make up two-thirds of the alleged victims of torture. Numerous allegations of government-sanctioned organ harvesting from incarcerated practitioners have surfaced within the last several years as well. Independent investigation into the practices of a hospital in Sujiatun, Shenyang proved inconclusive. However, based upon a report from two prominent Canadian human rights activists, international human rights organizations have called for an independent investigation and for continued international attention to allegations of organ harvesting from prisoners. The UN Committee on Torture, during its 2008 review of China, also called on the government to conduct independent investigations to clarify discrepancies in statistics related to organ transplants and allegations of torture of Falun Gong practitioners.” (ibid)

A detailed report published by Canadian attorneys *David Matas* and *David Kilgour* alleges that Falun Gong practitioners detained by the Chinese authorities are subjected to forced organ harvesting. In a section titled “The Allegation” this report states:

“It is alleged that Falun Gong practitioners are victims of live organ harvesting throughout China. The allegation is that organ harvesting is inflicted on unwilling Falun Gong practitioners at a wide variety of locations, pursuant to a systematic policy, in large numbers. Organ harvesting is a step in organ transplants. The purpose of organ harvesting is to provide organs for transplants. Transplants do not necessarily have to take place in the same place as the location of the organ harvesting. The two locations are often different; organs harvested in one place are shipped to another place for transplanting. The allegation is further that the organs are harvested from the practitioners while they are still alive. The practitioners are killed in the course of the organ harvesting operations or immediately thereafter. These operations are a form of murder. Finally, we are told that the practitioners killed in this way are then cremated. There is no corpse left to examine to identify as the source of an organ transplant.” (Matas, David and Kilgour, David (31 January 2007) *Bloody Harvest: Revised Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China*, pp.1-2)

In a section titled “Considerations specific to Falun Gong” (sub-section 19 “A perceived threat”) this report states:

“The overwhelming majority of prisoners of conscience in Chinese prisons are Falun Gong. An estimated two thirds of the torture victims in Chinese prisons are Falun Gong. The extremes of language the Chinese regime uses against the Falun Gong are unparalleled, unmatched by the comparatively mild criticisms China has of the victims the West is used to defending. The

documented yearly arbitrary killings and disappearances of Falun Gong exceed by far the totals for any other victim group.” (ibid, p.27)

In subsection 23 “Massive arrests” this report states:

“Repression of Falun Gong included sending thousands upon thousands of its practitioners to prisons and labour camps beginning in the summer of 1999. The US State Department’s 2005 country report on China 35, for example, indicates that its police run hundreds of detention centres, with the 340 re-education-through-labour ones alone having a holding capacity of about 300,000 persons. The report also indicates that the number of Falun Gong practitioners who died in custody was estimated to be from a few hundred to a few thousand.” (ibid, p.33)

In a subsection titled “Unidentified” (Subsection 25) this report states:

“Falun Gong detentions, though in some ways they are just Chinese repression as usual with the Falun Gong being the unlucky targets, present an unusual feature. Falun Gong practitioners who came from all over the country to Tiananmen Square in Beijing to appeal or protest were systematically arrested. Those who revealed their identities to their captors would be shipped back to their home localities. Their families would be implicated in their Falun Gong activities and pressured to join in the effort to get the practitioners to renounce Falun Gong. Their workplace leaders, their co-workers, their local government leaders would be held responsible and penalized for the fact that these individuals had gone to Beijing to appeal or protest. To protect their families and avoid the hostility of the people in their locality, many detained Falun Gong declined to identify themselves. The result was a large Falun Gong prison population whose identities the authorities did not know. As well, no one who knew them knew where they were. Though this refusal to identify themselves was done for protection purposes, it may have had the opposite effect. It is easier to victimize a person whose whereabouts is unknown to family members than a person whose location the family knows. This population is a remarkably undefended group of people, even by Chinese standards.” (ibid, pp.35-36)

In the section titled “Conclusions” the authors of this report state:

“Based on our further research, we are reinforced in our original conclusion that the allegations are true. We believe that there has been and continues today to be large scale organ seizures from unwilling Falun Gong practitioners. We have concluded that the government of China and its agencies in numerous parts of the country, in particular hospitals but also detention centres and 'people's courts', since 1999 have put to death a large but unknown number of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience. Their vital organs, including kidneys, livers, corneas and hearts, were seized involuntarily for sale at high prices, sometimes to foreigners, who normally face long waits for voluntary donations of such organs in their home countries. How many of the victims were first convicted of any offence, serious or otherwise, in legitimate courts, we are unable to estimate because such information appears to be unavailable both to Chinese nationals and foreigners. It appears to us that many human beings belonging to a peaceful voluntary organization made illegal eight years ago by President Jiang because he thought it might threaten the dominance of the Communist Party

of China have been in effect executed by medical practitioners for their organs.” (ibid, p.58)

In a section titled “Allegations concerning Falun Gong practitioners” (paragraph 25) a report from the *UN Committee Against Torture* refers to the allegations of organ harvesting as follows:

“While noting the State party’s information about the 2006 Temporary Regulation on Human Organ Transplants and the 2007 Human Organ Transplant Ordinance, the Committee takes cognizance of the allegations presented to the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture who has noted that an increase in organ transplant operations coincides with ‘the beginning of the persecution of [Falun Gong practitioners]’ and who asked for ‘a full explanation of the source of organ transplants’ which could clarify the discrepancy and disprove the allegation of organ harvesting (A/HRC/7/3/Add.1). The Committee is further concerned with information received that Falun Gong practitioners have been extensively subjected to torture and illtreatment in prisons and that some of them have been used for organ transplants (arts. 12 and 16).” (UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) (12 December 2008) *Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture : China*, p.10)

A *New York Times* article on the current situation for Falun Gong practitioners states:

“The drive against the spiritual group has eliminated its leadership, decimated the ranks of faithful and convinced many Chinese that the group is an ‘evil cult,’ as the government contends. But 10 years on, the war on Falun Gong remains unfinished. In the past year, as many as 8,000 practitioners have been detained, according to experts on human rights, and at least 100 have died in custody. Among them were Yu Zhou, 42, a popular Beijing musician, and Cao Changling, the 77-year-old vice director of a paper plant in Wuhan, whose bruised body was returned to his family by the police last summer just as China was reveling in the glory of the Olympic Games. In recent months, scores of practitioners have been given long prison terms, including Zhang Xingwu, a retired physics professor from Shandong Province who last week was sentenced to seven years after the police found Falun Gong literature in his apartment, according to family members.” (New York Times (28 April 2009) *China Still Presses Crusade Against Falun Gong* Jacobs, Andrew)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

#### **References:**

Associated Press (24 April 2009) *China's decade-long ban on Falun Gong holds firm* Olesen, Alexa  
<http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/>  
(Accessed 14 July 2009)

Amnesty International (19 June 2009) *Incommunicado detention/Prisoners of Conscience/Fear of torture and ill-treatment*, AI Index: ASA 17/029/2009  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/029/2009/en/b7cc2b89-880b-4ed5-829d-8008874ee2ac/asa170292009en.pdf>  
(Accessed 10 July 2009)

Amnesty International (2 March 2009) *Medical concern/fear of torture or other ill-treatment* AI Index: ASA 17/008/2009  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/008/2009/en/eecfd009-4065-4472-ad27-bc923b4a5996/asa170082009en.pdf>  
(Accessed 10 July 2009)

Amnesty International (22 January 2009) *Further information on UA 305/08 (ASA/17/103/2008, 3 November 2008) – Fear of torture/incommunicado detention* AI Index: ASA 17/002/2009  
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA17/002/2009/en/8dc7bbb2-e8b3-11dd-9c6c-dfd5a453deaf/asa170022009eng.pdf>  
(Accessed 10 July 2009)

Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) (17 March 2006) *10th European Country of Origin Information Seminar Budapest, 1 – 2 December 2005: Final Report on China*  
[http://www.ecoi.net/file\\_upload/bp269\\_COI-SE-Budapest200512-China-Report-Final.pdf](http://www.ecoi.net/file_upload/bp269_COI-SE-Budapest200512-China-Report-Final.pdf)  
(Accessed 13 July 2009)

Congressional – Executive Commission on China Virtual Academy (14 January 2009) *Manipulation of the Criminal Law to Penalize "Cults" Continues in Case of Painter and Popular Musician*  
<http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?mode=print&showsingle=115536&PHPSESSID=e8906a0aee57a5e2e7b6b38d15750852>  
(Accessed 10 July 2009)

Congressional-Executive Commission on China (31 October 2008) *Annual Report 2008*  
[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110\\_house\\_hearings&docid=f:45233.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_house_hearings&docid=f:45233.pdf)  
(Accessed 10 July 2009)

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (26 June 2008) *CHN102867.E – China: Treatment of children of Falun Gong practitioners; whether children of Falun Gong practitioners are subject to sanctions, including reduced access to education and to health care*  
[http://www2.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index\\_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451962](http://www2.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451962)  
(Accessed 10 July 2009)

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (11 July 2007) *CHN102560.E – China: Treatment of family members of Falun Gong practitioners by the*

*Chinese authorities; situation of persons who unwittingly or knowingly assist Falun Gong practitioners (e.g., by allowing use or rental of property, offices, office equipment, vehicles, etc.); the treatment of such persons if they deny knowledge of having assisted Falun Gong practitioners, agree to cease such assistance, or denounce Falun Gong*

<http://www2.irb->

[cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index\\_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451386](http://www2.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/index_e.htm?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=451386)

(Accessed 10 July 2009)

Irish Independent (6 February 2009) *I went home to China from Trinity -- and was put in a torture jail for two years* Meagher, John

<http://www.independent.ie/world-news/asia-pacific/i-went-home--to-china-from-trinity--and-was-put-in-a-torture-jail-for-two-years-1630091.html?service=Print>

(Accessed 14 July 2009)

Matas, David and Kilgour, David (31 January 2007) *Bloody Harvest: Revised Report into Allegations of Organ Harvesting of Falun Gong Practitioners in China*

<http://organharvestinvestigation.net/report0701/report20070131-eng.pdf>

(Accessed 14 July 2009)

New York Times (28 April 2009) *China Still Presses Crusade Against Falun Gong* Jacobs, Andrew

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/28/world/asia/28china.html?\\_r=1&pagewanted=print](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/28/world/asia/28china.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print)

(Accessed 14 July 2009)

UK Home Office Border Agency (16 April 2009) *Country of Origin Information Report: China*

[http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country\\_reports.html#countries](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/country_reports.html#countries)

(Accessed 10 July 2009)

UN Committee Against Torture (CAT) (12 December 2008) *Concluding observations of the Committee against Torture : China*

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/496c854b2.pdf>

(Accessed 14 July 2009)

United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (1 May 2009) *USCIRF Annual Report 2009 - Countries of Particular Concern: People's Republic of China*

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=printdoc&docid=4a4f2733c>

(Accessed 14 July 2009)

US Department of State (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor) (25 February 2009) *2008 Human Rights Report: China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, and Macau)*

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/eap/119037.htm>

(Accessed 10 July 2009)

US Department of State (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor)  
(19 September 2008) *China (includes Tibet, Hong Kong, Macau):*

*International Religious Freedom Report 2008*

<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108404.htm>

(Accessed 10 July 2009)

**Sources Consulted:**

Amnesty International

BBC News

Electronic Immigration Network

European Country of Origin Information Network

Google

Human Rights Watch

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

LexisNexis

Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database

UK Home Office

UNHCR Refworld

US Department of State