

Human Rights Newsletter - Issue 31

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It's a Matter of Conscience

Many people write to us and ask why our work revolves around China, why do we not work to stop the U.S. from committing so many reprehensible acts against its victims?

The simple and straightforward answer is: because we are determined to defend the most fundamental right of human beings, the right to conscience, and to stop the worst of all crimes, crimes against conscience.

In the U.S. Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson proclaimed that all men are endowed with "certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Those unalienable rights, unfortunately, have too often been taken away from human beings.

There is one thing that no external force can take away from a human being. That is one's conscience. No one can force us to change our mind; we have to agree to. It is the only thing that a human being truly owns and controls. Conscience, therefore, defines humanity, and the right to conscience is a human being's most fundamental right.

Since there is no direct access to human conscience, attempts to coerce people's conscience must be exerted through other violations. That is the underlying reason why violations of freedom of belief are often coupled with violations of other basic rights, an observation that Ms. Asma Jahangir, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Belief and Religion, has noted in one of her reports.

When human beings lose their conscience, there will be no bottom-line, and no telling what decadent minds will do. Many are outraged by toxic food and toys exported from China, and some analysts attribute that to the "lack of rule of law" in China. When there is no conscience, human intelligence will be ill used to evade all laws for personal gain.

The moral bankruptcy in China is the result of over fifty years of crimes against conscience by the Chinese communist regime. In recent years, the Chinese regime has taken its crimes against conscience to other parts of the world, plunging people in Darfur, Burma, Zimbabwe, North Korea and other regions into worse human rights suffering, and enticing Western corporations such as Microsoft, Yahoo and Cisco to cooperate with its human rights violations.



"Relentless" by WANG Zhiping. An artistic rendering of police relentlessly beating a Falun Gong practitioner.

Since goading people to act against their conscience is the very basis of the Chinese regime's rule, it has viewed conscience as the greatest threat to its rule and spent the fiercest violence on people who insist on their conscience. The Chinese communist regime's persecution of Falun Gong is its latest and most vicious attack against conscience.

In standing up to the CCP, Falun Gong practitioners not only are standing up for their own right to conscience, but also taking a stand for all of humanity.

How can we afford not to stand with them? How can we not devote ourselves to stopping the Chinese communist regime's crimes against conscience?

To illustrate the history and the essence of this epic struggle between peace vs. violence, truth vs. lies, and conscience vs. evil, we bring you the booklet, *Falun Gong, Humanity's Last Stand*, published in parts.

"If right and wrong can be compromised, why have right and wrong? ... Conscience, thus, defines human nature, and the right to conscience is a human being's most fundamental right.

No crime, therefore, is worse than the crime against conscience."

-- *The Conscience Foundation*

Falun Gong, Humanity's Last Stand

Part I: History Unfolds

July 20, 1999, in the wee hours, behind the curtain of the dark night, the Chinese armed police force, ushered on by China's then-ruler Jiang Zemin, launched a nationwide blitz arrest of Falun Gong practitioners, jump-starting a violent oppression of 100 million innocent citizens.



A group of policemen assaulting Falun Gong practitioners on Tiananmen Square.

No one at the time - neither the oppressed nor the oppressor - believed the persecution could last long. To Falun Gong practitioners, the persecution must have been

It's a Matter of Morality

Some people think that tying the Olympics to improving human rights in China is wrong. The Olympics, they say, should not be a political football.

Our response is twofold.

First, if a member of a particular political party commits murder, is it a political decision to oppose his wrongdoing? Of course not! It is a matter of morality. Shouldn't we try to stop the murderer? Chinese human rights attorney Gao Zhisheng stated it well in his recent letter to the US Congress, "As you know, today in China, those who connect the Olympics with human rights are immediately hunted down by the communist regime and its gang as 'enemies of the state.'" The result: the secret police took HIM away. Are we enemies of the state to connect the Olympics with human rights? Again, it is a matter of morality.

the result of a misunderstanding. Less than three months earlier, on April 25, Premier Zhu Rongji had met with representatives of Falun Gong practitioners and assured them of their right to practice Falun Gong. As recently as June 14, a government spokesperson had stated that the government never prohibited the Falun Gong practice, and that people had the right to practice. How could a government contradict itself so quickly?

More importantly, Falun Gong practitioners could not think of any justifiable reason for the persecution. Falun Gong only teaches people to follow the principle of Truth-Benevolence-Forbearance to improve their moral and mental quality, and to practice five sets of meditative exercises to improve their physical wellbeing. The authorities were quite aware of Falun Gong's positive impact on society; a February US News and World Report article quoted an official from the National Commission of Sports as crediting the practice with saving 100 billion yuan in medical expenses for the 100 million people practicing Falun Gong. One third of the 60 million Chinese Communist Party (CCP) members and a large number of high-ranking government officials practiced Falun Gong. How could a government turn on its own supporters?

To the CCP the persecution was meant to be a quick kill. Jiang himself, for example, had claimed: "I simply do not believe our Communist Party cannot conquer Falun Gong."

The regime had every reason to be self-assured. For several months, its intelligence agents had locked onto Falun Gong practitioners whom they thought to be "leaders," and its propaganda machinery had prepared potent fabrications to vilify Falun Gong and turn the public against it. In so many previous persecutions, these two steps alone were enough to break the backbone and spirit of any victim group.

The regime commands the world's most powerful machinery of repression: the largest army, armed police force, public security police force, and detention center/labor camp system. This well-oiled machine has accumulated the most experience and skill in controlling people's minds, dictating people's social behavior, and annihilating nonconforming groups. In addition, the regime has achieved a feat no oppressors had ever

Second, in 2001, in order to secure the Olympics, Chinese government officials made an explicit promise to improve human rights and freedom in China. To ask China to keep its promise is again not a political decision, but also a matter of morality.

A child's poster and two letters, one written by a victim who witnessed China's brutal persecution and another written by U.S. Congressman Adam Schiff, bring this point home.



This photo was taken during the Chinese New Year of 2005, a time for families to get together. The board reads, "My name is Sun Mingyuan and I am five years old. My father Sun Qian was arbitrarily sentenced to 12 years in prison because he practices Falun Gong. The police abducted my mother, Ma Chunli, on the street in broad daylight on December 14, 2004, just because she wants to be a good person and follow the principle of Truth-Benevolence-Forbearance. She has been on a hunger strike for 48 days and is in critical condition. I am lonely, helpless, and separated from my parents. Kind people, please help me. I miss my mom. I want my mom and dad back."

The Victim's Letter

Letter to the President of the International Olympic Committee

By a Falun Gong Practitioner in China

Dear Mr. President:

accomplished before: enticing the world's acquiescence towards repetitive human rights abuses through economic favors. There simply seemed no stopping it from doing what it wanted to do.

So overflowing was the regime's arrogance that the CCP deviated from its usual practice of labeling its political persecutions as "internal affairs" to divert international attention, and instead boldly trumpeted its new persecution abroad and even asked Interpol to apprehend and extradite the founder of Falun Gong. With such confidence, the CCP gave itself three months to "completely solve the Falun Gong question." Some China experts and international observers thought the government needed just a week.

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.



On May 7, 2004, in the Longshan Forced Labor Camp, two policemen handcuffed Ms. Gao Rongrong to a heating pipe and shocked her with three electric batons for seven hours straight, burning her face to a crisp. This photo was taken 10 days later. Ms. Gao sent the picture to overseas websites. When the Communist regime found out, they put out an all points bulletin for her capture. They tortured Gao Rongrong to death on June 16, 2005.

There is no doubt regarding the oppressor's ferociousness. In the first few 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 to neighborhoods, was turned against Falun Gong. Practitioners were forced to renounce their belief, or be fired from their jobs, expelled

I am aware that I am writing to you as a complete stranger, and my English is not good enough to make my words elegant...

I apologize for withholding my name and address. The reason is the same one that drove me to write this letter. In China, people do not have the right to freely and publicly express their opinions.

That is exactly what I wish to remind you: now is a critically important period not only for me, an ordinary Chinese, but also for you and everyone in the civilized world.

Maybe you want to become the most successful president in the history of the IOC, or maybe you simply want to be a respected person; maybe you want to be a good father to your children, and many other things.

But I'm certain that you do not want to be recorded in the history books as an accomplice to a dictatorship.

Unfortunately, right now, you are hanging from the edge of a cliff.

Now, let me tell you why this is a crucial time - you have the opportunity to help countless people who are suffering grave injustice, or you can support criminals with your silence and bring shame to the Olympic games.

I will share with you some true stories that I have personally witnessed.

One of my teachers was sent to a mental hospital and later to a prison, because she did not want to give up practicing Falun Gong. This is not a joke.

The police took away my mother, who is in her 60s, on July 20, 1999. She was not allowed to sleep for 24 hours and she was deprived of freedom for the next month. The same thing happened to thousands of other

from schools, stripped of business licenses, evicted from their homes, and deprived of retirement payments.

There is also no doubt of 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, while countless others have simply disappeared. Most shockingly, at least one clandestine concentration camp has 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.

Facing the extreme injustice, facing heinous torture and killing, Falun Gong practitioners have remained completely peaceful. They remain peaceful in the face of police beatings; they remain peaceful towards inmates whom police coerce into becoming torturers. They have exemplified Falun Gong's teaching of "not hitting back when attacked, and not talking back when insulted." Only the righteous command the moral power of non-violence. Such moral power is not displayed by just one or two, or a few, but by all Falun Gong practitioners. Their great tolerance and righteousness have touched countless people, including the torturers.

At the same time as the violent persecution, the communist regime also launched a far-reaching campaign of disinformation to demonize Falun Gong, to incite hatred, and to put pressure on Falun Gong practitioners. The CCP's propaganda machine flooded the printing presses and airwaves with the basest lies and fabrications, claiming that Falun Gong preached doomsday and encouraged suicide, that the regime had treated Falun Gong practitioners "like a mother treats her daughters," and that it had won "decisive victories and successfully transformed 98% of Falun Gong practitioners." In early 2001, the regime even staged a self-immolation of five people in Tiananmen Square and, like Nero's shift of blame for the Great Fire of Rome to Christians, blamed the immolation on Falun Gong. The potent propaganda poisoned many people into hating Falun Gong and participating in the persecution.

people in China. The reason is simple: they practiced Falun Gong. The Chinese government promised them freedom if they would just renounce their belief.

My colleague was held in prison for several months for the same reason.

My wife spent a long time convincing her parents to approve our union. When I visited her home for the first time, her parents were terrified because my mother practiced Falun Gong, all because of the shameless lies the government fabricated in an attempt to justify the persecution.

Maybe you would say all that is in the past now; the Chinese government has made huge improvements in terms of human rights. Yet even now, officials would come to my home to harass us if they learned my mother was here. This is what they claim to be the best period of human rights in China's history.

What I've just told you is the "harmonious" life of an ordinary Chinese. I have not even mentioned the organs harvested from living Falun Gong practitioners or countless other victims throughout China.

What is the true goal of the Olympics? Is it simply a pretty show designed for commercial success, or is it meant to remind us of humanity, friendship and courage?

The answer is not hard to find if you search deep in your conscience.

When Martin Luther King gave the famous speech, "I Have a Dream," people of different colors listened to him. I hope you share some of Dr. King's courage and willingness to uphold justice.

A Chinese citizen

Written on August 24, 2007



To let the Chinese people learn the truth about Falun Gong and the persecution, practitioners have posted flyers in many public places. Many people read the Falun Gong flyers.

With great compassion towards those who are under the influence of the venomous lies, Falun Gong practitioners have persisted in what the Chinese language describes as "truth clarification" informing people of the facts about Falun Gong and waking them up about a persecution that is completely based on lies. In the beginning, few people listened, and they even turned many practitioners in to the authorities. Gradually, people started to listen. As they learned about the heinous torture and saw through the CCP's lies, they began to distance themselves from the persecution. The CCP can no longer mobilize society to assist in the persecution. More and more people have also started to protect Falun Gong practitioners and help them to spread the truth.

For the first time the CCP has had to restrain its propaganda machine; to continue its smear campaign against Falun Gong would only convey the message that Falun Gong is still standing and Falun Gong practitioners are still going strong in China. For the first time in its long history of dictatorship the CCP has had to take its persecution underground and stop claiming more "decisive victories."

The regime, however, cannot stop the tide from turning. The persecution of Falun Gong has thoroughly exposed the despotic nature of the CCP. At the same time, the courage of Falun Gong practitioners has awakened people's consciences. Large numbers of people have renounced their CCP memberships and resigned from other CCP-affiliated organizations as a declaration to reclaim their consciences. By December 2007, nearly 30

Congressman Adam Schiff's Letter

On November 16, Congressman Adam Schiff wrote to Mr. Liu Qi, President of the Beijing Organizing Committee of the Olympic Games (BOCOG) about human rights in China. Here are some quotes from the letter, the full text of which can be read at [here](#).

"...we remain deeply concerned about the lack of improvement of the human rights situation in China. Despite explicit promises made by Chinese government officials in 2001, the Chinese government has not taken serious steps to expand basic rights and freedom."

"In 2001, a representative of the Beijing Candidate Committee said: 'By entrusting the holding of the Olympic Games to Beijing, you will contribute to the development of human rights.' Six years later, improvements in press freedom or online free expression have been minimal."

"We are disturbed that China's journalists are forced to have to accept the dictates of the Propaganda Department, which imposes censorship on a wide range of subjects. The state maintains broad control of news and uses authoritarian laws to punish journalist and editors for the most liberal media - charging them with subversion, divulging state secrets and espionage. Self-censorship is the rule in editorial rooms. Chinese-language media based abroad are blocked, harassed or jammed, including U.S.-sponsored media, preventing the emergence of any media pluralism."

"In the past, the Olympic games have been able to help establish freedoms in countries struggling to emerge from authoritarianism. Today, the absence of efforts by the Chinese

million people had renounced their allegiance to the CCP, and the number is rapidly growing.

This resistance to a violent persecution through truth clarification and awakening people's conscience is unprecedented. The steely will Falun Gong practitioners have demonstrated and the tremendous sacrifices they have made are what the Chinese language describes as "startling the heavens and moving the gods." When this page of history is turned, there is no doubt that historians, writers, and scholars for generations to come will visit and revisit the epic story playing out today.

-- *To be continued on our next newsletter: History Igored*

Excerpt from [Falun Gong, Humanity's Last Stand](#)

government could dash the goals and ideals of the Olympic Games."

"Mr. President, we believe that your convictions will enable you to quickly do what everyone is expecting of you - to take action on behalf of freedoms in China before the start of the 2008 Olympic Games."

Nine Congressmen, including Adam Schiff, signed the letter.

Tell Me Why?

In 2003, then ten-year-old, Declan Galbraith, recorded a song that asks the question: "Tell Me Why Does it Have to Be Like This?" What answer can we give our children about this world that we created? Please listen to his words.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_j6IBdHW_rY&feature=related

To Sign the Online Petition:

<http://www.falunhr.org/te/index.php?signature=1&lang=en>

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