

“The CCP’s campaign has made Falun Gong practitioners the most oppressed group in Chinese society,” reads a 2019 report titled “The 20-Year Persecution of Falun Gong in China” by Minghui, a U.S.-based website that tracks the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a spiritual discipline involving meditative exercises and moral teachings based on three core principles: truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance. The practice gained popularity in China during the 1990s, with estimates putting the number of adherents at 70 million to 100 million.

The communist regime, fearing the number of practitioners posed a threat to its authoritarian control, initiated a sweeping campaign aimed at eradicating the practice starting on July 20, 1999, a program that continues today.

Since then, millions have been detained in prisons, labor camps, and other facilities, with hundreds of thousands tortured while incarcerated, according to the Falun Dafa Information Center.

Detained adherents also have been victims of forced organ harvesting, which has resulted in an untold number of practitioners being killed for their organs to supply the organ transplant market in China.

Myriad Accounts of Persecution

For the past 20 years, Minghui has been collecting and publishing individual accounts of the persecution, which were systematized, and grouped by patterns observed in the suppression of Falun Gong, for the purpose of the report.

“No book can cover the hundreds of thousands of persecution cases we have recorded,” David Li, from Minghui publishing, told The Epoch Times. “We have practitioners getting arrested, put in prison, tortured, even killed ... the purpose of all that is to force them to renounce their belief [in what Falun Gong stands for]: truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance.”

Such patterns include the detention of practitioners in brainwashing centers, forced labor camps, and mental hospitals.

Minghui outlined 100 torture methods used on detained practitioners, such as beating, force-feeding, electric shocks, suffocation, rape, forced abortion, sleep deprivation, burning with hot water or oil, among others.

But besides grisly stories about torture and death in detention facilities, the book brings to light more overlooked aspects of the persecution, such as the suffering inflicted on children and ostracism experienced by practitioners.



Falun Dafa practitioners commemorate lives lost and 20 years of persecution by the Chinese communist regime in Sydney, Australia, on July 19, 2019. (The Epoch Times)

Child Victims

Children of Falun Gong adherents have also been victimized by the CCP's eradication campaign, according to Minghui's report.

Some children were detained and abused themselves. But others suffered collateral damage due to the persecution of their loved ones.

Many children became homeless orphans or were left to fend for themselves because their parents were imprisoned or killed. Others suffered psychological damage after their parents were tortured, or their homes ransacked.

Some were deprived of an education because they practiced Falun Gong, or with the purpose to coerce their parents to renounce their faith.

Most of them suffered the consequences of discrimination caused by heavy brainwashing of their peers against Falun Gong, becoming social pariahs, humiliated and bullied.

"Growing up in fear and witnessing their loved ones being arrested and tortured again and again will have long-lasting impact on these children, their extended families, and their own children," reads the report.

1 Year Old Detained in Brainwashing Center

Minghui's book mentions the case of Guo Yuetong, a 1-year-old who spent a year in the Changli Brainwashing Center, in northern China's Hebei Province, in 2001 while detained with her mother, a Falun Gong practitioner.

The child was present when her mother was tortured—namely, beaten, force-fed, and shocked with electric batons.

“Every time the guards tortured her mother, Yuetong was so scared that she hid in the corner and cried,” the report stated.

Yuetong turned 3 years old while still in the brainwashing center. She and her mother were detained again three years later.



A mother and daughter join Falun Gong practitioners for a candlelight vigil in front of the Chinese Consulate in New York on July 16, 2017. Launched on July 20, 1999, the persecution is now entering its 18th year inside China. (Benjamin Chasteen/The Epoch Times)

13-Year-Old Girl Force-Fed in Brainwashing Center

Chen Si was only 13 and attending middle school in southwest China's Chongqing city when she was arrested for distributing information about Falun Gong in 2001.

The police beat her and sent her to Geleshan Brainwashing Center, where she was interrogated.

The young girl started a hunger strike in protest, so the police force-fed her for two weeks.

After her release, she wasn't allowed to go back to school because she kept practicing Falun Gong.

Teenage Girl Traumatized After Witnessing Her Parents Getting Tortured

During April 2003, the police forced Yuanyuan, a 16-year-old girl from northern China's Heilongjiang Province, to watch while they tied her parents to a "tiger bench"—a torture device designed to inflict unbearable pain on the legs—and subjected them to other similar torture methods.

Police also force-fed her parents large amounts of mustard oil through the mouth and nose, and suffocated them by placing plastic bags around their heads.

Once Yuanyuan and her parents were released, the police told the young girl she had to stand still at the door of her building for hours.

"They threatened to beat her parents if she dared to move. Fearing that her parents would suffer more torture, Yuanyuan stood still until her feet became swollen and turned purple," Minghui's report stated.

These experiences deeply harmed Yuanyuan's mental health. She was unable to continue her studies and started to wander on the streets, eating food from garbage bins.

Though she is currently 32, Yuanyuan is not self-sufficient nor independent.



Falun Gong practitioner Chi Lihua and her daughter, Xu Xinyang, holding before and after photos of Xu Dawei, husband of Chi Lihua and father of Xu Xinyang, at the roundtable "Religious Persecution in China" in the Russell Senate Office Building on July 23. (Jennifer Zeng/Epoch Times)

Hatred Instilled Against Falun Gong

A critical component of the CCP's persecution is its disinformation campaign against the practice, aimed at turning Chinese citizens against Falun Gong and its adherents. To this end, the regime has relied heavily on propaganda, spreading hatred against the practice by misrepresenting it and vilifying its adherents.

From an early age, children are brainwashed against Falun Gong through the education system, starting in elementary school, according to Minghui's report.

Children "are trained to be loyal to the CCP," said David Li, the representative of Minghui Publishing.

Against the backdrop of the smear campaign, the regime demands neighbors, family members, and coworkers to report on and deliver Falun Gong practitioners to the authorities and discriminate against them.

"The regime has successfully used its system of brainwashing and thought control to turn children against parents, husbands against wives, and students against teachers," the report stated.

Through propaganda and thought control, the CCP managed to have people operate as proxies of the Party in the persecution, the report added.

Woman Beaten to Death by Her Own Son

One example of Chinese citizens serving as proxies of the Party is the case of Lu Shurong, a 77-year-old woman from northeastern Tianjin city who was beaten to death by her own son.

Lu had been arrested for her faith in the past, and her son, Du Xuedong, a 50-year-old military veteran, had posted bail twice to have her released.

Because the woman refused to quit practicing Falun Gong, and this could jeopardize her son's efforts to become a government employee, he started becoming hostile toward her.

While under the influence of alcohol, on Sept. 27, 2018, Du beat his mother for more than an hour, breaking her wrist and ten ribs.

Because one of her broken ribs pierced her lung and her organs were gravely injured, she died after being hospitalized for 24 days.

Discrimination

Falun Gong adherents of all ages have suffered discrimination at all levels of society, becoming completely shunned by their peers.

“No matter who they are, wherever they go, as long as they don’t give up practicing Falun Gong, they are labeled enemies of the Party and subjected to ruthless persecution,” the book stated.

Practitioners have been denied education by getting expelled from schools or not being allowed into college because of their faith.

They have been denied employment or fired from their jobs.

Their companies have been shut down or their clients stopped associating with them because of their faith.

Man Treated as an Enemy by Clients and Neighbors

He Lifang was detained and beaten by 17 inmates for practicing Falun Gong.

As the owner of a business, he was very successful before the persecution started. But due to the CCP’s propaganda campaign against his faith, his clients started treating him with hostility.

“One neighbor who used to be friendly swore at me and my family. Even children sometimes cursed at us because they too had been influenced by the propaganda,” he told Minghui, while recounting the persecution he suffered.



Falun Gong practitioners at candlelight vigil remembering victims of the 22 years of persecution in China at the Washington Monument on July 16, 2021. The characters for “Truthfulness, Compassion, Tolerance,” the principles taught by the spiritual practice appear at the front. (Larry Dye/The Epoch Times)

Responding With Compassion

Despite the atrocities Falun Gong practitioners have endured in the past 23 years of persecution, there's hope in how they have reacted to the persecution, according to Li of Minghui Publishing.

“They have no hatred of their persecutors because they see them as victims ... of a CCP system that forces them to act against their conscience and harm their fellow citizens,” Li said.

Practitioners have responded to violence with compassion, trying to persuade perpetrators to stop partaking in the persecution, and step out of that “cycle of abuse,” according to Li.

“Everyone is put in a position where they have to make a choice about whether to go along with the persecution, help the persecution or to stand up against it,” he added.

After more than two decades of “the cruelest violence, these practitioners have not given up their belief, and they are still living by the values of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance,” Li said.

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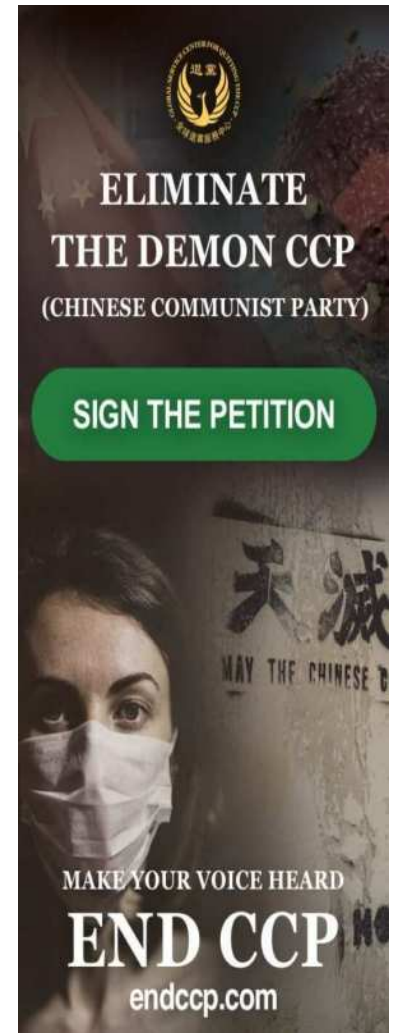
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