



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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13 September 2005

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China: the situation of persons who unwittingly or knowingly assist Falun Gong practitioners by allowing use or rental of property, offices, office equipment, vehicles or other items; the treatment of such persons by state authorities if they deny knowledge of having assisted Falun Gong practitioners, agree to cease such assistance or denounce Falun Gong (2003-2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

Information on persons who assist Falun Gong practitioners and later deny knowledge of having done so or agree to cease such assistance and denounce Falun Gong was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. According to an online newsletter published by the Falun Gong Human Rights Working Group (FGHRWG), "[p]ractitioners and non-practitioners alike who come to [practitioners'] aid are punished, often by being sentenced to prison" (2004). The FGHRWG reported that police sought to revoke the law license of a lawyer in Guangxi Province who was defending a Falun Gong adherent in court (FGHRWG 2004). The lawyer was put under surveillance while the police asked the Judiciary Bureau to also sentence him to three years of forced labour (ibid.). Although neither request was granted, the lawyer alleged that police confiscated all his documents concerning the case of the Falun Gong practitioner (ibid.). In early 2005, a Shanghai court suspended the law license of Guo Guoting for one year on charges of "'anti-constitutional speeches and acts'," according to Reporters without Borders (Reporters sans frontières, RSF) (4 Mar. 2005). Guo had defended a number of journalists and cyber dissidents in court, and in February 2005 had written an article explaining why he had taken on the case of a Falun Gong practitioner (RSF 4 Mar. 2005).

The Falun Dafa Association of New South Wales in Australia indicated in a submission to the Senate foreign affairs committee that, besides "'common practitioners'," relatives, friends, colleagues of practitioners, and non-practitioners have also been targeted by authorities (8 July 2005). Likewise, a representative of the Falun Dafa Association of Canada (FDAC) stated in correspondence to the Research Directorate that assisting Falun Gong practitioners can lead to "trouble" for non-practitioners (13 Sept. 2005). While neither the New South Wales association nor the FDAC elaborated, the FDAC representative pointed to a Falun Gong Human Rights Working Group document that reports on the case of a non-practitioner in Liaoning Province who in March 2003 was sentenced to an eight-year prison term (FDAC 13 Sept. 2005; FGHRWG n.d.). The non-practitioner allegedly collected material on the treatment of Falun Gong followers and helped some of them to leave China (ibid.). A Falun Gong adherent who claimed to have been arrested in China is quoted on the Website of Justice for Falun Gong as saying that a non-practitioner was arrested along with

her "simply because he taught [her] how to drive" (22 Feb. 2004).

The communications director at Human Rights in China explained in correspondence to the Research Directorate that the organization has heard of cases in which non-practitioners have been detained by police after Falun Gong adherents slipped pamphlets on the movement under their door and a neighbour proceeded to alert authorities (31 Aug. 2005). The communications director noted that such episodes are more common in the northeastern and central regions of China, and that pleading ignorance of Falun Gong would not prevent "a certain percentage of [Public Security Bureau (PSB)] officers" from detaining non-practitioners as a way to meet PSB requirements for controlling the Falun Gong movement (31 Aug. 2005).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Human Rights in China (HRIC). 31 August 2005. Correspondence from the communications director.

Falun Dafa Association of Canada (FDAC). 13 September 2005. Correspondence from a representative.

Falun Dafa Association of New South Wales. 8 July 2005. Submission to the Secretary of the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Canberra.
<http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/Committee/fadt_ctte/asylum/submissions/sub04.pdf> [Accessed 1 Sept. 2005]

Falun Gong Human Rights Working Group (FGHRWG). 2004. Falun Gong Human Rights Newsletter. Issue 6. <<http://falunhr.org/index2.php?option=content&task=view&id=395&pop=1&page=0>> [Accessed 31 Aug. 2005]

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Justice for Falun Gong. 22 February 2004. "Canada: Ottawa and Montreal Falun Gong Call to Bring Jiang, Luo, Liu and Zhou to Justice."
<<http://www.flgjustice.org/index2.php?option=content&task=view&id=222&pop=1&page=0>> [Accessed 31 Aug. 2005]

Reporters without Borders (RSF). 4 March 2005. "Lawyer for Several Journalists and Cyberdissidents Banned from Practising for One Year."
<http://www.rsf.org/print.php3?id_article=12756> [Accessed 14 Sept. 2005]

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Spokespersons for the Falun Dafa Information Center, along with

an academic source, did not provide information within the time constraints of this Response.

Internet sites, including: Human Rights Watch, Falun Dafa Clearwisdom, Falun Dafa Information Center, Freedom House, Friends of Falun Gong USA, Radio Free Asia, United Kingdom Home Office, United States Department of Homeland Security, United States House of Representatives Committee on International Relations.

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