

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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## Responses to Information Requests

Responses to Information Requests (RIR) respond to focused Requests for Information that are submitted to the Research Directorate in the course of the refugee protection determination process. The database contains a seven-year archive of English and French RIRs. Earlier RIRs may be found on the UNHCR's [Refworld](#) website.

2 October 2012

**CHN104187.E**

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China: Monitoring of Chinese citizens who practice Falun Gong (Falun Dafa) outside of China; consequences upon return to China (2008-2012)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

### 1. Monitoring of Chinese Falun Gong Practitioners in Canada

Two representatives of the Falun Dafa Association of Canada (FDAC) stated that the Chinese authorities monitor practitioners of Falun Gong in Canada (FDAC 12 Sept. 2012; *ibid.* 18 Sept. 2012). In 21 September 2012 correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Vice-President of the FDAC in Toronto stated that the Chinese Embassy and Consulates in Canada keep "blacklists" of all known Falun Gong practitioners. Additionally, in a telephone interview with the Research Directorate on 12 September 2012, an Ottawa-based representative of the FDAC explained that the authorities send people to observe, take photos of, and "attempt to intimidate" practitioners with their presence at public Falun Gong activities (FDAC 12 Sept. 2012). In correspondence sent to the Research Directorate on 18 September 2012, the Toronto FDAC Vice-President wrote that Chinese agents taking photos at Falun Gong events "run away" when approached (FDAC 18 Sept. 2012).

The Ottawa FDAC representative noted that the government's monitoring is also done via "Western" photographers sent by the state-owned Xinhua News Agency to take photos of Falun Gong events (*ibid.* 12 Sept. 2012). She added that two Xinhua reporters attended a demonstration outside the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa against President Hu Jintao's visit in 2010, where they questioned Falun Gong practitioners about their practice and took photos (*ibid.*). According to the Toronto FDAC Vice-President, Xinhua reporters attend Falun Gong press events in Ottawa but do not publish articles on these events (*ibid.* 18 Sept. 2012). In corroboration, in an article published in the September 2012 edition of *Ottawa Magazine*, Mark Bourrie, a Canadian journalist who worked for Xinhua in Ottawa between 2010 and April 2012, writes that Xinhua representatives attend and make video recordings of all local Falun Gong news conferences and events (*Ottawa Magazine* Sept. 2012, 33, 36). He notes, however, that "nothing about the news conferences appears on Xinhua's English-language website" (*ibid.*, 36). The *National Post* reports that, in an interview, Bourrie stated that he believed that the information on Falun Gong that he had collected was sent to the Chinese government (22 Aug. 2012). Bourrie also states that he was asked to collect the names and addresses of people who protested against Hu Jintao's visit in 2010 (*Ottawa Magazine* Sept. 2012, 35). The Canadian Press reports that the Ottawa Xinhua bureau chief denied that the journalist was asked to spy for the news agency (22 Aug. 2012).

The Toronto FDAC Vice-President stated that Falun Gong practitioners in Canada have been approached by representatives of the Chinese authorities, who threaten their family members in China if they do not stop "criticizing China" (18 Sept. 2012). Media sources report that in August 2012, the president of the Canadian branch of the Falun Gong-affiliated Chinese television station, New Tang Dynasty (NTD) Television, which broadcasts internationally and in China via satellite, received a telephone call from a state security agent demanding him to stop criticizing the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (*The Epoch Times* 1 Sept. 2012; *Sun News* 6 Sept. 2012). According to the NTD president, the phone call was made from his brother's home in China (*ibid.*; *The Epoch Times* 1 Sept. 2012). In 2010, the *Vancouver Sun* also reported that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) were investigating a NTD journalist's claims that the Chinese Ministry of State Security had threatened his life and his family because of his critical coverage of the Chinese government (23 Sept. 2010). According to the Toronto FDAC Vice-President, the RCMP remained in contact with the journalist for some time to verify his safety (21 Sept. 2012).

The Toronto FDAC Vice-President stated that some Falun Gong practitioners applying for visas to China or

Chinese passport extensions have been called to the Chinese consulate or embassy and asked to renounce Falun Gong (21 Sept. 2012). An article published on the Falun Dafa website Minghui.org (also known as Clearwisdom) reports that the Chinese consulate in Vancouver refused to renew the passports of one Falun Gong practitioner in 2010 and of a second practitioner in 2011 (Minghui.org 21 July 2011). The same source and another article published by the Falun Gong-affiliated newspaper the *Epoch Times* indicate that the second practitioner was denied her passport renewal after refusing a consulate official's request to stop protesting the government's treatment of Falun Gong members in front of the Chinese consulate (ibid.; *The Epoch Times* 31 May 2011). According to the *Epoch Times*, "[i]n recent years, many overseas Chinese, including dissidents and Falun Gong practitioners have had their passports revoked, canceled or denied extension by the CCP's embassies" (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

## 2. Monitoring of Falun Gong Practitioners in Other Countries

Media sources report that in 2006, Chinese intelligence agents recruited a German Falun Gong practitioner to collect and transmit information to China about Falun Gong activities in Germany (*Spiegel Online* 30 June 2010; *The Epoch Times* 12 June 2011). According to the *Epoch Times*, the practitioner was convicted of spying by the Niedersachsen State Supreme Court in June 2011 and sentenced to a two-year suspended prison sentence and a 15,000 Euro [C\$ 19,000 (XE 1 Oct. 2012)] fine payable to Amnesty International (ibid.).

In a 2008 affidavit and personal statement to the Supreme Court of British Columbia, provided to the Research Directorate by the FDAC, a former First Secretary for Political Affairs at the Consulate General of China in Sydney, Australia, Chen Yonglin, who defected and was granted political asylum in Australia in 2005, states that "[o]pposing Falun Gong is the top priority of all Chinese Embassies and Consulates today" and that the "'War on Falun Gong' constitutes more than half the total work of the typical Chinese mission" (Chen 17 June 2008, para. 6, 7, 29, 30). In the affidavit, which was submitted to the Supreme Court of British Columbia as evidence for legal proceedings between the City of Vancouver and Falun Gong practitioners protesting in front of the Chinese Consulate (ibid., para. 43, 44, Exhibit E), Chen also writes that

[o]ne of the functions of the Consulate-General in Sydney was to infiltrate Falun Gong practitioners, compile a complete name list of all practitioners in New South Wales, and collect as much information as possible about them so that the Consulate could assign Chinese students and Chinese Communist Party supporters in the local Chinese business community to maintain surveillance of all their movements. Most of the practitioners on the list, which eventually totaled about 800 people, were Australian citizens. (ibid., para. 31)

He indicates that the "control of the overseas Chinese community" is a strategic objective of the CCP in the US and Canada as well as in Australia (ibid., para. 19). He also states that every Chinese embassy and consulate in every foreign country has at least one diplomat whose primary task is to "implement the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners who are Chinese nationals with temporary or permanent residency, and citizens of the host country" (ibid., para. 20). Corroborating information for Chen's statements could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

## 3. Treatment of Returned Overseas Falun Gong Practitioners by the Authorities in China

According to the Ottawa FDAC representative, Chinese practitioners who live abroad and return to China have been "detained" and "interrogated" by the authorities about their involvement in Falun Gong (12 Sept. 2012). The Toronto FDAC Vice-President added that practitioners are sometimes interrogated "as soon as they [exit] the airplane" in China (18 Sept. 2012).

The Minghui.org article reports that a Vancouver Falun Gong practitioner's daughter and son-in-law, who do not practice Falun Gong themselves, were interrogated by three national security agents in Beijing in 2010 for two hours regarding the practitioner's activities (Minghui.org 21 July 2011). The article states that the authorities "threatened to 'take action'" if the practitioner refused to stop criticizing the CCP abroad (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

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 sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral source:** Attempts to contact a New York-based representative of Falun Info were unsuccessful.

**Internet sites, including:** Amnesty International; Australia Refugee Review Tribunal; *The Australian*; *The Calgary Herald*; China – Embassy in Ottawa, Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council; David Kilgour; *The Diplomat*; Falun Dafa Association of Canada; Factiva; Falun Info; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; iPolitics; *Jane's Intelligence Review*; *Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor*; *Taipei Times*; *The Toronto Star*; US – Committee on International Relations, Department of State; *The Washington Post*; *The Washington Times*.

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