

# Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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> Responses to Information Requests

## 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. Please note that some RIRs have attachments which are not electronically accessible. To obtain a PDF copy of an RIR attachment please email [Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca](mailto:Basesdedonnees.DatabaseUnit@irb-cisr.gc.ca).

16 May 2014

### CHN104868.E

China: Cases of people sentenced to "re-education through labour" in Fujian, including cities and types of labour; whether authorities in Fujian seize or cancel documents such as hukou or driver's licenses of people sentenced to re-education; actions taken by authorities to track down someone who escaped from re-education, including issuing a chuanpiao (2013)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information regarding cases of "re-education through labour" in Fujian Province; whether authorities there seize or cancel documents of people sentenced to re-education; and the actions taken by authorities to track down someone who escaped re-education was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

#### 1. Re-education Through Labour

A journalist who is based in Beijing for part of the year, has been published in news sources such as the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker*, and who has won a Pulitzer prize in 2001 for his reporting on the Falun Gong in China, stated that it was "possible" for an individual to be sentenced to "re-education through labour" outside of a labour camp in China, although he could not provide information on Fujian Province specifically (Journalist 8 May 2014).

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, a lecturer at the Department of Politics and International Relations of the University of Auckland, who researches Chinese politics and has written on Falun Gong in China, stated:

While I have no firsthand knowledge of individuals in Fujian undergoing [Re-education through Labour (RTL)] in factories, there are many well-documented instances of sessions intended to intimidate or "[transform]" [Falun Gong] practitioners that take place in other public buildings or meeting areas deemed fit for this purpose by agents of local-level 610 offices (often schools, libraries, or hotels). (Lecturer 9 May 2014)

For further details on the 610 offices, please refer to Response to Information Request CHN40879.

The lecturer added:

The sentencing of individuals to hard labour is increasingly not the way in which ideological correction is done, though there are many cases where FG practitioners continue to be threatened with incarceration of various types should they fail to recant their beliefs or submit to transformation under 610 auspices. (ibid.)

Similarly, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, an independent human rights researcher, who has provided reports, analysis and testimony to various NGOs and branches and agencies of the U.S. government and who is also a Falun Gong practitioner, stated that

the 'transformation' or re-education of Falun Gong adherents is conducted in a variety of settings and is not limited to re-education-through-labor camps. Since 2013 in particular, proportionally higher numbers of adherents have been sent to prisons or to black jails (called "legal education centers" in official parlance) where they are subject to targeted ideological reprogramming. These re-education classes are sometimes extremely ad hoc, taking place in civilian facilities like hotels, schools, and workplaces. (Researcher 9 May 2014)

The Researcher added:

Party officials also pressure employers to participate in the transformation campaigns against Falun Gong adherents. There are numerous reports on government websites detailing weekly anti-Falun Gong study sessions within state-owned enterprises, for instance. Sometimes re-education classes are organized by the companies themselves in cooperation with local party officials. In that sense, it is entirely plausible that a person would be forced to undergo re-education in a factory or other work unit. (ibid.)

In addition, the Researcher stated:

However, I am not aware of instances where a person is 'sentenced' to perform forced labor in a factory. The emphasis in the anti-Falun Gong campaign is on the re-education and ideological transformation component, and not on the labor per se. (ibid.)

Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In a 2008 report, the Laogai Research Foundation, a Washington, DC-based organization dedicated to gathering information and creating awareness of human rights violations in China's prison system (Laogai Research Foundation n.d.), states that "[i]n China, nearly all [re-education through labour] camps have an official prison name and one or more commercial names" (ibid. 19 June 2008). Similarly, according to Clearharmony.net, a Falun Gong-affiliated news site, the Qinghai Women's Prison, located in Qinghai Province, is also known as the "Leather and Feather Quilt and Clothing Factory" (28 Jan. 2009).

The 2008 *Laogai Handbook* produced by the Laogai Research Foundation, which provides the commercial names under which prisons and labour camps are also known in China, identifies the following prisons as having commercial names relating to the manufacture of clothing in Fujian Province: "Fuzhou Lianhua Clothing Processing Factory," "Quanzhou Shenghua Knit Clothing Factory," "Garment Factory" in Fuzhou, "Fuzhou Rujiang Clothing, Footwear and Hat Factory" and "Fuzhou Yanshan Clothing Factory" (Laogai Handbook 2008, 71-78). However, the Handbook notes that "because of the closed and secret nature of the Laogai [meaning "reform through labour" in Chinese (ibid., 26)] system, it is impossible to present a completely precise and accurate record of how many Laogai camps exist in China" (ibid., 27).

## 2. Seizure and Cancellation of Official Documents by Authorities

In response to a question from the Research Directorate, the journalist stated that authorities in Fujian would "certainly" seize or cancel documents, such as a *hukou* or a driver's license, from individuals condemned to re-education through labour (Journalist 8 May 2014). The researcher stated that it "is entirely plausible" that hukous or other official documents would be seized from individuals condemned to re-education through labour (Researcher 9 May 2014). The researcher added:

Although I'm not aware of cases in Fujian specifically, there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence of practitioners who are unable to obtain or renew official documents and whose children are denied hukou registration (and, by extension, access to education). I have also found several reports on local government websites alluding to the requirement that any person wishing to change their hukou registration must provide proof that they have no record of participation in Falun Gong (ibid.).

The lecturer stated:

I know of no particular instances in which official documents of Fujian residents have been permanently seized or cancelled, though it is well known that disavowal of FG and a promise to inform on any known practitioners, and acceptance of a duty to report any FG materials encountered (printed, electronic or otherwise) has long been a criterion of admission to institutes of higher learning, or for access to public service jobs (9 May 2014).

## 3. Efforts by Authorities to Track Down Someone Who Fled from Re-education Through Labour Camps

The journalist stated that authorities would "absolutely" issue a *chuanpiao* [a court-issued subpoena] or put up wanted posters to track down someone who fled rather than undergo "re-education through labour" (Journalist 8 May 2014). For information regarding court-issued subpoenas as well as summonses used in China, please refer to Response to Information Request CHN104458.

Regarding the efforts authorities would make to track down Falun Gong practitioners who fled rather than undergo "re-education through labour," the researcher stated:

I am aware of a couple instances where practitioners have been the subject of 'wanted' posters, or where authorities have attempted to pressure family members of acquaintances for information on their whereabouts. It is also fairly common for authorities to offer financial rewards for information leading to the identification or capture of Falun Gong adherents. Off the top of my head I can't point to specific examples in Fujian, but the trends are pretty consistent across the country. (Researcher 9 May 2014)

Discussing what efforts local 610 offices would undertake to apprehend a fleeing Falun Gong practitioner, the lecturer stated: "My sense is that the expenditure of time and money is much more likely in circumstances where financial rewards or punishments are levied for meeting/failing to meet a quota of caught practitioners" (Lecturer 8 May 2014). Corroboration of the above statement 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.

## References

Clearharmony.net. 28 January 2009. "Retired Practitioners Jailed in Qinghai Women's Prison." <<http://en.clearharmony.net/articles/a47713-print-Retired-Practitioners-Jailed-in-Qinghai-Women-s-Prison.html>> [Accessed 9 May 2014]

Journalist. 8 May 2014. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate.

Laogai Research Foundation. 19 June 2008. *Laogai Forced Labor Camps Listed in Dun & Bradstreet Databases*. <<http://laogai.org/system/files/u1/Laogai-DB-Report.pdf>> [Accessed 12 May 2014]

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\_\_\_\_\_. N.d. "About Us." <<http://www.laogai.org/about-us>> [Accessed 12 May 2014]

Lecturer, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Auckland. 9 May 2014. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate.

Researcher. 9 May 2014. Correspondence sent to the Research Directorate.

## Additional Sources Consulted

**Oral sources :** Representatives of the Embassy of Canada in Beijing and Friends of Falun Gong USA were unable to provide information within the time constraints of this Response. Attempts to contact the following individuals and organizations were unsuccessful within the time constraints of this Response: Consulate of Canada in Guangzhou; Laogai Foundation.

**Internet sites, including :** Asian Catalyst; Asian Human Rights Commission; Amnesty International; BBC; CNN; Dui Hua; eci.net; Freedom House; Human Rights Watch; Menghui; *The New York Times*; Perspectives chinoises; United Nations – Refworld; United States – Department of State; *The Wall Street Journal*; World Organisation Against Torture; Xinhua News Agency.

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