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Item 11 of the 61st Session of the UN Human Rights Commission

Statement on People's Republic China's Grave Human Rights Violations

UNA-San Diego reiterates its support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and protests the continued violation of the UDHR by the People's Republic of China on a scale unequalled anywhere in the world. While we note the recent release of Rebiya Kadeer by PRC, it is not enough. Just as releasing one or one thousand Jews from the 6 millions in concentration camps by the Nazis was not a human rights improvement, PRC's "human rights hostage" game should not be rewarded.

We are particularly concerned by the outrageous treatment of the practitioners of Falun Gong, who simply exercise rights declared in the UDHR. The confirmed deaths as a result of this persecution have climbed to over 1,600, with countless disappeared others still unaccounted for. This number alone does not illustrate the severity of the violation. Different and worse than the crimes by the Nazis, Stalin, or the genocide and ethnic cleansing in Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur, where physical elimination itself was the goal, the torture and killing in PRC's persecution of Falun Gong is a means. The goal is a spiritual murder – forcing people to choose between losing their lives and renouncing their core beliefs. The persecution of early Christians two thousand years ago is another example of such crime.

No crime is worse than such crimes against conscience, because conscience is the very essence of humanity. Everything else, even our "inalienable rights," can be forcibly taken away. The alteration of our conscience, no matter how small, must be consented to from within. Conscience, thus, defines human nature, and the right to conscience is a human being's most fundamental right.

Falun Gong, Christians, Tibetans, Uighurs, and numerous other persecuted groups are not the only victims of the PRC's crimes against conscience. It is no secret that many in this institution fear to criticize PRC. PRC's tactic is unsophisticated: "I will not do business with you unless you cooperate." This is an extension of the crime against conscience, coercing people to choose between conscience and financial gains.

The most recent case of bowing to PRC's pressure in exchange for financial rewards is France's Eutelsat, who decided to stop transmitting the signal of an independent, Chinese-language broadcaster *NTDTV* to Asia and China. UNA-San Diego joins Reporters Without Borders, the International Federation of Journalists, and 62 European MPs to condemn Eutelsat's craven sacrifice of principles, and we encourage the entire UN community to do the same. A "business decision" is no defense for assisting human rights abuses, just as "following orders" is never grounds for impunity.