



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Filner:

NOV 5 2008

Thank you for your inquiry of September 24 forwarding correspondence from your constituent, Ms. Joanna (Maqiong) Wang, noting her concern about her mother, Jinhua Ma, a Falun Gong practitioner who has been detained in China. We have shared Ms. Wang's letter with our Embassy in Beijing to alert them of Ms. Wang's concerns. We apologize for the delay in responding to your inquiry.

We have raised our concerns over China's treatment of the Falun Gong repeatedly with Chinese authorities both in Washington and in Beijing. In May, Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor David J. Kramer and Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom John V. Hanford III raised concerns related to treatment of Falun Gong with their Chinese counterparts during the U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue in Beijing. The U.S. Government has made clear on numerous occasions our strong opposition to the detention or persecution of individuals solely for peaceful association and assembly or for exercise of their religious or spiritual beliefs, including members of the Falun Dafa or Falun Gong, as well as to China's designation of the group as an "illegal cult." In November, 2006, the Secretary of State designated China a "Country of Particular Concern" (CPC) under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom. China has received this designation every year it has been made since 1999.

We have documented our concerns in our annual country reports on human rights practices and on international religious freedom. Our 2008 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom was issued on September 19 and may be found on the State Department website at www.state.gov.

We will continue to raise our concerns about the harsh campaign against Falun Gong with the Chinese Government through diplomatic channels and in public statements.

The Honorable
Bob Filner,
House of Representatives.

We hope this information is useful to you in responding to your constituent. If we may be of further assistance in this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Matthew A. Reynolds
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs