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Minghui
Report:

The 20-Year Persecution
of Falun Gong in China

1999-
2019



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A WINDOW INTO THE LIVES OF
THOSE WHO PRACTICE FALUN Dafa.



MINGHUI REPORT

The 20-Year Persecution of Falun Gong in China



BY THE MINGHUI GROUP

For our family and friends—and yours.

May our humble service open a door for you
to establish a bright future
for yourself and your loved ones.

Witness, be a part of, and record
this significant period of history in the making.

**Minghui Report:
The 20-Year Persecution of Falun Gong in China**

First English Edition

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About This Report



About This Report

From bloody political purges like the Cultural Revolution to the Tiananmen Square Massacre, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has a long history of demonizing select groups as threats to the country and mobilizing China's people to attack these groups. This way, the Party effectively diverts attention from its own crises.

In the late 1990s, then CCP leader Jiang Zemin turned his sights on the increasingly popular spiritual and meditation discipline of Falun Dafa, also known as Falun Gong. What followed was a brutal campaign that has led to thousands of confirmed deaths, hundreds of thousands of documented torture cases, and tens of millions of peaceful meditators being deprived of their most basic freedoms.

A group of North American volunteers launched Minghui.org on June 25, 1999, shortly before the suppression in China officially began on July 20. Since then, Minghui, with the courageous and selfless support of Falun Gong practitioners in China, has reported a massive volume of firsthand information about the violent suppression campaign, covered practitioners' worldwide efforts to counter the persecution, and provided a platform for the community of Falun Gong cultivators to share experiences and informational materials.

Over the past twenty years, Minghui has also published more than ten periodicals. Every Friday, practitioners in China who volunteer to run "material production sites" download, print, and distribute these materials in their local areas. Minghui publications help practitioners in China to learn how to protect their rights, progress in their self-cultivation, and counter the persecution. These magazines, booklets and video programs also equip practitioners to help their neighbors and friends better understand Falun Gong.

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Despite the CCP's internet censorship and overwhelming propaganda attacking Falun Gong, people in China can still access truthful information and updates on Falun Gong because of practitioners' perseverance even while being persecuted themselves. Among those who have come to understand that "Falun Dafa is good" and identify with its principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance (真善忍), some have started practicing Falun Gong. Others have found improved health and better relationships with family.

By publishing Falun Gong news reports and experience-sharing articles every day, producing radio programs, and hosting an annual online conference for all practitioners in China, Minghui's free platform allows practitioners to inspire each other to continually elevate their moral character and strive toward spiritual perfection.

With the biggest network of volunteers in China, Minghui has been the only media organization in the world that can overcome online censorship to report firsthand information amid the ongoing persecution. So far, Minghui has built up a database of more than 112,000 persecution cases and 105,500 perpetrators. Without any external funding and relying entirely upon volunteers' dedication and contribution of time, knowledge, and expertise over the years, Minghui has established itself as the official source of Falun Gong information.

The CCP's campaign to eradicate Falun Gong has fundamentally failed, and the perpetrators will be held to account. Despite its unprecedented cruelty and complexity, the persecution has proven futile from the start, and it will eventually bring about the collapse of the CCP itself.

Minghui's thorough documentation of the persecution in real time enables the international community to respond in a timely manner to alleviate and ultimately end this atrocity. As 2019 marks the twentieth year of practitioners' efforts to counter the persecution, we present this milestone report to help decision-makers better understand the human rights violations perpetrated against Falun Gong practitioners, and find ways to support the universal principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance (真善忍).

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Falun Dafa, also known as Falun Gong, is an ancient meditation practice and spiritual discipline based on the universal values of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance (真善忍). First taught to the public in 1992 by Mr. Li Hongzhi, Falun Gong became a household name in China in just a few years after its practitioners experienced profound improvements in their health and well-being and introduced it to their friends and families.

Though the Chinese government initially promoted Falun Gong for many of the same reasons, fear and distrust began to set in at the top levels of the Communist Party a few years later. Both Falun Gong’s surging popularity and its values, which were deemed incompatible with those of the Party’s doctrine of violence and struggle, were perceived as potential threats to the regime’s authoritarian rule.

Violent Repression Built on Incitement to Hatred

In 1996, state-controlled media began to attack Falun Gong in coordinated campaigns. Falun Gong exercise sites in public parks around the country—filled to the brim with people quietly meditating to serene music—came under surveillance by government agents and plainclothes police officers. The publication of Falun Gong books—national bestsellers at the time—was suddenly banned.

In April 1999, Falun Gong practitioners gathered outside a magazine office to discuss errors in a recently published article attacking

Falun Gong, only to be assaulted and arrested. After officials told other practitioners to appeal to the central government in Beijing to seek their release, around 10,000 stood quietly outside the national appeals office as instructed. Their concerns were met that evening after a discussion with then Premier Zhu Rongji. This event became known as the "April 25th Appeal" (explored in more detail in Appendix 1).

However, the Party leadership later characterized the peaceful appeal as a "siege" of the central government compound and used it to justify the launch of an all-out campaign to eradicate Falun Gong nationwide on July 20, 1999. Volunteer coordinators of exercise sites were arrested overnight, with others being taken into custody in the coming days.

To petition the government for their constitutional right to practice their faith, practitioners traveled to Beijing by the hundreds of thousands, congregating at the national appeals office and holding up banners on Tiananmen Square, only to be arrested en masse. Those who revealed their identities were turned over to local authorities in their hometowns. Some refused to do so in order to protect their families and colleagues from the CCP's policy of implication, and many of these practitioners were transferred elsewhere and have since disappeared.

A sophisticated propaganda campaign soon followed, with state-controlled media making false claims that practicing Falun Gong had led to 1,400 deaths. As public support for the suppression was initially lackluster, the regime later staged a spectacle on Tiananmen Square in which several people claiming to be Falun Gong practitioners set themselves on fire. Though the "self-immolation" event was quickly debunked as a hoax, the damage was done: much of the Chinese population were now firmly prejudiced against Falun Gong and had tacitly accepted the Communist Party's violent suppression of the group.

Campaign of "Transformation" Through Torture

At its core, the persecution of Falun Gong revolves around a campaign of "transformation," or forcing practitioners to renounce their belief. The methods range from gentle persuasion

to systematic brainwashing to physical and psychological torture. Practitioners who agree to write "guarantee statements" to renounce Falun Gong are offered early release, though many are then made to participate in the transformation of other practitioners.

This campaign is coordinated by Jiang Zemin's Gang through the 610 Office, an extralegal agency created by the central Communist Party leadership specifically to eradicate Falun Gong. To carry out this task, 610 Office has been given control over the judiciary, law enforcement, the penal system, and other authorities at all levels of government.

Falun Gong practitioners throughout China are systematically monitored, arrested, and taken to brainwashing centers (known officially as "legal education centers"), black jails, forced labor camps (until they were shut down in 2013), prisons, detention centers, drug rehabilitation facilities, and mental hospitals. While in custody, they are routinely abused and tortured by both guards and inmates who are instigated to do so by the authorities. Common methods of torture include beating, force-feeding, physical constraint in excruciating positions, sensory bombardment, electric shocks, waterboarding and suffocation, solitary confinement, and sexual assault. In addition, practitioners are often deprived of basic needs, including sleep, food, water, and access to toilets.

More than 4,300 practitioners have been confirmed to have died as a result of the persecution, and many more have been killed on demand to supply China's organ transplant industry. Many survivors of torture are left with permanent injuries, disabilities, paralysis, mental trauma, and in the most extreme cases, insanity. Families of practitioners have been torn apart, with relatives and children living in constant fear of the authorities who continue to harass them.

In addition to suffering physical harm, practitioners have also been denied employment, education, housing, and economic security. Practitioners routinely face fines and extortion by the police, as well as suspension of their pensions. Many have been fired from their jobs or expelled from their schools simply for their belief. This discrimination has also been extended to their family members, with authorities in some areas openly threatening their children's education and careers to force practitioners to renounce their faith.

The persecution has been extended to all children in China. Starting in elementary school, students are indoctrinated with anti-Falun Gong

propaganda in their textbooks and mandatory denunciation activities. Some practitioners' children died young after being forcibly separated from their parents, and some were abused or even tortured to death by the authorities for practicing Falun Gong. Some were orphaned after losing their parents in the persecution, and others were driven insane after being forced to watch their parents being tortured.

Because the prosecution of Falun Gong practitioners for their belief has no legal basis, legal procedures are sidestepped or openly violated at every step, from arrest through imprisonment. Police ransack practitioners' homes without search warrants. Courts hold show trials and hand down predetermined sentences while denying lawyers' ability to access case files, meet with their clients, and defend them at trial. Attorneys routinely face intimidation and even assault and torture for defending the rights of Falun Gong practitioners. Even after serving their terms, some practitioners are taken directly to a brainwashing center for further abuse instead of being released.

The communist regime has also extended its persecution campaign outside mainland China. It has carried out and instigated physical attacks against Falun Gong practitioners working to raise awareness of the persecution. The regime has also pressured foreign governments and police forces to illegally obstruct, arrest, or deny entry to Falun Gong demonstrators while Chinese officials are visiting. Organizations and individuals connected with the CCP have also harassed practitioners and intimidated Chinese tourists to prevent them from learning about the persecution.

Falun Gong Gains Support and Newcomers Despite Persecution

To resist the persecution and raise awareness of its brutality despite censorship and surveillance, Falun Gong practitioners in China have worked tirelessly to inform the public through word of mouth, distributing pamphlets and other keepsakes, displaying posters in public areas, writing letters to officials, making phone calls,

and sending messages online. Particularly noteworthy are the small but ubiquitous material production sites practitioners have set up in their homes to produce informational materials for the public using designs downloaded from Minghui.org.

Practitioners outside of China have complemented these efforts by making phone calls to dissuade perpetrators involved in the persecution in China, producing censorship-circumvention software to allow people in China to access information freely, and setting up information booths at tourist destinations around the world. In addition to meeting practitioners at community events, the public has learned about Falun Gong through art exhibitions and documentary films on the subject.

Human rights organizations, public officials, and legislative bodies around the world have also spoken out and passed resolutions to call for an end to the persecution in China. Courts in Spain and Argentina have indicted top CCP officials for torture and genocide. The U.S. Department of State and Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) have highlighted the persecution of Falun Gong in their annual reports and called for an end to the persecution.

As a result of these combined efforts, many Chinese citizens have begun to educate themselves and adopt a renewed perspective on Falun Gong. Some police officers and government officials in China have stopped participating in the persecution and even started protecting practitioners within their power. The number of arrests and sentences of practitioners in China has decreased in recent years. The ban on the publication of Falun Gong books was quietly lifted in 2011, though practitioners in China have printed their own books throughout the persecution to meet the demand. Nevertheless, the regime's overall persecution policy and machinery continue to operate.

When former Chinese Communist Party leader Jiang Zemin first launched the persecution, he vowed to "defeat" Falun Gong in three months. However, the spiritual practice has only continued to flourish over the past 20 years. Practitioners in China have persisted in their faith despite pressure and torture, and many who were forced to sign renunciations in detention later recanted their statements when they were released. A steady stream of newcomers has started practicing Falun Gong through instructional workshops and self-study. Today,

people in over 80 countries practice Falun Gong, and its books have been translated into more than 40 languages.

More International Leaders Taking Action

Many recent developments have focused on holding accountable the perpetrators of the persecution. Since 2015, more than 200,000 Falun Gong practitioners have filed criminal complaints against Jiang Zemin with China's highest court, and petitions to bring Jiang to justice have garnered millions of signatures.

In 2019, the United States government announced more stringent vetting of visas for human rights violators, including Chinese officials who have participated in the persecution of Falun Gong. Minghui.org has begun to compile information about such perpetrators, including their identities, family members, and assets, to be submitted to the U.S. government.

At the Second Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom held by the U.S. Department of State on July 16-18, 2019, current and former legislators discussed human rights violations in China, including how Western companies work with the Chinese regime to develop technologies used in its repression of faith groups, such as mass surveillance technology and artificial intelligence. President Trump met with survivors of religious persecution, including a Falun Gong practitioner whose husband remains imprisoned in China.

On July 20, 2019, which marks the 20th year of the persecution, the U.S. CECC issued a statement urging the Chinese Communist Party to stop the "appalling and unacceptable human rights abuses" it has perpetrated against Falun Gong practitioners. In addition, 22 U.S. Senators and Representatives sent letters commending practitioners' efforts over the past two decades. The German Federal Foreign Office also issued a statement calling for the end of the persecution and for independent investigations into the regime's harvesting of organs from Falun Gong practitioners.

Introduction



Introduction

Jiang Zemin’s Genocidal Policy

On July 20, 1999, former CCP General Secretary Jiang Zemin launched the persecution of Falun Gong and vowed to “annihilate Falun Gong in three months.” He issued an order to “ruin their reputation, cut them off financially, and destroy their physical bodies.”

Falun Gong practitioners in China have not only been denied their constitutional rights to freedom of belief, speech, and assembly, but they have also been denied residence, employment, education and the right to life. As soon as someone acknowledges that they practice Falun Gong, they lose their foothold in society, and their lives and property are jeopardized. Falun Gong practitioners are subject to arbitrary detention, extortion, confiscation of property, expulsion from work or school, denial of pensions, home ransacking, and shutoff of utilities. Many have been detained and tortured in prisons, labor camps, brainwashing centers, detention centers, drug rehabilitation centers, or mental hospitals, resulting in death, disability, or mental disorder. Some practitioners have also been raped or sexually assaulted while in custody.

Over the past two decades, Jiang Zemin and his gang have instigated hatred of Falun Gong practitioners by defaming them and intimidating, bribing, and infiltrating the general public. The CCP has almost a century-long history of choosing a group to persecute every ten years on average to ease its own crises and paranoia. Jiang Zemin followed the same playbook and started by labeling Falun Gong an “evil cult” to justify the persecution. This label is not factually or legally supported. Nevertheless,

the CCP's campaign has made Falun Gong practitioners the most oppressed group in Chinese society.

Overview of the Persecution

According to information collected by Minghui.org, between July 20, 1999 and July 10, 2019, there have been at least 2,500,000 to 3,000,000 arrests of Falun Gong practitioners (some have been arrested multiple times).

These arrests fall into four categories: 1) administrative detention based on Public Security Administration Punishment Law of the People's Republic of China; 2) illegal detention in brainwashing centers, which are usually labeled "legal education centers" and designed to conduct "thought reform" of Falun Gong practitioners; 3) detention in now-defunct labor camps; 4) criminal detention based on the Criminal Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China.

In addition, up to ten million unnamed Falun Gong practitioners have been arrested for appealing for their belief and taken to secret concentration camps, where they become guinea pigs in the CCP's scientific research and sources of involuntary organ donations. An unknown number have died, their bodies cremated without their families' knowledge.

These practitioners are unnamed because they refused to reveal their identities upon arrest in order to protect their families, neighbors, or employers. We do not have information about these practitioners, so the facts of whatever persecution they were subjected to are not included in our summary of human rights violations. We trust that after the genocide comes to an end, more insiders will step forward to testify against the CCP. We are also working to collect and compile cases of Falun Gong practitioners who have been subjected to organ harvesting and human testing in clinical trials.

The persecution of Falun Gong is carried out by the Communist Party, the government, military, health system, law enforcement, procuratorate (a state organ for legal supervision and prosecution), and judiciary working together. In order to protect their vested interests, each

of these entities attempts to cover up its crimes and censor information. Therefore, the information Minghui.org is able to collect is only the tip of the iceberg. Even so, Minghui.org has managed to collect a large amount of firsthand data over the past twenty years. Due to space limitations, this report covers only a small portion of the website's vast collection of persecution cases.

The cases covered in this report indicate that the persecution of Falun Gong is nationwide and covers both urban and rural areas. Practitioners have been persecuted in every one of China's 31 provinces and centrally controlled cities, including Anhui, Beijing, Chongqing, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hainan, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Inner Mongolia, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Ningxia, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanghai, Shanxi, Sichuan, Tianjin, Tibet, Xinjiang, Yunnan, and Zhejiang.

Victims of the persecution come from all walks of life, including government employees, military personnel, police officers, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, professors, teachers, students, scholars, entrepreneurs, engineers, artists, health workers, business managers, journalists, service workers, homemakers, farmers, retirees, the self-employed, the unemployed, monks, and Taoists.

They work in education, the sciences, government, agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry, hardware, lighting, ceramics, plastics, crafts, textiles, transportation, finance, insurance, utilities, automobiles, steel, electronics, food and beverage, postal service, media, aviation, military, energy, mining, entertainment, literature and art.

Victims also include people of all ages and genders, from infants to seniors in their 90s. Neither pregnant women nor the disabled have been spared. From the accounts it has accumulated, Minghui.org has summarized more than 100 methods of torture used on Falun Gong practitioners, including beating; shocking with electric batons; force-feeding; sleep deprivation; hanging practitioners up in different postures; starvation; denial of toilet access; forced abortion; burning and scalding with hot water, irons, or hot oil; dragging; sexual assault; whipping; forced labor; and solitary confinement.

The persecution has caused tremendous loss of life and property. As of September 10, 2019, Minghui.org has confirmed 4,343 cases of practitioners being persecuted to death. This is far fewer than the

actual death toll, as many cases—especially those concerning live organ harvesting—have remained hidden. The bodies of many deceased practitioners have also been forcibly cremated to destroy evidence.

Minghui.org has also confirmed that, as of July 10, 2019, at least 86,050 practitioners have been arrested at one point or another; 28,143 have spent time in labor camps; 17,963 have been sentenced to prison; 18,838 have been taken to brainwashing centers; and 809 have been confined in mental hospitals. It has also documented 519,040 cases of torture. Untold numbers have suffered discrimination, termination of employment, loss of income, mental trauma, broken families, injury, disability, or death over the past two decades of persecution.

Part 1: Persecution of Falun Gong



Part 1: Persecution of Falun Gong

Key Highlights

Falun Gong practitioners have been systematically held in prisons, brainwashing centers, forced labor camps, mental hospitals, and other detention facilities for their faith. While incarcerated, practitioners are subjected to brainwashing, forced labor, and torture. China's rubber-stamp judicial system hands down predetermined sentences even though practicing Falun Gong does not violate any laws.

Outside of detention, practitioners have been denied employment, education, housing, and economic security solely on the basis of their faith. Authorities have extorted money from practitioners, suspended their pensions, and seized their assets at will. Practitioners have also been denied identification cards and passports, and they are constantly monitored through facial recognition, telecommunications, and other surveillance technology.

Children of practitioners have been denied schooling, employment, and parental care. Some have been orphaned, assaulted by police, or driven insane after being made to watch their parents being tortured. Brainwashing campaigns have been extended into mandatory school activities and textbooks, instilling hatred of Falun Gong in a whole generation.

Torture of practitioners has led to more than 4,300 confirmed deaths and countless lives shadowed by injury, disability and mental

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trauma. Common methods include beatings, force-feeding, constraining victims in excruciating positions, sensory bombardment, restricting basic needs, electric shocks, waterboarding and suffocation, long-term solitary confinement, and sexual torture.

The Chinese regime has extended the persecution outside mainland China. It has used its embassies and CCP-linked organizations to disrupt practitioners' efforts to raise awareness around the world, instigated violence against practitioners on the streets, recruited informants to spy on practitioners, and pressured foreign governments into unlawfully restricting practitioners' right to peacefully demonstrate during visits by Chinese officials.

Chapter 1: Detention Facilities

The Chinese communist regime has used prisons, labor camps, brainwashing centers, and other facilities to detain Falun Gong practitioners since it launched its nationwide campaign against Falun Gong in July 1999.

The formal prison system is used to incarcerate Falun Gong practitioners who have been convicted for upholding their faith after trial. There were 681 prisons across China as of 2012, according to a report by China's Ministry of Justice. It is worth noting that China's court system has served as a rubber stamp in the persecution of Falun Gong: it merely goes through the motions to put on show trials before handing down predetermined sentences.

The now-defunct labor camp system allowed authorities to detain practitioners for up to four years without trial. In a 2009 UN Human Rights Council report, the Chinese delegation described its system of re-education through labor as "similar to that of correctional services in other countries" that was "applied to persons who have committed crimes that do not warrant criminal sentence." The report estimated that there were 320 labor camps holding 190,000 people across the country.

Because labor camps were, in fact, used to detain prisoners of conscience who had not committed any crimes, the Chinese regime faced mounting pressure from the international community and shut the system down in late 2013. The detention of Falun Gong practitioners didn't stop, however, as the regime has since intensified the use of extrajudicial brainwashing centers instead.

§1.1 Brainwashing Centers¹

To be precise, no detention facility in China is explicitly labeled a brainwashing center; rather, they are officially labeled “legal education centers” or “drug rehabilitation centers.” Unlike labor camps (an administrative punishment system) and prisons (a formal criminal punishment system), brainwashing centers are not legally obligated to follow any administrative or criminal procedures. The 610 Office, an extralegal agency established on June 10, 1999, specifically to persecute Falun Gong, created brainwashing centers in 2001, and all subordinate 610 Offices throughout China followed suit.

When brainwashing fails to shake Falun Gong practitioners’ faith, the CCP resorts to torture, causing many to suffer irreparable physical injury and mental trauma or lose their lives.

§§1.1.1 An Extrajudicial Branch of China’s Multi-Tentacled Detention System

Brainwashing has long been a tactic used by the CCP in its attempt to reform political dissidents and other groups of citizens that it deems a threat to its rule. The persecution of Falun Gong has centered around brainwashing practitioners who live by the principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance (真善忍), in an effort to force practitioners to renounce their faith. Under the directive of the 610 Office, any level of government, neighborhood committee, business, or even school can set up brainwashing centers in any location, even in hotels or private residences. Formal detention facilities such as police stations, detention centers, labor camps, and prisons often have their own brainwashing centers.

From their inception to their operation, these brainwashing centers exist outside the law. Some officials claim it is a type of house arrest. However, a house arrest must be approved by a court of law, while no legal procedure or documentation is needed to detain someone in a brainwashing center.

In addition, officers and guards in these facilities have more authority than ordinary law enforcement officers. They can arrest, detain, and

release practitioners at will. Nor is there a limit to how long a person can be held. Those in charge closely monitor basic human needs—talking, eating, sleeping, and access to a toilet—and deprive their detainees of them at will. They can beat, force-feed, and shock their charges with electric batons with no repercussions.

Brainwashing centers exist throughout China in almost every city and county and many communities. Their longevity ranges from days to years. It is thus difficult to ascertain the exact number of brainwashing centers, nor is there an official tally. However, Minghui.org has collected data on the number of practitioners sent to brainwashing centers.

Though extrajudicial and extralegal in nature, brainwashing centers have been well-funded by the government. Many law enforcement officers, employers, and residential communities have been incentivized to set up their own brainwashing centers or send practitioners to existing centers. The massive network of brainwashing centers has become a critical component of the Chinese regime’s multi-tentacled system to detain Falun Gong practitioners. This chapter discusses its scale, severity, and devastation.

§§1.1.2 A Massive, Well-Funded Network

A keyword search of Minghui.org from 1999 to 2019 returned about 65,000 articles in which the words “brainwashing center” appeared more than 210,000 times in total. After removing those brainwashing centers without exact locations and consolidating redundant entries with varied names, we estimate that there are about 3,640 such establishments across China.

These confirmed brainwashing centers were distributed across 30 provincial-level administrative units, including 26 provinces and 4 centrally controlled municipalities (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, and Chongqing). Hebei Province had the most brainwashing centers (439), followed by Shandong (383), Hubei (336), Sichuan (301), and Jilin (272). Eight other administrative units also had hundreds of brainwashing centers, while 15 units had dozens. Qinghai and Ningxia were the only provinces with fewer than ten brainwashing centers reported.

The real number could be much higher, given the secretive nature of these facilities and the censorship and persecution that persist in China. Furthermore, after the labor camp system was abolished in 2013, many practitioners were redirected to prisons and brainwashing centers, both existing ones and those newly created.

While brainwashing centers are initiated by different levels of the 610 Office, they are largely driven by financial incentives and partially funded by money paid by practitioners' employers or extorted from practitioners. Minghui published a white paper in 2014 on the scale of brainwashing centers:

We estimate that over the past 15 years, fees charged to detainees' employers totaled approximately 3.37 billion yuan. Government incentives for each "successfully transformed" detainee brought in a further 226 million yuan. This is in addition to government appropriations of an estimated 1.18 billion yuan dedicated to the construction and remodeling of brainwashing facilities.

§§1.1.3 Tactics Used to Destroy Practitioners' Faith

While prisons and labor camps existed prior to the persecution of Falun Gong, brainwashing centers are unique in that their sole purpose is to force practitioners to forsake their belief. To achieve this goal, brainwashing centers often employ the following tactics:

› 1.1.3(a) Arbitrary Terms of Detention

Because no legal procedures must be followed to incarcerate someone in a brainwashing center, practitioners can be detained simply for not renouncing their faith and held for an indefinite period of time.

Ms. Li Xihui, a former employee of the Sichuan Radio Station, was arrested in 2006 and detained in the Xinjin Brainwashing Center in Chengdu City, Sichuan Province, for seven years. The authorities secretly transferred her to Er'ehu Brainwashing Center in Ziyang City

in 2013 and continued to try to brainwash her. It wasn't clear if she had been released at the time of writing.

Another practitioner in Guangdong Province, Ms. Xie Yu, 32, was taken to a brainwashing center in January 2019, right after she finished serving two years in prison for distributing Falun Gong materials. Her family learned that the authorities had decided to send her to the brainwashing center because she still refused to renounce her faith by the time her prison term ended.

› 1.1.3(b) High Degree of Secrecy

The extrajudicial nature of brainwashing centers makes their operations highly arbitrary and secretive. For instance, after the labor camp system was abolished in 2013, many brainwashing centers in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, removed all visible signs and logos on their facilities to avoid liability and to keep from being traced. Occasionally, some facilities were closed while new ones were established elsewhere.

One practitioner in Hubei Province was arrested in October 2018 for not renouncing her faith. After she was detained for 15 days, the police took her to a mental hospital for five days before moving her to a secret brainwashing center. The officers covered her head with a hood and tied her hands during the transfer so she didn't know where she was being taken.

Her family learned of her whereabouts and went to the brainwashing center to try to see her. Before they got close to the door, they heard an automated voice issue a warning: "Do not approach. Lasers are being activated." Lasers suddenly surrounded them from all directions. The lights followed them as they moved, eventually forcing them to leave.

The practitioner's family then heard she'd been moved to another place, which they found to be an abandoned residence with no signs or plate on the door. The metal door was closed. No one answered when they called the practitioner's name.

The practitioner later told her family after she was released that she was in the second location when they went there. The staff got nervous when they heard her family outside and wouldn't let her make a sound or signal to her family that she was there.

› 1.1.3(c) Administration of Unknown Drugs

In addition to torture and around-the-clock monitoring, the forcible administration of unknown drugs is also common in brainwashing centers. Mr. Xie Deqing, a healthy retiree, died about 20 days into his detention at Xinjin Brainwashing Center in Chengdu City, Sichuan Province. He was emaciated, incontinent, and in extreme pain before his death. His skin was gray. These symptoms are consistent with those of other practitioners who have been confirmed to have been given unknown drugs. Over 100 police officers were later dispatched to take his body from the funeral home in the middle of the night to be cremated.

› 1.1.3(d) Intensive Brainwashing

Besides physical confinement, practitioners are also forced to watch propaganda videos slandering Falun Gong and write down their thoughts afterward. Their written reports are often analyzed by psychologists, who then take advantage of any weaknesses they discover to devise new strategies to destroy their faith. Very often, coworkers and family members are called in to try to coerce practitioners to give up their belief.

In brainwashing centers in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, the authorities installed three cameras in each room. Pieces of paper with sentences defaming Falun Gong printed on them were posted on the tables, chairs, and floor. With the exception of time allotted for sleep, the television in the room showed only programs defaming Falun Gong or other programs aimed at weakening practitioners' willpower. High-volume speakers broadcast propaganda slandering Falun Gong and its founder all day long.

The practitioners were prohibited from doing the Falun Gong exercises, and the guards also set strict restrictions, such as limiting the time to finish a meal and where and how they washed their dishes. Within three days of being taken to Haikou Brainwashing Center on August 9, 2018, Ms. Dai Juzhen was in life-threatening condition with high blood pressure and high blood sugar.

› 1.1.3(e) Misrepresentation and Deceit

Another distinctive aspect of brainwashing centers is that they misrepresent themselves as “legal education centers” and are located in unremarkable locations.

Officials deceive family members who do not support Falun Gong into helping to convince practitioners to go to these centers. This happened to Ms. Tang Xiaoyan in Guilin City, Guangxi Autonomous Region. Her family believed 610 Office officials who said that the center was a favorable, voluntary study place, but once Ms. Tang arrived there, officials beat her, tortured her, kept a bright light in front of her eyes at all times, and deprived her of sleep and water. This led to life-threatening conditions for Ms. Tang on at least two occasions.

§§1.1.4 Deaths in Brainwashing Centers

The physical and mental abuse at brainwashing centers has also contributed to deaths of Falun Gong practitioners. Among the 3,653 confirmed deaths of Falun Gong practitioners between 1999 and 2014, 746 (20.4%) were related to torture in brainwashing centers and 367 (10%) of the deaths took place in brainwashing centers.

Ms. Xu Huizhu, a retired teacher in Guangdong Province, was arrested in late July 2016 and taken to Huangpu Brainwashing Center. She died in August shortly after she was released.

While we do not have data on how many practitioners have been detained in brainwashing centers, we observe a largely positive correlation between the number of brainwashing centers and the number of deaths in various regions. (See chart on page 400.)

Even though we cannot draw definitive conclusions regarding how brainwashing centers have contributed to the deaths of Falun Gong practitioners, the positive correlation at least validates the role of brainwashing centers in the persecution of Falun Gong.

Appendices: Three Key Facts about the Persecution of Falun Gong



Appendices: Three Key Facts about the Persecution of Falun Gong

世界需要真善忍

In totalitarian China, “news” is carefully crafted by state-controlled media to promote the interests of the Communist Party. This vast propaganda machine has played a leading role in the persecution of Falun Gong.

By flooding the airwaves, newspapers, and magazines with countless stories vilifying Falun Gong and its founder, Mr. Li Hongzhi, the Communist Party drafted the entire society into the ranks of persecutors. People hear the lies so often repeated that in the end, they grow to believe them. This created an environment in which practitioners had no rights and no security. They could be attacked with impunity, and it became easy for the Chinese people to shut their ears to the cries of the tortured innocents.

The propaganda has also deceived many in the West, who have developed inaccurate perceptions of Falun Gong as a result. The following three chapters debunk the most common lies the CCP has employed to turn public opinion against Falun Gong.

Key Highlights

A peaceful appeal by more than 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners on April 25, 1999 was mischaracterized as a “siege of the central government compound” by Jiang Zemin, who used the event to justify the subsequent persecution. The demonstrators

were appealing on behalf of 45 practitioners who were beaten and arrested in Tianjin, and they had been instructed to go to the national appeals office in Beijing to do so. The quiet, orderly appeal was peacefully resolved after practitioners' representatives met with Premier Zhu Rongji.

On January 23, 2001, five individuals allegedly set themselves on fire in Tiananmen Square, but they were not Falun Gong practitioners as claimed by state-controlled media. The event was planned ahead of time, filmed from multiple angles in a secured area, and broadcast throughout China immediately after it took place. Even though the self-immolation was later found to be staged, it was successfully used to turn public opinion against Falun Gong.

Chinese authorities have alleged that Falun Gong has "led to more than 1,400 deaths" of its followers, but the cases were found to be fabricated. The alleged victims who were investigated either did not practice Falun Gong or simply did not exist. Chinese authorities falsely claim that Falun Gong teachings forbid practitioners from taking medicine and seeking medical treatment.

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Appendix 1: Peaceful Appeal of April 25, 1999

§A1.1 Overview³⁶⁶

§§A1.1.1 Background

On April 23 and 24, 1999, police in Tianjin, a city near Beijing, assaulted and arrested dozens of Falun Gong practitioners who had gathered outside a magazine office to discuss errors in a recently published article attacking Falun Gong. As word spread of the arrests and more Falun Gong practitioners inquired with officials, they were told to take their appeals to Beijing. The following day, April 25, more than 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners spontaneously gathered at the central appeals office in Beijing as they had been instructed to do by Tianjin officials. The gathering was peaceful and orderly. Several Falun Gong representatives were called in to meet with Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji and members of his staff. That evening, the concerns of Falun Gong practitioners were addressed, the detained practitioners in Tianjin were released, and everyone went home.

§§A1.1.2 The Problem

According to several sources within the Chinese government, in the months following the April 25th gathering, a fierce political struggle ensued within the top levels of the CCP brass. Then CCP leader Jiang Zemin called upon the government to "crush" Falun Gong, while

other members of the Politburo saw no threat in the practice. CNN senior analyst Willy Lam quoted senior officials who said the suppression of Falun Gong had become very “personal” for Jiang Zemin. In July, Jiang formally ordered the suppression of Falun Gong. The April 25th gathering was quickly re-characterized not as the peaceful appeal that it was, but rather as “laying siege” to the central government compound and “evidence” as to how Falun Gong was a threat.

§§A1.1.3 Why It Matters

The misrepresentation of April 25th as a “siege” of the central government compound politicized Falun Gong, both in China and abroad. Thus, rather than seeing the CCP’s persecution as the violent suppression of a religious minority, a narrative that Falun Gong and the CCP were vying for power began to evolve. Furthermore, some China watchers in the West believed Falun Gong brought the persecution on themselves by “challenging” the government on April 25th. This narrative has eroded the enthusiasm of many would-be supporters of human and religious rights, and it remains the single greatest factor in the blame-the-victim phenomenon that surrounds the investigation of and reporting on the persecution of Falun Gong more broadly.

§A1.2 Quick Facts³⁶⁷

§§A1.2.1 Why did Falun Gong practitioners appeal to the CCP Central Committee?

As early as June 1996, the Central Propaganda Department instructed various levels of government to criticize Falun Gong. *Guangming Daily* launched the first salvo with the article “Alarm Bell Keeps Ringing.” The News Publishing Bureau subsequently prohibited the publication, distribution and sale of Falun Gong books.

Before April 25, police all over China had already begun to seize Falun Gong books and interfere with group exercise sites. The arrests of practitioners by the Tianjin police were an escalation of the persecution.

§§A1.2.2 How many people went to appeal on April 25, 1999?

From Beihai Park’s South Gate to the west side of the Xi’an Gate, and from Fuyou Street to the alley west of it—in these two places alone, there were 30,000 people. Practitioners who came later were stopped on the outer peripheries. Practitioners from out of town were not allowed to leave the train stations or were blocked at highway checkpoints and not allowed to get into Beijing. The Chinese government only acknowledged the greatly reduced figure of 10,000, but the actual number far exceeded that.

§§A1.2.3 What did the practitioners ask for?

- They had three requests at the time:
1. For Tianjin police to release the Falun Gong practitioners who were taken into custody.
 2. That Falun Gong practitioners be accorded a non-hostile environment in which to practice.
 3. That the printing of Falun Gong books be permitted.

§§A1.2.4 How did those who appealed conduct themselves?

On the main thoroughfare from Beihai Park to Xi’an Gate, traffic flowed smoothly the entire day. Some practitioners took the initiative to ensure the smooth flow of vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The practitioners walked along the edge of the road, allowing pedestrians to use the sidewalk. They were calm and peaceful.

§§A1.2.5 How did the appeal end?

At around 10 p.m., a message came from the West Gate of Zhongnanhai: “The representatives have returned, and they have conveyed the practitioners’ requests to the leaders of the Central Committee. All practitioners arrested by Tianjin police have been released. Everybody can now go home.” The practitioners cleaned up their surroundings and even picked up cigarette butts dropped by the police. In less than 20 minutes, all the practitioners had left.

§§A1.2.6 One unsettled case:

Premier Zhu Rongji asked the representatives at the time if they had ever read his commentary on Falun Gong. The Falun Gong representatives said they had never seen it. Many wondered who had withheld the commentary and why it was withheld. This remains unknown to this day.

§A1.3 Analysis³⁶⁸

§§A1.3.1 Sequence of Events

A scholar named He Zuoxiu from the Chinese Academy of Sciences published an article titled “I do not agree with adolescents practicing qigong” in *Science and Technology for Youth* (a magazine published by Tianjin Education College). In the article, he fabricated stories about Falun Gong leading to mental illness and implied that Falun Gong could become an organization similar to the Boxers, who led a rebellion in the 19th century that destroyed the nation.

Some practitioners went to Tianjin Education College between April 18 and April 24 to talk to the magazine editors to clear up the slander and convey their own experiences of practicing Falun Gong. The conversations were calm and peaceful. However, the Tianjin Public Security Bureau dispatched riot police on April 23-24, who beat the practitioners and arrested 45 of them.

When other practitioners went to the Tianjin city government to seek their release, they were told that the Ministry of Public Security was involved and that they could not release the practitioners without approval from Beijing. Tianjin police told practitioners, “Go to Beijing. Only going to Beijing can solve the problem.”

On April 25, practitioners gathered outside the national appeals office in Beijing to ask for 1) the release of practitioners detained in Tianjin, 2) an open and legal environment in which to practice the Falun Gong exercises, and 3) the lifting of the ban on the publication of Falun Gong books.

Several police officers told practitioners at the appeals office that one place was not safe and that another place was off limits. Following police instructions, the practitioners divided into two groups alongside Zhongnanhai. Later, He Zuoxiu arrived and tried to provoke the practitioners, who did not respond to him.

According to a witness, on the evening of April 24, some practitioners working in the Public Security Department had already submitted their name cards to Zhongnanhai, asking for a chance to discuss the situation. There was no response. At 9 p.m., practitioners started to gather on Fuyou Street near Zhongnanhai, some with luggage, some with meditation mats.

At 6 a.m. on April 25, a witness went to the north entrance of Fuyou Street and discovered that the police were blocking the way to Zhongnanhai. None of the practitioners attempted to force their way through. The police first led the practitioners from the east side of the street to the west side, and then directed them to walk south towards Zhongnanhai. Meanwhile, another group came from the opposite direction, also led by police, and both groups met right outside the main entrance of Zhongnanhai. According to the media, there were over 10,000 practitioners gathered outside Zhongnanhai.

Soon, there were practitioners approaching from all directions. They filled all the sidewalks outside of Zhongnanhai. But the traffic was not blocked at all; even the route for the disabled remained clear. There were men and women in their eighties, pregnant women who were near the end of their terms, and mothers holding their newborn babies. Practitioners did not wander up and down the streets, chant slogans, wave signs, or start fights.

In China, appealing to the government does not require a permit from the Public Security Bureau. Each practitioner went to represent his or her own views and to report the mistreatment that they and their friends had been experiencing. They did not violate any laws or regulations. Once practitioners thought that they had achieved the goal of expressing their concerns and seeking understanding and support from the government, they quietly dispersed.

§§A1.3.2 Causes of the Gathering

On the surface, the April 25 appeal appeared to be triggered by the Tianjin arrests and an anti-Falun Gong article by He Zuoxiu. The underlying reason stemmed from the central authorities’ anxiety about the unprecedented popularity of Falun Gong. Seven years after Mr. Li Hongzhi’s first public lecture in 1992, there were about 70 to 100 million Falun Gong practitioners in Mainland China. A full understanding of the incident is very complex, as it had both long-term and short-term causes and was related to political struggles inside the Communist Party.

(a) Long-Term Cause

The long-term cause of the April 25 appeal was the ongoing suppression of Falun Gong. With the rapid spread of Falun Gong, the central Party leadership feared that it would lose ideological control over the people. The government had therefore been attempting to undermine Falun Gong through the media, by banning books, by conducting underground investigations, and by disrupting exercise practice sites the preceding few years. The government had already been attempting to destroy the practitioners’ environment for practicing Falun Gong. Practitioners had no other way to let the facts about the repression be known than to appeal to the central authorities. The April 25 gathering aimed to do just this.

The central authorities began to criticize Falun Gong on June 17, 1996. That day, *Guangming Daily* (the official voice of the State Council with articles that reflect only the opinions of government officials)

published an article criticizing Falun Gong as “anti-science” and “superstitious” and labeled its practitioners “stupid.”

On July 24, 1996, the Chinese News Publishing Office issued a notice to immediately confiscate five books nationwide, including Falun Gong (formerly titled China Falun Gong). Dozens of newspapers and magazines soon joined the campaign against Falun Gong. Some official scholars such as He Zuoxiu were also active in the campaign. The Central Office of National Publication and Central Propaganda Department also ordered all publishers not to publish books related to Falun Gong.

At the beginning of 1997, Luo Gan (member of the Politburo Standing Committee and Secretary of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee) ordered the Ministry of Public Security to conduct a nationwide investigation into Falun Gong to collect evidence that it was an “evil cult.” The investigation ended after public security departments found no criminal activity in Falun Gong.

In May 1998, Beijing TV Station (BTV)’s Beijing Express show broadcast a segment by He Zuoxiu that defamed Falun Gong using material unrelated to the practice. Following the broadcast, hundreds of Falun Gong practitioners in the Beijing and Hebei areas wrote to the station to point out false information that was shown in the program. On June 2, 1998, BTV broadcast a correction acknowledging the mistakes in the earlier program. It is worth noting that He Zuoxiu later used the same defamatory content in his magazine article.

Also in May 1998, the General Administration of Sport of China initiated a comprehensive investigation of Falun Gong. On October 20 of the same year, the head investigator for the cities of Changchun and Harbin stated that Falun Gong was effective in improving health and spiritual civilization. Investigations in Beijing, Guangdong, Dalian, and Wuhan reached similar conclusions.

In July 1998, under orders from Luo Gan, the Ministry of Public Security issued Notice [1998] No.555 to investigate Falun Gong. The notice first concluded that Falun Gong was an “evil cult” before ordering local public security and political protection departments to look for evidence of criminal activity by Falun Gong practitioners. In other words, the Ministry proclaimed guilt before conducting the investigation.

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Graphs and Photos



May 1992 - July 1999

Falun Gong was first introduced to the public in China in May 1992.

It quickly spread by word of mouth
because of its principles
(Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance)
and outstanding impact on health and fitness.

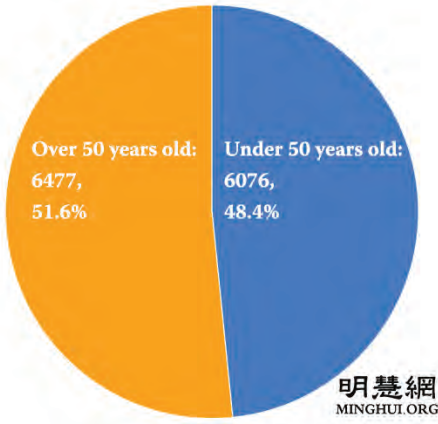
By July 1999, just seven years later, there
were 100 million people, or just about
one in every ten Chinese,
practicing Falun Gong.

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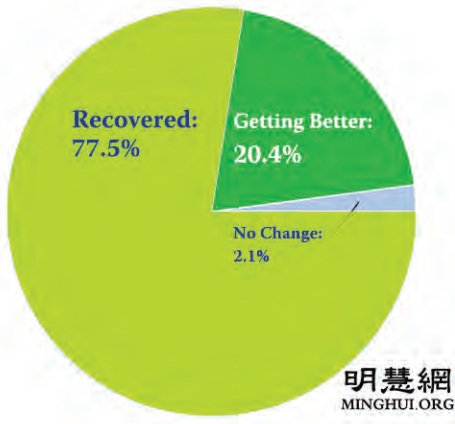


Before July 1999, every day at dawn, many people would go to a park to do the Falun Gong exercises before work or school. The scene was beautiful and serene. Chinese media outlets rarely reported on this phenomenon, however. The above article from a Guangzhou newspaper, titled "People of All Ages Practice Falun Gong," was a rare piece that showed the true situation of Falun Gong.

97.9% Saw Improved Health



A health survey conducted in 1998 in Beijing, China showed that 97.9% of people who studied *Zhuan Falun*, the main book of Falun Gong, and practiced the five Falun Gong exercises saw their health improve.



Among the 12,553 practitioners who participated in the survey, 51.6% were over 50 years old, and 48.4% were under 50.

Of the respondents, 10,475 suffered from one or more diseases. After practicing Falun Gong for 2 months to 3 years, 77.5% of those who suffered from diseases had recovered, and 20.4% reported getting better.

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Practitioners doing the Falun Gong exercises on Lantau Island, Hong Kong before the persecution began.



People from all walks of life gathered in public parks to do the Falun Gong exercises. The above photo was taken in Chengdu, Sichuan Province in early 1999.



Group exercise practice in Guangzhou before the persecution. The banner says "Falun Dafa volunteer instruction site."

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Awards presented to Mr. Li Hongzhi, the founder of Falun Gong, at the 1993 Asian Health Expo held in Beijing.

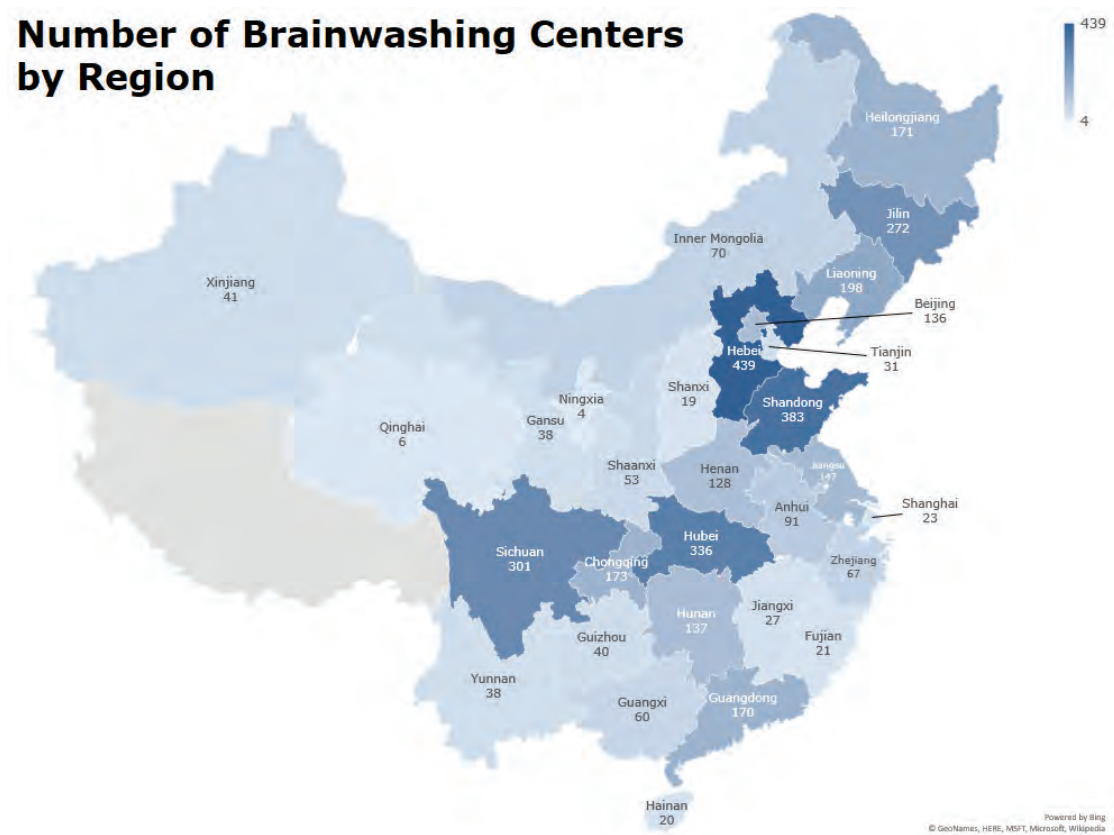
July 1999 - Today

Note: The data in this section include only cases that Minghui.org has managed to report during the ongoing persecution in China.

Due to the CCP's censorship and persecution of Falun Gong, such reporting carries great difficulties and risks. Therefore, these figures likely reflect only a small subset of all cases that have occurred, and many more have yet to be compiled and reported by our teams.

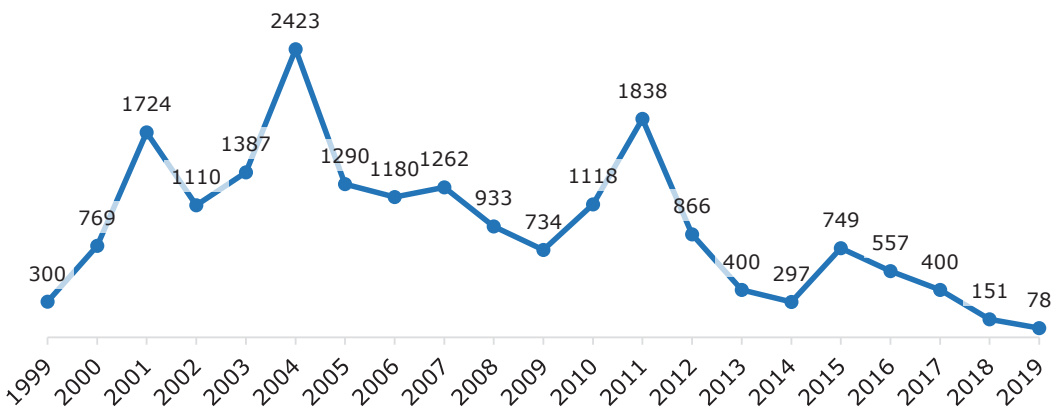
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Number of Brainwashing Centers by Region

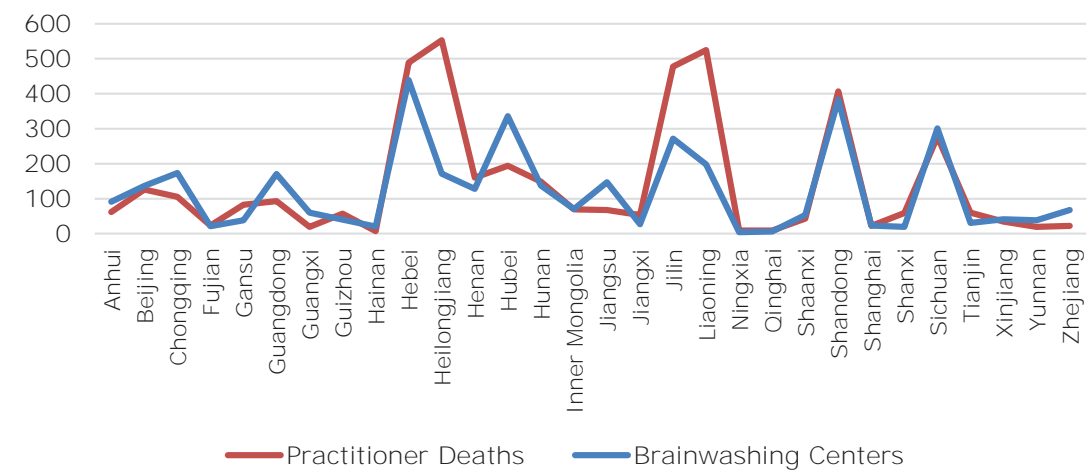


Number of Falun Gong Practitioners Taken to Brainwashing Centers by Year

Documented cases from July 1999 to July 2019



Brainwashing Centers vs. Practitioner Deaths by Region



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Number of Falun Gong Practitioners Taken to Forced Labor Camps by Year

Documented cases from 1999 to 2013

Note: Labor camps were officially abolished in 2013.

