

August 30, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20522

Dear Secretary Blinken:

Last month marked the 22nd anniversary of the beginning of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) brutal crackdown against the Falun Gong spiritual movement. On July 22, 1999, the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Civil Affairs of the People's Republic of China (PRC) issued separate directives formally forbidding the practice or proselytization of Falun Gong and banning it as an "illegal organization."

In the years that followed, the CCP has sought to forcibly eliminate Falun Gong from China, setting up an extralegal security apparatus called the "610 Office" to carry out a systematic nationwide campaign of persecution. Perhaps more than a million Chinese people have been targeted because of their belief in Falun Gong. The CCP has routinely detained Falun Gong practitioners, and in some cases multiple times, in "transformation-through reeducation" centers – a preview of the mass internment camps we are now witnessing in the genocide of Uyghurs and other Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. CCP officials have subjected Falun Gong practitioners to physical and sexual assault, forced labor, and torture in an attempt to make them renounce their beliefs. Credible allegations of forced organ harvesting have also repeatedly surfaced.

I urge you to call on Beijing to end its criminalization of Falun Gong, and to release all Falun Gong practitioners who are held in prisons and various detention centers in the PRC. In particular, I request that you raise two cases who have family members in Florida. On April 23, 2021, security agents in Dongying municipality, Shandong province broke into the home of Zhou Deyong (周德勇) and detained him on the charge of "sabotaging the enforcement of laws by organizing and utilizing cult organizations." He was formally arrested on May 31, 2021 for possessing Falun Gong materials in his home that belonged to his wife in the United States. Mr. Zhou has not been sentenced yet. I urge you to direct the Chargé d'Affaires David Meale in Beijing, or Deputy Assistant Secretary Rick Waters in Washington, to raise the case directly with PRC counterparts and call for Zhou's unconditional release.

In July 2016, security agents in Yuxi municipality, Yunnan province detained Deng Cuiping (邓翠苹) and four others for publicly distributing materials promoting Falun Gong. The Eshan County People's Court tried the five individuals in February 2017, and sentenced Ms.

Deng to six years in prison. Ms. Deng had previously served three years in prison as a result of her practice of Falun Gong. I ask that you also direct the appropriate officials to raise Ms. Deng's case with PRC officials and demand her prompt release.

Thank you in advance for your attention to these two cases and for your advocacy on behalf of Falun Gong practitioners and all others who continue to suffer at the hands of the CCP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', written in a cursive style.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator