



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

November 3, 2021

The Honorable
Marco Rubio
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rubio:

Thank you for your August 30 letter conveying your concerns regarding the People's Republic of China's (PRC) human rights abuses against Falun Gong practitioners. We share your concerns. The Department of State is committed to promoting freedom of religion or belief for all those around the world and has prioritized accountability for the PRC for its human rights abuses, including the oppression of Falun Gong practitioners.

Since 1999, the Secretary of State has designated the PRC as a "Country of Particular Concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act for having engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom. As reported in the Department's 2020 Country Report on Human Rights Practices and the 2020 International Religious Freedom Report, the PRC's respect for and protection of the right to freedom of religion or belief has deteriorated. In May, Secretary Blinken publicly designated a PRC official under Section 7031(c) of the annual appropriations act for his involvement in gross violations of human rights, namely the arbitrary detention of Falun Gong practitioners for their spiritual beliefs.

With respect to the cases of Zhou Deyong and Deng Cuiping, the Department is very concerned by the PRC's mistreatment and detention of these individuals. We will consider opportunities to advocate on their behalf with the PRC government.

We will continue to press the PRC government to uphold its international commitments with respect to the freedom of religion or belief for all individuals, including members of ethnic and religious minority groups and those who worship

outside of official state-sanctioned institutions. The PRC must uphold the promises made in its own constitution to protect the “freedom of religious belief.”

Thank you for your continued interest in this issue.

We hope this information is helpful. Please let us know if we may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Naz Durakoglu". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'N' and 'D'.

Naz Durakoglu
Acting Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Legislative Affairs