

Statement Presented to the Congressional-Executive Committee on China

By Kery Wilkie Nunez
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Thank you for the opportunity to submit a written comment on the persecution of Falun Gong in China. In particular, I would like to discuss the detention and torture of American citizen Charles Lee.

Dr. Charles Lee traveled to China in January of 2003. The moment he stepped off the plane, he was detained and beaten by Chinese authorities. He was later rushed through a show trial and “sentenced” to three years in prison for a crime he did not commit. On a previous business trip to China, Charles considered tapping into a local cable to expose the human rights violations against Falun Gong practitioners. He never considered sabotaging any TV or radio equipment (which is what he was accused of). Nor did he ever do a broadcast.

From a 95-page letter that Dr. Lee managed to get to the U.S. Consulate only by means of an eight-day hunger strike, as well as from information provided by the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai, we understand that Dr. Lee has endured severe abuse while in prison.

He was forced to wear smelly winter clothes on unbearably hot days; he was deprived of sleep for three days; he was handcuffed in a very painful position for over 72 hours. Police intentionally tightened the handcuffs into his flesh to make it more painful, leaving scars on his wrists. He was also handcuffed for 130 hours while trying to write his appeal to the Court. At least twice, he was force-fed (a type of torture that has resulted in the death of many Falun Gong practitioners). The Chinese authority intentionally left the tube in his body for 4 hours to torture him. And worst of all, the Chinese authority put tremendous pressure on Charles’ elderly parents (his mom had leukemia) in an attempt to break Charles’ will. Charles didn’t want his parents to witness his suffering, as he was very concerned about their health.

To understand why any Falun Gong practitioner would risk his or her life to broadcast human rights violations in China, one must first understand how China controls the media and fabricates lies to deceive the viewer into accepting the regime’s viewpoint. China uses its state-controlled media—print, radio, propaganda shows, Internet blockade, etc.—to spread lies about a very peaceful spiritual practice that has brought millions good health and inner peace. According to an article of July 23rd in *The Washington Post*, entitled “China’s Spiritual Outlaws,” China makes accusations and uses the word “cult” in describing Falun Gong in order to sow confusion, suspicion, and indifference among outsiders. The article explains that Falun Gong does not meet the definition of cult. “It does not coerce obedience, brainwash its members, gouge them for money or compel worship of its founder, Li Hongzhi. It doesn’t wear down their egos, then build them up in the new image of the spiritually transformed.” Yet, China’s state-controlled media spreads rumors to the contrary, meanwhile the books are banned from the public.

Meanwhile, the government pressures everyone in society (professors, companies, schools, neighbors, family members, etc.) to report on Falun Gong practitioners. Some Chinese people are deceived by the media and are misled to believe that they should report on their neighbors if they practice Falun Gong. What they don’t know is that they are reporting on innocent people who may be sent to a torture camp. Torture of Falun Gong practitioners is well documented in the free world. Yet, there is no way to educate the Chinese public about this, as a person may lose his life for distributing a flier.

Recently, we learned that Chinese authorities forced an abortion on a Falun Gong practitioner in her seventh month of pregnancy simply because she refused to give up her beliefs. She was restrained while an abortion-inducing drug was given to her. While abortion is relatively common in China, most Chinese citizens probably don't know about this baby, which struggled in its mother's womb for 40 hours before it died. Afterwards, the mother struggled to deliver the dead baby.

Perhaps a small dosage of truth would affect the views of a seemingly indifferent populace. In fact, Falun Gong's broadcast's in China has allowed many Chinese citizens the opportunity to see both sides of the story and follow their own conscience.

However, no one should have to risk his or her life to tell a story. It is my hope that, with the guidance of the CECC, the United States will play a key role in improving information exchange in China. I also hope that the rescue of Dr. Charles Lee and other Falun Gong practitioners from China will become a priority for the U.S. How the U.S. treats human rights issues will send a very important message to China's new leadership.

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