

The Chinese Communist Party's Escalating Transnational Repression Targeting Falun Gong

Written Submission to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission Hearing:
“Transnational Repression: Trends and Policy Approaches”

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Co-Chair Smith, Co-Chair McGovern, and distinguished members of the commission, thank you for holding a hearing on such an important topic and for allowing me to submit this written testimony. In this document, I would like to draw your attention to the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) transnational repression targeting Falun Gong practitioners and its evolution in recent years. Specifically:

- The CCP and its proxies have been carrying out a campaign of transnational repression against Falun Gong for over two decades, expanding and refining the tactics, mechanisms, and apparatus that today target a far wider array of victim communities.
- Per orders from the highest echelons of the party—Xi Jinping himself—the CCP has been escalating its global operations targeting Falun Gong practitioners since 2022, with a special focus on the United States. Key security ministries are playing a vital role in these operations, while mobilizing proxies or otherwise supporting individuals with CCP ties.
- The implementation of these orders has consisted, among other tactics, of over 100 violent threats against Falun Gong practitioners, supporters and public venues; physical attacks; and attempts to weaponize U.S. government agencies and courts to undermine non-profits tied to Falun Gong, especially the classical Chinese dance company Shen Yun.
- While several of these efforts have been thwarted by U.S. law enforcement, additional action is needed not only to protect the Falun Gong community in the United States, but also American institutions, the broader public, and future potential CCP targets.

1. A Two Decade Campaign of Transnational Repression

Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a spiritual practice in the Buddhist tradition that combines meditation and gentle exercises with a moral philosophy centered on the core tenets of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance.¹ Descending from an ancient lineage and introduced publicly in China in 1992, Falun Gong is now practiced in more than 100 countries, although the largest contingent of believers—numbering in the tens of millions—remains in China.

Since July 1999, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has engaged in a systematic and illegal effort to eradicate Falun Gong, deploying arbitrary detention, torture, and extrajudicial killings.² This policy remains one of the most widespread campaigns of persecution in China today.³ Since

¹ <https://faluninfo.net/what-is-falun-gong-falun-dafa/>

² <https://faluninfo.net/violent-suppression-of-100-million-people/>

³ <https://library.faluninfo.net/the-persecution-of-falun-gong-key-trends-from-2022-and-what-to-watch-for-ahead/>

the inception of this campaign, the CCP's attempts to intimidate, harass, and suppress Falun Gong practitioners have not remained within the borders of Mainland China. For over 20 years, Falun Gong practitioners outside China—be they Chinese nationals, members of the diaspora, or non-Chinese believers—have been a primary target of transnational repression and other forms of harassment around the world.

In a 2021 report, Freedom House found that the Chinese regime “engages in the most sophisticated, global, and comprehensive campaign of transnational repression in the world” and that among its targets are Falun Gong practitioners.⁴ This is just one example of the documentation of this long-term effort, with other evidence including first-hand accounts by victims, leaked CCP documents, congressional testimonies from defectors, and third-party investigations.

Since July 1999, Falun Gong practitioners outside China have faced break-ins, physical attacks in Chinatown, an assault on an anti-censorship technologist in his home in Atlanta, beatings by Chinese security agents accompanying officials visiting Latin America, and a shooting of Falun Gong activists in South Africa, among other incidents. As early as 2004, the US House of Representatives adopted H.Con.Res. 304, one of the first acts of Congress related to transnational repression that outlined various attacks on Falun Gong practitioners that had occurred in the United States and the intimidation of local US officials supporting their right to freedom of belief, while requesting measures to protect US residents who practice Falun Gong.⁵

These attacks have continued over the past 24 years. In its 2021 case study on transnational repression originating in China, Freedom House relayed its findings regarding cases of the CCP targeting Falun Gong since 2014.⁶

Practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual movement banned in China, also face regular reprisals from China and from Chinese agents. These include frequent harassment and occasional physical assaults by members of visiting Chinese delegations or pro-Beijing proxies at protests overseas, as in cases that have occurred since 2014 in the United States, the Czech Republic, Taiwan, Brazil, and Argentina. Media and cultural initiatives associated with Falun Gong have reported suspicious break-ins targeting sensitive information, vehicle tampering, and pressure from Chinese authorities for local businesses to cut off advertising or other contractual obligations with them. Multiple Falun Gong practitioners in Thailand have also faced detention, including a Taiwanese man involved in uncensored radio broadcasts to China and several cases of Chinese refugees formally recognized as such by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In October 2017, a Falun Gong practitioner who had survived a Chinese labor camp and become a high-profile informant on CCP abuses—sneaking a letter into a Halloween decoration when detained and later filming a documentary with undercover footage—died of sudden kidney failure in Indonesia. Some colleagues consider his death suspicious, but no autopsy was performed.

⁴ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/transnational-repression/china/>

⁵ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/house-concurrent-resolution/304/text/>

⁶ <https://freedomhouse.org/report/transnational-repression/china/>

These incidents are not accidental. Behind them lies a deliberate policy, massive bureaucratic structures, and guidance from the highest levels of the CCP security apparatus. Two insiders who defected to Australia in 2005 offered a glimpse of this system. Hao Fengjun, a former officer in the extralegal 610 Office security agency in Tianjin, relayed: “Falun Gong practitioners all over the world are under CCP surveillance. I personally received intelligence information about Falun Gong practitioners in Australia, the United States, and Canada.”⁷ Chen Yonglin, a former officer in the Chinese consulate in Sydney, testified before Congress:

In each Chinese mission overseas there must be at least one official in charge of Falun Gong affairs. The head and the deputy head of the mission will be responsible for the Falun Gong affairs. I am aware of there being more than 1,000 Chinese secret agents and informants residing in Australia, and they have partaken in efforts to persecute the Falun Gong. The number in the United States should be higher. The United Front uses the overseas Chinese diaspora, including students, businesspeople, media, and so-called Chinese community groups to influence, manipulate, and pressure foreign citizens, politicians, and business leaders to toe the Party line on Falun Gong.⁸

More recently, in a 2015 speech to party cadres from the 610 Office, Meng Jianzhu, then a member of the CCP Central Committee and head of the Political Legal Affairs Committee that oversees the security apparatus, called on those listening to “actively expand and deepen the overseas battlefield” against Falun Gong and other banned religious groups. In the speech, which was leaked and published online by the Europe-based Association for the Defense of Human Rights and Religious Freedom, Meng further explains:

The struggle against ‘Falun Gong’ and other xie jiao organizations is actually a serious political struggle. It is a political contest with the anti-China forces in the West. ... We must strengthen the top-level design, coordinate the domestic and foreign fronts, and treat the countries and regions with serious ‘Falun Gong’ activities such as the United States as the main battlefield... We must fully play our party’s political and institutional advantages, and coordinate and urge all relevant departments to do a good job on intelligence information, crackdown control, and education transformation.⁹

One point of information to note is that unlike other ethnic minority and exile groups targeted by the CCP, the Falun Gong community does not consist solely of members of the Chinese diaspora or those who have fled China. In addition to the many practitioners outside China who are of Chinese or Taiwanese descent, there are tens of thousands, if not more, people from a wide range of ethnicities who practice Falun Gong and have no connection to the country other than practicing this Chinese spiritual and meditation practice. Many do not speak Chinese and have never been to China. From Cape Town to Cannes, Bangladesh to Berlin, Tel Aviv to Tehran, Falun Gong is practiced in over 100 countries and its spiritual teachings have been translated into 50 languages.¹⁰

⁷ <https://faluninfo.net/espionage/>

⁸ http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intlrel/hfa22579.000/hfa22579_0f.htm ; <https://faluninfo.net/confessions-of-a-chinese-consular-official/>

⁹ <https://www.adhrrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/20160124.pdf>; https://faluninfo.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022_09_08_PRIV-Overseas-Influence-Operations-of-CCP.pdf

¹⁰ <https://faluninfo.net/falun-gong-around-the-world/>

In 2023, a small community of Falun Gong practitioners in the African nation of Togo celebrated the 10th anniversary of Falun Gong’s introduction to the country.¹¹ These and other believers are nationals of countries other than China and locally integrated into everyday society. Nevertheless, because of their faith and identity as Falun Gong practitioners, the CCP sees them as a threat and targets them as well. Non-ethnic Chinese adherents have been barred from parades, been beaten by Chinese thugs in Latin America, or been detained and deported from European countries when trying to peacefully demonstrate against visiting Chinese leaders. In Russia, under CCP pressure, Falun Gong’s spiritual text was banned, a situation which the European Court of Human Rights ruled a violation of the charter.¹²

The Falun Dafa Information Center has been tracking these and other cases of transnational repression targeting Falun Gong, especially in the United States. Over the past three years, Falun Gong practitioners in the United States and around the world have not only continued to experience the long arm of the CCP’s persecution, but have also faced significant escalations of the regime’s efforts to silence, defame, and intimidate the practice, its founder, and an artistic initiative founded by Falun Gong practitioners.

2. Top-Down Directives to Security Ministries

The ongoing escalation of actions against Falun Gong practitioners and associated entities, originates from directives issued at the highest levels of the CCP. In February 2025, a non-profit in Australia published a statement from Chinese scholar and political dissident Yuan Hongbin in which he revealed details about internal meetings in late 2022 where Xi Jinping refocused the regime’s attacks on Falun Gong internationally.¹³ News outlets like the *Diplomat* also reported on these orders to escalate the anti-Falun Gong crackdown abroad.¹⁴

Yuan noted Xi’s directives to use “public opinion warfare” and “legal warfare” to undermine Falun Gong globally, including by defaming the reputation of Falun Gong’s founder Mr. Li Hongzhi. Yuan also explained that his information on the internal meetings—which he received in September 2024—came from multiple sources in the party. These sources were former classmates or students of his who are “people with a conscience in the CCP system” or who do not like Xi because of factional infighting and purges. According to Yuan:

[In a 2022 speech] Xi Jinping said that...the suppression of Falun Gong internationally was largely a failure. Xi Jinping further stated...the methods used to suppress Falun Gong abroad were too conservative, too traditional, lacked creativity, and lacked innovation. Xi Jinping instructed to completely, and on an international scale, suppress Falun Gong’s momentum...It was confirmed at this meeting, after the 20th National Congress, that the crackdown on Falun Gong overseas would be coordinated mainly by the Ministry of State Security. That is, coordinated by Chen Yixin.¹⁵

¹¹ <https://faluninfo.net/togo-africa-10th-anniversary-celebration-parade-of-falun-dafas-introduction-to-togo/>

¹² <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-222771>

¹³ <https://endtransplantabuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Professor-Yuan-Statement-Transcript.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://thediplomat.com/2025/02/leaked-ccp-files-expose-global-crackdown-on-dissent/>

¹⁵ <https://endtransplantabuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Professor-Yuan-Statement-Transcript.pdf>

Even prior to these revelations, a leaked document¹⁶ revealed that the CCP’s Ministry of Public Security and Ministry of State Security—China’s counterparts to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Central Intelligence Agency—had established a joint office for combating Falun Gong in North America. This office’s mandate specifically focuses on suppressing Falun Gong practitioners and related organizations.

An additional set of leaks that emerged in mid-2024—notes from internal meetings of the CCP security apparatus sent abroad by people in the system sympathetic to Falun Gong—further warned of a budding campaign to turn the U.S. government and American public opinion against Falun Gong. Among other points, they listed by name two YouTubers who began in late 2023 to spread misleading information about Falun Gong and Shen Yun Performing Arts, a classical Chinese dance company founded by Falun Gong practitioners. The following quote from the detailed notes shared based on internal Ministry of Public Security meetings held in June 2024 is one example of how the regime’s plans were articulated:

Mobilize concealed agents to create and escalate the internal conflicts of Falun Gong, to expand nonstop the fighting strength, depth, and reach of [social media influencers targeting Falun Gong and Shen Yun] ... they must attract the continuous attention of the entire United States society, and force the U.S. government to strike on all fronts, eliminating the force of Falun Gong.¹⁷

3. Beijing’s Playbook Targeting Falun Gong and Shen Yun Globally

Indeed, within months of Xi’s directive, the Falun Dafa Information Center began noting the emergence of new and more sophisticated tactics to target the community that in hindsight closely match the very instructions the CCP chief had issued in late 2022. These included suspicious YouTubers with ties to China aggressively sharing threatening and misleading information about Falun Gong, U.S. government investigations revealing schemes to undermine a non-profit founded by practitioners, and an uptick in violent threats and impersonations. Drawing on dozens of incidents, the Falun Dafa Information Center has attempted to articulate Beijing’s full playbook¹⁸ to malign and eliminate Falun Gong and affiliated institutions globally (see image below)

In addition to long-standing tactics like Chinese diplomatic pressure and physical attacks, the regime and its proxies are now using six major tactics to target Falun Gong practitioners in the United States and around the globe: Beijing-backed social media influencers, violent threats, lawfare, media manipulation, attempts to co-opt government agencies, and impersonations. Below we outline three core dimensions and concrete examples.

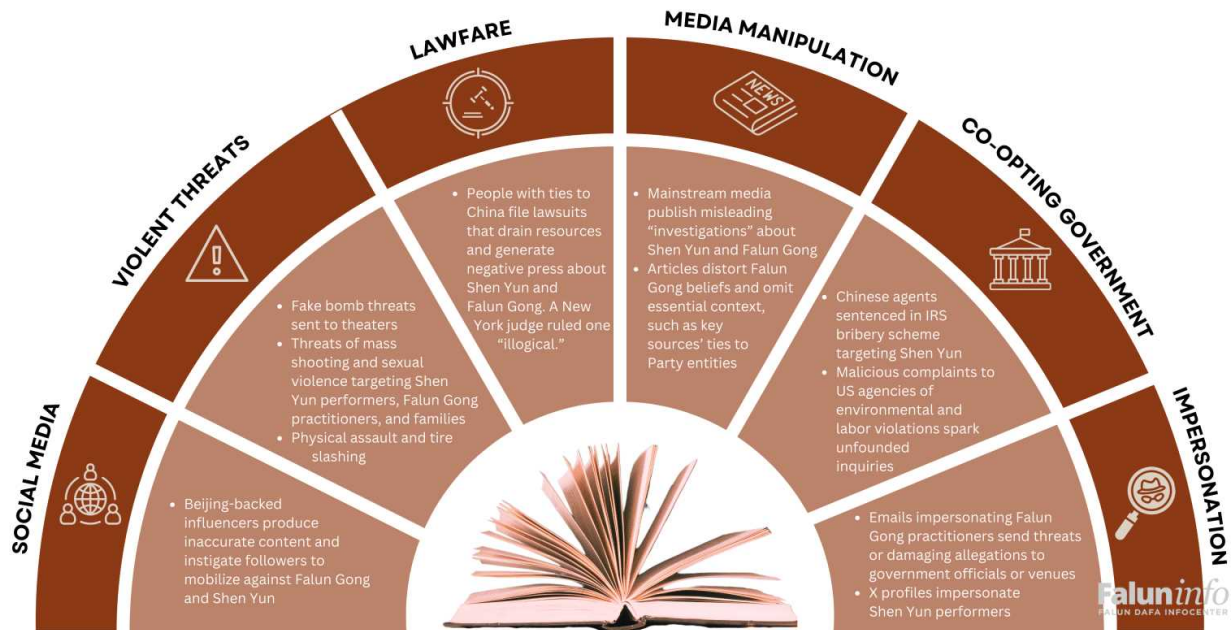
¹⁶ <https://www.upholdjustice.org/node/530>

¹⁷ <https://faluninfo.net/weaponizing-social-media/>

¹⁸ <https://faluninfo.net/launching-a-knockout-punch-ccp-campaign-to-sabotage-shen-yun-falun-gong/>

Beijing's Playbook Targeting Falun Gong and Shen Yun

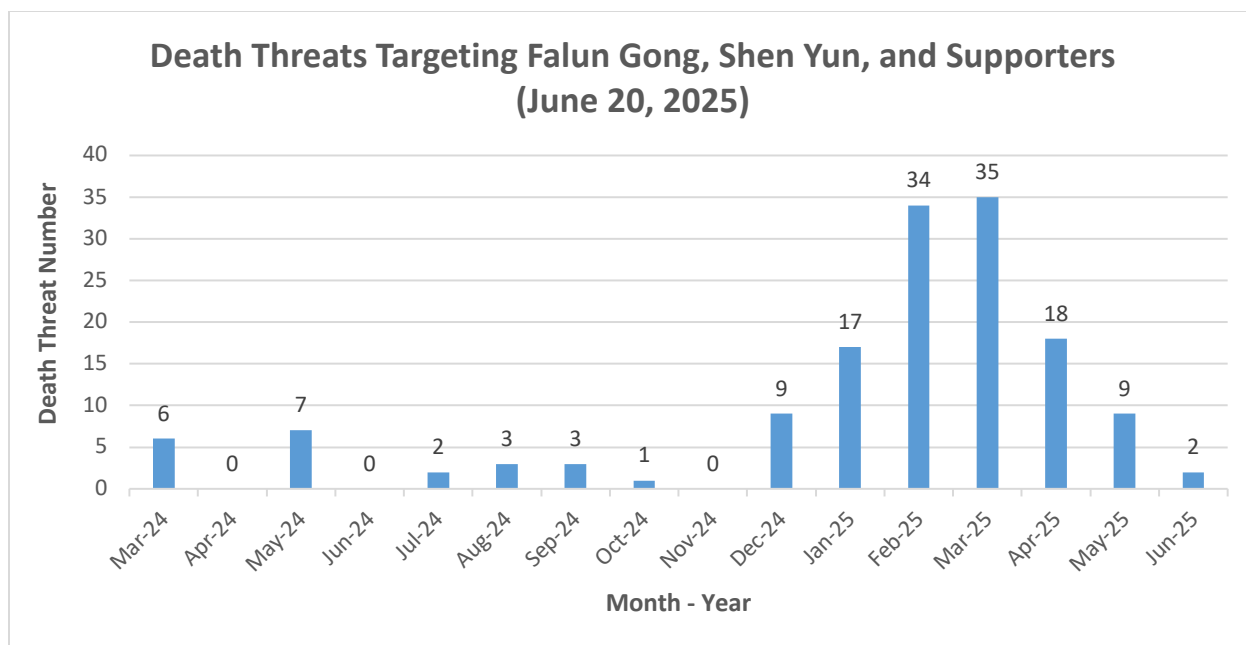
The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has launched a reinvigorated global campaign to malign and eliminate Falun Gong and the Chinese American dance company Shen Yun Performing Arts. The regime and its proxies are using these six strategies to target Falun Gong practitioners in the United States and elsewhere, with dozens of incidents documented in 2024.



a. Anonymous Violent Threats and Impersonation Tactics

Beginning in early 2024, a spate of anonymous death and other violent threats have been sent via email or website contact forms, threatening bombings, mass shootings, car accidents, arson, or sexual assault against Falun Gong practitioners, their families (including young children), elected officials and other supporters, and public venues such as theaters. This trend escalated beginning in December 2024. As of June 2025, the total number of such threats received had exceeded 140.¹⁹ To date, the threats appear to be false alarms, aiming to intimidate and deter Falun Gong practitioners or supporters, but nonetheless violate U.S. laws against sending such violent threats.

¹⁹ To learn more about the threats, the Falun Dafa Information Center documents and constantly updates an incident tracker: <https://faluninfo.net/incident-tracker-monitoring-the-ccps-latest-transnational-repression-and-disinformation-campaign-against-falun-gong/>



Death threats targeting Falun Gong, Shen Yun and supporters from March 2024 through June 20, 2025. Total amount documented by the Falun Dafa Information Center: 146.

While the threats take many forms, they have all been violent in nature and in many cases, **almost identical threats were sent from different email addresses and to different recipients.** For example, from March 27-30, 2025, three email or online messages were sent that included threatening messages related to upcoming parades being organized by Falun Gong practitioners. The messages were sent to the Falun Dafa Information Center and a website selling Shen Yun-related merchandise. The three identical messages in Chinese warned that “April 25th will be a disastrous day for Falun Dafa members” and that “grenades and petrol bombs will be thrown at the parade and guns will be fired.” April 25th is a date commemorated by Falun Dafa practitioners around the world to remember a peaceful appeal that took place in Beijing in 1999 as believers responded to escalating harassment and asked the Chinese government for freedom to practice. Practitioners in many cities around the world, including New York City, hold parades on the occasion. As with other threats targeting Falun Gong and Shen Yun, this one was ultimately a false alarm, but additional security precautions by both practitioners and local law enforcement were necessary nonetheless.²⁰

Other threats have targeted the Falun Gong community as a whole, including young children. In February 2025, a graphic and disturbing threat, written in Chinese, targeted the children of Falun Gong practitioners in the United States, claiming they would be kidnapped and murdered. The anonymous message was sent from separate accounts to four Falun Gong-related websites, indicating a coordinated effort. The email, which was accompanied by images of knives, describes the torture and sexual assault of young girls in the community and ends with the sender “swearing

²⁰ <https://faluninfo.net/incident-tracker-monitoring-the-ccps-latest-transnational-repression-and-disinformation-campaign-against-falun-gong/#mar-27-25>

to Mazu that this prophecy will come true.” One email appeared to use a Taiwanese email address on purpose, suggesting an attempt to mislead or obscure the sender’s true identity.²¹

At least 19 threats have also targeted U.S. officials, institutions like the White House, or elected officials from other countries who support Falun Gong. In February 2025, two messages sent in Chinese included death threats to Members of Congress and Dragon Springs, Shen Yun’s headquarters and home to its training facilities. The messages were sent using the contact form of the website FalunDafa.org, which hosts information about Falun Gong teachings and exercise instructions. The first message, sent on February 2, attempted to impersonate Chinese dissident Chen Pokong and requested a ransom of 18 million dollars, stating that otherwise, “I will make Dragon Springs Temple and the U.S. Congress covered with dead bodies everywhere.” The second message, sent on February 3, entered the name of Taiwan’s Vice President Bi-khim Hsiao as the sender and said: “We do not rule out attacking Congressional members who support Falun Gong. Bombs will be installed and detonated at or near these Congressional members' residents or in their vehicles!”²²

Besides violent threats, **there have also been attempts by CCP agents to impersonate Falun Gong practitioners** and send damaging, and at times, threatening messages to tarnish Falun Gong’s reputation or potentially entice police action against believers. For example, in August 2024, multiple departments of the Central Park Zoo in New York City received a threat via email and a contact form submission that claimed to be a Falun Gong practitioner and said they had placed bombs throughout the zoo. The email demanded the zoo send \$5 Million USD to Dragon Springs, the training campus for Shen Yun Performing Arts. One of the threats also listed my own email address from the Falun Dafa Information Center in an apparent attempt to implicate me. The zoo, skeptical of the threat’s credibility, contacted me and I was able to confirm the false impersonation attempt.²³ Additionally, since April 28th, there have been at least six emails that have tried to impersonate me while threatening violence against Falun Gong practitioners, events, and Shen Yun.

b. Physical Assaults and Use of Well-Known Proxies in Flushing

As noted above, the above-mentioned threats of large scale and graphic violence have thankfully not materialized. Nevertheless, **some incidents of physical assault or danger to Falun Gong practitioners and Shen Yun performers have occurred.** In March 2024, the tire of a bus carrying Shen Yun performers in Costa Mesa, CA was found to have had its tire slashed. There was a cut halfway through the rubber, ensuring that the tire would not deflate right away but would burst under pressure at high speed on the freeway (see image below). According to the police report, the cut looked fresh. The bus had been under 24/7 watch, but was taken to a garage for regular maintenance. The suspicion was that someone followed the bus to the garage and made the

²¹ <https://faluninfo.net/incident-tracker-monitoring-the-ccps-latest-transnational-repression-and-disinformation-campaign-against-falun-gong/#feb-16-25>

²² <https://faluninfo.net/incident-tracker-monitoring-the-ccps-latest-transnational-repression-and-disinformation-campaign-against-falun-gong/#feb-2-2025>

²³ <https://faluninfo.net/incident-tracker-monitoring-the-ccps-latest-transnational-repression-and-disinformation-campaign-against-falun-gong/#august-10-2024>

incision in a moment when it wasn't being closely supervised. According to Leeshai Lemish, an emcee with Shen Yun who has been documenting threats to the company:



“Three days later, my group’s bus had a tire burst at 1am while traveling on I-40 West between Memphis, TN and Little Rock, AR. This was the first time in four years one of the company’s buses had a burst or flat tire. Two days later, while in Little Rock, I was part of our truck’s pre-trip inspection, when I discovered a similar slash on one of its tires. We immediately took it to be replaced.”²⁴

Given the fierce persecution in China alongside systematic censorship and propaganda, one way in which Falun Gong practitioners around the world have tried to counter the negative effects of the CCP’s persecution has been to set up information booths, especially in Chinatowns or at sites frequented by tourists from mainland China. Volunteers and recent refugees take turns manning the booths, distributing information debunking CCP false propaganda about Falun Gong, exposing rights violations in China, and urging individuals to reconsider their affiliation with the CCP.

Unfortunately, such efforts also pose them as key targets for assault by individuals affiliated with CCP proxies or deceived by Chinese state-run propaganda that demonizes Falun Gong. Since 2008, **volunteers at Falun Gong information booths in Chinatowns, including in New York and San Francisco, have faced harassment, heckling, and physical attacks.**

The most recent case happened on April 29, 2025 in Flushing, NY. A tall young Chinese man, who identified himself as “Fan Yang” (phonetic) dressed in green and wearing sunglasses approached the information booth operated by the Global Tuidang Center, an NGO founded by Falun Gong practitioners to help educate people around the world about communism and the depravity of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). He suddenly began kicking the booth’s structure, including the frame and table, causing visible damage to the setup and deforming the structure. In addition to the physical assault on the booth, he also shouted threats and insults at the practitioners who were present. When the practitioners moved to intervene, he suddenly collapsed in a transparent ploy to feign injury and falsely accused them of assaulting him, only to rise moments later and stroll away apparently unharmed.²⁵

²⁴ <https://leeshailemish.com/on-shen-yun/2024/03/17/tire-slashing-is-back/>

²⁵ <https://faluninfo.net/violence-and-threats-against-falun-gong-escalate-in-flushing/>

Similar but more serious cases had happened in 2022 and 2023. For example, NYPD officers arrested Zheng Buqiu on February 15, 2022, charging him with criminal mischief in the fourth degree and a hate crime for repeatedly vandalizing and destroying multiple Falun Gong booth across Flunshing. This individual was also seen alongside Li Huahong, the president of the CACA, an entity linked to the 610 Office, indicating he may not be acting alone.²⁶ The NYPD also arrested and charged Zhongping Qi in 2023 with third degree assault for physically assaulting a Falun Gong practitioner unprovoked, injuring his hand, neck, and chin.²⁷

Parades organized by the Falun Gong community have also been subject to threats and assaults. In September 2024, Falun Gong practitioners held a parade in Brooklyn, NY to commemorate the upcoming Mid-Autumn Festival and expose the persecution faced by practitioners in China. During the parade, two incidents occurred whereby unknown Chinese men assaulted participants, hitting and spitting on them. Two days later, a man claiming to be one of the assailants sent an email threatening further violence and death to Falun Gong practitioners.²⁸

In recent months, there have also been **anti-Falun Gong protesters gathering in Flushing and midtown Manhattan**, distributing flyers and displaying banners that echo the CCP's defamatory propaganda about Falun Gong and Shen Yun. On March 26, 2025, a group of approximately two dozen protesters gathered outside Shen Yun Performing Arts' opening night at Lincoln Center in New York City, engaging in such an activity. Video and photographic evidence, as well as admissions by the participants (both ethnic Chinese and non-Chinese) indicate that these were neither spontaneous nor grassroots, as some protesters admitted being paid to join the protests and often had little idea what the actual topic was about.²⁹

These efforts appeared to be a coordinated effort linked to Michael Chu (Zhu Lichuang), a Flushing-based figure with known ties to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Some protesters admitted receiving \$200 per 8 hours worked; one admitted to being paid \$20 by Chu per stack of flyers distributed. Chu has been photographed with Chinese consulate officials and linked to anti-Falun Gong activities since at least 2016. He was a defendant in a nine-year lawsuit for engaging in civil rights violations against Falun Gong practitioners, which was settled in 2024. According to an article by analyst Mark Eades published by the Foreign Policy Association:

Zhu [Michael Chu] has deep ties with the Communist Party of China (CPC), appearing frequently in state-run Chinese media, engages in a variety of pro-CPC activities in the United States, and enjoys a warm relationship with the Chinese consulate-general in New York.³⁰

²⁶ <https://faluninfo.net/chinese-thug-arrested-for-hate-crime-against-falun-gong/>

²⁷ <https://faluninfo.net/suspect-in-new-york-charged-with-third-degree-assault-for-attacking-falun-gong-volunteers/>

²⁸ <https://faluninfo.net/falun-gong-practitioners-assaulted-during-brooklyn-parade-september-14-2024-2/>

²⁹ <https://faluninfo.net/anti-shen-yun-protesters-tied-to-notorious-ccp-linked-figure-in-new-york/>

³⁰ <https://foreignpolicyblogs.com/2016/05/09/chinese-government-front-groups-act-violation-u-s-law/>

c. Coordinated Campaign Against Shen Yun and Dragon Springs

Beyond the broader Falun Gong community, a key target of the regime's latest campaign and tactics has been Shen Yun Performing Arts and Dragon Springs, where Shen Yun is headquartered.

Shen Yun Performing Arts is a globally acclaimed classical Chinese dance company based in New York that was founded in 2006 by elite artists who practice Falun Gong. Its mission is to revive traditional Chinese culture, free from communist influence, through performances that include approximately 20 pieces, two of which artistically depict the persecution of Falun Gong in China to raise global awareness. Due to Shen Yun's messaging and global success, reaching over 200 cities and over one million live audiences every year, the CCP has been trying to sabotage Shen Yun's performances since its founding.³¹ The Falun Dafa Information Center (FDI) documented over 130 instances from 2007 to 2023 of CCP-orchestrated attempts to sabotage Shen Yun's operations, including cyberattacks, vandalism such as slashing bus tires, and diplomatic pressure on government leaders and theaters through CCP consulates and embassies to cancel performances.³²

This is a truly global phenomenon. Everywhere Shen Yun has performed—across North America, South America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East—the CCP's sabotage attempts have followed. **Chinese diplomats have been at the forefront of this pressure campaign.** In 81 out of the 135 documented incidents, Chinese diplomats took action to undermine Shen Yun. This typically entailed sending a letter, making a phone call, or visiting in-person a theater manager or local government official and spouting falsehoods about Shen Yun, while implicitly or explicitly threatening economic reprisals for disobedience.³³

More recently, in November 2024, Juris Žagars, Director of Dailes Theatre in Riga, Latvia, received an official letter from the Chinese embassy in Riga. The letter urged the institution to cancel an upcoming performance by Shen Yun which was scheduled for January 5–7, 2025 and offered to meet to discuss future opportunities for cooperation. The embassy argued that the shows should be canceled because Falun Gong is banned in China. Mr. Žagars publicly rejected the request in an interview with local media, calling it “absolutely unacceptable for the embassy of a [foreign] country to dictate to us” which performances are suitable. Žagars also reportedly alerted the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which raised the incident with the Chinese embassy, noting that Latvia respects freedom of speech and artistic expression and that foreign diplomats should “not interfere in the internal affairs of the host country.”³⁴ Multiple local media outlets reported on the incident.³⁵

³¹ <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/4500639-the-real-reason-communist-china-is-afraid-of-shen-yun/> .

³² <https://faluninfo.net/diplomatic-disruptions-and-disinformation-beijings-global-drive-to-stop-shen-yun/>

³³ Ibid

³⁴ <https://faluninfo.net/incident-tracker-monitoring-the-ccps-latest-transnational-repression-and-disinformation-campaign-against-falun-gong/#november-2024-latvia>

³⁵ <https://bnn-news.com/programme-chinese-embassy-has-attempted-to-influence-dailes-theatre-in-latvia-263370>; <https://zinas.tv3.lv/latvija/neka-personiga/kiniesi-tiksanos-ar-latvijas-parlamentariesiem-izmanto-savai-propagandai/>; <https://www.baltictimes.com/foreign-ministry-in-talks-with-chinese-embassy-underlines-respect-for-freedom-of-speech-and-artistic-expression-in-latvia/>

Over the past few years, however, the regime's efforts to sabotage Shen Yun have expanded far beyond diplomatic pressure, escalating in scale, severity, and sophistication.

Violent threats and impersonation attempts: Many of the above-mentioned incidents involved bomb threats and threats of mass shootings targeting Shen Yun performers and theaters hosting Shen Yun shows. For example, in February 2025, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. was evacuated following a bomb threat directed at Shen Yun³⁶, leading to street closures and increased security costs borne by Shen Yun. As has been typical with these threats, no explosives were found, indicating these threats serve as fear tactics to disrupt operations, increase operational costs, intimidate performers, and deter audiences from attending the performances. Between March 2024 and June 2025, the FDI recorded over 120 incidents spanning 11 countries that targeted Shen Yun or theaters where it was scheduled to perform. A significant proportion (77.5%) occurred in the United States, across 18 states.

Similar threats have been issued in other countries, such as France and the United Kingdom, as well as to government-owned theaters in Taiwan. In March 2025, Taiwanese authorities traced threats against Shen Yun performances in Taiwan to a Huawei facility in Xi'an, China. According to the local *Liberty Times* newspaper:

Although the perpetrators used foreign VPNs to disguise their locations, with IP addresses traced to various countries, the CIB's cybercrime unit, along with other units, compiled data and traced the source back to Xi'an, China. The most critical clue pointed to the Huawei Research Institute in the region, and investigators concluded that suspects associated with Huawei might be involved in the threats.³⁷

As of the time of writing, U.S. authorities and law enforcement agencies have yet to publicly share or take any action against those making these threats targeting American venues.

The violent threats have also targeted Shen Yun personnel. In January 2025, an anonymous message contained a vivid death threat targeting the New York headquarters of Shen Yun, called Dragon Springs, and members of the U.S. Congress who have supported Falun Gong. The threat was sent in Chinese by email to the Falun Dafa Information Center, as well as submitted via the contact form of FalunDafa.org, a website that hosts information about Falun Gong, its spiritual teachings, and exercise instruction videos. With the subject line, "Set fire on the first day of Chinese New Year," it warned:

I have made a large number of incendiary bombs using alcohol and glass bottles. On the first day of the Chinese New Year, we will secretly go to Dragon Springs Temple [home of Shen Yun's headquarters and training facilities], set fire to the surrounding vehicles, then hack and kill the guards, break into Dragon Springs Temple, and throw gasoline

³⁶ <https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/shen-yun-extra-security-kennedy-center-bomb-threat/3849698/>

³⁷ <https://web.archive.org/web/20250404232911/https://news.ltn.com.tw/news/society/paper/1700082>

bombs at the wooden buildings! Slash and kill everyone we can see! At the same time, our people will attack congressmen who support Falun Gong!³⁸

Additional security precautions were taken, though thankfully, no actual violence materialized.

In other cases, there have been **incidents of people attempting to impersonate current or past Shen Yun personnel**. In July 2024, the social media platform X removed several fake accounts that had posed as senior Shen Yun staff.³⁹ In early December 2024, a Canadian parliamentarian who has been publicly supportive of Shen Yun Performing Arts received a suspicious email. The email sender claimed to be a former Shen Yun dancer, shared links to recent misleading media reports, and relayed alleged accounts of overwork and trauma during their time with the company. The parliamentarian questioned the email's authenticity and informed a local Falun Gong practitioner. That person checked with Shen Yun, which confirmed that there was no such performer by the name that was listed as the email's signatory.

On the same day, a Swedish parliamentarian who had also publicly praised Shen Yun received a nearly identical email smearing the company. This time, the email sender used a different name and email address. Again, Shen Yun confirmed there was no current or former performer by that name. The overlapping timing and language in the emails, both sent to lawmakers who had publicly spoken positively about Shen Yun, indicates coordination and that there may be additional parliamentarians who have received or will receive similar messages.⁴⁰

PRC agents' attempts to manipulate U.S. government agencies: In a tactic more concretely tied to the PRC and even more insidious, the CCP has also attempted to weaponize U.S. governmental institutions to target Shen Yun. In May 2023, the U.S. Department of Justice indicted two CCP agents, John Chen and Lin Feng. On May 14, 2023, Chen and Feng met with an undercover FBI agent who posed as an IRS official, promising to pay the official a total of \$50,000 to open an audit on a Falun Gong-related entity (later discovered to be Shen Yun).⁴¹ In late 2024, the Department of Justice announced that two CCP agents had been sentenced to prison. U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said:

John Chen aligned himself with the PRC government and its goals to harass and intimidate the Falun Gong, a long-standing target of PRC repression. In doing so, Chen boldly attempted to bribe an individual he believed to be an IRS agent to corrupt the administration of the U.S. tax code and pervert the IRS whistleblower program. This Office will not tolerate efforts like this to repress free speech by targeting critics of the PRC in the United

³⁸ <https://faluninfo.net/graphic-death-threats-target-shen-yun-headquarters-members-of-u-s-congress-ahead-of-chinese-new-year/>

³⁹ <https://faluninfo.net/launching-a-knockout-punch-ccp-campaign-to-sabotage-shen-yun-falun-gong/>

⁴⁰ <https://faluninfo.net/incident-tracker-monitoring-the-ccps-latest-transnational-repression-and-disinformation-campaign-against-falun-gong/#december-6-2024>

⁴¹ <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/illegal-agents-prc-government-charged-prc-directed-bribery-scheme>

States. Today's sentence is a reminder that the U.S. justice system will hold accountable those who attempt to engage in malicious transnational repression on American soil.⁴²

In court documents (including an indictment for another PRC agent in Los Angeles filed in December 2024), John Chen disclosed that he had met Xi Jinping multiple times over the years and was responsible to scout the areas around the Dragon Springs to help facilitate potential environmental lawsuits.⁴³



Picture of convicted PRC agent John Chen shaking hands with Xi Jinping, likely taken on May 28, 2021 (according to photo's metadata).⁴⁴

Lawfare and other tactics target Dragon Springs. Since the early 2000s, Falun Gong practitioners in New York have developed Dragon Springs, a campus featuring Buddhist-style temple architecture inspired by the Tang Dynasty.⁴⁵ This campus serves as the home of two New York State-registered institutions—Fei Tian Academy of the Arts and Fei Tian College—as well as the training center for Shen Yun Performing Arts.

According to leaked CCP documents, targeting this campus for surveillance, espionage, and legal harassment has been a priority for the regime. A 2017 document from the CCP's Henan Provincial Committee states:

⁴² <https://www.justice.gov/usao-sdny/pr/california-man-sentenced-acting-illegal-agent-prc-government-and-bribery>

⁴³ <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25108526-feng-bail-doc-doj/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/media/1381256/dl>

⁴⁵ <https://www.dragonsprings.org/>

Tightly focus on the overseas xie jiao core backbones, the headquarters [Dragon Springs] base and foreign political figures, carefully organize strategies to strike and divide them. Pay close attention to the trend of overseas activities of Falun Gong... collect early-warnings, forward-looking, action-oriented intelligence information, and thus serve the overall struggle situation.

Indeed, the campus has faced vandalism, frequent spying via drones, and localized social media campaigns spreading falsehoods about the campus.

In a case that resembled Chen's disclosure, in 2021, an American individual who had resided in China for 15 years returned to the United States and established an environmental non-profit. Over the following years, it repeatedly filed frivolous lawsuits against Dragon Springs, falsely claiming damage to the local environment and waterways. All of the cases were dismissed. Indeed, in September 2024, a New York district court dismissed one such lawsuit with prejudice, prohibiting refiling on the same grounds. Judge Kenneth M. Karas rejected the complaint as "vague," "illogical," and an "oxymoron." Despite their shaky foundations, these lawsuits generated negative local media coverage upon filing (while the dismissals received little attention), fostering suspicion among local communities, causing reputational harm, and imposing significant legal costs.⁴⁶

More recently, a former Shen Yun dancer, who initially spoke positively of her experience and sought to rejoin the company, abruptly altered her stance after visiting Beijing and collaborating with the Beijing Dance Academy, a CCP-run institution and one of Shen Yun's few global competitors.⁴⁷ In November 2024, she initiated a civil lawsuit against Shen Yun and Dragon Springs. Phelim Kine, a senior China correspondent at *Politico*, described this lawsuit in an X post as a "propaganda coup for Beijing" in its decades-long campaign against Falun Gong⁴⁸, highlighting its alignment with the CCP's broader disinformation efforts. Her claims run counter to available information about working conditions at Shen Yun and the experiences of over 1,550 current and former performers and family members who signed a petition citing their concerns about "gross distortions and false narratives about our work, our faith, and our way of life echoing through mainstream media, and bolstered by lawfare as well as malicious calls for government inquiries."⁴⁹

Conclusion

The above detailed examples are only the tip of the iceberg of the Chinese regime's transnational repression targeting Falun Gong practitioners in the United States and elsewhere outside China. The CCP's reinvigorated campaign is already causing harm, traumatizing innocent religious believers, damaging a unique cultural initiative, raising costs for law enforcement, and creating a blueprint for the future targeting of other CCP critics and targets.

⁴⁶ <https://faluninfo.net/federal-judge-dismisses-frivolous-lawsuit-against-falun-gong-shen-yun-campus/>

⁴⁷ <https://faluninfo.net/beijing-dance-academy-a-chinese-state-owned-art-institute-closely-intertwined-with-the-chinese-communist-party/>

⁴⁸ <https://x.com/phelimkine/status/1861205086413684913?s=46>

⁴⁹ <https://www.shenyuncommunity.org/our-petition>

Within the Falun Gong community, believers are feeling the psychological impact of facing a spate of anonymous threats, physical attacks, and an unfair and misleading assault online and in mainstream media. David Fang, the victim of a physical assault in Flushing in February 2023, told the Falun Dafa Information Center:

I was persecuted in China for my faith, and under immense pressure for years. Soon after I arrived in the United States this February, I was attacked and became fearful that the CCP will come to haunt me in New York. I was scared that I would never be free.⁵⁰

The impact extends beyond refugees from China. Lillian Parker, a student at Fei Tian College who also performs with Shen Yun, shared that “being demonized in the mainstream media is bizarre and traumatic.” She reports seeing the strain this campaign has put on friends, families and the community as a whole.⁵¹ Many American Shen Yun performers and others in the Falun Gong community have had to increase security measures around their homes and workplaces, alert police to anonymous threats, or debunk impersonations using their name.

The potential impact of the CCP’s transnational campaign reaches far beyond the Falun Gong community itself. Although the primary target of this campaign is Shen Yun and the larger Falun Gong religious group, the ramifications are broader, striking at the very heart of American liberty and sovereignty. Moreover, Falun Gong has long been a testing ground—both within China and in terms of transnational repression—for the CCP’s authoritarian tactics. Already, some of the tactics outlined above have been used against other critics of the CCP, be they lawfare, harassment by state proxies, anonymous death threats, and false impersonations.

To our knowledge, however, the coordinated nature of this effort, the scale of threats, and the ability of individuals with ties to the CCP to take advantage of pre-existing biases, political polarization, and other vulnerabilities in American society to further and amplify its goals is unmatched. Yet should this campaign succeed, it would constitute a blueprint for Beijing to turn the U.S. media, government, and public discourse against any American target of its choosing.

Recommendations to Congress and the U.S. Government:

(A) Take action to protect Falun Gong communities from transnational repression

- 1. Law enforcement agencies and the Justice Department should investigate and prosecute** individuals and foreign agents that are assaulting, surveilling, harassing, and threatening Falun Gong practitioners who were peacefully exercising their right to free speech. This should include those sending anonymous violent threats and any agents linked to entities like the Special Office on Combating Falun Gong in North America.
- 2. Investigate proxy groups**, such as the 610 Office-linked Anti-Cult Association that are at the forefront of harassing Falun Gong practitioners in locations such as Flushing, NY.

⁵⁰ Personal interview conducted by the Falun Dafa Information Center with David Fang, September 3, 2023.

⁵¹ <https://faluninfo.net/launching-a-knockout-punch-ccp-campaign-to-sabotage-shen-yun-falun-gong/>

3. **Ensure that expanding activities and initiatives to monitor and prevent transnational repression include Falun Gong.** Relevant actions could include making sure that those working on transnational repression receive minimal education on Falun Gong, that engagement with vulnerable communities to collect incidents includes Falun Gong, and that transparency enforcement for foreign agents includes additional entities that demonize or harass Falun Gong believers. Ensure local Falun Gong community representatives are aware of any available channels to report incidents of transnational repression.
4. **Punish Chinese diplomats** who engage in intimidation, harassment, surveillance, or pressuring members of the Chinese diaspora to marginalize Falun Gong or take action against practitioners. Declare diplomats who commit transnational repression against Falun Gong targets persona non grata.
5. **Pass legislations** that would improve protections against transnational repression and affirm U.S. concern over the plight of Falun Gong practitioners. Congress should criminalize transnational repression, strengthen domestic institutional frameworks, and impose sanctions on responsible foreign officials. In addition, the Senate should vote on and pass S. 817 the Falun Gong Protection Act, which passed the House through unanimous voice vote in May.⁵² Although the bill focuses on accountability and prevention related to human rights violations taking place within China, its adoption would also have the effect of clarifying to the Chinese regime that the U.S. government supports the freedom of belief of Falun Gong practitioners more broadly.
6. **Actively welcome and support Falun Gong refugees** fleeing China, including by ensuring that asylum officers and others in the immigration system evaluating applications receive a minimal education on Falun Gong.
7. Representatives from relevant Congressional committees and US government agencies—such as the National Security Council, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of State—should **meet with Falun Gong representatives**, torture survivors, victims of transnational repression, and relatives of jailed practitioners outside China. This enables them to receive up to date information about conditions in China. Given the severity of the persecution in China and risk of reprisals, it is too dangerous for local adherents to meet with foreign government officials inside the country. As such, US officials and diplomatic staff should make a particular priority of meeting with Falun Gong practitioners prior to their travel to China or during visits to their home country. High-level officials, including presidents, vice presidents, prime ministers, secretaries of state, and religious freedom ambassadors should also meet with representatives from the Falun Dafa Information Center, Falun Gong torture survivors, victims of transnational repression, or relatives of jailed practitioners to better understand conditions in China and to signal support for their freedom.

⁵² <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/817?s=1&r=3&q=%7B%22search%22%3A%22falun+gong+protection+act%22%7D>

(B) Vocally condemn transnational repression against Falun Gong in public and private

1. US officials should **make public statements condemning incidents of transnational repression** targeting individual Falun Gong practitioners and their families. In February 2025, for example, the State Department issued such a statement.⁵³
2. In meetings with Chinese counterparts, officials should **call for the halt of transnational repression** of Falun Gong practitioners, including at the highest levels of diplomacy.
3. Local, state, and federal officials should make **public statements on key anniversaries**, such as May 13 (World Falun Dafa Day) and July 20 (the date of the CCP's launch of its violent persecution)—that express support for US residents and citizens who practice Falun Gong and condemn ongoing transnational repression.

⁵³ <https://faluninfo.net/incident-tracker-monitoring-the-ccps-latest-transnational-repression-and-disinformation-campaign-against-falun-gong/#feb-7-2025>