

Falun Gong march marks decade-long persecution

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Falun Gong practitioners hold portraits of alleged victims at a demonstration in Taipei yesterday.

PHOTO: AP

More than 1,000 Falun Gong practitioners staged a protest yesterday against China's persecution of the movement over the past 10 years.

Led by a marching band, protesters held banners and signs as they departed from a park across the street from Taipei 101.

"Ending the Chinese Communist Party [CCP] regime is the only way to end the persecution," one sign read, while a banner said: "Supporting human rights in China is supporting freedom for Taiwan."

Several hundred people each held a photo of a Falun Gong practitioner who they said had died at the hand of Chinese officials, while others enacted how Chinese authorities allegedly torture Falun Gong practitioners or harvest their organs.

"This July 20 marks the 10th anniversary of the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China," Taiwan Falun Dafa Association member Liao Hsiao-lan said. "Every year, Falun Gong practitioners around the world stage demonstrations around this date to protest against the persecution and to remember the victims."

On July 20, 1999, the Chinese government formally declared Falun Gong an "evil cult," outlawed Falun Gong organizations and began to crack down on practitioners.

Liao said that more than 100,000 practitioners have been put in jails in China and that more than 3,300 practitioners had died in prison.

Similar demonstrations are being held in 30 other countries.

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“We often pay too much attention to economic development in China and the positive impact it may bring, but not enough attention to the dark side of China, such as human rights violations,” said Wu Ya-ting, who has practiced Falun Gong since 2000. “As a practitioner, I hope such events will raise public awareness.”

Despite being partially paralyzed and having difficulty speaking, an elderly practitioner stood on the sidewalk with the help of a walker and handed out flyers.

When asked why he went to so much effort, he gave a “thumbs up” sign and slowly said: “It’s good.”

A woman surnamed Hsiao said she would take part in protests “for as long as China represses Falun Gong practitioners.”

Chairman of the Deng Liberty Foundation and long-time human rights activist Kenneth Chiu also expressed support for Falun Gong practitioners.

“The Chinese government’s persecution of Falun Gong is simply ridiculous,” Chiu said. “If Falun Gong is an evil cult, why is it no problem to practice it in other countries and in Hong Kong?”

He said any government that declared a religion illegal not only violated religious freedom, but also other rights such as the right to assemble, to preach and to spread teachings.

As the protesters marched, several Chinese tourist groups were either getting ready to enter or leave the Taipei 101 building across the street. Most of them stood and watched, took pictures or simply ignored the protest.

One complained that it was “bad luck to run into something so disgusting.”

Also See: [Falun Gong, 10 years after the ban](#)

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