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RELIGIOUS BOOKS BURNT BY CHINESE REGIME IN WAR AGAINST FAITH

See Page 2



Falun Gong books and posters are set on fire in Shouguang City, China's eastern Shandong Province, on Aug. 4, 1999. Chinese authorities in cities across China burned millions of Falun Gong books and materials after the communist regime launched a campaign to persecute the spiritual practice in July 1999.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Chinese Regime Burns Religious Books, Jails Believers in War Against Faith

EVA FU

he Chinese Communist Party has kept up its broad attack on faith amid the COVID-19 pandemic, burning and trashing religious books while jailing spiritual adherents for possessing religious literature.

While the officially atheist Chinese regime formally recognizes five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Christianity, it imposes strict rules over how these religious organizations should operate, and often installs Party cadres to control the entities, forcing millions of spiritual followers to turn underground.

At least 100 million people—or about a third of believers in China—faced "high" or "very high" levels of persecution in 2017, according to estimates by the human rights advocacy group Freedom House estimated. Their plight has continued to worsen, the group found last year.

For the believers—Tibetan Buddhists, Christians, Uyghur Muslims, or Falun Gong practitioners—reading, printing, or distributing religious materials could lead to jail terms, harsh labor, and other forms of abuse. Many are subject to routine monitoring and harassment by state agents, who often raid their homes without warning to seize and destroy their books.

These violations of religious freedom have led the U.S. State Department to designate the Chinese regime as a "country of particular concern" annually for more than two decades.

The repressive policies have only intensified in recent years. In 2016, the regime passed a regulation explicitly banning its roughly 90 million Party members from having religious beliefs, engaging in "feudal superstitious" activities, or supporting religious extremists or racial separatists—the latter is a term it frequently evokes to describe religious minorities such as Muslim practicing Uyghurs in Xinjiang or Tibetan Buddhists.

That occurs even as the Chinese Constitution guarantees its citizens rights to "freedom of religious belief" and to engage in "normal religious activities." The regime has frequently expressed its aversion to spirituality through

its aversion to spirituality through Party-owned media and in government documents. Last month, Beijing, in a top policy directive, listed promoting socialism and purging "superstition" among its top priorities for modernizing the country. CCP members, who have chosen to follow the materialistic path decreed by the Party, are as "incompatible with superstitious ideologies as fire and water," one state-controlled publication declared in 2016.

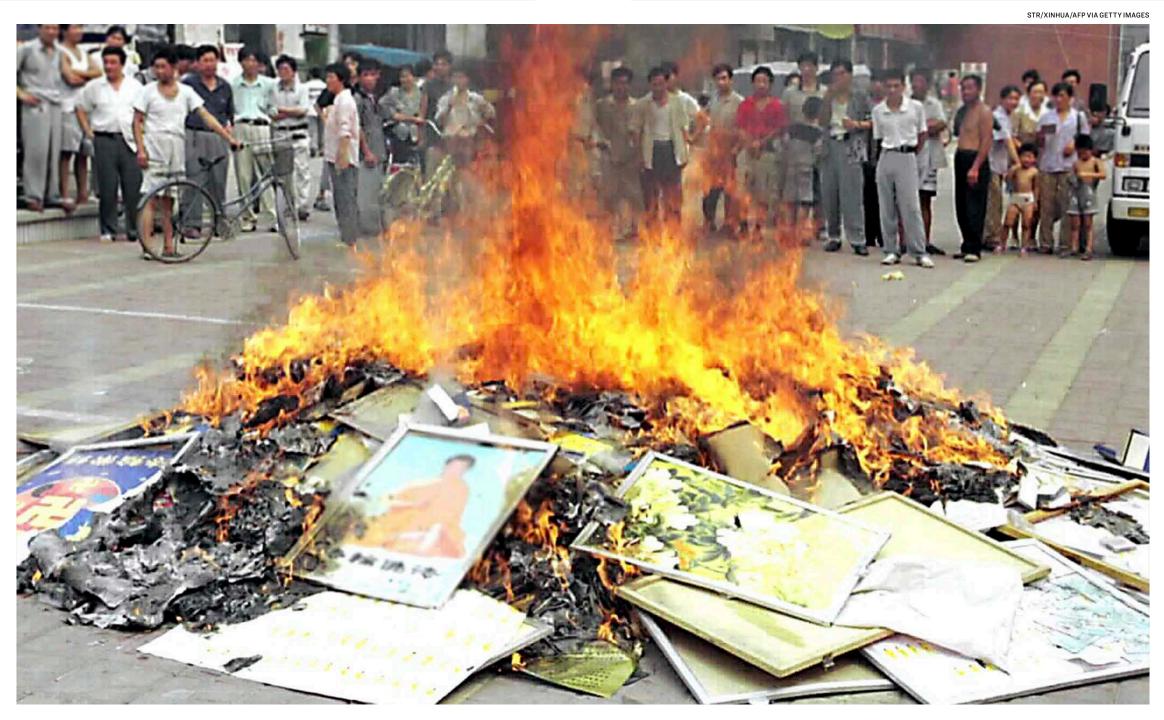
Religious Book Burning

In October 2019, a state library in Zhengyuan county of northwest China's Gansu Province was criticized for conducting a public book-burning of dozens of illegal publications or media with religious or "tendentious" content. Netizens compared the scene to the days of the Cultural Revolution, where books were burned and religious artifacts smashed, as the CCP attempted to stamp out traditional Chinese culture and tighten its ideological control over the population. But the library's action was hardly an isolated incident.

Roughly two decades after the Cultural Revolution, in 1999, the CCP ordered a massive campaign to eradicate Falun Gong, a spiritual meditative discipline based on moral principles of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance. Overnight, an estimated 70 million to 100 million Falun Gong adherents in the country were labeled as enemies of the state, facing detention, torture, harassment, and forced organ harvesting if they refused to renounce their belief. Soon, Falun Gong practitioners were forced to hand over their books and videotapes relating to the practice. Those materials were then crushed under a pulping machine, road roller, or set on

fire, often in public displays that were later used for propaganda purposes. Millions of publications were destroyed, according to Minghui, a U.Sbased website that tracks the persecution of Falun Gong, which based its estimate on reports by foreign journalists, state media, and eyewitness accounts.

A July 2019 notice, posted on the government website of Xilingol League in the region of Inner Mongolia, offered monetary rewards varying from 50 to 500 yuan (\$7.73 to \$77.30) for anyone who reported flyers, books, souvenirs, social media posts, or banners related to Falun Gong and other groups that the CCP deemed illegal. It also offered up to



Falun Gong books and posters are set on fire in Shouguang City, China's eastern Shandong Province, on Aug. 4, 1999. Chinese authorities in cities across China burned millions of Falun Gong books and materials after the communist regime launched a campaign to persecute the spiritual practice in July 1999.

The Chinese Communist leader Xi Jinping and his regime engineered the worst religious persecution since the end of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution in the 1960s.

Bob Fu, founder, China Aid

Two workers are seen burning books in front of the Zhenyuan county library in Qingyang City, Gansu Province, on Oct. 22, 2019. 300,000 yuan (\$46,392) for clues to "dismantle" them.

While Buddhism and Christianity are officially sanctioned religions, their adherents haven't been shielded from state pressure. In Jingdezhen County of Jiangxi Province, a Buddhist abbot recalled how the local government laid all of the local temples' CDs in the road, and used an excavator to crush them, according to a December report by Bitter Winter, a magazine on China's religious liberty and human rights. Last October, officials in the northern province of Shanxi shut the local Fengci Temple and confiscated around 882 pounds of religious books and tens of thousands of CDs, according to the same article.

In Anhui Province, at least 250 statesanctioned churches had their crosses removed between January and April 2020, often on the pretext of "being too tall, too large, too wide, or too eyecatching," the magazine reported. Officials claimed the action was part of a broad campaign to eliminate religious symbols.

Wen Weiquan, a house Christian from the Wufeng Tujia Autonomous County in Hubei Province, took his own life in February 2019 after police forced him to hand over his Bible and throw crosses

that had been in his house into a fire pit. "The Chinese Communist leader Xi Jinping and his regime engineered the worst religious persecution since the end of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution in the 1960s," Bob Fu, a Chinese Ameri-



CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES

can pastor and founder of U.S.-based Christian nonprofit China Aid, told The Epoch Times in an email.

'War Against Decent Faith'

The regime's sweeping religious policies have continued amid the pandemic, as China's faithful continue to suffer government reprisal for the mere act of holding, producing, or circulating materials related to their beliefs.

"Xi's regime constantly uses the pandemic as a pretext for further crackdown against any independent faith or religion in China," Fu said.

He pointed to the suspension of virtual worship services at a house church in Sichuan, and the case of Pastor Li Juncai in Henan Province, who received a five and a half year sentence in January for attempting to prevent a CCP flag and propaganda banners from being placed in his church.

Chen Yu, owner of an online Christian bookstore in Taizhou City in Zhejiang Province, was sentenced to seven years in prison in October 2020 and fined 200,000 yuan (\$29,450). His customers from three provinces reported raids of their homes by police who seized their religious books. Yu was charged with selling unapproved religious books imported from other countries.

Last September, a Shanghai court sentenced 16 people for operating an "illegal" business that printed more than 200,000 religious-themed books without a license, including the Buddhist scripture "Diamond Sutra."

In December last year, Falun Gong practitioner Guo Suling, who was 77 years old at the time, was handed a three-year suspended sentence for allegedly hanging three Falun Gong banners in public locations, while Sun Qian, an adherent who holds a Canadian passport, was sentenced to eight years in prison last June. The police arrested Sun after raiding her Beijing home and finding Falun Gong books.

Another practitioner, Sun Zhongqin, from Liaoning Province, was sentenced to three and a half years in prison in November for distributing calendars and booklets related to Falun Gong, according to Minghui.

Not wishing their books to fall into authorities' hands, some Kazakh Muslims in the far-western Xinjiang region sealed their Qurans in plastic bags and threw them into the Ile River, in hopes that they could be transported to neighboring Kazakhstan and be preserved, Radio Free Asia reported in October 2020.

To evade internet censorship, two government-approved Christian groups replaced religious terms with shorthand in their online bookstore, such as by changing "Christ"—pronounced as "Ji Du" in Chinese—into "JD," and "Bible" into "SJ," the short form of the term in Chinese "Sheng Jing," according to China Aid.

"This is a war against decent faith," Fu says. "History has told us this war is doomed to fail."



The pillar of a demolished Catholic church is seen in Puyang, in China's central Henan Province, on Aug. 13, 2018. The church was demolished to make way for a commercial development.



House Homeland Security Committee's Oversight and Management Efficiency Subcommittee Chairman Scott Perry (R-Pa.) holds a hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington on April 28, 2016.

US-CHINA

Rep. Perry: Designate CCP a Transnational Criminal Organization

ISABEL VAN BRUGEN & JOSHUA PHILIPP

Rep. Scott Perry (R-Pa.) says the Biden administration must designate the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) a "transnational criminal organization," to allow Americans to understand the regime's vision for not only China, but also the United States.

"We're making a differentiation between the people of China and the Communist Party of China," the lawmaker told The Epoch Times on Feb. 28 at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Orlando, Florida. "We need to designate them as that which recognizes who and what they are."

In October 2020, Perry introduced legislation to designate the CCP as such, and to eliminate sovereign immunity for Chinese officials—which would allow them to be tried in U.S. court for criminal prosecution.

"They claim they have sovereignty, because they are a government of a country, but I think that's very specious. They're a criminal organization involved in criminal acts. It's not a matter of conjecture," Perry said. "It's easily proven fact, whether it's the distribution or the allowance of the distribution of fentanyl across our borders and right into the United States, or whether it's the human rights violations.

"So we're somehow giving them a pass, because they say we have sovereign immunity as a government."

"Sovereign immunity as a government doesn't allow you to commit horrific acts of violence against your own citizenry, or anybody else, whether it's in your borders or not—the world has not allowed that," he said.

Perry introduced the legislation with Reps. Tim Burchett (R-Tenn.) and Scott DesJarlais (R-Tenn.) last year that would add the CCP to the Department of Justice's Top International Criminal Organizations Target (TICOT) list, which seeks to identify and eliminate international criminal organizations that pose the gravest threat to U.S. national interests.

He said on Feb. 28 that the designation would allow the DOJ to deal with the Chinese regime and "prosecute those responsible" for issues ranging from intellectual property theft to the regime's crimes against humanity.

"That will get the American people fully understanding who the Communist Party of China is and what their vision is for not only for China, for the United States of America," Perry said.

Transnational organized crime is defined by the FBI as self-perpetuating associations of individuals who operate transnationally for the purpose of obtaining power, influence, and monetary and/or commercial gains, wholly or in part by illegal means, while protecting their activities through a pattern of corruption and/or violence, or while protecting their illegal activities through a transnational organizational structure and the exploitation of transnational commerce or communication mechanisms.

"These are all crimes and they're not being dealt with," Perry said, referring in part to the human rights abuses being committed against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in China's northwestern Xinjiang region, forced organ harvesting, the Chinese regime's social credit program, the intellectual property theft on U.S. soil, the distribution of narcotics, and proliferation through China into the United States through Mexico.

Sovereign immunity as a government doesn't allow you to commit horrific acts of violence against your own citizenry, or anybody else, whether it's in your borders or not—the world has not allowed that.

Rep. Scott Perry

"So I think that it sets everybody's frame of mind and especially businesses, because I don't think most businesses want to be dealing with a criminal organization, and most businesses certainly don't want to deal with some of this with an organization that is involved in the concentration camps and the oppression of the Uyghurs."

A day before leaving office, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo designated the Chinese regime's persecution of Uyghurs as genocide and "crimes against humanity." While the Biden administration has agreed with the designation, Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, however, has said the new administration has some reservations about former President Donald Trump's approach to China.

"Let me just say that I also believe that President Trump was right in taking a tougher approach to China," Blinken told the Senate foreign relations panel during his confirmation hearing. "I disagree very much with the way that he went about it in a number of areas, but the basic principle was the right one, and I think that's actually helpful to our foreign policy."

President Joe Biden has indicated he would focus on "extreme competition" with the Chinese regime, although the administration has shed little light on concrete plans, pending a review of Trump-era China policies. The administration also faces pressure from Congress to continue a hardline stance toward the regime, an area that enjoys bipartisan support.

Cathy He contributed to this report.

UN-CHINA

Leaked Emails Confirm UN Gave Names of Dissidents to CCP

ALEX NEWMAN

eaked emails prove that, contrary to United Nations denials, UN human-rights officials did in fact give the names of Chinese dissidents to the communist regime in Beijing before those activists were set to testify in Geneva against the Communist Chinese Party's abuses.

In fact, it appears from the leaked documents that the practice of handing over names of Chinese dissidents to the dictatorship was viewed as a "usual practice" by all involved. The whistleblower told The Epoch Times that it continues to this day, despite UN denials.

Chinese communist authorities used the names received from the UN to prevent the dissidents from leaving China. At least one dissident identified by the UN and detained by the CCP before leaving for Ge-

neva, Cao Shunli, died while in detention. If the dissident expected to embarrass Beijing at the UN was already abroad, the CCP frequently threatened or even kidnapped and tortured the person's family, according to UN whistleblower Emma Reilly, who first exposed the scandal.

Critics of the regime whose names were handed over by the UN included activists concerned about Tibet, Hong Kong, and the Islamic Uyghur minority in Western China—all of which are being targeted by the CCP for various reasons.

In February of 2020, The Epoch Times reported on the scandal, and on the retaliation faced by Reilly for attempting to expose and halt the practice. Reilly's case at the UN is ongoing. She remains employed there but is under "investigation."

Prominent human-rights organizations around the world have slammed the UN practice for endangering the lives of dissidents and their families.

In comments to The Epoch Times, Reilly described it as "criminal" and even argued that it made the UN "complicit in genocide." For years, the UN denied that its agents were providing the names of dissidents to the CCP.

Thanks to leaked e-mails about the practice, however, it is now clear that the UN misled its member governments and the press surrounding the scandal.

One of the explosive emails in question was sent on Sept. 7, 2012, from a diplomat at the CCP's Mission to the UN in Geneva requesting information on Chinese dissidents set to testify at the UN Human Rights Council.

"Following the usual practice, could you kindly heip [sic] me to check whether the persons on the attached list are requesting the accreditation of the 21st session of the HRC?" asked the CCP diplomat in an email to a UN liaison with non-governmental organizations. "My delegation has some security concern [sic] on these persons."

The UN official, whose name was redacted from the leaked email, responded by confirming that two of the dissidents on the CCP's list were in fact accredited and planning to attend.

"As per your request, kindly be advised that Dolkun Isa and He Geng were accredited by the Nonviolent Radical party, Transnational and Transparty for the 21st session of the Human Rights Council," the UN official confirmed to the regime, with no apparent concern for the safety of either dissident or their families still in China.

Isa is the president of the World Uyghur Congress, which advocates on behalf of the Uyghur population of Western China's Xinjiang region that is being brutally targeted by the CCP.

Numerous official sources around the world say the regime is holding more than a million Uyghurs in "re-education" camps. Former detainees who spoke with The Epoch Times revealed that they were being raped, tortured, brainwashed, and savagely abused.

Isa also serves as the vice president of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO), which seeks to be a voice for nations and people groups without representation from a nationstate of their own.

The year after that email, at the request of the regime's delegation, UN security attempted to remove Isa from the Human Rights Council chamber. However, Reilly—and only Reilly—intervened and

prevented his ouster.

The other dissident identified by the UN in its email to the CCP mission, Geng He, is the wife of imprisoned Chinese human-rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, a Christian who wrote a book about the severe torture he was subjected to by the CCP for his work and beliefs.

One of the reasons for the brutal torture of Gao was the fact that his wife was speaking out at the UN, as revealed to the CCP in advance by the UN officials in that email.

Another leaked email, this one from 2013, showed the same CCP diplomat again seeking to confirm the identities of Chinese dissidents expected at the Human Rights Council to expose CCP abuses.

The problem with the UN is there are no adults in the room and there is no external oversight.

Emma Reilly, U.N. whistleblower

"The Chinese Mission had very good cooperation with you and your section in previous sessions," the CCP diplomat said in to the UN official in the email obtained by The Epoch Times and other media. "We appreciate it a lot."

"This time, I need you to do me a favor again," the CCP diplomat continued. "Some anti-Chinese Government secessionists are trying to participate the HRC session [sic] under the disguise of other NGOs. They might pose a threat to the United Nations and the Chinese Delegation."

"Could you please check and inform me whether the persons I list below have got accreditation for the 22th session [sic] of the Human Rights Council?" the CCP diplomat asked. "If you have any information, please contact me through email or at [number redacted]."

Among the names on the list was Dolkun Isa, again.

According to Isa, CCP agents have showed up at his house overseas to try to get him to stop speaking out. CCP operatives also arrested his family in China, including his mother, who died in a Chinese "concentration camp" in 2018. His older brother was also arrested. And his younger brother has been missing since 2016. CCP media outlets reported that Isa's father died, too, though Isa does

not know when or where. The Epoch Times attempted to reach the CCP diplomat in question at the Swiss cell-phone number listed in the email, but was unsuccessful. UN human-rights officials responded to that CCP mission email with the names of four activists who were expect-

ed to attend the Human Rights Council.

The Epoch Times is withholding the names of the activists that are not yet public for their protection and privacy. Reilly was furious and horrified at the same time.

"This is a hideous practice, but if the UN is going to do it, at least they must make sure it's public so people know the danger they are going to be put in," she told The Epoch Times in a video-conference interview from Geneva. "This is basic decency and basic standards of humanity—don't secretly put these people in danger. Is that too much to ask?" Right from the start, the emails reveal that Reilly argued against giving the names of dissidents to the CCP. Instead, she advocated informing the targeted individuals.

However, Chief of the UN Human Rights Council Branch Eric Tistounet argued that the list of names was public and that the CCP requests could therefore not be resisted.

Indeed, Tistounet suggested acting as quickly as possible to avoid "exacerbating Chinese mistrust," the emails show. "When did that become part of the considerations?" Reilly asked rhetorically in

comments to The Epoch Times. News of the emails confirming that the UN was in fact handing over names of Chinese dissidents made a major splash in Turkish media. However, in Europe and the United States, the scandal has barely been mentioned in the press. In remarks to The Epoch Times, Reilly urged journalists worldwide to examine the documents, transcripts of internal court cases, and other evidence to see who was telling the truth—and then to report that truth so the people of the world can see what is happening.

But Reilly said this is a systemic issue with the UN.

"The problem with the UN is there are no adults in the room and there is no external oversight," she said, citing other examples of whistleblowers who have been persecuted for trying to do the right thing. "Unless the member states act, this is going to continue."

Reilly also expressed deep concern about the close relationship between CCP agents and senior officials within the UN human rights system charged with protecting human rights.

For years, senior UN officials attempted to mislead UN member states, the media, and the public about the name-sharing scandal, Reilly told The Epoch Times.

From 2013 to 2017, the UN claimed the practice was not happening. Much later, in January of 2021, a spokesman for the UN was quoted telling the Anadolu Agency that the practice was stopped "since 2015." However, in a Feb. 2, 2017, press release aiming to deflect the escalating criticism, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) admitted that it was indeed confirming to governments the identities of individuals being accredited to attend its human-rights events.

"Chinese authorities, and others, regularly ask the UN Human Rights Office, several days or weeks prior to Human Rights Council meetings, whether particular [non-governmental organization] delegates are attending the forthcoming session," the UN OHCHR said. "The Office never confirms this information until the accreditation process is formally under way, and until it is sure that there is no obvious security risk." Reilly said she was shocked by the lan-

guage used in the release. "The only security checks that are ever done are those done by the Chinese diplomats," she told The Epoch Times.

Indeed, transcripts from the case show that Reilly challenged the UN to show any evidence of its supposed "security" checks before handing over the names. None was provided.

"It was all about whether these people would cause problems for the Chinese diplomats at the UN," she said. "It had nothing to do with keeping anyone safe."

This is a major violation of the UN's own rules as well, Reilly said, noting that if governments want to know who is attending they are supposed to ask the plenary in front of other UN member states. Despite the escalating scandal sur-

rounding the practice and the UN's retaliation against the whistleblower who exposed it, Reilly told The Epoch Times that the practice of handing dissident names to the CCP continues to this day.

"It has now become my personal mission and responsibility to prevent this UN complicity in genocide," she said.

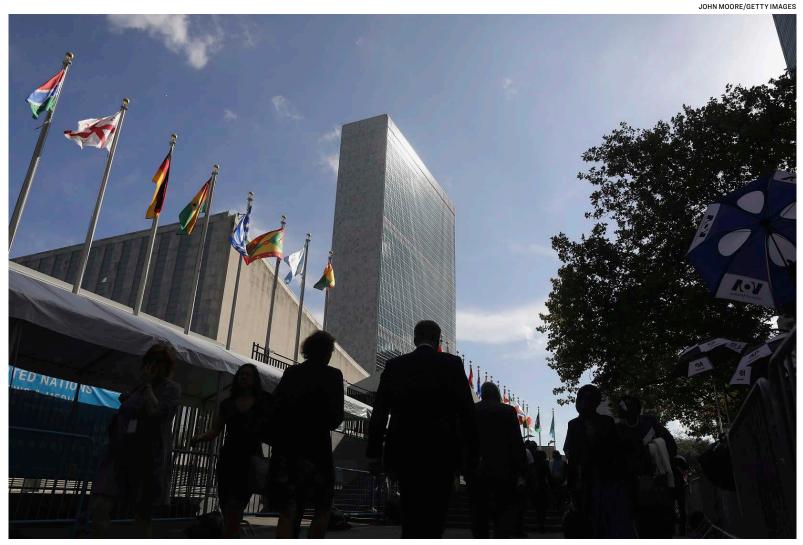
Documents obtained by The Epoch Times reveal that some of the highestranking officials within the UN system have been involved in an effort to silence, discredit, and retaliate against Reilly for her efforts.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights did not respond to requests for comment on the leaked emails or the broader scandal.

In early 2020, the UN OHCHR declined to comment to The Epoch Times, citing ongoing litigation. However, Reilly told The Epoch Times this week that she has given them full permission to comment on the case to the media.

Multiple spokesmen for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also declined to comment.

Alex Newman is an award-winning international journalist, educator, author, and consultant who co-wrote the book "Crimes of the Educators: How Utopians Are Using Government Schools to Destroy America's Children." He is the executive director of Public School Exit, serves as CEO of Liberty Sentinel Media, and writes for diverse publications in the United States and abroad.



People walk past the United Nations headquarters in New York City on Sept. 26, 2018.



Falun Gong practitioners hold a vigil to commemorate victims of the Chinese regime's persecution of the spiritual discipline since 1999, in Taipei, Taiwan, on July 18, 2020.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Countries Should Do More to End China's 'Horrific' Forced Organ Harvesting: Experts

FRANK FANG

A group of international advocates is calling on countries, including the United States, to do more to hold China accountable for its state-sanctioned practice of harvesting organs from living prisoners of conscience.

"On the issue of forced organ harvesting, the international community has remained silent despite the evidence for far too long," said Kristina Olney, director of government relations for the Washington-based nonprofit Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC), during a webinar held on Feb. 24.

The online event was co-hosted by VOC and the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC), a group comprising lawyers, academics, medical professionals, researchers, and human rights advocates.

"The United States and the rightsrespecting nations of the world must confront the evidence of this horrific human rights abuse taking place in China today, and hold the Chinese Communist Party accountable for its complicity. This crime has no place in the 21st century," Olney said.

China has been one of the top destinations for transplant tourism, while Beijing has promoted a narrative in U.S. newspapers that organs are sourced from voluntary donations. Previously, the Chinese regime announced that it would stop sourcing organs from executed prisoners from Jan. 1, 2015, and claimed that it would exclusively rely on a new system of voluntary donations.

Beijing's claim was refuted by a June 2019 report published by a London-based people's tribunal headed by U.N. war crimes prosecutor Sir Geoffrey Nice QC. The report concluded, after a yearlong investigation, that the statesanctioned practice of forced organ harvesting for profit was happening on a "significant scale" in China, with Falun Gong practitioners being the main source of organs. On the issue of forced organ harvesting, the international community has remained silent despite the evidence for far too long.

Kristina Olney, director of government relations, Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation

"There have been a number of congressional hearings and resolutions condemning forced organ harvesting, but until now, there has been no comprehensive legislation signed into law requiring the U.S. government to address this issue,"

ents first emerged around 2006.

In China, adherents of Falun

Gong, a spiritual discipline also

known as Falun Dafa, have been

the targets of persecution by the

CCP since July 1999. According

to estimates from the Falun Dafa

Information Center, millions of Fa-

lun Gong practitioners have been

thrown into prisons, psychiatric

wards, and other facilities, while

hundreds of thousands have suf-

Allegations of forced organ harvest-

ing from detained Falun Gong adher-

fered torture.

Olney said. This year, three different counties in the state of Virginia passed resolutions condemning China's forced organ harvesting.

Olney applauded U.S. lawmakers for introducing the Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act in December 2020, calling the bill "one of the most comprehensive legislative initiatives ever introduced on the issue of organ trafficking." She added that the bill will be reintroduced in both the Senate and House next week.

The Senate bill (S.5016) was introduced by Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) on Dec. 15 last year. On the same day, Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J) and Thomas Suozzi (D-N.Y.) introduced the House version (H.R.8972).

Under the proposed legislation, the president would be empowered to impose sanctions on foreign officials and entities that engage in or support the forced removal of vital organs from unwilling victims.

"We urge the U.S. Congress to swiftly enact this bill, and for international governments to pass similar legislation," Olney stated.

Aside from Olney, other participants in the webinar included Ethan Gutmann, a China studies fellow at the VOC and co-founder of ETAC; Sean Lin, communications director for the Falun Dafa Association in Washington; and Nice, a prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

Lin said that dealing with the issues of forced organ harvesting was more than about simply addressing medical ethics in China's transplant industry. Rather, the international community needed to confront the CCP's human rights and other violations directly.

"If you do not deal with the Chinese Communist Party directly, the rampant forced organ harvesting in China won't stop," he said.

Nice said the tribunal reviewed "nothing but evidence" and came to the conclusion that China has committed crimes against humanity with its practice of forced organ harvesting.

Also taking part in the webinar was Wendy Rogers, a professor of clinical ethics at Macquarie University in Australia. She called for collaboration as no single individual or institution can force China to end its practice.

"But acting together, professionals and institutions can exert significant pressure on China," Rogers said, adding that their actions "will send a strong message that the rest of the world will not tolerate this atrocity."

Ivan Vilibor Sincic, a Croatian politician and member of the European Parliament, said at the webinar that the European Union has been "afraid of criticizing" China because of economic interests.

On Dec. 30 last year, the European Union and China signed a comprehensive business investment deal. Critics have condemned the agreement—which has yet to be ratified by the European Parliament or approved by the EU Council—over China's continued human rights abuses and poor labor conditions.

"People's lives must be put first. It's time to stop fearing the Chinese economic power. Europe must take a strong position. And of course, the world must take a strong position on this issue," Sincic said.



OPINION

HSBC Doubles Down on China, Asian Markets Amidst Criticism by US, UK

FAN YU

fter aligning with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), there's no turning back. Having faced criticism

in the UK and the United States for endorsing the national security law forced upon Hong Kong by the CCP, global banking giant HSBC is now doubling down on China and the Asian market.

The London-based international bank announced during its fourthquarter earnings call on Feb. 23 that it would accelerate its "pivot to Asia" by retrenching its retail presence in the United States and investing billions in growing its footprint across Asia, including mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and India.

Peter Wong, the group's chief executive in Asia Pacific region, outlined a \$6 billion investment in Asia over the next five years, with a focus on growing its wealth management and international wholesale business. The bank emphasized Hong Kong, mainland China, India, and Singapore as key drivers of future growth, according to a February presentation to investors.

HSBC is sending several senior executives to the region to lead the effort. Those likely to be relocating to Hong Kong include co-head of global banking and markets Greg Guyett, chief executive of global commercial banking Barry O'Byrne, and chief executive of wealth and personal banking Nuno Matos, according to a Financial Times report citing people familiar with the bank's plans.

Alongside its plans to expand its Asian presence, HSBC is retrenching from the U.S. market. The bank is set to sell or close its roughly 150 commercial bank branches in the United States, according to a Reuters report.

Overall, the group reported relatively poor 2020 financial results, driven by negative impacts from the CCP virus pandemic. Revenues for 2020 were \$50.4 billion, a 10 percent decline

Going forward, HSBC will likely find itself caught in the middle of the political rift between the Chinese regime and the West.

from 2019. Profits before tax dropped **Drawing CCP's Ire** HSBC's full-year 2020 strategic report. vient attitude to the CCP hasn't im-

Doubling Down on China HSBC has drawn criticism from U.S.

and UK lawmakers for supporting CCP policies and facilitating Beijing's oppression of political dissidents. Last year, the bank endorsed the

controversial "national security law" in Hong Kong, a law imposed on the city by Beijing and would be used to crush political dissent to Beijing's one-party rule.

Late in 2020, it froze the bank accounts of Ted Hui, a former Hong that were set up to do business with Kong pro-Democracy lawmaker Iran, in violation of U.S. sanctions. now in exile, and the accounts of the pastor of Good Neighbor North District Church, a church known to have worked with pro-democracy protestors in Hong Kong.

HSBC's CEO, Noel Quinn, was grilled in a UK parliamentary foreign affairs committee hearing in January regarding its freezing of dissident accounts.

Given HSBC's history—and the fierce banking competition in the United States and Europe—it makes sense for the bank to go "all in" on China, and more broadly, Asia in general. It doesn't hurt that Carrie Lam, Hong Kong's chief executive, has recently praised the bank and said she would "love" for HSBC to expand its presence in the city.

The bank has increasingly become Asia-focused even before the acceleration of the "pivot to Asia" strategy. Fifteen years ago, HSBC's revenue contributions were diversified, with Europe being the biggest driver, followed by North America and Asia, according to research by the Financial Times. It also had a small South American franchise. It was a true global bank. By 2019, Asia—mostly Greater China—made up more than 50 percent of its revenues, followed by Europe, and its presence in North and South America have dramatically dwindled.

The bank didn't respond to a request for comment by press time.

percent to \$8.8 billion, according to In mainland China, HSBC's subsermediately paid off.

The bank has been criticized by Chinese state media for assisting in the arrest of high-profile Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou. The bank's internal investigation on the Huawei CFO uncovered the tech giant's alleged dealings with Iran, which eventually led to Meng's arrest in Canada.

U.S. prosecutors allege that Meng defrauded HSBC and other banks by misrepresenting Huawei's relationship with several front companies

But the CCP claims that HSBC may have "set up traps" to ensnare Meng, according to a 2020 op-ed in hawkish state-run outlet Global Times.

Wong, HSBC's Asia chief executive, is a member of a political advisory body to the CCP, according to the Financial Times. He was apparently instrumental in resolving the rift between the bank and Beijing following Meng's arrest.

Going forward, HSBC will likely find itself caught in the middle of the political rift between the Chinese regime and the West. In the January parliamentary hearing, some MPs brought up the possibility of HSBC breaking into two, an idea that CEO Quinn dismissed.

There is potentially even more pressure from the Chinese side. In January, Beijing issued new rules to allow Chinese courts to punish global companies operating in China for complying with "unjustified" foreign laws and sanctions. Even if it does not want to, HSBC may be forced to pick sides in the near future.

And given its recent political and business decisions, it's becoming increasingly clear which side HSBC will pick in this confrontation.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

OPINION

Italy the Beachhead for CCP's Invasion of Europe

JOHN MILLS



Churchill called Italy, the "soft underbelly" of Europe, meaning the invasion of the continent in World War II should be done there first by the Allied forces.

Italy has also received other titles, such as the "Sick Man of Europe." This title has been passed among several countries, but Italy has been a common recipient of this inglorious title due to its anemic economic growth. High taxes, low economic growth, high unemployment, have led to an economy perpetually in the doldrums since World War II. Italy has never quite re-established itself from the peak of its Roman magnificence.

The Second World War axis with its northern ally ended miserably for the country and squelched its totalitarian leader's attempt to re-establish its once world-renowned aura. A grand self-image combined with empty pockets created a willing candidate to be the first European nation to sign up for the CCP Maritime Silk Road Project.

Although a country showed up with investment funding in return for signature of a contract that may or may not have been translated properly, Italy jumped. And perhaps once again, Italy is acting as the first beachhead for the "invasion" of Europe, this time unfortunately by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Ports and Information

Technology Networks The port arrangement model previously used in Kenya, Sri Lanka, and other places was a natural starting point for the CCP's influence operations in Italy. A major port such as Trieste in the top northeast portion of the country was an early entrant as a port partner program. It is ironic that Trieste was the same immediate region in which British and American military forces skirmished with Soviet and Yugoslavian Communists attempting to cede the territory away from Italy at the end of World War II.

Smaller ports also are getting the attention of the Chinese. Vado Ligure, a more diminutive port on the top northeastern portion of the Italian peninsula has also received significant CCP attention with the port deal there. "Vado Ligure is the largest fruit logis tics hub in the Mediterranean" is the best reason it appears on the surface for the CCP interest (China is a net food importer), but perhaps there are additional reasons.

As usual, Huawei is part of the vanguard of CCP influence operations. Although making initial progress in entering the Italian market, things became rocky by fall of 2020. Huawei was blocked by Italy in

October 2020 along with Bulgaria—major with Leonardo/Alenia, which is simultanewins for then Secretary of State Pompeo ously performing Boeing 787 should be and the "Clean Network" initiative, wellconstructed programmatically as well as by moniker. With the change of Administrations in the United States, it remains to be seen if this State Department initiative becomes enduring or the seemingly hardening European stance begins to go wobbly.

It is too early to tell on how long this rejection as a network provider will last, but likely Huawei will continue to seek soft spots and access points in Italy through lesser measures such as phone sales, routers, and other mobile devices. Although not as good as controlling the network, these network endpoints and components are important steps also for the ability to see the data traversing the networks.

An Aviation Manufacturing

Hub Venture A joint venture has been in operation for

The port arrangement

model previously

used in Kenya, Sri

Lanka, and other

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operations in Italy.

places was a natural

several years at Pomigliano d'Arco, just outside of Naples, Italy. This facility is Alenia Aermacchi's biggest plant in southern Italy, part of the long standing, successful Boeing international supply chain.

It participates in the production of the Boeing 787, producing about a "14% share of (the) 787's airframe," according to the firm's website. Alenia is part of the larger Leonardo multi-national company which focuses on aerospace, defense, and related market sectors. Leonardo also owns Leonardo DRS in the United States led by former Deputy Secretary of Defense, William J. Lynne III.

What is also curious about the Alenia facility outside of Naples is the relation of both Russian and Chinese interests, apparently in the same facility with Boeing. On Oct. 26, 2018, China, through the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China, Ltd. (COMAC) signed with Leonardo (parent of Alenia) to develop the CR929, essentially the Chinese equivalent to the Boeing 737.

Although the Leonardo listing mentions COMAC, COMAC has also created a joint venture with United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) of the Russian Federation and the CR929 is really the China-Russia Commercial Aircraft International Corporation Co., Ltd. (CRAIC) CR929. This can get light to the CCP to push harder. quite confusing.

List (CSL) of the Department of Commerce does display UAC as a listed company. This means that there are concerns of the U.S. Government toward UAC. COMAC did not come up directly in the CSL, but close variants did.

The civil-military fusion efforts of the CCP are adept at constantly creating new or slightly differently named companies, so the coincidental nexus of COMAC/UAC

considered one hop away or closer to Boeing intellectual property (IP).

This means a listed Russian company and a questionable Chinese Company are working with a trusted Boeing partner, potentially in the same facility, potentially on the same network. The CSL list is good, but there is a lag time between variants of incorporation, done willfully to evade being memorialized on the CSL, and the CSL being updated to catch these willful evasions.

There has been an ongoing attempt by COMAC (really CRAIC) to obtain Boeing IP to support the development of the CR929s immediate predecessor, the CR919, as identified by a cybersecurity firm named Crowdstrike, which identified this activity in approximately the 2010–2015 period.

The 737 is essentially the crown jewel of American commercial airline exports. If CRAIC could destabilize the 737-market position, they would be able to enter the top tier of providers to the airline industry. The possible co-location of Boeing network endpoints so physically close to CRA-IC personnel should be of great concern to any cybersecurity or export control risk

analysis. There's also another concerning angle: a possible insider threat situation, an expression in cybersecurity describing a trusted personality who has network access who may have played a role in all of this. The personality's name: Arturo D'Elia.

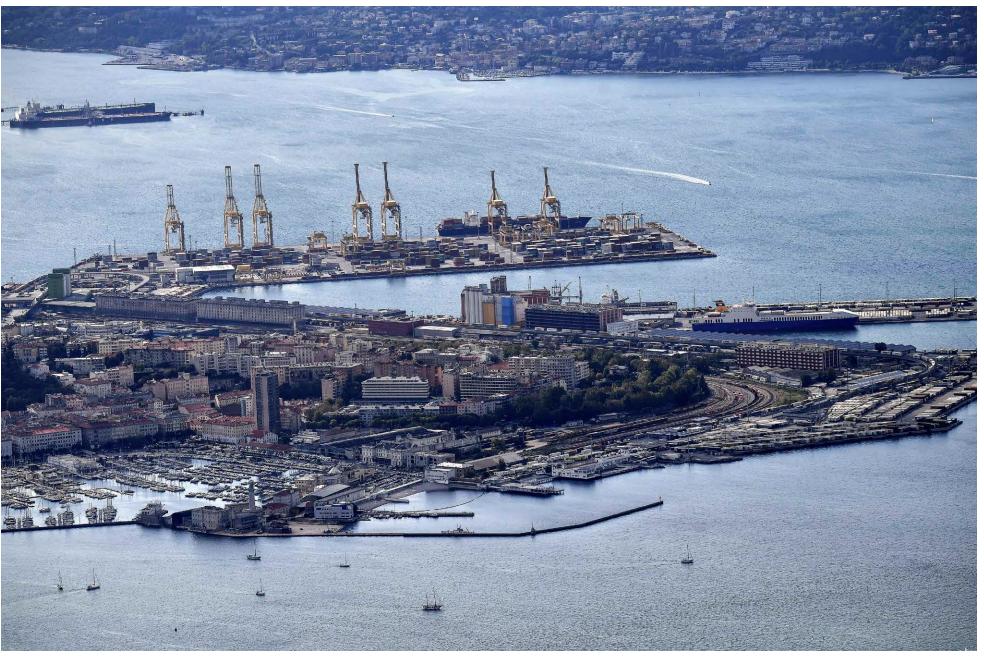
Arturo D'Elia, a former cybersecurity director within Leonardo, was imprisoned in December 2020 in regards to possible unlawful access and removal of data from the Leonardo networks. An analysis by Reaqta further established the exfiltrations to be significant, contrary to initial reporting by Leonardo. There are additional Italian investigations going on related to significant bribes involving multiple Leonardo personalities.

In summary of all these events, once again Italy seems to be the entry point for a (soft) landing on the European continent, the CCP is relentlessly using its Italian beachhead as an influence operation, and President Biden's resolve to deter CCP adventurism is unclear, which is a green

A check of the Consolidated Screening Retired Col. John Mills is a national security professional with service in five eras: Cold War, Peace Dividend, War on Terror, World in Chaos, and now, Great Power Competition. He is the former director of cybersecurity policy, strategy, and international affairs at the Department of Defense.

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> > ALBERTO PIZZOLI/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



An aerial view of the commercial harbor of the northeastern Italian city of Trieste along the Adriatic Sea on Oct. 8, 2017.



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