

WEEK 26, 2022

THE EPOCH TIMES

# CHINA INSIDER

A hand holding a scalpel. The hand is painted with a red and yellow Chinese flag pattern. The scalpel is silver and has a sharp blade. The background is a dark grey gradient.

## KILLED FOR HIS LIVER

CHINESE REGIME'S ON-DEMAND  
ORGAN HARVESTING INDUSTRY

See Page 2





Falun Gong practitioners take part in a parade marking the 30th anniversary of the spiritual discipline's introduction to the public, in New York on May 13, 2022.

## ORGAN HARVESTING

# Chinese Regime Killed Falun Gong Adherent for His Liver, Witness Says

EVA FU

A former Japanese criminal gang member says he was a witness of China's live organ trade, having seen an anesthetized Falun Gong adherent—shortly before the man was placed on an operating table to have his liver carved out.

That was in August 2007, when Ushio Sugawara, now 58, was still a member of the Sixth Yamaguchi-gumi—Japan's largest crime syndicate. He left the gang in 2015 and is now an economic commentator in Japan.

His friend's brother was desperate for a new liver to sustain his life. With strict regulations, high costs, and long waiting times in the United States and France—two of the few countries offering liver transplant surgeries at the time—the struggling patient turned to what appeared to be his only alternative: China.

At the time, Beijing's General Hospital of the Armed Police Forces, a state-run military hospital, had risen to become a

national leader in liver transplant surgery.

A Chinese broker who facilitated medical tourism with Japan put the brother in touch with the Beijing hospital. Within a month, they had a suitable donor, telling the patient to fly over for surgery "anytime." The price was 30 million yen (roughly \$255,000)—not even half the cost of what they'd been told in the United States and France.

**'Contribution Before His Death'** Sugawara, in an interview with The Epoch Times, recounted how he became involved after the family found that the quality of the hospital's albumin, a protein produced by the liver that is infused during the surgery, wasn't up to par. He helped them buy the solution in Japan to smuggle into Beijing, with the sanction of the Chinese hospital.

The day before the scheduled surgery, Sugawara visited the patient and learned that the donor was in the next room.

"Would you like to have a look?" suggested a Chinese doctor fluent in Japanese, drawing back the curtain to reveal a

The fact that the doctor was initially framing the donor as a terrorist in order to justify his act of harvesting organs is despicable.

Torsten Trey, executive director, Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting

21-year-old man. The man was unresponsive due to being anesthetized.

"He's very young. The liver is very healthy," the doctor told Sugawara.

"What kind of a person is he?" Sugawara asked.

The doctor, in response, claimed the man to be a "bad person" and a death row prisoner.

"That was when I realized that China uses prisoners for organ harvesting," Sugawara said.

"He will die sooner or later, and this way, he can make some more contribution before his death," the doctor said. He then branded the man as a "terrorist group member." Pressed by Sugawara on what the man did, the doctor answered that he was "Falun Gong."

The spiritual discipline Falun Gong, whose teachings are based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance, was vastly popular in China in the 1990s but came under a nationwide persecution under the Chinese Communist Party in 1999. In the decades since, millions of adherents have been arrested and subjected to various forms of abuse designed to decimate their faith.

Concerns that the regime may have been harvesting organs for profit first surfaced in 2006. Multiple whistleblowers that year approached The Epoch Times offering testimony about the illicit practice. Annie (a pseudonym), who worked at a Chinese hospital in northeastern China, said that her ex-husband, who was a brain surgeon at the same facility, and other doctors removed corneas and other organs from living Falun Gong practitioners before throwing the bodies into incinerators, sometimes while they were still alive.

A 2019 London-based independent panel, known as the China Tribunal, concluded beyond reasonable doubt that the

regime had been killing prisoners of conscience and selling their organs. Falun Gong practitioners, they found, remained a primary victim group.

In early May, the European Parliament approved a resolution condemning the regime's organ harvesting, calling it "persistent, systematic, inhumane."

"The doctor said that with so many people in China, they can find as many donors as needed," Sugawara said.

"China has a lot of bad people," the doctor told him. "They will have to die anyway, so we should make good use of them."

The surgery ultimately failed, and the patient died during the operation, along with the donor.

### Special Treatment

Sugawara was escorted out of Beijing airport by a senior official and four armed police officers when he landed with the albumin. He had been held for several hours by customs officers who had detected the albumin solution in his checked luggage, since it wasn't allowed into the country without a special permit.

A customs official came to stamp his passport as he was taken through a VIP immigration lane. He was then whisked away in a black luxury Lexus.

The special treatment he received was one sign of the active part that Party officials played in the regime's organ harvesting industry, Sugawara said.

"The broker said that they couldn't proceed without officials' participation," he said. "There's no way they could balance the complicated relationships."

### 'Medical Barbarism'

The man who Sugawara saw had bandages around his hands and feet. He remembers the doctor saying they had cut the tendons on the donor's limbs a day earlier, in part to keep him from fleeing. "The cutting of the man's tendons reflects the brutality" of the doctors, according to Torsten Trey, executive director of the medical ethics advocacy group Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting.

"No doctor who follows the medical oath would do that," he told The Epoch Times. "If they can cut tendons, they can also remove organs without consent. It's a 'medical barbarism.'"

He believes it's possible that the doctors

"wanted to avoid application of muscle relaxants to ensure better quality of the organs." Cutting the tendons, he said, could "suppress the resistance of the muscles, which makes it easier to remove the organs."

"The fact that the doctor was initially framing the donor as a terrorist in order to justify his act of harvesting organs is despicable, in particular as he later admitted that it was a lie and that it was a healthy Falun Gong practitioner," Trey said.

By cutting the tendons, the doctors were "basically creating an artificially created paralysis," Trey said, adding that such an act "is cruel and should induce in any doctor a strong reaction of dismay."

The World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong (WOIPFG), a New York-based human rights group, has identified the General Hospital of the Armed Police Forces as one of the worst offenders involved in many suspected cases of organ harvesting crimes. In WOIPFG's undercover phone calls, at least one transplant surgeon from the hospital admitted to sourcing organs from Falun Gong practitioners.

"We have plenty of organs," said Wang Jianli, the deputy chief surgeon for the hospital's organ transplant research institute, when asked by one investigator posing as a patient's family member in search of a liver. He said that one to two weeks was "about right" for them to arrange a surgery.

"Right, right, right," Wang said in November 2018 when asked whether the organs they used were "the Falun Gong healthy organs."

The short timeframe for securing a suitable organ in China—such as matching a liver within one month, as in the case of the brother of Sugawara's friend—should also raise alarm bells, Trey said.

It's "a very short time frame that is unusual for an altruism-based organ donor program in the West, yet quite common in China's transplant market," he said.

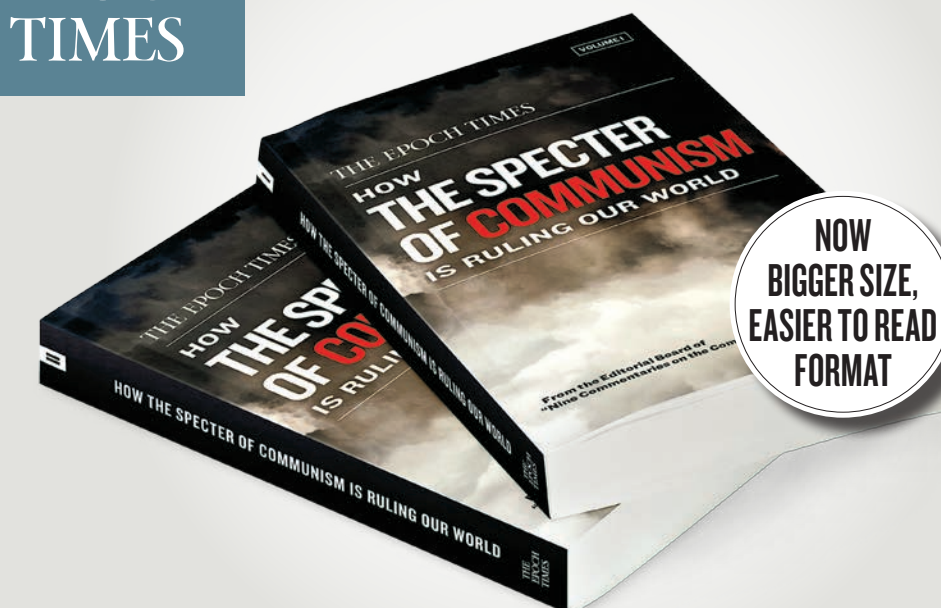
The passage of time hasn't lessened the sense of cruelty that Sugawara felt about what he witnessed.

"They thought they were doing the right thing. They were all brainwashed," he said.

The Japanese edition of The Epoch Times contributed to this report.

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## BANK RUNS

# Bank Runs Across China Trigger Complaints About Obtaining Cash

NICOLE HAO

After nearly one million Chinese people were unable to access their bank deposits in central China's Henan province earlier this year, residents in east China's Shanghai, south China's Shenzhen, north China's Dandong, and central-east China's Jiujiang reported the difficulties they faced when trying to withdraw cash from their bank accounts.

Some banks will only serve a limited number of customers per day, some banks limit each client's withdrawal to no more than 1,000 yuan (about \$149), and others closed their branches. Even the ATM machines are empty.

Bank runs have been happening in the world's second-largest economy for over a week, which is unusual in China because most of the banks are state-run.

"The reason why the bank run issue hasn't been solved is that China's economic system is in crisis and the Chinese regime doesn't have the ability to solve it," Wang He, U.S.-based China affairs commentator, told The Epoch Times on June 22.

Zheng Yongnian, one of the economic advisors to Chinese leader Xi Jinping, published an essay on June 1, in which he pointed out that China's economy is facing critical challenges, including over half of the foreign investments, have left China, and China's private businesses are struggling for survival due to a supply chain crisis and lack of cash.

Zheng's essay was removed from China's internet soon after it was published.

## Shenzhen Residents

"I have an account with the Agricultural Bank of China. In recent two days, people lined up in front of the branch. This is the first time I have seen such a long queue," Chen, a resident in Shenzhen in south China's Guangdong Province, told NTD, The Epoch Times' sister media, on June 21.

The Agricultural Bank of China is one of the four main state-run banks in China. The other three are Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Bank of China, and China Construction Bank. Chen said that he was told the bank had mistakenly frozen customers' accounts. To unfreeze an account, the bank asked its customers to submit their Shenzhen resident identity cards in person.

The resident identity card is a method the Chinese regime uses to control people's moving from site to site. The person won't have basic resident rights if they don't have a local household registration card. If a person works for a big company in another city for six months, the employer can apply for a resident identity card for the employee.

Hao, a resident in Longgang district in Shenzhen, told The Epoch Times on June 22 that freezing accounts is a method banks use to stop people from withdrawing cash.

"It's hard to find an ATM machine that has cash inside. Actually, since about two months ago, it has been difficult to withdraw cash. I have tried the Agricultural Bank of China and the China Construc-



People line up outside of a bank in Shanghai on June 02, 2022.

tion Bank. It's not easy to withdraw cash," Hao said.

In a video that went viral on June 21, a man said that in a Shiyuan neighborhood in Bao'an district in Shenzhen, people lined up outside the Bank of China at 6:00 a.m., but were told that the bank had run out of money when it opened at 9:00 a.m.

The bank didn't explain why it had run out of cash.

## Bank Runs in Other Cities

Dandong is a city neighboring North Korea across the Yalu River in northeastern China's Liaoning Province. In recent weeks, people in Dandong complained that they couldn't get cash from their bank accounts no matter how high their balances were.

"It has been a week. Every morning, there's a long line [of people] waiting to withdraw cash. However, when it's our turn in the afternoon, the bank has run dry," a Dandong resident said in a social media video on June 20.

The man who shot the video said that employers in Dandong deposit salaries into their employee's bank accounts in the Dandong Bank. Employees, in turn, withdraw the cash for their daily living expenses. Being unable to access cash will make it difficult for them.

Another Dandong resident complained in a video that he went to several banks but

was unable to get any cash.

In Jiujiang city of Jiangxi Province, residents reported that Agricultural Bank of China branches only allow customers to withdraw 1,000 yuan (about \$149) or less if they don't have a local household registration.

In eastern China's Shanghai, people are also waiting in line outside the banks.

Huang, a local resident, told NTD on June 21 that banks will only serve 300 customers a day and this started on June 1 when the city officially opened up after a COVID lockdown. People have to go to the bank early in the morning, otherwise, they won't even enter the bank.

"I met a man in his 80s who began waiting in front of the bank between 4:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. He was counted as the 107th client of the day when the bank opened at 9:00 a.m. He had to stay there for several more hours because the bank wouldn't allow him to enter if he missed his turn," Huang said.

Unlike the United States, a lot of Chinese residents pay their gas, electricity, and water bills at a bank, and most retired people rely on cash because they don't know how to make a payment using the internet or a smartphone, or how to pay for groceries using a bank card.

Gu Xiaohua contributed to this report.

## CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE

# New Report Warns of Confucius Institute Rebrand

TERRI WU

WASHINGTON—A new report warns that China has rebranded its Confucius Institutes (CI) in U.S. universities. Out of the 118 CIs in the United States, about 105 have closed or announced closures. However, at least 38 colleges have replaced their closed CI programs with similar alternatives, according to the report by the National Association of Scholars (NAS), a conservative research and advocacy organization.

CIs are funded by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which picks and pays for textbooks and selects and pays Chinese nationals who come to the United States to teach Chinese language, culture, and history.

Li Changchun, a standing member of the CCP's Politburo, said in April 2007 that CIs were "an important part of China's overseas propaganda setup." A 2018 report by the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission said CIs had "longstanding and formal ties" to the CCP's United Front Work Department, an agency responsible for coordinating the CCP's influence operations.

In February 2019, the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations found that the CCP had invested more than \$158 million in U.S.-based CIs since 2006.

In August 2020, the U.S. State Department designated the Confucius Institute U.S. Center (CIUS) as a Chinese foreign mission. Then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described CIUS as "an entity advancing Beijing's global propaganda and malign influence campaign on U.S. campuses and K-12 classrooms."

## Story of 'Success' and 'Warning'

The CI story was a "story of success" and a "story of warning," said Rachelle Peterson, a NAS senior research fellow, at the report launch event at the conservative think tank Heritage Foundation on June 21. Peterson authored the new and the 2017 reports that facilitated the U.S. policy change.

In the new report, titled "After Confucius Institutes: China's Enduring Influence on American Higher Education," she com-



"A protester calls on Tufts University to close its Confucius Institute language program, in Somerville, Mass., on March 13, 2021.

The report also reveals that some U.S. nonprofit organizations have acted as middlemen in the CI rebranding, hence playing a key role in keeping Confucius Institutes alive.

pared CIs to scaffolds that would serve no use to the CCP anymore after the building—the influence operations—had been constructed.

When these U.S. higher education institutes decided to shut down their CIs, the most common reason they gave was that they would replace their CI with a new program, the report found. In other words, they were ditching the CI name but retaining the investments. And only five of them said that they were concerned about the Chinese regime's influence on other colleges but assured that their campuses had been perfectly safe.

According to the report, the CCP's response to CI shutdowns in the United States changed from shock and anger to "regret," eventually making offers to support alternative programs. In closing their

CI, some universities had to pay penalties to the CCP. For example, Kennesaw State University in Georgia paid back at least \$31,000, and the University of Maryland refunded China \$900,000, an amount China initially provided for a CI renovation.

The report also reveals that some U.S. nonprofit organizations have acted as middlemen in the CI rebranding, hence playing a key role in keeping CIs alive.

NAS's recommendations to the federal government include limiting federal funding to colleges that maintain a CI or similar program and commissioning a study on Confucius Classrooms, the K-12 equivalent to CIs in universities. The report also advocated stricter transparency requirements in the Higher Education Act for U.S. universities to disclose foreign investments.

## OPINION

# Foreign Investors Flee China in Droves

Same old playbook no longer enticing to foreign capital

FAN YU

Foreign investors continued to reduce their holdings of Chinese bonds in May for the fourth consecutive month. The divergent monetary policy between the United States and China, as well as a fundamental economic weakening, has driven foreign investors away from China in droves.

And unlike Chinese selloff periods over the past decade-plus, foreign investors no longer deem Chinese investments more attractive on a risk-adjusted basis compared to developed markets.

Chinese yuan-denominated bonds have suffered continued drawdowns, according to official data from China Central Depository & Clearing Co. The outflows have also hit the yuan currency, hitting its lowest relative value in almost two years. Since last June, the yuan has lost 3.5 percent versus the dollar.

Over the past 10 years, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been courting foreign investors by gradually opening up its massive financial markets to overseas investors. This is partially to offset outbound capital flows; Chinese companies and households have sent money abroad to snap up foreign assets such as real estate and business investments.

Global investors were happy to oblige. Turning a blind eye to China's totalitarian regime and its human rights abuses, foreign investors have sent dollars to China to invest in monetary assets as well as to set up local businesses to capture the Chinese market. For some time, Chinese markets provided some diversification, as Chinese bonds offered higher yields during periods of near-zero bond yields in the West.

In many ways, foreign investors were there to bail out Chinese markets repeatedly over the past decade.

But things have changed quickly. Foreign investors are leaving in droves and there's little reprieve in sight.

Driven by an increasingly divergent



A worker rides a bicycle on a street in the Jing'an district of Shanghai on June 1, 2022.

central bank policy, U.S. Treasuries now provide a higher yield than their Chinese government bond counterparts. China's economy, roiled by ongoing COVID-related shutdowns, is in its worst shape in decades with consumer and business confidence sagging. And lastly, China's unflinching support for Russia in its invasion of Ukraine has increased the geopolitical risk of businesses operating in China. Will China attempt to annex Taiwan in the near future? That's a question that companies investing in China must ponder.

There are some signs the selloff is easing, especially in the Chinese stock market. But in this economic environment, with fundamentals far from stable and just a matter of time until the next COVID lockdown is enacted, investors are pessimistic that the near future will hold different outcomes.

Just as Beijing and Shanghai begin to emerge from suffocating COVID lockdowns, the southern economic hotbeds of Shenzhen and Macau may be facing crippling restrictions.

The technology hub of Shenzhen has locked down several neighborhoods,

and officials are enacting mass testing. Nearby, in the Asian gambling center Macau, a virus outbreak is threatening gaming companies operating in the city.

The Financial Times reported that total gaming revenues in Macau for the month of May were \$413 million, a 90 percent drop from pre-pandemic levels.

Of course, the bonds of Chinese property developers continued to be traded far below par. But recently there were also signs of contagion spreading beyond the usual sectors. For example, the offshore bonds of Chinese conglomerate Fosun International suffered heavy losses in June, a sign that other heavily indebted companies may also be in trouble.

Beijing regulators are hoping a new program will help reverse recent trends in foreign fund flows.

The People's Bank of China announced that qualified foreign institutional investors (QFIIs), including deep-pocketed foreign banks, sovereign wealth funds, and pension funds, will be allowed to invest in the domestic exchange market.

Beginning on June 30, the Chinese exchange market will grant foreign institutional investors access to certain securities not available on the inter-bank market, including riskier instruments such as asset-backed securities and derivatives, in addition to bonds.

But will it work? Certain intrepid fund managers with a penchant for distressed investing may jump at this opportunity. But for the mainstream, with China's COVID policy and the dark clouds above its economy, coupled with higher relative fixed-income yields in the United States, the Chinese market simply isn't very attractive.

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

Fan Yu is an expert in finance and economics and has contributed analyses on China's economy since 2015.

Foreign investors are leaving in droves and there's little reprieve in sight.

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Two Chinese jet fighters during a military drill in the South China Sea near China's Hainan Island, in this undated photo.

## MILITARY WARFARE

# China's Reckless Fighter Pilots Aim to Weaken Western Alliances: Expert

ANDREW THORNEBROOKE

It's late May and an Australian surveillance plane flies through the azure skies above the South China Sea. The crew of the aircraft is on a routine surveillance mission in international airspace. They don't expect trouble. Suddenly, a Chinese fighter jet intercepts them.

It launches flares and cuts fast and close across the nose of the Australian aircraft. The fighter then deploys its chaff, a bundle of tiny metal strips typically used as a countermeasure to disrupt an enemy's radar systems.

The innumerable little shards of aluminum are immediately sucked up into the engines of the surveillance plane, damaging the aircraft, putting its crew at severe risk, and cutting the Australian mission short.

While international leadership has refrained from considering the event an act of war, it is just one of a growing number of hostile encounters between the military forces of China's communist regime and those of America's closest allies.

"Quite obviously, this is very dangerous," Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles said after the incident.

Yet it's just the latest in a long line of aggressive and at times reckless stunts carried out by the Chinese military in its efforts to intimidate Western allies away from the Indo-Pacific.

**Aggression Against America's Allies**  
Tan Kefei, a spokesperson for China's Defense Ministry, accused the Australian crew of "disregard of repeated warnings from the Chinese side" and of entering airspace over the Paracel Islands, a disputed territory of which China, Taiwan, and Vietnam all claim ownership.

Tan didn't present any evidence to support the claim.

Nor did he connect the dangerous maneuver to a growing number of incidents conducted by the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) military wing, likely intended to intimidate U.S. allies away from engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

Indeed, Chinese fighter pilots are becoming increasingly aggressive with international encounters to the point of recklessness, frequently "buzzing" allied aircraft and ships, flying so close as to cause turbulence and force allied missions to take detours from their intended routes.

Most recently, Chinese fighter jets flew within 20 feet of a Canadian surveillance plane—close enough that the Canadian pilots could make eye contact with the Chinese pilots, who then presented the

Canadians with a middle finger, according to Canada's Global News, which cited unnamed government sources.

According to a separate Global News report, there have been more than 60 such interceptions of Canadian aircraft by Chinese fighters in international waters in recent months, including several in which Chinese pilots opted to play "chicken" with Canadian pilots, forcing them to change their flight path in order to avoid a mid-air collision.

**Our allies need to record and document these intimidation tactics while continuing undeterred in their legal flights.**

Casey Fleming, CEO, BlackOps Partners

## China's Quest for Revolutionary Martyrs

To the questions of why now, why America's allies, and why like this, there are few exceptional answers that highlight the ambition and strategy of the CCP in the Indo-Pacific.

One reason for such intimidation is that the CCP is seeking to obscure evidence of its own wrongdoing. The CCP is currently suspected to be violating sanctions against North Korea by illicitly transferring oil to North Korean ships at sea, for example. The Canadian planes so closely buzzed by Chinese forces were part of Operation Neon, a U.N. mission to track just such sanctions breaking from North Korea and prevent the hermit state from developing a nuclear weapon.

However, the tactic of using high-publicity stunts and intimidation goes back

much further than China's likely sanction busting and has deep precedent in the past 20 years of CCP propaganda and doctrine.

Back in 2001, a Chinese fighter pilot named Wang Wei, who had his own long history of buzzing Western aircraft, collided with a U.S. Navy surveillance plane and was killed after ejecting from his fighter jet over the South China Sea.

Then-CCP leader Jiang Zemin subsequently declared Wang a "guardian of the seawaters and airspace," and CCP propaganda celebrated him as a "revolutionary martyr," forever enshrining his actions in the cultural lexicon of Chinese military tactics.

The granting of martyr status to Wang was also tied chronologically to the adoption of the CCP's "three warfare" and "unrestricted hybrid warfare" strategy, which sought to maximize the politicization of everything for the sake of propagating communism.

Now, 21 years later, Xi Jinping's CCP is unloading a new barrage of military psychological operations against the United States and its allies in an apparent attempt to push the Western powers into a retreat from influence in the Western Pacific.

In a tense meeting with U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin on June 10, Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe said the CCP was ready for war "no matter the cost." That meeting was supposed to have focused on setting guardrails for the two powers in an effort to prevent a catastrophic miscalculation that could start just such a war.

Soon thereafter, Xi announced 59 new regulations for the military with the intent of preparing China for "nonwar" military operations, echoing similar language used by its partner Russia to refer

to the invasion of Ukraine.

That, in turn, was followed by another announcement that China and Russia would increase "strategic coordination," including military ties.

In each incident, the CCP followed a well-established pattern of saying post hoc that it was acting in defense of its sovereignty, precisely the language used to justify the needless violence and death of the pilot Wang 21 years ago.

## 'Weakening the Enemy'

With the exception of one close encounter between U.S. and Chinese fighter jets, the CCP's campaign of aerial intimidation has focused heavily on U.S. allies, but not the United States itself.

According to one expert, this is deliberate and is most likely an attempt to drive a wedge between the United States and its allies in the region, whom it depends upon as part of its national strategy—and from whom it will desperately require assistance in the event that it's drawn into a war over the continued de facto independence of Taiwan.

"If China intends to invade Taiwan, the CCP wants to intimidate U.S. allies to make them think twice about supporting economic sanctions or a ground war," said Casey Fleming, CEO of risk management firm BlackOps Partners.

According to Fleming, the frequency and showmanship of China's aerial aggression ought to be considered within the CCP's larger campaign of unrestricted hybrid warfare, through which it seeks to erode the capabilities and influence of Western democracies through military, legal, economic, and psychological means.

"Hybrid warfare is based on weakening your enemy through any and all means possible," Fleming said. "[These] intimidation tactics are meant to show strength and willingness to fight should a ground war take effect in Taiwan."

As such, recklessness in air-to-air confrontations between the CCP and allied forces shouldn't be considered isolated incidents. Rather, they're a key part of China's strategy to demoralize and weaken U.S. allies and partners whom China's communist leadership fears may assist the United States in the event open conflict erupts in the Indo-Pacific.

To that end, Fleming said the best practice Australian, Canadian, and other allied forces could implement was to document and publicize each and every encounter and continue to demonstrate their ability to fly freely through international airspace in spite of CCP outbursts. "Our allies need to record and document these intimidation tactics while continuing undeterred in their legal flights," Fleming said.

## INTERNET FIREWALL

# Shanghai Resident and Fiancée Detained by CCP Over Allegedly Helping Develop Firewall Circumvention Tool

KELLY SONG

He Binggang, 46, is the owner of a computer and electronics firm in Shanghai. Since October last year, Mr. He and his fiancée, Ms. Zhang Yibo, a former business manager at Siemens Shanghai, have been detained for allegedly helping the Chinese public gain access to uncensored information by circumventing the communist regime's internet firewall.

Both Mr. He and Ms. Zhang practice Falun Gong, a spiritual discipline including five meditative exercises and a set of moral teachings centered on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance. Its popularity grew in the late 1990s in China, with estimates putting the number of practitioners at 70 million to 100 million.

Perceiving this popularity to be a threat, the CCP launched a brutal campaign against Falun Gong in 1999. Since then, millions of adherents have been detained in jails, labor camps, and detention centers across the country, where they're subjected to torture, slave labor, indoctrination, and forced organ harvesting.

## Circumventing the Firewall

The Epoch Times has confirmed with sources close to the case that the CCP police had been monitoring He and Zhang for some time. By monitoring internet traffic, they traced some packets to a firewall circumvention tool called oGate.

The Chinese regime runs the world's most sprawling and sophisticated online censorship and surveillance apparatus, known as the Great Firewall, blocking internet traffic in and out of China.

Many Chinese inside the country thus use circumvention tools to bypass the CCP's firewall to access uncensored information from the outside world, such as virtual private networks (VPNs).

Over the years, Falun Gong practitioners have developed a suite of firewall circumvention tools, which are free to use. The latest such tool is oGate, which doesn't require the user to install any software. Because of its ease of use, oGate enables millions of page views per month.

## Held in Isolation

At around 9 p.m. on Oct. 9, 2021, two dozen officers from Shanghai's Changning District Police Station arrested He and ransacked his home, without an arrest warrant or search warrant. Neither did they provide

**The CCP police wouldn't tolerate He's success in business, and in April 2010 planted 'illegal items' in his business to use as a pretext to raid his company and put him in detention, according to Zhang's friend.**



A banner calls for institutions to adhere to the political philosophy of Chinese leader Xi Jinping on the campus of Fudan University in Shanghai on Dec. 18, 2019.

a list of confiscated items, which included He's personal computers and cellphone, according to a friend of Zhang's.

Zhang was also taken by police, and the couple have been held in Changning District Detention Center since then.

During their first five months in detention, He and Zhang's only way to communicate with the outside world—through their lawyers—was denied by Changning District Detention Center, which said it was an order "from above," Zhang's friend told The Epoch Times.

In early March, the lawyers were finally allowed to talk to their clients over the phone, without video.

## He Binggang

He Binggang had displayed exceptional technical acumen since he was a teenager. His invention of a voice-activated system that helped blind people use the computer won him a top prize at the age of 15. He passed the programmer's certificate exam when he was 16, according to Minghui.org, a U.S.-based website that serves as a clearinghouse for information on the persecution of Falun Gong in China.

At 18, He was accepted, without having to take an exam, to the prestigious Fudan University in Shanghai. Four years later, he was again accepted without an exam to graduate school at the university.

However, everything changed for He after the persecution of Falun Gong began. Fudan University forced him to drop out of graduate school in 2000 because he wouldn't give up his faith.

Since then, He has been arrested, detained, and tortured many times, to the point where he was almost paralyzed. But whenever he could, he tried to keep abreast of developments in internet technology and became a self-taught computer expert.

In 2007, He opened a computer and electronics firm after a six-year prison term.

He once said: "I was very much into philosophy, searching for the purpose of life until I found my belief [Falun Gong]. I do business honestly, and I don't fight with others for profit. My heart is at peace, and I've made a lot of friends."

His business grew rapidly, even though He and his company were under police surveillance. The CCP police wouldn't tolerate He's success in business, and in April 2010 planted "illegal items" in his business to use as a pretext to raid his company and put him in detention, according to Zhang's friend.

While in detention, He was beaten so badly that he developed spinal compression. He suffered excruciating pain, but received no medical care for nine months, from July 2010 to March 2011.

## Zhang Yibo

Zhang Yibo, 43, started practicing Falun Gong soon after the persecution started in 1999, Minghui reported.

On June 4, 2009, Zhang and her mother, Li Yaohua, also a practitioner, were taken from their home by police for distributing information on Falun Gong. Despite rescue efforts by Zhang's older brother, who is in the United States, and her grandfather, who lives in Taiwan, Zhang and Li were both given prison terms.

Zhang was sentenced to 18 months. This ended Zhang's career as a business manager at Siemens Shanghai.

Zhang's mother was given a 3 1/2-year sentence. She became very ill in prison with sciatic nerve and cervical spine disease, and vomited when she ate. She also had high blood pressure and angina. In March 2010, she was sent to the hospital, but the prison refused to release her on medical parole.

Li has not recovered her health to this day.

## Continued Persecution

Now, He Binggang's health is deteriorating inside the detention center. He told his lawyer in March that he was suffering from continuous headaches, abnormal digestion, abnormal clotting, and urinary incontinence, the friend told The Epoch Times. At times, he couldn't move his limbs and could only lie in bed.

The cases of Zhang and He were forwarded to the Changning District Court on March 15. They have been waiting for a court date for three months and counting.



SAUL LOEB/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES



U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin at the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., on Sept. 1, 2021.

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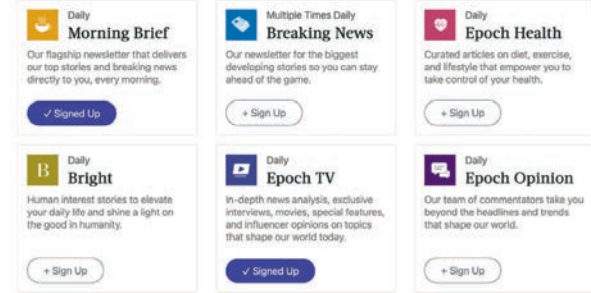
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