

After 8 Years of Torture in Chinese Prison, Retired Teacher Is Sentenced Again for Her Faith

Wei Shuyuan was sentenced to three years behind bars for practicing Falun Gong, a spiritual practice that has been brutally persecuted by the CCP since 1999.

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Falun Gong practitioners take part in a rally calling for the end to the Chinese Communist Party's 25 years of ongoing persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China at the National Mall in Washington on July 11, 2024.



By Sophia Lam

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A retired Chinese teacher who endured more than eight years of brutality in detention for her faith in Falun Gong has been sentenced to three years behind bars for practicing the meditative discipline.

The latest sentencing of Wei Shuyuan was confirmed by Minghui, a website that tracks the persecution of Falun Gong, in a [Nov. 21](#) report. It comes more than a year after her arrest on Aug. 14, 2023, while she was out grocery shopping in her hometown of Xuchang, located in central China.

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Despite being released on bail the following day due to a diagnosis of severe anemia, Wei faced relentless harassment in the months that followed.



She was subjected to physical examinations at least three times—procedures that her frail health repeatedly deemed her unfit for, leading to her rejection by local detention facilities. That changed on June 24, when police invaded her home, dragging the 61-year-old woman into the Xuchang City Detention Center.



Details of her time there remain shrouded in mystery, but when her lawyer finally managed to visit her on Nov. 11, Wei was in a wheelchair and hospitalized, according to Minghui.

It's not the first time Wei has been incarcerated for her faith. Over the past 25 years, Wei has been jailed twice before. In total, she has spent more than eight years behind bars because she refused to renounce her belief in Falun Gong.

Falun Gong is a traditional spiritual practice that combines meditation with moral teachings centered on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance. The practice gained popularity in China

in the 1990s, with official estimates that at least 70 million were practicing it by the end of the decade.

Viewing Falun Gong's popularity as a threat, then-Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader Jiang Zemin began to [persecute](#) the spiritual practice in 1999, directing the entire Party and state forces to eradicate it. As a result, millions of practitioners have since been subjected to detention in prisons, brainwashing centers, and [labor camps](#), where they have been subjected to torture and abuse.

From a Healthy Woman to Wheelchair-Bound

Once a teacher at the No. 2 Petroleum Base School in Hami City, Xinjiang, Wei saw her life upended in 2005 when police took her from her office. In 2006, in a closed-door trial, she was sentenced to five years in Xinjiang Women's Prison, a term that was later extended by 20 months in 2010.

By the time she was released in 2012, Wei had been transformed from a healthy woman into someone reliant on a wheelchair, according to a 2015 [criminal complaint](#) she filed in China against the former CCP head for his role in ordering the persecution.

In the complaint, Wei gave a brief recount of what she had experienced in Chinese detention facilities, including being punched and kicked, lifted and slammed to the ground, slapped, various cuffing torture methods, shocked with electric batons, and dragged down staircases by her hands. "Every part of my body that touched the stairs was injured," she wrote in the legal complaint.

Additional torture she was subjected to included freezing temperatures, scalding heat, hunger, pinching, exposure to the sun, having her mouth taped shut, being denied sleep, and being denied the use of a toilet.

She was also placed in solitary confinement several times by the prison authorities, and on one occasion, she was locked up in a small cell for a year.

“In the isolation cell, the heating was electric, and they set the temperature extremely high. With my hands handcuffed to the wall, I was forced to squat on the ground, and my buttocks developed blisters from the heat,” she wrote. Her feet were paralyzed as a result of the torture by the prison police.

Escalated Persecution

In 2023, courts in China sentenced 755 people to prison or other forms of detention for practicing Falun Gong, nearly seven times more than the previous year, according to data collected by [Minghui](#). Many of the convicted received lengthy sentences.

After 24 years, the persecution of Falun Gong remains a top priority for the agents of the communist regime—including police, prosecutors, and judges in over a dozen provinces—according to an analysis of official documents by the [Falun Dafa Information Center \(FDIC\)](#).

The FDIC has [documented](#) at least 5,000 deaths of Falun Gong practitioners across the country from the ongoing persecution as of the end of 2023. Given the difficulty of getting related information out of China, it is believed the actual number of deaths is much higher.

Detained Falun Gong practitioners are vulnerable to forced organ harvesting, according to the findings of an independent people’s tribunal in 2019. The tribunal in London [concluded](#) that forced organ harvesting has taken place in China for years “on a significant scale,” and that killing to supply the transplant industry was ongoing.

The suppression of Falun Gong in China has drawn condemnation from the United States.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the bipartisan [Falun Gong Protection Act](#) (H.R. 4132) on June 25 to sanction people involved in forced organ harvesting.

On July 20, 2024, the 25th anniversary of the day the CCP began its persecution of Falun Gong, the U.S. Department of State [called](#) upon the CCP to “cease its repressive campaign and release all who have been imprisoned for their beliefs.”

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