

## **Falun Gong practitioners urge Prime Minister Turnbull to raise human rights violations issue during China visit**

SYDNEY –Prior to Prime Minister Turnbull’s first visit to China, Falun Gong practitioners will gather at Sydney's Martin Place on Thursday, April 7 to send a peaceful message to the public and raise awareness about the ongoing human rights violations against the group.

This **public event** will draw attention to the 17-year long persecution of the meditative practice, that has resulted in death and torture of thousands of its followers. The timing of the Prime Minister’s visit is close to the 17<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Zhongnanhai incident (April 25, 1999) - a peaceful appeal to the Central Government which triggered the illegal crackdown on 100 million practitioners in mainland China. (More information : <http://goo.gl/o0ITXf>)

"We welcome Australia's growth and prosperity and engagement with China. At the same time, we urge the Prime Minister to not ignore the fact that millions of Falun Gong practitioners continue to endure persecution and torture at the hands of China's communist regime. This is an opportunity to strengthen the relationship of two countries," says Falun Dafa Association President Dr Lucy Zhao.

"At this time we say to our Prime Minister and his Government - please use our country’s strong democratic principles to urge President Xi Jinping to ensure there is transparency in the human rights dialogue and to have a more prosperous China by ending the 17-year persecution campaign against Falun Gong practitioners".

Attending the event will be Australian-Chinese citizens who are urgently seeking the release from imprisonment of their family members in China.

17-year old Eric Jia's father has been detained for over 8 years and before that the family endured constant harassment and abuse. He moved to Australia in 2012 with his mother to escape persecution.

"We miss him so much. I can no longer remember his voice, but I still remember his smile and often look at old family photos and ask mum to tell me about him. Mum and I are in Australia now and cannot return to China. We are deeply worried about him but feel completely helpless and desperate as there is so little we can do for him," he has written in his personal letter to the Prime Minister, which he will deliver in person before Mr Turnbull leaves for China.

**Details:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
<b>April 7, 12-2pm PUBLIC RALLY</b>	Martin Place, CBD On main stage	Speakers include community leaders, victims of persecution and politicians
<b>April 7, 8am-6pm</b>	Martin Place Between Pitt St and Castlereagh St	Group meditation and petition collection

## FACT BOX

- Falun Gong also known as Falun Dafa is a traditional practice of meditation, exercises and moral principles with roots extended back to thousands of years.
- Its core principles are based on the values of Truth, Compassion and Tolerance
- Falun Dafa was introduced to modern China in 1992 by teacher Mr. Li Hongzhi and quickly spread by word of mouth to over 100 million people within only a few years.
- Today Falun Dafa had brought physical health, joy and peace of mind to the lives of millions around the world. Falun Dafa is practiced in over 100 countries and its teaching freely available in 30 languages.
- Falun Gong popularity was unprecedented in China. Within a short period of time it was the most popular spiritual practice.
- This was seen as a threat by the Communist leadership in China, which began a campaign of violence and suppression on 20th July 1999.

### Recent Australian Parliamentary Proceedings:

- More than 250,000 Signatures on Petition collected since 2013, calling for End to Organ Harvesting.
- NSW Parliament is currently in consultation over a law reform which will criminalise transplant tourism, with the aim of deterring Australian citizens from participating in unethical transplant practices. The law reform is proposed by MLC David Shoebridge. ***The Bill is due for the second reading in Parliament in June 2016.***

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/NSWBills.nsf/d6079cf53295ca7dca256e66001e39d2/aa14fb3f5d477a8cca257e9e00214114?OpenDocument>

- In February 2016 Australian Senate debated the issue of forced organ harvesting in China, initiated by Melissa Parke, Shadow Assistant Minister for Health. <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;db=CHAMBER;id=chamber%2Fhansardr%2Fa8ddabc5-4310-4bda-a2fd-c9e6a54e12dc%2F0276;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansardr%2Fa8ddabc5-4310-4bda-a2fd-c9e6a54e12dc%2F0277%22>

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**For more information:** [www.faluninfo.net](http://www.faluninfo.net)      [www.falundafa.org](http://www.falundafa.org)

### MEDIA CONTACTS:

1. **John Deller, Falun Dafa Association Spokesperson** 0403 430 786
2. **Dr Lucy Zhao, Falun Dafa Association President** 0424 388 509