



Ana GOMES

His Excellency President Lee Myung Bak
Office of the President
1 Cheongwadae-ro, Jongno-gu
Seoul, Republic of Korea (110-820)

Dear Mr President,

I would like to bring your attention to the difficult situation of the Chinese Falun Gong practitioners who have applied for refugee status in South Korea, since it has come to my knowledge that they are unable to earn a living and are at constant risk of arbitrary arrest and repatriation.

I am extremely concerned with the fact that the number of Falun Gong practitioners being granted refugee status by the South Korean authorities is extremely low, despite the fact that many of them have shown evidence of being subjected to persecution and/or imprisonment. Furthermore credible reports by human rights organisations state that Falun Gong practitioners have been persecuted by the Chinese authorities for the past 11 years. Many have been arrested illegally in China and subjected to ill-treatment routinely.

It is moreover very worrying that at least 10 of these asylum seekers, who have seen their applications rejected, were forcibly repatriated to China by the South Korean authorities. South Korea is a State Party to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and is thereby legally obliged to comply with the principle of *non-refoulement*. I am convinced that the repatriation of Falun Gong practitioners to China amounts to a violation of that principle, since there is substantial evidence that they will face the danger of being imprisoned, persecuted and even tortured to death.

Therefore I urge to take these elements into consideration and take measures directed at the protection of Chinese Falun Gong asylum seekers until the end of their persecution by the Chinese authorities.

Thank you for your attention on this matter.

Sincerely,

Ana Gomes
Member of the European Parliament

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