

Human Rights Without Frontiers Int'l

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Newsletter "Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief"

Russia is an ally of China in the fight against Falun Gong

HRWF (26.12.2011) - Moscow is helping Beijing in its fight against Falun Gong by persecuting this spiritual movement and its members on the basis of two treaties: the Treaty of friendship between Russia and China, and the Shanghai cooperation Organization.

Treaty of friendship between Russia and China

On 16 July, 2001 a **Treaty of friendship** was signed between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China.

The 8th article of the Treaty says: "None of the parties to the treaty allows the creation and the activities on its territory of organizations and groups causing damage to the sovereignty, safety and territorial integrity of the other party to the treaty". It is on this basis that Falun Gong which has registered 6 legally recognized organizations in Russia is now harassed and prosecuted by the authorities. Various local authorities have forbidden their public activities of Falun Gong, referring in their letters to Article 8 of the Treaty.

In 2006 - 2007, under the pressure of local authorities, Chinese refugees, who were practicing Falun Gong, were forced to leave the country - after they had lived in Russia for many years. In 2007, a mother and her 8-year-old daughter were deported back to China. They had been registered with the United Nations as persons requiring international protection. The same happened to the 72-year-old Chinese professor living in Russia with his Russian wife and paralyzed after a stroke.

Access to the Russian territory is forbidden for many Falun Gong followers who are citizens of other countries.

In 2005 "Falun Gong Today" newspaper was refused registration.

There are also refusals to register new local Falun Gong organizations in various regions of Russia.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

The second channel used by China against Falun Gong practitioners in Russia is the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), is an intergovernmental mutual-security organisation which was founded in 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Except for Uzbekistan, the other countries had been members of the "Shanghai Five", founded in 1996; after the inclusion of Uzbekistan in 2001, the members renamed the organisation.

The SCO is primarily centered on its member nations' Central Asian security-related concerns, often describing the main threats it confronts as being terrorism, separatism and extremism. However evidence is growing that its activities in the area of social development of its member states is increasing fast.

The organisation is also redefining cyberwarfare, saying that the dissemination of information "harmful to the spiritual, moral and cultural spheres of other states" should be considered a "security threat." It is in this framework that Falun Gong and its members are now experiencing various forms of hardships:tapping of their telephones, constant financial and other checks on the companies in which they work, pressure on their employers to dismiss them under the pretext of closing channels of financing for international terrorism.