



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

PETITIONS

Falun Gong

PROCEDURAL TEXT

Monday, 24 August 2020

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Date Monday, 24 August 2020
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Questioner
Speaker

Source House
Proof Yes
Responder
Question No.

Falun Gong

Falun Gong

Dear Chair

Thank you for your letter regarding petition number PN0467. The petition raised concerns about the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners and reports of organ harvesting and trafficking in China.

Australia is committed to promoting and protecting human rights, including freedom of religion and freedom of belief for all people. We remain concerned that religious groups in China, including Falun Gong practitioners, continue to be targeted on the basis of their beliefs. We have regularly raised our concerns about this issue with China, including at ministerial level, both directly and in international fora. We will continue to do so while serious human rights abuses continue.

The Government is aware of reports of illegal organ harvesting in China. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is carefully monitoring developments on this issue, and regularly reviews available evidence as new reports are published. We are aware that organs have been harvested from executed prisoners in China for use in medical transplants, at least prior to 2015. Australia strongly opposes this practice.

Australia is committed to preventing organ trafficking. Since 2004, the Government has had a comprehensive strategy to combat such crimes and is committed to ensuring that Australia's response to organ trafficking and transplant tourism remains as effective as possible. Australia's States and Territories have robust frameworks in place to regulate lawful donation and transplants of human organs and tissue for therapeutic purposes. In November 2018, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (JSCFADT) Human Rights Sub-Committee produced the report '*Compassion Not Commerce: An inquiry into Human Organ Trafficking and Organ Transplant Tourism*'. This report delivered 12 recommendations, which are currently under consideration by the Government. The Department of Home Affairs is leading the Government's response.

The petition you referred to requests the sanctioning of individuals involved in the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. We regularly review our sanctions settings to ensure they remain suitable and effective. At my request, the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is inquiring into the merits of a 'Magnitsky-style' human rights-based sanctions regime for Australia. I look forward to receiving the Committee's report in due course, and will consider its recommendations carefully. I take very seriously the question of whether Australia should introduce a human rights-based sanctions regime and consider it important that we properly understand the implications of such a regime. At present, the Migration Act allows the Government to prevent individuals involved in human rights abuses from visiting Australia. We will continue to monitor closely reports of mistreatment and restrictions against religious groups in China, and seek opportunities to respond strongly to these abuses.

Yours sincerely

from the **Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Payne** (Petition No. PN0467)