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Investigate the Persecution
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An Interview with Legal Counsel to the WOIPFG

An Interview with Mr. Stewart Weisman, Esq., Legal Counsel to the World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong

Today, we have an opportunity to interview WOIPFG's legal counsel, Mr. Stewart Weisman

Reporter [R]: Mr. Weisman, could you tell our readers why you decided to join the WOIPFG?

Weisman [W]: Although I am not a practitioner of Falun Gong, as a lawyer engaged in the practice of fighting discrimination and upholding civil rights, I accepted WOIPFG's invitation to become its attorney. During my association with WOIPFG, I have met wonderful people from all races and different nationalities who embody the virtues of truthfulness in all dealings, compassion towards people, and tolerance of the viewpoints of others. These principles are certainly noble aspirations and that is why WOIPFG's mandate to protect the human rights of Falun Gong practitioners, to investigate and expose violations of those rights, and to restore and uphold justice in society is both vital and necessary.

R: What impact do you anticipate WOIPFG will have upon China?

W: I am greatly optimistic that the efforts of WOIPFG will bear fruit in at least three important areas. First, WOIPFG will expose all of those who have participated in the criminal acts orchestrated by Jiang's regime so that a sense of justice and balance can be achieved, so that harmony can be restored. Second, the very presence of an investigatory organization may serve to reduce, and hopefully eliminate, the acts of persecution. Third, WOIPFG's efforts will help to educate the citizens of China as to the nature of the senseless brutality inflicted upon their fellow citizens just because of their beliefs. In that fashion, the attitudes of the people will undoubtedly change and hostility towards practitioners will subside.

R: Dr. Charles Li, an American citizen and a Falun Gong practitioner, was arrested and later sentenced to three years in prison by the Chinese regime. As a lawyer, what are your thoughts on this case?

W: Simply stated, I am outraged. No matter what falsehoods have been and will be offered by the government of China concerning Dr. Li, the simple fact is that he was arrested, detained, and now faces the prospect of spending the next three years in prison because of his beliefs. This type of behavior is not to be tolerated among civilized nations, especially in the Year 2003.

R: What has WOIPFG done, and what does it plan to do to seek Dr. Li's release?

W: In the initial stage, WOIPFG has communicated with important and influential government representatives, particularly in the U.S., to intercede on behalf of Dr. Li. It is heartening to see the outpouring of support. Besides seeking support from the government, NGOs, and the society at large, WOIPFG is also conducting special investigations that are directly and indirectly related to Dr. Li's case. We are confident that our efforts will make a difference.

R: With respect to the special investigations WOIPFG is conducting you just mentioned, it has been reported that WOIPFG recently launched a special investigation into the illegal overseas assets and properties of Chinese government officials, especially those who have participated in the persecution of Falun Gong. Can you tell us more about this?

W: It is important to understand that it is an unfortunate part of life that despots such as Jiang Zemin squander the assets of their people by routing badly needed money, resources, and manpower to oppress certain segments of the population both internally and in many countries throughout the world. Such evil rulers, and really, there can be no other term to properly describe Zemin, also force the victims of the persecution to pay for their own punishments by, for example, extracting illegal fines and through forced labor. But perhaps the unkindest cut of all is the corruption of the souls of those who are brainwashed by the constant onslaught of propaganda, or, who, out of a desire to survive, must turn a blind eye or even aid in the persecution. There are many documented cases in China in which practitioners are arrested repeatedly and their relatives are forced to hand over money in exchange for their release time after time. At the same time, many high-ranking

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Chinese officials have been smuggling dirty money overseas. Among them, many are followers of Jiang's policy of genocide against Falun Gong practitioners. If these officials are afraid of having their properties and assets seized, then they may exert pressure upon others to stop the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners and to release people who have been wrongly imprisoned, such as Dr. Charles Li whom we talked about earlier.

R: How does WOIPFG intend to pursue this effort and others?

W: Generally, we want to confiscate the properties of these corrupt government officials with the liquidated value of the assets going to the victims. We will also continue to collect evidence and bring the guilty to justice. Specifically, WOIPFG is requesting that appropriate federal agencies, such as the FBI, assist our efforts to amass evidence against responsible parties, commence criminal prosecutions, seize assets under applicable federal laws, and ensure that those who are found guilty are appropriately sentenced. The recent statement made in March by Senator Patrick Leahy from Vermont introducing the Anti-Atrocity Alien Deportation Act of 2003 is also very encouraging. The proposed law is intended to close loopholes in our immigration laws that have allowed war criminals and human rights abusers to enter and remain in this country. There have also been civil actions commenced, such as one now pending in the U.S. District Court in Illinois, which name Jiang Zemin as a defendant and request large penalties be imposed for his nefarious activities. There's also an effort underway by a Swiss-based international NGO, "Track Impunity Always" ("TRIAL"), wherein a number of countries are preparing to file criminal complaints against Jiang Zemin. According to the president of TRIAL, Attorney Phil Grant, if Jiang is found guilty he might face life-imprisonment. We will also invite entities such as the World Organization Against Torture and other NGOs to join our efforts.

R: What can we learn from the Nuremberg Tribunal and the Bosnia War Crimes Trial?

W: I don't think that it is so much a question as to what we can learn from the outcomes of these famous tribunals but what Jiang's regime has failed to learn from them; that is, all rulers, public officials, or private individuals who commit genocide and crimes against humanity have individual criminal accountability and will be prosecuted no matter how long it takes. To that end, we draw inspiration from the efforts of other private organizations dedicated to bringing violators of international law to justice, such as the Wiesenthal Center which has had tremendous experience in tracking down Nazi war criminals.

R: Mr. Weisman, thank you very much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to talk to us. We wish you and your organization success in your endeavor.

W: It's my pleasure. Thank you