



IGFM

– Deutsche Sektion e. V. –



Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte
International Society for Human Rights · Société Internationale pour les Droits de l'Homme
Sociedad Internacional para los Derechos Humanos · Международное Общество Прав Человека

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**To the
Human Rights Committee
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Bredenbeck, 19. Juni 2007

LAOGAI – The Chinese Gulag

Ladies and Gentlemen,

IGFM/ISHR and LAOGAI Research Foundation LRF Washington D. C. are pleased to report that – after the US Congress in 2005 - German Bundestag has just passed a motion condemning the Chinese LAOGAI system. Please find the text enclosed.

We wonder whether you may want to initiate a similar motion in your national Parliament too ?

This would certainly help to promote Human Rights in the People's Republic of China ("PRC"), and will therefore be met by rather harsh opposition of the PRC's government. The PRC claims this to be an unfair and unjustified campaign but never admits visitors from democratic countries to LAOGAI camps of their own choice. Even the UN Special Rapporteurs were not permitted to visit some camps.

We also hope that the EU-Commission will take the necessary measures to prevent imports of LAOGAI made goods into the EU soon. Your help in this matter will be highly appreciated.

And, should the participation of European teams in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games not be reconsidered ? With this threat in mind the PRC may end the death penalty, organ harvesting, persecution of Uighurs and Tibetians, and the LAOGAI – or at least 2 or 3 of these practices.

Yours faithfully


Peter E. Müller

Präsident:

Alexander Frhr. v. Bischoffshausen

Ehrenpräsident:

Ludwig Martin, Generalbundesanwalt a. D.

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Werenfried van Straaten †

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Prof. Dr. Alfred de Zayas, Schweiz

Vorstand des Vereins:

Vorsitzende: Katrin Bornmüller

Geschäftsf. Vorsitzender: Karl Hafen

Sprecher: Martin Lessenthin

Schatzmeister: Man-Yan Ng

Beisitzer: Edgar Lamm, Aachen

Jochen Langer, Wiesbaden

Prof. Dr. Thomas Schirrmacher, Bonn

Wolfgang Tücks, Meißen

Reinhard Wenner, St. Augustin

Kooptiert: Dr. Reinhard Gnauck, Mainz

Rechtsgeschäfte schließt der Vorstand ab

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Motion

tabled by the parliamentary groups CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

Condemning the prison labour system ("laogai") in the People's Republic of China

The Bundestag is requested to adopt the following motion:

The German Bundestag notes:

One of the most notorious instruments of oppression ever to be deployed by a totalitarian regime against its own people was the Soviet system of "gulags" – a network of punishment and detention camps and prisons which reached its terrifying peak under Joseph Stalin. The West became aware of the atrocities being perpetrated in these camps largely as a result of the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago* by **Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn**, who won the Nobel prize for literature.

Whereas the Soviet system of gulags has been consigned to history, a similar instrument of oppression continues to exist in the People's Republic of China. Here, political dissidents, as well as people convicted of general often petty offences are made to suffer in the "laogai" camps. Furthermore, members of ethnic minorities such as Tibetans, Mongolians and Uighurs, and adherents of religious minorities – especially practitioners of Falun Gong – are subjected to the torments of the "laogai" system. **In more than 1000 prisons, labour camps and what are claimed to be psychiatric institutions**, originating during the Maoist period, dissenters are detained without proper trial and forced to undergo "political re-education", aimed at bringing their views into line with those of the Beijing regime. According to official accounts the number of inmates is given at 200.000. Non-governmental-organisations estimate this number to be far higher.

Besides enduring this political brainwashing, **prisoners are forced to work long hours in gruelling conditions, without pay, for up to 16 hours a day, seven days a week, with only three or four rest days a year. The prisoners, including minors, work at factories, farms and in the mining industry.** Besides violating the prohibition of forced labour, the camps systematically violate the ban on child labour as well. The conditions of work and imprisonment are appalling: **detainees are forced to handle toxic chemicals with no protective clothing, or work in asbestos mines without adequate safety precautions. No occupational health and safety provisions apply in the camps.**

Prisoners are also subjected to many different forms of torture. The death of prisoners from malnutrition, overwork, exhaustion and torture is accepted as a matter of course, and there is also a high suicide rate among detainees.

Many former laogai inmates living abroad have campaigned tirelessly to raise the West's awareness of the conditions in these camps (e.g. Laogai Research Foundation). Professor Manfred Nowak, the UN's Special Rapporteur on Torture, also drew attention to the

inhumane conditions in Chinese laogai-camps in the report which he published in December 2005 after his visit to the People's Republic of China.

The repressive regime operated in the camps is so well documented that on 16 December 2005, the US Congress adopted a resolution (H. Con. Res. 294), by 413 votes to one, condemning the inhumane conditions in the laogai. While Germany has an interest in constructive relations with the People's Republic of China, the Federal Government must not remain silent on the issue of the conditions in the laogai camps.

The German Bundestag therefore calls on the Federal Government:

1. to continue to condemn the conditions in the laogai camps, to urge the People's Republic of China to close these institutions, and to continue to make the issue of the laogai system a focus of attention in the bilateral rule-of-law dialogue as well in EU-China human rights dialogue;
2. to carry on requesting the Government of the People's Republic of China to release information about the laogai system, including the exact number of camps, their exact location, and the number of prisoners detained within them;
3. to request the Government of the People's Republic of China to release information about the goods produced in the laogai, including product descriptions and the countries to which they are exported;
4. in cooperation with appropriate multipliers (such as the chambers of commerce abroad), to make German companies with operations in China aware that their Chinese business partners may be fronting laogai-related activities;
5. to work pro-actively with appropriate private-sector bodies to establish a voluntary seal of quality for Chinese products which do not contain any components manufactured in laogai camps and also in the framework of the Global Compact move against the distribution of products originating in laogai camps;
6. to keep requesting the Government of the People's Republic of China to release information about the number of deaths of prisoners in the laogai camps;
7. to continue to urge the Government of the People's Republic of China to allow unrestricted visits by the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, all UN Special Rapporteurs and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to all laogai camps throughout China;
8. to use its influence to get the UN Human Rights Council to address the issue of the Chinese laogai camps.

Berlin, 7 March 2007

Volker Kauder, Dr. Peter Ramsauer and parliamentary group
Dr. Peter Struck and parliamentary group
Dr. Guido Westerwelle and parliamentary group
Renate Künast, Fritz Kuhn and parliamentary group

December 16, 2005

Washington, D.C.- This afternoon, the House of Representatives passed H.Con.Res. 294, a resolution condemning China's forced labor prison camp system, the "laogai", with a vote of 413 to 1.

Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) and other members of Congress introduced the resolution. Representative Wolf, who chairs the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, co-sponsored the resolution, along with co-chairman Representative Tom Lantos (D-CA).

Below is the text of the resolution.

Calling on the international community to condemn the Laogai, the system of forced labor prison camps in the People's Republic of China, as a tool for suppression maintained by the... (Introduced in House)

HCON 294 IH

109th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. CON. RES. 294

Calling on the international community to condemn the Laogai, the system of forced labor prison camps in the People's Republic of China, as a tool for suppression maintained by the Chinese Government.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

November 9, 2005

Mr. WOLF (for himself, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. SOUDER, Mr. ROHRBACHER, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, and Mr. STARK) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Calling on the international community to condemn the Laogai, the system of forced labor prison camps in the People's Republic of China, as a tool for suppression maintained by the Chinese Government.

Whereas the Laogai is a vast prison labor system in the People's Republic of China and consists of a network of more than 1,000 prisons, camps, and mental institutions in which detainees must work at factories, farms, mines, and other facilities;

Whereas the two major aims of the Laogai are to generate economic resources for the state through free labor and to `reform criminals' through hard labor and political indoctrination;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China relies on the Laogai as a tool for political suppression of pro-democracy activists, Internet dissidents, labor activists, and religious and spiritual believers, including Han Chinese, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Mongolians, and `house church' Christians;

Whereas, while the Soviet Gulags no longer exist, the Chinese Laogai is still fully operational, subjecting most of its three million prisoners to forced labor by threatening torture;

Whereas fifty million people have suffered as prisoners in the Laogai since its inception;

Whereas Laogai prisoners are deprived of religious freedom and forced to give up their political views in order to become a `new socialist person' and uphold communism and the Chinese Communist Party;

Whereas in recent years, more than 100,000 religious believers have been unjustly and illegally imprisoned in one Laogai camp alone, where they have been beaten, tortured, and often killed;

Whereas Laogai prisoners are forced to work long hours in appalling conditions, including mining asbestos and other toxic chemicals with no protective clothing, tanning hides while standing naked in vats filled with chemicals used for softening of animal skins, and working in mining facilities where explosions and other accidents are a common occurrence;

Whereas it is documented that China's national policy since 1984 has been to extract organs from executed prisoners without prior consent of the prisoners or their family members, setting China apart from every other country in the world;

Whereas there are more than 1,000 instances in which organs are harvested from executed Chinese prisoners every year;

Whereas both Chinese and foreign patients from around the world receive organs transplanted from executed Chinese prisoners;

Whereas Laogai prisoners are required to make confessions of their

wrongdoings, which include political and religious views that the Chinese Communist Party wishes to suppress;

Whereas Chinese citizens are not guaranteed due process of law nor even a right to trial;

Whereas many individuals are often convicted and sentenced with no trial at all, or they are convicted with `evidence' extracted through torture;

Whereas in one part of the Laogai system known as the Laojiao, or reeducation-through-labor, Chinese citizens can be detained for up to three years without any judicial review or formal appearance in the judicial system;

Whereas goods produced by forced labor in the Laogai system continue to be exported to the United States and the world;

Whereas the Chinese Government has continuously encouraged the export of goods produced through the Laogai prison system and relies on forced labor as an integral part of its economy;

Whereas forced labor and torture practices carried out in the Laogai violate international laws, standards, and treaties to which China is party, including the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and

Whereas China, a member State of the International Labor Organization, also violates many agreements regarding labor conditions and the rights of workers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress--

(1) calls on the international community to condemn the Laogai, the system of forced labor prison camps in the People's Republic of China, as a tool for suppression maintained by the Chinese Government;

(2) calls on the Government of the United States to fully implement United States laws that prohibit the importation of forced labor products made in the Laogai;

(3) calls on the Government of the United States to take actions to review the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Prison Labor in 1992 and the Statement of Cooperation in 1994 with respect to the Laogai;

(4) will undertake efforts to join with the European Parliament to urge the

introduction of a resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Commission condemning the Laogai and the human rights situation in China;

(5) calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to release information about the Laogai, including the total number of Laogai camps and prisoners throughout China, the exact locations of the camps, and the business production activities taking place at the camps;

(6) calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to release information about the number of executions of prisoners at the camps that are carried out every year, and the extent of the harvesting and transplantation of organs of executed prisoners;

(7) urges the Government of the People's Republic of China to allow unrestricted visits by international human rights inspectors, including United Nations inspectors, to Laogai camps throughout China; and

(8) urges the Congressional-Executive Commission on China to investigate the Laogai system in China and to make recommendations for United States policy that will help protect human rights for Chinese citizens.