



Internationale Gesellschaft
für Menschenrechte (IGFM)

CHINA



China: Abolish camps!



The People's Republic of China runs the biggest camp system in the world. About four million people are exploited as slave labour – seven days a week, up to 16 hours a day. Sleep deprivation, torture, violence, and an insufficient water and food supply are



everyday occurrences in the camps. The “Laogai” system (Chinese: “reform through labour”) is a synonym for political imprisonment, forced labour and torture. All information concerning the camp system is a state secret kept strictly locked away by the government. Therefore, there are no official statistics on the number of camps or their inmates. However, the independent Laogai Research Foundation was able to identify about 1,000 labour camps in the People’s Republic. The founder of this foundation is Harry Wu, who is a member of the ISHR Board of Trustees, and suffered a total of 19 years performing forced labour in Laogai camps as a political prisoner.

Despite name changes and some “reforms” in recent years that have been publicly announced - but not implemented - the camp system of the People’s Republic of China remains virtually unchanged to this day. The victims are frequently imprisoned on a completely arbitrarily basis, without the possibility to defend themselves. Many of them are imprisoned due solely to political reasons; for example, for protesting against corruption, defending the rights of minorities, or for being a part of the persecuted Buddhist meditation school of Falun Gong. Beyond the official prisons and camps, a growing number of informal detention centres called “black jails” have emerged. In the jargon of the local party management, they are misleadingly referred to as ‘legal education classes’. The victims are primarily people who wanted to submit an appeal to a state petition office.