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THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP

MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS
CANBERRA

28 JUL 2011

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy

I refer to your letter of 23 May 2011 conveying a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding Falun Gong.

The Australian Government has long held concerns about the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners in China. While the Government takes no position on Falun Gong beliefs, it considers that China's ban on Falun Gong and the treatment of its practitioners are in breach of international human-rights standards. The Government has consistently raised these concerns with Chinese authorities, including at the last round of the Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue (HRD) in Beijing in December 2010.

Leading international human-rights organisations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, have been unable to substantiate allegations of Falun Gong-related organ harvesting. The Government is however concerned that organs have been harvested from executed prisoners, who may include Falun Gong practitioners. The Government strongly opposes this practice. We have raised this issue with China on several occasions, most recently at the last HRD. We are encouraged that China has taken steps to stamp out the practice with the establishment of a new organ-donation pilot-program with Red Cross involvement. We will continue to raise our concerns about this practice with Chinese authorities.

Thank you once again for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Rudd