



Continued Human Rights' Violations in China — Where's Michael Moore?

China never fails to top itself when it comes to human rights violations. Even as Michael Moore attempts to defend communist regimes, world-wide media networks continue to report on the harsh practices of the Communist Chinese government, most recently forced sterilizations of Puning County parents and the torture of Falun Gong practitioners.

Times online reports that China intends to sterilize nearly 10,000 parents in Puning County who have violated the one-child rule. Puning County, with a population of 2.2 million, is the most populated county in the country. Jane Macartney of *The Times* claims that the sterilization campaign was launched on April 7 and is expected to last 20 days.



A Daba village doctor reported that he and his team would be in charge of completing the sterilizations, beginning at 8 am every morning and lasting until approximately 4 a.m. the next day.

Under current regulations, families in Puning County who break the one-child rule are already punished in a variety of ways. They are not permitted to buy homes, and the “illegal” children are not permitted to receive residency registration, which in turn denies them healthcare and education as well. Macartney writes, “Authorities have discovered, however, that those methods have less success than rounding up relatives.”

Zhang Lizhao knows something about this favored method. He and his wife were forced to rush home to undergo sterilization in order for Lizhao's brother to be freed from detention. While in detention, detainees are exposed to government rhetoric on the necessity of adhering to family-size laws. Currently, 1,300 people are held in detention as a means to force families to succumb to sterilization. Thousands of Puning County residents have undergone this treatment by authorities.

While Chinese government officials claim to be investigating this matter, asserting that authorities are not permitted to punish families without authorization, or detain residents as pressure tactics, the strict “one couple, one child” government policy has led to a variety of human rights' violations, though the number of incidents have reputedly decreased in recent years. These include forced late-term abortions, and the murder of newborn babies.

It's likely that the officials' promises of investigation are false, as an official from the Puning Population and Family Planning Bureau has admitted to Macartney, “It's not uncommon for family planning authorities to adopt some tough tactics.”

Until now, Puning was a “refuge” of sorts for families who have more than one child, since it is rural and generally outside of government surveillance. Unfortunately, the increased number of large families



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 22, 2010

in the county has prompted Puning officials to adopt such harsh measures in order to remain eligible for their “bid for promotion to a second-tier county.” One of the measurements for this desirable status is whether the county meets the government limit for family size.

Despite the shocking nature of these abuses, policies like these are reminiscent of American eugenics supporter Margaret Sanger. Her decision to open Planned Parenthood was motivated by principles similar to that of the Puning authorities. Yet, Sanger’s motivations and the Puning sterilizations have remained relatively unreported in the American mainstream media.

Of course, human rights violations in China are nothing new. For 20 years, the religious group known as the Falun Gong has undergone suppression, even torture, at the hands of the Chinese government, who claim that Falun Gong is a cult in order to justify the government’s crackdown on the organization. (The American mainstream media have taken at least a paragraph from the same playbook, painting the Tea Party movement as extremists, likely with the same intent of silencing the group.)

In truth, the Chinese government is aware that Falun Gong is not a cult, but the government is threatened by the large number of Falun Gong practitioners, as it is the only group whose membership outnumbers that of the Communist Party in China, according to a 1999 *U.S. News and World Report*. In addition to the overwhelming size of the organization, the Communist Chinese government has a reputation for religious intolerance. *The Globe and Mail* wrote, “Any group that does not come under the control of the Party is a threat”.

To counter this threat, the government resorted to psychiatric torture of Falun Gong members, using nerve-damaging chemicals. They have utilized starvation of imprisoned practitioners, forced abortions, and other physical abuses like burning with irons. The *Washington Post*, in a 2001 article written by John Pomfret and Philip Pan, exposed torture of Falun Gong members.

The United Nations Human Rights Council and the Falun Gong Human Rights Working Group are working together with the Conscience Foundation to stop the torture of the Falun Gong practitioners. The success of this alliance remains to be seen.

The Chinese government continues to commit human rights abuses regularly. Yet Michael Moore has not been inspired to create a documentary criticizing the Communist Chinese government. He continues to assert “capitalism is evil.” Go figure!



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