

**Friends of Falun Gong Human Rights Award, Washington DC, Friday 16 July 2021**  
**Statement by Prof Sev Ozdowski,**

I am delighted to be the recipient of the 2021 Friends of Falun Gong Human Rights Award. I regret I cannot be in Washington DC with you.

It is an honour to be the first individual selected by the Friends of Falun Gong committee for this award and to be recognised alongside past winners, David Matas and David Kilgour, the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC) and the journalists, academics and researchers who contribute to Bitter Winter. Thank you for acknowledging my human rights work in this important area.

My interest in human rights and my work to advance and promote rights and freedoms dates to my youth in Communist Poland.

Human rights are the basic freedoms and protections that belong to every single one of us and that should be delivered by a state. However, my experience of Communism in Poland taught me that a totalitarian state could be in fact the worst violator of human rights.

As Australian Human Rights Commissioner and Chair of Australian Multicultural Council I developed close contacts with the Chinese community in Australia.

The 2006 Kilgour–Matas investigative report about organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners in China was an eye opener. The report stated that "*the source of 41,500 transplants for the six-year period 2000 to 2005 is unexplained*". Further research documented prosecution, imprisonments and murders of Falun Gong followers. This was my personal 'call for action' and was the start of my close cooperation with Falun Gong practitioners in Sydney.

However, back in 2006 I perhaps naively hoped that after the government crimes against the Falun Gong community were exposed, the Chinese Communist Party would take steps to eliminate the practice and punish those responsible.

Unfortunately, I was wrong. The prosecution and organ harvesting continues to this day. Thus, we need to continue our fight.

Last, but not least, I wish to dedicate my award to all the people in Australia working to advance the human rights of Falun Gong practitioners in China. There are too many of them to mention individually.

Be reassured, victory will be ours. History tells us that the persecution of religious and minority groups by a state leads only to one result; the submission of the state to the will of the people.

You will be able to practice your religion in freedom again.