

## **Press conference**

### **Justice Denied: The Tai Ji Men Case in Taiwan**

**10 December 2020**

**Organizers:** CESNUR – Center for Studies on New Religions  
HRWF – Human Rights Without Frontiers

See the event on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19RSx8hxWq0&feature=youtu.be>

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### **Tai Ji Men: Fabricated case, arbitrary auction & illegal arrest of Ms Huang**

**Oral presentation by Willy Fautré, Human Rights without Frontiers**

In late August 2020, Taiwan's National Taxation Bureau (NTB) arbitrarily seized and auctioned properties that belonged to Dr Hong Tao-tze, the founder and spiritual leader of the Tai Ji Men.

This abrupt intervention of the Taxation Bureau was allegedly due to a tax bill dating back to 1992, despite this bill having been successfully contested through Taiwanese courts.

The latest move of the Taxation Bureau fits a pattern of prejudice against Tai Ji Men and its spiritual leader. It is also likely retaliation for several other tax cases concerning Tai Ji Men that the Taxation Bureau lost.

Some suspect that there was a profit-making objective behind this auction.

Indeed, officers of the National Tax Bureau normally receive a bonus based on the taxes they collected.

Officers at the Enforcement Agency also receive a bonus from the enforcement results of the auction.

Finally, government officers involved in the Tai Ji Men case both at the National Tax Bureau and the Enforcement Agency received a bonus from handling the case.

It is because of all these alluring bonuses that some scholars suspected that Tai Ji Men's case was a fabricated case.

One of the bureaucrats that Tai Ji Men suspects of abuse of power is **Lee, Gui-fen**, Chief Enforcement Officer of Hsinchu Branch of Administrative Enforcement Agency, under the Ministry of Justice. This suspicion is supported by a document with Lee Gui-fen's seal that outlines the bonus allocation from the auction of Tai Ji Men's properties before the official announcement of the auction had been publicised.

### **The arrest of Ms Huang (<https://youtu.be/TG6lgp86Mlc>)**

On 19 September 2020, a Tai Ji Men member, Ms Huang, planned to use her right to freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution of Taiwan to denounce the lucrative nature of this auction. She was about to peacefully protest on the street with others while holding a sign that named **Lee, Gui-fen** when she was surrounded by several police officers.

The officers stopped the demonstration before it had even started. They demanded that Ms Huang present her ID and then arrested her without any stated cause.

When other volunteers asked whether they were in an area restricted from demonstrations and why they were arresting Ms Huang, the police did not respond. Instead, they asked that everyone show their IDs and ordered the protestors to leave. They also threatened that anyone recording the scene would face consequences. By disrupting the planned demonstration, the authorities did not allow these individuals to exercise their right to freedom of assembly and protest.

The protesters finally cooperated and provided their IDs. The police officers checked them and then left for about 30 minutes. When they returned, Ms Huang no longer had the allegedly controversial sign. However, several police searched her bag without a warrant or her consent. They discovered a different poster and coerced her into falsely claiming that it was the same sign. After this, they declared that she would be prosecuted, although they still had not told her what for.

Ms Huang was taken to the Liu-Jia police station in Zhubei by more than a dozen police officers without being informed of the charges against her.

### **Who is Mrs Huang?**

Ms Huang is not a troublemaker. Ms Huang had never been stopped or arrested by the police before this incident. Ms Huang did not threaten the national security nor disturb public order on 19 September.

Ms Huang is an ordinary Taiwanese citizen. She is 60 years. She is married and has two children. She has been a housewife for her whole life and a member of Tai Ji Men for 29 years.

### **At the police station and the prosecutor's office**

During the interrogation at the police station, Ms Huang was treated with complete disrespect. She was accused of publicly defaming a public servant, Lee Gui-fen.

In the meantime, a group of protesters gathered outside the police station. One of them, Professor Tze-Lung Chen, repeatedly asked why they had arrested Ms Huang. The police refused to answer, claiming they could not comment on an ongoing prosecutorial investigation despite it only being a police investigation. Professor Chen accused the police officers of abusing their power and urged them to release Ms Huang as there was no written complaint of her alleged defamation or intimidation.

However, instead the police transferred her to the Prosecutor's Office. With no regard for her age nor physical and mental state of health, she was deprived of her freedom and interrogated for eight hours in all. She was not released by the Prosecutor until 2am.

During the interrogation, Ms Huang said she wanted to sue the police officers for her arbitrary arrest but her verbal complaint was blatantly ignored by the prosecutor.

The arrest caused immense mental and physical distress for Ms Huang. After hours of interrogation, first at the police station and then at the Prosecutor's Office, she fainted and was sent to hospital. A doctor there diagnosed her with acute stress and trauma syndrome.

## Conclusion

Taiwan has the reputation of being a democratic country. Articles 11 and 14 of the Constitution of Taiwan guarantee the freedom of speech and assembly. As such, Ms Huang's sign was legally protected by the Constitution. It read: "*Lee, Gui-fen, head of the Hsinchu Branch of the Administrative Enforcement Agency, how much bonus did you get from handling the Tai Ji Men case? NT\$100,000? NT\$1 million? Or NT\$10 million? Give it back!!!*"

In this case, the Taiwanese authorities failed to behave democratically and instead abused their power to silence citizens.

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