



Gerard Julien/AFP/Getty Images

‘DISPOSABLE IMMIGRATION: NO!’ A banner at an immigration protest held in Marseille, France in May 2006.

France to Allow Some Illegal Immigrants to Stay

PARIS (Reuters)—France will give residence permits to some illegal immigrants whose children attend school, Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy said on Tuesday after protests against pupils’ expulsions and a tough new immigration bill.

Sarkozy announced the measure to the Senate upper house of parliament at the start of a debate on the controversial law, which aims to attract skilled workers while keeping less qualified ones out.

“If a foreign child is born in France, or has come here at a very young age, if it is at school in France, doesn’t speak the language of its country of origin, has no link with this country, it would be very cruel to take it back there by force,” Sarkozy said.

Sources close to the interior ministry said 800 families could be given residency permits.

Sarkozy said local officials should apply the measure on a case by case basis, as well as offering financial help to families who want to leave France voluntarily.

Pro-immigration groups welcomed Sarkozy’s move, but said a large majority of children whose parents had no residency papers remained threatened

with expulsion from France.

“This measure risks being a political diversion in the sense that at least 100,000 school children are today at risk of expulsion,” the MRAP anti-racism group said in a statement.

Some 300,000 to 400,000 illegal immigrants live in France, according to the interior ministry.

Sarkozy vowed to tighten immigration rules after rioting youths in Parisian suburbs—many of them of the offspring of immigrants—torched thousands of cars last November.

The law, which would make it harder for immigrants already living in France to bring over their families and force newcomers to take French and civics lessons, has triggered protests in France and some former colonies in West Africa.

Critics say the new bill stigmatizes foreigners and hurts the weakest.

Parents, students and teachers have taken to the streets in towns across France in past months to protest against the expulsion of immigrant classmates.

Last October, Sarkozy asked local officials to avoid expelling pupils during the current school year, which ends in four weeks.

European Parliament Vice President Talks with Rights Attorney in China

‘I cannot see how the Olympics can take place in China’

By MEIHUA ZHOU
Epoch Times Chicago Staff

On June 4, last Sunday, Vice President of the European Parliament Edward McMillan-Scott had an hour long phone conversation with Chinese human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, discussing human rights violations in China, including the allegations of organ harvesting from living Falun Gong practitioners.

Mr. McMillan-Scott began the conversation by expressing his concern for the two Falun Gong practitioners whom he met in Beijing last month. He said that while one of them had returned home, the other was still missing. Through a translator, he asked if it would be possible for Gao “to make some intervention with the authorities.” “And I am going appeal to the Chinese embassy in Brussels,” he said.

Niu Jinping and Cao Dong, who were once jailed for 2 years and 4 and a half years respectively for their belief in Falun Gong, were arrested by Chinese authorities after meeting with McMillan. While Niu has been released and is being monitored, nobody knows Cao’s whereabouts.

Gao said that although he was concerned about the two, he was not able to do anything because he was constantly being followed by 20 to 30 special agents. He added that in the persecution that has been going on for seven years, Falun Gong practitioners having gone missing is no longer news. “It will be news if they are not hiding and yet are not missing,” he said.

‘Shock’

McMillan-Scott said he was in a state of shock after his meetings in Beijing with people, “whose relations are in detention in China, and who are Falun Gong practitioners, who are

beaten and tortured.”

“Once the world knows what has been going on, I cannot see how the Olympics can take place in China and that China can change fundamentally by 2008,” he told Gao.

McMillan-Scott explained, “The reports of organ harvesting of [the Falun Gong] prisoners, that is to say, the reverse matching of organs and tissues, which in my view amounts to genocide.”

In response, Gao said that ever since he had finished the third round of investigation into the persecution of Falun Gong in China, no story of persecution, not even the news about organ harvesting, was shocking to him.

Gao said that of all the human rights violations he has seen in China, the most unbelievable is the persecution of Falun Gong. This was the reason he has devoted all his attention to it in the last two years.

“People only see the surface of the persecution—labor camp detention and the denial of the rights to appeal and defense,” Gao said, “But the real persecution is what they can’t see: physical torture, mental torment and the financial persecution, which, according to Gao, are “barbaric, primitive and cold-blooded.”

Gao said that before the news of organ harvesting broke out, he had encountered cases in which sutures were found on the bodies of Falun Gong practitioners who died under police custody. He commented that the act of harvesting organs from the living practitioners for profits is no less gruesome than what the Nazis did to the Jews, adding “this has to stop immediately—not even a minute of waiting.”

Change Needed in Dealing with China

When McMillan told Gao that the Canadian parliament, the U.N. Rapporteur, and the European Parliament have already begun investigations into the organ harvesting allegations, Gao related what a police officer once told him.

Gao said that last year a police officer, who chose to be anonymous, called him from Hebei after the incident in which a police officer in that province’s Zhuozhou City raped two Falun Gong practitioners successively in front of his colleagues in a police station. He said the police explained to him why the authorities did not do anything about the case.

“The police have been persecuting Falun Gong for so many years. Their hands are full of the evidence of how the Chinese regime has been engineering the persecution. So the regime dares not do anything against them. This is the vicious circle that the persecution has reached,” Gao said.

“It is high time for the international community to change its way in deal-



Brian Bahr/Getty Images

OLYMPIC FLAME TO CHINA? The Olympic flame burns during the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin, Italy.

ing with China’s human rights violations,” Gao said, adding, “Otherwise, the Chinese regime would think that it has done pretty well in deceiving the world and can continue with it, and the Chinese people will laugh at the Western governments for their being deceived by the Chinese regime; they will no longer take those governments seriously.”

McMillan-Scott responded positively by naming the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who met with Chinese dissidents and raised human rights issues with the Chinese authorities.

“All the signs are that the regime is facing real challenges—economic contradictions, manifest administrative corruption, the dissents in the country side, the increasing of religious groups, the ability of young people to get on the Internet. All these are the beginnings of change. I am more optimistic now than I was ten years ago. When things changed in Europe in 1989, it happened in a matter of weeks,” he said.

Over the phone, McMillan-Scott read a paragraph from a letter that he wrote to Gao, which Gao never re-

ceived and had only learned about its message through friends.

“The Chinese people have friends wherever thought, religion, and association are free, but the regime has no friends. I warn those responsible in China of the consequences of genocide. On the anniversary of the massacre on Tiananmen Square and elsewhere in 1989, I am urging my colleagues in the European Parliament and in freely elected assemblies across the world, to monitor all the abuses that Mr. Gao has so courageously brought to our attention. I am also urging the Embassies of the European Union in China, the British, the German, the French and the EU itself to support and when necessary give sanctuary to human rights defenders like Mr. Gao. As he knows, the future will be the judge of all of us.”

In concluding the conversation, McMillan-Scott alluded to his opening remark that he hopes Gao will be invited by the European Parliament to give evidence to an inquiry, which has already begun, into religious freedom in China, and in particular the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners, saying that he would be in touch with Gao again soon.



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Nepal PM Seeks Indian Aid for Ravaged Economy

NEW DELHI (Reuters)—Nepali Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala



Prakash Singh/AFP/Getty Images

HELPING NEIGHBOR: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (R) greets Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala (L) upon Koirala’s arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi on June 6, 2006.

arrived in India on Tuesday seeking aid to support his new government’s efforts to rebuild the economy, devastated by political instability and a long-running Maoist insurgency.

It is Koirala’s first trip abroad since he took power in April after weeks of street protests in the Himalayan nation forced King Gyanendra to restore parliament and end direct rule. Nepali officials said Koirala, who is accompanied by a delegation of ministers and businessmen, was expected to seek aid for rehabilitation of the victims of the decade-long Maoist conflict as well as reconstruction of infrastructure.

“We will also request India for financial support for roads, irrigation and other infrastructure projects,” Bhoj Raj Ghimire, the finance secretary, told Reuters.

Koirala, 84, was to hold talks with Indian government leaders, including counterpart Manmohan Singh, during his four-day visit.

Neighboring India is a major do-

nor to Nepal and supplies the bulk of essential goods to the land-locked nation, whose aid and tourism-dependent economy has been wrecked by fighting which has cost more than 13,000 lives.

The Nepali economy, one of the world’s poorest, grew at an average of 2.7 percent annually over the past three years compared to an annual average of 5.1 percent for the decade ending in 2002, when parliament was dissolved.

The Maoist rebels and the new multi-party government have agreed to hold elections for a special assembly to prepare a new constitution that would decide the future of monarchy.

They are also urging Koirala to seek the release of about 150 of their comrades jailed in India.

The rebels, who have been fighting for a communist state since 1996, often escape into India after crossing the porous border. Many have been arrested by Indian police.