

New wave of harassment targets Shen Yun

COMPANY CONTINUED FROM P1
The New Jersey Falun Dafa Association is one of the presenters of the show in New Jersey. Local Falun Dafa associations typically help host Shen Yun shows for the New York-based company, which is currently on its annual world tour.

Falun Gong (also known as Falun Dafa) is a spiritual meditation practice, which the Chinese regime has persecuted since July 1999.

Sen Yang, president of the Mid-USA Falun Dafa Association, believes the aim of the e-mails is to give theatres an impression that Falun Gong practitioners are irrational and weird, so that they will cancel the Shen Yun shows. The e-mail campaign seeks to damage Shen Yun by negatively portraying the Falun Gong practitioners who support it.

The e-mails are not the only form of harassment that have been aimed at the New Brunswick show.

"The Chinese consulate in New York also made threatening phone calls to the theatre," Mr. Liang said. In addition, he said individuals working for the Chinese regime have spread rumours within the Chinese community in an attempt to disrupt the marketing of the show.

However, Mr. Liang believes the interference won't have much effect as both the State Theatre and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) have successfully hosted Shen Yun shows in the past.

"These theatres have a good relationship with Shen Yun Performing Arts and are familiar with Shen Yun's high quality," he said.

PATTERN OF HARRASSMENT

The author of the e-mail sent to the San Francisco War Memorial and Performing Arts Center claimed to be from a Falun Gong practitioner and a "Shen Yun fan." It also threatened the recipients if they did not take up the practice of Falun Gong.



Audience members watch Shen Yun during the show's 2009 world tour. THE EPOCH TIMES



"There has never been a Falun Gong practitioner who sent out threats to force others to practice," said Mr. Yang, adding that the practice of Falun Gong has always been completely voluntary.

The e-mails follow various other forms of harassment that have targeted Shen Yun.

On the morning of March 31, the

day Shen Yun opened for its Calgary run, someone claiming to be one of the hosts called the theatre manager to cancel the show that evening.

Theatres holding Shen Yun have routinely received letters such as the 13-page missive sent by the Chinese consulate in Houston, Texas, to the Robinson Center Music Hall in Little Rock, Arkansas. The letter

attacked Falun Gong and accused Shen Yun of "damaging Sino-American relations" and "disrupting China's stability." The letter also asked the theatre to reject the Shen Yun show.

There have been several cases in which individuals claiming to be members of the audience have complained to the theatre about the

show and asked the theatre not to offer any reservations to Shen Yun in the future.

According to Huishar Chen of the Falun Dafa Association in Edmonton, B.C. culture minister Kevin Krueger received a phone call from someone claiming to have attended Shen Yun who complained about the show and asked him to ensure

that no theatre allow it to perform. The minister refused and told this individual that he had seen the show and disagreed with the complaints.

SUPPORT FOR SHEN YUN

Mr. Krueger is not alone in objecting to efforts to stop Shen Yun from performing.

Mr. Liang said the director of NJPAC, where Shen Yun performed in January 2009, received daily harassment calls from the Chinese consulate in New York urging her to stop hosting Shen Yun.

He said the director was very upset and called the Chinese consul, telling him, "We are not in China. Anyone who follows the regulations has the right to use the theatre. Please do not interfere anymore." After that, the Chinese consulate stopped harassing NJPAC.

When a Shen Yun show scheduled in Kiev, Ukraine, faced cancellation due to pressure from the Chinese regime, U.S. Congressman Rush Holt wrote a letter to President Yanukovich of Ukraine. He referred to Shen Yun as "one of the world's premier Chinese dance and music companies."

"It aims to revive traditional Chinese arts and has performed to critical acclaim in 100 cities around the world. I found [Shen Yun] both educational and inspirational," the congressman said.

Shen Yun will hold two performances on June 20 in the State Theatre. Nine U.S. congressmen, the New Jersey State Senate, and the mayor and city council of New Brunswick have sent congratulatory letters welcoming the show's return to New Jersey.

The e-mail seeking to damage Shen Yun's performance in New Jersey has been turned over to the FBI.

With reporting by Shi Yu and Weilin Wu.

UN calls for a humanitarian corridor to Kyrgyzstan

By **ANDREY VOLKOV**
Epoch Times Staff

The United Nations has called on regional organizations and governments to assist humanitarian operations to southern Kyrgyzstan after days of mass ethnic clashes left at least 179 people dead, about 2,000 injured, and created more than 100,000 refugees.

The death toll was confirmed by the country's Ministry of Health. A rapid assessment by UNICEF staff on the ground of the more than 100,000 refugees that have fled Kyrgyzstan into neighbouring Uzbekistan has found that 90 percent are women and children.

Uzbeks have fled fearing being gunned down and burnt in their homes, according to the International Red Cross.

The Uzbek government has opened schools and colleges to accommodate the refugees, but there is a lack of food, water, and

medical help. The refugees are being housed in 75 camps around the city of Andijan, according to UNICEF.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has sent an emergency team of operations and logistics experts.

"We are very grateful for the willingness of the Uzbek authorities to welcome and receive people fleeing violence in Kyrgyzstan," said UNHCR António Guterres in a statement.

"We have agreed with the Uzbek government to support their efforts and assist tens of thousands, mostly women and children, seeking safety in Uzbekistan."

The violence, which erupted late on the evening of June 10, has left many businesses, shopping centres, cultural centres, city markets, and governmental buildings burnt and destroyed in the southern city of Osh. There were also reports of looting and other

acts of vandalism in the city. Uzbeks make up half the population of Osh.

By June 15, the situation in Osh and in the nearby region was somewhat calmer, according to media reports.

The UNHCR stressed that Osh is at high risk for ethnic conflicts since about 80 different minorities live in the city.

"The region has long been known to be a 'powder keg.' That's why it is highly important that Kyrgyz authorities end the clashes in the strongest way. Everything indicates that ethnic conflicts were not spontaneous, but organized, aimed, and well-planned," Human Rights Council spokesperson Rupert Colville said in a statement.

Colville said that the breakout of disorder began when five groups of armed men with bandages on their faces attacked different buildings, triggering a backlash.

All EU nations on debt 'watch list' except one

EU CONTINUED FROM P1

Those who placed bets on the failure of the euro on international markets want to win those bets. "These people have no morals," said Schulz, according to a Parliament press statement.

"We have to make sure these people lose their bets on the markets. We have to make sure we win this battle."

While the downgrading is a new blow to the country, experts say that the new rating comes as no surprise. On April 27, Standard & Poor's also downgraded Greece, and another financial watchdog, Fitch Ratings, says it will wait until end of the year to see the results of the austerity measures implemented by the Greek government.

However, this is the first time in the history of the eurozone that a member country has lost its

investment rating.

Analysts estimate the downgrade will reduce demand for Greek bonds even further and will lead to greater difficulties for the country in dealing with its budget deficit.

Moody's experts, however, are confident that Greece will not need to sell bonds over the next two years since receiving the bailout, which is why they do not expect the downgrade to negatively affect the country's balance sheet.

Greece's Finance Ministry was unhappy about the new junk status and said it "does not reflect in any way Greece's progress over the past months, nor does it reflect the potential created by the country's effort of fiscal consolidation and increased competitiveness."

"Greece is moving ahead with all the reforms stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding, (and) for

many of these reforms, it is already ahead of schedule," the ministry wrote.

Moody's also downgraded the city of Athens to junk status because of the uncertainty of the financial reform.



PROGRESS: European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs Olli Rehn holds a chart showing Greece's reducing deficit. JEAN-CHRISTOPHE VERHAEGEN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Subscribe to

The Epoch Times today!



Did you know that you can receive The Epoch Times anywhere in British Columbia delivered to your mailbox?

Subscribe today, and don't miss a single edition.

The Epoch Times is an independent newspaper. Your subscriptions will help us to expand our resources and bring you more of the kind of non-sensational, quality news that you have come to expect from us!

Subscription Rates 2010
Call Now! 604-439-9777

13 weeks
\$20.80

Name _____
Address _____

26 weeks
\$39.00

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Payment Options

- VISA/Mastercard (over the phone)
- Cheque

52 weeks
\$72.80

(Payable to The Epoch Times / \$20 charge for NSF cheques)
Mailing Address: 210 - 5481 Kingsway, Burnaby BC V5H 2G1