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**CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTIONS OF: RELIGIOUS
INTOLERANCE**

**Written statement* submitted by Romanian Independent Society of Human Rights
(SIRDO), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[3 February 2005]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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- (i) The Romanian Independent Society of Human Rights (SIRDO) is a non-government organisation founded in 1990 to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. Among SIRDO's preoccupations there is the infringement of religious rights and the intimidation of religious communities, other than the orthodox one, in majority in Romania.
- (ii) In this sense, SIRDO forwards to the attention of the Human Rights Commission the situation of Falun Gong practitioners in Romania. The Qigong Falun Dafa Romania association is a non-government organisation legally registered by the Romanian authorities on 18 February 2003. Based on the fundamental nature of the universe expressed by Truth-Kindness-Compassion-Tolerance-Endurance, Falun Gong is a method of spiritual improvement with antique roots in the Chinese spirituality. It is welcomed in over 50 countries and cannot be assimilated with an organisation or a religion, has no political intentions or affiliates, rituals or worships.
- (iii) In spite of the facts presented, the activity of the practitioners was constantly boycotted by police officers, gendarmes and employees of the Internal Information Services. Thus, we may chronologically present events revealing that the way in which the Romanian authorities relate to the right of free speech, the freedom of association, tolerance, non-discrimination, freedom and security of the person, the right not to be subjected to torture.
 - March 2003 – the Falun Gong practitioners who manifested peacefully in front of the Bucharest Chinese Embassy, in solidarity with the victims persecuted in China, were amended for disturbing the public order;
 - March 2003 – both Romanian authorities and representatives of the Chinese embassy acted against an exhibition of traditional Chinese painting, victim of persecution against Falun Gong in China;
 - May 2003 – the Bucharest City hall refused the initiative to organise a protest in front of the Chinese Embassy in Romania, in memory of practitioners killed 4 years ago in China;
 - July 2003 – Bucharest City hall refused the request of Falun Gong practitioners to organise an info day claiming that this event “exceeds the provisions in the status of the association” and that the action “would be an obstacle before the diplomatic relationships between Romania and China”;
 - August 2003 – the Cluj City hall rejected the request to organise information activities on Falun Gong Dafa, considering they did not give all necessary information;
 - June 2004 – The Bucharest City hall rejected the request of welcoming the president of China, Mr Hu Jintao, who was visiting Romania. The practitioners of Falun Gong were taken from the sidewalk, treated with physical and verbal violence, subjected to psychological violence in order to sign statements on facts that they did not commit, they were amended with amounts over the monthly income of a person. Among those arrested there were also foreign citizens who were subjected to the same violent treatment;
 - July 2004 – the request taken to the Bucharest City hall to organise a protest in front of the Chinese Embassy and an info day in the centre of the capital, including the commemoration of victims of persecution for being practitioners of Falun Gong, was also rejected claiming that “the purpose of this action does not justify its presence on public

domain. The public activities are done through specific means and methods of publicity, while the practice of exercises specific to the association should and must be done in areas (halls) identified and ensured by the association based on conventions with their rightful owners”.

- August 2004 – The activity of the practitioners was obstructed by the police by the interruption of exercises made in a park and the obligation to leave the sight, claiming there were new legal provisions on public assemblies and sports manifestations.

Until now, the Romanian National Council of Combating Discrimination which was informed on the facts, did not provide any answer to the requests of the Qigong Romanian Association.

The first decision in favour of the cause of the Qigong Romanian Association – Falun Dafa Romania was materialised by sentence of the Sector 1 Court, Bucharest, of October 2004, annulling the fines for three Falun Gong practitioners.

Considering the aspects presented, SIRDO keeps sustaining the cause of the Qigong Romanian Association – Falun Dafa Romania in their interest to inform the Prosecutor’s office on:

- acts of torture committed by police officers who have repeatedly acted violently and taken the practitioners to police stations, who have intimidated and threatened them with imprisonment;
- the obligation to sign statements that contain the recognition of facts that they did not commit;
- the resistance of the Falun Gong practitioners at police headquarters without attorney or other witnesses not to sign incriminating statements and against their accusations of disturbing public order and fines over their material possibilities;
- the threats, obstructions, intimidation of the members of the association in their attempt to exercise their rights.

In order to support the Qigong Romanian Association to exercise their rights related to their belief and freedom of speech, SIRDO asks the member states of the Commission, the UN Rapporteur on torture, the UN Rapporteur of religion and faith, to use the most efficient methods so that the Romanian state should:

- make decisive diplomatic efforts to improve the situation of human rights in China;
- follow the opinion of the Austrian Ministry of External Affairs which, in 2004, claimed to agree the protection of human rights for the practitioners of Falun Gong;
- to consult the Appeal of IGFM (Internationale Gesellschaft für Menschenrechte-Osterreichische Sektion) addressed in 2004 to the Austrian Parliament and Govern concerning the violation of human rights in China and the torture of Falun Gong partisans.
- offer full protection to Romanian citizens and not allow the involvement of the Chinese Embassy in Bucharest in actions of intimidating the Falun Gong practitioners and obstructing their activities;
- recognise the activity of Falun Gong practitioners as legal based on national and international norms regimenting the freedom of association and the right to freedom of speech;

- stop and forbid the actions of intimidation, obstruction, lack of liberty. psychological torture, harassment and abuse of the Romanian Gendarmerie, Police and Internal Information Services.
