

Collateral Childhoods: The Psychological Impact of State Violence on the Children of Human Rights Defenders

Content Note: This report may involve sensitive content such as violence, self-injury, and suicide. Be mindful of self-protection and psychological safety when reading.

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1. Preamble

In contemporary human rights research and public discussion, "state violence" is often understood as direct repression and persecution of dissidents, group protesters, or marginalized groups. However, the effects of violence do not stop at the individual being targeted. It ripples outward, seeping into family structures, altering daily routines, and reaching the most vulnerable, children, in a hidden but lasting way.

Children are often imagined as pure beings far from politics, but they are not left out of the realities of authoritarian governance and oppressive politics. Instead, they are often forced to endure the collateral damage of their parents' repression: their studies are interrupted, their daily lives are unstable, and their psychological security is repeatedly shattered. Because they do not have sufficient cognitive and resistance mechanisms, the traces left by these wounds in their lives are often more far-reaching and difficult to see by society and institutions.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has long made it clear that children should be free from any form of violence and have the right to education, healthy growth and freedom not to be arbitrarily deprived. However, in the experiences of these families of human rights defenders, we see systemic deprivation and invisible punishment: their children are turned away from school, discriminated against on campus, and even witnessed their parents being treated roughly in public places. Children's rights are marginalized in this context, and their psychological needs are perpetually ignored.

Based on the oral accounts and materials of many families who have experienced state violence, this paper focuses on the multiple trauma experiences faced by the "second generation of human rights" in China and abroad. Through these cases, we can not only see how state violence crosses the boundaries of law and system and penetrates into families and daily life, but also understands how this violence has shaped the psychological development and realization of rights of a generation of children.

Horizontal comparison table of cases of children of human rights defenders

Name/pronoun	Family background	encountered State violence	Education and life situation	Psychology and behavior manifestation	Family/Individual Situation	Psychology and emotions Status description
Quanquan (son of Wang Quanzhang)	Father 709 arrested, mother Li Wenzu defended his rights	For a long time, he was forced to move, monitored, and assaulted in the middle of the night with his mother	He interrupted his studies several times and followed his mother to displace	He had nosebleeds, collapsed, and was anxious due to fright	The mother fought tenaciously, and the father was still under surveillance after being released from prison	Lack of security in childhood
Bao Zhuoxuan (son of Wang Yu)	Both parents are lawyers, and 709 was arrested	was handcuffed, detained, and beaten at the age of 16; Later, he failed to smuggle into Myanmar and was arrested again	After returning to China, he was restricted and eventually studied in Australia and the United States and was granted asylum	Depression, anxiety, staying behind closed doors, and suicide threats	His mother compromised on TV and pleaded guilty and sent him abroad	Complex trauma experience, intergenerational trauma transmission is significant
Rabbit (son of Chang Weiping)	His father, Chang Weiping, was arrested after 709	His father was imprisoned, and his mother raised him alone	Education is blocked, and social interaction is lacking	The child is attached to his mother and has a clear sense of isolation	The mother spoke out publicly for support	Lack of fatherhood and risk of developmental trauma
Li Zeyuan (son of Li Heping)	Father 709 arrested, mother Wang Qiaoling defended his rights	The father was imprisoned, his passport was restricted, and he was banned from leaving the country	Unable to go to college, studying abroad is blocked	Depression, depression, and self-learning skills	The mother prayed for companionship, and the son went to work	Adolescent identity frustrated → decreased sense of powerlessness/control
Li Jiamei (daughter of Li Heping)	ditto	The father was arrested, and the mother was under surveillance	School is blocked, and frequent forced transfers	often asked, "How long can I stay", anxiety and uneasiness are obvious	Mothers stick to their families and look for alternative education	Separation anxiety manifests and environmental instability exacerbates psychological vulnerability
Yu Zhenyang (son of Yu Wensheng)	Both parents were arrested and monitored for a long time after 709	Parents were arrested again in 2023, threatening to be arrested if they spoke out.	dropped out of middle school, monitored for a long time, isolated	Two suicide attempts, severe depression	International organizations support this, but actual support is limited	Adolescent trauma + isolation → high risk of suicide
Son of Yang Chunlin	His father was a protester of "Don't Olympic Games, Human Rights"	Exit has been blocked many times	He worked part-time in the Japanese newspaper, and then went to a language school and a private university	Dropped out of school early and took on financial pressure	Self-reliant, relying on a network of dissidents	High resilience, showing the "ordinary magic" of growing in the face of adversity
Tang Zhengqi (daughter of Tang Yoshitian) (died of illness)	His father was a human rights lawyer and was often under house arrest	Because of his father's identity, he was forced to go abroad	He studied at a language school in Japan and worked part-time to make a living	Isolated personality, multiple suicide attempts, self-harm	Living alone and relying on limited support from peers	Depression, self-injurious behavior, and difficulty regulating

						emotions and relationships
He Fangmei's children (4 people)	The mother was arrested and imprisoned as a petitioner	The children were dispersed into foster care and placed in mental hospitals	Lack of education and delayed rehabilitation of disabled children	Introversion, isolation, and severe limitations for children with disabilities	Aunts and aunts took care of them sporadically and lacked support	Attachment deprivation + institutionalized injury → developmental trauma disorder
Zhang Hongyuan (son of Zhang Yi)	His father, Zhang Yi, a human rights defender, was summoned and detained many times	The father was frequently summoned and restricted by the police, and the mother was also threatened	He has changed schools many times due to his parents' suppression, and the educational order has been interrupted	When his father is taken away or his home is attacked by the police, he will choose to play the guqin to soothe himself	The family has been in a high-pressure atmosphere for a long time, but parents struggle to maintain communication and support	Demonstrates strategies for self-regulation through art, embodying resilience potential, but also in a state of tension and anxiety for a long time
One by one (son of independent recorder A)	Single mother, father absent	The mother was summoned, threatened, and blocked from leaving the country	He changed schools many times, was bullied, and dropped out of school in the early days of overseas	insomnia, anxiety, and strong dependence on the mother; Self-proclaimed "burdensome"	The mother insisted on accompanying her to study and finally entered the school, and her symptoms were relieved	Attention difficulties + trauma superimposed, anxious attachment is obvious

2. Research methods

This report is based on oral interviews and public information. Interviewer: Liu Damin, reporter. Focus on state violence, censorship and the business environment. Masterpiece "Weakness". Author: Cang Yue, independent writer and public welfare observer, has long been concerned about state violence and human rights issues, with a special focus on the application of psychology and trauma research to public issues. The research team also includes senior human rights NGOs, human rights lawyers and professional counsellors.

The research team conducted in-depth interviews with family members of human rights defenders (including guardians of minors) and human rights workers between 2024 and 2025, referring to relevant news reports, public statements, legal documents, and information from public welfare organizations. All psychological terms are only state descriptions or theoretical frameworks, and are not used for individual diagnosis. Due to the limitations of samples and methods, direct causality cannot be inferred, and only possible mechanisms and associations are suggested.

In order to present the real situation of the interviewed families as much as possible, the following methods were adopted:

1. Interview method: Mainly semi-structured interviews, flexible adjustment according to individual circumstances. Interviews included the human rights defenders themselves, their spouses and their children, with a focus on family life, educational experiences and psychological feelings.
2. Supplementary information: For some families who were unable to be interviewed directly, the research team referred to their self-reports and records in public media, social platforms and public welfare organizations.
3. Cross-validation: Compare key information through multiple channels to avoid bias caused by a single narrative.
4. Research ethics: All adult respondents and guardians of minors gave informed consent, and minors explicitly expressed voluntary participation. Interviewees can interrupt the interview at any time, and the team provides emotional support and necessary referrals after the visit.
5. Research Positioning: This report is an independent non-governmental study, based on field-based records and analyses by independent writers and observers, with the aim of presenting the impact of state violence on children's mental health and the right to development, and promoting social and international attention and action, rather than clinical psychological diagnosis or academic research.

The research methods of this report also have their own limitations: the sample is limited and mostly concentrated in specific groups, especially lawyer families and urban families in the "709 case". In addition, the data sources focus on oral data, and lack of systematic quantitative data collection and statistical analysis, which may be affected by the interviewer's narrative bias, memory bias, and social expectation effects.

3. The family background and growth experience of the children involved

In the cases of children covered in this report, their upbringing, although different, are shrouded in the same shadow: the continued intrusion of state violence. These children are not trapped by personal choice, but because their parents are surveilled, detained or exiled in their rights activism, faith or social action. Childhood was supposed to be a time of stable attachment and exploration of the world, but their lives were deprived of normal conditions for development from the very beginning.

These families generally present structural breaks. Some children have been raised by single parents since birth, such as the son of independent recorder A, who has always been the only mother who bears all care responsibilities from birth to more than seven years old; Other children lack parental companionship due to parental arrest or long-term surveillance. As a teenager, Bao Zhuoxuan experienced a series of repression and threats from his parents, and his family was forced into exile, causing him to lose the social experience he shared with his peers. Yang Chunlin's son was banned from leaving the country due to his father's protests in middle school; Tang Yoshida's daughter Tang Zhengqi went to Japan, but repeatedly hurt herself in an isolated situation. The most extreme situation occurred in He Fangmei's four children, who were forcibly dispersed into foster care after their mother was arrested, and were even sent to a mental hospital, losing their basic connection with their families.

In this situation, the environment in which children grow up is highly drifting and uncertain. With frequent changes in residence and repeated interruptions in educational opportunities, many children continue to transfer schools in kindergarten, primary and even secondary school, making it difficult to establish stable peer relationships. The son of independent recorder A traveled to Beijing, Chengdu, Malaysia, Thailand and other places, and could hardly form a lasting life order. The deprivation of educational resources is particularly obvious: Yang Chunlin's son entered Nihon University after many years of delay; Tang Zhengqi had difficulty adapting to the language school and gradually withdrew; He Fangmei's disabled child missed the critical period of rehabilitation because he was confined to the hospital for a long time. Psychological research shows that child development requires a predictable life framework to support cognitive and emotional growth, and these children are perpetually disorganized, leading to learning difficulties, attention disorders, and social isolation as the norm.

Trauma at the psychological and health level is particularly prominent in these cases. Some children have typical post-traumatic stress reactions: independent recorder A's son showed strong alertness and fear of any sudden knock on the door after experiencing the scene of the police rushing into the hospital and his mother being taken away, showing the triggering mechanism of traumatic memories. Tang Zhengqi fell into depression for a long time and attempted suicide many times, leaving obvious traces of self-injury on his body. There are also children who show severe separation anxiety, cannot sleep independently, and must rely on their mother's company to gain security. The most worrying thing is that He Fangmei's disabled children have lost the opportunity to improve their mobility during the critical period of skeletal development due to the lack of rehabilitation conditions, resulting in physical disabilities and psychological isolation. Trauma psychology points out that long-term exposure to violence can cause complex trauma, which not only disrupts emotional regulation, but also affects cognitive function and social relationships, and the situation of these children is the concrete reality of this theory.

Still, their lives are not completely covered in despair. Individual children show some resilience in the efforts of their caregivers. In the process of his parents being imprisoned and exiled overseas, Bao Zhuoxuan gradually developed the ability to adapt to external pressures due to mutual support within the family. Independent Recorder A insists on maintaining open communication with his son and never covering up the reality with lies, and this transparent relationship has become an important resource for children to resist chaos. Yang Chunlin's son saved tuition fees by getting up early to deliver newspapers and working part-time, and was

finally admitted to university, showing the tenacity to find a way out in the face of adversity. Psychological research suggests that resilience is not an innate endowment, but rather a dynamic process that is gradually generated through supportive relationships and individual efforts. In these children, the only support often comes from a strong emotional connection with their primary caregiver, and the absence of external social support makes their resilience particularly fragile.

Overall, the experiences of these children shed light on how state violence can create lasting harm at the intergenerational level. Their families are forced to disintegrate, their education and life order are constantly disrupted, and their mental and physical health is damaged for a long time, and the only thing that can be maintained is often the limited protection given by their parents in extreme difficulties. These deprived childhood stories are not only personal misfortunes, but also profound indictments of society and the system.

4. Review of state violence

In the fate of these families, state violence manifests itself in many forms, both as an open judicial repression and as a covert daily intrusion; It is not only a sudden arrest, but also a long-term accumulation of surveillance and deterrence. Parents' actions are defined as "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" or "inciting subversion", and their children are unknowingly involved in endless political games. From a psychological point of view, these violence do not only act on detained adults, but are deeply embedded in children's life experiences and become the background of their growth.

The arrest of Yu Wensheng and Xu Yan is the most eye-catching case. On April 13, 2023, they were detained by police on their way to the EU delegation and subsequently detained in detention centers in Beijing and Suzhou. Yu Wensheng, who had previously been imprisoned for four years for peaceful freedom of expression, this time, he and his wife were once again in prison. Imprisonment and torture not only devastated their bodies, but also plunged their 18-year-old son Yu Zhenyang into a serious psychological crisis after losing the company of his parents. The experience of two suicide attempts shows the intergenerational penetration of state violence: when power tries to suppress parents with fear, children become the most vulnerable bearers in isolation and surveillance. Trauma psychology¹ emphasizes that if adolescent children lose their primary caregivers, they are prone to the collapse of their sense of self-worth and doubts about the meaning of existence, and Yu Zhenyang's situation is a clear confirmation of this theory.

Similar scenarios have occurred in other activist families. Yang Chunlin was sentenced to five years in prison for holding a sign protesting "no Olympics, no human rights" during the 2008 Olympics, and his son was constantly restricted from his right to education as he grew up. When he tried to study abroad, he was stopped by customs and was only able to make the trip the second time. However, this journey did not bring true freedom, and he could only make ends meet by working part-time during his studies in Japan, under the dual pressure of financial constraints and instability. Education was originally a bridge for children to the future, but it became a thorny path under the intervention of state violence.

Wang Yu's son Bao Zhuoxuan was intercepted by the Beijing authorities by extreme means when he tried to travel to a third country via Myanmar, and then failed again to fly from Tianjin to Japan, and his passport was cut off in two corners and invalidated. This incident clearly shows how the state apparatus extends across borders, including underage children in the territory of surveillance and suppression. In a psychological sense, the humiliation and fear of this arrest can easily lead to a decrease in children's sense of

¹ See Peng Meiliu and Xu Haiyun (2023) "The Impact of Left-behind Experience on Children's Mental Health"

powerlessness/control, and they gradually believe that no matter how hard they try, they cannot escape the control of the state.

Tang Jitian's daughter Tang Zhengqi was forced to live in Japan because her father was detained many times. Alone, she struggled to integrate into her peers, and her Japanese school teacher once described her as "stubborn", but in fact, she was withdrawn and self-isolated in the trauma response. According to relevant human rights workers, the prolonged isolation caused her to repeatedly self-harm. Child psychology believes that self-injury is often an alternative behavior when pain cannot be expressed verbally, which is not only a distress signal, but also a sense of control compensation for the out-of-control environment. Tang Zhengqi's experience reminds us to pay attention to the unspeakable despair hidden behind those seemingly "stubborn" silences.

Even more tragic is He Fangmei's family. She was arrested and imprisoned for her long petition and rights activism, and her four children have since been separated. The eldest son is fostered in the home of a villager who has participated in stability maintenance, lacking real emotional care; Two young daughters were sent to a mental hospital and "placed under residential surveillance" with their mother; Children with disabilities gradually lose the possibility of walking in an environment without rehabilitation treatment. Such a fate not only deprives children of their right to education and rehabilitation, but also constitutes an institutionalized neglect. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) clearly states that the State should guarantee children's rights in health, education and the family environment, which are directly torn apart by the state apparatus in reality.

Even in cases that were not taken away, violence permeated in another form. Independent Recorder A was frequently interrogated by the police in his daily life, and was even forcibly taken away in the hospital hall where his child was sick and in infusion. This early traumatic experience can easily leave a deep mark on the brain, and even if the incident itself does not cause direct physical harm, it still sows long-term anxiety and fear in the child's psychological development.

Through these cases, it can be seen that state violence is not a single incident, but a continuous environment. It shapes children's daily realities through multiple mechanisms such as surveillance, intimidation, detention, and family breakup. In this environment, children not only lose secure attachment relationships and educational opportunities, but are also forced to live with constant vigilance against unknown risks. This form of life is the socialized reproduction of complex trauma, which continues between generations, causing families and children to fall into long-term anxiety and pain.

5. Personal and family coping methods

In the face of persistent state violence, these families do not passively endure it, but are constantly looking for ways to cope in a limited space. Their strategies include both external resistance and internal adjustment; There are both open protests and forbearance of self-protection. In the framework of psychology, these coping styles are both survival strategies and traumatic responses.

First, many parents choose to maintain transparent and honest communication within the family to protect their children from deeper confusion. Independent Recorder A has emphasized that she never hides the reality from her son, and even in the most dangerous moments, she tries to explain what happened in a way that children can understand. Such a choice contrasts with traditional "protective silence". Trauma psychology points out that moderate truth telling helps children develop a sense of predictability and prevent them from falling into greater fear due to speculation. In this transparent relationship, the child can at least confirm that the parents are the support they can trust. The core impact of trauma is to create a sense of insecurity and uncontrollability, and to properly inform the child of the truth

and explain to the child what is happening around them, but to give the child a sense of security and control in a situation of extreme change and anxiety.

On the other hand, there are families who oscillate between concealment and informalization. When He Fangmei's sister visited the children, she did not tell them the true situation of her mother, but covered it up with vague explanations to avoid the child from being hit a second time. However, this protection often leads to cracks in children's perception of reality. They feel that their parents are "absent" and cannot understand the reason, which can easily turn into anxiety or anger over time. Attachment theory points out that children are more likely to fall into "insecure attachment" if they do not have a clear explanation when they lose their primary attachment object, which manifests as overdependence or extreme avoidance in future intimate relationships.

At the level of life, many children maintain a certain sense of normalcy through labor and study. Yang Chunlin's son has been working in Japan for a long time, getting up at four o'clock in the morning every day to deliver newspapers and using his savings to pay for tuition. His choice was not only financially inevitable, but also psychologically self-justified: through self-reliance, he strives to regain control of his life. Tang Zhengqi's experience of working in Japan also reflects similar needs. Although isolation and depression caused her to hurt herself repeatedly, during her part-time job, she met some Japanese peers, which brought her short-term social support. Resilience research in children and adolescents² shows that even limited peer relationships can be an important resource in the fight against isolation.

Support networks outside the home are often extremely limited, but sporadic mutual aid still exists. Some dissidents' children have been accepted and helped by overseas communities after going abroad. For example, Yang Chunlin's son met supporters in Japan who not only provided temporary shelter, but also took care of them in their daily lives. Although these mutual support relationships are not enough to replace the companionship of parents, they prevent the complete collapse of the child at a critical moment. However, this support often relies on casual relationships rather than institutionalized safeguards, making it fragile and unstable.

When it comes to psychological adjustment, some children develop unique coping styles. Zhang Yi's son chose to hide in the room to play the guqin when his father was summoned, using music to divert his attention. This seemingly evasive behavior is actually a typical "self-appeasement" strategy that helps individuals establish a momentary sense of order in an out-of-control environment. In contrast, Tang Zhengqi's self-injury is a "negative adjustment" method. She uses physical pain to confirm her existence as a way to combat emotional numbness. Although these behaviors have a protective aspect, they also hint at the seriousness of the psychological crisis. Feminist psychology believes that these are both painful reactions to violence and individual resistance strategies in the face of totalitarian violence.³

It is worth noting that the attitude of parents plays a decisive role in how the child copes. Yu Wensheng's biggest concern in prison is not his own safety, but the psychological condition of his son Yu Zhenyang. His longing reflects the strong emotional bond between father and son, and although this "spiritual companionship" is limited, it may still give the child a certain amount of support invisibly. In contrast, some parents internalize their anger due to prolonged violence, turn it on family members, and even show signs of domestic violence. This situation constitutes a double trauma for children: they have to endure both oppression from external countries and face the harm of their internal families, which often leads to deeper psychological rifts in children. The latter can see that under the influence of

² See Livingston et al. (2025) Resilience, Adversity, and Social Support in Children and Adolescents

³ The book "Feminist Therapy" shows that negative regulation such as dissociation can be regarded as a way of resistance for the victim himself.

external state violence, horizontal violence will also occur within the family, when parents have been exposed to violence for a long time

To sum up, these families are not single, but constantly adjust under different restrictions. Some maintain the integrity of relationships through open communication, some rely on labor and learning to regain a sense of control, some rely on occasional external support to get a respite, and some fall into a cycle of self-harm and violence. Either way, it reflects the struggles and choices of individuals and families under state violence. Their story illustrates that trauma is not only a passive injury, but also a process of continuous interaction with the environment, and coping is a concrete manifestation of this interaction.

6. Perspectives of child psychology and trauma theory

If we look at the external events alone, the difficulties experienced by these children are heavy enough; But the real impact is not limited to the arrest, surveillance and exile itself, but how these events permeate their psychological development. Child psychology and trauma psychology provide an analytical framework that allows us to understand how a child's emotional, cognitive, and social relationships will be profoundly rewritten when they are exposed to unsafe environments for a long time during critical growth periods.

First, attachment theory ⁴reveals the central role of parents in children's psychological development. Attachment theory emphasizes that children need to develop a stable and secure attachment relationship with their primary caregiver early on that provides them with a foundational sense of security to explore the world. However, most of the children involved in this report experienced the absence or wavering of their attachment partner during critical periods. Yu Zhenyang lost the company of his parents at the same time when he was eighteen years old and adolescence, and committed suicide many times; Tang Zhengqi lives alone in Japan, lacks reliable care, and exhibits self-isolation and self-harm behavior; He Fangmei's child was even forcibly deprived of her mother's care and sent to a mental hospital, completely separated from her family. The breakdown of attachment relationships makes them more likely to show anxiety, avoidance, or distrust in future relationships.

Second, theories of PTSD and complex trauma ⁵help explain the recurring emotional and behavioral dilemmas of these children. Complex trauma theory points out that children who have been in a violent and controlling environment for a long time will not only receive a one-time blow in the event, but also form complex trauma in the repeated triggers of daily life. Children's trauma psychology research also shows that when children are subjected to continuous violence, neglect or extreme environmental turmoil, children's brain nerves will show a "survival mode", which means that children will have long-term awakening, fear and anxiety, so as to continue to protect individuals from possible harm, but such long-term reactions may have a drastic impact on children's physical and mental health and even brain neurodevelopment, including children's sense of security, interpersonal distrust, self-isolation, social avoidance, etc⁶. If sustained trauma is experienced earlier, children's brain neurodevelopment is stunted, and even has far-reaching effects on the future, and even in adulthood, it will continue to "freeze" in traumatic childhood experiences. The son of independent recorder A showed extreme alertness to strangers knocking on the door after witnessing his mother being taken away, a typical overvigilance reaction. Tang Zhengqi's self-injury behavior is not only a release of inner pain, but also a common "dissociative regulation" after trauma. These symptoms not only damage their mental health, but also

⁴ See Yang Ya and Cao Xiaojun (2021) "Child Psychological Abuse in Family Relationships"

⁵ See Cook et al. (2005) "Complex trauma in children and adolescents"

⁶ Information on childhood trauma and brain development can be found here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYBUY1kZpf8>

hinder learning and social integration. If these traumatic effects are not effectively intervened and supported, it is foreseeable that the future will affect the adult lives of the "second generation of human rights". Yu Zhenyang's choice of suicide and self-harm is an extreme case and evidence that violence seriously affects children's health.

Third, developmental psychology ⁷reminds us that adolescent children are already in the exploration stage of identity and independence. Developmental theory states that the core task faced by adolescents is "identity vs. role confusion". However, this developmental task becomes nearly impossible when they encounter parental arrest, family breakdown, and social exclusion at the same time. Yu Zhenyang was alone on his 19th birthday and chose to commit suicide, which was not a simple manifestation of depression, but a desperate response to the fundamental question of "who am I". The breakdown of the family, exile, and inability to get support have made Yu Zhenyang seriously doubt his own existence, and even an existential denial, losing the sense of value and meaning of continuing to live, which is also the most devastating inner blow of tyranny to human rights families. Tang Zhengqi's "stubbornness" and isolation also reflect the lack of a clear sense of self-identity in the chaos of the role, and it is also the above-mentioned post-traumatic stress stimulation, he has lost enough resilient social skills in a traumatic environment, thus showing trauma reactions such as isolation, withdrawal, and aggression.

In addition, studies have shown that long-term high-pressure stress is associated with difficulties in memory, attention, and emotional regulation, and that the brain nerves are regulated to high arousal (fighting modes such as alertness and anger) or low arousal (avoidance modes such as numbness, avoidance, dissociation, etc.), and attention and energy are all consumed in response to potential crises, so many traumatized children are very challenging to concentrate academically, unless some children develop a high degree of dissociation to focus on their studies. However, at the expense of interpersonal or emotional experiences (which is also a trauma response in itself), their energy and energy are all spent dealing with inner fears and insecurities, which may explain why some children have attention disorders, learning difficulties, and even drop out of school. Lack of education interacts with neurological damage, putting them at multiple disadvantages in social competition.

However, psychology also points to potential hope. Resilience theory emphasizes that individuals may develop resilience through supportive relationships and positive experiences, even in the face of extreme adversity. In these cases, despite the severe lack of social support, the emotional connection between parents and children still plays a role at a critical moment. Zhang Yi's son soothes himself through music, showing creativity in coping with trauma; Yang Chunlin's son supports his studies through labor, embodying tenacity and a sense of purpose. These signs show that trauma has not completely erased humanity, and that individuals can still try to recover under limited conditions when they have some resources for support and healing. Trauma does not necessarily lead to a complete breakdown, but is closely related to the environment and support conditions.

Taken together, the perspectives of child psychology and trauma psychology reveal a cruel fact: state violence is not only oppression at the legal or social level, it profoundly changes the trajectory of children's psychological development. The disruption of attachment relationships, the accumulation of complex trauma, the blockage of adolescent identity construction, and the impairment of brain development all weave a web of inextricable escape. In this net, the struggles of children, the protection of parents, and sporadic social support constitute the possibility of recovery that is fragile but still flickering.

⁷ Erickson's Psychosocial Development Theory Phase 5 task mentions that the core conflict of adolescent (13-18 years old) individuals is to "gain self-identity" and overcome role confusion

7. Case comparison and commonality model

Looking at the cases of these children, different family backgrounds and experiences form a fragmented but echoing picture. Individual suffering does not exist in isolation, but is repeated in highly similar ways in different families. This similarity shows that the plight of the so-called "children of political prisoners" is not an accident, but an inevitable product of the institutionalized operation of state violence, and even the deeper impact of state violence can be seen through these cases, which is not only reflected in the physical violence and rights restrictions of human rights activists, but also in the destruction of the mental health of individuals and children. State violence can be described as a systematic "extermination" of individual political prisoners and children from the outside to the inside, from the individual to the heart.

First of all, the interruption and limitation of education occur in almost all cases. Wang Quanzhang's son Quanquan was frequently forced to move in Beijing and lost a stable schooling environment; Wang Qiaoling's daughter was repeatedly rejected by the school because of her dual status as a "non-Beijing citizen" and a "child of a political prisoner", and was still discriminated against and ostracized even after reluctantly enrolling; Xie Yanyi's children were publicly labeled as "counter-revolutionary children" in the classroom and bullied by teachers and students. In contrast, although Yang Chunlin's son eventually arrived in Japan, he was repeatedly blocked before going abroad, forming a broken learning trajectory. Education is no longer a channel for upward mobility, but a tool for the state to impose punishment. This deprivation of the right to education not only destroys children's real opportunities, but also destroys their self-identity and future expectations.

Second, the prevalence of mental health crises is equally shocking. Bao Zhuoxuan was repeatedly detained and monitored as a teenager, and was eventually diagnosed with depression and anxiety; Tang Zhengqi was isolated in Japan and frequently hurt himself; Yu Zhenyang attempted suicide twice within a year of his parents' arrest; He Fangmei's child spent her childhood in a mental hospital and lost the possibility of rehabilitation and normal development. All of these situations are the consequences of the "persistent stress" emphasized by trauma psychology. The difference is that some children find a temporary outlet through art or labor, such as Zhang Hongyuan soothes themselves with music, but more children can only fall into despair in isolation.

Furthermore, the breakdown of family structure and the separation of parents and children constitute another common context. Li Wenzu and Wang Quanzhang, Wang Qiaoling and Li Heping, Wang Yu and Bao Longjun, Yu Wensheng and Xu Yan, almost all parents have suffered long-term detention at different stages, causing their children to lose their main attachment objects at critical growth stages. Trauma studies have shown that repeated separation of flesh and blood can lead to disturbances in the attachment system, which in turn further affect children's social relationships and emotional development. Quan Quan was overly frightened by the police breaking into her home in the middle of the night, and Bao Zhuoxuan hid her experience from her parents after being beaten and humiliated to avoid worrying them again. These reactions are both marks of trauma and deformation of the child's relationship with their parents.

At the same time, we can also see similar coping patterns shown by some families. Parents often adopt a "dual strategy": on the one hand, they continue to speak out in public and protect the safety of their families through exposure; On the other hand, efforts are made to maintain the child's psychological stability on a private level, providing support through companionship, prayer, art or small-scale educational practices. Wang Qiaoling insisted on letting her daughter be educated in a homeschool, despite the limited conditions; Wang Yu risked being monitored and still kept in touch with his son; Zhang Yi tried to make up for his absence from his father's duties through letters and studies in prison. While these efforts cannot eradicate institutional oppression, they at least provide some kind of fragile support for children.

If we compare these cases in a larger context, we can find that there are some commonalities between the experiences of "children of political prisoners" and the children of landless peasants and ethnic minority victim families. Whether it is deprivation of education, or monitoring and isolation, the pattern is almost the same. This shows that when the state treats groups that are considered "threatening", it often extends punishment to families and future generations through collective punishment, thereby creating fear and silence. As a result, children's lives are forced to be involved in adult political struggles and lose their independent growth space. Together, their experiences show how state violence can lead to the harm and exploitation of different families in the process of violating human rights in all aspects, and finally children are the most vulnerable chains, and how political violence is passed on to the next generation of children through generations.

The emergence of this common pattern reminds us not to think of these children as isolated victims. The trauma they experience actually reveals the intergenerational mechanism of state violence. They are not simply "collateral harm", but are intentionally involved - their suffering, part of the state's control strategy. Only by understanding this can we push public opinion and international mechanisms to truly turn their attention to these silent minors.

8. The legacy of intergenerational trauma and silence

When state violence enters private life, it leaves behind not only immediate wounds, but also the long-lasting shadows that can transcend time and generations. Both psychological and sociological studies have shown that trauma is often characterized by cross-generational transmission. Parents' fear, humiliation, and sense of oppression are not only reflected in their narratives, but also transmitted to their children through silent behavior, emotional regulation, and the atmosphere of family relationships, so that children internalize their parents' fears and insecurities from an early age, and the existing violent system will trigger a continuous trauma response again, thus becoming a "silent legacy".

This intergenerational effect is particularly pronounced among the children involved in this report. Wang Yu's son Bao Zhuoxuan once said to his mother when he was a teenager: "Who hasn't worn handcuffs and shackles?" This sentence not only reveals his own experience of being tortured, but also reflects the internalization of his parents' trauma in his heart. He did not just witness the suffering of his parents, but regarded this suffering as the "normal" of life, thus downplaying his due pain. This process of internalization is typical of intergenerational trauma: the unhealed wounds of parents are quietly transplanted to the next generation through family interactions.

The same pattern also appears in Wang Qiaoling's family. After Li Heping was released from prison, he was extremely emotionally unstable, and his wife and children suffered from his depression and powerlessness at home for a long time. The son is frustrated because he can't go to school, and the daughter keeps asking, "How long can we live?" Parents' frustration and uneasiness turn into a lasting sense of uncertainty in their children's hearts. Developmental psychology tells us that children need stable "scaffolding" support as they grow up to establish a safe worldview. However, in these families, parents themselves are unable to stabilize their emotions, and as a result, children can only grow up in wandering and fear.

This cross-generational transmission is not only reflected in the emotional and behavioral level, but also in the inheritance of social identity. The label of "children of political prisoners" makes it impossible for these children to get rid of the shadow of their parents even in school or in the social field. Xie Yanyi's children were accused of being "counter-revolutionary sons" by classmates and teachers in class, and this exclusion and humiliation from the outside actually deepened the lock-in effect of intergenerational trauma. Children are forced to inherit their parents' political identity, which is not their choice but determines their social situation.

The deeper legacy lies in "silence". Many children choose not to confess their wounds to their parents, for fear of adding to their parents' pain. Bao Zhuoxuan was beaten in custody, but he hid it from his parents for a long time, and his mother did not know about it until the old man in the family revealed it. This choice of silence itself constitutes a double trauma: on the one hand, the child suffers alone; On the other hand, they bear the responsibility of "protecting their parents", and children who should be protected by their parents become their protectors and caregivers. This premature adulthood is believed in psychology to deprive children of the childhood they deserve, make them mature early in responsibility and loneliness, and at the same time suppress their childhood emotions and physical and mental needs, and are more likely to develop anxiety and depression.

Theories of intergenerational trauma ⁸suggest that unprocessed suffering is often passed on to the next generation in fragmented memories, broken emotions, and a vague sense of identity. In the cases of this report, children often face a dilemma in their relationships with their parents: a desire for understanding and closeness, and a fear of touching unspeakable pain. Their lives are therefore filled with silent tension. This silence is both self-preservation and submission to external violence.

However, this legacy can not only be negative. Some children also gain strength through their parents' fighting spirit. Yang Chunlin's son studied hard in Japan, insisted on labor and self-reliance, and continued his father's attitude of "not giving in"; Zhang Yi's son finds an emotional outlet through music, showing another form of resilience. In other words, it is not only trauma that is passed down across generations, but also resistance and resilience. But unfortunately, the latter requires greater social support, otherwise it is easy to be overwhelmed by ubiquitous surveillance and suppression.

Therefore, the so-called "silent legacy" is both a description of pain and a warning of the future. If these children do not have access to external support, the silence and mistrust they carry are likely to continue to affect their partnerships, parent-child relationships, and even the psychological state of the next generation in adulthood. The chain of intergenerational trauma will be extended and become a lasting wound. This is not only a private plight for families, but also a public issue. Because when trauma is passed down from generation to generation, the trust structure and citizenship of society as a whole will be eroded.

9. New dilemmas in exile and refuge

For some lucky children, leaving China seems to mean a relief. However, the truth is far more complex than it seems. Exile is not the end of suffering, but often becomes the beginning of another form. The new country offers relative security, but it also brings cultural barriers, identity anxiety, and psychological trauma. For these "children of political prisoners", exile is both a way to freedom and a new dilemma. As mentioned in the above-mentioned child trauma psychology, children will develop a pattern of fight or flight in violent and crisis environments, but when they go to another more "safer" country, the trauma reaction may continue to trap them in the past situation, and the brain is difficult to adapt to a more "normal" environment, coupled with cultural isolation, language difficulties, etc., which is tantamount to allowing "children of political prisoners" to experience new physical and mental challenges.

Bao Zhuoxuan's experience is the most representative. He finally arrived in Australia after repeated blockages, destroyed passports, and psychological breakdowns. However, the arrival of safety did not immediately heal the wound. Due to being monitored for a long time, he still had a strong fear of being tailgated by strangers in a foreign country, and his depression recurred and he needed to rely on medication. Changes in the environment cannot

⁸ See Danieli et al. (1998), International Handbook of Intergenerational Trauma Legacy

erase physical and psychological memories, and trauma recurs in a new land. This confirms a basic law of trauma psychology: leaving the place where the trauma occurred is not the same as getting rid of the trauma.

Tang Yoshida's daughter, Tang Zhengqi, also showed this dual situation during her school career in Japan. She ostensibly stayed away from political persecution, but drifted away from her peers in isolation. Even though she had a working partner, she still couldn't integrate into the community and tried to commit suicide many times due to psychological pressure. A teacher at a Japanese language school once described her as "stubborn", which was actually a sign of self-protection. Her stubbornness is precisely the way she coped with the ongoing persecution in the past. For her, choosing not to rely on others is a way to avoid being betrayed or abandoned again. However, this defensive posture made it difficult for her to gain support from new social relationships and fall into deeper loneliness.

Yang Chunlin's son also lives in Japan. He made a living by delivering newspapers and working part-time, and worked hard to complete his studies, showing tenacity beyond his years. However, he faces another kind of pressure: the uncertainty of his identity. He was neither a simple international student nor a complete refugee. Life in Japan requires constant explanation of "who you are", but it is difficult to truly understand. This sense of identity ambiguity often leads to persistent insecurity.

In addition, the problem of poverty caused by exile cannot be ignored. Many children can only rely on part-time jobs to make ends meet, and they have no time to focus on their studies. Tang Zhengqi works at McDonald's, and Yang Chunlin's son delivers the newspaper in the early morning, all of which are portrayals of this economic pressure. Poverty not only limits their educational opportunities, but also exacerbates the psychological burden. Compared to their peers, they must shoulder the responsibilities of adults during adolescence. This premature commitment not only deprives them of childhood, but can also lead to long-term exhaustion and despair.

The more hidden dilemma is cultural estrangement and social isolation. While exile provided them with physical security, language barriers, cultural differences, and a lack of belonging left them marginalized in their new environment. Studies have shown that immigrant children are very vulnerable to "separation strategies" if they lack effective social support, that is, they cannot integrate into the mainstream culture and are separated by their native culture. Tang Zhengqi's isolation is a manifestation of this "separation strategy", and Bao Zhuoxuan's fear reaction also makes it difficult for him to establish a new social network.

However, exile is not without hope. In some cases, children receive new support through labor, art, or religion. Zhang Yi's son Zhang Hongyuan accompanied himself with the guqin in the Netherlands, using music as an outlet for emotional expression. This way of self-healing, although fragile, at least provides him with a reason to continue his life. Yang Chunlin's son also found a mutual aid network in Japan to connect with families in the same difficult situation, alleviating some of the isolation. These experiences show that even in a foreign country, the effects of trauma can be partially repaired if you can gain social acceptance and support.

Overall, exile is not a single salvation, but a complex turning point. It keeps children away from direct state violence, but pushes them to new psychological and social margins. Identity dilemmas, poverty, isolation and persistent trauma keep them in a high-risk situation. This "double dilemma" reminds us that focusing on the trauma of "children of political prisoners" must not only focus on their situation in China, but also extend to their living conditions overseas. Otherwise, the trauma will only continue to repeat itself in their lives in a new form.

10. Lack of social support and limited assistance

In the study of child psychology, social support is generally considered to be one of the most effective protective factors against trauma and adversity. Whether it is support within the family, or assistance from schools, communities, and social organizations, it can cushion the impact of trauma to a certain extent. However, for the children in this report, they are faced with a serious lack of support systems. State violence not only directly hits parents, but also cuts off almost all external support children may have access to through lockdowns, stigmatization, and expulsion, leaving them with indigestible pain in isolation. The serious lack of support system has also caused them to suffer many re-traumas, and have also experienced countless "betrayal" traumas: a country that is supposed to protect and support them has abandoned and hurt them again and again, and even forced them to give up themselves and their lives.

The most direct deficiency is reflected in the exclusion of the education system. Wang Qiaoling's daughter was denied admission by the school because of her "non-Beijing" status and her parents' political background, and even after enrolling, she was discriminated against and bullied because of the label of "child of political prisoners". Xie Yanyi's children were named and humiliated in class, and teachers and classmates participated in the exclusion, turning the school from a place that should provide growth and protection to a scene of secondary harm. Quanquan was forced to transfer schools in Beijing many times, and the interruption of his educational rights prevented him from getting a stable learning environment. The indifference and hostility of the education system have caused these children to suffer additional damage at the stage when they need support the most.

Medical and psychological assistance is also lacking. Although Bao Zhuoxuan was diagnosed with depression and anxiety, he had little access to effective treatment in China and did not begin to receive medication until he was in exile. Yu Zhenyang attempted suicide many times after his parents were arrested, but he was under police surveillance and isolation for a long time without continuous psychological support. He Fangmei's child was forcibly admitted to a mental hospital, not only did not receive rehabilitation, but missed the critical period due to isolation and lack of rehabilitation conditions, and was even controlled as a political tool. This lack of assistance reflects the institutional disregard for children's basic health and mental health rights.

At the community level, neighbors and peers often distance themselves from these families due to fear or stigma. Many children mention being isolated at school or in their community and having few peers. Quanquan was afraid that the police would break into the door in the middle of the night, so he would rather stay at home and take online classes; Tang Zhengqi lacks trust in Japan and can only maintain superficial social interactions with strangers in part-time jobs. This isolation greatly exacerbates their psychological dilemma. Isolation not only means lack of companionship, but also means that they have no channels to talk to and ask for help. At the same time, this situation of isolation and isolation again has made them bear more stigma, and even internalized this stigma and shame, feeling that they cannot get along with their peers, and even lost their sense of dignity and security as human beings.

Limited support comes more from informal networks. After Wang Yu was released, some friends tried to help Bao Zhuoxuan arrange to go abroad; Yang Chunlin's son received help from some dissidents in Japan; Zhang Yi's son found musical companionship through his father's friends. While this aid is valuable, it is far from enough to combat systemic exclusion. The lack of institutionalized, long-term support keeps these children's lives on the brink of instability.

The international community and human rights organizations have paid some attention to this group. For example, Amnesty International's appeal to the cases of Yu Wensheng and Xu Yan clearly pointed out the mental health plight of his son Yu Zhenyang; Some overseas organizations have provided scholarships and temporary accommodation for children in exile. But this assistance is often fragmented and inadequate, making it difficult to form a lasting

protection net. Compared with the total suppression of the state apparatus, the power of social support seems too weak.

Psychological research ⁹shows that resilience is formed on three key elements: a stable caregiving relationship, a predictable environment, and positive social connections. These three are almost completely absent in the situation of "children of political prisoners". Parents are frequently arrested, and the family structure is unstable; Residences are constantly being forced to move, and life is full of uncertainty; Society cuts them off because of fear. Ultimately, these children can only rely on the limited persistence of themselves and their parents in the face of adversity. This is also the systematic exclusion and destruction caused by tyranny.

Thus, the lack of social support not only means that these children lose the opportunity for recovery and development, but also reveals another goal of state violence: to drive them into despair through isolation and stigmatization, multiplying the cost of resisters. Although limited assistance has provided hope in individual cases, the children as a whole still lack a systematic protective net. Their vulnerability is thus magnified, and the trajectory of their lives is deeply rewritten.

11. Perspectives on international law and children's rights

When we turn our attention from the individual and family level to the framework of international law, we will find that what these children encounter is not just "family misfortune", but a systematic violation of internationally recognized children's rights. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted in 1989, clearly states that every child has a fundamental right to survival, development, education and freedom from violence. However, in almost every case involved in this study, there was a flagrant denial of rights.

The first is the right to education. Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child explicitly requires States parties to recognize the right of children to education and to ensure that education is universally achieved under conditions of non-discrimination. However, Wang Qiaoling's daughter encountered barriers to enrollment due to her status as a "non-Beijing citizen" and a "child of political prisoners"; Xie Yanyi's children were openly discriminated against by teachers and students; Quanquan lost his stable academic environment due to frequent forced relocation of his family. These illustrate that the education system not only fails to meet its guarantee obligations, but is also mobilized as a tool of punishment. This practice of depriving educational opportunities on the basis of parental status is a direct violation of the "principle of non-discrimination" emphasized by the CRC (Article 2).

The second is the right to freedom from violence and torture. Article 37 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. However, Bao Zhuoxuan was handcuffed and shackled, beaten and deprived of sleep when he was a minor; He Fangmei's child was admitted to a mental hospital and forcibly isolated in non-medically necessary situations. These practices not only violate the CRC but also violate the Convention against Torture (CAT). Under the framework of international law, any use of children as a bargaining chip to pressure parents constitutes a serious violation of human rights.

Third, children have the right to be reunited with their parents. Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children should not be forcibly separated from their parents unless it is in their best interests. However, in the "709" case and its subsequent cases, a large number of children were forced to be separated due to the arrest of

⁹ See Livingston et al. (2025) Resilience, Adversity and Social Support in Childhood and Adolescents

their parents. Yu Zhenyang was separated from his parents for a long time during adolescence, leading to severe depression; Quanquan lost his father's company for more than four years; He Fangmei's children were deprived of their mother's care in infancy and lost the key attachment development period. All of this shows that the Chinese authorities have disregarded the principle of the best interests of the child in handling human rights defenders' cases.

In addition, Article 12 of the CRC emphasizes children's right to participate and requires respect for children's freedom to express their opinions. But in these cases, children's voices are often silenced or even punished. When Yu Zhenyang was warned that "if you speak out, you will be arrested", his right to express himself was completely deprived. In fact, children not only do not have the opportunity to make their voices heard, but are stigmatized by their parents' words and deeds, forming a "double silence".

The international community has taken note of this phenomenon. The UN Human Rights Council Special Rapporteur has repeatedly called on the Chinese government to stop repressing family members; Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and other organizations also emphasized in the report that the "collective punishment" strategy is a serious violation of international human rights law. However, the Chinese government often emphasizes improvements in child welfare in its reports on the Rights of the Child, while making no mention of these politically implicated groups. This selective silence is an evasion of the obligation of international law.

From a broader perspective, these cases are not only about the fate of individual families, but also about the effectiveness of international human rights mechanisms. If States parties continue to ignore serious violations of children's rights in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the international community lacks substantive accountability, the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be reduced to empty text. In other words, what happened to these children is not only a tragedy for the family, but also a consequence of the lack of international institutional safeguards.

Therefore, from the perspective of international law, it can be clearly pointed out that the Chinese authorities have systematically violated a number of core provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in dealing with the families of human rights defenders. The lack of children's rights is not accidental, but an extension of state violence at the family level. To truly protect the future of these children, it is necessary not only to make efforts from families and society, but also to enable the international community to assume its due legal and moral responsibilities through institutionalized pressure and supervision.

12. Conclusion and call to action

When we look back at the growth trajectory of these children, it is clear that they are not isolated victims, but the product of a systematic repression mechanism. State violence does not stop at the imprisonment, torture and deprivation of liberty of individual human rights defenders, but creates intergenerational fear and trauma through the repression of children. Children are supposed to grow up in a safe, caring, and stable environment, but are forced to learn how to survive in the face of violence and uncertainty.

At the psychological level, anxiety, insomnia, hypervigilance, attachment disorders, academic interruptions and interpersonal estrangement exhibited by these children are typical symptoms of PTSD and complex trauma. Some of them have lost their emotional connection with their parents due to long-term separation, some have encountered discrimination and bullying on campus, some have been burdened with responsibilities beyond their years in exile, and some have to give up their lives to gain "liberation". Research in child psychology has repeatedly emphasized that childhood trauma not only affects immediate emotions and behaviors, but may also cause long-term social adjustment difficulties and intergenerational psychological burden.

At the societal level, these encounters reveal the reality of public systems such as education, healthcare, and social welfare being embroiled in political repression. School refusal, teacher discrimination, hospital cooperation and monitoring, and even the shackles of the household registration system have further deprived children of their right to survive and develop. This "inferior citizenship" status shaped by institutional discrimination not only tears apart individuals, but also undermines the basic fairness of society.

At the level of international law, the Chinese government, as a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, has systematically violated a number of obligations: the principle of non-discrimination, the principle of the best interests of the child, the right to education, the right to freedom from violence, the right to family reunification and the right to expression. Children are used as bargaining chips to pressure their parents, which is not only a violation of human rights, but also a departure from international conventions.

Therefore, this report is not only a record of the life trajectory of these children, but also an appeal to society and the international community. We put forward the following points:

First, face up to the situation of children in political persecution. Regardless of political position, minors should not bear the cost of their parents' choices. Academia, the media, and the public need to pay attention to each other and put their stories at the center of public discussion.

Second, establish a social support network. Domestically, civil society, public welfare organizations, and educators should be encouraged to provide compensatory support for these children, including counselling, academic assistance, and social integration. Overseas, multinational public welfare organizations and diaspora communities should share the responsibility for acceptance and assistance.

Third, promote the implementation of international monitoring mechanisms. The Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council and the review of State party reports by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child should include these cases on the agenda. International NGOs and academic institutions should continue to provide evidence to prompt States parties to be questioned and recorded.

Finally, and most fundamentally, the legitimacy of "collective suppression" must be questioned and limited. Any state apparatus that punishes family members violates the most basic bottom line of human rights protection. If this mechanism is not contained, then the trauma will span generations, depriving not only parents of freedom, but also of their children's future.

In addition, we emphasize the importance of social support and active intervention: timely intervention by non-profit organizations, schools, mental health institutions, and community groups can provide emotional support and practical help to traumatized children, such as psychological counseling, learning assistance, and social integration programs. These interventions can help children restore order to their daily lives, rebuild their sense of belonging, and improve their ability to face future uncertainties. Continuous care and specific assistance can promote their psychological recovery, allowing them to gradually repair their once broken childhood. Only through multi-party cooperation and sustained attention can we ensure that these children regain the strength they need to grow.

The story of these children is not the end, but the beginning. As child psychologist Winnicott said: "There is no so-called independent baby, only the baby and the caregiver." "Similarly, the fate of these children is not only their own destiny, but also closely linked to whether society as a whole can protect the most vulnerable lives.

Only when society acknowledges and repairs the harm suffered by these children, and when the international community acts on its commitment to children's rights, can we say that this record is not just a testimony to suffering, but a first step towards change.

Special tip: If you or someone close to you is experiencing a psychological crisis or has thoughts of self-harm or suicide, contact your local emergency services or psychological crisis intervention hotline immediately for professional help. You are not alone, there are people willing to listen and offer support.

📎 Attached: Relevant websites/resources

- Chinese mainland: National psychological assistance hotline: 12320 (some areas), Beijing Psychological Crisis Intervention Center: 800-810-1117 or 010-82951332
- Hong Kong: Samaritan Suicide Prevention Hotline: +852-2389-2222
- Taiwan: Anxin Hotline: 1925 (24 hours)
- United States: National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 988
- UK: Samaritans Samaritans Society 116 123
- Australia: Lifeline 13 11 14

📎 More international resources: Visit <https://findahelpline.com> to find out about local psychological assistance hotlines around the world.