

ANNUAL REPORT

VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



2023



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM
MEMORIAL FOUNDATION™

MISSION

To educate future generations about the ideology, history, and legacy of communism.

OBJECTIVES

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC) is an educational, research, and human rights nonprofit organization devoted to commemorating the more than 100 million victims killed by communism around the world and to pursuing the freedom of those still living under totalitarian regimes.



WE'RE TELLING THEIR STORIES





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A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

A child who nearly starved to death in North Korea... Another who survived the Cambodian genocide... Another who was responsible for traveling internationally alone with his three younger siblings from Romania to the United States without knowing a word of English... Yet another who boarded a ferry from Havana to Miami, not knowing when he would see his parents again....

These are the true stories of victims of communism—the stories the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation is telling **thanks to your support**. Still today, over 1.5 billion people endure the scourge of despotic regimes. The Chinese Communist Party’s brutal treatment of Uyghurs, Venezuela’s deepening humanitarian crisis, and Ukraine’s brave stand against Russian aggression are stark reminders of the enduring threat of totalitarianism. Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.

Despite these challenges, 2023 was a year of resilience and solidarity. The international community has taken greater strides in recognizing the gravity of these issues and extending support to those affected. The Victims of Communism Museum has become a hub of remembrance and education—welcoming a large and growing audience, and amplifying the narratives of the victims of communism.

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation carries the mandate of the 100 million killed by communism’s cruelty and those forced to live under communist regimes: “*Remember Us.*” And so we shall. Our mission is clear as we honor their memory and advocate for liberty against tyranny.

We stand committed and grateful for the support that empowers our cause. Together, we can educate future generations about the ideology, history, and deadly legacy of communism.

We thank you for standing with us in this noble endeavor. **We must never forget the victims of communism.**



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth Spalding".

Elizabeth Spalding, Ph.D.
Chairman



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric Patterson".

Eric Patterson, Ph.D.
President and CEO

2023 IMPACT: BY THE NUMBERS

In 2023, we published:

6

Special Reports

23

Witness Project Videos

5

Witness Project Podcasts

4

Educational Videos

We launched:

- Witness Project Podcast
- State-based teacher seminars
- Xinjiang Person Search Tool expansion

Online, VOC made an impression across various platforms:

71,400

Twitter Followers

43,000

Facebook Followers

253,000

Website Views

6 MILLION

Video Views

9 MILLION

Impressions on Social Media

Our in-person and online events educated thousands:

30

Schools Visited the VOC Museum

83

Events

20,060

Event Attendees

Our experts made a high impact in the media:

15

TV Appearances

6

Radio Appearances

560

Media Mentions

23

Op-Eds and Blog Posts

EDUCATION



Victims of Communism Museum

In June 2022, the Victims of Communism Museum opened its doors, realizing a quarter-century aspiration of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VOC) to establish a museum in the capital of the free world. Its prime location near the White House underscores America's role as a sanctuary for those fleeing communist oppression. The museum's galleries, focused on Revolution, Repression, and Resistance, offer a somber voyage through the history of communism, from the Russian Revolution to the contemporary fight against totalitarianism.



The museum has already welcomed over 1,350 students from dozens of schools as well as thousands of visitors and tourists, immersing them in the complex history of communism through interactive tours and discussions with survivors. These programs aim to dismantle misconceptions and instill a deeper understanding of the ideology's harsh realities. The powerful *Gulag Collection*, a unique collection of 50 paintings by Ukrainian artist and Gulag survivor Nikolai Getman, further anchors the museum's narrative, offering a haunting visual remembrance of the Gulag's grim legacy.

The museum's strategic growth has been bolstered by significant team expansions, with new hires enhancing our communications and academic outreach. This growth reflects the museum's success in drawing new donors and partnerships and reinforcing our Foundation's mission to educate and remember.





In 2023, we were honored to open our doors to the future generation of leaders with an unprecedented 30 school visits, reaching a total of 1,062 students from various educational institutions. Among these, Cardozo DC Public School and Saint Rita School stood out for their enthusiastic participation and insightful discourse during their visits. These interactions are crucial for educating future generations about the importance of freedom and democracy, ensuring the impact of the museum's work was significantly amplified by the visits of high-profile leaders who have shown a commitment to our cause.

We were privileged to host the former Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison, whose presence underscored the global importance of acknowledging the consequences of totalitarian regimes. Mr. Morrison's visit brought international attention to our educational efforts and served as a beacon of solidarity for victims of communism worldwide.

Adding to the museum's international reach, we were graced by the visit of Romania's Minister of Culture, Raluca Turcan. This visit not only celebrated the shared values between our nations, but fostered a dialogue about the cultural resilience and preservation of history in the face of oppressive ideologies.

Furthermore, a visit from members of the Air Force Directorate marked a significant milestone in our collaborative efforts. The strategic discussions and exchanges that took place have laid a foundation for future initiatives aimed at promoting human rights and democratic principles on a global scale.

The generosity of our donors has been the backbone of these achievements. Every exhibition curated, each story told, and the growing number of informed individuals are a testament to the importance of your support. As we look towards the future, we are empowered by your contributions to continue our vital work. The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that the truth about communism is known and that those who suffered are never forgotten.



Scott Greenblatt
11 reviews



★★★★★ 7 months ago

Without hesitation, the Victims of communism museum is the standard bearer of communicating the toll communist states have on human life.
- For the sake of our principles, America won't look the other way.

With great appreciation to the museum, leadership, and staff ensuring that this message is communicated far and wide.

anybody visiting Washington DC, strongly encouraged to visit this museum for a short tour, it will be time well spent.

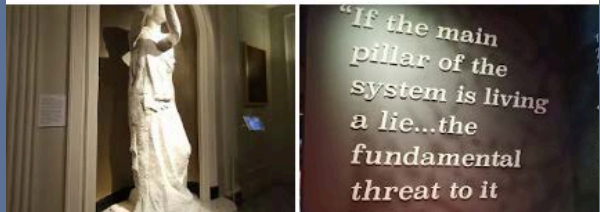


T McCarthy
Local Guide · 206 reviews · 231 photos



★★★★★ 4 months ago

This small museum packs a powerful impact. It's very worth adding to your itinerary while you are in Washington DC. There is no charge although they do accept donations and you do need to make a reservation. We were fortunate that on the day we were there, there was a temporary exhibit that included a profound VR movie experience. It was simply incredible and substantially more impactful than we had thought we would find at this museum. An additional bonus was that the creators of this exhibit happened to be present that day from Poland and we were able to speak with them directly. The permanent exhibits remind us of the damage done by communism all over the world still today and the people that still need help and support. The staff at this museum are all incredibly friendly and helpful and personally invested. We are so glad we took the time to visit this museum and encourage others to do so as well.



Frank Cohen
Local Guide · 210 reviews · 493 photos



★★★★★ a year ago

All the 1-star reviews are obviously politically motivated. Ignore them. This place is fascinating. You'll end up spending all day wandering through these meticulously curated and excellently narrated exhibits. How unsettling that so many reviewers be propagandists eager to gloss over the horrors of Communist regimes. Please Google Reviews, do some culling.

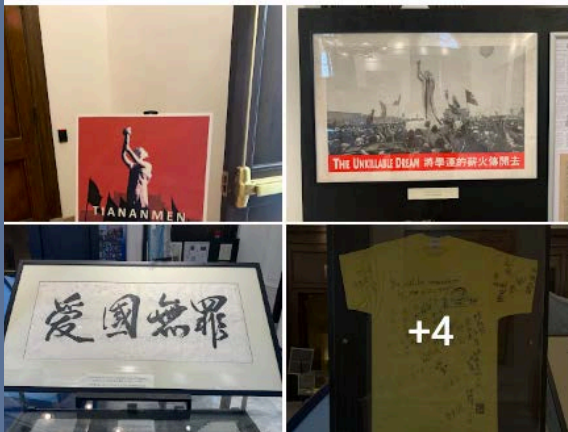


Kenny Yue
Local Guide · 13 reviews · 39 photos



★★★★★ a year ago

Incredible place to visit and highly recommend for everyone to learn what's communist done to the world. I especially enjoy the visit to the Tiananmen Square exhibition. It's great!



William West Hopper (DC Car Guy)
Local Guide · 571 reviews · 2,158 photos

★★★★★ 2 months ago

A timely place to visit and it's free to visit. Interesting history of the world and the struggle humans have had with communist regimes.



Melissa Colby
17 reviews · 4 photos



★★★★★ 5 months ago

Great museum that depicts the destruction wrought by Communism. I took my kids to show them the outcome of a world devoid of religion and freedom. Even at a young age, they clearly could see how destructive the outcome is for the individual. The art spoke to my 5-year-old and made the concept come alive.



Laurencio Ronquillo

Local Guide · 1,796 reviews · 7,700 photos

★★★★★ 6 months ago

It is a fantastic little space museum full of history and facts. The first floor is very interactive and amazingly presented.

The second floor has a rotating exhibit. In this case, it was the Czech ... [More](#)



Chad Nusbaum

Local Guide · 29 reviews · 17 photos

★★★★★ a year ago

Undiscovered gem! Highly recommended. Not large, but you will need time to read and watch the short movies to get a full appreciation. I plan on returning on my next visit to DC, to better remember some of the interesting historical details.



Gary Ault

7 reviews · 1 photo

★★★★★ 2 weeks ago **NEW**

Very informative displays that reveal the nature of communism.



Like



Share



Austin Graff

Local Guide · 3,196 reviews · 50,342 photos

★★★★☆ a year ago

Decades in the making, the Victims of Communism Museum opened in the summer of 2022 inside a historic downtown D.C. building associated with the country's labor movement. After visiting at 10 a.m. on a Monday in August, here's my experience:

1) Exhibit: The permanent exhibit is on the ground floor and takes you through 3-4 rooms. There are a few artifacts, but most of the story is experienced through reading placards and watching 5-8 minute movies throughout. Having grown up in Russia, I found the history lesson interesting. The exhibit focuses on the human toll on communist regimes.



Robert Harmala

3 reviews

★★★★★ 2 months ago

Outstanding smaller and overlooked new museum in DC. A great memorial to victims of totalitarian regimes and power of human's to resist. Well worth a visit.



Sandi Newman

Local Guide · 111 reviews · 5 photos

★★★★★ 3 months ago

An amazing new museum that is a must-2 for those who want to understand some of what is going on within this world.

CUBAN COMMUNIST PRISON EXHIBITION



As we look back on the influence of our “Cuban Communist Prison” exhibition, we are reminded of the power of art to convey the stark realities of political oppression. This temporary gallery, which opened its doors to an engaged public, served as a vivid testament to the enduring spirit of the Cuban people who have suffered under the weight of communism since 1959.

The exhibition, featuring heart-wrenching works by Cuban activists, offered a window into the lives of thousands of political prisoners and their families. Through interviews, a meticulously crafted timeline, and evocative artwork, visitors were transported into the depths of Cuba’s history of repression and civil unrest. The gallery not only educated but also stirred emotions, inspiring a deeper understanding of the human costs of political imprisonment.

Our donors played a critical role in bringing this important narrative to light. It was your generous support that enabled us to showcase internationally recognized artists like Tania Bruguera and Angel Delgado, whose personal experiences of Cuban imprisonment lend authenticity and urgency to their art. Hamlet Labastida’s “República Carcelaria” series and Annelys Perez Marrero’s data-driven prison maps further highlighted the systematic nature of Cuban political detention.

The exhibition was enriched by the documentation of “Patria y Vida,” a song that has become synonymous with Cuban resistance, which was captured through the lens of Anyelo Troya. At the exhibition opening event, the participation of Keylilli de la Mora, a young refugee and former political prisoner, provided a poignant and personal narrative that connected visitors to the ongoing struggle for freedom in Cuba.

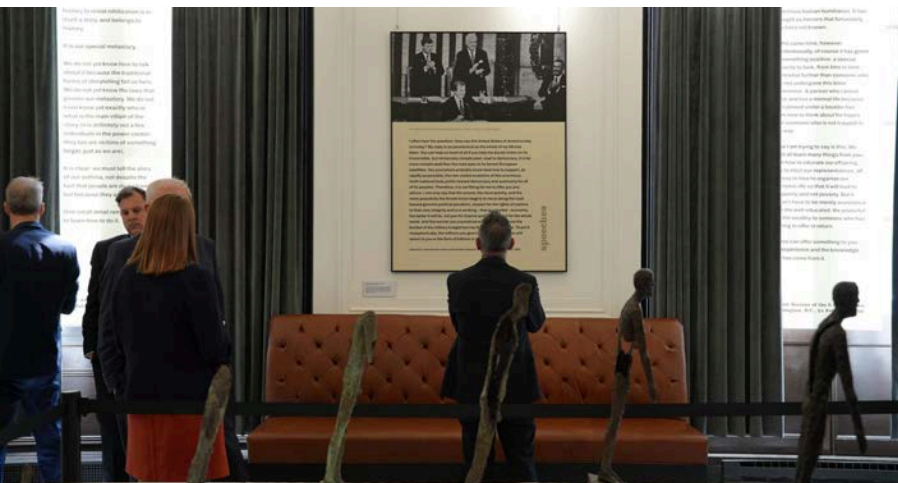
This exhibition, produced in collaboration with Valia Garzon Art Services, would not have been possible without the partnership of our donors. Your contributions have enabled us to honor the stories of resilience and resistance that must be told. Although the Cuban Communist Prison gallery is now physically closed, we carry forward the commitment to remember and advocate for those who remain silenced by tyranny.

VÁCLAV HAVEL: FROM DISSIDENT TO PRESIDENT EXHIBITION

The “Václav Havel: From Dissident to President” temporary exhibition, was displayed at the Victims of Communism Museum from May-September 2023. It brought to life the indomitable spirit of Václav Havel, a man whose legacy transcends borders and generations.

Chronicling Havel’s evolution from a pre-revolutionary dissident and playwright to the first President of the Czech Republic, the exhibition offered an intimate look at a leader whose philosophical insights and political actions shaped the course of history. The Velvet Revolution’s triumph and the Czech Republic’s subsequent embrace of democracy were vividly narrated through Havel’s most influential writings, personal artifacts, and immersive audio-visual footage.

The centerpiece of the exhibit, a bronze model of the Disappearing Man statuary, powerfully symbolized the erasure of individuality under totalitarianism and stood as a tribute to those who endured the oppression of communism. This first-time display in the United States served as a stark reminder of the resilience of the human spirit against the forces of tyranny.



This exhibition was brought to fruition through collaboration with esteemed institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the Embassy of the Czech Republic in the United States, and the Václav Havel Library in Prague, among others. The unwavering support of the Arco Family Foundation, the Stapleton Charitable Trust, and other dedicated sponsors, partners, and individuals was crucial in sharing Havel’s remarkable story with a wider audience.

The inaugural event, graced by dignitaries and scholars, set the tone for an exhibition that both recounted history and inspired dialogue on human rights and democracy. The powerful remarks delivered by esteemed guests like Markéta Pekarová Adamová, President of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, and Czech Ambassador Miloslav Stašek underscored the exhibition’s significance in the context of global freedom and civic responsibility.

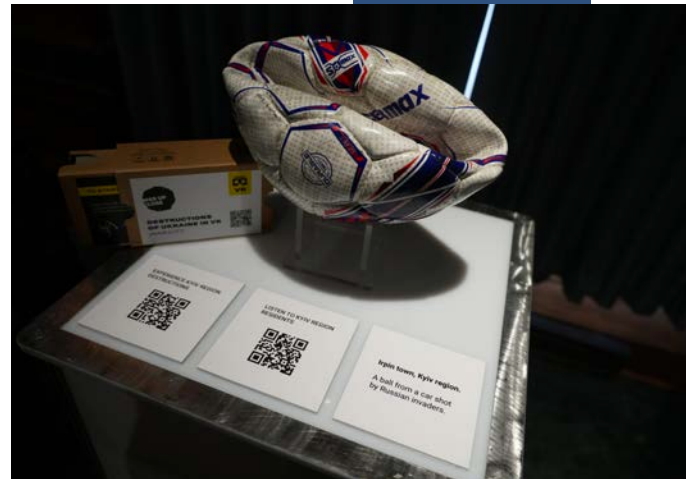
“WAR UP CLOSE” VIRTUAL REALITY EXHIBITION

In an expression of solidarity and commitment to truth, VOC hosted the “War Up Close” Virtual Reality Exhibition at the Victims of Communism Museum. This groundbreaking project was conceived with a resolute purpose: to amplify the voices of those affected by the ongoing conflict in Ukraine and to showcase the harrowing consequences of Vladimir Putin’s aggressive war.

The exhibition unfolded across nine thematic installations, each meticulously crafted to convey the raw reality of war with unflinching honesty. Visitors were enveloped in a 360-degree narrative, surrounded by the echoes of buildings shattered, communities fractured, and lives irrevocably altered. The immersive power of virtual reality gave a stark presence to the distant turmoil, bridging miles and emotions and bringing the battlefield into the heart of our museum.

With the generous support of our donors, we were able to host “War Up Close,” which not only educated and moved our local community but helped us build inroads into groups affected by aggressive and tyrannical governments. These partnerships are key in developing large and diverse coalitions united in the same belief in freedom and liberty.

We are deeply grateful to our supporters, whose contributions made it possible to host such a poignant exhibition for the local community. Your unwavering support ensures that the truth prevails, the memories endure, and the fight for freedom presses on.



“WHEN REBELLION IS AN ACT OF JUSTICE” EXHIBITION



The second anniversary of the July 11, 2021 Cuban pro-democracy protests (“11J”) marked a poignant moment for global solidarity with Cuba’s call for freedom. In remembrance of this pivotal uprising and to honor those still suffering under the shadow of communist tyranny, VOC curated a series of virtual reality art exhibitions. “When Rebellion is an Act of Justice” unveiled the stark realities faced by Cubans post-11J through the compelling narratives captured by visual artists.

Silent Screams, set amidst the vibrant Cuban cultural bastion of Calle 8 in Miami, echoed the defiance and resilience of a new generation of Cuban graphic artists. Their bold “artivism” shone a light on the national outcry against injustice and commemorated the political prisoners of the movement, ensuring their struggles would not be forgotten.

Inhabiting Cuba offered a glimpse into the public discourse shaped by three prolific urban artists, whose origins in graffiti artistry painted a vivid picture of dissent and hope across the island's streets. *The One Year Since the Cry for Freedom* exhibition brought together a collection of 12 evocative pieces from artists both on and off the island. Their collective yearning for a future where artistic expression is unchained from fear underscored the exhibitions’ overarching message of liberty and human rights.

These curated experiences did more than showcase artistic talent; they amplified the voices of the silenced and laid bare the truth of Cuba’s plight under communism. Through the eyes of its artists, the world witnessed the valorous fight for basic human rights—a fight that continues to resonate within and beyond Cuba’s borders.



VICTORIA 1920: BATTLE FOR WARSAW VIRTUAL REALITY EXHIBITION

From September 14 to September 15, 2023, VOC was honored to host an evocative virtual reality experience, “Victoria 1920.” This immersive event allowed guests to step back in time to witness the pivotal Battle of Warsaw, a series of battles in which Poland triumphed over the Soviet Red Army in 1920. The narrative was brought to life with breathtaking 360-degree technology, courtesy of the esteemed Niepodlegla Office from Warsaw and in partnership with the Polish National Foundation.

“Victoria 1920” encapsulated the spirit and bravery of the Polish forces during this battle, also referred to as “Miracle on the Vistula.” Our supporters and attendees were transported to the heart of the battle over a century ago, gaining an understanding of the struggle against communist forces.

Thanks to the generous contributions of our donors, we were able to bring a crucial piece of anti-communist history to the locals of Washington, D.C.



HOLODOMOR THEN; GENOCIDE NOW; JUSTICE WHEN? EXHIBITION



From October 2, 2023 to February 4, 2024, the Victims of Communism Museum opened the compelling temporary gallery, “Holodomor Then; Genocide Now; Justice When.” This evocative exhibition, curated in collaboration with the U.S. Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor Genocide Awareness and the Embassy of Ukraine, guided visitors through the tragic saga of the Ukrainian Famine, known as “the Holodomor,” and its enduring connection to the modern struggle for freedom in Ukraine.

As visitors visited the exhibition, they encountered a poignant collection of witness accounts and a heartfelt replica of the Holodomor Memorial, located just one block from the Victims of Communism Memorial in Washington, D.C. The photographs taken by Alexander Weisenberger, a chronicler of the Holodomor, offered a visceral glimpse into the suffering endured during this dark period.

The gallery also made a contemporary connection, displaying relics from the current war in Ukraine, such as shrapnel and photographs that laid bare the scars of Vladimir Putin’s invasion on Ukraine. By juxtaposing the past and present, the exhibition highlighted the continuous thread of resistance against oppression and the quest for truth and justice.



VOC Hosts Inaugural Bipartisan Event of House Select Committee on China



In a landmark event held at the Victims of Communism Museum on February 27, 2023, VOC illuminated the pervasive human rights atrocities perpetrated by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The bipartisan exchange, led by Committee Chairman, Representative Mike Gallagher, and Ranking Member, Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi, was not merely a discussion but a potent testimony to the resilience of truth in the face of oppression.

The event featured a panel of courageous witnesses who, each in turn, recounted their harrowing experiences under the CCP's brutal policies. Zhou Fengsuo, a beacon of the Tiananmen Square protests, shared his indelible insights alongside Tursunay Ziyawudun, a stalwart Uyghur dissident. Elfidar Iltebir, Abdulhakim Idris, Dimon Liu, and Wei Jingsheng further provided powerful narratives, painting a vivid picture of the plight faced by millions.

VOC's commitment to unmasking the CCP's crimes was duly recognized. Our efforts in exposing the Xinjiang Police Files were hailed as "absolutely groundbreaking" by Chairman Gallagher. The Files, a chilling ledger of the CCP's systematic abuses, serve as a testament to VOC's unwavering dedication to research and truth.

As the world grapples with the CCP's far-reaching influence, VOC's role in education, human rights, and research remains a bulwark against the tide of tyranny. This event, one of many milestones, not only honored the memories and struggles of those under communist regimes but also served as a venue for "across-the-aisle" dialogue around an issue requiring bipartisan support.

VOC Trains Thousands of Florida Teachers

In the summer of 2023, VOC made significant strides in advancing civic literacy through a collaborative initiative with the Florida Department of Education. A series of five influential seminars unfolded across Florida, beginning in Pensacola on June 19 and continuing through Orlando, Jacksonville, and Miami, culminating in a fifth session in Orlando on September 25.

Each seminar featured a lecture by VOC's Vice President for Academic Operations and Strategic Partnerships Ken Pope on the historical implications of communism. His insights set the stage for poignant panel discussions alongside survivors whose lives bore the direct imprint of communism's reach. Witnesses Channy Chhi Laux, Marina Davidovich, Orlando Luis Pardo Lazo, Rosa María Payá, and Tatiana Menaker shared their personal narratives, enriching the educational experience for attending teachers.



The seminars resonated deeply, evidenced by the standing ovation received in Pensacola and the fervent engagement of teachers, who actively participated with questions and discussion. The Florida Department of Education's distribution of VOC's comprehensive slideshow on the history of communism to educators statewide marked a notable endorsement of our educational resources.

Building on the partnership initiated in 2022 with State Departments of Education, the integration of the VOC curriculum into public school classrooms has seen tangible success. Florida and Arizona have embraced their states' mandate to educate students about the grim legacy of communism, with additional states poised to follow suit.

The influence of these seminars has been profound, scaling VOC's teacher alumni network from 600 to over 3,800 in a single summer. These educators now carry VOC's message to over 380,000 students annually, with the potential to reach an estimated 19 million students throughout their teaching careers. This expansion of awareness is a testament to the relevance of VOC's mission and the tangible difference made in fostering an informed and vigilant future generation.

VOC Works with Arizona Department of Education

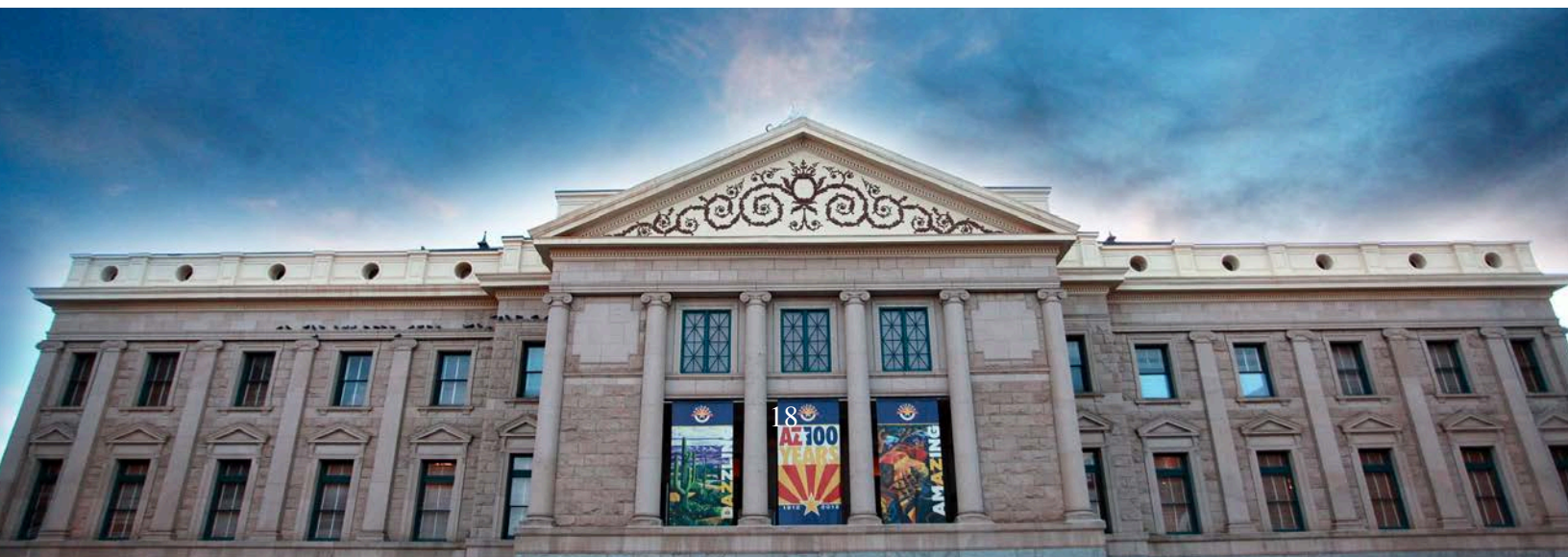
In 2023, the landscape of education in Arizona was reshaped through VOC's steadfast commitment to historical truth and remembrance. In 2022, legislation was passed that requires students in Arizona's public schools to receive formal instruction on the history and horrors of communist regimes. Once the state standards are updated, this legislation will be fully implemented and Arizona students will receive proper instruction on the dangers of communism.

VOC's collaboration with the University of Arizona yielded a series of three compelling mini-documentary episodes, each one a testament to the resilience of the human spirit in the face of oppression. These three witness episodes, which are integral to Arizona's curriculum, featured personal narratives of witnesses of communism: Arizona Representative Ben Toma, who escaped communist Romania as a child along with his three younger siblings; Arizona Representative Quang Nguyen, who escaped Vietnam at age 12 one week before Saigon fell to communist forces in 1975; and Sylwia Cavalcant, who grew up in Poland and assisted in the Solidarity movement, resisting the communist regime alongside her parents.

Their stories, articulating both suffering and hope, offer students a profound look at the realities of life under communist rule and the courage of those who resisted communism.

Complementing these visual accounts, VOC's Academic Council, comprised of leading experts on communism, played a critical role in ensuring the educational content met the highest standards of accuracy and scholarly integrity. Their oversight guaranteed that the complex historical and political nuances were conveyed with clarity and depth.

VOC's partnership with State Departments of Education helps equip students with the critical thinking skills necessary to analyze and understand the ideologies that shape our world. The success in Arizona serves as a model for educational excellence and remembrance, honoring the lives affected by communism and reinforcing VOC's resolve to educate future generations.



Witness Project Podcast Launch



VOC launched a Witness Podcast series in 2023 to give a voice to those who have suffered under communist regimes by sharing firsthand accounts, historical narratives, and meaningful stories of survival, resistance, and the human will to overcome oppression.

VOC is committed to making our witness stories accessible to a wide audience by housing them on various streaming platforms. This accessibility allows us to reach people of all ages and backgrounds, fostering a broader understanding of the detriments of communism and the importance of promoting human rights and democratic values.

The premiere episode of the Witness Podcast takes us to 1989, where 13 Vietnamese individuals are stranded at sea on a small fishing boat. Facing pirates, storms, and injuries, they are united by their resolve to escape communist Vietnam for freedom elsewhere.

Among them is Vi Kha Hoang, who survived this dangerous escape and shares his story of life under communism and his pursuit of liberty. Now living in the United States, Vi Kha Hoang educates Vietnamese American youth about his generation's struggles. His experience highlights the human cost of seeking freedom and the importance of remembering the past to inform the future. Through his narrative, the Witness Podcast fulfills its mission to amplify the voices of victims of communism.

In addition to Vi Kha Hoang's story, VOC produced four other Witness Podcasts in 2023, featuring the stories of witnesses from Soviet-occupied Lithuania, North Korea, Romania, and Cuba.

New Witness Project Episodes Released

Through the lens of our award-winning Witness Project video testimonial series, VOC illuminates the human cost of communism by chronicling harrowing escapes from oppressive regimes and the relentless pursuit of freedom.

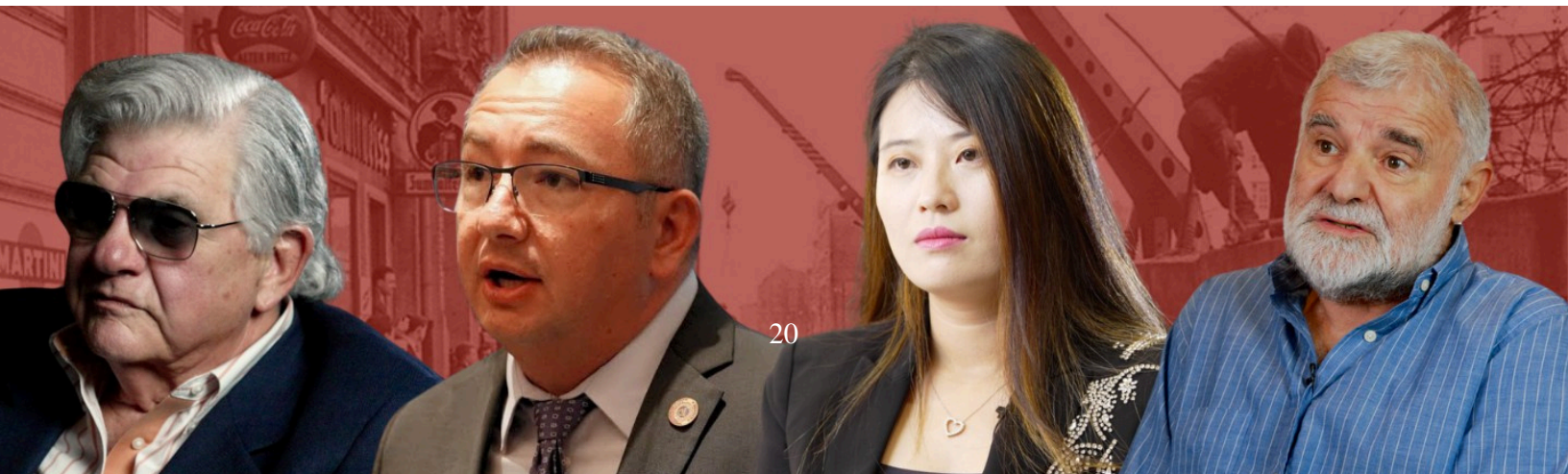
The narratives of Boris Hoffman, Grace Jo, and Representative Ben Toma, alongside Maximo Alvarez's poignant recollection of the Pedro Pan Operation, have been instrumental in our educational initiatives. These stories of survival serve as a testament to the human spirit and as vital educational tools that breathe life into the historical facts about the atrocities committed under communist regimes.

Our collaboration with academic institutions, such as both the Florida and Arizona Departments of Education's civics education initiatives, has furthered our impact by embedding the powerful testimonies of individuals like Representative Toma into the fabric of education. These partnerships ensure that future generations understand the true cost of communism and the value of liberty.

Moreover, our inaugural International Cultural & Food Fair not only celebrated diverse heritages but also provided a platform for Representative Toma to share his journey of suffering under Ceaușescu's surveillance to becoming a symbol of hope and leadership in the United States.

The stories of individuals like Grace Jo, who endured untold hardships as a child in North Korea and emerged as a beacon of hope for those still oppressed, underscores the urgent need to continue our work in exposing the atrocities being committed by current communist regimes.

As we reflect on these poignant narratives, it is evident that VOC's endeavors in education, human rights, and research are not just about preserving history. They are about shaping a future where such stories of oppression are no more than distant memories, and freedom is a reality for all. Our Witness Project is more than a series of testimonies—it is a clarion call for vigilance against the resurgence of communism and an homage to the indomitable will of those who have overcome its grasp.



2023 National Teachers Seminar

In the heart of a bustling Washington, D.C., the eighth annual National Seminar for Middle and High School Educators marked a cornerstone event in the continuing education on the global impact of communism. From July 10 to July 14, 2023, dedicated teachers across America engaged in a profound exploration of communism’s history, deadly ideology, and the more than 100 million lives it has claimed.

The seminar, hosted at the Victims of Communism Museum, brought to light the essential narratives of survivors, whose personal accounts of oppression under communist regimes underscored the critical need for comprehensive education in this field. Notable scholars, including Dr. Paul Kengor and Soviet-born Dr. Naya Lekht, illuminated the potent force of



communist propaganda, while survivors like Channy Chhi Laux, survivor of the Cambodian genocide, and Lily Tang Williams, who grew up in China under Mao’s rule, shared harrowing tales of escape and resilience.

As educators delved into new tools and curricula, they gained invaluable strategies to impart of communism’s deadly legacy and present dangers to their students.

“Thank you VOC for bringing teachers together to give them a framework for teaching these important lessons so that we can help our students embrace the need to stand firm against this ideological assault on truth.”

—Laura Libanati, 2023 Seminar Graduate

The program’s success was evident in the enriched perspectives teachers took back to classrooms nationwide—ensuring that the lessons of the past would inform the leaders of tomorrow. This seminar week both educated and inspired, as educators became conduits for a narrative that champions individual and economic liberty over totalitarian doctrines—a narrative that continues to shape the free world.



New Curriculum Sections Released



In the past year, VOC has taken a significant stride forward in our educational efforts with the unveiling of Sections 2 and 3 of our innovative digital curriculum, “Communism: A History of Repression, Violence, and Victims.” This curriculum is not only a testament to our commitment to historical accuracy but also serves as a beacon of knowledge for a new generation.

Section 2, entitled “Fathers of Communism,” critically analyzes the profound influence of communism’s originators, Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin, on the global stage. Students will explore the ideology that Marx and Engels developed and that Vladimir Lenin embraced and put into practice.

“Stalin and the Building of Socialism,” the focus of Section 3, provides a comprehensive examination of the totalitarian regime under Joseph Stalin’s rule. This exploration offers students a vivid understanding of the Five-Year Plan, the orchestrated famines, the Great Terror, and the profound effects of Stalin’s policies on not just the Soviet Union but the entire European continent and the world.

Once fully completed, the curriculum, with its 10 sections and 33 chapters, will represent a monumental effort to encapsulate the complex narrative of communism. Each chapter is meticulously crafted to engage students with interactive activities, while the inclusion of digitally native supplementary resources—comprising readings, videos, and audio content—enriches the learning experience. Furthermore, the curriculum is strengthened by scholarly essays that are both fully sourced and peer-reviewed, ensuring educational integrity and depth.

VOC Internship Program

In 2023, VOC expanded its commitment to the next generation by offering internships for young professionals eager to delve into the complexities of our mission. These internships served as a unique bridge, connecting the nation's only nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring the victims of communism with the innovative minds of the future.

Among these bright minds, one intern, Csendike Somogyvári, particularly stood out. Taking on the roles of Development Intern and Coalitions & Fellowship Programs Intern, she immersed herself in the mission of our Foundation. Csendike was instrumental in organizing events and managing donor relationships, while also taking the initiative to seek out prospective partner organizations.



These efforts contributed significantly to the amplification of our voice and the expansion of our network.

Csendike currently holds a position at The World Bank, a leading international financial institution. Inspired by her work with us, she continues to champion justice and the preservation of the memories of the victims of communism, further extending the reach of our mission.

“The responsibilities I had at VOC enriched not only my professional but my interpersonal skillset as well. Whether I was involved in professional or team-building activities, I was proud to be part of this organization and the community that make it possible to bring together people who believe in the spirit of democracy, independence, and freedom.”

—Csendike Somogyvári, Former VOC Intern now working at The World Bank



Another intern success story is that of Ayturk Tashpolat, who gained valuable experience as VOC's Digital Media Intern this past summer, and is studying Film at Indiana University Bloomington. She chose to intern at VOC because she wanted to speak out for the Uyghurs who are currently being detained in concentration camps and those who are suffering under China's communist regime, including her relatives. Ayturk shared her motivation for supporting VOC's mission:

“Since 2017, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has arrested millions of Uyghurs and sent them to ‘re-education’ camps. Those millions are not just numbers, but they include children and teenagers who have to spend their best years of youth in the camps; they are women who are being raped and forcibly sterilized; they are men who are tortured; they are people killed simply because of their ethnicity and religious beliefs.

All of these people have different stories of struggle, but they are all similarly heartbreaking. As the world's media today is occupied by the CCP's powerful propaganda, it's very difficult to tell others the truth of China's ongoing Uyghur genocide.

Thus, as one of the lucky ones who escaped Xinjiang at a young age, I wanted to tell those stories and allow others to have their voices heard.

Working at VOC has given me the chance to reach out to people and tell them about Uyghurs and our struggle. I have had the important opportunity to tell the horrific stories of my relatives and my people. I'm very grateful to be a part of VOC and for this incredible experience.”

—Ayturk Tashpolat, Former VOC Intern



VOC is constantly seeking out talented individuals who are either still studying or starting their careers, and who are passionate about our mission. As much as we educate about the past and current legacy of communism, we also want to help prepare the future generation who will carry on long after we are gone. Contact VOC if you or anyone you know is interested in our internship program by visiting victimsofcommunism.org/internship.



Re-establishment of Bipartisan VOC Caucus

In a year marked by global awareness and remembrance, the re-establishment of the bipartisan Victims of Communism Caucus in the United States House of Representatives stood as a testament to our commitment to honor more than 100 million people killed by the scourge of communist regimes. Spearheaded by Representatives Michelle Steel (R-CA) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), the caucus reignited a unified acknowledgment of the ongoing struggles against oppressive ideologies.

VOC's mission to educate about the atrocities of communism and the continuous plight of those living under communist rule found resonance and support within the legislative framework. The bipartisan nature of the caucus, embracing voices from both sides of the political spectrum, mirrored our own commitment to transcend divisions in the pursuit of universal human rights.

This year, the efforts of the caucus have been instrumental in amplifying the narratives of suffering and resilience that communist regimes have wrought upon individuals throughout the 20th century, and which continue to this day.

The caucus's focus on countries where communism's grip still stifles dissent and denies fundamental rights aligns with our educational initiatives, inspiring a new generation to value and protect liberty.

The reactivation of the Victims of Communism Caucus was not merely a political statement but a galvanizing force that reaffirmed our mission to ensure that the world never forgets the cost of communism and the value of freedom.

16th Annual Roll Call of Nations Wreath Laying Ceremony & Presentation of the Dissident Human Rights Award

In the heart of our nation's capital, VOC marked a significant moment of reflection and recognition on June 9, 2023. The 16th annual Roll Call of Nations Wreath Laying Ceremony & Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom Award Presentation to Tibetan activist Bhuchung K. Tsering convened a mosaic of international representatives, human rights advocates, and educational leaders at the Victims of Communism Memorial on Capitol Hill.

The ceremony, a cornerstone of VOC's commitment to education, united 15 embassies and 3 delegations in solidarity with 42 ethnic and human rights organizations. It was a testament to the collective resolve to acknowledge the past and educate for the future, ensuring that the memories of millions are honored and the plight of those still suffering under communist regimes is illuminated.

In a poignant highlight of the ceremony, the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom was bestowed upon Bhuchung K. Tsering. His journey, from fleeing his native Tibet in the wake of Chinese Communist invasion to becoming an unwavering voice for Tibetan rights, epitomizes the human spirit's enduring resilience against the tide of communism. Tsering's acceptance speech resonated with the truth that the human spirit prevails against oppression, echoing the words of Jayaprakash Narayan and affirming that no regime could extinguish the flame of freedom that burns within.

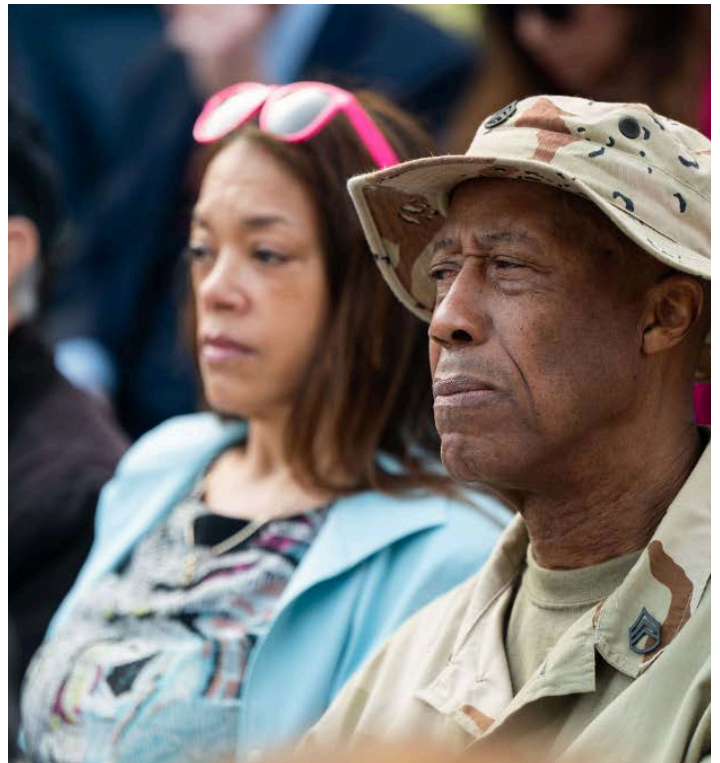
The event's speakers further illustrated VOC's role as a beacon of truth and advocate for human rights. Canon Charles H. Nalls, VOC Chairman Dr. Elizabeth Spalding, and VOC Trustee The Hon. Paula J. Dobriansky, and VOC Vice President for Academic Operations and Strategic Partnerships Ken Pope each lent their voice to champion the cause and to remind us that the past must be understood to navigate the future.





“Communism will not succeed because man will not be slave forever.”
—Bhuchung K. Tsering





VOC In The News

THE
NEW YORKER

“UYGHURS FORCED TO PROCESS
THE WORLD’S FISH”

THE DAILY SIGNAL

‘China Is in a Challenging Moment
Right Now,’ VOC President Says

The Washington Times
America's Newspaper

“Honoring Oswaldo Paya: Standing with
Cuba’s heroes as they pave the future”

NR

“Victims of Communism,
Victims of Modernism”



Financial Times: CCP PAID EUROPEAN POLITICIAN TO ATTACK VOC'S DR. ZENZ



> CELEBRATING NATIONAL NON-PROFIT DAY



DR. ELIZABETH EDWARDS SPALDING | VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MUSEUM

1983: REAGAN REFERS TO USSR AS "EVIL EMPIRE"



VOC Museum Builds Partnerships

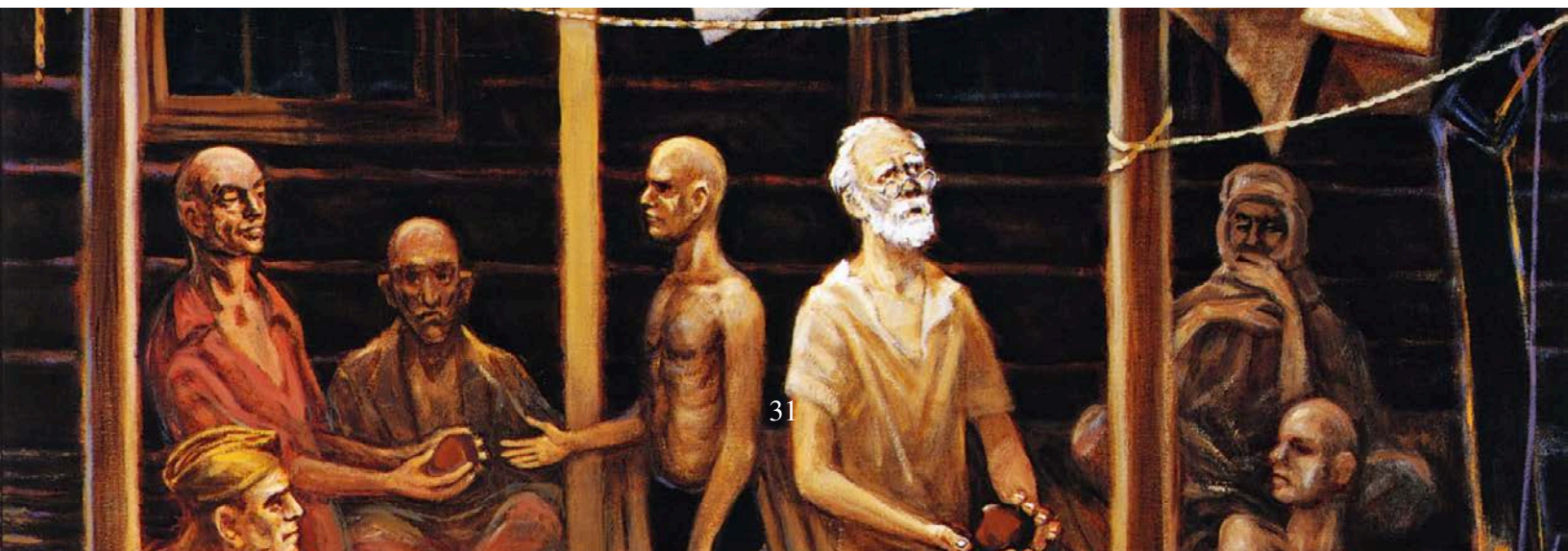
In a year marked by strategic growth and meaningful partnerships, VOC expanded its collaborative efforts to educate about and combat the influence of communist regimes.

Our interactive exhibitions, such as the virtual reality 360-degree portrayal of the ongoing war in Ukraine and the “Battle of Warsaw VR Experience” were developed in concert with international partners, leveraging technology to resonate with a broader, tech-savvy audience. These immersive experiences were made possible through the support of our alliance with the Polish government and other agencies committed to the cause of remembrance and education.

VOC also deepened its commitment to human rights by providing a critical platform for Russian activists and the dialogue surrounding the challenges faced by political prisoners. This was achieved through a strengthened network of partnerships with organizations such as United Help Ukraine and the Free Russia Foundation. By standing in solidarity with these groups, VOC has amplified the voices of those who continue to suffer under the weight of oppressive regimes.

Additionally, our research initiatives were notably enriched through diversified expert engagement, offering a spectrum of perspectives on contemporary and historical issues. Collaboration with the Coalition for Empowered Education and the Institute for Liberal Values, for example, enabled us to confront neo-Marxist trends in education, equipping current and future educators with the knowledge to foster critical thinking in the classroom.

These expanded and nurtured partnerships have been instrumental in increasing VOC’s reach and efficacy. By joining forces with a multitude of organizations and individuals, from grassroots activists to academic scholars, we have not only honored the memory of communism’s countless victims but have also sown the seeds for a more informed and vigilant society. The impact of these alliances echoes our foundational credo: to ensure the world will never forget the atrocities of the past, while vigilantly safeguarding the freedom of future generations.



40th Anniversary of Reagan’s “Evil Empire” Speech



In a solemn remembrance of President Ronald Reagan’s pivotal “Evil Empire” speech, VOC marked the 40th anniversary with a profound assembly at the Victims of Communism Museum. Esteemed institutions, united in the pursuit of truth and liberty, lent their support to this reflective gathering.

Chaired by Dr. Lee Edwards, a distinguished Reagan biographer and Co-Founder of VOC, the commemoration delved into the speech’s lasting legacy. A seminal address by Reagan’s Chief Speechwriter, Anthony R. Dolan, set the stage, revisiting the decisive foreign policy maneuvers that hastened the Soviet Union’s demise.

The discourse evolved, engaging a cadre of scholars in examining the speech’s enduring moral resonance. The dialogue encompassed the lived experiences of American Christians and those oppressed under communist regimes, demonstrating the inseparable bond between education, human rights, and meticulous research.

This event showed that VOC is dedicated to teaching people about history. It highlighted the importance of always remembering the stories of communism, both in the past and present, and it strengthened the determination to watch out for the spread of communist ideas.



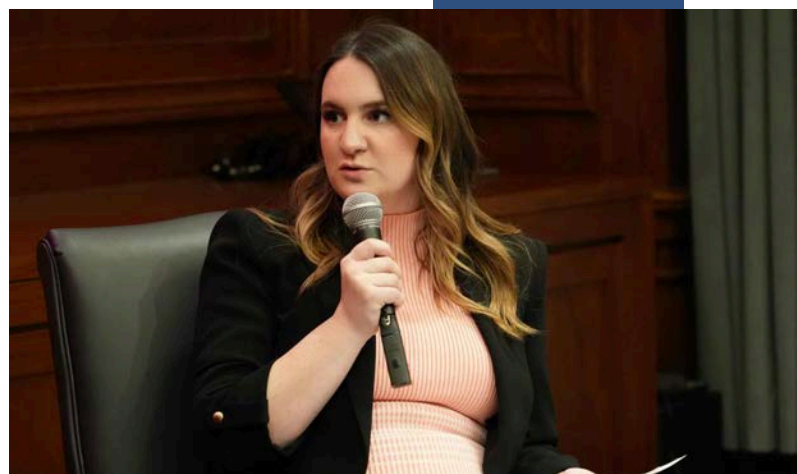
Religious Freedom in Hong Kong

On January 26, 2023, VOC, in partnership with the Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong, hosted a critical discussion on the state of religious freedom in Hong Kong under the shadow of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The event brought to the forefront the alarming potential for increased religious persecution in the city-state, a concern that has grown since the CCP's policies have become more assertive in the region.

Participants, including subject matter experts and human rights advocates, analyzed the current conditions and future risks for religious practitioners in Hong Kong and mainland China. The dialogue provided insights into the CCP's history of religious suppression and examined strategies for the United States and international allies to safeguard these freedoms under threat.

The discussion was instrumental in raising awareness and pushing for a concerted international stance to defend against the encroachment on religious rights. It also laid the groundwork for future actions to prevent the erosion of this fundamental human right.

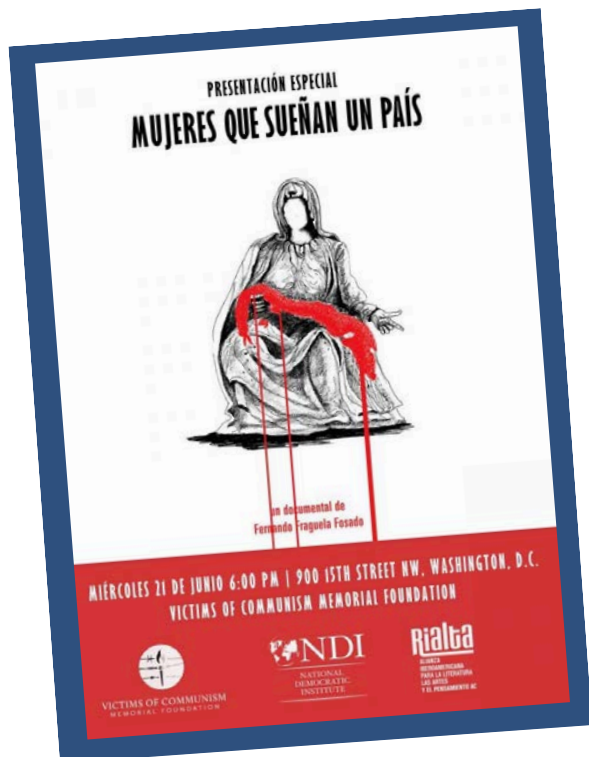
This event also demonstrates VOC's commitment to addressing human rights violations through informed discourse and collaboration.



Mujeres Que Sueñan un País Film Screening



On June 21, VOC held a film screening of “Mujeres que Sueñan un País” by Fernando Fraguela Fosado. This documentary, which was censored for being critical of the Cuban regime, brought to light the persecution and forced exile of three dissidents, members of the San Isidro Movement, the forefront of Cuban protest in recent years.



After the film screening, attendees engaged with a panel of experts, delving into an analysis of the documentary’s themes and the current state of dissent in Cuba. Questions from the audience prompted a robust discussion, which helped illuminate human rights struggles under communist regimes.

The event served as a direct channel to educate the public on the realities faced by those challenging oppression today. It underscored the power of storytelling in preserving the memory of resistance against communism.

RESEARCH



Xinjiang Person Search Tool



**XINJIANG
POLICE FILES**

www.xinjiangpolicefiles.org

In 2023, VOC marked a pivotal advancement in our human rights advocacy efforts with the release of the Xinjiang Person Search Tool, a groundbreaking resource derived from the Xinjiang Police Files. This initiative illuminated the opaque veil shrouding Beijing’s human rights violations in Xinjiang, providing unparalleled insights into the fate of countless individuals ensnared within the Chinese Communist Party’s mass internment campaign.

Leveraging over 700,000 personnel records, this tool emerged as an unparalleled beacon for the Uyghur community and human rights defenders worldwide, including Nuriman Abdureshid, a Uyghur activist living in the United States. After not having heard from her family since 2017, Nuriman was able to use the Person Search Tool to search for and find her parents, confirming her worst speculations: that they are interned in a Chinese detention center.

Simultaneously, VOC’s United Nations Complaint Submission Portal commenced operations, enabling victims and their kin to articulate their grievances for review by the UN’s Special Procedures office. Nuriman Abdureshid, after uncovering the hidden truths of her family’s detention, was able to concretely submit a complaint to the United Nations.

VOC’s commitment to rigorous analysis and dissemination of the Xinjiang Police Files, coupled with our collaborative media outreach, has undeniably amplified the global resonance of these revelations, empowering advocacy and legal efforts for justice. As we progress, the database will continue to expand, ensuring that the magnitude of Beijing’s transgressions are both comprehensively documented and universally recognized. The Xinjiang Police Files stand as a testament to VOC’s unwavering dedication to human rights and the pursuit of justice for the victims of communism.

VOC Awarded The Heritage Innovation Prize

2023 marked a year of profound insight and educational outreach, as VOC expanded its commitment to unveiling the realities of oppression under the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The Heritage Foundation’s recognition of VOC through their inaugural Innovation Prize not only affirmed the significance of VOC’s China Studies Program, but also propelled our initiatives to new heights.

With The Heritage Foundation’s grant of \$150,000, VOC channeled resources into high-impact research that cast a revealing light on the CCP’s human rights abuses and security threats. VOC’s China Studies Program, through meticulous analysis and robust academic rigor, developed a clearer understanding of the CCP’s maneuvers that challenge global freedom and the rule of law. VOC’s major media campaigns resonated across networks, fostering a dialogue critical to the defense of universal human rights. The annual China Forum conference emerged as a beacon of thought leadership, uniting experts and advocates in a shared mission to counter Beijing’s crimes against humanity.

“Heritage is committed to taking back our culture from the Left’s radical ideologies that threaten the very foundations of our country. We’re proud to award the Innovation Prize, using the resources generously provided by fellow Americans, to the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation for its work of exposing the true devastation that China has brought about with its Communist regime.”

—Dr. Kevin Roberts, President, The Heritage Foundation

The Heritage Innovation Prize allowed VOC to continue our partnerships with a network of allies all committed to collective resistance against the deadliest ideology of our time, and amplified VOC’s influential voice as a leader in this space. In reflection of this year’s milestones, VOC President Emeritus Ambassador Andrew Bremberg’s words resonate:

“We are honored to be selected for the Heritage Innovation Prize. As the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation continues its mission to educate the public about the more than 100 million killed under communist regimes, ... this prize will expand VOC’s ability to shed light on the human rights atrocities committed by the Chinese Communist Party as we work to expose Beijing’s crimes through groundbreaking research, analysis, and advocacy.”



VOC Testifies to U.S. Congress on China



Over the past year, VOC experts were called upon by the United States Congress to provide testimonies on the brutalities committed under communist regimes, underscoring VOC’s role as a vanguard of truth and justice.

On March 23, Dr. Adrian Zenz, VOC Senior Fellow and Director in China Studies, delivered a groundbreaking testimony before the U.S. House Select Committee on China. His detailed report, encapsulating VOC’s extensive research, revealed the harrowing realities of the Uyghur genocide.

Dr. Zenz’s 87-page written testimony synthesized years of research into a single document. It detailed evidence of mass arbitrary detention, forced labor, and coercive birth prevention policies in Xinjiang, utilizing China’s own official documents. His testimony, requested due to his expertise in uncovering human rights abuses in China, played a crucial role in informing policy recommendations aimed at sanctioning implicated Chinese officials and preventing U.S. investments in entities involved in these atrocities.

“Thanks to Dr. Adrian Zenz, a leading scholar on the Uyghur genocide, through his work and research of leaked Chinese government documents including the Xinjiang Papers and the China Cables, [VOC has] played a paramount role in bringing these atrocities to light.”

—Representative Mike Gallagher (R-WI), Chairman, House Select Committee on China

On April 20, Ambassador Andrew Bremberg, VOC President Emeritus and former U.S. Ambassador to the UN in Geneva, testified before the U.S. Congress’ House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee about Beijing’s widespread persecution of political and religious prisoners in China.

Ambassador Bremberg highlighted the CCP’s persecution of political and religious prisoners, including Uyghurs, House Church Christians, Falun Gong practitioners, and Tibetans. He provided actionable recommendations to hold the CCP accountable, such as implementing sanctions and severing Western supply chains indirectly financing these abuses.

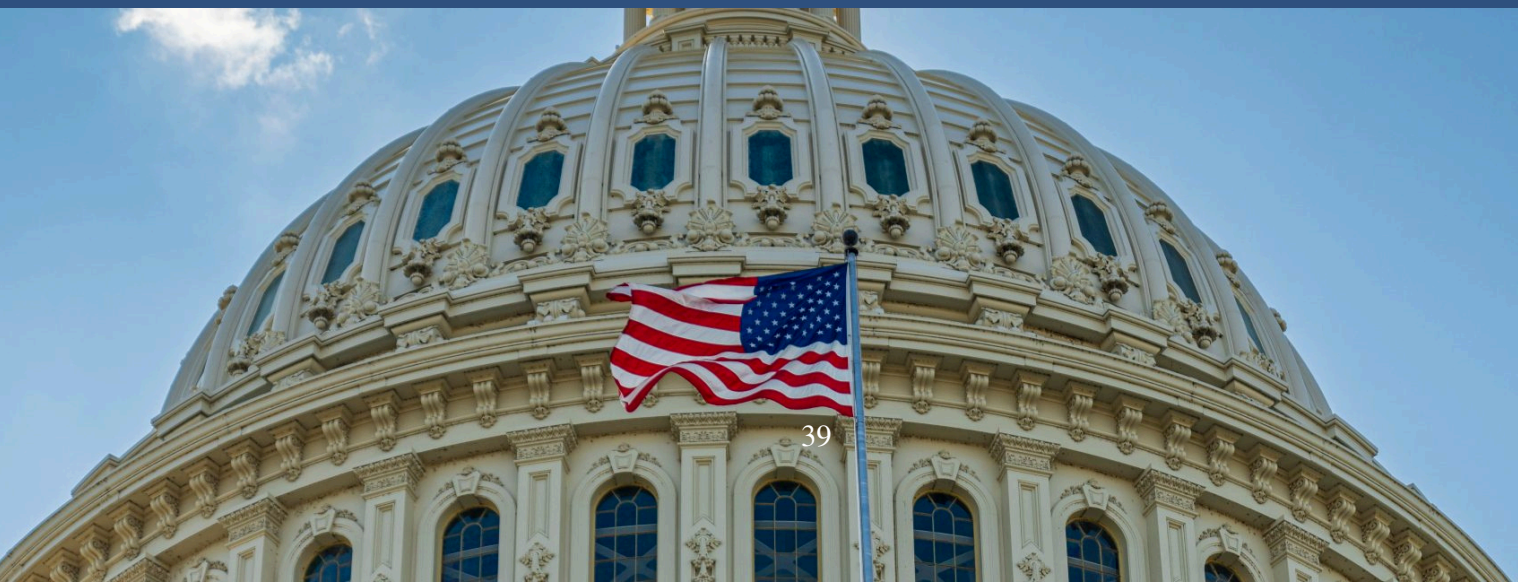
Both testimonies were instrumental in shedding light on the plight of China’s political prisoners and religious minorities. Ambassador Bremberg’s verbal and written statements to the bipartisan House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations contributed to a comprehensive policy approach. This strategy includes consistent high-level advocacy for the release of all political prisoners, leveraging international platforms, and rigorous enforcement of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA), which echoes the impact of Dr. Zenz’s prior research and testimony.

These appearances before Congress, combined with VOC’s other initiatives such as partnering with ChinaAid to commemorate the disappearance of Gao Zhisheng and co-hosting the Human Rights Defender Awards, illustrate VOC’s unwavering commitment. Each testimony, event, and piece of research contributes to a larger narrative of exposing and countering the atrocities of communism.

VOC’s research and education efforts, spearheaded by the likes of Dr. Zenz and Ambassador Bremberg, have not only informed U.S. policy but also ensured that the voices of the oppressed are heard in the halls of power. Together, these actions embody VOC’s dedication to fighting the rise of communism, providing global education, and preserving the memory of its victims—so the world will never forget.

“The CCP uses [China’s] criminal justice system as a political tool to target Chinese citizens who challenge the CCP’s authority. Individuals who pursue universal human rights, particularly when they independently organize or challenge the Party’s authority are considered ‘disruptive.’”

—Ambassador Andrew Bremberg, President Emeritus, Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation



VOC Exposes Corporate Complicity in Xinjiang

In the past year, VOC has played a critical role in exposing the entanglement of multinational corporations with repressive regimes. A pivotal moment was the publication of new evidence from the Xinjiang Police Files, which provided concrete evidence of Uyghur forced labor in Volkswagen’s operations in China.

Through rigorous analysis, VOC demonstrated that the company’s audit, claiming the absence of forced labor, was fundamentally flawed, given the repressive and coercive environment in Xinjiang. The Files revealed that Uyghurs were being sent from camps to vocational training programs and then to jobs at companies like Volkswagen under highly controlled conditions, raising serious concerns about the use of forced labor.

“The ramification is that re-educated and coerced Uyghurs can likely end up working for larger companies such as SAIC-Volkswagen in Xinjiang.”

—Dr. Adrian Zenz, Senior Fellow and Director of China Studies, Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation

VOC’s research challenged the credibility of corporate self-auditing in regions where freedom of speech is severely restricted, and the risk of reprisals for speaking out is high. Our findings brought to light the inadequacies of Volkswagen’s due diligence processes and underscored the need for corporations to reevaluate their presence in Xinjiang.

Furthermore, VOC’s strategic release of the Xinjiang Police Files have intensified scrutiny of corporate complicity in human rights abuses. By leading the charge in calling out such corporate involvement, VOC has underscored the essential role of independent research and transparency in combating human rights violations linked to business operations.

Throughout the year, VOC’s unwavering pursuit of accountability has influenced public opinion and corporate behavior. VOC has remained dedicated to its mission, ensuring that the atrocities committed against the Uyghur people are not forgotten and that corporations cannot ignore their ethical responsibilities.

“The notion that a Uyghur could speak freely to investigators during an audit interview in Xinjiang is patently absurd, given the obvious reprisals they would face for speaking the truth.”

—Ambassador Andrew Bremberg, President Emeritus, Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation



Ninth Annual China Forum Conference

In October 2023, the China Forum served as a vital nexus for informed dialogue and strategic analysis on the complexities of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its impact on global human rights. China Forum successfully convened an assembly of scholars, experts, and policymakers who delved into the intricacies of U.S.-China relations, trade policies, and the human rights crisis, particularly the plight of the Uyghur population.

At the heart of this endeavor was the understanding that education begets change. The screening of “China: The Uyghur Tragedy” not only shed light on the suffering endured by this persecuted group but also laid the groundwork for a poignant panel discussion. Here, the dialogue extended into the realms of Beijing’s repressive actions, weaving a narrative that underscored the urgency for awareness and education.

Thought leaders and human rights activists provided firsthand accounts and expert analyses, contributing to a robust discourse on Beijing’s ongoing repression. The meticulous research presented by VOC Senior Fellow and Director in China Studies Dr. Adrian Zenz illuminated the dark corners of forced labor and human rights violations, guiding policy considerations and corporate responsibility.



To bolster China Forum’s relevance in contemporary global geo-politics, Representative Mike Gallagher, Chairman of the House Select Committee on China, and Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ranking Member of the Committee, delivered video remarks assuring attendees of the moral legitimacy of the Western world when faced with the overwhelming crimes of the CCP. China Forum’s thematic focus on human rights was further reinforced through discussions on forced labor, wherein the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act was scrutinized for its efficacy and challenges.

The intricate web of supply chains implicating Western businesses in Beijing’s human rights atrocities was untangled, offering pathways for policy responses and corporate reforms. Furthermore, China Forum addressed the intersection of power and diplomatic responsibility, exploring how Beijing’s human rights record is shaping global diplomacy and foreign policy.

Panels assessed the influence of the CCP on international bodies, highlighting the imperative of aligning democratic governance with international cooperation. In addition, Senior Fellow at The

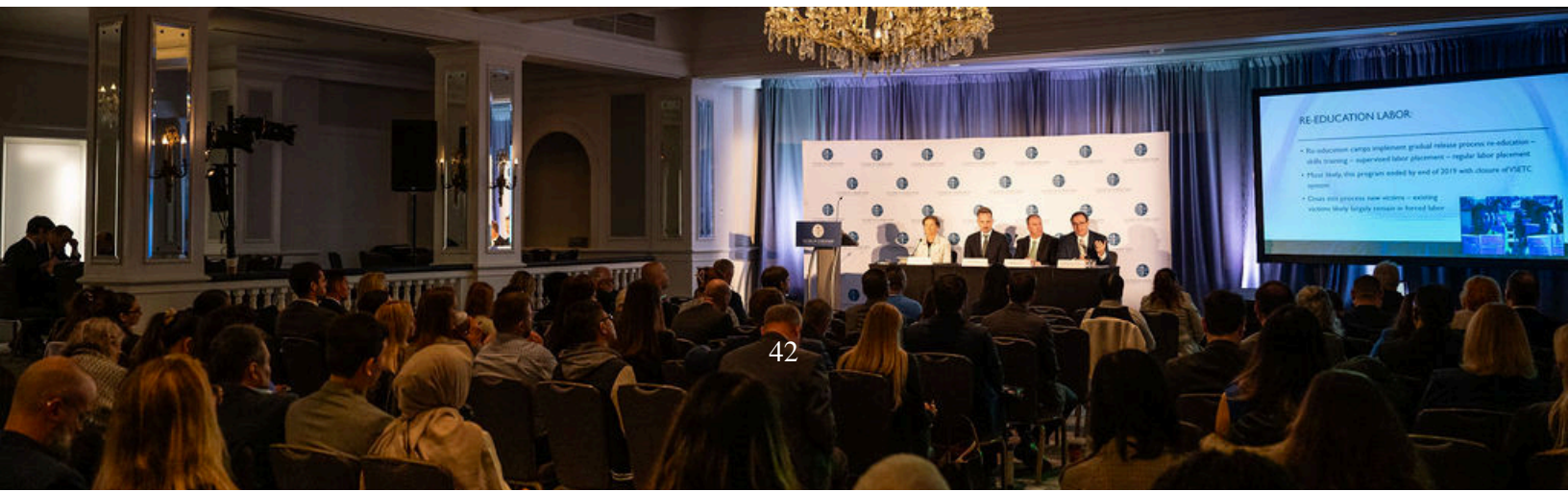


Hoover Institution and former Deputy National Security Advisor, Matthew Pottinger delivered a timely keynote address emphasizing the power of humor and satire as a form of resistance against totalitarian regimes, sharing anecdotes of Chinese citizens mocking censorship and state policies, and honoring those who have suffered under such regimes, including Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo and Uyghur poet Tahir Hamut Izgil.

“Back in the 20th Century, communist regimes inflicted 100 million untimely deaths worldwide. The Chinese Communist Party accounted for more than half of the total.”

—Matthew Pottinger, Senior Fellow, The Hoover Institution; Former Deputy National Security Advisor

As the curtain fell on the China Forum, the resolve to remember and act against the rise of communism was stronger than ever. The synthesis of academia, policy, and witness narratives not only honored the memory of millions but also fortified the resolve to advocate for those still suffering under communist regimes. Events like these are only possible due to the generosity of our sponsors. We especially thank Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, Sarah Scaife Foundation, and Taiwan Foundation for Democracy for their generosity.



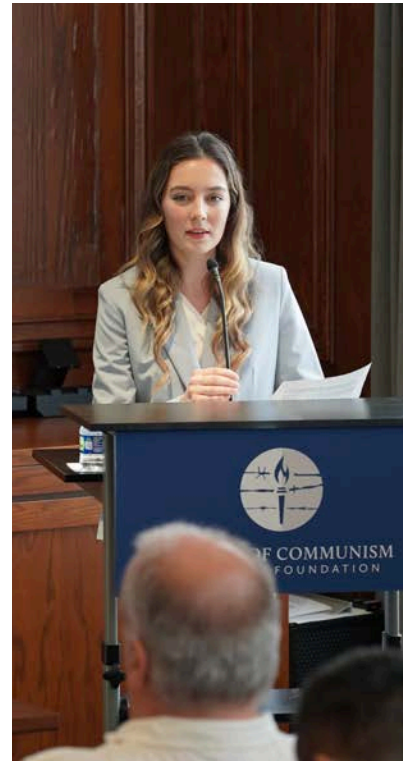
Polish Studies Conference

On March 23, VOC, in partnership with The Polish National Foundation, held its annual Polish Studies Conference in an effort to illuminate the past to educate the present. This confluence of minds delved into the lives and legacies of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Pope John Paul II, and President Ronald Reagan—champions renowned for their unwavering resistance against the tide of communism.

Hosted at the Victims of Communism Museum, the event gathered a diverse assembly of political, intellectual, and religious leaders. Together, they embarked on a reflective journey, reassessing the relevance of these Knights of Liberty in today’s context and extracting timeless lessons from their crusade for freedom.

The discussions centered on how the spiritual and political convictions of Wyszyński, John Paul II, and Reagan galvanized societies to confront oppression. These narratives, rich with historical gravitas, underscored the essence of liberty and the indomitable human spirit, echoing VOC’s ethos of remembrance and vigilance against the resurgence of totalitarian ideologies.

VOC was honored to host Winsome Earle-Sears, the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Virginia, at the conference, who delivered remarks on her efforts to educate Virginia State Public School students about the history and deadly legacy of communism.



The Pilecki Report Film Screening



VOC, in partnership with Polish National Foundation, magnified the extraordinary story of Witold Pilecki through a film screening of *The Pilecki Report* on May 25. This film, a significant feature in our unique museum, reached global audiences, narrating Pilecki’s voluntary infiltration of Auschwitz, his organization of a resistance network, and his smuggling out of critical Holocaust information.

Pilecki’s story underlined our commitment to human rights, showcasing his unyielding fight for freedom even under Soviet occupation. Captured and sentenced to death by the communist government in 1948, Pilecki’s courage and solidarity were brutally silenced, but through our efforts, his voice was heard again as a symbol of resistance against oppressive regimes.

The Pilecki Report served as an essential educational resource, providing a groundbreaking perspective on the historical struggle against communism. The first-hand accounts of the Holocaust in the film served as an important research tool, contributing to our understanding of the atrocities committed under communist regimes.

Pilecki’s journey served as a chilling reminder of the past and our commitment to ensuring the world will never forget.



HUMAN RIGHTS



International Cultural & Food Fair

On November 7, VOC's International Cultural & Food Fair in Washington, D.C. commemorated those affected by communism. This event directly countered the communist reduction of food to mere sustenance. By honoring the cultural importance of cuisine, the event presented a powerful educational experience that challenged the communist view of food and celebrated the human spirit's resilience.

Collaborations with embassies and ethnic organizations provided guests with a resistance narrative through the culinary arts, defying the oppressive regimes' devaluation of cultural identity. Traditional dishes became a form of silent protest, illustrating food's role beyond the "fuel for workers" mentality.

Arizona Representative Ben Toma and Gary Powers, Jr. shared personal accounts, adding depth to the exhibits and fostering a multi-layered educational experience. Video remarks from representatives of all eight states where Victims of Communism Memorial Day has been passed were featured—Alabama, Idaho, Florida, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Georgia, and Wisconsin—highlighting the national support for Victims of Communism Memorial Day.



VOC “Torture in Cuba” Report

2023 bore witness to an unprecedented illumination of the Cuban regime’s disregard for human rights, as the world’s eyes were opened to the plight of those courageously standing against authoritarian cruelty. A collaborative effort between the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, Prisoners Defenders, and the Czech Transition Promotion Program culminated in the comprehensive “Torture in Cuba” report. This pivotal work, underpinned by both quantitative and qualitative analysis, laid bare the depth of the regime’s depravity, examining the suffering of 181 victims over the previous year.



The “Torture in Cuba” report exposed 15 torture methods used by Cuban officials, with the majority of victims experiencing multiple abuses. Methods included denial of care, physical assault, and psychological harm. This truth starkly contrasted Cuba’s international commitments to human rights. Despite peaceful protests for basic freedoms, the year ended with 1,048 political prisoners detained for dissent. VOC’s research played a critical role in highlighting the urgent need to confront these human rights violations.

Remembering Cuba's July 11th Protests

On July 11, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation co-hosted two pivotal events marking the two-year anniversary of Cuba's pro-democracy protests. The day began with a press conference at the Rayburn House Office Building on Capitol Hill, featuring Cuban dissidents who recounted the stark realities of life under the communist regime. The names of those who died during the protests and of current political prisoners were solemnly read aloud, ensuring their stories remain at the forefront of our advocacy.



Members of Congress, including Representative Carlos Giménez, Representative Nicole Malliotakis, Representative Rick Scott, Representative Alex Mooney, and Representative Bob Menendez, joined the event. They, alongside Rosa María Payá and VOC's Director of Government Relations, Karina Lipsman, spoke of the ongoing struggle for human rights in Cuba.

Later, outside the Cuban embassy, a vigil was held, coordinated by John Suarez and Rosa María Payá, and co-hosted by VOC. Attendees, including members from the Young America's Foundation, displayed images of political prisoners and honored both the deceased and the detained, reinforcing the call for remembrance and action against the injustices perpetuated by communism.



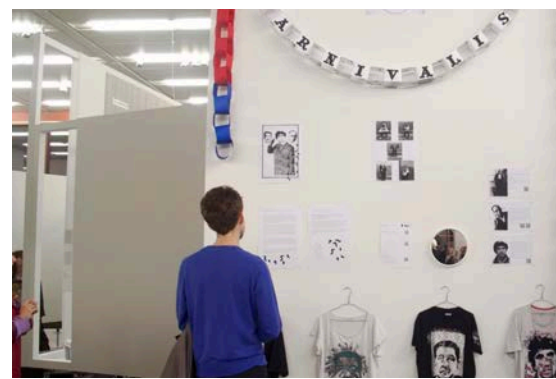
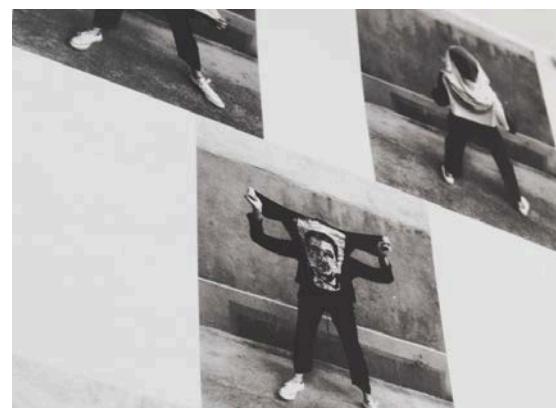
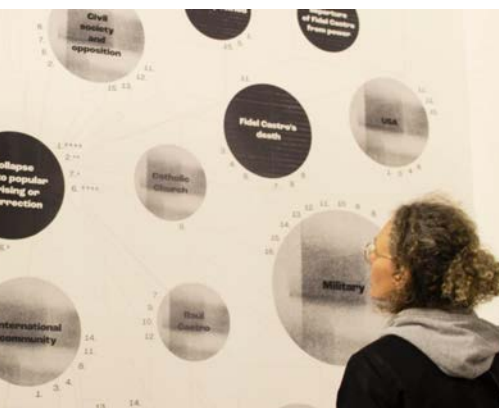
Cuban “Artivists” Exhibitions During Vienna Art Week Supported by VOC

In 2023, VOC’s Latin America Studies Program was instrumental in presenting two significant Cuban “artivism” exhibitions in Vienna, Austria, during Vienna Art Week.

The first exhibition, “Alibi,” displayed at the Contemporary Art Museum, Belvedere 21, in Austria from October 25 to December 3, highlighted the pervasive frustration in Cuba following the government’s crackdown after the July 11, 2021 pro-democracy protests. Curated in collaboration with Cuban artists, activists, and human rights platforms, “Alibi” provided an artistic critique and reimagining of Cuba’s future, free from historical oppression. The Justicia 11J platform’s participation underscored the exhibition’s focus on the human rights crisis in Cuba, documenting the political detentions and sentences that followed the protests.

The second exhibition, “How Long Have You Been Blind,” delved into the events of July 11, 2021, through the lens of five Cuban artists using immersive technologies. Their works probed the repercussions of the protests and envisioned the role of technology in shaping Cuba’s future.

The success of these exhibitions was made possible by the collaboration with ENTRE Gallery and Forma Foco. Key contributors included Marilyn Volkman of ENTRE Gallery and the Forma Foco team—Solveig Font, Lester Alvarez Meno, Aminta D’Cárdenas, and Julio Llópez-Casal. These exhibitions offered a platform for Cuban voices, expanding VOC’s educational outreach on the devastating impact of communism on Latin America.



Urban Art Exhibit



2023 has been a year of impactful storytelling and awakening through the lens of art. In an art exhibition that spoke volumes without uttering a word, “The Veil of Silence” and “Venezuela Resists, Images of a Tragedy” shed light on the harsh realities of life under communism in Cuba and Venezuela. Displayed at the Art Museum of the Americas in Washington, D.C., these exhibitions revealed the human rights abuses and societal decay that often go unseen.

Elicer Márquez Duany’s “Homeland and Life” became a rallying cry of resilience that echoed the universal fight against authoritarianism. Curator Ana Olema juxtaposed artistic narratives with the stark truth behind Cuba’s healthcare facade.

The Venezuelan struggle was captured through the lens of Vasco Szinetar and the “Venezuela in Contrast” contest winners, exposing the dire consequences of two decades under Chavez and Maduro.

The involvement of the Center for a Free Cuba and Havana Club was crucial to the successful launch of these events, which were attended by influential leaders like Organization of American States Secretary General Luis Almagro, extending the reach and impact of the exhibitions.

These art exhibitions not only educated but also sparked a dialogue on human rights, aligning with VOC’s dedication to research and education. Furthermore, the exhibitions are housed online, broadening the reach of these powerful stories.

In 2023, VOC made significant progress in its mission to educate and ensure the world remembers the victims of communism, utilizing art to keep their stories alive.

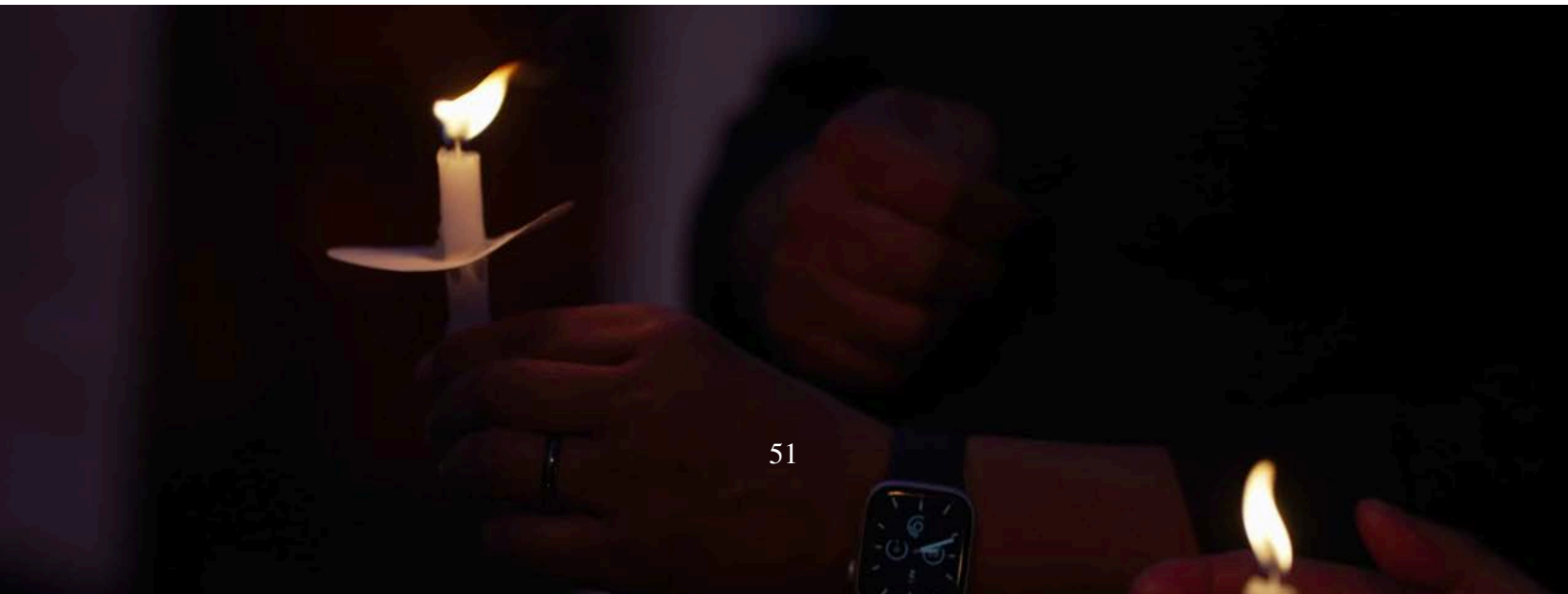
Tiananmen Square Massacre Candlelight Vigil

On the solemn occasion marking the 34th year since the Tiananmen Square Massacre, our commitment to remembrance and education cast a poignant light on the past and present struggles against oppression. The candlelight vigil and ceremony held on June 2 served not only as a tribute to the valiant souls who perished in 1989 but also as a stark reminder of the sacrifices made in the quest for freedom.



The gathering at the Victims of Communism Memorial, an emblematic replica of the “Goddess of Democracy” statue, drew individuals from all walks of life, unified in honoring the memory of those who stood defiant in the face of tyranny. The testimonies of Tiananmen Square Massacre survivors resonated deeply, as did the voices of the Uyghur, Tibetan, and Hong Kong representatives, each narrative weaving into the tapestry of continued vigilance against the ongoing transgressions of the Chinese Communist Party.

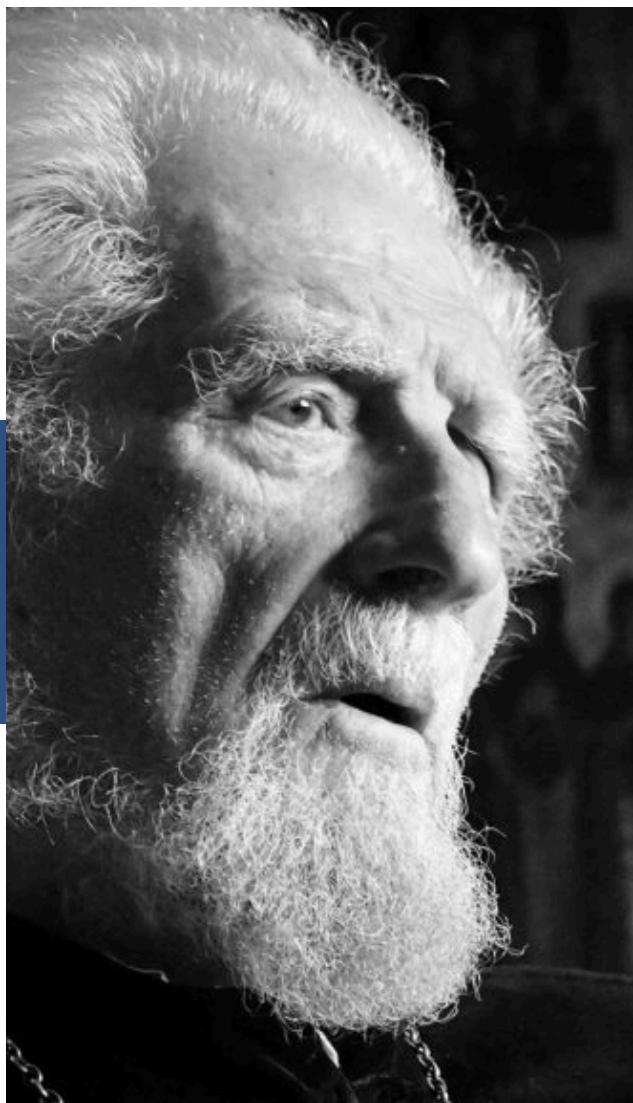
This event underscored the importance of historical awareness and the power of collective witness. It was an assertion of our foundational belief in the value of individual rights and the enduring hope for a future where such rights are universally upheld.



2023 Captive Nations Summit

In commemorating National Captive Nations Week, VOC convened the Captive Nations Summit, turning the Victims of Communism Museum in Washington, D.C., into a hub of international discourse. Witnesses from countries once and currently subjugated to communism shared their experiences, shedding light on the pervasive threat of totalitarian regimes. The summit served as a critical platform for dialogue, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine sharpening the focus on current global crises.

VOC's commitment to human rights was further exemplified by the recognition of bold advocates for freedom. Vladimir Kara-Murza received the Dissident Human Rights Award for his unwavering advocacy in Russia, while Father Georgi Edelstein was honored with the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom, acknowledging his lifelong struggle for truth and religious liberty.



“The communist system has not changed in principle during the last 105 years...To quote Lenin, ‘A blue devil is no different from a yellow one.’”

—Father Georgi Edelstein



Our resolve to intellectual resistance against communism was reinforced by insightful contributions from leaders such as Representative Mike Gallagher, Chairman of the House Select Committee on China, and VOC Trustee, Ambassador Paula Dobriansky. Their keynote speeches provided a strategic vision to counter the narrative of communist regimes and supported VOC's goal to promote a world that cherishes freedom.

The Captive Nations Summit also included several expert panels which delved into the complex dynamics of war perception, memory politics, and the role of collective memory. Panelists from diverse backgrounds brought a wealth of knowledge, enhancing VOC's research objectives and offering a multifaceted understanding of resistance to authoritarianism.

The cumulative effect of VOC's activities throughout the year has been a testament to the power of collective effort in preserving the memory of the victims of communism and advocating for a future free from the shadows of tyranny.

"When evil is not publicly reckoned with and condemned, it always returns."

—*Vladimir Kara-Murza*

Through each endeavor, VOC has not only honored the legacy of those who have suffered under oppressive regimes but also laid the groundwork for generations to come to continue the fight for freedom and human dignity.



VOC HONORS



Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom Laureates

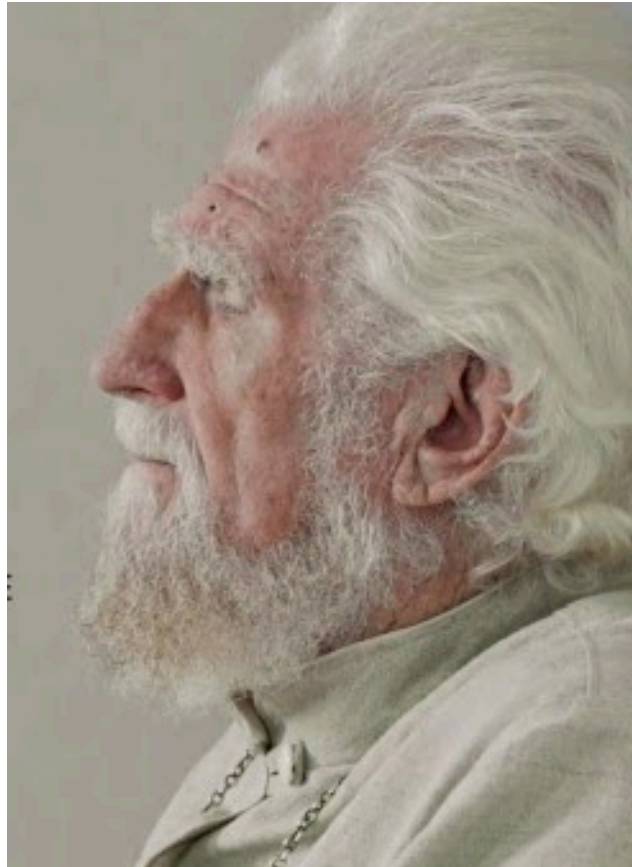
The Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom is awarded to those who have demonstrated a lifelong commitment to freedom and democracy and opposition to communism and all other forms of tyranny.

2023 Father Georgi Edelstein Bhuchung K. Tsering	2012 The Hon. Donald Rumsfeld H.E. Stanislaw Shushkevich	2005 Pope Saint John Paul II The Hon. Lev E. Dobriansky Lt. Gen. Edward L. Rowny, U.S.A. (Ret.) Solidarity Free Trade Union of 1980 Anna Walentynowicz
2022 Lee Edwards, Ph.D.	2011 The Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen H.E. Vaira Viķe-Freiberga, Ph.D. John C. Whitehead	2004 Lockheed Martin Corporation The Hon. John Shimkus Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, U.S.A. (Ret.)
2021 Jimmy Lai	2010 Robert Conquest The Hon. Armando Valladares Harry Wu H.E. Emanuelis Zingeris	2003 H.E. Václav Havel National Endowment for Democracy Michael Novak
2020 José Daniel Ferrer García	2009 The Hon. Steny Hoyer The Hon. Jack Kemp The Hon. Edwin Meese III Richard Pipes, Ph.D. The Hon. Bishop László Tókéš	2002 The Hon. Philip M. Crane The Hon. Hae Yung Chung The Hon. Joseph Lieberman H.E. Viktor Orbán
2019 H.E. Joachim Gauck Col. Gail S. Halvorsen, U.S.A.F. (Ret.) Tiananmen Mothers H.E. Joseph Cardinal Zen, Ph.D.	2008 Midge Decter Amb. Paula J. Dobriansky, Ph.D. The Hon. Tom Lantos The Hon. Kateryna Yushchenko	2001 Vladimir Bukovsky The Hon. Jesse Helms
2018 H.E. Valdas Adamkus H.E. Sandra Kalniete, MEP H.E. Tunne Kelam, MEP Oswaldo Payá Sardiñas	2007 William F. Buckley, Jr. The Hon. János Horváth, Ph.D. The Hon. Henry “Scoop” Jackson The Hon. Dana Rohrabacher Trần Văn Bá	2000 Đoàn Việt Hoạt, Ph.D. Col. John McKone, U.S.A.F. (Ret.) Col. Lewis Millett, U.S.A. (Ret.) The Hon. Orson Swindle Gen. Paik Sun-yup, ROKA (Ret.) Wei Jingsheng Youk Chhang
2017 H.E. Mart Laar, Ph.D. Memorial Society The Hon. Natan Sharansky	2006 Edwin J. Feulner, Ph.D. The Hon. Milada Horáková H.E. Lech Wałęsa	1999 Elena Bonner H.E. Philip Dimitrov Lane Kirkland H.E. Vytautas Landsbergis, Ph.D.
2016 Paul A. Goble		
2015 Chen Guangcheng Guillermo Fariñas Alexander Podrabinek		
2014 Mustafa Dzhemilev Myroslav Marynovych		
2013 H.E. Václav Klaus, Ph.D. Fr. Thadeus Nguyễn Văn Lý Jianli Yang, Ph.D.		

Father Georgi Edelstein

Father Georgi Edelstein, born in 1932 in what is now Ukraine, was a figure of moral strength and religious conviction in a landscape marred by the suppression of the Soviet regime. His heritage, part Jewish and part Christian, set the stage for a life at the crossroads of faith and identity, challenging him from the start in a society rife with anti-Semitic and anti-religious sentiment.

Despite these challenges, Father Edelstein pursued a vocation in the Russian Orthodox Church, a decision that would define his journey as both a priest and a dissident. His ordination in 1979 marked the beginning of his official ministry, but it also brought him into direct conflict with Soviet authorities. He became known not just for his religious duties but as a vocal critic of the Soviet Union's control over religious institutions.



His steadfast defiance against the state's attempts to manipulate the church earned him a suspension and the label of a politically motivated dissident. Yet, he remained undeterred. Father Edelstein's actions spoke to a commitment that transcended personal safety, as he denounced the infiltration of KGB practices within the priesthood and fought for the sanctity of religious expression.

When conflict erupted in Ukraine in 2022, Father Edelstein's voice once again rose in opposition, this time against the Russian Orthodox Church's leadership for their endorsement of Putin's military campaign. His call for solidarity with Ukraine and his condemnation of the Kremlin's military actions demonstrated his enduring advocacy for truth and justice.

Receiving the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom at the 2023 Captive Nations Summit, an event symbolizing resistance against communist oppression, Father Edelstein's biography was celebrated not only as a personal achievement but as a testament to the power of unwavering conviction in the face of tyranny. His life's story reinforces the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation's dedication to education, research, and human rights, inspiring current and future generations to remember and to act against the injustices borne of communism.

Bhuchung K. Tsering

Bhuchung K. Tsering was born in Tibet and, like many of his compatriots, was forced to flee his homeland as a young man in the wake of the Chinese Communist invasion in 1960. This pivotal moment set the course for a life of activism and advocacy on behalf of Tibet and its people.

Settling in the United States, Tsering immersed himself in the Tibetan cause, using his voice and pen to shine a light on the struggles faced by Tibetans under Chinese rule. His writings and speeches have chronicled the cultural, political, and human rights issues confronting his native land, earning him recognition as a prominent Tibetan American intellectual and a respected figure in the diaspora community.

Tsering's passion for his people's cause led him to the International Campaign for Tibet where he has played a significant role in raising awareness about the situation in Tibet.

At the helm of the Research and Monitoring Unit, he oversees the gathering and dissemination of critical information about China's policies and their impact on Tibet, from racial discrimination and cultural suppression to environmental destruction and the presence of nuclear activities on the Tibetan plateau.

Beyond his organizational leadership, Tsering has been a dynamic force in international diplomacy. His testimony before the U.S. Congress and his presence on the global stage at various think tanks and universities has helped to keep Tibet's struggle in the international consciousness and has rallied support for Tibetan autonomy and human rights.

In 2023, the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation recognized Bhuchung K. Tsering's decades-long dedication to the Tibetan cause by awarding him the Truman-Reagan Medal of Freedom, a testament to his enduring advocacy for freedom, democracy, and the rights of the Tibetan people.



Dissident Human Rights Award Laureates

The Dissident Human Rights Award is given to activists and dissidents of Captive Nations for their bravery in standing for human rights and freedom in the face of communist tyranny.

2023
Vladimir Kara-Murza

2022
The People of Ukraine

2021
Movimiento San Isidro
Alexei Navalny

2020
Ilham Tohti

2019
Chen Qiushi

2018
Mother Mushroom

2017
Fang Zheng

2016
Sirley Ávila León

2015
Dolkun Isa



VLADIMIR KARA-MURZA

VOC awarded the 2023 Dissident Human Rights Award to Vladimir Kara-Murza, a Russian pro-democracy activist, historian, journalist, and television host for his lifelong advocacy for democracy and human rights in Russia, no matter the cost.

Kara-Murza is a former deputy leader of the People's Freedom Party and was a candidate for the Russian State Duma. He has testified before Parliaments in Europe and North America and played a key role in the passage of the Magnitsky legislation that imposed targeted sanctions on Russian human rights violators in the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, and several EU countries. He is currently imprisoned in Russia for the next 25 years for his staunch opposition and criticism of Vladimir Putin's brutal war in Ukraine.



Vladimir Kara-Murza, born in Moscow on September 7, 1981, hails from a family with a history of standing up against authoritarian regimes. His father, Vladimir Alexeyevich Kara-Murza (1959–2019), was an outspoken critic of Leonid Brezhnev and a supporter of Boris Yeltsin's reforms. Notably, his father's lineage connects back to Latvian revolutionary Voldemārs Bisenieks (1884–1938) and Latvia's first Ambassador to Great Britain, Georgs Bisenieks (1885–1941), both of whom were executed by the NKVD. The Latvian agronomist and publisher Jānis Bisenieks (1864–1923) was their older brother.

Before his death, U.S. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) called Kara-Murza “one of the most passionate and effective advocates for passage of the Magnitsky Act” and U.S. Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) described him as “a courageous advocate for the democratic process and fundamental universal human rights.” Twice, in 2015 and 2017, Kara-Murza was poisoned and left in a coma; the attempts on his life were widely viewed as retribution by the Kremlin for his work on the Magnitsky sanctions.

Flame of Liberty Award Laureates

The Flame of Liberty Award recognizes individuals and organizations that have advanced teaching truth, seeking justice, and keeping memory in honor of the millions of victims killed and the billions still suffering under communism.

POLISH NATIONAL FOUNDATION

On December 21, VOC presented its inaugural “The Flame of Liberty Award” to Dr. Marcin Zarzecki, Chairman, and Michał Góras, Trustee, of the Polish National Foundation for the Foundation’s longstanding support of VOC’s mission.

In partnership with the Polish National Foundation, VOC established a Polish Studies program in 2018 that helps draw lessons from Poland’s communist past, its heroic fight against communist ideology, and bolster the understanding of American audiences as to how the totalitarian Nazi and communist regimes oppressed the entire region of Central and Eastern Europe—and how resistance from freedom fighters in countries like Poland helped stop the spread of the tyranny to the United States.



Financial Position FY 2022

ASSETS

Total current assets	\$ 4,189,593
Property and equipment, net	\$ 8,511,579
Other assets	\$ 5,770,489
<hr/>	
Total assets	\$ 18,471,661

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Current liabilities	
Current liabilities	\$ 124,189
Accrued expense	\$ 130,102
Deferred rent & Other Liabilities	\$ 5,183,810
Economic injury disaster loan (EIDL)	\$ 2,039,479
<hr/>	
Total liabilities	\$ 7,477,580

Net assets	
With/Without donor restrictions	\$ 10,994,081
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Total net assets	\$ 10,994,081
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Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 18,471,661
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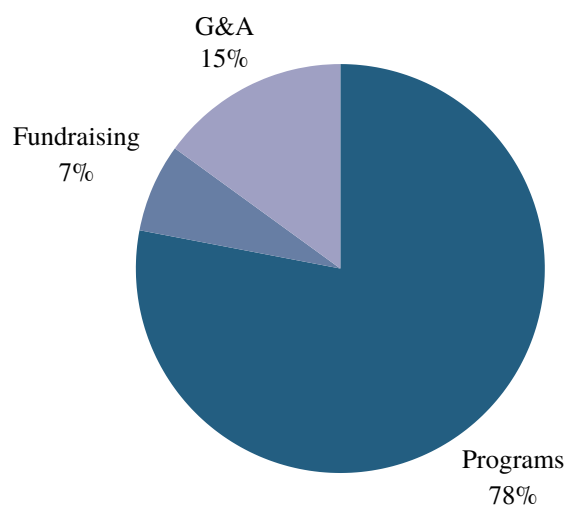
Total revenues and support	\$ 7,100,669
Total expenses and losses	\$ 6,971,486
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Change in net assets	\$ 129,183
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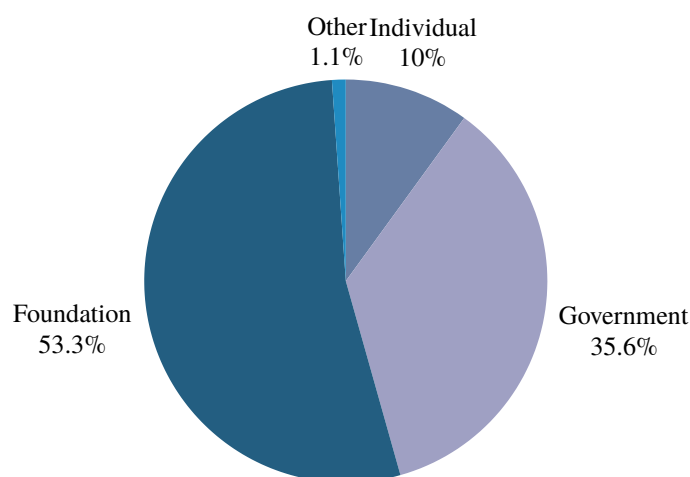
Net assets, December 31, 2021	\$ 10,864,898
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Net assets, December 31, 2022	\$ 10,994,081
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Total Expenses \$6,971,486



Total Revenue \$7,100,669



Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation's financial position is based on an independent audit for the fiscal year January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2022. The Foundation is grateful for the generosity of its stakeholders.



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MUSEUM

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Victims of Communism Museum Remembrance Society Members are devoted to supporting liberty everywhere. Thank you to our Society Members for their generous support!

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One Founder member has asked to remain anonymous.

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By joining our Victims of Communism Museum Remembrance Society, you would enjoy a host of sponsorship levels and recognition.

Levels starting at:

Founder.....	\$1,000
Teaching Truth.....	\$5,000*
Voices for Freedom.....	\$10,000
Flames of Liberty.....	\$25,000
Pillars of Memory.....	\$150,000

**Newly added level as of 2024.*

For details on the benefits attached to each level, please call (202) 629-9500 or visit victimsofcommunism.org/donate.





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Contact

If you would like to learn more about how you can support VOC, please contact Ashlee Davis at:



202-629-9500



ashlee.davis@victimsofcommunism.org



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Donate

VOC relies on the generous support of our donors to carry out our mission. Will you consider partnering with us to educate people about the history and horrors of communism?

Scan this code with your phone to donate securely online, or visit our website:

www.victimsofcommunism.org/donate



TRUTH
JUSTICE
MEMORY



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MEMORIAL FOUNDATION™

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