



REPRESSION & RESILIENCE

Annual Report

on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in China (2017)



Chinese Human Rights Defenders

Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD)

www.nchrd.org

contact@nchrd.org

The Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) is a coalition of Chinese and international human rights non-governmental organizations. The network is dedicated to the promotion of human rights through peaceful efforts to push for democratic and rule of law reforms and to strengthen grassroots activism in China.

CHRD engages in capacity building and provides advocacy tools as well as technical support to grassroots Chinese human rights defenders through organizing trainings on international human rights instruments and protections for human rights defenders.

CHRD administers a program of small grants for activists to implement human rights projects, and provides legal aid and emergency assistance to victims of human rights abuses.

CHRD investigates and monitors the human rights situation in China, disseminating human rights news updates, alerts to urgent situations, statements about important developments, and research reports and analyses to inform the media, policy makers, human rights agencies, and the general public.

This report has been produced with the financial support of generous donors. The contents of this report are the sole responsibility of CHRD and should not be regarded as reflecting the position of any other party. Please provide full credit for any information cited.

This report contains information collected from interviews with sources inside China. Due to security concerns, the identities of these individuals have been kept anonymous.

February 2018

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
<i>Situation of Chinese Human Rights Defenders: Selected Cases & Events (2017)</i>	
Chapter 1. Human Rights Defenders Persevere in Face of High Risks	3
Chapter 2. Struggling to Exercise Free Expression in Defiance of Ubiquitous State Censorship	14
Chapter 3. Efforts to Assemble Peacefully Even Under Tight Restrictions	20
Chapter 4. Striving to Exercise Right to Free Association Amid Assault on Civil Society	24
Recommendations	29
Notes	
Appendix: Imprisoned Chinese Human Rights Defenders - Selected Cases From Past Annual Reports	
In Memoriam - Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo, 1955-2017	

Cover: Mourners gathered for a seaside memorial in Jiangmen City in Guangdong Province to pay their respects to dissident Liu Xiaobo, who died of cancer in July 2017 while in state custody. Police detained participants from the activity as well as other individuals who commemorated Liu elsewhere in China.

Executive Summary

In 2017, human rights defenders (HRDs) demonstrated remarkable resilience in promoting and protecting human rights in the face of government repression.¹ President Xi Jinping consolidated more power during the Communist Party's (CCP) 19th Party Congress, advancing his contorted vision of a “moderately prosperous society” and “socialist modernization,” which excludes universal values like democracy, human rights, and rule of law. Throughout the year, human rights activists mobilized and disseminated information online, gathered in protest, and formed alliances to defend human rights. Many faced detention, imprisonment, torture, harassment, or administrative punishment for speaking out against government suppression.

The Chinese government took an aggressive approach to undermining international human rights principles in 2017 while it carried on severely violating human rights inside the country. Xi Jinping's January speech in Geneva launched an active push by China for an alternative concept of “human rights with Chinese characteristics,” which prioritizes “development” over human rights. At home, the “China model” has continued to leave behind countless Chinese citizens, victimized by breakneck growth at the expense of protections from discrimination, exploitation, and abuses of power.

Chinese authorities continued to persecute HRDs, subjecting them to enforced disappearance, criminal prosecution, torture—including deprivation of proper medical treatment—and other types of mistreatment. The government's ill-treatment of HRDs in custody may have directly contributed to the deaths of two prominent prisoners of conscience in 2017,

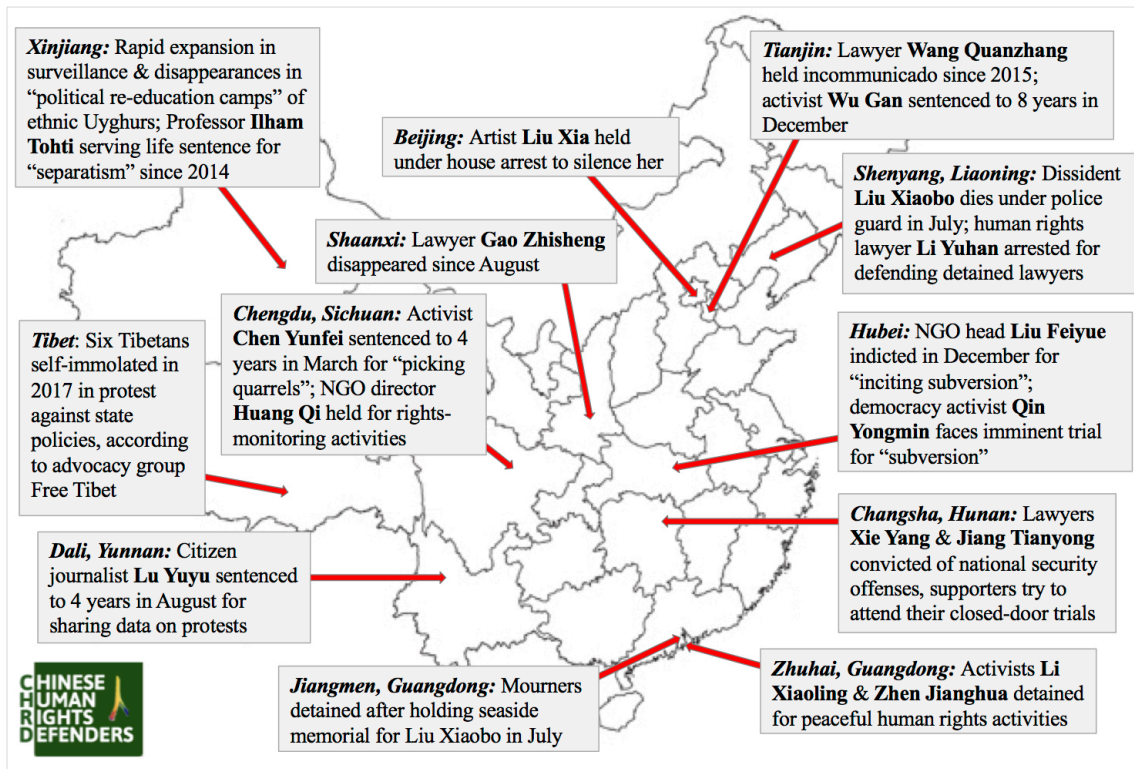
including Nobel Prize Laureate **Liu Xiaobo** (刘晓波).

Many Chinese human rights defenders revealed in 2017 that they had been tortured by police during secret detention under “residential surveillance at a designated location.” The government continued its persecution of human rights lawyers and obstructed their efforts to conduct their professional activities independent of government interference. Such lawyers soldiered on even as they remained at high risk of losing their licenses and being harassed, physical assaulted, detained, and criminally prosecuted. State authorities continued to harass and threaten reprisals against activists and lawyers seeking to engage with UN rights bodies.

Chinese authorities promoted “cyberspace sovereignty” and further tightened restrictions on freedom of expression and information online. Highly sophisticated cyber controls on free speech were ramped up in 2017, making it even riskier than before for HRDs to speak out about rights abuses and conduct advocacy work. Many HRDs in 2017 faced detention or stood trial for online speech, particularly expression over issues that the government considers “politically sensitive,” including expression mourning Liu Xiaobo's death or views about the 19th Party Congress and Xi Jinping's consolidation of his power.

Despite restrictive regulations and the risk of persecution, large-scale protests continued to break out spontaneously—including protests against pollution, land grabs, forced evictions, and unfair wages. Activists gathered publicly to express their views, often assembling outside courthouses to support detained HRDs whose trials were held behind closed doors, or outside government buildings to demand official accountability for abuses. Throughout 2017, authorities put HRDs on trial for organizing or participating in peaceful protests.

Situation of Chinese Human Rights Defenders: Selected Cases & Events (2017)



Civil society organizations in China, including NGOs engaged in human rights advocacy, struggled for survival in 2017. Some groups persevered in the face of contracted space to operate amid ongoing suppression. Some groups shut down permanently, while others operated only in heavily-controlled cyberspace. Victims and activists continued to undertake collective actions in 2017, mostly in informal groups or loose alliances, in response to human rights violations. The year ended with some human rights NGO leaders languishing in custody on “endangering state security” charges for documenting rights abuses.

CHRD urges the Chinese government to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and end its repression of civil society, including HRDs. The government must:

- Release all detained and imprisoned HRDs and activists;
- Investigate allegations of torture and ensure perpetrators are held criminally responsible;

- Ensure that detainees and prisoners are promptly given access to proper medical treatment;
- Repeal Article 73 of the Criminal Procedure Law and end the practice of forcibly disappearing HRDs and activists;
- Guarantee that lawyers’ professional rights are respected;
- Ensure that lawyers have access to their clients no matter the criminal charge;
- Allow Chinese citizens to participate in UN human rights activities without fear of reprisals;
- Repeal stipulations in national legislation which abridge the rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association;
- Bring national legislation on assemblies into compliance with international standards; and
- Allow national and international NGOs to play a full and active role in promoting and protecting human rights in China.

Chapter 1. Human Rights Defenders Persevere in Face of High Risks

In 2017, members of China’s civil society actively promoted and defended human rights, assisted victims of abuses, and sought government accountability for those abuses, albeit in increasingly contracted space, and despite unyielding government assault. In retaliation against acts of human rights advocacy, police detained activists, lawyers, dissidents, and citizen journalists. Chinese authorities continued to treat human rights work as “criminal” behavior, and subjected human rights defenders to enforced disappearance, torture—including deprivation of proper medical treatment—and other types of mistreatment.

hospital. Consequently, some of them faced persecution (see page 18). Even as the effects of the July 2015 crackdown (known as the “709 Crackdown”) against human rights lawyers continued to be felt, lawyers strengthened their mutual solidarity and supported their colleagues who were still detained or disappeared. They carried on their struggle to uphold universal human rights norms and protect due process rights, including the right to legal counsel and a fair trial. As a result, lawyers faced harassment, administrative punishment, detention, and criminal prosecution.

Deaths in Prison & Deprived Access to Medical Treatment

In 2017, Chinese grassroots groups and activists reported on a multitude of rights abuses by authorities, including delayed or deprived medical treatment for detainees and other pervasive forms of torture and



Dissident Liu Xiaobo (pictured with his wife, Liu Xia) and writer Yang Tongyan died in 2017 after being deprived of adequate medical treatment in state custody.

For example, despite the risks, many Chinese spoke up online or held memorial services to pay tribute to **Liu Xiaobo**, the imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate who died of liver cancer on July 13 while held under tight security in a government

inhumane punishment. Their documentation revealed a deliberate pattern of mistreatment, detailing cases of failures to provide proper medical care for incarcerated HRDs and official refusal to grant release on medical grounds.² Rights

defenders criticized such abuses and called for greater protection of detainees' right to health and freedom from torture.

The government's ill-treatment of HRDs in custody may have directly contributed to the deaths of two prominent prisoners of conscience in 2017. In July, **Liu Xiaobo** died at age 61 of complications from liver cancer.³ There are indications that Chinese authorities suppressed information of Liu's terminal condition until after the cancer had advanced to a life-threatening stage. An international independent investigation of Liu's medical examinations and treatment is warranted. Liu, who died less than three weeks after authorities made his condition public, was denied an explicit request—permission to travel abroad to seek treatment from doctors of his own choice. Authorities forced Liu's family to scatter his ashes into the sea, likely to prevent a gravesite from becoming a location where supporters could gather.⁴

“Instead of sentencing political prisoners and dissidents to death, authorities instead exploit the convenience of keeping them in custody and letting diseases become fatal, so that such people will die behind bars.”

Chinese human rights lawyer

Several human rights groups based in China first reported the August release of democracy activist **Yang Tongyan** (杨同彦, aka **Yang Tianshui**, 杨天水). At the time, Yang was terminally ill with an aggressive brain tumor and near the end of a 12-year prison sentence for “subversion.”⁵ Yang, who had long suffered from debilitating illnesses, died in November at the age of 56. For a decade, authorities had denied appeals by his family and lawyers for Yang's release on medical parole. After news of his release and condition emerged, Chinese activists organized to collect funds

to pay for Yang's hospitalization and provide his family with emotional support. After his death, officials pressured the family to scatter Yang's ashes in the sea and warned the family to keep silent. The government's coercion came to light only after a supporter of Yang's leaked the information to a human rights group.

Human rights defenders in China documented other egregious cases of detainees and prisoners suffering from life-threatening health conditions while being denied adequate medical treatment and bail or parole on health grounds. **Huang Qi** (黄琦), the head of the NGO “64 Tianwang Human Rights Center” detained since November 2016, has a potentially fatal liver condition for which authorities in Sichuan have denied treatment since July 2017.⁶

Xiao Yunling (肖蕴苓), an activist serving a six-year prison term in Jilin, suffers from severe glaucoma and hypertension, neither of which have been properly treated. Authorities have refused to release the 80-year-old Xiao, whose advanced age should increase her eligibility for clemency, including medical parole.⁷ **Li Xiaoling** (李小玲), an activist detained in Guangdong, has been denied treatment for an eye injury since she was taken into custody in June.⁸ Li's injury continues to worsen. Also in Guangdong, activist **Su Changlan** (苏昌兰) was denied parole while detained despite a variety of conditions, including severe hyperthyroidism, as well as heart arrhythmia and tremors.⁹ Su, who was sentenced to three years in prison for “inciting subversion” in March 2017, was released after serving out her punishment in October. She was in such poor health upon being freed that she was immediately hospitalized for urgent medical treatment.

Torture in Secret Detention

In 2017, many lawyers and activists, while under pressure from authorities, took tremendous risks to visit detention facilities or prisons, and to document and

disseminate information about alleged torture and mistreatment of HRDs being held in secret, including brutal means to extract confessions. Reports of such abuse confirmed longstanding fears that incommunicado detention, such as “residential surveillance in a (police-) designated location” (RSDL), has provided cover for torture and other forms of mistreatment (see page 7 for more information on RSDL).

During the year, many rights defenders revealed that they had been tortured by police during interrogations in RSDL. Some of them said they were tortured to force confessions for crimes that they did not commit. Three of these individuals—lawyer **Li Heping** (李和平), activists **Gou Hongguo** (沟洪国) and **Zhai Yanmin** (翟岩民)—were convicted and given suspended sentences in 2017 after “confessing” and pleading guilty at trial.¹⁵ Court proceedings that featured “confessions” by HRDs also were shown on state television, in the cases of lawyers **Xie**

Yang (谢阳)¹⁶ and **Jiang Tianyong** (江天勇) and Taiwanese activist **Li Mingzhe** (李明哲).¹⁷ It is believed these three men had all been tortured or coerced into admitting to crimes before being brought before a judge in essentially closed-door trials. In **Xie Yang**’s case, he told his lawyers in January that he had been forced to sign, under duress, whatever documents that police had prepared and put in front of him.¹⁸ The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention determined in October that Xie’s detention contravened the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Working Group noted it was not convinced by Chinese government arguments that Xie freely confessed to a crime and expressed concerns about the possibility that Xie had been tortured.¹⁹

Other well-documented reports of torture of HRDs came out in 2017, made public by the victims themselves after they left detention or by their lawyers or families. Many of the victims, like **Li Heping**, **Gou Hongguo**, and **Xie Yang**, had been

Ongoing Persecution of “709 Crackdown” Detainees

During the year, authorities continued to detain, imprison, or closely monitor human rights lawyers and activists affected by the “709 Crackdown.” By the close of 2017, five individuals taken into custody in 2015 remained in prison, including activist **Wu Gan** (吴淦), who was given an eight-year sentence for “subversion of state power” in December 2017.¹⁰ In addition, two Hubei activists who had rallied for Wu’s release in 2015—**Wang Fang** (王芳) and **Yin Xu’an** (尹旭安)—were sentenced in 2017, to three and three-and-a-half years, respectively.¹¹ Two others were serving terms for “subversion” handed down in 2016: lawyer **Zhou Shifeng** (周世锋), given seven years, and activist **Hu Shigen** (胡石根), who is serving seven-and-a-half years.

At the time of writing, 28 detainees from the crackdown, including 12 lawyers, had been released on “bail” or given suspended sentences.¹² However, eleven of the 28, who received bail in 2016, were out of contact—and likely under police control—for at least the first half of 2017. Those who continued to live under close police monitoring or virtual house arrest included **Wang Yu** (王宇) and her husband, **Bao Longjun** (包龙军), as well as **Xie Yanyi** (谢燕益) and **Xie Yang** (谢阳).¹³ In **Xie Yang**’s case, police moved into an apartment next door to watch his movements.

Three crackdown detainees serving suspended sentences—lawyer **Li Heping** (李和平) and activists **Gou Hongguo** (沟洪国) and **Zhai Yanmin** (翟岩民)—are likewise still living under threat of further retaliation. Under the conditions of their sentencing, these individuals can be sent to prison if authorities determine that they break certain rules during the period of their suspended sentence.¹⁴

detained in 2015 as part of the “709 Crackdown.” Among these, lawyer **Li Chunfu** (李春富), the brother of Li Heping released in January after spending over 18 months in detention, displayed acute symptoms of trauma that he had experienced in custody.²⁰ Both **Li Shuyun** (李姝云),²¹ a trainee lawyer, and **Gou Hongguo** revealed in 2017 that they had been forcibly medicated in detention, among other forms of ill-treatment.²² In a case closely linked to the crackdown, detained lawyer **Li Yuhuan** (李昱函) told her lawyers that she had been subjected to cruel, inhumane punishment in a detention center in Liaoning.²³ Li, who was taken into custody in October 2017 and arrested the next month, had represented then-detained lawyer **Wang Yu** in 2015-16. Li also had supported other lawyers seized during the crackdown as well as their families.

him to record a confession on tape, but that he had refused.

HRDs who exposed acts of torture by state agents faced government reprisals in 2017. For example, Jiangsu police criminally detained activist **Zhang Kun** (张昆) in May, after he posted online that police had tortured him in custody between 2013 and 2016.²⁵ In March, authorities barred lawyer **Chen Jiangan** (陈建刚) from handling legal cases for six months after Chen had made public details about alleged police torture of **Xie Yang**, who Chen was representing.²⁶ As Xie’s trial approached in May, Chen, his wife and son, and some friends were briefly detained by police in Yunnan Province. Furthermore, Chen’s son was blocked from attending a public school in Beijing.²⁷



Lawyers Xie Yang and Jiang Tianyong and Taiwanese activist Li Mingzhe pleaded guilty in televised show trials in 2017, after likely being coerced into confessing to criminal offenses.

In another case, Sichuan activist **Chen Yunfei** (陈云飞) told his lawyers in January that he had suffered injuries from having his hands cuffed and feet shackled in detention.²⁴ Chen, who was given a four-year sentence in March, was transferred in the summer to a prison where inmates reportedly are forced to engage in hard labor. In addition, activist **Huang Qi** told his lawyer in July that he had been routinely beaten by his guards in an effort to force

In May, hundreds of Chinese citizens signed an open letter to the National People’s Congress demanding investigations into torture allegations of detained lawyers and activists. They told authorities that “[the acts of torture] are decidedly against the ideals of modern civilization and are a disgrace for our entire nation.”²⁸ The signatories included former torture victims and their family members, who risked government retaliation by standing up against torture.

Enforced Disappearance as Tool of Persecution

In 2017, Chinese authorities continued to resort to enforced disappearance to silence and punish HRDs. Police held detainees under “residential surveillance in a (police-) designated location” (RSDL), a legalized type of enforced disappearance, denying requests for lawyer visits and refusing to inform families of detainees’ whereabouts. Authorities put under RSDL at least 17 human rights lawyers and activists after rounding them up as part of the “709 Crackdown” in 2015.³⁴ This form of

detention, which is stipulated in Article 73 of China’s Criminal Procedure Law (CPL), authorizes police and procuratorial officials to hold detainees in secret locations for up to six months and with access to counsel subject to approval, on the basis that their cases allegedly involve acts that “endanger national security.”³⁵ China’s ongoing use of RSDL defies international human rights conventions signed by China. Having received and considered information from Chinese HRDs, the UN Committee Against Torture, in concluding its 2015 review of China, called on the government to repeal CPL’s Article 73 as a “matter of urgency.”³⁶

A Snapshot of RSDL: Secret Detentions in Suzhou

A dozen activists in Suzhou in Jiangsu Province were held incommunicado in RSDL starting at different times between November 2016 and March 2017. Police had initially seized them as a part of “maintaining stability” prior to the G20 Summit in Hangzhou. The activists remained in RSDL between four to six months, the maximum allowed under China’s Criminal Procedure Law. They all had been tied to a peaceful protest held outside a courthouse.²⁹ Authorities claimed several of the detainees had “fired” their lawyers, and all were forbidden from seeing lawyers of their choice. In some instances, police denied visits on the grounds that they may “hinder investigation” or lead to “leaking of state secrets.” Four of the activists were formally arrested in 2017 after being held in RSDL:

- **Wu Qihe** (吴其和), accused of “disrupting court order,” was put under RSDL in September 2016 and formally arrested in March 2017.³⁰
- **Ge Jueping** (戈觉平), accused of “inciting subversion of state power,” was put under RSDL in November 2016 and formally arrested in May 2017.³¹
- **Xing Jia** (邢佳), accused of “disrupting court order,” was put under RSDL in November 2016 and formally arrested in May 2017.
- **Xu Wenshi** (徐文石), accused of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” was put under RSDL in March 2017 and formally arrested in August.³²

The eight others were released on bail after serving time under RSDL:

- **Gu Yimin** (顾义民), accused of “inciting subversion of state power,” was put under RSDL in September 2016 and released in January 2017.
- **Wang Mingxian** (王明贤), **Wang Wanping** (王婉平), and **Xu Chunling** (徐春玲), all accused of “disrupting court order,” were put under RSDL in September 2016 and released in March 2017.
- **Hu Cheng** (胡诚), accused of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” was put under RSDL in November 2016 and released in May 2017.
- **Ni Jinfang** (倪金芳) and Ms. **Lu Guoying** (陆国英), both accused of “disrupting court order,” were put under RSDL in November 2016 and released in May 2017.
- **Gu Xiaofeng** (顾晓峰), accused of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” was put under RSDL in February 2017 and released in August.³³

Several high-profile cases of enforced disappearance of HRDs were documented and reported by China's grassroots activists in 2017. Disbarred lawyer **Gao Zhisheng** (高智晟), who had been under house arrest in Shaanxi Province since 2014, disappeared in August 2017. Gao reportedly had escaped from house arrest in August after revealing that authorities still did not allow him access to medical treatment for serious dental problems, but police apparently captured him.³⁷ In November, it was reported that Gao was being held in a completely darkened room in an unknown location in Shaanxi Province. Several activists were detained on suspicion of having aided Gao's escape.

The widow of **Liu Xiaobo**, poet and artist **Liu Xia** (刘霞), was last seen publicly in July, after appearing in a state-released video following the staged funeral of her husband.³⁸ In August, Liu again appeared in a video that was posted online. It was apparently leaked by the government, however, and it was impossible to know if Liu was speaking freely or where she was located. Soon after **Liu Xiaobo** won the Nobel Peace Prize in October 2010, Chinese authorities put **Liu Xia** under illegal house arrest, cut off her access to the Internet, and barred her from seeing visitors, leaving her isolated for years.

In another case, **Zhao Suli** (赵素利), the wife of pro-democracy activist **Qin Yongmin** (秦永敏), remained disappeared at the close of 2017, after initially going missing in Hubei along with her husband in January 2015.³⁹ A plea on Zhao's behalf was sent to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance in November 2017.⁴⁰ **Qin Yongmin**, whose rights advocacy goes back four decades, is head of the group "China Human Rights Watch," also known as the "Rose Group," and is under detention in Wuhan, awaiting trial.⁴¹

Practice of Denying Right to Lawyer of Choice

One tactic that police have increasingly used during enforced disappearances is coercing detained HRDs into "dismissing" their lawyers (who were engaged by their families) and to accept government-appointed lawyers. According to international human rights norms, detainees have the right to access legal counsel from lawyers of their own choice, and lawyers should be able to work in the best interest of their clients and independently without interference from the state. However, in the

"I will be convicted not because I am guilty, but because of my refusal to accept a government-appointed lawyer, to plead guilty in a televised propaganda confession, and because I exposed torture, mistreatment, violence, and prosecutorial misconduct."

Activist Wu Gan (in pre-trial statement released by his lawyer)

cases of "forced firings" documented by human rights lawyers and NGOs, government-appointed lawyers tend not to challenge law-enforcement and judicial authorities for violating their clients' rights. Nor do they defend defendants facing political persecution at trial according to the principle of "presumption of innocence until proven guilty." These government-appointed lawyers tend not to request that illegal evidence obtained through alleged torture or coerced confession be thrown out. Instead, they seem to follow an officially dictated script in handling such cases, keep detainees' families in the dark, or even try to pressure families to cooperate with authorities.⁴²

Many "fired" rights lawyers, however, do not simply end their efforts to disclose abuses of their clients' rights. For example, Hunan authorities told the family of

detained lawyer **Jiang Tianyong** in May that he had dismissed his lawyer, just at the time when Jiang had been moved to a detention center after a six-month secret detention under RSDL. The “dismissed” lawyers and Jiang’s family spoke out about their fears that Jiang had been coerced into such a move.⁴³ The lawyers hired by Jiang’s family continued to try to meet with Jiang, but police rejected their requests, claiming that Jiang had “hired” new lawyers.⁴⁴ In another case,

lawyers **Li Heping** and **Wang Yu** (王宇) apparently withdrew the names of lawyers that each had requested to see, after the detainees became concerned about the lawyers’ safety.⁴⁹ In another case, **Gu Yuese** (顾约瑟, aka **Joseph Gu**) of Hangzhou, the detained pastor of China’s largest official Protestant “megachurch,” dismissed his lawyer, **Zhang Peihong** (张培鸿), in July 2017, out of concern for Zhang’s well-being.⁵⁰

Searching for Wang Quanzhang, Victim of Enforced Disappearance: A Victim-Family Centered Advocacy Campaign

Among the enforced disappearances linked to the “709 Crackdown,” rights lawyer **Wang Quanzhang’s** (王全璋) has endured the longest period of incommunicado detention.⁴⁶ Wang, who remains completely out of contact, has been held without access to lawyers since he was detained in August 2015. There are grave concerns that Wang has been tortured in custody, considering his lengthy disappearance and the mistreatment reported in the cases of many other “709” detainees. The Chinese government continues to hold Wang incommunicado despite domestic and global calls urging his release, including inquiries and pressure from foreign governments and UN human rights bodies.

Li Wenzu (李文足), Wang’s wife, has been his most vocal and spirited advocate, keeping a public count of how long he has been disappeared—approximately 950 days at the time of this report. Along with the wives of other “709” detainees, including **Wang Xiaoling** (王峭玲), wife of **Li Heping** (李和平), **Li Wenzu** has engaged in sustained advocacy to get information about her husband’s whereabouts and seek accountability, while also drawing attention to the plight of other “709” detainees. In coordinated efforts aided by lawyers and other family members and supporters, these women have released joint letters, press statements, and public appeals over the illegal detentions and alleged torture and disappearance of their loved ones. They have converged on procuratorates, courthouses, and detention centers to file requests and submit complaints with officials, though they have faced repeated refusals and harassment. They have been consistently turned away or ignored by authorities while police have verbally and physical assaulted, threatened, and harassed them.⁴⁷ **Li Wenzu’s** advocacy has garnered particular notice: Li was awarded in December 2017 the inaugural Outstanding Citizen Award by a group of activists inside China for her courage and perseverance.⁴⁸

detained activist **Li Jiangpeng** (李江鹏) in Shenzhen was reportedly pressured to dismiss his lawyers, who still continued to speak up in his defense.⁴⁵

As reported in 2017, some detained HRDs, aware of the increasingly treacherous work conditions for rights lawyers, decided not to be represented by lawyers who may face great personal and professional risks. For instance, while in detention in past years,

As seen in several cases in 2017, detained HRDs “represented” by government-appointed lawyers confessed to criminal charges, pleaded guilty at trial, and even agreed not to appeal their convictions. These detainees were often told by the appointed lawyers and prosecutors that they could gain “leniency” if they did so, such as a suspended sentence. Such actions were taken in the cases of **Jiang Tianyong**, **Li Heping**, **Li Mingzhe**, and **Xie Yang**.

The lawyer assigned by authorities to **Li Heping**'s case did not even attend Li's sentencing in Tianjin in April, when Li was given a three-year suspended sentence for "subversion of state power."⁵¹

court sentenced lawyer Liu to 20 years in prison. Liu had been disbarred in 2008 after representing villagers in a land dispute case in the city of Heyuan. Liu's 2017 conviction for "extortion," "blackmail," and



Wives of "709 Crackdown" detainees have actively sought their freedom. Li Wenzu, wife of disappeared lawyer Wang Quanzhang (pictured at right with their son), has exhibited particularly steadfast support for Wang in the face of state suppression.

Human Rights Lawyers Push for Rule of Law Despite Government Persecution

In 2017, the Chinese government continued its persecution of human rights lawyers and obstruction of their efforts to conduct their professional activities independently from government interference. Such lawyers soldiered on in 2017 even as they remained at high risk of losing their licenses and being subjected to harassment, physical violence, detention, and criminal prosecution. Their speaking out about abuses of human rights has kept the international community aware of the hypocrisy of China's "rule by law" claims. The UN condemned the government's ongoing persecution of human rights lawyers in May, recognizing the increasingly lawless conditions under which China's rights lawyers conduct their work.⁵²

The year saw court proceedings in cases of two rights lawyers, **Liu Yao** (刘尧) and **Xia Lin** (夏霖), who are serving the longest-known sentences handed to Chinese lawyers under Xi Jinping.⁵³ In April, a Guangdong

"purchasing a trafficked child" was believed to be retaliation for his activism in exposing corruption of local officials.⁵⁴ In April, a Beijing court turned down lawyer Xia Lin's appeal of his 12-year sentence, though the court reduced it to 10 years. Lawyer Xia was initially detained in 2014.

Lawyers convicted of crimes may permanently lose their license for practicing law, as stipulated in China's Lawyer's Law. Shandong lawyer **Shu Xiangxin** (舒向新), who was sentenced to six months in prison for "libel" in January 2017, can no longer practice law.⁵⁵ This is also the case for lawyer **Li Heping**, who was put on trial and convicted in April 2017 but released on a suspended sentence.

Between late 2017 and early 2018, authorities took away or suspended several rights lawyers' licenses to practice. Revoking a lawyer's license is an administrative punishment and in effect bans a lawyer from ever practicing law again. Judicial officials apparently issued the administrative penalties in retaliation for the

lawyers' online expression, which authorities claimed had "endangered national security," and for their staunch defense in "sensitive" cases.⁵⁶ In September, judicial officials revoked the license of Shandong lawyer **Zhu Shengwu** (祝圣武), citing his posted criticisms tied to the

power" and placed him in "residential surveillance in a designated location."⁵⁹ Officials had previously refused to renew Yu's license in July 2017, in apparent retaliation for his representing detained lawyer **Wang Quanzhang**.⁶⁰



Zhu Shengwu, Sui Muqing, and Yu Wensheng are among the human rights lawyers who have lost their licenses to practice law after persistently defending their clients' rights.

case of a client, **Wang Jiangfeng** (王江峰), who was jailed after mocking Xi Jinping on social media.⁵⁷ In December, Hangzhou authorities suspended the license of lawyer **Wu Youshui** (吴有水) for nine months, noting his criticism of "corrupt officials," including President Xi. In January 2018, judicial officials in Guangdong notified lawyer **Sui Muqing** (隋牧青) that his license would be revoked, and Beijing authorities "de-registered," or temporarily cancelled, the license of lawyer **Yu Wensheng** (余文生). Earlier in the same week, Yu was denied permission to set up a law firm and banned from travelling overseas on "national security" grounds. These government decisions were likely linked to Yu's public statement calling for constitutional and legal reforms in China. After Yu made these acts of retaliation public, authorities criminally detained him on suspicion of "disrupting official duties."⁵⁸ In late January, authorities changed the charge to "inciting subversion of state

Dozens of lawyers signed an open letter in July 2017 urging the State Council to repeal several administrative rules and practices that restrict lawyers' rights to conduct their work independently.⁶¹ Among the most troubling are two sets of provisions amended in 2016 by the Ministry of Justice—the Administrative Measures for the Practice of Law by Lawyers and Administrative Measures for Law Firms.⁶² Changes to the measures promote allegiance to CCP ideology and introduce further restrictions on lawyers' free expression.⁶³ Under the administrative rules, law firms can dismiss lawyers if they express dissent or challenge violations of their clients' legal rights in court, gather to discuss legal strategy, or file complaints about abusive police behavior.

As an example of how the rules on law firms have been applied, authorities conducted searches and "inspections" of law offices, citing such rules as justification. In September, when police were detaining

activists and tightening security around the country before the 19th Party Congress, authorities conducted “special inspections” of firms known to take on politically sensitive cases. Those targeted include Beijing Daoheng Law Firm, the office of lawyer **Liang Xiaojun** (梁晓军), and also the office of lawyer **Mo Shaoping** (莫少平), which employs several human rights lawyers.⁶⁴

To further rein in rights lawyers, the Ministry of Justice put out a “ranking system” in March 2017 to rate lawyers based on their “political performance.” Under this ranking system, lawyers whose work supports the Party’s leadership and “socialist rule by law” can score points with the government. In practice, the system serves to further discredit and penalize human rights lawyers, since when faced with interference by Party and government officials and illegal behavior by state-appointed judges and public security organs, such lawyers tend not remain silent but instead speak up, thus incurring the ire of officials.⁶⁵

Reprisals Against HRDs Engaging With UN Rights Mechanisms

The Chinese government has regarded acts of obtaining or disseminating information about international human rights standards, and applying or defending such norms, as “criminal” activities. Under Xi Jinping, China made a significant move in 2017, from quietly resisting and undermining such standards, to taking a more vigorous global offensive to re-model the UN human rights system according to the government’s blueprint of “development over human rights.”⁶⁶ During the year, state authorities continued to harass and threaten reprisals against activists and lawyers seeking to engage with UN human rights bodies. Authorities blocked some HRDs from travel to take part in UN activities overseas, claiming that such an activity “endangers national security.”

Several HRDs were questioned by police before or after attending a training on international human rights in the spring of 2017, according to information gathered by CHR.D. One activist was questioned and repeatedly warned by national security officers not to travel outside the country to participate in “sensitive” activities. At least four other HRDs were stopped at airport security in China while en route to the training program; border police confiscated and destroyed the passport of one of these HRDs. Police also interrogated a human rights lawyer about the training after he had

“The administrative measures on law firms is a manifestation of an official shift in how lawyers are suppressed—from judicial proceedings to professional administrative sanctions. They show once again that the law is a state tool for maintaining stability and suppressing citizens.”

Chinese human rights lawyer

returned to China, and they banned him from traveling overseas again for an unspecified period of time. At least three other activists were also interrogated at the border upon their return, with police inspecting their cell phones. In addition, several training invitees were unable to obtain passports or could not attend since they had already been banned from going abroad.

There is reason to believe that the Chinese government’s criminal prosecution of lawyer **Jiang Tianyong**, who was sentenced to two years in prison in November, was partly in reprisal for his meeting with Philip Alston, the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, during Alston’s visit to China in August 2016. Alston urged China to release Jiang when he presented his report on the visit before the UN Human Rights Council

in June 2017. Alston described how he was constantly trailed by government agents, and that Chinese officials ignored his requests to meet unmonitored with members of China’s civil society.⁶⁷ In convicting Jiang, the Hunan court cited, among other “evidence,” his participation in overseas human rights trainings.

torture, including deprivation of medical treatment, five months after being taken into custody when she was about to board a plane to Geneva to attend a UN training program. In September 2017, on the fourth anniversary of Cao’s abduction, CHRD urged the US government to invoke the Global Magnitsky Human Rights



Chinese authorities have held activist Mi Chongbiao (left) and his wife under house arrest since 2013. Activist Cao Shunli died in police custody in 2014, a tragedy that has not been independently investigated.

In another case, Guizhou activist **Mi Chongbiao** (糜崇标) and his wife, **Li Kezhen** (李克珍), were put under house arrest in 2013, after Mi posted online a complaint he had submitted to the Human Rights Council about rights violations that his family had suffered. They were subjected to further acts of reprisals in 2017. In April, national security officers reportedly assaulted the couple, and Mi was transferred to a detention center for two months. Mi was charged with “intentional injury” in July, for allegedly injuring a guard in an altercation when the guards assaulted his wife, but the charge was later dropped. He and Li, who have never been allowed a visit with a lawyer, have been completely out of contact since the summer of 2017.⁶⁸

Accountability Act to sanction Chinese officials responsible for her torture and death.⁷⁰ In December 2017, one official in the public security unit that oversaw the facility where **Cao Shunli** was detained was designated for sanction under the Act.⁷¹

The Chinese government has refused to allow any independent investigation into the torture and death in custody in March 2014 of human rights defender **Cao Shunli** (曹顺利).⁶⁹ Cao died from mistreatment and

Chapter 2. Struggling to Exercise Free Expression in Defiance of Ubiquitous State Censorship

Due to China's growing number of Internet users and proliferation of social media apps, more Chinese citizens than ever before are able to voice human rights concerns and post critical comments online about government policies and abusive officials. HRDs are using available technology and limited space to share and disseminate information, coordinate advocacy campaigns, and quickly report news and developments related to human rights. As the Internet has expanded the channels for criticizing government policies and practices, and exposing rights abuses, authorities have responded with highly sophisticated cyber controls on free expression. Such measures were ramped up in 2017, making it even riskier than before for HRDs to speak out about rights abuses and conduct advocacy work.

While the government aggressively censored and surveilled rights activism online during the year, Chinese activists adapted by using new communication channels on social media and updating their Internet security tools. However, heavy reliance on the Internet to conduct rights advocacy remains a double-edged sword; several HRDs in 2017 faced detention or stood trial for online speech that was critical of the government or exposed rights abuses. Authorities charged them with a variety of crimes, including the widely applied “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” as well as “subversion of state power” and “inciting subversion.”

New Regulations Further Reduce Space for Free Speech Online

Since President Xi Jinping came to power, China has strongly promoted “cyberspace sovereignty” and further tightened restrictions on free expression and information online.⁷² Both Chinese and foreign tech companies are required to abide by the government's censorship requirements and, as a result, some simply practice self-censorship to avoid penalties. In 2017, Chinese authorities put into effect new regulations that largely fortified previously introduced limits on information-sharing and free expression.⁷³ Restrictions and surveillance on Internet users and social media apps were ramped up prior to the 19th Communist Party Congress in October. Tightened control over cyber-activities led to the persecution, including

“I've been completely deprived of my free expression rights beginning this year. Every time I published an article online, the justice bureau would call me to delete it, no matter the content. When authorities go about ‘maintaining stability,’ they don't care if my views are valid or not. They demand that I delete postings even if I'm just slightly critical of China's political situation.”

Chinese human rights lawyer

detention, of HRDs around the country. In regulations rolled out in January 2017, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology have required that virtual private network (VPN) providers obtain state authorization. This move outlawed most VPNs used by companies and private citizens in the country and effectively shut down a secure tool for engaging in human rights advocacy.⁷⁴ Many HRDs have used VPNs to circumvent the “Great Firewall”—the government's massive censorship apparatus—to access websites and social media platforms that are blocked by authorities.⁷⁵ HRDs also have heavily relied

on independently developed VPNs to communicate and mobilize actions online. Several people were detained or imprisoned in 2017 for breaking rules on VPNs. An IT engineer, **Wu Xiangyang** (吴向洋) of Guangxi, was sentenced to five-and-a-half years in prison in December for selling VPNs for Internet users to evade the “Great Firewall.”⁷⁶ In another case, **Deng Jiewei** (邓杰威) of Guangdong was given a nine-month sentence in March 2017 after he was convicted of illegally selling VPNs.⁷⁷

In June 2017, China’s Cyber Security Law went into effect, strengthening the government’s control over mass media, private communications, and online information. This law prohibits the establishment of “websites and communication groups” for “spreading...information related to unlawful and criminal activities.” It gives authorities a pretext to criminalize online sharing of specific content, including reports on human rights violations and public protests. The State Council may invoke the law to approve restricting network communications (i.e., cutting off Internet access) in certain regions, if authorities deem that such a drastic move is necessary to keep “social and public order.”⁷⁸

Also in June, authorities began enforcing rules from the State Internet Information Office, which stipulate that authorities must assess the “safety” of “important” Internet products and services. The rules allow authorities to “blacklist”—hence, block from purchase—Internet products and services that allegedly involve “national security and public interest.”⁷⁹ Given the ill-defined scope of “national security,” the rules give authorities even greater control over tools used in cyberspace.

Most forms of news distribution in China as of June 2017 must meet strict licensing requirements, based on regulations issued by the Cyberspace Administration Office (CAC), the central Internet oversight and

censorship agency. The rules, which spell out possible fines and grounds for criminal investigation, apply to information shared on websites, software applications, blogs, social media accounts, and instant messaging.⁸⁰ The rules go after information about social and public affairs but also on emergencies, such as environmental disasters and mass incidents. Reports of these sorts of events have often gone viral online in China, and have included information on critical comments, large-scale petitions, and citizen lawsuits against government officials.

During the year, authorities also placed more conditions on sharing information via private messaging tools, which are already heavily monitored.⁸¹ New rules were introduced in October that require group leaders on the popular WeChat instant messaging service to be held personally liable for content discussed by members.⁸² WeChat also was subject to frequent disruptions by government regulators in 2017; authorities periodically interrupted users’ access and closed tens of thousands of accounts, allegedly for “rumor-mongering.”⁸³ Controls over instant messaging applications appeared to spike in the weeks prior to the Party Congress. In a case related to monitoring of WeChat, police in September took into custody **Liu Pengfei** (刘鹏飞), a scholar who had headed a discussion group focusing on current affairs and Chinese politics.⁸⁴

The government has been policing the popular messaging application WhatsApp, which is advertised as providing secure, end-to-end encryption. In late September, authorities severely disrupted WhatsApp, likely to “maintain stability” before the Party Congress.⁸⁵ In October, a Guangdong-based netizen **Zhang Guanghong** (张广红) was detained, apparently after he sent messages in a WhatsApp group that included content about Xi Jinping. Zhang was formally arrested in November.⁸⁶

Persecution in Response to “Politically Sensitive” Expression

Chinese authorities targeted a number of HRDs and others who, undeterred by political risks, expressed critical comments and dissent online. Police particularly went after those who shared views related to the death of **Liu Xiaobo** in July as well as other topics of “political sensitivity”—the 28th anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre, the 19th Party Congress, and Xi Jinping’s leadership.



illness and death.⁸⁹ Public expression of sentiments about the Nobel laureate appeared to greatly unnerve authorities, triggering perhaps the first incidence of image filtering in one-to-one chats on social media and instant messaging tools, including WeChat.⁹⁰

Activists took to the Internet or real physical space to mark the 28th anniversary of Tiananmen Massacre, calling for justice for victims and their families. Police responded by detaining or arresting several of them.⁹¹



Activists Li Xiaoling (left) and Shi Tingfu were detained in June 2017 after bringing attention to the suppression of June 4th, 1989, and government denials of the tragedy.

A prominent free speech case in 2017 involved the outpouring of online comments and memorials following the death in July of dissident and Nobel Peace Prize laureate **Liu Xiaobo**.⁸⁷ Authorities barred the communications and movements of **Liu Xia**, holding her incommunicado in an unknown location after a state-orchestrated funeral, and prohibited her from speaking openly about **Liu Xiaobo**. Censors expunged messages on social media that mentioned **Liu Xiaobo** or criticized authorities’ handling of his medical treatment.⁸⁸ Official media propagated the government’s own narrative about his

Guangdong-based activist **Li Xiaoling** (李小平) uploaded to WeChat a photo of herself holding up a sign at Tiananmen Square that read “June 4th Marching to the Light.” Police abducted Li on the anniversary and took her back to Guangdong, where she was formally arrested in September, charged with “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.”⁹² Activist **Shi Tingfu** (史庭福) delivered a speech about the 1989 massacre near the Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, exhorting passers-by to “Never forget June 4th.” He was detained in June and formally arrested in July.⁹³ In another case,

Shanghai-based activist **Liang Bin** (梁斌), who mentioned “June 4th” online, was criminally detained in early June, accused of “picking quarrels,” and then released in July.⁹⁴

In Hunan, 10 activists in Zhuzhou City made a formation of the numbers “6” and “4” with candles and their own bodies on June 4th and filmed aerial images, which they posted online. They were picked up by police and served administrative detentions.⁹⁵ Four Sichuan activists arrested in 2016 for commemorating the massacre were indicted in March 2017, formally charged with “inciting subversion of state power.” The men—**Fu Hailu** (符海陆), **Chen Bing** (陈兵), **Luo Fuyu** (罗誉富), and **Zhang Junyong** (张隽勇)—were accused of making a wine label and sharing the image online, which referenced “1989, June 4th.”⁹⁶

more serious charge of “subversion.”⁹⁷ Several activists who expressed support for Zi’s proposal online were also detained, including **Huang Xiaomin** (黄晓敏) of Sichuan, who went missing in May for three months; Huang was formally arrested on a charge of “picking quarrels” on an unknown date.⁹⁸ In a pre-emptive strike at dissent before the Party Congress, Guangdong-based songwriter **Xu Lin** (徐琳) and singer **Liu Sifang** (刘四仿), who had composed and shared songs online denouncing rights abuses and mocking CCP leaders, were seized in September. Police accused the two men of “picking quarrels.” In November, Xu was formally arrested while Liu was released on bail.⁹⁹

Several netizens and activists faced repercussions in 2017 after taking to the Internet to ridicule top Party leaders, but particularly Xi Jinping as he was



Prof. Zi Su and activists Ding Lingjie and Liu Bing (left to right) were detained in 2017 for peaceful acts of free expression that challenged the legitimacy of President Xi Jinping.

A number of HRDs were detained in 2017 for expressing dissent or urging political reforms ahead of the 19th CCP Congress, which culminated in Xi Jinping’s consolidation of his power. Prof. **Zi Su** (子肃) of Sichuan was arrested in June, for “inciting subversion,” after releasing an open letter calling for democratic elections at the Congress to replace Xi. The professor was indicted in December 2017, but on the

crystalizing his Mao-like cult of personality. Shandong netizen **Wang Jiangfeng**, initially detained in 2016, was sentenced to two years in prison for “picking quarrels” in April 2017. Wang had satirized Xi and Mao Zedong while complaining online about local officials.¹⁰⁰ Jilin netizen **Quan Ping** (权平, aka **Kwon Pyong**) stood trial for “inciting subversion” in February 2017. He had posted images of

The “Crime” of Memorializing Liu Xiaobo

Chinese citizens from a broad swathe of society—activists, writers, businesspeople, educators, and others—were detained for speech and acts that memorialized **Liu Xiaobo**. After Liu’s ashes had been scattered into the sea, many went to seaside areas and paid their respects in small groups.

A total of 11 individuals were criminally detained on suspicion of “gathering a crowd to disrupt social order” for taking part in a seaside memorial for Liu on July 19 in Jiangmen City, near Guangzhou. All were subsequently released on bail but put under tight police surveillance. Except where it is indicated on the list below, the individuals were detained within days of the memorial and released in August or September.¹⁰²

- **He Lin** (何霖), business owner from Guizhou
- **Liu Guangxiao** (刘广晓), Foshan resident
- Ms. **Li Shujia** (李舒佳), Foshan teacher
- **Qin Mingxin** (秦明新), Foshan netizen
- **Wei Xiaobing** (卫小兵), Guangzhou clothing merchant
- Ms. **Wang Xinju** (汪欣菊), Guangzhou writer
- **Ma Qiang** (马强), Beijing-based Taobao shop owner
- **Huang Yongxiang** (黄永祥), Guangzhou activist and business owner [detained in September and released in October 2017]¹⁰³
- **Zhuo Yuzhen** (卓玉楨), Fujian resident [detained and released in September 2017]¹⁰⁴
- **Li Xuwen** (黎学文), writer and former teacher from Hubei [detained in December 2017 after going into hiding; released in January 2018]¹⁰⁵
- **Zhan Huidong** (詹惠东) Foshan writer and publisher [detained in December 2017 after going into hiding; released in January 2018]¹⁰⁶

Other activists were seized after going to seashores in other cities to commemorate Liu or for expressing support for him. Activist **Li Yu** (李宇) of Sichuan, an early signatory to “Charter 08,” the pro-democracy manifesto that Liu had helped author, was detained on July 19 after posting images of himself at a seaside in Fuzhou. Li captioned the image with an allusion to mourning **Liu Xiaobo**: “At the seaside, with him.” In Liaoning, activist **Jiang Jianjun** (姜建军) was given a 10-day administrative detention after honoring Liu at a Dalian seaside on July 17.

Hunan based activist **Jing Yingjun** (敬迎军) was given an administrative detention in early July after calling online for Liu’s release.¹⁰⁷ In addition, Guangdong-based poet **Lang Zi** (浪子, whose real name is **Wu Minglang**, 吴明良) was criminally detained in August after composing poems for an anthology eulogizing Liu. Lang was held on suspicion of “illegal business activity” before being released on bail in September.¹⁰⁸

himself wearing a t-shirt with satirical nicknames for Xi, including “Xi steamed bun” and “Xitler,” before his detention in 2016.¹⁰¹

Three activists—**Diao Jijun** (刁继军), **Ding Lingjie** (丁灵杰), and **Li Xuehui**

(李学惠)—were detained in September and arrested in November on suspicion of “picking quarrels,” in connection to a video mocking President Xi that was uploaded online.¹⁰⁹ **Liu Bing** (刘兵), a Guangdong-based activist, was detained in April and held for a month, accused of “picking

quarrels,” after holding up signs on a busy city street which read “China does not need the CCP” and “China does not need Xi Jinping.”¹¹⁰ **Liu Yanli** (刘艳丽) of Hubei, detained in 2016, was granted bail in May after being held for eight months for posting and sharing online comments critical of Xi, Mao Zedong, and Zhou Enlai. Police had charged her with “slandering” and “insulting” Chinese leaders.¹¹¹

Uyghur Scholar Serving Life Sentence for Exercising Free Speech



Uyghur scholar **Ilham Tohti** (伊力哈木·土赫提) is serving a life sentence for “separatism” after peacefully advocating for the rights of the Uyghur ethnic minority through an online platform that he founded.¹¹² In November 2017, a federation of parties and affiliates in Europe gave Ilham a free speech award, a recognition of the inherent risks of independent online reporting in China.¹¹³

Activists were also detained after expressing support for Guo Wengui, a mainland real estate tycoon living in the United States, who exposed alleged corruption by Chinese political elites.¹¹⁴ Some in the mainland circulated photos of themselves online wearing t-shirts with the phrase “Everything Is Just Beginning,” a slogan which Guo used to take jabs at officials and call for political reform. Authorities took action in Guangdong against several such individuals,

including through detention and criminal prosecution.¹¹⁵

In 2017, China again was regarded as one of the world’s most repressive countries for exercising press freedoms¹¹⁶ and among the biggest jailers of journalists, including independent reporters, citizen journalists, and bloggers.¹¹⁷ Rapid expansion of Internet access in China has led to a flourishing of independent investigation and grassroots reporting on human rights abuses and official corruption. In response, the government has further tightened its grip over both print and online media, taking stringent measures to suppress online journalism (see pages 25-26 for information on several detained citizen journalists in China, including heads of influential NGO websites that report on human rights abuses). The government’s actions against citizen journalists underscore an official fear that the spread of information on “sensitive” subjects can kindle widespread protests and jeopardize the CCP’s hold on power.

In one case, **Lu Yuyu** (卢昱宇), a citizen journalist based in Yunnan, was sentenced to four years in prison in August 2017 after being convicted of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.”¹¹⁸ Lu and his girlfriend, **Li Tingyu** (李婷玉), were both detained in June 2016 after they had for years documented and shared data online about public protests. Li Tingyu herself was secretly tried in April 2017 but then released.¹¹⁹

In addition, **Wang Tao** (王涛), a citizen journalist from Hubei, had investigated and reported online on a case that authorities deemed sensitive, about dozens of university students who had gone missing in Wuhan. Due to his reporting, police charged Wang with “rumor mongering” and issued him a 10-day administrative detention in September.¹²⁰

Chapter 3. Efforts to Assemble Peacefully Even Under Tight Restrictions

In 2017, HRDs continued to find alternative and innovative ways to exercise their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly despite obstacles and retaliation from the state. Peaceful assemblies in China are technically protected under the Constitution, but they are essentially banned under restrictions set out in the Law on Assemblies. This law requires citizens to obtain a permit from the police and prohibits demonstrations that challenge the CCP or criticize any government policies. Authorities have enforced this repressive legislation by categorically rejecting any applications made by HRDs to hold demonstrations.

“Spontaneous demonstrations with specific demands [about the environment, pollution, land issues, and other problems] keep growing. These demonstrations happen all around the country and will continue to increase since conflict resolution mechanisms are ineffective and deficient.”

Chinese human rights defender

Activists who gathered publicly without police permits faced persecution. Under Article 296 of the Criminal Law, Chinese citizens can receive a maximum five-year prison sentence for participating in an “unlawful” assembly. Police also charged those who protested or gathered without a permit with crimes such as “disrupting public order,” “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” and “subversion of state power.” Throughout 2017, authorities put on trial several HRDs for organizing or

participating in peaceful protests without police pre-approval.

Despite restrictive regulations and the risk of persecution, social protests continued to break out spontaneously, and activists got together publicly to express their views. For instance, activists often gathered to show support in front of courthouses as trials of detained HRDs were held behind closed doors. They also organized non-public gatherings—which are not prohibited by law—such as dinner parties, study groups, and memorials, and participants would often use social media to spread word of such events. Police caught on and took steps to prevent or punish these alternative ways for exercising free assembly.

Demonstrations took place in many locations in China in 2017, though police often responded by putting them down quickly, including by using force. Citizens voiced concerns during large-scale protests over, for instance, polluting factories in Hebei and Guangdong provinces in May; discrimination against ethnic minorities in Tianjin in May, and Inner Mongolia in August; forced evictions in Shenzhen in January, Henan in March, and Shanghai in June; and unpaid social benefits to thousands of military veterans and school teachers in Beijing.¹²¹

In early December, a demonstration took place in the Beijing suburbs over the forced evictions of migrant workers following a deadly fire the previous month.¹²² Authorities responded by censoring information about the protests from the Internet, detaining several individuals in connection to a march in support of the migrants, and stamping out civil society efforts to document and disseminate information online about the incident.

Following a demonstration over environmental pollution in Chaozhou City, Guangdong in February, police arrested

four demonstrators in April. The participants, **Chen Ruifeng** (陈瑞峰), **Mai Pinglin** (麦平林), **Mai Yingqiang** (麦应强), and **Wang Er** (王而), were accused of “gathering a crowd to disrupt order of a public place and to disrupt traffic.”¹²³ Over 100 local residents had rallied in February against pollution from a battery recycling plant and the construction of new factories. The protest broke out after officials ignored villagers’ calls to either shut down the recycling plant or resolve the pollution issues. Police violently broke up the protest. One demonstrator, **Wang Xili** (王喜利), fled to Thailand to seek refuge.¹²⁴

Many “solidarity protests,” in which HRDs have rallied outside courts to show support to activists or lawyers standing trial, occurred across the country in 2017. For instance, supporters protested outside courthouses in Changsha and Tianjin during proceedings for lawyers **Xie Yang** and **Jiang Tianyong** and activist **Wu Gan**.¹²⁷ In response to such actions, authorities increasingly resorted to using the charge of “disrupting court order” (Article 309), amended in the Criminal Law in 2015, to prosecute those who gathered or protested. The UN Committee Against Torture declared, in 2015, that Article 309



Activists Li Yufeng and Lin Xiuli were handed prison sentences in 2017 in government retaliation against their participation in public demonstrations.

The government does not publicly release data about demonstrations, but spontaneous protests are believed to number in the tens of thousands each year in China. Independent reporting on mass protests has become a target of government persecution, as these incidents may spread, threatening “social stability,” or paint China in a bad light internationally. Citizen journalists **Lu Yuyu** and **Li Tingyu** had chronicled protests for years and posted the information on a website named “Not the News” (非新闻), one of the only independent sources of information on protests in China.¹²⁵ The sites ceased operating after police detained the two in 2016.¹²⁶

was overbroad and subject to “abusive interpretation.”¹²⁸

The Supreme People’s Court (SPC) issued a notice in February, granting more power to police to detain peaceful protesters outside courthouses.¹²⁹ The notice followed the release of regulations for implementing the amended Article 309 in 2016.¹³⁰ The SPC notice “clarified” the methods available to public security forces to “protect judicial personnel” from demonstrators who “disrupt court order” by holding banners or shouting slogans near a courthouse. The notice listed punitive measures for “gathering a crowd to attack government organs,” including expulsion from the area, fines, or criminal prosecution.¹³¹

In one case, 12 activists were detained in 2016 and 2017 in Suzhou on suspicion of “disrupting court order” and other alleged offenses for protesting outside a courthouse against a verdict that they felt was unjust¹³² (see page 7 for more information on this case). In another incident, in November 2017, police dragged away three activists on suspicion of “disrupting court order” after they applauded in support of a fellow activist who was standing trial at the Shanghai Pudong New District People’s Court.¹³³ Several detainees in the “709 Crackdown” were charged with “subversion” or “inciting subversion,” with authorities citing acts of “organizing” demonstrations outside courthouses.

In 2017, authorities prosecuted a number of activists or petitioners (who tried to file complaints about rights abuses), who staged

or participated in demonstrations or gatherings, for “disrupting public order” or “organizing illegal assemblies.” For example, two rights defenders, **Yin Xu’an** and Ms. **Wang Fang**, participated in a demonstration to show solidarity with detained activist **Wu Gan** in July 2015. The demonstrators wore t-shirts printed with Wu’s image and posted photos of the activity online.¹³⁸ Yin and Wang were subsequently detained, put on trial separately for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” after prolonged pre-trial detentions, and eventually convicted and imprisoned in 2017.

Henan activist **Li Yufeng** (李玉凤) participated in demonstrations to show solidarity with several persecuted fellow activists in Beijing and Henan. Tried in the summer of 2016, Li received a four-year

HRDs Imprisoned for Creatively Exercising Right to Peaceful Assembly

Two well-known maverick activists, **Chen Yunfei** and **Wu Gan**, received heavy prison sentences in 2017. The two had extensively used performance art, humor, and satire—both online and in public spaces—to draw attention to rights abuses and galvanize support for victims, leading to their persecution.

Chen Yunfei is serving a four-year prison sentence for organizing a memorial service for victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre in March 2015.¹³⁴ Approximately 20 individuals attended the memorial before more than 100 policemen arrived and broke up the gathering. Police detained Chen afterward and formally arrested him a month later. Chen spent the next two years in pre-trial detention, including six months incommunicado. Chen told his lawyers he was tortured in custody. Eventually, the Wuhou District People’s Court in Chengdu convicted him of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” in March 2017. Chen, a former student protestor in 1989, had long been active in demanding the Chinese government investigate the Tiananmen Massacre and provide compensation to victims’ families.

Activist **Wu Gan** is serving an eight-year prison sentence for his efforts to highlight miscarriages of justice and rights abuses. An advisor at the Beijing Fengrui Law Firm, Wu was detained in May 2015, less than two months before police launched the large-scale crackdown on human rights lawyers. A report in the state-run Xinhua News Agency accused Wu of “disrupting public order” by “hiring” individuals to rally in front of courthouses to try to sway judicial decisions.¹³⁵ His case indictment cited as criminal evidence of “subversion of state power” Wu’s courthouse protests and online postings criticizing abuses by the government.¹³⁶ Wu, who was kept incommunicado for his first 19 months in custody and held in pre-trial detention for 27 months, told his lawyers that he had been tortured and threatened by police to force him to confess and admit guilt on state television. The Tianjin No. 2 Intermediate People’s Court put him on trial behind closed doors for “subversion” in August 2017 and sentenced him to 8 years in prison on December 26, 2017.¹³⁷



Activists Chen Yunfei (left) and Wu Gan were given prison sentences in 2017, punished for exercising their rights to free expression and peaceful assembly.

prison sentence upon the court’s conviction of her for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” in January 2017.¹³⁹ In its verdict, a Jiaozuo City court claimed that the demonstrators had “severely disrupted the normal order” of public space by holding up banners.¹⁴⁰

Qingdao petitioner-activist **Lin Xiuli** (林秀丽) and other petitioners attempted to raise awareness of their grievances through public demonstrations in Beijing at the same time as a major military parade was staged, in September 2015. She was subsequently detained and sentenced, in April 2017, to three-and-a-half years in prison on a charge of “disrupting public order.”¹⁴¹

Aiding or assisting others to stage demonstrations has also become a police target. Hubei police put writer and activist **Zhou Yuanzhi** (周远志) under criminal detention on suspicion of “organizing illegal assemblies” in late November, and formally arrested him a month later. Singling Zhou out as an “organizer,” authorities accused him of helping petitioners stage a demonstration in order to draw public attention to their grievances against government officials.¹⁴²

In one of the most remarkable instances of free assembly in 2017, Chinese citizens showed resolve to defy heightened suppression of any open display of mourning after the July death of **Liu Xiaobo**. Individuals held memorials on seaside areas in several Chinese cities to honor Liu, and police detained several attendees (see page 18 for more information).¹⁴³ One activist, **Ma Qiang**, told a journalist after his release that police tried to force him to sign a pledge not to attend any more memorial services.¹⁴⁴

“I went to grieve Liu Xiaobo’s death [at a seaside memorial] on my own accord, as a way to pay respects to one of the main mentors in my life....I don’t regret my participation and firmly believe that I am innocent of any criminal act.”¹⁴⁵

Excerpt of statement from writer Li Xuewen drafted before his detention

Chapter 4. Striving to Exercise Right to Free Association Amid Assault on Civil Society

Civil society organizations in China, including human rights advocacy NGOs, struggled for survival yet persevered in the face of contracted space to operate amid ongoing government suppression in 2017. Some of these organizations were able to carry on their advocacy work in a diminished capacity and under the watchful eyes of police. Others existed only in heavily-controlled cyberspace and without a physical presence. Meanwhile, many groups have shut down permanently. Some leaders of those groups are languishing behind bars or living in self-imposed exile to escape government persecution. However, victims and activists in China continued to take collective action in 2017, mostly in informal groups or loose alliances, in response to violations of, or failures to protect, human rights on the part of the government.

“The result of fierce suppression [under Xi Jinping] is that Chinese NGOs and rights-based advocacy groups have been forced to reduce their activities, be more cautious, and hunker down more.”

Chinese human rights defender

In the area of economic and social rights, despite decades of economic growth and the government’s boasts of achievements, abuses and failures to protect equal rights continue to affect the lives of millions of Chinese, including their rights to education and health, and the rights of women, persons with disabilities, and migrant labor. The government had previously considered independent groups working to protect rights in these areas as less “sensitive” or

politically non-threatening to its rule than NGOs working to protect civil and political rights. This posture, however, has changed significantly since Xi Jinping took power in 2013. Many social and economic rights-based advocacy groups, which were previously allowed to obtain legal registration or operate openly, now have been forced to shut down or face an elevated level of state scrutiny and police surveillance. Since the detentions of the “Five Feminists”¹⁴⁶ and the leaders of health rights groups¹⁴⁷ in 2015, many women’s rights, health rights, and anti-discrimination groups have essentially conducted their work underground. Their personnel have faced constant harassment, including police visits, financial inspections, and threats from landlords to evict them from rental properties.

Some of the most vocal labor rights groups in southern China have also been forced to fold operations after police detained several leading activists in January 2016.¹⁴⁸ Authorities continued to silence labor rights groups in 2017, fearful that successful efforts to organize and demand rights protections for workers will disrupt the balance of power between laborers, businesses, and the state, possibly even threatening the Communist Party’s rule. One labor activist, **Liu Shaoming** (刘少明), who was initially detained in May 2015, received a four-and-a-half-year prison term in July 2017.¹⁴⁹ The verdict in his conviction, for “inciting subversion,” cited his essays on democracy and other topics. However, authorities also likely sent Liu to prison in retaliation for his labor rights advocacy in China’s southern Pearl River Delta region, where he had helped migrant workers organize to defend their rights.

Independent groups that openly advocate for civil and political rights had never been able to obtain legal status or operate in public view in China. These groups have always done their advocacy at great risk, and their staff and affiliates have faced

detention, imprisonment, and other punishments. In 2017, such groups based in China managed to carry on their monitoring and advocacy activities, albeit on a reduced scope and under constant threat of reprisals. Several leaders of some of the most active of these groups, as well as some of their staff and volunteers, are currently in detention or prison. Many of these individuals have been forcibly disappeared and reportedly tortured, and they have been blocked from meeting with their lawyers or family members.

The government's persecution of leaders of human rights NGOs, including **Zhen Jianghua** (甄江华), **Liu Feiyue** (刘飞跃), and **Huang Qi**, demonstrates that authorities treat rights groups as a threat to national security. Their detentions took place immediately prior to, or after, the Law of the People's Republic of China on Administration of Activities of Overseas Nongovernmental Organizations (Overseas NGO Law) took effect on January 1, 2017. The indictment against **Liu Feiyue** cited as evidence "subversive" articles about human

Detained Human Rights NGO Leaders & Associates Allegedly "Endanger National Security"

Zhen Jianghua (甄江华), based in Guangdong, was detained in September 2017, on suspicion of "inciting subversion of state power."¹⁵⁰ Zhen had for years directed campaigns on the online platform Human Rights Campaign in China (HRCC, 权利运动). Zhen also helped organize and lead ATGFW.org, a group that provides technical assistance to circumvent the government's cyber censorship and information controls. Zhen had initially been held incommunicado at Zhuhai No. 1 Detention Center, where authorities denied all visits from his lawyers on the grounds that such contact might "hinder investigation" or "leak state secrets." On December 13, Zhuhai police informed Zhen's lawyers that Zhen had been transferred to RSDL on an unspecified date. His lawyers still have had no access to him, and police have told his lawyers that Zhen "dismissed" them. Detained in secret, Zhen is at serious risk of torture.

Liu Feiyue (刘飞跃), based in Hubei, was detained in November 2016 and arrested the next month, but remained in detention without a trial through 2017.¹⁵¹ He had no access to a lawyer until May 2017. Prosecutors finally indicted him on the charge of "inciting subversion of state power" in December 2017. Liu was the director of the Civil Rights & Livelihood Watch (CRLW, 民生观察). CRLW affiliate **Ding Lingjie** (丁灵杰) disappeared in September 2017 and was later confirmed to be under criminal detention in Beijing. Her detention is tied to her publishing an article on CRLW's sister-site "Voice of Petitioners" (访民之声).¹⁵²

Huang Qi (黄琦), based in Sichuan, was detained in November 2016.¹⁵³ Authorities held Huang incommunicado until July 2017. Police accused him of "illegally providing state secrets to foreign entities," but he has not been formally charged. Huang was the director of 64 Tianwang Human Rights Center (六四天网). Several affiliates with 64 Tianwang also have faced prosecution. **Wang Shurong** (王淑蓉), a volunteer, received a six-year prison sentence in April 2017 after being convicted of "using dangerous methods to undermine public security" and "picking quarrels and provoking trouble."¹⁵⁴ Another volunteer, **Wang Jing** (王晶), had been sentenced to 58 months for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" in 2016.¹⁵⁵ Volunteer **Yang Xiuqiong** (杨秀琼) was arrested in June 2017 on suspicion of "illegally providing state secrets to foreign entities" after she repeatedly published information about Huang Qi's detention.¹⁵⁶ A fourth volunteer, **Li Zhaoxiu** (李昭秀), was criminally detained in September after she made a call online for Huang Qi's release.¹⁵⁷

rights abuses posted on the Civil Rights & Livelihood Watch site, which he founded, and his group's applications for overseas funding.¹⁵⁸ Early police interrogations of **Huang Qi**'s associates showed that authorities were looking into whether his group, 64 Tianwang, had received foreign funding.¹⁵⁹

HRDs resorted to organizing collective advocacy actions online. For example, in response to the alleged torture of lawyer **Xie Yang**, which was reported in January 2017, HRDs organized online and set up a "China Anti-Torture Alliance" platform to draw attention to torture allegations, demand investigations, and urge the



NGO heads Liu Feiyue and Zhen Jianghua (from left) ended 2017 in detention, while activists Wang Shurong (third above) and Liu Shaoming were sent to prison for their rights advocacy work with independent groups.

Besides tying the detentions to "overseas funding," police also tried to connect the groups' reporting to "state secrets." The "secret" Huang had been accused of leaking was a Mianyang City government directive that listed Huang as a target for an upcoming crackdown.¹⁶⁰ Police leveraged China's overly broad State Secrets Law and retroactively classified the document as "top secret." In **Liu Feiyue**'s case, police recommended in August 2017 that he be indicted on the additional charge of "illegally providing state secrets to foreign entities," though prosecutors later dropped that charge when indicting him in December.¹⁶¹

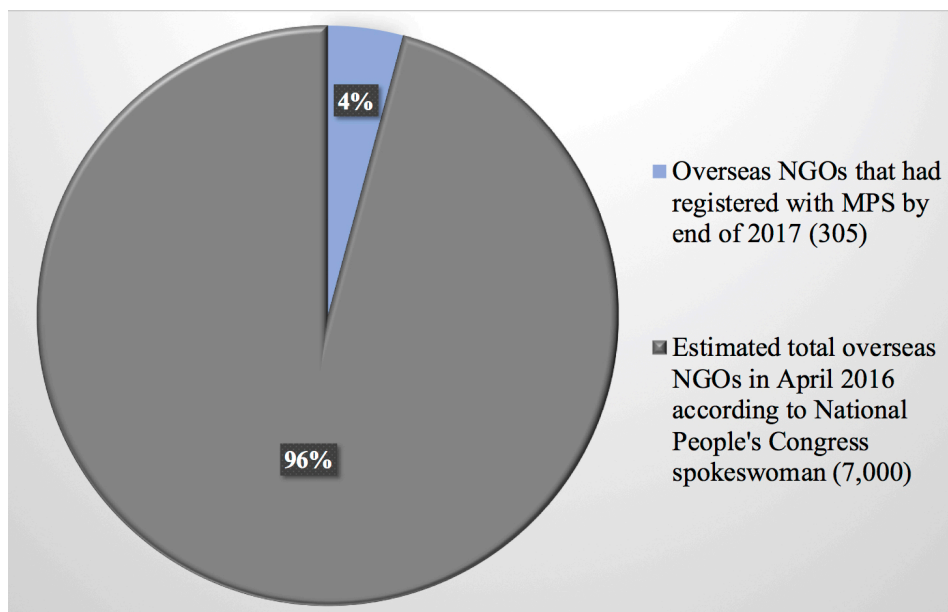
Chinese government to uphold its obligations under the Convention against Torture.¹⁶² Within two weeks, over 1,000 responses were posted to express interest in joining the group. Police questioned and warned several lawyers who were involved in this act of online organizing.

On January 1, 2017, the Overseas NGO Law went into effect, providing legal cover for the tightening of government control over civil society. This law practically shuts off international financial support for domestic human rights organizations, whose work the government considers politically "sensitive." Such organizations struggling for survival in China's hostile environment have no alternative source of support. This law has had a chilling effect on overseas NGOs and charities trying to operate inside China, coercing some of them into practicing self-censorship by shunning "sensitive" groups or activities. This law has further jeopardized the existence, security, and sustainability of more independent Chinese domestic civil groups.

"My previous employer had to dissolve after the Overseas NGO Law came out, and all the employees were let go."

Former Chinese NGO staff member

Not deterred by the potential danger of exercising the right to freely associate, some



Only a small percentage of foreign NGOs operating in China had registered with the Ministry of Public Security by January 2018, one year after the “Overseas NGO Law” went into effect.

The new legislation will likely have a profoundly detrimental impact on China’s civil society far into the future, and some early ramifications of the law have become apparent. By the end of the year, roughly 300 foreign NGOs had managed to register a representative office—or only about 4% of the estimated number of overseas NGOs that were operating in China before the law.¹⁶³ Of the groups that have obtained registration for a representative office from the Ministry of Public Security, a majority of them work in “non-sensitive” areas like trade, such as chambers of commerce or business associations. Most temporary activity permits have been given to organizations that focus on issues such as poverty and education.¹⁶⁴

It is unclear how many overseas NGOs have ceased their operations in China since the law was adopted; however, according to international media reports in the summer of 2017, several groups had suspended operations, and one NGO had moved its office from Beijing to Hong Kong.¹⁶⁵ An unofficial grace period for unregistered

NGOs is believed to have expired, leaving uncertain the fates of thousands of groups. A notice issued by the People’s Bank of China ordered all banking institutions to freeze the accounts of overseas NGOs that had not provided a copy of their registration permit as of January 1, 2018.¹⁶⁶ Since the adoption of the law, it is impossible to estimate the amount of reduced funding provided to Chinese NGOs from overseas NGOs and charities. However, many overseas NGOs have not been able to register and may have decided to end operations in China permanently, or to temporarily stop providing financial support to Chinese groups until their registration status is resolved. Many Chinese NGOs, especially those that have not focused on human rights issues or “sensitive” topics, now also fear they will face government scrutiny if they seek or receive overseas funding.

To further tighten monitoring and control over Chinese NGOs, the Ministry of Civil Affairs released a draft of the “Provisional Measures on Random Inspections of Social Organizations” in early 2017. These

administrative regulations would authorize unannounced police raids on NGO offices, allowing authorities to conduct “random inspections” of a group’s finances in the name of enforcing the Overseas NGO Law’s provisions on funding sources.¹⁶⁷

“The crackdown on NGOs has reached a frightening level. I used to edit for an independent news website, and police would frequently slow down or shut off the Internet. It was very hard, even impossible sometimes, to work normally.”

Chinese human rights defender

On June 27, 2017, the National People’s Congress passed a new National Intelligence Law, which took effect the following day.¹⁶⁸ This law, in lockstep with a series of other national security-focused laws adopted under Xi Jinping, has very vaguely and broadly defined what constitutes “endangering national security,” while granting more power to security forces. This law may pave the way for courts to punish even a wider scope of activities. It could also be used to justify the targeting and scrutinizing of Chinese NGOs that have been accused by the government of accepting funding from overseas groups, or those working with what Chinese authorities call “hostile foreign forces.”¹⁶⁹

In November, the State Council released regulations for implementing the Counter-Espionage Law, which was adopted in 2014.¹⁷⁰ The regulations further restrict free expression, assembly, and association rights. Of particular concern, Article 8 defines a vast range of activities as “conduct that endangers national security other than espionage,” which the Counter-Espionage Law authorizes security forces to “prevent, stop and punish.”¹⁷¹

Recommendations

For China to live up to its public pledges and international commitments to protect human rights and to uphold the Chinese Constitution, the Xi Jinping government must:

- End the practice of criminalizing activities of human rights defenders, including lawyers, and release all detained or imprisoned human rights defenders;
- Stop harassing and obstructing Chinese citizens, including human rights defenders, from participating in UN human rights activities, and end reprisals against them;
- Guarantee implementation of the Lawyer's Law, protect detainees' prompt access to legal counsel of their own choice, and allow lawyers to meet with clients without police monitoring or interference; and investigate allegations of illegal obstruction of lawyers' access to their clients and of incidents of violence against lawyers;
- Ensure detainees and prisoners are promptly given access to proper medical treatment, including seeing a doctor without police monitoring, and ensuring that doctors can report signs of torture and ill-treatment without fear of reprisal;
- Ensure prompt and impartial investigations of allegations of torture and inhumane treatment or punishment, including tactics meant to force confessions or extract evidence; and prosecute suspected perpetrators of torture and ill-treatment, holding them legally accountable;
- Repeal Article 73 of the Criminal Procedure Law, which authorizes "residential surveillance at a [police] designated location" for up to 6 months without judicial review or notifying families of detainees' whereabouts; and end the practice of forcibly disappearing human rights defenders;
- Repeal stipulations in national legislation, such as in the National Security Law, National Intelligence Law, and Overseas NGO Law, which abridge the rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association;
- Amend the Law on Assemblies to bring it into compliance with international norms, so that it protects the right to take part in peaceful assemblies and that such assemblies should not be subject to prior authorization by authorities;
- Allow national and international NGOs to play a full and active role in promoting and protecting human rights in China, specifically by removing legislative obstacles to NGO funding, ensuring registration for all NGOs and civil society organizations, and protecting their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and association.

Notes

- ¹ “Human rights defender” is a term used to describe people who, individually or with others, act to promote or protect human rights, according to a definition from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). For more information on the work of human rights defenders, see OHCHR: Fact Sheet No. 29, <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet29en.pdf>.
- ² CHRD, Watch List of Detainees and Prisoners of Conscience in Need of Medical Attention, <https://www.nchrd.org/2014/06/medical-watch-list-of-chinese-detainees/>.
- ³ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Liu Xiaobo, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/07/prisoner-of-conscience-liu-xiaobo/>.
- ⁴ *South China Morning Post (SCMP)*, “China stages ‘hasty’ cremation of Liu Xiaobo and has his ashes scattered at sea,” July 15, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2102761/liu-xiaobo-cremated-funeral-ailing-widow-makes-first>.
- ⁵ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Yang Tongyan, <https://www.nchrd.org/2011/07/prisoner-of-conscience-yang-tongyan/>.
- ⁶ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Huang Qi, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/12/huang-qi/>.
- ⁷ CHRD, Update and Appeal on Behalf of Xiao Yunling – May 18, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/06/update-and-appeal-on-behalf-of-xiao-yunling-may-18-2017/>.
- ⁸ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Li Xiaoling, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/10/li-xiaoling/>.
- ⁹ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Su Changlan, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/05/prisoner-of-conscience-su-changlan/>.
- ¹⁰ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Wu Gan, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/03/wu-gan/>.
- ¹¹ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Wang Fang, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/08/wang-fang/>; CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Yin Xu’an, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/08/yin-xuan/>.
- ¹² CHRD, Individuals Affected by July 9 Crackdown on Rights Lawyers, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/07/individuals-affected-by-july-10-crackdown-on-rights-lawyers/>.
- ¹³ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Wang Yu, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/07/prisoner-of-conscience-wang-yu/>; CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Xie Yanyi, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/09/xie-yanyi/>.
- ¹⁴ CHRD, Civil Society Follow-Up Report Submitted to UN Committee against Torture – June 2017, para. 25, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/06/civil-society-follow-up-report-submitted-to-un-committee-against-torture-jun-2017/#Point2>.
- ¹⁵ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Li Heping, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/08/prisoner-of-conscience-li-heping/>; CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Hu Shigen, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/01/hu-shigen-胡石根/>; CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Guo Hongguo, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/01/guo-hongguo/>; CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Zhai Yanmin, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/07/zhai-yanmin/>; CHRD in Collaboration with a Consortium of Chinese Civil Society Groups, Civil Society Follow-Up Report Submitted to the UN Committee Against Torture: Responses to the Committee’s Requests & to China’s Follow-up Report, para. 3, June 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/06/civil-society-follow-up-report-submitted-to-un-committee-against-torture-jun-2017/>.
- ¹⁶ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Xie Yang, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/09/xie-yang/>.
- ¹⁷ *Liberty Times Net*, “Rescue Brigade: Li Mingzhe May Be Sentenced This Year, Faces Harsh 10-Year Punishment” (救援大隊：李明哲案可能本週宣判 面臨 10 年重刑), November 1, 2017, <http://news.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/2239838>.
- ¹⁸ CHRD, “China: Investigate Torture Allegations of Detained Lawyer Xie Yang, Hold Torturers Accountable,” January 24, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/01/china-investigate-torture-allegations-of-detained-lawyer-xie-yang-hold-torturers-accountable/>.
- ¹⁹ Working Group on Arbitrary Detention Opinion No. 59/2017 (China) on Hu Shigen, Xie Yang and Zhou Shifeng, October 13, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/WGAD-letter-1.pdf>.
- ²⁰ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Li Chunfu, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/03/li-chunfu/>.
- ²¹ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Li Shuyun, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/03/li-shuyun/>.
- ²² CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Guo Hongguo.
- ²³ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Li Yuhan, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/12/li-yuhan/>.
- ²⁴ CHRD, Portrait of a Defender – Chen Yunfei, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/05/chen-yunfei/>.
- ²⁵ Rights Defense Network (RDN), “Wu Lijuan: Jiangsu Xuzhou Citizen Zhang Kun Criminally Detained for ‘Picking Quarrels and Provoking Trouble’” (伍立娟：江苏徐州公民张昆被以寻衅滋事罪刑事拘留), May 29, 2017, https://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/05/blog-post_410.html.
- ²⁶ Human Rights Campaign in China (HRCC), “709 Mass Detentions: Chen Jianguang, Defense Lawyer in Xie Yang Case, Due to Pressure Cannot Take on Cases or Access Case Files for 6 Months” (709 大抓捕 谢阳案辩护律师陈建刚基于压力未来半年停业整理案卷), March 17, 2017, https://www.hrcchina.org/2017/03/709_17.html.
- ²⁷ HRCC, “Police Station Informed School Not to Accept Mr. Chen’s Son, Believed to Be Retaliation by Authorities for Chen Jianguang Exposing Torture in ‘709’ Case of Xie Yang” (派出所通知学校不让接收陈建刚律师的儿子上学 疑与当局报复陈建刚披露 709 案谢阳遭受酷刑有关), May 16, 2017, https://www.hrcchina.org/2017/05/709_34.html.

- ²⁸ CHRDR, “Add Pressure on China to End Torture: Stand with Victims” (petition), June 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/06/add-pressure-on-china-to-end-torture-stand-with-victims/>; RDN, “Recommendation by Lawyers Safeguarding the Chinese Human Rights Lawyers Group Requesting NPC Establish Special Investigative Committee to Investigate Whether “709 Series” Cases Involve Existence of Handling Organs Forcing Defendants to Take Unknown Drugs, Among Other Acts of Torture” (中国保障人权律师团律师关于要求全国人民代表大会成立特别调查委员会调查“709 系列”案件是否存在办案机关强迫当事人服用不明药物等酷刑的建议), May 14, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/05/709_49.html.
- ²⁹ CHRDR, *China Human Rights Briefing March 20-23, 2017*, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/03/chrh-detentions-in-suzhou-new-measures-curb-free-expression-320-23-2017/>; Rights Defense Network (RDN), “Summary of Large-scale Detentions in Suzhou and Fuzhou in Late Stage of ‘709’ Crackdown” (709 末期之苏州大抓捕和福州大抓捕情况概述), August 6, 2017, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/08/709-201786.html>; RDN, “Lawyer Sui Muqing: Notice in Large-scale Detentions in Suzhou: Arrest Approved for Xu Wenshi” (隋牧青律师: 苏州大抓捕通报——徐文石被批准), August 7, 2017, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.co.uk/2017/08/201787.html>.
- ³⁰ *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, “Wu Qihe Arrested in Suzhou Mass Detention Case After Completing Residential Surveillance” (苏州大抓捕吴其和监居期满被捕), March 10, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/arrest-03102017075748.html>.
- ³¹ *RFA*, “Ge Jueping Arrested for Crime Involving Subversion, Wife Lu Guoying Released on Bail” (戈觉平涉嫌煽动罪被捕 妻陆国英取保获释), May 7, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/dissident-05072017091524.html>.
- ³² *RFA*, “Xu Wenshi Arrested, Suzhou Mass Detention Case Continues” (苏州大抓捕持续 徐文石被捕), August 8, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/renquanfazhi/x11-08082017135545.html>.
- ³³ *RFA*, “Gu Xiaofeng of Suzhou Mass Detention Case Released” (苏州大抓捕案顾晓峰获释), August 5, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/release-08052017101221.html>.
- ³⁴ CHRDR, “End 2-Year Crackdown on Lawyers, Hold Chinese Government Accountable,” July 6, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/07/end-2-year-crackdown-on-lawyers-hold-chinese-government-accountable/>.
- ³⁵ Under Article 73 of the Criminal Procedure Law, lawyers’ visits with clients held on suspicion of crimes in the category of “endangering state security,” terrorism, or involving significant amounts of bribes must first be approved by investigating organs. The “Ministry of Public Security Provision on Procedures for Handling Criminal Cases” expands police power to deny lawyers’ visits on “national security” grounds beyond the crimes of “endangering state security” in the Criminal Law. Ministry of Public Security Provision on Procedures for Handling Criminal Cases (公安机关办理刑事案件程序规定), 2012, www.mps.gov.cn/n2254314/n2254409/n2254443/n2254452/c3708286/content.html.
- ³⁶ UN Committee Against Torture (CAT), Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of China, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, February 2016, para. 15.
- ³⁷ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Gao Zhisheng, <https://www.nchrd.org/2011/02/prisoner-of-conscience-gao-zhisheng/>.
- ³⁸ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Liu Xia, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/02/liu-xia/>.
- ³⁹ Zhao Suli was reportedly freed from her enforced disappearance by early February 2018. RDN, “Zhao Suli, Wife of Famous Pro-democracy Activist Qin Yongmin, Returns Home After Over 3 Years of Enforced Disappearance” (著名民运人士秦永敏夫人赵素利遭强迫失踪 3 年多后回到家中), February 5, 2018, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2018/02/3.html>.
- ⁴⁰ CHRDR, Submission to UN on Zhao Suli – November 17, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/12/submission-to-un-on-zhao-suli/>.
- ⁴¹ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Qin Yongmin, <https://www.nchrd.org/2018/01/qin-yongmin/>.
- ⁴² CHRDR, Civil Society Follow-Up Report Submitted to UN Committee against Torture – June 2017, paras. 7-10.
- ⁴³ RDN, “Jin Lianling: Solemn Statement on Jiang Tianyong Forced Firing of Defense Attorney” (金变玲: 关于江天勇被胁迫辞去辩护律师的严正声明), May 31, 2017, https://wqw2010.blogspot.nl/2017/05/blog-post_194.html.
- ⁴⁴ RDN, “Latest Situation Briefing of Jiang Tianyong’s Case of Subversion of State Power” (江天勇颠覆国家政权案最新情况通报), July 20, 2017, https://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/07/2017720_20.html.
- ⁴⁵ HRCC, “Deng Hongcheng & Li Jiangpeng Have Been Confirmed Arrested by Shenzhen City People’s Procuratorate on Suspicion of Subversion of State Power; Detained in Shenzhen City No. 2 Detention Center” (深圳大抓捕 邓洪成、李江鹏证实遭深圳市人民检察院以涉嫌颠覆国家政权罪执行逮捕 羁押于深圳市第二看守所), May 21, 2017, https://www.hrcchina.org/2017/05/blog-post_21.html.
- ⁴⁶ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Wang Quanzhang, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/01/wang-quanzhang/>.
- ⁴⁷ For more information on advocacy conducted on behalf of 709 detainees, particularly Wang Quanzhang, please see: *RFA*, “With Wang Quanzhang Disappeared 928 Days, Family Members Submit Complaint, Hit Wall for 25th Time” (王全璋失踪 928 天 家属 25 次控告碰壁), January 23, 2018, <https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/renquanfazhi/yf1-01232018103302.html>; RDN, “709 Families: Relatives Do Not Relent, Do Not Stop” (709 家属: 亲人不回绝不休), August 19, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/08/709_19.html; RDN, “Statement by 709 Wife Li Wenzu” (709 李文足的声明), August 15, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/08/709_95.html; RDN, “709 Families: Wang Quanzhang, Jiang Tianyong, Wu Gan, and Xie Yang: Are You ‘Living Cancers’?” (709 家属: 王全璋、江天勇、吴淦、谢阳, 你们正在“被肝癌”吗?), July 2, 2017, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/07/709.html>.
- ⁴⁸ RDN, China Citizen Movement Net: Congratulations to Ms. Li Wenzu, ‘Outstanding Citizen Award’ Recipient” (中国公民运动网: 祝贺李文足女士获“杰出公民奖”), December 10, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/12/blog-post_10.html.
- ⁴⁹ RDN, “Lawyers’ Interest Attention: 709 Li Heping and Wang Yu Requested Lawyers During Detention, Provided Lists; No Permission Granted” (律师权益关注: 709 李和平和王宇在关押期间曾要求见律师并提供了名单 未被允许), July 27, 2017, https://wqw2010.blogspot.co.uk/2017/07/709_27.html.

- ⁵⁰ RDN, “Trial Opens in Case of Pastor Gu Yuese of Zhejiang; Lawyer Faces Dismissal” (浙江顾约瑟牧师案开庭在即 律师遭解聘), July 20 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/07/blog-post_61.html.
- ⁵¹ See English translation of video statement by Wang Qiaoling. China Change (translation), “‘Screw Your Suspended Sentence’: ‘The 709 Cases Are Far From Over,’ Says Li Heping’s Wife,” April 28, 2017, <https://chinachange.org/2017/04/28/screw-your-suspended-sentence-the-709-cases-are-far-from-over-says-li-hepings-wife/>; RFA, “709 Crackdown: Li Heping Sentenced in Secret, Government Lawyer Curses at Family” (709 大抓捕:李和平律师遭秘密宣判 官派律师指骂家属), April 28, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/renquanfazhi/x14-04282017103347.html>.
- ⁵² Reuters, “U.N. denounces China crackdown on lawyers, seeks release,” May 5, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-rights-un/u-n-denounces-china-crackdown-on-lawyers-seeks-release-idUSKBN18111D>.
- ⁵³ CHRd, Portrait of a Defender – Xia Lin, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/02/prisoner-of-conscience-xia-lin/>.
- ⁵⁴ CHRd, China Human Rights Briefing September 22-27, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/09/chrh-ongoing-suppression-of-hrds-li-xiaoling-arrested-lawyer-liu-yao-loses-appeal-over-20-year-sentence-gao-zhisheng-still-missing-922-272017/>.
- ⁵⁵ CHRd, China Human Rights Briefing January 1-7, 2016, <https://chrnet.com/2016/01/chrh-torture-of-chinese-human-rights-lawyer-emblematic-of-persistent-pattern-of-official-reprisal-abuse-11-7-2016/>; CHRd, Portrait of a Defender – Shu Xiangxin, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/01/shu-xiangxin/>.
- ⁵⁶ CHRd, “China Strips Rights Lawyers’ Licenses in Reprisal Against Their Push for Rule of Law,” January 24, 2018, <https://www.nchrd.org/2018/01/china-strips-rights-lawyers-licenses-in-reprisal-against-their-push-for-rule-of-law/>.
- ⁵⁷ RFA, “China Strikes Off Defense Lawyer in ‘Steamed Buns’ Presidential Nickname Case,” September 21, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/china-strikes-off-defense-lawyer-in-steamed-buns-presidential-nickname-case-09212017123315.html>.
- ⁵⁸ Civil Rights & Livelihood Watch (CRLW), “Beijing Lawyer Yu Wensheng Blocked From Getting Passport, Informed He Is Restricted From Going Abroad” (北京律师余文生办理护照受阻 得知已被限制出境), January 17, 2018, https://www.hrcchina.org/2018/01/blog-post_18.html.
- ⁵⁹ “Xu Yan: Lawyer Yu Wensheng’s Case Update – Name of Crime Changed from Disrupting Official Duties to Suspected of Inciting Subversion of State Power and Placed Under Residential Surveillance in a Designated Location” (许艳:余文生律师案进展通报——罪名也已经从以前的妨害公务罪变更为涉嫌煽动颠覆国家政权罪被指定监视居住), January 29, 2018, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2018/01/blog-post_501.html.
- ⁶⁰ RDN, “Yu Wensheng: Briefing on Practice of Lawyer Yu Wensheng, Annual Inspection & Representing Wang Quanzhang” (余文生: 关于余文生律师执业、年检及代理王全璋案的简要说明), July 29, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/07/blog-post_707.html.
- ⁶¹ RDN, “54 Mainland Lawyers Signed ‘Supervisory Letter Concerning State Council’s Failure to Perform Statutory Duty to Review and Cancel Illegal Regulations of the Ministry of Justice’ (大陆 54 名律师联署《关于国务院不履行审查撤销司法部违法规章法定职责的监督书》), July 27, 2017, <https://wqw2010.blogspot.co.uk/2017/07/54.html>.
- ⁶² Ministry of Justice (MOJ), Administrative Measures for the Practice of Law by Lawyers (律师执业管理办法), 2008, amended 2016, http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2016/content_5113014.htm; MOJ, Administrative Measures for Law Firms (律师事务所管理办法), 2008, amended 2016, http://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2016/content_5109321.htm.
- ⁶³ For analysis on the Administrative Measures on Law Firms, see: CHRd, China Human Rights Briefing September 21-October 3, 2016, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/10/chrh-revised-measures-on-law-firms-further-curb-independence-of-chinese-lawyers-921-103-2016/>. The 2016 amendments to the Practice of Law by Lawyers include a provision (Article 2) that stipulates: “As a basic requirement to practice, lawyers should endorse Communist Party leadership and socialist rule of law.” Under Chapter 4 of the amended measures, officials have inserted new clauses that would restrict lawyers’ speech, association, and assembly (Articles 37, 38, 39, 40).
- ⁶⁴ See, for example: Lawyer Rights and Interests Net, “Survey Team Formed by Beijing Municipal Bureau of Justice and Other Departments Entered Beijing Daoheng Law Firm to Conduct Inspection” (北京市司法局等多部门组成的调查组入驻北京道衡律师事务所检查), September 15, 2017, http://lvshiquanyiguanzhu.blogspot.com/2017/09/blog-post_15.html; RFA, “Chinese Officials Search Law Firm of Top Human Rights Lawyer,” September 18, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/search-09182017193815.html>.
- ⁶⁵ SCMP, “China’s Communist Party to evaluate lawyers based on ‘political performance,’” April 14, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2087515/chinas-communist-party-evaluate-lawyers-based-political>.
- ⁶⁶ CHRd, “From Forced Evictions of Migrant Workers to Abused Children: Violations of Social & Economic Rights in China Refute the ‘China Development Model,’” December 7, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/12/from-forced-evictions-of-migrant-workers-to-abused-children-violations-of-social-economic-rights-in-china-refute-the-china-development-model/>.
- ⁶⁷ Reuters, “China accuses U.N. rights envoy of ‘meddling’ in its judiciary,” June 8, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-diplomacy/china-warns-against-attempts-to-contain-beijing-before-trump-visit-idUSKBN1CZ263>; “Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights on his mission to China,” March 28, 2017, http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/35/26/Add.2.
- ⁶⁸ CHRd, Portrait of a Defender - Mi Chongbiao & Li Kezhen, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/11/mi-chongbiao-li-kezhen/>.
- ⁶⁹ CHRd, Cao Shunli (曹顺利) & Her Legacy, <https://www.nchrd.org/2014/04/prisoner-of-conscience-cao-shunli/>.

- ⁷⁰ CHRDR, “Justice for Cao Shunli: Sanctions Sought to Hold Chinese Officials Accountable for Torture,” September 13, 2017, <https://www.nchrdr.org/2017/09/justice-for-cao-shunli-sanctions-sought-to-hold-chinese-officials-accountable-for-torture/>.
- ⁷¹ CHRDR, “Small Step Toward Accountability: US Sanctions Chinese Official Over Death of Cao Shunli,” December 22, 2017, <https://www.nchrdr.org/2017/12/small-step-toward-accountability-us-sanctions-a-chinese-official-over-death-of-cao-shunli/>.
- ⁷² Freedom House, Freedom on the Net 2017, November 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2017/china>.
- ⁷³ CHRDR, “*They Target My Human Rights Work as a Crime*: Annual Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in China (2016), pgs. 13-14, <https://www.nchrdr.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/They-Target-My-Human-Rights-Work-As-a-Crime-CHRD-Report-on-the-Situation-of-Chinese-Human-Rights-Defenders-2016.pdf>.
- ⁷⁴ Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, Notice on Cleaning Up and Standardizing Internet Access Service Market (清理规范互联网网络接入服务市场的通知), January 17, 2017, <http://www.miit.gov.cn/n1146295/n1652858/n1652930/n3757020/c5471946/content.html>; SCMP, “The who, what and why in China’s latest VPN crackdown,” January 26, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2065432/who-what-and-why-chinas-latest-vpn-crackdown>.
- ⁷⁵ Associated Press, “China cracks down on tools used to get around web filters,” January 23, 2017, <https://apnews.com/8bd7b2aa8e0d418db34a80bda01bca6c>.
- ⁷⁶ RDN, “Wu Xiangyang, Network Engineer in Guangxi, Sentenced to 5 Years and 6 Months for Providing VPN Services to Scale Great Firewall” (广西网络工程师吴向洋因提供翻墙 VPN 服务 竟遭判刑 5 年 6 个月), December 21, 2017, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/12/vpn-56.html?spref=tw>.
- ⁷⁷ SCMP “Man jailed for selling VPNs to evade China’s ‘Great Firewall’,” September 4, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2109618/man-jailed-selling-vpns-evade-chinas-great-firewall>.
- ⁷⁸ Articles 9, 46, 58, 59, Cyber Security Law of the People’s Republic of China (中华人民共和国网络安全法), November 2016, http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2016-11/07/content_2001605.htm; Reuters, “China adopts cyber security law in face of overseas opposition,” November 7, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-parliament-cyber-idUSKBN132049>.
- ⁷⁹ Methods for Network Product and Services Security Review (Provisional) (网络产品和服务安全审查办法（试行）), May 2017, http://www.cac.gov.cn/2017-05/02/c_1120904567.htm.
- ⁸⁰ Regulations on Internet News and Information Services Management (互联网新闻信息服务管理规定), May 2017, http://www.cac.gov.cn/2017-05/02/c_1120902760.htm; Cyberspace Administration Office of the People’s Republic of China, “National Cyberspace News Office to Intensify Efforts to Rectify False News” (國家網信辦加大力度整治網絡虛假新聞), July 3, 2016, http://www.cac.gov.cn/2016-07/03/m_1119155494.htm?from=groupmessage&isappinstalled=0.
- ⁸¹ Freedom House, “Censorship Updates: WhatsApp Blocked, Rights Websites Targeted, Scholars Pressured,” October 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/china-media/china-media-bulletin-beijings-foreign-meddling-censorship-innovation-hk-campus-tensions-issue-no-122#a4>.
- ⁸² Cyberspace Administration Office, Regulations on Internet Group Information Services Management (互联网群组信息服务管理规定), September 2017, http://www.cac.gov.cn/2017-09/07/c_1121624277.htm.
- ⁸³ RFA, “In Past Half Year, WeChat Closed 45,000 Accounts, Is Criticized for Suppressing Freedom of Speech” (微信半年封号 4.5 万 被批打压言论自由), March 6, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/wechat-03062017075457.html>; RFA, “Once Again, Tencent Shuts Down Large Number of WeChat Groups” (腾讯再度风沙大批微信群), March 22, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/Tencent-03222017093716.html>.
- ⁸⁴ RDN, “Dr. Liu Pengfei, Head of Global Report WeChat Group, Taken Away by Authorities on September 6, Has Home Searched; Current Whereabouts Unknown (环球实报微信群主刘鹏飞博士于 9 月 6 日遭当局带走、抄家 目前情况不明), <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/09/96.html>.
- ⁸⁵ SCMP, “WhatsApp services disrupted ahead of China’s Communist Party congress,” September 26, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2112832/whatsapp-services-disrupted-ahead-china-communist-party>.
- ⁸⁶ RDN, “Lawyer Sui Muqing: Briefing on Meeting With Zhang Guanghong (screen name ‘Twisted Flower Commentary’)” (隋牧青律师: 张广红 (网名“拈花时评”) 会见通报), December 8, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/12/blog-post_8.html.
- ⁸⁷ CHRDR, Hold Xi Jinping Accountable for Liu Xiaobo’s Death in Custody, Free Liu Xia, July 13, 2017, <https://www.nchrdr.org/2017/07/hold-xi-jinping-accountable-for-liu-xiaobos-death-in-custody-free-liu-xia/>.
- ⁸⁸ See, for example: RFA, “China in ‘Whitewash Campaign’ Ahead of Liu Xiaobo’s Death,” July 13, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/whitewash-07132017103038.html>.
- ⁸⁹ See, for example: *China Digital Times (CDT)*, “China Controls Information About Liu Xiaobo,” July 12, 2017, <http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2017/07/china-controls-information-ailing-nobel-prize-laureate/>.
- ⁹⁰ The Citizen Lab, “Remembering Liu Xiaobo: Analyzing censorship of the death of Liu Xiaobo on WeChat and Weibo,” July 16, 2017, <https://citizenlab.ca/2017/07/analyzing-censorship-of-the-death-of-liu-xiaobo-on-wechat-and-weibo/>.
- ⁹¹ CHRDR, *China Human Rights Briefing June 1-8, 2017*, <https://www.nchrdr.org/2017/06/police-cover-up-of-suspicious-death-of-detained-ethnic-villager-government-crackdown-on-citizens-remembering-tiananmen/>.
- ⁹² CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Li Xiaoling.
- ⁹³ Shi Tingfu was given a one-year sentence, suspended for 18 months, in February 2018, and subsequently released. RDN, “Shi Tingfu, Sentenced Today for ‘Picking Quarrels’ for Speaking About Truth of June 4th, Given 1 Year in Prison, Suspended for 1 Year, Already Released” (史庭福因宣讲六四真相而被“寻衅滋事罪”案今宣判 处有期徒刑 1 年, 缓刑 1 年 6 个月 现已出狱), February 11, 2018, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2018/02/116.html>; CRLW, “Shi Tingfu,

Who Made Pronouncements on June Fourth at Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall, Is Criminally Detained, Has Home Searched” (南京大屠杀纪念馆前宣讲“六四”的史庭福被抄家刑拘), June 5, 2017, <http://msguancha.com/a/lanmu1/2017/0605/15926.html>.

⁹⁴ RDN, “On Eve of June 4, Netizen Liang Bin (Screen Name: Being Brother) of Shanghai Pudong New Area Framed by Shanghai Police, Criminally Detained for ‘Picking Quarrels,’ Family Threatened” (六四前夕, 上海浦东新区网友梁斌(网名: 当哥)被上海警方构陷“寻衅滋事罪”刑事拘留 家人遭威胁), June 11, 2017, https://wqw2010.blogspot.co.uk/2017/06/blog-post_11.html.

⁹⁵ HRCC, “Hunan Zhuzhou Citizen Chen Siming Describes Experience of Being Detained for Taking Part in Performance Art Activity for 28th Anniversary of June Fourth” (湖南株洲公民陈思明记述因参与人体行为艺术纪念六四事件 28 周年活动而被拘留的经历), June 15, 2017, https://www.hrcchina.org/2017/06/28_32.html.

⁹⁶ The wine was called “Eight Liquor Six Four,” based on the date of the Tiananmen Massacre: 6/4/89. In Mandarin Chinese, the characters for “liquor” and “nine” are both pronounced “jiu.” RDN, “Lawyer Lu Siwei: Briefing on Situation of Meeting Zhang Junyong, Suspect in Chengdu ‘Wine Case,’” (卢思位律师: 会见成都“酒案”的当事人张隽勇情况通报), July 12, 2017, https://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/07/blog-post_20.html. *The New York Times* (NYT), “A High-Proof Tribute to Tiananmen’s Victims Finds a Way Back to China,” May 30, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/30/world/asia/china-tiananmen-liquor-bottle-baijiu.html>; RDN, “Report on Developments in ‘Chengdu 6/4 Wine Case: Brief History of 4 Detained Men: Chen Bing, Fu Hailu, Luo Fuyu & Zhang Junyong’” (“成都六四酒案”进展通报及陈兵、符海陆、罗誉富、张隽勇四君子简历), July 16, 2016, <https://wqw2010.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/2016716.html>; CHR, *China Human Rights Briefing June 3-8, 2016*, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/06/chr-10-activists-criminally-detained-for-memorizing-june-4th-63-68-2016/>;

⁹⁷ RFA, “Zi Su, Advocate for Election of General Secretary of Chinese Communist Party of China, Indicted” (倡直选中共总书记 子肃案送法院起诉), December 29, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/prosecute-12292017062621.html>.

⁹⁸ CHR, *China Human Rights Briefing September 28-October 17, 2017*, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/10/chr-china-stop-detaining-activists-silencing-political-expression-around-19th-ccp-congress-928-10172017/>.

⁹⁹ RDN, “Bulletin on Cases of Xu Lin & Liu Sifang: Formal Arrest Approved for Xu Lin, Liu Sifang Bailed Out Awaiting Investigation” (徐琳、刘四仿案通报: 徐琳被正式批准逮捕, 刘四仿取保候审), November 3, 2017, https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/11/blog-post_3.html.

¹⁰⁰ RDN, “Wang Jiangfeng of Shandong, Originally Issued 2-Year Sentence for Speech Crime, Gets 20 Months at Retrial” (山东王江峰因言获罪案原判 2 年 再判改为 1 年 10 个月), November 2, 2017, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/11/2-110.html>; RDN, “Citizen Wang Jiangfeng’s 2-Year Conviction for Speech Crime Thrown Out, Retrial Proceedings to Be Held” (因言获罪的招远公民王江峰一审判决 2 年已撤销 启动再审程序), June 13, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/06/2.html>.

¹⁰¹ RFA, “Chinese Activist Stands Trial For Subversion Over ‘Xitler’ T-Shirt,” February 15, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/teeshirt-trial-02152017123713.html>; RFA, “Xi Jinping T-Shirt Activist Confirmed Held in Northeast China Detention Center,” December 8, 2016, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/xi-jinping-t-shirt-activist-confirmed-held-in-northeast-china-detention-center-12082016110338.html>.

¹⁰² CHR, *China Human Rights Briefing July 19-August 3, 2017*, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/08/seven-confirmed-detained-for-mourning-liu-xiaobo-whereabouts-of-liu-xia-remain-unknown/>; RDN, “Ma Qiang of Liu Xiaobo Sea Memorial Case Released Today” (海祭刘晓波案马强今获释 被遣返北京), September 12, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/09/blog-post_28.html;

¹⁰³ RDN, “Guangzhou Democracy Activist Huang Yongxiang (Screen Name ‘Old Southerner’), Detained in Liu Xiaobo Sea Memorial Case, Released on Bail” (因海祭刘晓波案被抓捕 广州民主人士黄永祥(网名南方老头) 取保获释), October 30, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/10/blog-post_374.html.

¹⁰⁴ RDN, “Zhuo Yuzhen, Who Took Part in Liu Xiaobo Sea Memorial, Released on Bail” (海祭刘晓波案卓玉楨今天取保获释), September 29, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/09/blog-post_694.html.

¹⁰⁵ RDN, “Li Xuewen, Independent Scholar Writer, Seized by Police at Guangzhou Train Station, Suspected in Liu Xiaobo Seas Memorial Case” (独立学者、作家黎学文在广州火车站遭警方抓捕 疑因海祭刘晓波案), January 1, 2018, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/12/blog-post_36.html; RFA, “Alert: Hubei Writer Li Xuewen, Detained in ‘Liu Xiaobo Sea Memorial Case,’ Released” (快讯: “海祭刘晓波案”被捕湖北作家黎学文获释), January 15, 2018, <https://www.rfa.org/mandarin/Xinwen/2-01152018085330.html>.

¹⁰⁶ RDN, “Zhan Huidong (Screen Name ‘Headmaster’), Detained in Liu Xiaobo Seaside Memorial Case, Released on Bail Today” (因海祭刘晓波案遭刑拘的詹惠东(网名校长) 今取保获释), January 24, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2018/01/blog-post_886.html.

¹⁰⁷ HRCC, “Revered Military Man Administratively Detained by Authorities For WeChat Group Discussion to Release Liu Xiaobo and Insulting Party and State Leaders” (因于微信群发言释放刘晓波 湖南敬进军遭当局以侮辱党和国家领导人为由行政拘留), July 6, 2017, https://www.hrcchina.org/2017/07/blog-post_18.html.

¹⁰⁸ RFA, “Poet Held in Southern China Over Planned Poetry Anthology Remembering Liu Xiaobo,” August 22, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/poet-08222017110033.html?searchterm=%3Auf8%3Astring=mudie#.WZ5QVghNY2k.facebook>.

¹⁰⁹ RFA, “Three Formally Arrested Recently Arrested, Had Been Criminally Detained Over Suspected Production of Satirical Xi Jinping Video” (疑制作讽刺习近平视频被刑拘 三人近日正式批捕), November 7, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/cantonese/news/film-maker-11072017063822.html>; RFA, “Li Xuehui Criminally Detained for Producing ‘Innovative Petitioning’ Video Ridiculing Xi Jinping” (李学惠“创新上访”制作嘲习视频被刑拘), October 2, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/renquanfazhi/gf1-10022017101608.html>.

- ¹¹⁰ RDN, “Liu Bing, Participant in Southern Street Movement, Released After Being Criminally Detained for Holding Up Signs on Street” (因街头举牌遭刑拘的南方街头运动参与者刘兵昨获释), July 22, 2017, https://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/07/blog-post_22.html.
- ¹¹¹ RDN, “Lawyer Zhang Lei: Opinion on Non-Standard Arrest of Liu Yanli” (张磊律师: 关于不批准逮捕刘艳丽的律师意见), October 27, 2016, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2016/10/blog-post_90.html; RDN, “Citizen Liu Yanli of Jingmen, Hubei Formally Arrested Today for Speech Crime” (湖北荆门公民刘艳丽因言获罪今被正式批捕), November 3, 2016, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2016/11/blog-post_10.html; RDN, “Citizen Liu Yanli of Jingmen, Hubei Released Today, Had Been Charged With Speech Crime” (湖北荆门因言获罪的公民刘艳丽今取保获释), May 28, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/05/blog-post_752.html.
- ¹¹² CHR, Portrait of a Defender – Ilham Tohti, <https://www.nchrd.org/2014/07/prisoner-of-conscience-ilham-tohti/>.
- ¹¹³ RFA, “Jailed Uyghur Scholar Ilham Tohti Awarded ‘Prize For Freedom’ in The Hague,” November 30, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/awarded-11302017165248.html>.
- ¹¹⁴ NYT, “The Mystery of the Exiled Billionaire Whistle-Blower,” January 11, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/10/magazine/the-mystery-of-the-exiled-billionaire-whistleblower.html>.
- ¹¹⁵ Dong Qi (董奇), who was accused of printing the shirts, was arrested in May. Lin Shengliang (林生亮) was sentenced in December to 14 months in prison, after being taken into custody in May. Wang Shouguo (王守国) was put under criminal detention in October for uploading an image online of himself wearing the t-shirt. RDN, “Lawyer Huang Sha: Report on Situation of Meeting Lin Shengliang” (黄沙律师: 会见林生亮情况通报), December 25, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/12/blog-post_60.html; HRCC, “Accused of Printing T-Shirts With Expression ‘Everything Is Just Beginning,’ Citizen Dong Qi of Dongguan, Guangdong Arrested; Dong’s Wife Issues Public Statement Clarifying Dong’s Innocence, Makes Appeal for Broad Concern” (涉定制印有“一切都是刚刚开始”文化衫遭当局逮捕的广东惠州公民董奇 其妻子公开发文澄清董奇无罪 并恳请各界关注), July 4, 2017, https://www.hrcchina.org/2017/07/blog-post_4.html; RDN, “Dongguan, Guangdong Citizen Wang Shouguo Criminally Detained for ‘Picking Quarrels and Provoking Trouble’” (广东东莞公民王守国被“寻衅滋事”刑事拘留), October 24, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/10/blog-post_749.html.
- ¹¹⁶ See, for example, a ranking of press freedom by the international NGO Reporters Without Borders lists China as 176th of 180 countries (accessed January 15, 2018), https://rsf.org/en/ranking_table?sort=desc&order=Ranking.
- ¹¹⁷ Committee to Protect Journalists, “Record number of journalists jailed as Turkey, China, Egypt pay scant price for repression,” December 13, 2017, <https://cpj.org/reports/2017/12/journalists-prison-jail-record-number-turkey-china-egypt.php>.
- ¹¹⁸ CHR, Portrait of a Defender – Lu Yuyu, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/02/lu-yuyu/>.
- ¹¹⁹ CHR, Portrait of a Defender – Li Tingyu, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/02/li-tingyu/>.
- ¹²⁰ RDN, “Report on Case of University Students in Wuhan: Journalist Wang Tao Sent to Detention Center After 10-Day Administrative Punishment, Feared Criminally Detained” (报道武汉大学学生失踪案一文记者王涛遭行政拘留 10 天后又转看守所 恐被刑事拘留), October 11, 2017, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/10/10.html>.
- ¹²¹ RFA, “Thousands Protest Chemical Plant Pollution in China’s Hebei,” May 4, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/hebei-pollution-05032017161045.html>; Hong Kong Free Press (HKFP), “Video: Plan for incinerator project scrapped after protesters clash with police in Guangdong,” May 12, 2017, <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2017/05/12/video-plan-incinerator-project-scrapped-protesters-clash-police-guangdong/>; RFA, “Clashes as Ethnic Evenk Herders Protest China’s Grazing Ban in Inner Mongolia,” August 4, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/herders-08042017154144.html>; RFA, “Muslims in China’s Tianjin Protest Decades of Land Sales, Eviction,” March 28, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/hui-03282017104120.html>; RFA, “Police Fire Pepper Spray at Thousands Protesting Evictions in China’s Henan,” March 24, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/police-03242017110213.html>; RFA, “Ten Held, Dozens Injured After Clashes in China’s Shenzhen,” January 12, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/shenzhen-clash-01122017142758.html>; SCMP, “Hundreds of Chinese military veterans stage fresh protests over pensions,” February 23, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2073400/hundreds-chinese-military-veterans-stage-fresh-protests>.
- ¹²² SCMP, “Migrant workers take to streets of Beijing to protest against forced evictions,” December 10, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2123714/migrant-workers-take-streets-beijing-protest-against>.
- ¹²³ CHR, “Earth Day: China Must Protect Human Rights To Effectively Protect the Environment,” April 20, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/04/earth-day-china-must-protect-human-rights-to-effectively-protect-the-environment/>.
- ¹²⁴ RFA, “Chinese Environmental Protester Seeks Refuge in Thailand Ahead of Earth Day,” April 21, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/refuge-04212017110725.html>.
- ¹²⁵ CHR, Portrait of a Defender – Lu Yuyu.
- ¹²⁶ HKFP, “Jailed founder of China protest blog maintains innocence in appeal,” September 15, 2017, <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2017/09/15/jailed-founder-china-protest-blog-maintains-innocence-appeal/>.
- ¹²⁷ RFA, “709 Crackdown: Many Citizens Summoned for Questioning For Trying to Watch Xie Yang Case” (709 大抓捕: 多名围观“谢阳案”公民遭国保传唤), May 4, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/renquanfazhi/ml2-05042017111545.html>; RDN, “Lawyer Jiang Tianyong Inciting Subversion Case Trial Concludes, Sentenced to 2 Years” (江天勇律师煽动颠覆国家政权案一审宣判 遭判刑 2 年), November 21, 2017, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/11/2.html>; RDN, “Hubei Activist Xu Guangli Already Arrested After Seized by Hubei Jingmen Police” (湖北维权人士许光利已被湖北荆门警方批捕), January 12, 2018, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2018/01/blog-post_0.html.

- ¹²⁸ UN Committee Against Torture (CAT), Concluding Observations on the Fifth Periodic Report of China, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, February 2016, para. 18-9.
- ¹²⁹ *China News*, “How to Deal with a Sit-In or Unfurled Banners in Court? Supreme Court Has Clarified Rules” (在法院周边静坐围堵、打横幅如何处理？最高法明确), February 7, 2017, <http://www.chinanews.com/gn/2017/02-07/8143209.shtml>.
- ¹³⁰ State Council, “Regulations to Protect Judicial Personal While Performing Their Legal Duties” (保护司法人员依法履行法定职责规定), July 28, 2016, http://www.spp.gov.cn/zdgg/201607/t20160729_160469.shtml.
- ¹³¹ CHRDR, *China Human Rights Briefing March 20-23, 2017*, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/03/chrb-detentions-in-suzhou-new-measures-curb-free-expression-320-23-2017/>.
- ¹³² CHRDR, *China Human Rights Briefing October 4-6, 2016*, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/10/chrb-womens-rights-activist-sentenced-new-cases-of-disappearance-torture-104-6-2016/>.
- ¹³³ RDN, “3 Shanghai HRDs Xu Peiling, Chen Jianfang, and Ren Naijun Detained After Applauding at Ding Deyuan Trial” (上海3人权捍卫者徐佩玲、陈建芳、任迺俊旁听丁德元案庭审鼓掌遭拘留), November 25, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/11/3_25.html.
- ¹³⁴ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defenders – Chen Yunfei.
- ¹³⁵ *Xinhua News Agency*, “Fresh details reveal seized lawyers’ misconduct in, outside court,” July 19, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-07/19/c_134424756.htm.
- ¹³⁶ Tianjin Municipal People’s No. 2 Procuratorate Indictment (Wu Gan) (天津市检察院第二分院起诉书 (吴淦)), December 23, 2016 (published by RDN), https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2017/01/709_4.html.
- ¹³⁷ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Wu Gan.
- ¹³⁸ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Yin Xu’an; CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Wang Fang.
- ¹³⁹ RDN, “Li Baifeng: Henan Activist Li Yufeng’s Recent Situation in Prison” (李白凤：河南人权捍卫者李玉凤女士狱中近况), June 13, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/06/blog-post_65.html; CRLW, “Henan Jiaozuo Li Yufeng Sentenced to 4 Years in First-Instance Trial” (河南焦作李玉凤“寻衅滋事”案一审被判有期徒刑四年), January 19, 2017, <http://www.msguancha.com/a/lanmu4/2017/0119/15424.html>.
- ¹⁴⁰ RDN, “Chang Weiping Lawyer: Li Yufeng Second-Instance Trial, Jiaozuo Intermediate Court Quickly Upholds Original Sentence” (常玮平律师：李玉凤案二审，焦作中院仓皇维持原判), May 11, 2017, <http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/05/2017511.html>.
- ¹⁴¹ RDN, “Qingdao Rights Activist Lin Xiuli Sentenced to 3.5 years for ‘Disrupting Public Order’” (青岛维权人士林秀丽被以“聚众扰乱秩序罪”判刑三年六个月), April 7, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/04/blog-post_8.html.
- ¹⁴² RDN, “Independent Chinese Pen Member Hubei Jingmen’s Zhou Yuanzhi was Criminally Detained for ‘Organizing Illegal Assemblies’” (独立中文笔会会员湖北荆门周远志被以“组织非法聚集罪”刑事拘留), November 28, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/11/blog-post_56.html.
- ¹⁴³ CHRDR, *China Human Rights Briefing July 19-August 3, 2017*, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/08/seven-confirmed-detained-for-mourning-liu-xiaobo-whereabouts-of-liu-xia-remain-unknown/>; RDN, “Zhan Guidong (Screenname ‘The Headmaster’) Seized By Police For Attending Liu Xiaobo Seaside Memorial” (詹惠东 (网名校长) 因海祭刘晓波案昨遭警方抓捕), December 27, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/12/blog-post_655.html; WQW, “Li Xuewen Bailed After Criminal Detention for Liu Xiaobo Memorial (因海祭刘晓波案遭刑事拘留的黎学文今取保获释), January 15, 2018, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2018/01/blog-post_15.html.
- ¹⁴⁴ RFA, “Liu Xiaobo Seaside Case: Ma Qiang Refuses to Sign Guarantee and Zhou Yuzhen Meets with Lawyer” (刘晓波海祭案: 马强拒写保证书 卓玉桢见律师), September 15, 2017, <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/renquanfazhi/xl2-09152017102242.html>.
- ¹⁴⁵ HRCC, “Guangdong Liu Xiaobo Memorial Case: Lawyer Huang Simin Releases Her Boyfriend Li Xuewen’s Statement From Before His Detention” (广东海祭刘晓波案 黄思敏律师公布其男友黎学文被捕前声明), December 22, 2017, https://www.hrcchina.org/2017/12/blog-post_22.html.
- ¹⁴⁶ CHRDR, “5 Women’s & LGBT Rights Activists Detained in Escalating Clampdown on NGOs,” March 12, 2015, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/03/chrb-5-womens-lgbt-rights-activists-detained-in-escalating-clampdown-on-ngos-36-1215/>.
- ¹⁴⁷ CHRDR, “Police Detain Two Rights Advocates as NGO Crackdown Intensifies,” June 15, 2015, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/06/police-detain-two-rights-advocates-as-ngo-crackdown-intensifies/>.
- ¹⁴⁸ CHRDR, Freedom of Association Under Assault in China: Arbitrary Detentions & Disappearances: “4 Labor Activists Arrested, NGO Terrain Keeps Shrinking Under State Pressure,” January 21, 2016, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/01/chrb-freedom-of-association-under-assault-in-china-arbitrary-detentions-disappearances-18-212016/>.
- ¹⁴⁹ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Liu Shaoming, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/07/liu-shaoming/>.
- ¹⁵⁰ CHRDR, “Free Activist Zhen Jianghua, Stop Criminalizing Human Rights Advocacy,” September 21, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/09/free-activist-zhen-jianghua-stop-criminalizing-human-rights-advocacy/>.
- ¹⁵¹ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Liu Feiyue, <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/12/liu-feiyue/>.
- ¹⁵² RDN, “Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch Editor Ms. Ding Lingjie Kidnapped and Missing” (《民生观察》编辑丁灵杰女士被绑架失联), September 24, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/09/blog-post_74.html; RDN, “Detained ‘Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch Editor Ding Lingjie’ Meets with Lawyer” (被羁押的“民生观察”网编丁灵杰终获会见律师), November 9, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/11/blog-post_49.html.
- ¹⁵³ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Huang Qi.
- ¹⁵⁴ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Wang Shurong, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/07/wang-shurong/>.
- ¹⁵⁵ RFA, “Tianwang Citizen Journalist Wang Jing Sentenced to Four Years” (天网公民记者王晶被判囚4年), April 25, 2016, <http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/yataibaodao/renquanfazhi/ql1-04252016102013.html>.

¹⁵⁶ HRCC, “64 Tianwang Volunteer Yang Xiuqiong Arrested on Suspicion of “Supplying State Secrets Overseas” For Continuing to Release Information on Huang Qi’s Case, Currently Held at Fucheng District Detention Center” (因持续发文披露黄琦案情况 六四天网义工杨秀琼被以涉嫌为境外提供国家秘密罪逮捕 目前羁押于涪城区看守所), June 27, 2017, https://www.hrcchina.org/2017/06/blog-post_83.html.

¹⁵⁷ RDN, “Sichuan 64 Tianwang Volunteer Li Zhaoxiu Criminally Detained and Held in Detention Center for Supporting Huang Qi Before Liver Surgery” (四川“六四天网”义工李昭秀因替黄琦呼吁 肝部手术前竟被刑拘关进看守所), September 19, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/09/blog-post_88.html.

¹⁵⁸ CRLW, “Procuratorate Indictment Accused Civil Rights & Livelihood Watch’s Liu Feiyue of ‘6 Major Criminal Offenses’” (检方起诉书指控民生观察刘飞跃“六大罪状”), January 17, 2018, <http://msguancha.com/a/lanmu4/2018/0117/16941.html>.

¹⁵⁹ CHRDR, “They Target My Human Rights Work as a Crime”: Annual Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders (2016), <https://www.nchr.org/2017/02/chrdr-releases-they-target-my-human-rights-work-as-a-crime-annual-report-on-the-situation-of-human-rights-defenders-in-china-2016/>, p. 22.

¹⁶⁰ CHRDR, Portrait of a Defender – Huang Qi; CHRDR interviews, October 2017.

¹⁶¹ CRLW, “CRLW’s Liu Feiyue Suspected of New Charge of “Supplying State Secrets Overseas” (民生观察刘飞跃被新增“为境外非法提供国家秘密罪”), August 15, 2017. <http://msguancha.com/a/lanmu4/2017/0815/16255.html>.

¹⁶² HRCC, “Already Over 1000 People Join China Anti-Torture Alliance, Promote and Supervise Full Implementation of Convention Against Torture in China” (已逾千人参与加盟中国反酷刑联盟 推动和监督《联合国反酷刑公约》在中国得到认真的落实), February 24, 2017, https://www.hrcchina.org/2017/02/blog-post_64.html; RDN, “Announcement of the Establishment of the China Anti-Torture Alliance” (中国反酷刑联盟成立公告), February 13, 2017, http://wqw2010.blogspot.com.au/2017/02/blog-post_13.html.

¹⁶³ Number of registered groups from the “Service Platform for Overseas NGOs” on the MPS website. Last checked January 17, 2018. Ministry of Public Security, “Search for the total number of overseas NGOs” (查到的境外非政府组织机构共有), <http://ngo.mps.gov.cn/ngo/portal/toInfogs.do?beginDate=&endDate=&pager.offset=0&q=>; Estimate of total number of overseas NGOs is from the spokeswoman of the National People’s Congress. *Xinhua*, “Proposed bill not to restrict overseas NGOs in China: spokeswoman,” March 4, 2016, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/0304/c90785-9025137.html>.

¹⁶⁴ ChinaFile, “Visually Understanding the Data on Foreign NGO Representative Offices and Temporary Activities,” January 10, 2018, <http://www.chinafile.com/ngo/analysis/visually-understanding-data-foreign-ngo-representative-offices-and-temporary-activities>.

¹⁶⁵ SCMP, “Why foreign NGOs are struggling with new Chinese law,” June 13, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2097923/why-foreign-ngos-are-struggling-new-chinese-law>; Reuters, “International NGOs’ China operations hit by registration delays under new law,” July 6, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-ngo-analysis/international-ngos-china-operations-hit-by-registration-delays-under-new-law-idUSKBN19S00V>.

¹⁶⁶ Notice from the People’s Bank of China and the Ministry of Public Security Concerning the Proper Performance of Work Relating to the Management of the RMB Accounts of Overseas Non-Governmental Organization Representative Organizations (中国人民银行公安部关于做好境外非政府组织代表机构人民币银行账户管理有关工作的通知), May 4, 2017, <http://www.pbc.gov.cn/zhengwugongkai/127924/128038/128109/3300353/2017050314344244545.pdf>; English translation by China Development Brief, <http://chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/articles/new-government-document-on-managing-rmb-bank-accounts-for-overseas-ngos/>.

¹⁶⁷ Ministry of Civil Affairs, “Provisional Measures on the Random Inspections of Social Organizations (Draft for solicitation of comments)” (社会组织抽查暂行办法 (征求意见稿)), January 3, 2017, <http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/zwgk/tzl/201701/20170100002847.shtml>.

¹⁶⁸ National People’s Congress, “National Intelligence Law of the People’s Republic of China” (中华人民共和国国家情报法), June 27, 2017, http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2017-06/27/content_2024529.htm; CHRDR, “Draft Intelligence Law Portends Further Squeeze on China’s Civil Society,” May 24, 2017, <https://www.nchr.org/2017/05/draft-intelligence-law-portends-further-squeeze-on-chinas-civil-society/>.

¹⁶⁹ For example, see the situations of the Panyu Migrant Worker’s Documentation Service Center and the lawyers and activists detained in the “709 Crackdown.” CHRDR, “They Target My Human Rights Work as a Crime”: Annual Report on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders (2016), pp. 6-7, 22.

¹⁷⁰ *Xinhua*, “Authorized Release: Detailed Implementing Regulations for the Counter-Espionage Law of the People’s Republic of China” ((受权发布) 中华人民共和国反间谍法实施细则), December 6, 2017, http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2017-12/06/c_1122068667.htm.

¹⁷¹ Article 39. National People’s Congress, “Counter-Espionage Law of the People’s Republic of China” (中华人民共和国反间谍法), November 1, 2014, http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2014-11/02/content_1884660.htm.

Appendix: Imprisoned Chinese Human Rights Defenders - Selected Cases From Past Annual Reports

CHRD has produced profiles of 40 human rights defenders sent to prison between 2007 and 2016 whose cases were covered in previous annual reports, and who are still serving their sentences. More information on these cases (listed below in alphabetical order), as well as profiles on other persecuted HRDs, can be found on CHRD's website: <https://www.nchr.org/2016/03/list-of-prisoners-of-conscience/>.

Name	Year Detained	Expected Release	Criminal Charge/s	Sentence	Activity/ Targeted Reason
Cao Haibo 曹海波	2011	10/2019	Subversion	8 years	Online expression
Chen Shuqing 陈树庆	2014	3/2025	Subversion	10.5 years	Opposition party and online expression
Chen Wei 陈卫	2011	2/2020	Inciting subversion	9 years	Online expression (Jasmine Crackdown)
Chen Xi 陈西	2011	11/2021	Inciting subversion	10 years	Online expression
Dong Rubin 董如彬	2013	3/2020	Picking quarrels; illegal business activity	6.5 years	Online expression
Guo Feixiong 郭飞雄	2013	8/2019	Gathering a crowd to disrupt public order; picking quarrels	6 years	Peaceful assembly
Guo Quan 郭泉	2008	11/2018	Subversion	10 years	Opposition party & online expression
Hailaite Niyazi 海莱特尼亚孜	2009	7/2025	Leaking state secrets	15 years	Online expression; press freedom
Hu Shigen 胡石根	2015	1/2023	Subversion	7.5 years	Free association (709 Crackdown)
Huang Wenxun 黄文勋	2013	5/2018	Inciting subversion	5 years	Peaceful assembly
Ilham Tohti 伊力哈木·土赫提	2014	N/A	Splittism	Life	Free expression
Jia Lingmin 贾灵敏	2014	5/2018	Picking quarrels	4 years	Peaceful assembly; human rights educator
Ji Sizun 纪斯尊	2014	4/2019	Gathering a crowd to disrupt public order; picking quarrels	4.5 years	Free expression, peaceful assembly
Kalsang Dhondup 尕藏当智	2013	3/2018	Inciting splittism	5 years	Freedom of religion
Karma Samdrup 噶玛桑珠	2010	11/2024	Grave-robbing	15 years	Cultural freedom; free expression
Li Bifeng 李必丰	2011	9/2023	Contract fraud	12 years	Retaliation for helping dissident flee China; free expression
Li Tie 李铁	2010	9/2010	Subversion	10 years	Online writings, opposition party
Liu Jiakai 刘家财	2013	8/2018	Inciting subversion	5 years	Peaceful assemblies, free expression
Liu Ping 刘萍	2013	10/2019	Picking quarrels; gathering a crowd to disrupt public order; using a cult to undermine implementation of law	6.5 years	Peaceful assembly and free expression (New Citizens' Movement)
Liu Xianbin 刘贤斌	2010	6/2020	Inciting subversion	10 years	Free expression (Charter 08)
Lolo 洛洛	2013	4/2018	Unknown	6 years	Free expression

Lü Gengsong 吕耿松	2014	7/2025	Subversion	11 years	Opposition party and online expression
Lü Jiangbo 吕江波	2010	2/2021	Obstructing official business; extortion; undermining elections; seizing a post; obstructing testimony; accepting bribes from non-state workers	11 years	Retaliation for opposing government policy, free expression & peaceful assembly
Qi Chonghuai 齐崇淮	2007	6/2020	Extortion and blackmail; embezzlement	13 years	Press freedom
Rao Wenwei 饶文蔚	2008	7/2020	Inciting subversion; accepting bribes	12 years	Free expression
Tang Jingling 唐荆陵	2014	5/2019	Inciting subversion	5 years	Freedom of association, free expression
Wang Dengchao 王登朝	2012	3/2023	Embezzlement; disrupting official business	11 years	Free expression; retaliation
Wang Mo 王默	2014	4/2019	Inciting subversion	4.5 years	Peaceful assembly (Occupy HK supporter)
Wei Zhongping 魏忠平	2013	10/2019	Picking quarrels; gathering a crowd to disrupt public order; using a cult to undermine implementation of law	6.5 years	Peaceful assembly and free expression (New Citizens' Movement)
Wu Zeheng 吴泽衡	2014	N/A	Organizing or using an illegal cult to undermine implementation of the law; rape; fraud; production and sale of harmful food	Life	Freedom of religion, free expression
Xia Lin 夏霖	2014	11/2024	Fraud	10 years	Retaliation for being a lawyer
Xie Changfa 谢长发	2008	6/2021	Subversion	13 years	Opposition party, free expression
Xie Fengxia 谢丰夏	2014	4/2019	Inciting subversion	4.5 years	Peaceful assembly (Occupy HK supporter)
Xu Zhiqiang 徐志强	2014	5/2018	Inciting subversion	4 years	Freedom of religion, free expression
Zhang Haitao 张海涛	2015	6/2034	Inciting subversion; providing intelligence overseas	19 years	Free expression, press freedom
Zhao Haitong 赵海通	2013	8/2027	Inciting subversion	14 years	Retaliation for defending rights of others
Zhang Shaojie 张少杰	2013	11/2025	Fraud; gathering a crowd to disrupt social order	12 years	Freedom of religion
Zhang Rongping 张荣平	2014	8/2018	Inciting subversion	4 years	Peaceful assembly (Occupy HK supporter)
Zhou Shifeng 周世锋	2015	7/2022	Subversion	7 years	Retaliation for being a lawyer (709 crackdown)
Zhu Yufu 朱虞夫	2011	3/2018	Inciting subversion	7 years	Free expression (Jasmine Crackdown)

IN MEMORIAM

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE LIU XIAOBO

1955-2017



"FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS THE FOUNDATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS,
THE SOURCE OF HUMANITY, AND THE MOTHER OF TRUTH. TO
STRANGLE FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS TO TRAMPLE ON HUMAN RIGHTS,
STIFLE HUMANITY, AND SUPPRESS TRUTH."

- LIU XIAOBO FROM "I HAVE NO ENEMIES"