

CHINA HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW UPDATE

United States Congressional-Executive Commission on China

Senator Byron L. Dorgan, Chairman | Representative Sander M. Levin, Cochairman

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Statement of the Chairman and Cochairman: Xinjiang - One Year After Demonstrations and Rioting

We are deeply concerned by human rights conditions in Xinjiang, one year after demonstrations and rioting in the region. Events that started on July 5, 2009 resulted in injury and death to Han and Uyghur citizens alike. Repressive policies in the region have continued, and, in some cases, have intensified.

In the aftermath of last year's violence, the government tightly restricted the free flow of information, and curbed Internet access for 10 months. Authorities intensified security campaigns and conducted large scale sweeps and raids. Security forces detained some Uyghurs, primarily men and boys, whose whereabouts still remain unknown. We are alarmed by reports that trials have been marred by violations of Chinese law and international standards for due process. We are concerned by reported curbs on independent legal defense and a general lack of transparency in trials.

Conditions in the region today remain tense. The Internet is back up, but a number of Uyghur Web sites remain shuttered. And throughout the last year, the government issued regulations to restrict free speech. As we noted immediately after last year's tragic events, we urge the Chinese government, when addressing events in Xinjiang, to abide by its domestic and international commitments to protect citizen's fundamental rights and to promote the rule of law, and we urge the Chinese government to address the longstanding grievances of the Uyghur people, especially those related to official suppression of Uyghurs' independent expressions of ethnic, cultural, and religious identity.

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Announcements

Roundtable: "Prospects for Democracy in Hong Kong: Assessing China's International Commitments"

Wednesday, July 14, 2010

3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Capitol Visitor Center (CVC)

Congressional Meeting Room-South

Hong Kong's basic freedoms for the most part have been maintained under "one country, two systems." In June of this year, Hong Kong took its first steps toward constitutional reform since the British handed the territory back to China in 1997. This roundtable examines these recent constitutional reforms, mainland China's engagement in Hong Kong, and how Hong Kong may contribute to the development of democracy and civil society in China.

Panelists:

Robert Keatley, Founder and Editor of Hong Kong Journal; former Editor of the Wall Street Journal Asia, the Wall Street Journal Europe, and the South China Morning Post

Michael DeGolyer, Hong Kong Baptist University Professor of Government and International Studies, Director of the Hong Kong Transition Project

Michael F. Martin, Specialist in Asian Affairs, Congressional Research Service

Ellen Bork, Director, Democracy and Human Rights, Foreign Policy Initiative

CECC Roundtables are open to the public. No RSVP is necessary.

Roundtable: "China's Far West: Conditions in Xinjiang One Year After Demonstrations and Riots"

Monday, July 19, 2010

2:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 628

At this *CECC roundtable*, panelists will examine conditions in the far western region of Xinjiang one year after demonstrations and rioting occurred there. Events in July 2009 exposed longstanding tensions in the region and Uyghurs' grievances toward government policies that threaten basic rights. Authorities pledged in 2010 to improve economic conditions in Xinjiang and appointed a new Party secretary for the region. How will these new developments shape Xinjiang's future? Is the government effectively addressing Uyghurs' grievances? How have government controls over the free flow of information affected our understanding of events in the region?

Panelists:

Shirley A. Kan, Specialist in Asian Security Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service

Kathleen E. McLaughlin, China Correspondent for BNA, Inc., and freelance journalist

Sophie Richardson, Asia Advocacy Director, Human Rights Watch

Stanley W. Toops, Associate Professor, Department of Geography and International Studies Program, Miami University

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CECC News and Analysis

Recent Worker Actions in China

In recent weeks, reports have appeared in Chinese and international media outlets highlighting strikes at enterprises throughout China, many at foreign-owned enterprises, and other incidents involving workers, including suicides. Chinese and international journalists, academics, and activists have penned essays and articles attempting to explain the causes of the recent spate of worker incidents. Some of these pieces have taken an interpretive angle, bringing out themes—such as the Chinese government's denial of the right to free association, the rights of migrant workers, and changing attitudes of a new generation of workers—that have persisted in China since economic reforms began in 1978. [Read more »](#)

Central Leaders Hold Forum on Xinjiang, Stress Development and Stability as Dual Goals

Top central government and Communist Party leaders held a major "work forum" in May to set state economic and political objectives for the far western region of Xinjiang. Authorities at the conference defined promoting "development by leaps and bounds" and upholding stability as twin goals for the region. They also announced a series of initiatives to spur economic growth and to support social welfare. Following the forum, local leaders in Xinjiang unveiled concrete initiatives to implement the objectives of the May meeting, some of which could bring economic benefits to the region. Other initiatives, however, appear likely to clash with residents' rights, especially the rights of Uyghurs and other non-Han groups to preserve their cultures, languages, and livelihoods. The recent plans intensify a trend of top-down initiatives that prioritize state economic and political goals over the promotion of regional autonomy provided for under Chinese law and broader protections of Xinjiang residents' rights. [Read more »](#)

Government White Paper on Internet Claims Free Speech Protected

The State Council Information Office released its White Paper on the State of the Internet in China in June 2010 claiming that the Chinese government's regulation of the Internet guarantees freedom of speech and is consistent with international practice. The white paper highlights the government's efforts to expand Internet access and what it describes as lively exchanges on China's Internet, stating that large numbers of citizens express opinions online through blogs and comment boards. The white paper fails to address, however, aspects of China's regulation of the Internet that violate international human rights standards, including routine filtering of politically sensitive content and vague and broadly worded prohibitions on content. [Read more »](#)

Case of Wrongful Conviction in Henan Captures National Attention

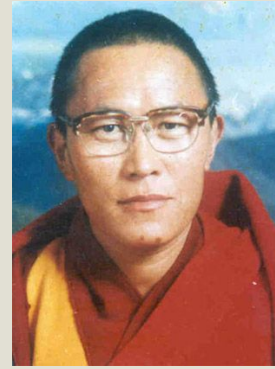
In early May, Chinese and international media reported on the case of wrongfully convicted Zhao Zuohai who served 10 years in prison before his alleged murder victim returned home. Subsequent to his release, Zhao reported that officials had repeatedly used torture on him to extract a confession. The case has sparked national debate over the use of torture to coerce confessions in criminal prosecutions. [Read more »](#)

Restrictions on Religion Continue in Xinjiang

Authorities in the far western region of Xinjiang exert tight control over religious practice in the region, in a number of cases imposing limits on religious activities that are harsher than restrictions imposed elsewhere in China. Authorities single out Muslim practices in some instances, as a number of recent reports detail. Authorities have claimed "illegal religious activities" and "religious extremism" as threats to the region's stability and blamed "religious extremism" as one source of unrest during demonstrations and rioting in Xinjiang in July 2009. Several recent government and media reports detail tight controls over religious activity in the year since the demonstrations and rioting took place. Such controls include steps to monitor mosques and pre-examine sermons, to prevent children from "believing in a religion," and to punish religious believers engaged in activities outside of officially approved parameters. [Read more »](#)

Relatives Visit Imprisoned Buddhist Teacher Tenzin Deleg, Officials Report Ill Health

Officials in Sichuan province permitted two sisters of imprisoned Tibetan Buddhist teacher Tenzin Deleg (A'an Zhaxi) to visit him at an unspecified location on April 27, 2010, according to a June 11 Radio Free Asia (RFA) [report](#). Prison officials informed the women that their brother is suffering from multiple illnesses, though sources told RFA that Tenzin Deleg had "played down" reports of his illness and his sisters said he appeared to be "reasonably well." The officials' unexpected notice to the sisters that they could visit their brother and the officials' unsolicited disclosure of information on his medical condition occurred approximately one year and nine months prior to January 2012, when Tenzin Deleg will have completed seven years of his sentence of life imprisonment—the period of time he must serve under Chinese regulations before officials can consider whether or not his illnesses may qualify him for release on medical parole.



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