

Bulletin

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PROMOTING ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

JUNE 4TH AND DOMESTIC ADVOCACY

Through its media and lobbying work, HRIC continues to support domestic Chinese voices demanding accountability for the June 4th crackdown. HRIC supported an open letter to the National People's Congress and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference by the Tiananmen Mothers, a group headed by Ding Zilin that includes more than 100 family members of people killed or injured in the Tiananmen Square massacre. HRIC's media work linked these domestic Chinese calls for redress to current debates on the lifting of the EU's arms embargo on China.

HRIC is actively engaged in official briefings and debates regarding the EU's possible lifting of the arms embargo it imposed in 1989 on China in response to the June 4th crackdown. HRIC's advocacy work on this issue includes testifying at a public hearing on the EU arms embargo convened by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe in Strasbourg, and submitting a statement to a hearing in March of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, which is preparing recommendations for the U.S. administration. HRIC has urged that any decision regarding the lifting of the embargo must be linked to at least three conditions: a reassessment of the Tiananmen Square crackdown, the unconditional release of prisoners still detained in relation to the protests, and the release of names and review of cases of political prisoners, especially those imprisoned on charges of the now-repealed crime of counter-revolution.

HRIC's media and electronic advocacy work on behalf of human rights defenders and activists within China also raised cases of individuals detained or imprisoned, labor rights violations, religious persecution and forced relocations.

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH

Through its participation in UN bodies and multilateral processes and in policymaking fora of the EU and U.S., HRIC has been actively contributing to key human rights debates and decision-making processes, thereby exerting pressure on the Chinese government to respond, and contributing to greater political space for domestic activists. HRIC also collaborates with international and national human rights NGOs and workers rights groups, including the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Rights and Democracy, International Campaign for Tibet, China Labour Bulletin, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

HRIC regularly lobbies, briefs and makes submissions in the form of backgrounders and individual case appeals to government bodies and processes. During this period, in addition to EU work on the arms embargo issue, HRIC submitted testimony on China's new legal provisions on religious affairs to the U.S. Congressional-Executive Commission on China roundtable. HRIC pointed out that these new provisions continue to restrict religious activity in China, despite the Chinese government's efforts to present them as protective in the official media.

HRIC also participated in human rights training for the new class of foreign-service officers of the State Department's Foreign Services Institute. These officers will eventually be stationed at consular posts, and HRIC's participation is an effort to build on its positive relationships with consular posts in China, improve information-sharing systems and offer HRIC as an ongoing resource.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

HRIC attended the UN Commission on Human Rights from March 29-April 6 in Geneva. At three parallel NGO briefings, HRIC made presentations before civil society and other actors addressing the impact of China's increasing participation in multilateral processes, windows of opportunity for advancing human rights in China, and structural factors contributing to China's failure to meet its human rights obligations. As one of the independent NGO affiliates of FIDH, HRIC Executive Director

Sharon Hom delivered an oral intervention at the plenary session of Item 10 (on economic, social and cultural rights worldwide). HRIC also briefed the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and UN Special Rapporteurs on China's human rights situation with the goal of providing input on issues for possible China missions.

HRIC participated in a session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) from April 25-29 in Geneva during the Committee's review of China's first report on the implementation on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). HRIC made an oral intervention based on its parallel NGO report, which documented China's failure to fully implement its obligations under the ICESCR, especially with regard to vulnerable groups who have been denied the benefits of China's economic growth. HRIC concluded with legislative and policy recommendations directed to the Committee and the PRC government. At a parallel NGO briefing on China, Tibet and Hong Kong, HRIC focused on benchmarks for assessing China's compliance with the ICESCR and Internet censorship and surveillance issues.

HRIC Hong Kong staff also attended an NGO roundtable in March organized by the Hong Kong Home Affairs Bureau in coordination with the CESCR that focused on the Hong Kong government's implementation of the ICESCR. The discussion was attended by more than 40 NGOs, legislators, advocates for domestic workers, sex workers and children's rights groups, and representatives of the local bar association and law society.

TECHNOLOGY, TRADE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

As a delegate of FIDH, HRIC attended the Prep Com II phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) from February 16-18 in Geneva. At a briefing attended by 150 multilateral bodies, government officials, NGOs and media, HRIC delivered a presentation on China's information control and role in policy debates regarding future Internet regulations. HRIC's high-profile participation at the WSIS has elicited strong support for HRIC's next accreditation bid. Fifty-three human rights, media and other NGOs from 20 countries have signed a petition initiated by the WSIS Human Rights

Caucus supporting HRIC's accreditation bid and demanding a non-politicized and transparent process for the next phase of the WSIS in September 2005.

To strengthen its expertise and capacity with regard to WTO processes, HRIC attended the WTO's annual public symposium, "WTO After 10 Years: Global Problems and Multilateral Solutions," from April 20-22 in Geneva, which included governments, parliaments, civil society, businesses, academics and media. Workshop sessions focused on the present and future of the WTO's economic, legal and institutional functions, and trade in connection with development, the environment and market access.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

HRIC brought international attention to complex human rights issues in China through the release of two new reports:

- A joint report released in April 2005 with Human Rights Watch, *Devastating Blows: Religious Repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang*, reveals the complex architecture of law, regulation and policy in Xinjiang that denies Uighurs religious freedom, and, by extension, freedom of association, assembly and expression. The report is based on previously undisclosed Party and government documents, as well as local regulations, official newspaper accounts and interviews conducted in Xinjiang. In conjunction with the report's release, Research Director Nicolas Becquelin presented a briefing at Chatham House in London. He also met with the head of the EU Commission on Human Rights and Democratization, the head of the EU China Unit and the Royal Institute of Strategic Affairs, including representatives of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the BBC, NGOs and academics;
- A China case study for the Center for Democracy and Technology's compendium of papers, "Spam 2005: Technology, Law and Policy," examines how spam issues are being addressed in the U.S. and abroad, including through new technologies and legislation. HRIC's study points out that avoiding anti-spam technologies requires NGOs and non-profits to reveal their identities, which

undermines their privacy, security and freedom of expression. The study also addresses China's use of anti-spam software to track authors of "subversive" content and prevent critical information from reaching Chinese citizens.

HRIC launched a new version of *Ren Yu Renquan*, its monthly electronic Chinese-language journal, which publishes research papers, in-depth analyses and book and law reviews and enables Chinese citizens to openly discuss human rights issues through the Internet. Among the site's new features are improved integration with other HRIC sites, a more user-friendly interface and a function allowing articles to be transmitted by e-mail.

He Qinglian's report produced for HRIC, *Media Control in China*, was reviewed by China scholar Perry Link in the February 24 edition of *The New York Review of Books*. It describes how the report counters China's claims of easing controls on the media by revealing the oppressive, often violent and even lethal consequences of overstepping the government's limitations on freedom of speech and of the press.

PRESS AND MEDIA WORK

HRIC provided timely human rights perspectives on current human rights issues in China for major international and domestic media. HRIC fielded press interviews from major international news sources—including ABC.com News, Agence France-Presse, Associated Press, the BBC, Channel 4 (London), *The New York Times*, Reuters, *South China Morning Post*, and *The Standard*—on current debates surrounding the lifting of the EU's arms embargo on China, the release of the joint HRW-HRIC report on religious repression in Xinjiang, and China's new legal provisions on religious affairs. HRIC provided analysis on China's legal reforms for the BBC World Service's program *The World Today*, as well as other broadcast media, including ABC and RTHK. President Liu Qing also participated in weekly interviews with Radio Free Asia.

HRIC'S RECENT COMMENTS IN THE MEDIA:

On China's legal system in reference to the wrongful conviction of She Xianglin:
"The individual cases of injustice put a human face on the systemic and structural lack of protection for people's rights."
ABC News International (ABC.com), May 25, 2005

On censorship and state secrets:
"Shi Tao's case has raised widespread concern inside and outside of China as a classic example of the Hu Jintao regimes relentless suppression of free speech and free press."
Agence France Press, May 21, 2005

On the anti-Japanese protests:
"Once you mount the tiger, it's hard to dismount. They made use of the nationalism but found it a little more difficult to contain than they expected once its usefulness was over."
Los Angeles Times, April 26, 2005

On China's human rights white paper:
"In terms of hardcore human rights like freedom of assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of religion, there has been no improvement whatsoever."
South China Morning Post, April 14, 2005

On the arms embargo:
"The embargo against China was imposed in 1989 not only because of the crackdown on the protests. It was also meant to send a message regarding human rights."
Der Spiegel, April 12, 2005

On China's border terrorities:
"The Chinese military presence there [in Tibet] has actually become stronger. And the same goes for the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, where Peking continues to carry out violent suppression."
DDP (Germany), April 2005

On reforming the Reeducation Through Labor system:
"It is good that the system is being changed, but it is still incomplete because the decision still rests with police. They are the investigators, prosecutors, judges and centre supervisors. All power is centralized in their hands and it is open for abuse."
South China Morning Post, March 21, 2005