

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND CASEWORK

HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

HRIC continues to submit individual cases of human rights abuses to UN bodies and international governments, provide humanitarian aid to human rights defenders and their families inside China, and assist newly exiled political prisoners to the U.S. HRIC also issues press releases and gives interviews to international press groups to make the situations of individual political prisoners known to the global community.

In April and May, HRIC submitted individual investigation cases to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, alleging that there was sufficient information to establish that the following individuals were being arbitrarily deprived of their liberties based on violations of international norms and principles relating to UN mandate: Li Wangyang, 54, is a former labor activist currently serving his second sentence for writing letters to Shaoyang City authorities, publicizing them to the international community and launching a 22-day hunger strike to obtain government payment for serious medical conditions he developed while incarcerated. Luo Yongzhong, 36, is an Internet activist with a physical disability being detained for writing politically sensitive articles advocating for the rights of disabled people and criticizing the central government and its handling of the 1989 Massacre. Tao Haidong, 46, is a writer and democracy activist currently imprisoned for writing and publishing articles on Chinese and overseas Web sites focusing on political and legal reform in China. We expect the cases to be reviewed during the Working Group's September session.

JUNE 4TH FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY

In commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the June 4th Massacre, 60 members of the June 4th Memorial Global Coalition

organized activities in 20 localities around the world in the first globally coordinated memorial effort devoted to June 4th. As a Coalition member, HRIC took a leading role in coordinating memorial activities, including:

- a press conference to publicize international 15th anniversary activities;
- a photography exhibit mounted in 26 cities in 17 countries;
- a candlelight vigil in New York in front of the Chinese consulate;
- a panel discussion, "Tiananmen in Retrospect" and a conference for Chinese democracy movement participants in New York.

HRIC's Hong Kong office also actively participated in June 4th commemorative events organized by the Tiananmen Mothers Campaign, including a candlelight vigil, and three screenings of "Testimonies of families of victims of the June 4th massacre" at the Hong Kong Arts Centre.

UN ADVOCACY

In May, HRIC submitted a re-application for Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) consultative status. HRIC's first application for ECOSOC status was reviewed and denied in 1999 by the UN Committee on NGOs. HRIC's re-application is currently undergoing the initial review process.

As part of HRIC's commitment to monitoring China's compliance and implementation of international treaty obligations, HRIC also continued to brief Special Rapporteurs on human rights issues in China relevant to their mandates.

INCORPORATING RESPONSIBILITY 2008

HRIC's multi-year research and monitoring campaign, Incorporating Responsibility 2008 (IR2008), focuses identifying intervention points for promoting human rights as China increases its global presence as a member of the World Trade Organization, host of the 2008 Olympics and participant in the UN Global Compact Initiative. As part of HRIC's efforts to monitor the human rights dialogues with China, HRIC, in collaboration with the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), prepared a preliminary assessment of the EU-China dialogue process based on the officially announced

benchmarks. HRIC and the FIDH also prepared input to the formal EU assessment process about to be initiated.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR RIGHTS

In June, HRIC and China Labour Bulletin co-sponsored the Conference for Action: Human Rights for the Millions, which was generously hosted by the Joseph R. Crowley Program in International Human Rights at Fordham University's School of Law.

The conference brought together experts in China's human rights and labor rights arenas to explore long-term strategies to assist and complement Chinese workers' struggles to deal with the negative social consequences of China's economic reforms. Conference participants comprised a diverse group including representatives of human rights NGOs, multilateral bodies, the corporate sector, trade unions and labor groups, academia, governments, foundations, the legal community and the media.

John Sweeney, President of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), delivered an opening keynote speech that focused on the urgent need for real freedom of association for all Chinese workers, and on the vital role that international trade union solidarity can play in advancing that goal.

As part of the conference's interactive multimedia approach, HRIC opened the conference with a screening of *Blind Shaft*, a film powerfully depicting labor conditions for millions of displaced and unemployed Chinese workers. Other multimedia presentations included testimonies from Chinese workers and excerpts from a documentary about coal miners.

The key themes and issues addressed by the panels and roundtables included: the increasing importance of promoting internationally recognized labor standards and workers' rights in China; violations of labor and human rights by the Chinese government; challenges of reporting on labor and other issues; enforcing corporate compliance with international labor standards; developing and implementing "best practice" models; and identifying benchmarks for evaluating approaches and progress. Two final strategy sessions focused on the role of trade and investment in advancing workers' rights and the opportunities for human rights and labor rights interventions

created by the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.

HRIC and China Labour Bulletin expect the high level of interest generated at the conference to strengthen cross-sector collaboration on a range of initiatives identified at the conference. Planning is now underway for a follow-up Conference to be held in Hong Kong in 2005.

GOVERNMENT BRIEFINGS

On May 17, HRIC Research Director Nicolas Becquelin attended a Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) roundtable examining the current situation of Islam in China entitled "Practicing Islam in Today's China: Differing Realities for the Uighurs and the Hui." After the roundtable, Nicolas met with representatives from the Uighur American Association and also with reporters from Radio Free Asia Uighur service.

On June 3, HRIC Executive Director Sharon Hom testified at a CECC hearing entitled, "Fifteen Years after Tiananmen: Is Democracy in China's Future?" The hearing commemorated the 15th anniversary of the suppression of the democracy movement in and around Tiananmen Square in Beijing, examined its legacy and looked ahead to assess whether this anniversary might prompt an official reassessment of Tiananmen and begin a process of political liberalization.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND TECHNOLOGY

As part of HRIC's electronic advocacy and outreach work, Sharon Hom presented HRIC's E-Activism Project at 2600 magazine's Fifth HOPE Conference, which addressed political and privacy concerns related to computers and new technologies. Sharon spoke to an audience of over 500 people, primarily computer and security experts, about the importance of building "alliances of conscience" between technologists and human rights communities to empower the potential technology offers to promoting human rights.

On July 15, HRIC participated in the Center for Democracy and Technology's (CDT) SPAM Consultation on anti-spam legislation and the U.S. CAN-SPAM act. HRIC raised issues relating to the impact of anti-spam technologies on NGOs and non-profit groups, many of whom use the Internet as an inexpensive medium for sending mass

mailings such as press releases and newsletters, and who may be unable to afford protective anti-spam software. HRIC also discussed the international impact of anti-spam software, including China's use of the software to prevent information such as human rights-related content from reaching Chinese citizens.

MEDIA AND PRESS WORK

President Liu Qing, Executive Director Sharon Hom and Research Director Nicolas Becquelin participated in regular interviews with the news media, including Associated Press, Agence-France-Presse, *Los Angeles Times*, Voice of America, BBC, *South China Morning Post* and Radio Free Asia.

They responded to media inquiries regarding the prosecution, imprisonment, release and refuge of Tiananmen protesters and democracy and Internet activists. They also fielded media interviews on China's postponement of a trip by the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture; China's repatriation of South Korean refugees; the government's suppression of the Tiananmen Mothers; the release of Dr. Jiang Yanyong, who exposed the SARS epidemic in 2003; and the persecution of a journalist who reported claims of abuse from peasants living in Tangshan and Fujian.

Sharon Hom also gave an in-depth interview for the spring 2004 issue of *China Development Brief* in which she drew distinctions between China's use of human rights discourse within the past few years and their compliance with international human rights norms and principles. She also called on foreign funders to push the envelope more in contributing to the promotion of legal and social reforms in China.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

In June, HRIC published a special report on media control entitled *Media Control in China*. Authored by He Qinglian, an economist and author of *China's Pitfall*, the report examines the Chinese government's control of media activities, its use of the news as propaganda and the methods it employs to enforce censorship. The report also portrays the oppressive and often violent consequences of overstepping the

government's limitations on freedom of speech and of the press. The report was published in Chinese, with two chapters translated into English for *China Rights Forum: Gray Zones* (No. 1, 2004).

HRIC also contributed a chapter on China to a book published by Human Rights First entitled *Defending Security: The Right to Defend Rights in an Age of Terrorism*, which focuses on the War on Terror's impact on human rights around the world. HRIC's contribution, "Post-911 Impact on Human Rights Defenders in the PRC," argues that China has historically justified its repression of dissidents and human rights activists with national security needs, and that the post-911 antiterrorism climate has provided even greater leeway for China's human rights abuses. HRIC made a series of recommendations, including pressuring the PRC to amend its laws to reflect a more legitimate balance between national security concerns and human rights protections; commit to non-discriminatory treatment of ethnic and religious minority groups, as well as lawyers who defend vulnerable groups; move forward with its promise to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which it has already signed; and engage in multilateral and bilateral training initiatives on international human rights laws and principles.

STAFF AND BOARD NOTES

In June, we were sad to say good-bye to Jennifer Rockwitz. Jennifer joined HRIC in 2002, and has made wonderful contributions to our work. She will attend the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in the fall.

We also warmly welcome three new staff. Irma Medina, our new office manager, brings over 15 years' experience in office management and accounting, including non-profit experience. Melissa Shore, our new development associate, holds a BA from Skidmore College and has worked for a consulting firm on state-wide fundraising campaigns for not-for-profits. Elisabeth Wickeri, our new law program officer, received a JD from New York University School of Law and has interned at a wide range of international and domestic human rights NGOs.