

This “Take Action” feature highlights the roundup of petitioners and human rights defenders in the lead-up to the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (*Zhongguo Gongchandang di Shiqici Quanguo Daibiao Dahui*; referred to also as the “17th Party Congress”). Before significant events such as national congresses, sensitive anniversaries, or high-level visits from foreign dignitaries, roundups and harassment of rights defenders and petitioners take place. These are efforts to prevent any protests or incidents that may disrupt the official proceedings. These incidents are important, because the way that social control is exerted before and during the 17th Party Congress is an indication of the tactics to which dissidents and activists may be subjected before Beijing’s Summer Olympics next year.

THE ROUNDUP

The increased harassment of petitioners and rights defenders before and during the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China violates their legally protected right to petition and right to freedom of expression, and undermines China’s promises of greater openness in advance of the Olympics next year. The three cases below are those on which HRIC has been active during recent months.



LÜ GENGSONG

Anticipated release: ?



Freelancer **Lü Gengsong**, 51, is a long-time advocate for democratic political reform in China. He has published several books on the subject, and published widely on the Internet regarding human rights violations. On August 24, 2007, Lü was detained in Hangzhou City, Zhejiang Province, after posting articles online that criticized local government officials for colluding with real estate developers in illegal land seizures. His wife was also detained for questioning. While his wife was released after three hours, Lü was formally charged on September 29 with “incitement to subvert state power,” and is currently being held at the Xihu Detention Center in Huangzhou. He was also initially charged with “possession of state secrets,” but the charge was dropped. On September 30, his wife Wang Xue’e was notified of Lü’s formal arrest. Lü is an active member of the banned China Democracy Party (CDP), and was a teacher at the Zhejiang Higher Professional School of Public Security before being expelled in 1993 as a result of his democracy activism. Lü’s detention has prompted expressions of great concern in China and overseas, including a petition signed by 1,163 Chinese rights defenders, writers, scholars and lawyers calling for Lü’s release.

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CHINESE GOVERNMENT 101: THE 17TH PARTY CONGRESS

Who

Approximately 2,200 delegates from across the country, comprising all levels of the CPC

When

October 15–21, 2007

Where

Great Hall of the People, Beijing, China

Why It's Important

According to the Constitution of the Communist Party of China, congresses are convened every five years, and are some of the country's most significant political events.

At Party congresses, the Party line is established for all major policy sectors, and the political blueprint for priorities and tasks is designed. Decisions announced at the congress, however, are usually determined ahead of the event, so there is no public debate over matters on the table.

Additionally, one of the congress's main tasks is to elect a new Central Committee, which will lead the Party until the next Party congress. The Central Committee then appoints a new party leadership, which includes the following:

- Politburo and its Standing Committee
- Central Military Commission
- Secretariat (the oversight body for implementation of Politburo decisions throughout the political hierarchy)
- General Secretary

What Happened

At the 17th Party Congress, Shanghai Party chief Xi Jinping, 54, and Liaoning Party chief Li Keqiang, 52, were promoted into the Politburo Standing Committee, while several existing Politburo members, including Luo Gan, Wu Guanzheng, and Zeng Qinghong, retired. President Hu Jintao solidified his power.

Policy-wise, Hu Jintao's announcement of a "Scientific Development Concept" [*Kexue Fazhan Guan*], a framework for a national development strategy to decrease the growing gap between rural and urban areas, was formally endorsed as Party policy. The Scientific Development Concept includes egalitarian elements such as "putting people first," social welfare, sustainable development, and a harmonious society. Additionally, strong support was shown for improving and building internal democracy within the Party.

THE ROUNDUP



HUA HUIQI
SHUANG SHUYING
Anticipated release: 2009



Activist **Hua Huiqi** has been detained repeatedly in recent years for leading an underground house church, as well as for his rights defense efforts on housing and other issues. His mother, **Shuang Shuying**, is also a committed member of the underground church. On October 8, 2007, the police forcibly removed Hua, his father, and his wife from their residence in Chongwen District and sent them to Fengtai District. Police specifically informed Hua that this action was due to the upcoming 17th Party Congress, and that Hua and his family would have to stay in Fengtai for a month. However, Fengtai police brought Hua back to Chongwen on October 11. When they arrived at Hua's Chongwen house, a fight broke out between them and the Chongwen police, as well as private guards from a demolition company working in the neighborhood. Hua was knocked unconscious during the fight.



Earlier this year, Hua and Shuang attempted to petition the National People's Congress over the forcible clearance of their home, but were detained by police officers of the Public Security Bureau's Asian Games Village division and severely beaten. Hua was then arrested on February 8 for interfering in official business, and was jailed until July 25 on charges of "obstructing official business." Meanwhile, Shuang was arrested while protesting Hua's detention, and on February 26, 2007, was sentenced to two years in prison for "intentional damage of public and private property." Shuang is currently held in Beijing Women's Prison.



LI HEPING



Li Heping is a Beijing-based human rights lawyer. On September 29, 2007, he was abducted by a group of unidentified masked men and tortured with electric rods. He was held in a basement outside Beijing until early September 30, when he was dumped in the woods outside the city. As he was beaten, Li was warned that he should leave Beijing with his family. Upon returning home, Li discovered that his law license and other personal belongings were missing. His computer had also been completely erased. Li has a master of laws from Renmin University of China Law School, and is now partner at a Beijing law firm. Li has served as defense counsel for several human rights defenders and activists, including imprisoned journalist Yang Zili, environmental activist Tan Kai, house church leaders, Falun Gong practitioners, and victims of forced eviction. In 2005, Li also appealed to the Beijing Bureau of Judicial Affairs on behalf of imprisoned lawyer Gao Zhisheng.

CRF TAKE ACTION

WHAT YOU CAN DO!

Write to the Chinese government!

Join the international community in calling for the immediate and unconditional release of these and other human rights defenders. You can send copies of letters expressing concern for prisoners to the following officials and organizations:

→ **Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland**

11, Chemin de Surville
1213 Petit-Lancy
Geneva, Switzerland
Email: mission.china@ties.itu.int

→ **Minister of Justice, Wu Aiying**

Ministry of Justice
10 Nandajie Chaoyangmen
Chaoyangqu
Beijingshi 100020, PRC
Fax: 011 86 10 65 292345
Email: minister@legalinfo.gov.cn

→ **President Hu Jintao**

The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie
Xichengqu
Beijingshi 100017, PRC

→ **Minister of Foreign Affairs, Li Zhaoxing**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
2 Chaoyangmen Nandajie
Chaoyang District
Beijingshi 100701, PRC

And for those subjected to ill-treatment:

→ **Chinese Medical Association**

42 Dongsi Xidajie
Beijing 100710, PRC
Fax: 86-10-6512-3754
E-mail: cmafrd@public3.bta.net.cn

→ **International Committee of the Red Cross**

19 avenue de la Paix
CH 1202 Geneva
Fax: 41 (22) 733 20 57

Do you write, publish or blog?

- Highlight these human rights defenders in your writing. Make sure that the stories of these individuals are not lost!
- Link HRIC's banner supporting Chinese voices to your blog or Web site.

Are you a member of a business or professional association?

- Is there a corporate social responsibility or human rights committee in your association? Find out what they are doing about China!
- Contact HRIC to explore taking action on a case or issue.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE FOR MORE DETAILS ON HOW TO "TAKE ACTION" AND FOR OTHER IDEAS ON HOW YOU CAN HELP!