

INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AND CASEWORK

HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT AND ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

By submitting cases of human rights abuses to UN bodies and international governments, HRIC advances international pressure on China to respond to claims of torture, lack of due process and denial of medical care for political prisoners. HRIC also provides humanitarian aid to human rights defenders and their families inside China, and helps exiled political prisoners make arrangements for access to initial health care, housing and media work. HRIC raises these cases to the attention of the international community by issuing press releases and fielding print and radio interviews.

In September, HRIC submitted the following cases to the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention alleging that these individuals are being arbitrarily deprived of their liberties based on violations of international principles relating to the mandate of the Working Group:

He Depu, 47, is a veteran activist from Beijing now being detained for an open letter he and 200 Chinese political dissidents presented to the 16th Communist Party Congress calling for national elections and a reassessment of the 1989 democracy movement.

Liu Fenggang, 44, is a religious activist from Beijing who in 2003 was arbitrarily detained and tried in secret for transmitting a report on the suppression of religious activities in Zhejiang Province to organizations outside China.

Xu Yonghai, 43, is a doctor and religious activist from Shandong Province who was detained in late 2003 for printing a report on religious suppression in Zhejiang Province, including the destruction of more than a dozen house churches and the arrest of at least 300 Christians. In 2004 Xu was tried and convicted in secret, violating his fundamental right to a fair and public trial.

HRIC expects these cases to be reviewed at the meeting of the Working Group in November.

INCORPORATING RESPONSIBILITY 2008

HRIC's multi-year research and monitoring project, *Incorporating Responsibility 2008*, identifies intervention points for promoting human rights as China increases its global presence as a member of the World Trade Organization, host of the 2008 Beijing Olympics and participant in the UN Global Compact Initiative. The project incorporates collaborative approaches with actors across a range of sectors, including a diversity of NGOs, some of which are referenced below.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
As part of HRIC's outreach to the business sector and push for corporate social responsibility in China, Executive Director Sharon Hom participated in Gap, Inc.'s first Stakeholder Consultation on Labor and Corporate Social Responsibility on September 15 in Washington, D.C. The purpose of this consultation was to collect feedback from NGOs, government officials, unions, suppliers, shareholders and concerned employees on Gap, Inc.'s first Corporate Social Responsibility report, which was released in May 2004. HRIC urged Gap, Inc. to support the efforts of workers to organize and empower themselves, support emerging NGO networks, and build upon the Chinese government's growing interest in corporate responsibility issues.

In early October, Sharon Hom spoke at *Ethical Corporation* magazine's two-day conference in New York, "How to Make Corporate Responsibility Work in China," which was attended by foreign businesses and investors in China, Chinese factory managers, trade unions, policy groups and NGOs. The conference addressed market expansion in China in the context of the country's social, political and economic developments, including former corporate responsibility standards with regard to labor conditions, human rights and the environment. Sharon's presentation addressed the implications of China's economic expansion for human rights in China, and how businesses can contribute to sustain-

able improvements in the country's human rights situation.

Sharon Hom was also invited to speak at the Corporate Social Responsibility in Asia panel convened by Amnesty International at the European Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility from November 7–9 in Maastricht, The Netherlands. The Conference aims to develop policy recommendations for member states and EU countries that promote corporate compliance with international human rights in Asian countries, including China.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND LABOR RIGHTS
HRIC is currently staging the groundwork for a second Conference for Action (CFA II) in Hong Kong in August 2005, to be co-organized with China Labour Bulletin (CLB), and hosted by a local academic institution. CFA II will build on the cross-sector collaboration generated at the first conference this past June, and is an indicator of the networks HRIC and CLB are developing to address human rights and labor issues in China.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF HUMAN RIGHTS

HRIC uses the Internet to promote freedom of expression and peaceful activism toward a democratic China, increase access to information, expand awareness within China and the international community about human rights issues in China and develop strategies for protecting these rights.

REDESIGN OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE WEB SITE

In October 2004, HRIC redesigned its English-language main Web Site to include expanded features and resources. The site now incorporates:

- A complete front end design that is more easily navigated;
- A more coherent presentation of the vision and organization of HRIC's program work;
- A feature for making online donations;
- More effective e-activism tools that help users better understand the human rights situation in China and encourage participation in online campaigns, including advocacy for the release of political prisoners;

- Expanded resources and external links to the thematic focal points of HRIC's work: Ethical Globalization, Technology and Human Rights, Legal Reform and Human Rights Defenders, including more information on China and the WTO, 2008 Olympics, corporate accountability, the Internet, arbitrary detention, state secrets and urban development and relocation, among other subjects; and
- More user-friendly access to *China Rights Forum* articles.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Sharon Hom visited mainland China and Hong Kong from September 2–12. Her meetings with a range of activists, academics, democracy leaders and NGOs contributed to the strengthening of HRIC's domestic advocacy networks and collaboration on projects with Hong Kong groups.

NGO COLLABORATION

As a result of HRIC's participation in the Center for Democracy and Technology's (CDT) SPAM Consultation on anti-SPAM legislation and the U.S. CAN-SPAM act in July, HRIC was invited to contribute to CDT's upcoming compendium on SPAM issues with a China case study on the challenges of implementing anti-SPAM technologies and legislation, and the Chinese government's use of anti-SPAM tools to block and censor information.

On October 8, at the invitation of La Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme (FIDH), Program Officer Elisabeth Wickeri represented HRIC on a roundtable, "Application of the Death Penalty in Asia and its Evolution," at the 2nd World Congress against the Death Penalty, which included hundreds of activists and academics from all over the world. Elisabeth outlined the Chinese framework for administering the death penalty and offered suggestions for taking action, including advocacy for greater coherence in China's compliance with its international obligations under the WTO and UN bodies, as well as outreach to the corporate and business sectors.

In preparation for Sharon Hom's participation in the EU-China human rights seminar in The Hague in November, HRIC has

continued to work with FIDH to monitor the EU-China Dialogue process and contribute to the EU assessment process.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In September 2004, HRIC expanded its internship program, welcoming seven student interns, volunteers and attorneys to its New York and Hong Kong offices. HRIC is currently hosting four J.D. students from NYU School of Law and Fordham University School of Law; an attorney in the LLM program at NYU School of Law; an undergraduate in the Bard Globalization and International Affairs program; and a development economics graduate student from the New School. This year, HRIC also developed an internship program with the NYU Law International Human Rights Clinic, and is benefiting from the expertise of the clinic's directors, both of whom are human rights attorneys.

MEDIA AND PRESS WORK

As part of HRIC's ongoing Chinese- and English-language media work, President Liu Qing, Sharon Hom and Research Director Nicolas Becquelin fielded print and radio interviews on a range of issues over the past few months, including: the imprisonment and release of Dr. Jiang Yanyong, who in 2003 exposed the Chinese government's cover-up of the SARS outbreak; peasant protests in Zigong, Tangshan and Fujian over the unlawful appropriation of rural land; the escape from China of Yuan Hongbing, former dean of a Chinese law school, and his application for political asylum in the U.S.; the arrest of journalist Zhao Yan, who was accused of leaking confidential information about Jiang Zemin's resignation; the arrest and detention of nearly 36,000 protesters in Beijing prior to a September meeting of the 16th Communist Party Congress; Internet censorship; the persecution of religious groups in China; and the impact of the 2008 Olympics on human rights in China. Additionally, Liu Qing participated in weekly interviews with Radio Free Asia.

On September 20, Sharon Hom was interviewed on Public Radio International's roundtable *To the Point*, which included Orville Schell, Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California

at Berkeley, and Richard Baum, Director of UCLA's Center for Chinese Studies. Sharon addressed the future of China's human rights situation with regard to President Hu Jintao's recent succession, arguing that true social change will require structural shifts in Chinese institutions and culture as well the development of an independent civil society. She pointed to the 2008 Olympics as an opportunity for human rights groups to intensify international scrutiny of China's human rights violations and advance activism.

RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

HRIC collaborated with China Labour Bulletin to issue a report on state secrets published in Issue No. 3, 2004 of *China Rights Forum*. The report, *Labor and State Secrets*, analyzes the Chinese government's regulation and control of information related to labor affairs, including child labor, industrial accidents, unemployment rates, wage policies, worker associations and others. The report argues that by controlling this information, the Chinese government is effectively acknowledging the brutal working conditions affecting a majority of China's citizens.

HRIC has distributed approximately 300 Chinese-language copies of *Media Control in China*, a report by He Qinglian, economist and author of *China's Pitfall*. *Media Control in China* examines the Chinese government's control of media activities, its use of the news to disseminate propaganda and the methods it employs to enforce censorship. Two chapters appear in English translation in Issue No. 1, 2004 of *China Rights Forum*, and the entire Chinese-language report will soon be available on HRIC's main Web site.