

MEDIA CENSORSHIP

Web sites shut down/blocked

Yahoo! reported on June 13 that its popular Internet photo site Flickr.com was blocked in China. Flickr allows users to post, store and exchange photographs online. Access to the site was blocked soon after photos of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown began appearing there. (AFP)

“Forum of Contemporary Chinese Poetry,” a Web site operated by poet **Lu Yang**, was shut down on July 11 along with two other forums. Boxun reported that the closure followed postings related to June 4th. An Israeli-based literary Web site, *shvoong*, also became inaccessible in China in early July. (RFA, RSF)

The Maoist Web site *Maoflag* (www.maoflag.cn) was shut down in mid-July after it posted an open letter by 17 retired CPC cadres criticizing China’s reforms and official policies. (RFA)

At least six Inner Mongolian Web sites were shut down at the end of July. The authorities told the managers of one of the sites that it was closed because they had not registered the site’s bulletin board system (BBS). (RFA)

Workers’ rights Web site *Tongyipianlantiansia* (www.blueseasky.cn) was shut down for two weeks before access was restored on July 26. (RSF)

Xinhua accuses Voice of America of distorting facts

A spokesperson for the Foreign Information Administration Center of the Xinhua News Agency accused Voice of America (VOA) of distorting facts with “ill intention.” The spokesperson denounced an article published by VOA on May 1, which argued that the Measures for Administering the Release of News and Information in China by Foreign News Agencies, issued by Xinhua on September 10, 2006, restricts the development of foreign news agencies in China. (VOA, XH)

TV signal hijacked and anti-Party message broadcast

A television signal was hijacked and anti-Communist Party messages were broadcast during primetime in Guangdong on May 1. The footage showed anti-government slogans urging viewers to abandon the Communist Party. It was reported to have lasted about 20 seconds before being blocked out. The broadcast also reached millions of viewers in several other cities. The hijackers are still unknown. (SCMP)

China among “Enemies of the Internet”

Reporters Without Borders listed China as one of 13 “Enemies of the Internet” as it launched a Chinese-language version of its Web site on May 3. The Paris-based group appealed to the Chinese authorities not to block rsf-chinese.org and to stop censoring other Chinese-language news Web sites. (RFA)

Chinese MySpace reports 30,000 users

MySpace China (Myspace.cn) announced on May 8 that the site had registered 31,826 users since its launch on April 27. (PE)

Xinhua criticizes local government over cover-up

The Xinhua News Agency on May 15 criticized local authorities in Shandong Province for covering up information on hand, foot and mouth disease. (RFA)

Increased controls over magazine and periodical publications

The General Administration for Press and Publications (GAPP) announced on May 23 that it will begin enforcing new rules, the Regulatory Basis for the Publication of Periodicals, in an attempt to tighten control over an estimated 9,000 weekly and monthly magazines and periodicals. The move has been interpreted as an effort to limit negative coverage before the 2008 Olympics. (RFA)

Plan for real-name registration of bloggers dropped

Chinese officials announced on May 22 that a proposal requiring Internet bloggers to register under their real

names had been dropped. However, blog hosts would be held responsible for censoring sensitive blog entries. (FT)

Xiamen moves to ban anonymous Web postings

Xiamen, the city where protesters successfully halted the construction of a chemical plant in June, is considering draft legislation to ban anonymous Web postings and require Web sites to approve all postings. Xiamen would be the first city in China to require the use of real names online after the central government backed down on its plans to require real-name registration in May. The vice-chief of the Xiamen CPC's propaganda department said the legislation was unrelated to the chemical plant protest, which was fueled largely by text messages and Internet postings. (WSJ, AP)

Boxun journalist taken into custody

Nanjing-based journalist **Sun Lin**, a regular contributor to the overseas Boxun Web site, was detained by police on May 30. He was reportedly told that Boxun endangers national security. (RFA)

China's blacklist for Olympics

It was reported at the end of May that the Ministry of Public Security issued an internal notice to police departments across China in April, requiring them to bar "hostile" overseas journalists and other blacklisted people from entry. (RFA)

HRW accuses China of backtracking on promises of greater media freedoms

On May 31, Human Rights Watch (HRW) charged that "the Chinese government is already failing to deliver on its pledge to fully lift restrictions for foreign journalists ahead of the Beijing Games," referring to the relaxed controls that took effect on January 1. According to HRW, a number of foreign journalists have found that authorities ignore, or are unaware of, the supposed new freedoms and have obstructed their work as reporters. (AFP)

"Citizen journalism" fights China's censors

While China continues to find new ways to block and censor "offensive" material, Chinese citizens are increasingly employing the Internet and other technological advances to express their opinions and voice

their complaints. One striking example was the letter posted on the Internet by 400 parents that led to the uncovering of the slave labor scandal. Text messages, particularly in the Xiamen protests, have also proven effective. (TA)

Men held responsible for journalist's death

Seven men have been jailed over the beating to death of journalist **Lan Chengzhang** outside an illegal coal mine in Shanxi Province. The head of the mine, Hou Zhen-run, was sentenced to life in prison for "causing the death of another by malicious injury" by ordering the attack. Five men were given prison sentences of five to 15 years for carrying out the attack, while another received a one-year sentence for harboring the suspects. Lan was accused of being a "false journalist" seeking payments in return for not reporting problems at the mine, but the case still provoked a huge uproar among journalists and media groups. (BBC)

No new Internet cafés in 2007

On June 5, a government notice stipulated that industry and commerce bureaus at all levels are not allowed to license any new Internet cafés in 2007. Meanwhile, regulators will carry out an industry-wide inspection amid concerns that violent games, sexually explicit material and gambling Web sites are harming young people. (AP)

Web sites barred from discussing leader's death

Web sites in China were barred from discussing the death of CPC leader Huang Ju in early June. (RFA)

Newspaper editors fired over Tiananmen ad

Three editors of the *Chengdu Evening News* were fired after the newspaper published an advertisement that read, "Paying tribute to the strong-willed mothers of June 4 victims," on the eighteenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown. It appears that a young clerk allowed the ad to be published because she had never heard of the crackdown and was told that the date marked a mining disaster. The Communist Party has banned references to June 4th in the state media, on the Internet and in books, leaving most young Chinese ignorant of the event. The placer of the ad, surnamed Feng, was reportedly arrested. (RTR, RFA)

Record of Internet use to be kept 60 days

It was reported on June 13 that China Netcom Group, a state-owned enterprise, would require records of Internet use to be kept at least 60 days in order to “suppress online pornography.” (BJN)

English Wikipedia unblocked

The English-language version of Wikipedia was again accessible in China on June 15, although the simplified Chinese-language site remained blocked. One source cited the “bad PR” among foreign users as a reason that the English-language site was unblocked. (Info World)

Internet user arrested over critical pictures

On June 16, an Internet user in Shandong Province was reportedly arrested for posting pictures of luxurious government buildings online. (RFA)

Web site shut over corruption report

A Chongqing-based Web site launched in mid-March has been blocked since mid-June. The Web site revealed instances of corruption and led to a named official being placed under *shuanggui*, or “double regulations,” which is a disciplinary measure overseen by the CPC’s Disciplinary Inspection Committee. (RFA)

Google to provide Internet content in China

On June 20, Google reported that it won an Internet content license from China’s Ministry of Information and Industry. The license will allow Google to potentially offer news in what has become the world’s second largest Internet market. (RTR)

Two TV channels punished for running banned ads

The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) ordered two provincial-level television channels to suspend all commercials and acknowledge their mistakes in written reports as a punishment for repeatedly running banned medical advertisements. SARFT claims that the two channels continued to run the ads despite four prior warnings and notifications. The punishments were the toughest handed down since regulations banning such ads were issued in August last year. (XH)

Draft law loosens restrictions on media

In a move to improve transparency, the second draft of

the emergency response law, advanced by the national legislature on June 24, would allow media to report on public emergencies without the government’s authorization. The first draft, which included fines of as much as 100,000 *yuan* (\$13,100) for reporting on emergencies without authorization or spreading fabricated information, was revised after it met with criticism. The second draft only bans the making up or spreading of false information. (PD)

Media quiet after karaoke blast

A reporter for a Liaoning newspaper said the provincial propaganda department issued a gag order soon after an explosion on July 4 at a karaoke parlor in Tianshifu, Benxi County, Liaoning Province. The Xinhua News Agency, which is believed to have been the first to send reporters to the mining town, was the only official news source mainland readers could access to find out about the blast. However, a source within Xinhua said field reporters in Benxi had been ordered to stop reporting. (SCMP)

China Development Brief shut down

It was reported on July 11 that the popular Western-run newsletter *China Development Brief* (CDB), which focuses on Chinese social and economic development issues, was ordered by the Chinese police to cease operations. CDB, with 11 staff in Beijing, published Chinese and English editions in print and on the Internet. Nick Young, who founded CDB in 1995, said officials representing the Beijing police and the local statistical bureau told him that he had violated the 1983 law on gathering statistics by conducting “unauthorized surveys.” Young said the authorities provided no specific reason for issuing the order, after allowing the publication to operate for 12 years. While *China Development Brief* did not have a license to publish in China, and its staff members were not registered as news correspondents, Mr. Young said the local authorities had closely monitored his business for years and seemed to understand that providing objective information was in China’s interests. (NYT)

Magazine on civil society shut down

The Chinese-language magazine *Minjian*, published by a research center at Sun Yat-sen University, was shut down around mid-July. Like *China Development Brief*,

Minjian discussed civil society developments in China. (RFA)

Email disrupted by new China censors

Adjustments to China's Internet surveillance system appear to have disrupted cross-border email flow in mid-July. Several IT companies confirmed that Internet users and clients in China and overseas complained of difficulty sending and receiving emails. An executive at a Shanghai-based media company reported that his company was advised to use local email, because a "new firewall system" being installed at state-owned China Telecom and China Netcom was leading to "some overseas email being scanned and cleaned off." The new firewall system will supposedly allow authorities to temporarily intensify their monitoring and control ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization meeting in early August. (RTR)

New technology makes it harder to block bad news

New technologies, including the Internet and mobile phones, are apparently making it more difficult for China to block negative news. In comments published in July 16, Wang Guoqing, a vice-minister with the cabinet's information office, said that "information blocking is like walking into a dead end." Wang said local governments need to be more transparent, citing the recent slave labor scandal as evidence that bad news needs to be managed and controlled rather than concealed. (AFP)

162 million Internet users in China

The number of netizens in China reached 162 million at the end of June 2007, according to the twentieth report on the development of the Internet in China issued by China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) on July 18. (CD)

Reporter of cardboard meat buns story detained

A freelance television reporter in Beijing was detained on charges of faking a report about street vendors who used chemical-soaked cardboard to fill meat buns, local media reported July 19. (AP)

China cracks down on fake news stories

In the wake of the cardboard meat buns incident, China launched an unprecedented crackdown on fake news stories, according to reports in the state media on

July 25. The Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, and the State Press and Publication Administration jointly issued a circular to all news organizations ordering those who reported or released fake news to publicly apologize and correct the items. Furthermore, they said people who intentionally fabricated news that caused public anxiety and damaged the country's reputation would be harshly dealt with or even prosecuted. China's press watchdog also provided hotlines where members of the public could report news stories suspected of being false. (PD)

Journalist receives death threats

Journalist **Pang Jiaoming** of the *China Economic Times* said in his blog on July 20 that he had received several death threats following the publication of two stories he wrote on the use of substandard materials to construct the Wuhan-Guangdong Railway. (RFA)

Publisher convicted over illegal book

RFA reported that **Liu Xingwen**, publisher of a financial book, was sentenced around July 25 to three years' imprisonment on charges of illegal business activity. Liu has appealed. According to the report, the State Council had not granted permission for the book to be published. (RFA)

Interviews with foreign media led to jail threats

Near the end of July, evictees protesting a land grab in Zhejiang were threatened with imprisonment if they continued to give interviews to foreign media. (RFA)

PETITIONS AND PROTESTS

Career advancement linked to control of social unrest

A senior Communist Party official stated on July 5 that "officials who perform poorly in maintaining social security in rural areas will not qualify for promotion." Police were also urged to investigate and report on disputes that might lead to "mass incidents" or crimes in rural areas. (AP)

Number of collective petitions falls

Xinhua reported on July 10 that the number of collec-

tive petitions received by disciplinary inspection and supervision organs dropped by 16.9 percent from 2005 to 2006, while the number of people involved in those petitions dropped by 14.3 percent. No specific figures were given. (XH)

Revision of official policies on petitioners

The Supreme People's Procuratorate issued a regulation on the handling of petitions, effective on May 13. Main points include: (1) Officials can be punished for abuse of power, dereliction of duty and other negligent behavior when they process petitions; (2) petitioners will be held criminally responsible for distorting facts and harming others' lawful interests; and (3) heads of local procuratorate offices must receive petitioners at least 12 times a year and for at least half a day each time they meet. (BJN)

It was reported in mid-June that the central authorities had issued an internal document controlling petitioners in Beijing ahead of the 17th CPC National Congress. The document states that petitioners caught in Beijing should be sent back to their hometowns, and that the more troublesome petitioners should be sent to psychiatric hospitals, "reeducation classes" and even prison. A petitioner told RFA that official "retrievers" had recently started openly arresting petitioners at petitioning offices, including petitioners who were not from their own provinces. (RFA)

According to a new opinion co-issued by the CPC Central Committee and the State Council on June 24, China will establish a national center to receive public complaints and petitions, as well as a national public complaints information system to improve monitoring of the public complaints process by officials and members of the public. The opinion emphasized the need for local government officials to be receptive to public complaints. (XH)

Local strategies to suppress petitioners

It was reported on May 4 that authorities in Shanghai, Jiangsu and Chengdu have adopted various strategies to suppress petitioners. Shanghai's Office for Letters and Calls decided in an April meeting to train laid-off workers to monitor petitioners, and on April 29, its officials beat three petitioners and forced them to sign a

letter confessing to the crime of disturbing social order. Jiangsu authorities detained petitioners and made them attend "education classes," while in Chengdu, a notice issued on April 29 banned certain types of petitioning, including kneeling, shouting slogans and self-immolation. (RFA)

It was reported on May 11 that authorities from Huangshi, Hubei Province, have started sending staff to "accompany and lead" petitioners in order to achieve the two "No's": no petitioning in Beijing and no local chaos. (RFA)

Protest against police power abuse in Shanghai

Some 280 petitioners gathered on a busy street in Shanghai on May 9 to protest police abuses of petitioners. Eighty petitioners were reportedly taken away by police. The protest was prompted by the May 4 police beating of **Chen Zonglei** after he petitioned the Shanghai authorities over a forced eviction. (RFA)

Petitioner prevented from tuberculosis testing

Petitioner **Tan Jinhua**, currently serving an 18-month sentence in a reeducation-through-labor camp, began showing symptoms of a recurrence of tuberculosis in May. Although Tan was vomiting blood and complaining of chest pain, Hubei authorities refused to permit a diagnostic blood test unless she promised not to petition again. (RFA)

Petitioners beaten

Petitioner **Zheng Mingfang** and her partially paralyzed husband were beaten by 20 people led by a local cadre in Tianjin on June 6. Local police barred other petitioners from helping Zheng when the assailants stripped off her clothes. (RFA)

Petitioner to be tried

It was reported on June 7 that Henan petitioner **Li Yufeng** would be tried on June 11 on charges of "obstructing execution of official duties." The authorities alleged that Li attacked officials in charge of intercepting petitioners, otherwise known as "petition retrievers," in 2005. Li's sister argued that Li did not know the retrievers' official identity and that both sides sustained injuries. (HRIC, RFA)

Disabled petitioners harassed

Ma Wenjun, a petitioner with disabilities, was forced to leave Beijing and return to his Hubei hometown on June 12 after local authorities threatened to cancel his social security payments if he continued to petition. Jiangsu rights defender **Zhang Jianping**, partially paralyzed, was barred from accessing the Internet for six months because of two “subversive” articles he wrote on the treatment of petitioners. (RFA)

Hospital allegedly turned away petitioners

Police officers used metal chairs to beat five Liaoning petitioners, including three who were disabled, in Beijing on June 26. A petitioner told RFA that a hospital forced them to leave the same day they were admitted for treatment, but the hospital denied the allegation in a phone interview. (RFA)

Petitioner dies in confrontation with police

On June 28, 10 petitioners from Liaoning Province planning to petition Beijing over a land dispute were confronted by police at the local railway station. One of the petitioners became so agitated that he jumped onto the tracks and was killed by a train, and another was seriously injured. The remaining eight were being held by police. (SCMP)

Healthy engineer given psychiatric treatment

Tan Linshu, a naval engineer with the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), was admitted to a Guangxi psychiatric hospital in early July. His family insisted that he was healthy and that his admission was in retaliation for his petitions alleging a case of plagiarism in the navy. (RFA)

Needle injection for petitioner

Xinjiang petitioner Wang Hongxiang said on July 5 that he had seen the authorities use a needle injection to subdue and arrest a female petitioner from Henan surnamed Li. The authorities denied the allegation. (RFA)

Petitioner’s sons sent to orphanage

According to an RFA report on July 6, Ningxia authorities sent two sons of petitioner **Ma Yuanxin** to an orphanage and refused to let her take them back because of fears that they would accompany Ma to petition in Beijing. (RFA)

Students detained for interviewing petitioners

Nine Beijing students were detained for five hours on July 23, the “County Chief’s Reception Day,” for interviewing petitioners in Ji County, Tianjin Province for a social research survey. (RFA)

Labor disputes on the rise

Yang Jingyu, chairman of the Law Committee of the NPC, stated on July 23 that the number of “mass incidents” triggered by labor disputes has increased significantly in the past 12 years. He did not give specific figures, noting only that the number of labor disputes, mainly concerning unpaid wages, was 13.5 times greater in 2006 than in 1995. (XH)

Workers protest unpaid wages in Shenzhen

About 400 workers began protesting unpaid wages and redundancy packages at the Eltop Electronics Factory in Shenzhen on May 21. The factory had announced in April that it would relocate to Dongguan at the end of May. About 200 police officers and uniformed security guards reportedly raided the factory on May 28 and 29, when protesters surrounded trucks transporting equipment. At least 18 people were detained and 10 injured after police used force in an attempt to end the protest. (SCMP)

Teachers beaten

On June 25, Shandong police stopped bystanders from assisting petitioning teachers who were being beaten by thugs. The teachers had also been warned that their relatives’ jobs would be affected if they continued to petition over reduced employment benefits. (RFA)

Laid-off bank workers arrested over protest

Nearly 1,000 former employees of Beijing’s Industrial and Commercial Bank of China were detained on June 25 after protesting compensation terms. (MP)

Tour guides in Guilin detained after protest

More than 1,000 Guilin tour guides launched demonstrations on July 26 to demand official assistance in improving their working conditions. The protests were spurred by comments published in the *Guilin Daily* saying that tour guides were cheating visitors and earning too much in commission. The city has 8,000 to 9,000 tour guides, who do not earn salaries and are not

covered by a social security program. Protesters gathered in front of the city government offices to urge the government to cancel all cheap tours offered below cost, and to insist that travel agents pay the guides basic salaries. More than 600 tour guides were detained, and witnesses reported that some were badly beaten. (SCMP)

Taxi drivers on strike

Some 20,000 Henan taxi drivers went on strike on July 30 to protest what they considered unfair government and taxi company policies. Non-striking taxi drivers were beaten by those who participated in the strike. (MP)

Increase in protests linked to anger over environment

Zhou Shengxian, head of the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), said in early July that petitions received by his agency were up 8 percent in 2007. He attributed the increase to people's growing discontent with environmental pollution in their localities. Protests against power and chemical plants have become more common, while health fears and unfair land grabs have also fuelled unrest. In a recent inspection of 529 firms along the Yellow and Yangtze rivers and other waterways, 44 percent were found to be violating environmental laws, while almost half of the waste water treatment facilities were inadequate or nonfunctional. Moreover, factory owners who violate state guidelines are often protected by local officials. (Guardian)

Protest by thousands halts construction of chemical plant in Xiamen

A flood of text messages calling for street protests outside of government offices prompted the city of Xiamen, Fujian Province, to delay the building of a petrochemical plant. The leaders of Xiamen announced on May 30 on the city's official Web site that the building of the petrochemical plant would be postponed in order to weigh environmental objections. However, protesters wearing gas masks and holding banners marched through Xiamen on June 1, demanding that the government cancel, and not just suspend, plans to build the plant. At its peak, the protest boasted 20,000 participants following the circulation of a reported one million mobile-phone text messages urging participa-

tion in the protest. The messages compared the plant to an "A-bomb" because of dangers to the environment in the event of an accident. The plant was to be built only 1.5 kilometers away from the nearest residential area. (RTR, MP, FT)

It was reported on July 19 that Xiamen resident and Diaoyu Islands activist **Li Yiqiang** was arrested on June 3 on suspicion of organizing the June demonstrations. Li's family received the formal arrest warrant a month later. In addition to Li Yiqiang, at least three other Xiamen residents were detained in June in connection with the protests. **Huang Zhaohui**, 39, was detained for 15 days on charges of instigating and organizing the protest. **Huang Zhaopeng**, 20, was held on the same charges for five days. **Shi Kesheng**, 16, was detained for half a day and accused of "leading the parade with radical slogans." While all three were subsequently released, Li remained in detention at last report. All four detainees had marched at the front of the protest in June. (SCMP)

Clash erupts in Sichuan over polluted water

Twenty people were injured and seven detained when thousands of protesters clashed with armed police in Shiyuan, Sichuan Province, on July 27 during demonstrations against a brewery's pollution of nearby rivers. Villagers alleged that local officials had been bribed to ignore the pollution caused by China Resources (Shifang) Breweries, and others were angry at the brewery's dismissal of many workers and its failure to keep up social insurance payments. (SCMP)

Villagers' protest against mine exploitation subsides

Violent protests in May and early June against government exploitation of a lead and zinc mine in Daofu County, Sichuan Province, were reported to have subsided on June 25. During the protests, some 300 villagers gathered at the mine and smashed equipment and motor vehicles belonging to the developer and the local government, saying exploitation of the mine would damage the sacred mountain and cause natural disasters. Work teams from Ganzi Prefecture and Daofu County were also attacked. Two government workers were injured, and some villagers were subsequently detained by police. (XH)

Villagers ransack homes and offices of village leaders over land disputes

During the first two weeks of May, villagers in 13 township communities in Guangdong Province ransacked homes and offices of village leaders in protest over news that almost all of their land had been sold to people with close connections to those officials. In Toupu Village, villagers first realized that all the land had been sold by the village Party secretary in October, when local authorities rejected all land allocation applications submitted by township enterprises. (SCMP)

Protesters bring suit against police

On May 10, six Sichuan villagers lost a lawsuit against local police, who, they alleged, had illegally detained them after a land grab protest. The villagers complained that the court was controlled by government officials, as evidenced by the lack of defense witnesses and frequent interruption of the villagers as they tried to make their case. Villagers said the videotape of the protest provided by the police also failed to show police beatings of protesters. (RFA)

Tianjin protesters given heavy sentences

Fourteen Tianjin villagers were convicted on June 5 of gathering a crowd to disturb social order, and other charges related to a land grab protest staged on a railway track in December 2006. Relatives of protesters **Ding Shuyin** and **Yang Tinglu**, who were sentenced to prison terms of twelve and one-half and nine and one-half years, respectively, said they were not given advance notice of the trial. An appeal has been launched. (RFA)

Local residents clash with police over land in Inner Mongolia

Violence erupted between police and an estimated 5,000 protesters in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on June 8. The protesters, mostly railway workers, were among local residents forcibly evicted to make way for a commercial and cultural project. More than 20 people were injured as protesters overturned three police cars and blocked roads. (SCMP)

Police assault villagers on second anniversary of land dispute

Police assaulted 20 villagers attempting to go to Beijing

on June 11 for a protest marking the second anniversary of the violent deaths of six people involved in a land dispute in Dingzhou, Hebei Province. The protesters, who were relatives of the six victims, were reportedly attacked by 300 police officers as they prepared to petition Beijing over the municipal government's refusal to give them proper compensation and return the disputed 25 hectares of land. (SCMP)

Protest against forced demolition saves "nail house"

More than 30,000 people demonstrated against the forced demolition of a house in Shaoqing, Zhejiang Province, on June 18 and 19. At least four police cars were overturned, while two protesters were arrested and dozens more beaten. The demonstration succeeded in dissuading local officials from demolishing a "nail house"—a four-story building in Shaoqing owned by 18 householders that had remained standing in spite of nearby redevelopment. (SCMP)

Protesters defend 90-year-old woman's home

Violence erupted in Shengzhou, Zhejiang Province, on June 20 as 20,000 people clashed with police while protesting the attempted eviction of a 90-year-old woman, Zhang Xinghua. The conflict resulted in the injury of 20 individuals, with six protesters detained by the police. (CP)

Thousands protest Chongqing land deal

A three-day protest was launched in Chongqing in July by farmers dissatisfied with variations in compensation offered by the government for land reclaimed for different phases of an industrial zone project. It was the third riot to break out in Chongqing within a month. Some 5,000 farmers who had sold their land three years ago were angry that the government was now offering double the compensation. More than 1,000 armed police and two armored vehicles were sent to deal with the protest, which eventually resulted in one death and more than 10 injuries. (SCMP)

Loss of property rights ahead of the Olympics

Beijing residents petitioned in July against the annulment of their apartment ownership rights, which they believed would become increasingly difficult to restore due to Beijing's rapid development before the 2008

Olympic Games. In Qingdao, approximately 100 evicted families protested at the local government office on July 23 before being dispersed by police. The families complained that local officials had seized their homes in a city-wide beautification project in preparation for the Olympics. (RFA)

Clash over mysterious death of village head's wife

Twenty people were injured when 1,000 Guangdong villagers clashed with police on July 8 over the suspicious death of the wife of a village head. The village head, surnamed Lin, had reportedly refused to agree to an unfair land deal. Earlier on July 5, the authorities had sent 100 people to Lin's home, and his wife was detained on the grounds that the couple had violated the one-child policy. She died an hour later. The official explanation was that she jumped to her death because she had refused to pay fines for the violation. But villagers argued that Lin had paid long ago, and that the couple's youngest son was already 12 years old. Local media were barred from covering the incident. (RFA)

Man attempts to set fire to Mao portrait in Tiananmen Square

Chinese police arrested a man who allegedly tried to set fire to the giant portrait of Chairman Mao Zedong in Tiananmen Square on May 12. **Gu Haiou**, from Urumqi, threw a homemade object at the painting two hours after arriving in Beijing. Smoke and fire broke out briefly on the bottom left-hand corner of the portrait, which was promptly replaced. Apart from a brief report by Xinhua News Agency, all other news agencies and Web sites were silent regarding the incident. (BBC)

Protests over family planning rules

Riots broke out across the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region between May 25 and May 31 in protest against forced abortions and sterilizations. From May 25 to 26, as many as 3,000 people throughout several counties clashed with police, some burning government buildings and overturning cars to vent their anger. Twenty-eight people were detained, according to state media. In Shitao Township, Rongxian County, residents reignited riots on May 29 over family planning rules that had taken effect in mid-May. Protesters surrounded local government offices and clashed with police. At least a dozen villagers were

arrested on May 30. Also on May 29, hundreds of protesters in Yangmei Township, Rongxian County, gathered in front of a family planning office and demanded a refund of fines imposed for having more than one child. A dozen alleged protest organizers in Shabi Town were reported detained on June 4 after a house-to-house raid by public security officers, who surrounded the town in 46 police vehicles. Similar incidents also occurred in Bobai County, and it was reported on July 23 that a man surnamed Peng and another surnamed Li were sentenced to prison terms of two years and one year, respectively, for falsifying an official document that led residents to demand refunds of "social support fees" collected in the family planning crackdown. (RFA, RTR, SCMP)

Tiananmen Mothers call for accountability

Ding Zilin and more than 20 other members of the Tiananmen Mothers gathered at the end of May to commemorate the eighteenth anniversary of the violent crackdown on unarmed protesters in and around Beijing's Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. As an alternative to their previous open letters to the central government, members of the group held a roundtable discussion on May 24 and 26, during which they expressed their opinions and requests. (HRIC)

Students riot after street inspectors beat female student

As many as 2,000 students clashed with 100 police officers in Zhengzhou, Henan Province, on June 6 after a student vendor was beaten by inspectors clearing her unlicensed stall. Five students and six inspectors were detained. (ABC)

10,000 protesters clash with police over murder

10,000 protesters clashed with police in Chongqing on June 29 over the handling of the stabbing death of a Form One student. At least four people were reported arrested, and more than 10 injured in the clash. A blogger had reported that police delayed in rescuing the student, and the alleged perpetrators of the murder, also students, were reportedly released soon after questioning because they were too young to be charged. (SCMP)

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Harassment

It was announced on May 11 that **Xu Jiehua**, wife of detained Jiangsu environmental activist **Wu Lihong**, would carry on Wu's activism regarding pollution in Tai Lake. Xu announced that she had filed a lawsuit in the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on May 9 against SEPA for naming their hometown of Yixing as one of the mainland's 44 "Green and Eco-aware Cities" despite the fact that thousands of people in Yixing have cancer because of pollution there. "The lawsuit was scheduled by my husband and his friend Chen Faqing before his arrest, and I am now replacing him to do that," Xu said in Beijing. Wu Lihong was detained by Yixing police on April 13 for alleged blackmail, and the family has suffered harassment for more than 10 years because of their activism. (SCMP)

Guangxi-based rights defender **Mo Jufeng** was forcibly sterilized on May 13 for violating the one-child policy by having two children. Mo argued that both his children were more than 10 years old, and he had no intention of having a third child. Mo noted that the authorities had not taken any action against him in the past 10 years, and he suspected the forced surgery was actually retaliation against his rights defense work. Mo has been monitored by the police, and his Internet access has been blocked. (RFA)

Hu Jia, a rights activist who fought for medical benefits for thousands of people in central Henan Province who were infected with HIV/AIDS from tainted government-run blood banks, was briefly detained and then placed under house arrest on May 18, after he attempted to leave for Hong Kong with his wife, **Zeng Jinyan**. Authorities had ordered him not to leave the mainland and had accused him of "endangering state security." On May 20, a Beijing policeman stationed outside Hu's apartment threatened to beat him with a wooden club spiked with nails. The policeman reportedly ordered Hu to pay compensation for a pair of sunglasses that were broken when other officers restrained him from attacking Hu. (AFP)

The home of 74-year-old **Li Changyu** was ransacked and his computer confiscated by Shandong provincial

authorities in early May. Li and others started a signature campaign calling for a reevaluation of the "Anti-Rightist" movement last year. (MP)

Shuang Shuying, the elderly mother of house church activist **Hua Huiqi**, was reported in late June to have been denied family visits in prison despite her serious health problems. Hua Huiqi himself was sentenced to six months in prison on June 4, 2007, and was also denied family contact. Both Shuang and Hua were detained for protesting forcible eviction from their home. Hua Huiqi's wife, **Wei Jumei**, said that she had tried several times to visit Shuang Shuying in the detention center but had been refused each time, with detention center police saying the decision was outside their control. (HRIC)

Shanxi police refused to investigate an incident on June 19 in which pregnant rights defender **Zhou Li** and her daughter were attacked during a trip. They were beaten by unidentified thugs after asking other hostel users to keep their voices down. Zhou's husband is rights defender **Sun Xiaodi**. (RFA)

Beijing-based rights defender **Liu Anjun** was released on June 19 after being detained for 20 hours because of his recent contacts with foreign media. He suffered head injuries during police interrogation. (RFA)

Gao Zhisheng was taken away from his Beijing home on June 24, preventing him from attending the American Board of Trial Advocates award ceremony in the US. He was allowed home on July 5. Around mid-July, Gao clashed with police who had stepped up surveillance on his home after petitioners learned that he could provide legal representation again. In related news, officials rejected an application by Gao's wife and children to travel abroad. (AP, RFA)

It was reported on July 12 that officials rejected **Jiang Yanyong's** application to travel to receive a human rights award in the US in September. Dr. Jiang publicized the Chinese government's cover-up of the SARS epidemic in 2003, and in 2004 called on the National People's Congress to reassess the June 4th crackdown. (MP)

Shanghai rights defense lawyer **Zheng Enchong** and a group of displaced residents of Shanghai's Dongbakuai

neighborhood were prevented from registering to attend the trial of Shanghai property tycoon Zhou Zhengyi on July 24. Zheng Enchong was reportedly surrounded by six police officers and beaten and dragged in an hour-long assault when he tried to go to the Shanghai Municipal Higher People's Court. The displaced residents were turned away from the court by security guards and court police. As reported by HRIC on July 17, Zheng and more than 100 displaced residents signed a petition demanding a public trial for Zhou Zhengyi and for an opportunity for residents to testify at Zhou's trial. (HRIC)

Rights defender **Zheng Dajing** was beaten by officials in Beijing on July 24 after he tried to intervene in the aggressive removal of a disabled petitioner. (RFA)

An application by human rights lawyer **Li Jianqiang** to renew his law license was rejected by the Shandong judicial authorities at the end of July. No reason was given for the rejection. (RFA)

Arrest/Detention/Disappearance

Beijing-based rights defender **Qi Zhiyong** was detained on May 15 after inviting 30 other rights defenders to a birthday party he organized for himself. Rights defender **Liu Fenggang** was beaten by police for his involvement in the birthday celebration. (RFA)

China Democracy Party member **Chen Shuqing** had been on a hunger strike for over half a month as of May 18. Chen had been in detention for eight months without charge, and his family had not been allowed to visit him. (RFA)

Trial developments

According to a posting on the Web site Boxun at the end of May, Hubei-based workers' representative **Zhou Yuanwu** was sentenced to a prison term of two years and six months for "obstructing the execution of official duties". (RFA)

It was reported on June 8 that the trial of environmental activist **Wu Lihong** had been postponed indefinitely, in order to investigate allegations that interrogators tortured Wu to extract a confession. Wu was arrested in April after he reported the worsening pollution at Taihu Lake. (RAN)

Zhu Yufu and his son, **Zhu Ang**, were formally arrested on May 18 on allegations of obstructing the execution of official duties and assaulting police officers. The Zhejiang dissident and his son were indicted on charges of "obstructing execution of official duties" on June 21. On July 10, Hangzhou's Shangcheng District Court sentenced Zhu Yufu, 54, to two years in prison, while Zhu Ang was given a suspended one-year sentence. (VOA, RFA, AP)

The family of Pan-Blue Alliance member **Zhang Zilin** was notified on June 22 that Zhang had been formally arrested on blackmailing charges. The girlfriend of another member, **Xiong Jiahu**, was notified on June 26 that Xiong had been sentenced to "custody and education" for two years for procuring sex. Xiong's girlfriend and the Pan-Blue Alliance criticized the sentencing procedures as unfair. The whereabouts of Pan-Blue Alliance members **Sun Buer** and **Cai Aimin** remained unknown in June. Another member, **Xie Fulin**, was taken away from his home on June 5, and the authorities told his family that he would be detained for 15 days. (RFA)

China Democracy Party member **Chen Shuqing** was tried on July 17, but the court had yet to hand down a decision as of August 5. Chen was indicted on charges of inciting subversion through articles he published on the Internet. His lawyer, Li Jianqiang, criticized the prosecution's presenting as evidence articles that had not been included in the indictment against Chen. (RFA)

It was reported on July 18 that rights defense lawyer **Li Shuangling** was sent to a custody and education facility for one year on charges of visiting a sex worker on March 25. Some Guangdong evictees argued for Li's innocence, saying that Li was detained while preparing to represent them in an administrative lawsuit over their eviction. (RFA)

Delivery of the verdict in the trial of Guangdong-based rights defender **Guo Feixiong**, also known as **Yang Maodong**, has been delayed for further investigation. Guo went on trial on July 9 on charges of "running an illegal business" in connection with the publication of a book. Guo's wife, Zhang Qing, called Guangzhou's Tianhe District Court on July 26 to find out when the verdict would be announced and was told that the

procuratorate had requested that Guo's case be sent back for supplementary investigation following the adjournment of his trial. (HRIC)

The appeal of Zhejiang-based China Democracy Party member **Chi Jianwei** against his three-year prison sentence was denied in a closed trial, and he began serving his sentence on May 31. Chi was convicted of "using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law." (RFA)

Imprisonment/prison conditions

In early May, it was reported that imprisoned China Democracy Party member **He Depu** was beaten by another inmate, who had a good relationship with prison authorities. There have been previous reports of He being beaten by law enforcement agents. (RFA)

On May 3, Canada's House of Commons unanimously passed a highly unusual motion calling on China to give Canada consular access to **Huseyin Celil**, a Canadian Uyghur serving a life sentence in China for alleged terrorist links. (The Ottawa Citizen)

Zhang Jianhong, currently serving a jail term for inciting subversion, was diagnosed with muscle atrophy in mid-June. His wife said a doctor believed the serious condition should qualify him for medical parole. Zhang wrote a number of political essays under the pen name **Li Hong**. (RFA)

Prison authorities prevented the family of **Chen Guangcheng**, a blind, self-taught lawyer imprisoned in Shandong Province, from visiting him on May 8. They also refused to pass on to Chen a copy of the Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons (the version for persons with visual disabilities), on the grounds that they could not verify the contents of the book. His wife reported in June that she and Chen's brother had found him covered in bruises when they visited him in prison on June 16. Chen told them he had been beaten by fellow inmates after refusing to have his head shaved. He also said prison guards often deprived him of food. (RFA, RSF)

Shanghai petitioner **Chen Xiaoming** died on July 1, shortly after being released on medical parole. Chen's

family had previously made numerous requests on his behalf for medical parole, but they had been refused. Since his detention on February 15, 2006, Chen's family had only been allowed to visit him once, in April 2007. Around the end of April, Chen was transferred to Baimaoling Prison, after which family members were unable to visit him or receive any information about his health. On June 29, a prison official notified Chen's family that Chen had been transferred to Shanghai's Tilianqiao Prison Hospital, where they found him vomiting blood and barely conscious. Given Chen's serious condition, his family was authorized to apply for medical parole, and on July 1, Chen was transferred to Shanghai's Zhongshan Hospital. However, he showed no signs of improvement, and at 7:30 that night, he died of a massive hemorrhage. (HRIC)

The family of Shanghai petitioner **Mao Hengfeng** told RFA on July 5 that Mao had been tortured in prison. According to her family, Mao was beaten and confined to a room with no sunlight or fresh air, and was forced to sleep on the floor. Mao was also force-fed after refusing to accept the food other inmates brought her because she feared poisoning. In addition, she was reportedly forced to strip half-naked in front of male inmates and police officers. (RFA)

It was reported on July 9 that Internet activist **Guo Qizhen** was beaten by fellow-inmates at Shijiazhuang prison, Hebei Province, at the behest of prison guards. His wife reported that he was covered in bruises when she was finally allowed to visit him on June 18. Guo was arrested on May 12, 2006, and sentenced to four years in jail for "incitement to subvert state power." He had a broken leg at the time of his arrest and has not received adequate treatment in jail, causing his health to deteriorate. (RSF)

Release

Environmental activist **Tan Kai**, sentenced on charges of illegally obtaining state secrets, was released on April 19 after completing his 18-month prison term. Tan, a computer technician, founded a group called Green Watch in 2005 to look into complaints by local residents in Zhejiang that pollution from a chemical factory was destroying crops and causing birth defects. (RFA)

China Democracy Party member **Gao Hongming** was released on June 28 after eight years' imprisonment. He was convicted of subversion in 1999. (RFA)

Chang Yongjie, 42, a Beijing worker jailed for life for taking part in the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, was freed on June 26 after his sentence was commuted. At least 12 others similarly sentenced remain in prison. (RTR)

Sun Hong, jailed after the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, was released on July 7. He had been sentenced to death with a two-year reprieve on arson charges. (AP)

June 4th-related incidents

On the night of June 3, Tiananmen Mother **Ding Zilin** was allowed for the first time to pay tribute to her son at the location where he was shot dead in Beijing 18 years ago. (MP)

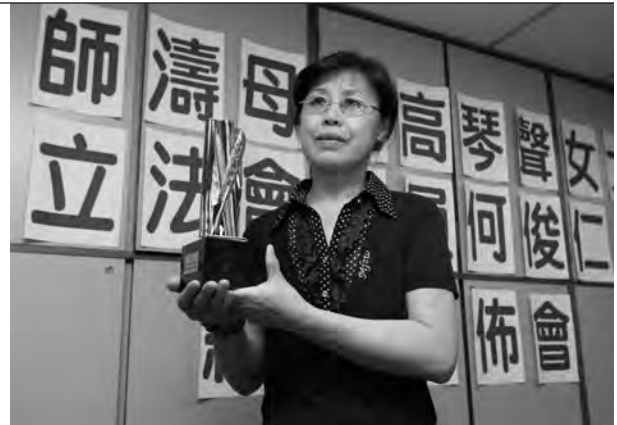
Rights defender **Qi Zhiyong** was released on June 5 after being detained for a week. Qi has been demanding justice for the leg he lost due to gunshots during the June 4th crackdown. (RFA)

Exile

President Bush met with the exiled leader of China's Uyghur Muslims, **Rebiya Kadeer**, on June 5. The meeting was significant amid international pressure on China to curb serious human rights abuses ahead of the 2008 Olympics. Kadeer's sons are currently in jail, while Kadeer herself was imprisoned for six years before being released into exile in the US. (AFP)

Awards

Imprisoned Chinese journalist **Shi Tao** received the 2007 Golden Pen of Freedom on June 4 at the opening ceremony of the World Newspaper Congress (WNC) and World Editors Forum (WEF). The Golden Pen of Freedom, established in 1961 by the Paris-based World Association of Newspapers, is an annual award recognizing individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the defense and promotion of press freedom. The presentation of this year's award on the eighteenth anniversary of the June 4, 1989, crackdown was particularly appropriate, given that Shi Tao was sentenced to 10 years in prison for circulating informa-



Gao Qinsheng, mother of imprisoned journalist **Shi Tao**, holds the Golden Pen of Freedom Award that she accepted from the World Association of Newspapers on behalf of her son. Photo: Reuters

tion about official security preparations for the fifteenth anniversary of June 4th, in 2004. WNC and WEF announced plans for an advocacy campaign demanding Shi Tao's release and drawing international attention to other cases of imprisoned Chinese journalists. (HRIC)

Blind activist and self-taught "barefoot lawyer" **Chen Guangcheng** was awarded Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Prize on July 31. Chen, who is currently serving a four-year prison term for exposing forced abortions and sterilization, was one of seven winners of the Manila-based Ramon Magsaysay Award this year. The Foundation lauded his "irrepressible passion for justice in leading ordinary Chinese citizens to assert their legitimate rights under the law." Chen's wife **Yuan Weijing** was given the "Victims' Family Members Award" by a US foundation in mid-July for her efforts to secure Chen's release. Yuan herself remains under stringent monitoring and harassment from the authorities. (RTR, RFA)

LABOR

Labor Contract Law proposed

China's proposed Labor Contract Law, which was first presented in December 2005, was passed on June 29 by the standing committee of the NCP. The Labor Contract Law is the most significant overhaul of workplace regulation to date in China.

The law sets standards for layoffs, severance and the use of temporary workers, among other conditions. The

first draft of the law was made available to the public for comment and elicited 190,000 responses. A provision to punish government officials for abuse of office and dereliction of duty was added at the last minute in response to a recent slave labor scandal. (WSJ, AP)

Plans for more labor contracts by year's end

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security announced on July 20 that it hopes to bring 90 percent of China's workforce under the protection of formal labor contracts by the end of 2007. A spokesperson said the government would further bring all enterprises with trade unions into the collective labor contract scheme by 2012. Other matters of priority include reemployment of laid-off workers and ensuring an appropriate salary growth rate. (XH)

Survey on wages of miners conducted

In May, news reports highlighted a survey conducted by 10 undergraduate students of Hunan Normal University, which found that miners earn only 1,000–2,000 *yuan* (\$130–260) per month with barely any other benefits. The survey also found that 82 percent of the miners interviewed had less than a high-school education, 62 percent had no occupational skills, and 48 percent could not find other jobs. (AT)

Survey reveals that job discrimination is common

A survey conducted by the Constitutional Government Research Institute of the China University of Politics and Law found that most people have experienced some kind of discrimination while seeking jobs, state media reported in June. Out of 3,500 respondents, 85 percent reported job discrimination, while slightly more than 50 percent said that "serious discrimination" exists. Physically disabled people were most likely to report discrimination, followed by people with HIV/AIDS or hepatitis B, and migrant workers. Another survey revealed that nearly 80 percent of foreign companies refuse to employ hepatitis B carriers, mainly because they fear carriers will pass the virus to healthy employees. (PD, XH)

Survey finds migrant workers are mistreated

A poll by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences among 5,000 workers in several major cities found that migrant construction workers are overworked. About

53 percent of migrant workers lacked an official contract, and only 17 percent of workers with contracts said they understood its contents. A mere 31 percent of workers regularly received their full salary on time, and nearly two-thirds lacked disability insurance. The poll also found that 44 percent of respondents felt they were "looked down on" by locals. (TA)

Employment training for women

Chinese authorities were reported in early May to be trying to increase employment of women and to increase training of laid-off female workers to ease their reemployment. More than 270,000 Chinese women have received employment training from labor departments, with 154,000 finding jobs or setting up their own businesses. About 21 percent of rural women in cities were fired after they became pregnant or had a child, state media reported on May 7. (XH)

Online job system helps rural unemployed find jobs

The expansion of the government-supported online job information system serving rural areas in Hebei Province was reported in June to have helped many unemployed laborers secure jobs. The "fully employed community" program, part of Hebei's rural poverty alleviation program, provides jobseekers with cost-free information through links with networks operated by the labor departments in provincial administrations. The system aims to help at least 90 percent of unemployed farmers find jobs. (XH)

Eight million rural workers to be trained in 2007

China will train eight million rural laborers in 2007 as part of a plan announced in early July by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security to provide job-training opportunities to a total of 40 million rural laborers over the eleventh Five-Year Plan period (2006–2010). (XH)

Companies accused of using child labor to make Olympic-licensed products

In a June 10 report, PlayFair 2008 accused four factories in southern China of labor violations and criticized the International Olympic Committee for doing too little to prevent such abuses. Lekit Stationary Company, Ltd., Yue Wing Cheong Light Products (Shenzhen) Co. Ltd., Eagle Leather Products Ltd. and Mainland Headwear Holdings Ltd. were cited for using workers as young as 12 years of

age, falsifying employment records and forcing workers to lie about their terms of employment. Organizers of the Beijing Olympics said they took the allegations very seriously and threatened to cancel the companies' Olympics contracts if the allegations proved to be true. (AP)

Child labor uncovered at Shaanxi factory

A quilt factory in Shaanxi's Qishan County was found to be using juvenile workers in early July. A reporter first discovered two workers of "a very young age" working without any protective equipment; later, authorities discovered a total of four workers aged 14 to 16 years, who had been forced to work 12 hours a day without pay for nearly six months. The factory was sealed off, and the owner was ordered to report to the Labor Bureau, where he was expected to be fined 5,000 *yuan* for each underage worker. (SCMP)

Worker dies after mob beating in wage dispute

Migrant worker Lei Mingzhong, originally from Chongqing, died on July 2 from injuries sustained during a dispute on June 29 over unpaid wages in Dongyuan County, Heyuan, in Guangdong Province. Lei was one of approximately 300 workers with the Qiutian construction company who were attacked by an armed mob allegedly recruited by Qiutian's contractor, Fuyuan Hydropower Development Company, after they went on strike to demand unpaid wages. Fuyuan's security head, Ye Dingfa, was arrested with three others for leading and inciting the attack. (PD)

Work safety campaign to be launched

The State Council released a document on May 15 stating that China will conduct an inspection and supervision campaign to try to improve work safety. The campaign will focus on high-risk industries such as mining, petrochemicals, non-ferrous metals, construction and fisheries. (XH)

Labor accidents

On July 13, work safety authorities announced that 46 work accidents involving 205 deaths had been deliberately covered up in the first half of 2007. 177 of these deaths, or 86 percent, occurred in colliery accidents. On July 18 it was reported that companies could be fined up to five million *yuan* if caught deliberately covering up work accidents. (XH, CNA)

Rise in deaths from specialized equipment accidents

It was reported in June that a total of 117 accidents involving specialized equipment had occurred in China in the first five months of 2007, leaving 110 people dead and another 124 injured. The death toll was seven percent higher than during the same period last year. (XH)

SAWS announces small mine closures

The State Administration of Work Safety (SAWS) announced in June that it will close 10,000 small coal mines by the end of 2007. Small coal mines account for one-third of China's total production, but two-thirds of deaths from coal mine accidents. In 2006, accidents in small coal mines took 3,431 lives. (XH)

For details of industrial accidents reported in the media, see the Monthly Briefs posted on HRIC's Web site: www.hrichina.org.

Punished

China's Supreme People's Court announced on June 4 that it had prosecuted 193 people, including 16 government officials, for contravening work safety regulations such as those prohibiting the operation of illegal coal mines. Out of the 193 punished, 149 were imprisoned immediately, while the rest were put on probation. Five were sentenced to prison sentences of seven years, the heaviest possible punishment for the crime. (XH)

Coal mine owner Wang Jianjun was fined one million *yuan* (\$129,800) and sentenced to life in prison for covering up a gas blast that killed 21 people in Shanxi Province in March. Wang sealed off information, sent miners home and destroyed evidence after the blast. Two of his managers were sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment, and another 19 defendants, including eight civil servants, were jailed. (RTR)

Zhang Ruilin, one of the owners of an illegal coal mine in Shanxi Province where 14 people were killed in an explosion on April 30, was arrested on May 2. The police are still searching for the other owner, Zhao Laiyin, who, like Zhang, fled after the accident. Five other organizers have been detained in connection with the explosion. (XH)



Parents searching for missing children exposed the kidnapping of workers, some under-aged, to serve as slave laborers in Shanxi Province brick kilns. Photo: Associated Press

On July 3, the Intermediate People's Court of Linfen City, Shanxi Province, found three coal mine bosses guilty of illegal mining, tax dodging and forcing miners to work in a mine despite known risks. The charges stemmed from a gas explosion that had killed 28 miners two months earlier. Hao Yingjie, former owner of the Pudeng Coal Mine in Puxian County, Linfen City, was sentenced to 20 years in prison, while two chief directors of the coal mine, Zhang Xiaodong and Wang Zhangxi, received life and eight years' imprisonment, respectively. An additional 14 people responsible for the accident also received jail sentences, and the coal mine itself was fined 8.3 million *yuan* (about \$1 million). (XH, PD)

Seaweed farm owner Liu Songquan was sentenced to five and one-half years in prison on June 26 after being found responsible for the accidental deaths of 19 people in mid-April. Liu forced his employees, including his wife, to work overtime on his laver farm near the coastal Hezao Village in Rudong, Jiangsu Province. When the workers finally headed back to the village, their tractors became bogged down in the mud, and

they were swept out to sea when the tide came in. The court found Liu liable for failing to arrange for the rescue of his employees, for failing to ensure that he and his employees had received technical training on maritime safety, and for allowing employees to drive his tractors without licenses. (XH)

On June 16, authorities arrested five people from a brick kiln in Hongtong County, Shanxi Province, for enslaving workers at their factory. Kiln boss Wang Bingbing, foreman Heng Tinghan and three hired thugs were charged with "illegally holding and deliberately injuring laborers . . . and forcing them to do highly intensive manual labor." Reports of laborers made to work as virtual slaves in Shanxi brick kilns first surfaced in early June. The victims, who included children and people with mental disabilities, were abducted by human traffickers and sold to brick kilns owners in Shanxi and Henan provinces for an average of 500 *yuan* (\$66) each. Chinese state media estimate that other kilns and mines similarly abused more than 53,000 illegal migrant workers. By the end of the month, nearly 600 people had been rescued and 168 suspected kiln

bosses detained as tens of thousands of police were dispatched to investigate the scandal.

On July 17, Shanxi brick kiln owner Wang Bingbing received nine years in prison for unlawful detention and the use of slave labor. Foreman Heng Tinghan, convicted of beating and enslaving workers, was sentenced to life in prison, while another foreman, Zhao Yanbing, was sentenced to death for killing an enslaved worker. Dozens more were subsequently tried on various charges of abusing the workers. It was reported on July 16 that 95 officials at the county level or lower were punished by the CPC, receiving warnings, demotions and black marks on their records. Three were expelled from the Party, 33 were fired from their jobs, and eight officials will be criminally prosecuted. However, officials at the municipal level and above were found to be innocent of wrongdoing. (LAT, VOA, CD, XH, AP)

DEATH PENALTY

It was reported in early June that the number of people executed in China had dropped in the first five months of the year after the Supreme People's Court resumed the right to review and approve all death penalties handed down throughout China. (PD)

A circular released by the Supreme People's Court on June 14 affirmed that first-instance hearings of death penalty cases must be open. It called for courts to carry out public trials for appeal hearings in criminal cases, and for more in-court announcements of judgments, and it emphasized the need for timely, "full-scale" public trials. (PD)

For details of death sentences and executions reported in the press, see the Monthly Briefs posted on HRIC's Web site: www.hrichina.org.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	ABC News
AFP	Agence France Presse
AP	Associated Press
AT	Asia Times
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BJN	Beijing News
CD	China Daily
CNA	Channel News Asia
CP	China Post
CORG	China.org.cn
ED	EastDay.com
FT	Financial Times
Guardian	The Guardian (London)
HRIC	Human Rights in China
IHT	International Herald Tribune
LAT	Los Angeles Times
LD	Legal Daily
MP	Ming Pao
NYT	New York Times
PD	People's Daily
PE	Pacific Epoch
PTA	Press Trust of India
RAN	Reuters AlertNet
RTR	Reuters
RFA	Radio Free Asia
RSF	Reporters Without Borders
SCMP	South China Morning Post
SHD	Shanghai Daily
TA	The Age
VOA	Voice of America
WSJ	Wall Street Journal
XH	Xinhua News Agency