

## REACHING OUT TO INTERNATIONAL POLICYMAKERS

HRIC regularly engages with key global policymakers, including the **European Union (EU)**, to press for systemic legal reforms in China. HRIC had several opportunities in late summer and fall to brief member states of the EU.

In September, the **foreign ministries of Denmark and Norway** invited Executive Director Sharon Hom and European Liaison Officer Isabella Nitschke to introduce HRIC's advocacy and civil society building work to various government representatives, NGOs, and academic audiences. Briefing topics also included the role of bilateral human rights dialogues, China's role in the international arena, and the lead-up to the 2008 Olympics.

On the invitation of Thomas Mann, the chair of the **Tibet Intergroup**, Isabella gave a briefing on HRIC's report, *State Secrets: China's Legal Labyrinth*, at a meeting of the European Parliament in Strasbourg on September 26.

In October, Isabella participated in the **China Europa Forum**, an event designed to explore opportunities for greater cooperation between European and Chinese civil society. The event, consisting of 46 workshops in different fields of EU-China cooperation, was funded by the European Commission and organized by several European and Chinese academic institutions and foundations.

Also in October, Law Program Director Elisabeth Wickeri joined Isabella in HRIC's Brussels office to support HRIC European outreach. In preparation for the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in mid-October, HRIC provided background to the **European Council Working Group on Human Rights (COHOM)**, and updated the council members on HRIC's state secrets report. Elisabeth and Isabella also attended an event at the European Parliament for the nominees to the 2007 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

HRIC's Brussels office provided several background briefings to European institutions ahead of meetings with their Chinese counterparts. Written and oral contributions were provided to the **European Interparliamentary Delegation** ahead of its meeting with a delegation from the National People's Congress on September 26–27 in Strasbourg. HRIC also gave background information to the **European Economic and Social Committee** in preparation for the second EU-China Round Table on November 14.

On November 7–8, Isabella attended a **European Parliamentary Conference on Tibet** organized by the European Parliament Intergroup for Tibet, International Campaign for Tibet, and the Bureau of Tibet in Belgium. The topics of the conference were the state of the **environment** in Tibet and the **Beijing Olympic Games 2008**. The conference brought together European and national parliamentarians, environmental experts, academics, journalists, and representatives of several NGOs and Tibet support groups (TSGs). Isabella met with representatives of the Parliament of the Central Tibetan Administration, together with a number of other Brussels-based NGOs, to introduce HRIC's work with European institutions.

## ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF INDIVIDUALS

HRIC supports individual human rights defenders in China through its work with international institutions and the international media. HRIC's efforts both increase international attention to and awareness of these cases, and provide solidarity and support for the defenders and their families.

In order to highlight the cases of individuals who have been arbitrarily detained by the PRC government, HRIC regularly makes submissions to the **UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention**, an international independent reviewing body. HRIC provides the Working Group with factual background to each case, and an analysis of international and Chinese law. Since 2002,

HRIC has submitted a total of 49 cases. During the September and November sessions of the Working Group, HRIC submitted six cases.

## HRIC SPEAKS

“As the international community increases its scrutiny of China in the lead-up to the Olympics, it is appalling that this kind of attack on lawyers continues. . . . These attacks raise serious concerns about the will and ability of the Chinese government to protect lawyers’ personal safety and right to practice law, which are essential elements of a system of rule of law.”

HRIC statement in support of Li Heping, quoted in “Chinese Lawyer Recounts Abduction,” *New York Times*, October 3, 2007.

“. . . [A]ctivists’s efforts to generate controversy around the Games could be bolstered by the recent spate of China-made product recalls. Getting American consumers to care about human rights in distant China was difficult . . . . But if you say the reason you are getting contaminated food and toys—all of these things directly affecting you—is because the Chinese government is not accountable, and transparent . . . I think that that link is going to be easier to make.”

Sharon Hom quoted in “Games Backers Play Up Green,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 15, 2007.

HRIC issued 18 press releases between September and mid-November advocating on behalf of mainland Chinese human rights defenders and raising broader systemic policy issues. HRIC criticized Chinese authorities for undermining journalist **Zhao Yan**’s due process protections through the manipulation of state secrets charges, and jailing him for three years in spite of the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention’s decision concluding that his detention was arbitrary. HRIC also engaged in media work on behalf of human rights defenders **Guo Feixiong**, **He Depu**, **Mao Hengfeng**, and **Li Heping** as well. Finally, HRIC raised awareness of the crackdowns on expression leading up to and during the **17th National Party Congress**, raising concerns regarding similar crackdowns in the run-up to next summer’s Olympic Games.

## ENGAGING CORPORATE LEADERS

Access to information is the gold standard for any rights defender, and the Internet serves as a robust tool for news gathering and information sharing. HRIC has been actively participating in a private multi-stakeholder process convened by **Business for Social Responsibility** (BSR) and **Center for Democracy and Technology** (CDT) aimed at confronting the challenges faced by technology providers doing business in authoritarian countries. This initiative includes a diverse group of companies, academics, investors, technology leaders, and human rights organizations, working on drafting guidelines and an assurance framework for protecting freedom of expression and privacy rights. Sharon and Robert L. Bernstein Fellow in International Human Rights Cynthia Wong participated in the September meeting in Manhattan.

## HOSTING WRITERS, ADVOCATES, AND LEGISLATORS

On September 14, Liu Bao Pu gave a talk entitled “Analyzing Chinese Politics for Human Rights Activism” at HRIC’s New York office. Mr. Liu, who served on the HRIC Executive Committee from 1992 to 1999, is a publisher at New Century Media and Consulting and a freelance writer on Chinese politics.

On October 2, Yang Jianli gave a talk at HRIC's New York office for HRIC staff, board members, and friends. Dr. Yang served a five-year prison term for entering China on a borrowed passport to investigate labor unrest in the northeast. Dr. Yang is president of the Foundation for China in the 21st Century, a non-profit think tank, and active in the 1989 Chinese democracy movement. An interview with him can be found on page 57. An interview with his wife, Fu Xiang, can be found on page 36.

HRIC also hosted an informal briefing by a Hong Kong delegation of legislators and human rights activists on October 22.

## OUTREACH AND CONSULTATIONS

### NGO outreach

Representatives of governments, NGOs, academic institutions, and civil society gathered in Taipei in early September at the **International Symposium on Human Rights in Tibet**. In addition to sharing HRIC's recent publications, Program Officer Carol Wang met with staff from the Taiwan Foundation of Democracy in order to develop a better understanding of each other's programs and explore future cooperation.

Sharon gave a short briefing on China to a meeting of the International Steering Committee for the **Community of Democracies Nongovernmental Process** on September 26. The meeting was hosted by the Open Society Institute.

### Consultations

In late September, Sharon, invited in her individual capacity as a China expert, participated in a one-day consultation on China organized by the **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation** at its office in Chicago.

On October 11, Sharon joined a panel of media, environmental, and health experts for an event sponsored by the **Carnegie Endowment for International Peace** in Washington D.C. The conference—"China's

Olympian Challenge: Can Beijing Deliver on its Promises?"—examined various opportunities and challenges presented by next summer's Olympic Games.

### Academic outreach

HRIC staff gave several academic talks as part of HRIC's ongoing outreach efforts. Senior Researcher Bonny Ling spoke at the **Hong Kong University (HKU) Faculty of Law** on "The Case of Journalist Shi Tao: Through the Lens of Human Rights Advocacy in China." Hong Kong Program Director Roseann Rife presented "Legal Developments in China's Labor Protection" at the **HKU Center for Comparative and Public Law Rights** Talk Series, "China and International Human Rights Diplomacy" at **HKU's Department of Politics and Public Administration**, and "Trends and Challenges with Gender and Labor in China" at the **City University of Hong Kong's Department of Asian and International Studies**. Elisabeth was a panelist at "China: The State of Secrecy," hosted by APALSA and the International Law Society at **Brooklyn Law School**. Sharon guest lectured at Don Clarke's Chinese law class at **New York University School of Law**.

### HRIC ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES

HRIC held its fall board meeting in New York at the end of September. Sharon and Roseann presented a work report and outlook on 2008 programs. The board also discussed strategic challenges to and opportunities for HRIC's domestic and international advocacy programs.

In staff news, **Tina Tan**, previously a Leitner Fellow at HRIC, joined the organization as a full-time Law Program Officer. She practiced law for over 12 years in China, including criminal defense, civil and corporate litigation, international arbitration, and other legal work. She obtained her BA and LLM degrees in China. She also participated in a Lord Chancellor's training program for young Chinese lawyers in England.

**Sarah McKune** joined HRIC as the Special Assistant to the Executive Director. She graduated from Michigan State University in 1999 with a BA in international rela-

## RECENT HRIC EVENTS

On November 26, Executive Director Sharon Hom will speak at a hearing on China in the **European Parliament Sub-Committee on Human Rights**.

The hearing will focus on China's development ahead of the Olympic Games in 2008. Other speakers include representatives from International Campaign for Tibet and Human Rights Watch, and Dirck Sterckx, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with the People's Republic of China.

Together with the **Brussels China Forum** and the **Institute for European Studies**, HRIC will host a panel discussion on November 27 in Brussels focusing on corporate social responsibility (CSR) in China in light of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Sharon will focus on the role of foreign actors and the opportunities for them to advance human rights and CSR concerns in China. Other speakers include the Belgian Chamber of Commerce and the European Commission.

On December 4, Sharon will speak at the **Hudson Institute**, a non-partisan policy research organization, about the challenges and opportunities raised by the intersection of business and human rights.

HRIC will host two events this winter to celebrate the launch of its latest publication, **Challenging China: Struggle and Hope in an Era of Change**. This collection of essays by activists, journalists, authors, and former government officials explores the growth of individual and group activism in the face of the complex human rights challenges facing China. On December 4, Board Co-Chair Andy Nathan will introduce the book at an event at **Book Culture** in New York City, and on December 11, Sharon and writer Yan Li will present the book at a luncheon at the **Foreign Correspondents Club** in Hong Kong.

HRIC's Hong Kong office, along with other local human rights organizations, migrant rights groups, and social service organizations, will host interactive information booths at the **International Human Rights Day Carnival** in Hong Kong on December 9, which attracts around 1,000 local and mainland visitors.

tions, and obtained her JD in 2002 from the University of Michigan Law School. During her studies, she interned with the U.S. State Department in Hong Kong, and with the International Law Commission of the United Nations in Geneva. From 2003 to the beginning of 2007, she practiced law as a litigation associate in New York City. Until August 2007, she taught English in Hefei, Anhui Province, China.

HRIC hosted three interns this fall:

**Tendon Dahortsang**, Legal Intern, graduated from the University of Zurich and the University of Bern with a graduate degree in law. She previously served on the executive committee of the Tibetan Youth Association of Europe from 2004 until 2006, and also provided legal advice at Lamtoen to Tibetan asylum seekers. She has previously worked as a law clerk in Switzerland, and in the finance and accounting department of Bank Von Ernst & Cie.

**Victor Lai**, Undergraduate Intern, graduated in 2007 from National Taiwan University with a BA in international relations. He has previously interned at the World Federation of the United Nations Association and the U.S.A. State of Arizona Trade and Investment Asia-Pacific Office. In addition, he volunteered with Amnesty International Taiwan and Students Against Hunger while an exchange student at the University of Toronto.

**Sandy Wong**, Undergraduate Intern, is a second-year student at Dartmouth College, and spent the summer of 2007 abroad at Beijing Normal University. She has previously interned at *The New York Times* and Bloomberg, and worked part-time at Woodside Houses Summer Youth Employment Program.