

NEWS ROUNDUP | AUGUST–OCTOBER 2007

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MEDIA CENSORSHIP

Websites shut down/blocked

A labor website that provided legal knowledge and information on rights defense lawsuits became inaccessible on August 20. (RFA)

On August 23, a Henan-based Internet service provider was ordered to shut down because it contained an “illegal” message. As a result, 10,000 websites hosted by the service provider were no longer accessible, affecting millions of Internet users. (MP)

Wikipedia’s English site was again blocked in China beginning in September, after being accessible for two

months. Reportedly, the user-generated content may have been blocked ahead of the 17th Party Congress in October. (IDG News Service)

On September 18, a Chinese website was ordered to shut down for the 18th time, for setting up a poll allowing Internet users to virtually elect either Hu Jintao or Wen Jiabao. The website, established in 2005, has been repeatedly shut down for conducting sensitive opinion polls online. The person responsible for the website said the website has been on a government blacklist, and its content is closely monitored. (RFA)

Rights defender **Huang Xiaomin** told RFA on October 3 that a Sichuan-based website cancelled one of its very popular sub-forums on October 1. Wang speculated that the cancellation was related to the 17th Party Congress. RFA reported in mid-September that the same

Virtual police officers will soon begin visible patrols on Chinese Internet sites to warn surfers they are being monitored. Photo credit: STR/AFP/Getty Images.



website removed a heavily-viewed post about an attack on an evictee. (RFA)

On October 4, Ars Technica reported that China's Public Security Bureau blocked all incoming URLs that begin with "feeds," "rss" and "blog," effectively censoring RSS feeds. The story quickly spread to numerous technical and blog-related publications before subsequent reports provided necessary clarification. These reports stated that China is not dynamically blocking all RSS feeds, although RSS feeds will be blocked if they are coming from sites that are already blocked. (Global Voices, Danwei, Nartv)

On October 9, an online forum on HIV/AIDS became inaccessible for the fourth time since September 29.

Meng Lin, the forum's founder, told RFA that the Internet service provider said the closure was due to technical problems, but that he could not speculate on the real motive behind the closure. (RFA)

A popular Tibetan literature website, reportedly the first of its kind, was shut down on October 20. Tibetan writer Woesser told RFA that the website had been careful not to publish articles related to political and current affairs, and that the closure was likely linked to Dalai Lama's receipt of the Congressional Gold Medal award in the U.S. (RFA)

It was reported on October 18 that numerous Internet users from inside China reported being redirected to the Chinese-owned Baidu search engine when they tried to access the websites of Google, Yahoo!, and Microsoft. Although many bloggers have speculated as to the cause, there is no definitive information on the scope of the redirection or how long it lasted. (AFP)

Foreign journalists detained/harassed

Despite a new regulation that guarantees greater reporting freedom to foreign media in the period leading up to and during the 2008 Olympics, an August survey found that the authorities continue to interfere in journalists' work. Foreign journalists reported 157 incidents of surveillance, intimidation of sources, reprimands and violence against foreign correspondents and their staff. Conducted by the Foreign Correspondents Club of China (FCCC), the survey found that 95 per-

cent of respondents found reporting conditions in China inferior to international standards, and that 11 foreign reporters had been officially reprimanded by authorities since the new rules came into effect in January 2007. (FCCC)

On August 6, a dozen foreign journalists were detained by Beijing police while covering a press conference in which Reporters Without Borders (RSF) called for the release of nearly 100 Chinese journalists and online activists who are currently in prison. Four RSF spokespersons had flown to Beijing for this first press conference in China held by the Paris-based NGO, conducted across the street from the headquarters of the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee (BOCOG). After the event, police physically restrained foreign journalists from leaving the area for more than an hour. Neither BOCOG nor Beijing police responded to requests to comment on the incident. (The Star, FT, AFP)

On September 14, RSF estimated that about 32 foreign journalists had been detained or prevented from carrying out interviews since January 1, 2007, when China's new regulations on foreign journalists came into effect. The regulations were aimed at loosening restrictions on foreign journalists. RSF urged the Chinese government to keep its promise on protecting media freedom ahead of and during the Beijing Olympic Games. (RFA)

On September 12, two Agence France-Presse (AFP) journalists were detained and questioned by the police for five hours in Dingzhou, Henan Province, after the police alleged that they were "illegally" conducting interviews. The journalists were interviewing villagers after a local protest against a Henan land grab in late-August. The police also asked the journalists to give contact information for the individuals that the journalists had interviewed. (RFA)

On October 21, BBC journalist Juliana Liu was forced to stop interviewing a labor rights consultation unit in Guangdong Province. Local authorities interrupted the interview, and police followed and harassed the head of the unit after the incident. In related news, a BBC Chinese team was not allowed to cover the 17th Party Congress and was also not allowed to cover the National



A Chinese police officer demanding that a journalist switch off his camera after detaining several others who attend a protest organized by members of the Reporters Without Border in Beijing, China, Monday, Aug 6, 2007. Photo credits: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan.

People's Congress (NPC) meeting in March; an explanation was not provided. (RFA)

On October 30, RFA reported that two journalists from UK Channel 4 TV were detained for six hours while interviewing petitioners for the documentary "China's Olympic Lie." The journalists' Chinese interpreter was detained for 16 hours. The documentary was covering a detention center where petitioners were reportedly held and sometimes beaten. Chinese authorities deny the existence of such centers. The TV station also contacted the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee, which denied knowledge of these centers. (RFA)

Yahoo! investigation/lawsuit

In early August, the Dui Hua Foundation gave evidence before Congress that Yahoo! had provided information to the Chinese government on an individual, journalist Shi Tao, in full knowledge that the authorities were investigating an allegation of inciting subversion. Representative Tom Lantos (D-CA) opened an informal investigation after hearing the Dui Hua evidence, which

suggested that Yahoo! officials had presented inaccurate information in their testimony before Congress in February 2006. (BetaNews)

In late August, the World Organization for Human Rights filed a human rights lawsuit against Yahoo! Hong Kong for assisting police investigations of cyber-dissidents by providing names and IP addresses of Yahoo! e-mail and groups services users. Despite following Chinese law, Yahoo! was accused of violating international law. Yahoo! sought to dismiss the lawsuit. (Dailytech)

China adopts Emergency Response Law

On August 30, the Standing Committee of the NPC passed the Emergency Response Law, which attempts to improve the handling of industrial accidents, natural disasters, and health and public security hazards. Organizations and individuals who create and spread fake news concerning these emergencies will be punished, but the law does not specify what violations are serious enough to constitute a crime and be subject to punishment. (XH)

Liaoning authorities silence news of local explosion

Local officials of the Communist Party of China (CPC) blacked out news of a fatal explosion at the Tianying karaoke bar on July 4. In August, it was reported that CPC had barred newspapers and television stations in Benxi County and Liaoning's capital, Shenyang, from conducting investigations or sharing the information. The Liaoning Propaganda Bureau had faxed instructions to Liaoning media outlets ordering them to publish and broadcast only what the official Xinhua News Agency reported. (WP)

Chinese scholars write open letter

Chinese scholars and activists wrote an open letter to Chinese and international leaders on August 7, 2007, proposing seven ways to end human rights violations. The letter, entitled "One World, One Dream, and Universal Human Rights," was initially signed by more than 40 prominent individuals, including Dai Qing, Bao Tong, Liu Xiaobo and Ding Zilin. Since being posted online, the letter has continued to collect signatures, which numbered over 1,000 by mid-August. The letter calls for amnesty for political prisoners, genuine reporting freedom for both domestic and foreign journalists, and fair compensation for forced evictions, among other proposals. (CRD)

Reporter of "faked" cardboard buns story jailed and fined

On August 12, the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court found Zi Beijia, 28, guilty of "infringing on the reputation of a commodity" for reportedly faking a story about vendors using cardboard in pork buns. Zi was sentenced to one year in jail and a fine of 1,000 *yuan*. The court heard that Zi paid four migrant workers from Shaanxi Province to make the buns with chemically-treated cardboard. (AP)

Crackdown on media in lead-up to 17th Party Congress

People's Daily reported that immediately following Zi Beijia's sentencing, the CPC issued a notice that "those who intentionally fabricate news that causes public anxiety and tarnishes the nation's image will be harshly dealt with or even prosecuted if they break the law." Media outlets have been asked to set up hotlines so the

public can report false news during the campaign, which continued through mid-October in an effort to create a "healthy and harmonious environment" for a successful Party Congress. (AP)

Journalists beaten for reporting bridge collapse

Reporters said thugs harassed and beat them when they attempted to cover the August 13 collapse of the Fenghuang bridge in Hunan Province, which killed more than 64 people. Five reporters, including one from *People's Daily*, said unidentified assailants interfered in their efforts to interview survivors and family members. "The reporters demanded that they show their identification but were refused, and then suddenly one of the men kicked (*People's Daily* reporter) Wang Weijian in the stomach," read an Internet account posted by the reporters, adding that other reporters were also beaten. (AP, RTR)

Internet pact signed by foreign companies

The government-run Internet Society of China recently released a pact that was signed by at least 20 blog service providers in China, including Yahoo! and Microsoft. RSF said that the "pact stops short [of] the previous project of making it obligatory for bloggers to register, but it can be used to force service providers to censor content and identify bloggers." Microsoft subsequently said in a statement, "It should be emphasized that these are indeed recommendations only, and we retain discretion to determine how to best achieve the overarching goals of the agreement." (IDG News Service)

Virtual Internet police

State media reported on August 29 that two virtual police officers will patrol the Internet in the form of animated figures patrolling user screens on foot, by motorbike or in a car every 30 minutes. The figures will appear on news portals starting on September 1, and on all Beijing sites and forums by the end of 2007. The virtual police will be watching for "Web sites that incite secession, promote superstition, gambling and fraud," the *China Daily* said, citing Beijing's Municipal Public Security Bureau. Users will be able to click on the icons to connect to the Bureau's Internet Surveillance Centre, where they can report illegal activities. (BBC)

Online forums to reapply for operational license

On August 31, the Chinese Ministry of Information Industry, together with provincial authorities, issued a notice requiring all online forums to reapply for an operational license to stay in business. Those operating without a license would be closed. (RFA)

Website to remove report on HIV disaster

It was reported on September 10 that commercial website “Hichina” was ordered to remove a report about transfusions of HIV-contaminated blood in Henan Province. The report included articles from several experts, journalists, doctors and academics that revealed the corrupt practices of local officials associated with the spread of HIV/AIDS in Henan. (RFA)

Foreign news agencies authorized in China

The Foreign Information Administration Center (FIAC) of Xinhua News Agency announced on September 25 that it authorized three more foreign news agencies to disseminate information in China. The three agencies are RIA Novosti of Russia, and Sipa Press and Gamma of Eyedea, both based in France. All foreign news agencies need approval by the Xinhua News Agency, and must have entities designated by Xinhua act as their agents. (XH)

Media censors Burma news

Chinese media coverage of the situation in Burma has given more prominence to the Burmese junta’s official line, and access to uncensored information remains limited. On September 25, the Xinhua News Agency reported that protesters wanted “an improvement to people’s livelihoods, the release of prisoners and national reconciliation.” There was no mention of the democratic reform demands that have widely been reported on outside China. (AT)

China’s online population reaches 172 million

The number of Internet users in China reached approximately 172 million, or 13 percent of the total population, at the end of September. More than 100 people in China are accessing the Internet every minute of the day. (XH)

More access for overseas media

On October 9, *China Daily* reported that overseas reporters would have greater access to cover the 17th

Party Congress. Besides three open press conferences, overseas reporters also had access to more group interviews and to more interviews with delegations. Instead of having to take photos from afar, overseas photographers were allowed closer contact with CPC leaders and delegates. (CD)

Netizens use Internet to voice opinions

As the 17th Party Congress began on October 15, Chinese citizens used chatrooms and online surveys to voice their ideas. Four of the top concerns were restraining the power of officials, reducing corruption, improving living standards and narrowing the wealth gap. On a bulletin board sponsored by *People’s Daily*, 7,000 messages were directly addressed to Hu Jintao and urged him to get rid of corrupt officials and provide more channels for people to raise complaints against officials. (XH)

Restrictions on marriage-seeking advertisements

On October 18, Shanghai Daily reported that the city’s civil affairs bureau in Zhengzhou City, Henan Province, placed additional restrictions on marriage-seeking advertisements. Violations of the new regulation by newspapers running the advertisements will result in a warning. Two warnings will lead to suspension, and violators will be shut down if they receive three warnings. The regulation will take effect in November. (SHD)

U.S. supports Internet laws

On October 24, BBC reported that legislation stopping Internet companies like Yahoo!, Google and Microsoft from revealing personal data to Chinese authorities gained support from the House Foreign Relations Committee. Under the legislation, companies would not be allowed to provide personal information to designated “Internet-restricting” countries except for legitimate law enforcement purposes as determined by the U.S. Department of Justice. Companies would also have to reveal to the U.S. Department of State the terms and phrases they filtered in those countries. The bill now needs approval from the House Energy and Commerce Committee. (BBC)

Fake reporters jailed for extortion

It was reported on October 25 that four Chinese men who had posed as reporters from China Legal News to

blackmail an official were each given sentences of between three and eight years. The four men had tried to extort 100,000 *yuan* from an official in southern Hainan Province in return for not reporting the unauthorized commercial use of a piece of farmland. (AP)

Chinese film/TV bans

The movies *Rush Hour 3*, *The Age of Tattoo* and *Lost in Beijing* fell afoul of Chinese censors in August. *Rush Hour 3*, with scenes on Chinese triad activities, was labeled “anti-China” by the Chinese authorities. The State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) refused to permit Chinese director Jia Zhangke to shoot *The Age of Tattoo*, which is set during the Cultural Revolution. *Lost in Beijing*, originally scheduled to be shown in China in May, had yet to be shown as of August. The director claimed that the movie had been censored because its depiction of the sex industry and other “ugly” aspects of Beijing was considered to have an adverse effect on China’s image before the 17th Party Congress. (RFA)

In preparation for the 17th Party Congress, China banned talent shows from airing on primetime television starting September 21. SARFT cite vulgarity in design, judges, and contestant performance and appearance as the reason for banning the talent shows. The talent show ban from primetime was part of a wider effort to clean up the media before the 17th Party Congress convened. (RTR)

Since the beginning of September, SARFT has penalized seven radio stations for sex talk shows that contained material of an “extreme pornographic nature.” On September 25, SARFT announced that sex-related advertisements were banned from television and radio: approximately 2,000 were banned within the first two weeks of October. Stations that violate the ban will face severe penalties. By the end of September, China had also banned “sexually provocative sounds” and “tantalizing language” from airwaves. (XH, RTR, AFP)

In order to comply with China’s censorship rules, Ang Lee deleted thirty minutes worth of scenes from his erotic spy thriller, “Lust, Caution.” Mainland China has no formal film rating system. SARFT stated, “[f]ilms not suitable for children are not suitable for adults.” The film was scheduled to open in China on October 26. (AFP)

PROTESTS AND PETITIONS

Tibetan convicted for expressing support for the Dalai Lama

Rongyal Adrak, a Tibetan of the Yonru nomadic group, was detained by local police in Lihang on August 1 while attending a major festival of the region. He was reportedly taken into custody after calling out that Beijing should allow the Dalai Lama to return to Tibet. On October 29, Rongyal Adrak was tried and convicted by a Sichuan court for subversion. The judge said the final sentence would be announced in six to seven days. He was also considered responsible for instigating subsequent protests in which 1,000 Lihang nomads called for his release. (RFA)

Minor detained as petitioner mother escapes

On August 1, 15-year-old petitioner **Wu Yinan** was taken back to her hometown in Ningxia for distributing leaflets describing her family’s grievances at Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Wu was detained again in Ningxia on August 11 after local authorities failed to arrest her mother, who continued petitioning in Beijing. Ningxia authorities reportedly presented no legal documents when they took Wu away. (RFA)

Tibet activists detained and deported

The executive director of Students for a Free Tibet (SFT), **Lhadon Tethong**, and fellow activist Paul Golding were detained in Beijing on the afternoon of August 7, one day before the Olympics countdown celebration. Tethong and Golding were using the Internet and videos to draw attention to China’s human rights abuses in Tibet. SFT reported that Tethong and Golding had been under round-the-clock surveillance by Chinese authorities, at some points followed by up to 30 police officers. They were deported from Beijing on August 8. (HRIC)

Hospital riot

Eleven people involved in a riot outside a hospital in October 2006 were sentenced to prison terms of up to two years, according to the Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy on August 13. Two thousand people had protested in Guangan City, Sichuan Province, claiming that a four-year-old boy died because the hospital refused to treat him when his family was unable to pay for medical care. Authorities said that the child died because he drank “enough pesticide to kill 500 children” and not because he was refused treatment. (AP)

Xiamen protester released on bail

Li Yiqiang, detained on June 2 after leading protests against the construction of a paraxylene plant in Xiamen, was reported in mid-August to have been released on bail after being charged with illegal assembly. Construction of the \$1.4 billion paraxylene facility by Tenglong Aromatic PX (Xiamen) Co. Ltd. was suspended after mass protests over possible health threats. At least two other people were detained in June in connection with the protest. (AP)

Tibetan festival turns into silent protest

This year’s Khampa Festival in Qinghai Province was the scene of silent protests by Tibetans resisting attempts by Chinese authorities to turn the festival into a tourist attraction. Tibetans refused to participate in the singing and dancing led by Chinese announcers, and also followed the Dalai Lama’s call not to wear fur, explaining that the tradition is inconsistent with Buddhism. (NYT)

Discontent over rising property prices

On August 24, it was reported that **Yue Ming**, 28, was jailed in Beijing for 14 days after he posted online chat-room messages calling for a protest over high real estate prices. Police in the capital’s Xicheng District said that Yue was guilty of an administrative offence of inciting or plotting an illegal rally. Posting under the name “Proletarian Alliance,” Yue publicized the meeting via blogs, emails and mobile text messages, but claimed he did not plan to follow up on the protest. (AP)

Evicted petitioner writes to German Chancellor

Just before German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s visit to China in August, Shanghai petitioner **Chen Enjuan**

wrote an open letter asking the chancellor to take a stand on human rights issues related to German companies’ investments in China. Chen has been petitioning Beijing since she and her family were forcibly evicted from their Shanghai home in 2000 for a redevelopment project by a joint venture between Shanghai Pudong Iron Steel (Group) Co. Ltd. and the German-based Thyssen Krupp Stainless Co. Ltd. (HRIC)

Land disputes lead to injuries

Farmers in Yutian Village, Heilongjiang Province, set up roadblocks on August 25 to protest a planned commercial housing project that would require the demolition of their homes. The arrival of anti-riot police sparked a clash that resulted in two villagers being seriously injured and another two detained. (AP)

Demobilized soldiers protest

On the afternoon of September 3, approximately 2,000 demobilized Chinese soldiers rioted at training centers located in the cities of Baotou, Wuhan and Baoji. The soldiers destroyed classrooms, overturned cars and set fires in protest of their poor living conditions. Police suppressed the protest, resulting in 20 injuries and five arrests. On September 17, China’s Railway Ministry stated that the Associated Press report on the demobilized soldiers’ riots was inaccurate. The ministry said that only a small number of students were unhappy with the training, but provided no new details on the situation. (RTR, AP)

Land rights protesters convicted

Eleven Guangdong protesters of a local land grab were convicted of “disturbing social order” and sentenced to one to five years in prison on September 5. The protesters reportedly damaged construction materials at the disputed site, which they alleged was originally their land, but later sold secretly to developers by village cadres. One anonymous relative of a convicted protester said the defendants’ lawyers were not allowed to present their case in court. (RFA)

Public urged to report Olympic protests

It was reported on September 5 that Xinhua News Agency had issued a series of guidelines instructing spectators, athletes, and officials attending the Olympic Games on how they should react to any potential

protests. The guidelines stated that witnesses should report them immediately to the police, volunteers, and any venue managers nearby, and that under no circumstances should they get involved. (SCMP)

Petitioner beaten by police

Petitioner **Zheng Mingfang** was again beaten by the police on September 10 in Tianjin, where a Petitioners' Reception Day had been organized by the Public Security Bureau. Zheng, who was sentenced to two years in 2004 after applying to hold a demonstration in Tiananmen Square, told Radio Free Asia (RFA) that while many petitioners were waiting to be received, they were severely beaten and did not get to see the mayor. (RFA)

Jiangsu woman beaten during eviction

It was reported on September 10 that, 67-year-old protester **Zhou Dazhen** was kicked unconscious on August 25 by Jiangsu authorities, who, (accompanied by thugs), had tried to forcibly acquire a plot of land in Guannan County, Jiangsu Province. Zhou has since been in a coma at the hospital. Local authorities admitted to beating Zhou upon RFA's inquiry, and the eviction was suspended after the incident. (RFA)

Child prevented from receiving medical treatment

It was reported on September 11 that a 12-year-old Guangdong boy, who became gravely ill after a meningitis vaccination, and his family were stopped from going to Hong Kong to receive further medical treatment. The parents of two other children in similar conditions have lodged lawsuits, but are awaiting judgment. Local officials have prevented previous attempts by the parents to petition the local and central authorities. (RFA, HRIC)

Control tightens as CPC meeting approaches

A Hong Kong-based human rights group said on September 13 that CPC central authorities had drafted a list of 7,000 petitioning cases in August. While local authorities were required to help solve 1,000 of these cases, the police were ordered to closely monitor the remaining cases. The NGO also claimed that local police were required to report any petitioners who were missing from their hometowns to senior authorities, in order to reduce the number of petitioners in Beijing in the lead-up to the 17th Party Congress. (RFA)

Students in south China protest rising food prices

On September 13, students at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangdong Province called for a boycott of canteen food in protest of high prices, small portions and unsatisfactory taste. Other universities had launched similar boycotts in September. (RTR)

Petitioners detained

It was reported on September 17 that Sichuan petitioners **Wang Shurong** and **Li Wenfeng** were arrested on charges of extortion and illegal possession of state secrets, respectively. Wang's sister argued that the alleged extortion sum of 11,000 *yuan* was a living allowance that Wang's original working unit had given her so that she would not petition. In Li's case, her ex-husband said that he believed the materials related to petitioning and did not contain state secrets. (RFA)

Disabled son of Hebei petitioner sent to RTL

It was reported on September 18 that Hebei petitioner **Wang Guoying** was sentenced on July 19 to a year and three months of Reeducation-Through-Labor (RTL). Her disabled son was sent to a welfare institution and forced to work on human waste disposal. (RFA)

Petitioners' village demolished; apartment owners punished

Early in September, Beijing warned the 3,000 petitioners living in Beijing's Fengtai District that their settlements would soon be demolished for a new railway station, to be opened in time for the Olympics. Petitioners who moved out of these areas before September 19 were given a cash reward. In addition, police reportedly issued an order on September 14 stating that hostels housing petitioners will be fined 20,000 *yuan*; petitioner **Liu Baochun** told RFA on October 25 that Beijing authorities said they would detain apartment owners for 15 days if they rent to petitioners. Many petitioners were consequently induced to move to outlying suburbs. On September 26, Beijing began demolition of the petitioners' community. Petitioners were not allowed to retrieve their belongings while several dozen police were stationed at the site. The police also used video cameras to tape people talking to reporters. (TheStar.com, RFA, AP)



Petitioners cram into a small room eager to share their stories with journalists visiting the village where petitioners stay in Beijing Thursday, Sept. 6, 2007. Photo credits: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan

Anhui workers beaten for petitioning

On September 27, more than 1,000 workers in the Anhui iron and steel industry organized a mass demonstration after their factory allegedly employed thugs to beat them. At least 14 workers who had been protesting conditions related to the factory's privatization were reportedly injured. A woman told RFA that her husband was one of those beaten by metallic bars, and was hospitalized with bone fractures as a result. RFA discovered that most of the online posts discussing the incident were removed on October 3. (RFA)

Petitioner forced into psychiatric hospital

On October 3, Hunan petitioner **Liu Ping** told RFA that she had again been forcefully admitted to a psychiatric hospital for 42 days beginning January 26. This forced hospitalization resulted from her petitions to Beijing since 2006 on the local government's failure to provide compensation after the factory where she worked went bankrupt. Liu was sent to a psychiatric hospital for the first time in September 2006 after similar petitioning in Beijing. (RFA)

According to the Sichuan-based Tianwang Human Rights Center, the Wuxi Bureau for Letters and Calls (which receives petitions from residents) in Jiangsu Province issued a document in 2003, stating that petitioners "with mental illness," such as **Lin Xiuqing** and **Zhu Shiqing**, were damaging Wuxi City's image. On October 25, RFA reported that Lin's forced admission to psychiatric hospitals in 2001 and 2003 was retaliation against her petitioning in Beijing over undercompensated eviction. Zhu had been kept in psychiatric facilities for more than 200 days because he had complained about the police's inaction over his beating by thugs in 1992. (RFA)

Farmers and police clash over cotton sales

On October 4, Reuters reported that a violent clash between farmers and police in the Suxingtian area of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) over cotton prices left 40 people injured and 25 detained in late September. Tensions erupted after farmers sold cotton in the market rather than to the government-operated Xinjiang Production and Construction Corps

(XPCC), because the farmers were not satisfied with XPCC prices. Police set up checkpoints to prevent the farmers from selling their cotton and made midnight raids on households. In response, the residents attacked the checkpoints and the Suxingtang police station. (RTR)

Petitioners demand democratic reform

More than 12,000 mainland petitioners from 30 provinces sent an open letter to Communist Party of China (CPC) leaders urging democratic reform and basic human freedoms. The letter highlighted China's social problems and called for the abolition of the RTL system and an end to the persecution of petitioners. **Liu Jie** and **Wang Guilan**, two of the letter's main representatives, were arrested on October 11 and October 14, respectively, while the other two organizers **Liu Xueli** and **Cheng Yingcai** remain in hiding. (SCMP, RFA)

Mass incidents in Guangdong decrease

Mass protests and riots in Guangdong have decreased greatly in recent years because of the government's efforts to solve social conflicts, according to statements by Guangdong's CPC chief Zhang Dejiang on October 16. (RTR)

Beijing employs thugs to manage petitioners

On October 25, RFA reported that the Provincial Government's Regional Offices in Beijing increasingly employ thugs to deal with petitioners. Petitioners are captured and secretly held for days (sometimes months) in hotels transformed into illegal detention facilities, like the Yi Hua Hotel in Beijing Haidian district, the report says. According to petitioners who had been detained there, thugs are employed by the government to suppress dissent, and to terrorize and beat petitioners. Their wages are reportedly calculated according to the number of petitioners captured and beaten. (RFA)

Villagers demand land property rights

On October 26, residents of Huangyong Village, Guangdong Province, surrounded the local village committee building to demand land property rights and a fair share of land profits. They were soon confronted by more than 1,000 policemen, who arrested four leaders and injured three elderly protesters. One of the detainees was released immediately, but the other three were detained for 10 days. (RFA)

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Harassment

Jiang Yanyong, a military surgeon who broke government secrecy to reveal the true scale of Beijing's SARS outbreak in 2003, was reportedly prevented from leaving China in August to accept a human rights award in New York. In a later phone interview, he was quoted as saying he declined to attend the ceremony because the Human Rights of Scientists award by the New York Academy of Sciences was political, not scientific, in nature. He declined to comment on whether he had received pressure from the Chinese government not to accept the award. (WP, RFA)

Beijing-based rights defense lawyer **Li Heping** was abducted, beaten, and tortured with electric rods by a group of unidentified, masked men on September 29. He was held in a basement outside Beijing until early September 30, when he was dumped in the woods outside the city. As he was beaten, Li was told to leave Beijing with his family. When he returned home, Li discovered that his license to practice law and other personal belongings were missing. His computer had also been completely erased. Later, Li visited a hospital where doctors told him that he may have suffered serious head injuries. (NYT, HRIC)

Hua Huiqi was knocked unconscious on October 11 during a fight involving police and private security guards. Hua, his father, and his wife were removed from their residence by the police from Chongwen District and sent to Fengtai District on October 8. Police informed Hua that this move was due to the upcoming 17th Party Congress. Fengtai police brought Hua back to his Chongwen house on October 11, where a fight broke out between them, the Chongwen police, and private guards from the company New World China Land, which has been demolishing old houses in the neighborhood. Hua was knocked unconscious during the fight. Police and the hospital where Hua was admitted have reportedly declined comment. (HRIC)

Rights defense lawyer **Zheng Enchong** and his wife **Jiang Meili** were refused passports and travel permits to visit Hong Kong by the Shanghai Municipal Public

Security Bureau (PSB) Immigration Department, which claimed that Zheng is “a defendant or criminal suspect in a criminal case.” Zheng Enchong was released from prison in June 2006 after serving a three-year sentence for “illegally providing state secrets overseas.” Under the terms of his sentence, Zheng was further subject to an additional year of deprivation of political rights, under which he was prevented from resuming his law practice, speaking with news media or leaving his neighborhood. This one-year term ended at the beginning of June this year. (HRIC)

In October, Zheng was unable to pay his last respects to his dying mother because the police had disconnected his phone line. Hospital staff at the Social Welfare Institution for the Aged in Nanhui District, Shanghai, tried to call Zheng on the evening of October 11 to inform him about his mother’s deteriorating condition, but could not reach him. His mother died the next morning. He was also ordered by police not to leave his home when Shanghai tycoon Zhou Zhengyi’s trial opened on October 23. (HRIC)

Blind, self-taught lawyer **Chen Guangcheng** was unable to go to the Philippines in August to receive the 2007 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Emergent Leadership for “his irrepressible passion for justice in leading ordinary Chinese citizens to assert their legitimate rights under the law,” because he is currently serving a four-year and three-month sentence on charges of willfully damaging property and organizing a mob to disturb traffic. (Inquirer.net)

Chen’s wife, **Yuan Weijing**, attempted to fly to the Philippines on August 22 to accept the award on Chen’s behalf, but was detained by authorities in Beijing and reportedly beaten while being forcibly returned to her home in Shandong Province.

Yuan remains under close surveillance by local authorities. Zhang Jianfu, the party secretary of the local township government, also gave instructions that Yuan not be allowed to see a doctor outside of Shuanghou Township. On October 29, Yuan was again prevented from leaving town to see a dentist. (Kaisernetwork.org, RFA, HRIC)

Rights defense lawyer **Gao Zhisheng** was detained again

after writing a letter to the U.S. Congress asking them to help expose what he called China’s “ongoing human rights disaster,” and urging a boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He was seized by police on September 22. On October 28, Gao made phone contact with fellow human rights defender **Hu Jia** for the first time after he was taken away by police. Gao said he had been in Shaanxi and Shanxi during the past month, but he did not reveal further details. Hu said Gao’s wife, **Geng He**, and their daughter are being followed by police, and Geng was also warned not to talk to anyone about her situation. (AP, RFA)

Huang Yan, who from time to time publicized messages about the family of rights defense lawyer Gao Zhisheng, was detained by state security officers the same day, repeatedly beaten during her detention and forcefully sent back to her Hubei hometown from Beijing on September 26. She was freed on October 23. Huang reportedly attempted suicide during the house arrest after being harassed by police. (RFA)

Hu Jia, an HIV/AIDS and environmental activist, has been detained on numerous occasions by the Chinese government. **Zeng Jinyan**, Hu Jia’s wife, started a blog detailing her experiences and the repressive activities of the police against her and her husband. Her blog has been blocked in China, and she and Hu Jia have been harassed, intimidated and subjected to round-the-clock surveillance. (WP)

It was reported in October that organizers and participants of the rights defense campaign against three major communications giants were monitored, intimidated and prosecuted in recent months. (RFA)

Hunan rights defender **Chen Shuguang** was arrested in September for extortion, and he and fellow rights defender **Ye Jian** were detained. Chen’s wife said the approximately 10,000 *yuan* in dispute was compensation given to Chen lawfully.

Guangdong-based **Chen Shuwei**, one of the main organizers of the campaign, was kept under house arrest for 12 days so that he could not petition in Beijing during the 17th Party Congress. He was released on October 21. Chen said his relatives and friends were

also harassed, and that the shop of fellow activist **Xia Chuhui** was splashed with red paint soon after he complained about one of the companies in September. In August, another rights defender **Wang Jianghui** was investigated for disrupting communications until he promised to cease his complaints.

Between July and August, Jiangxi-based **Zhang Renwen**, **Zhang Renwu** and **Zhou Meicen** were unlawfully detained until they agreed to stop their complaints.

In June, Qingdao-based **Geng Shengxue** was assaulted by unidentified thugs while he was making a complaint in the sales department of one of the companies.

On October 8, a group of lawyers, intellectuals, and rights defense activists issued an open letter to the State Council, Supreme People's Procuratorate, Ministry of Public Security, and Ministry of State Security, protesting the violent attack on the Beijing lawyer Li Heping. The letter urged the government to investigate and resolve the case quickly to ensure a safe environment for Li and other lawyers in China to practice their profession. The signatories demanded a prohibition on illegal kidnappings, illegal detentions, and violent assaults on lawyers, scholars, journalists, and other rights defenders. (HRIC)

Arrest/Detention/Disappearance

Lü Gengsong, author of several books and articles on official corruption in China, was reportedly detained on August 24 on charges of "incitement to subvert state power" and "illegally possessing state secrets." Lü's detention has raised expressions of great concern in China and overseas, including a petition signed by 1,163 Chinese rights defenders, writers, scholars and lawyers calling for his release. His house was searched for eight hours and his computer was seized. At the end of September, Wang Xue'e, Lü's wife, received a formal arrest warrant for Lü on the charge of "subverting state power." (HRIC, AFP)

Two relatives of **Ye Guozhu**, a housing rights activist who was detained for organizing protests against forced evictions for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, were also detained on September 29. **Ye Mingjun**, Guozhu's son, was charged with inciting subversion of state power,

while **Ye Guoqiang**, Guozhu's brother, was charged with protesting forced evictions for the Olympics. (RTR)

Land rights activist **Yang Chunlin** was taken away on July 6, and formally arrested on August 3. Police told Yang's family that he was suspected of taking money from foreign anti-China organizations. However, Yang's family believes the true reason for his arrest was that he collected 10,000 signatures for his open letter, titled, "We want human rights, not the Olympics." Moreover, Yang's lawyers were prevented from seeing him because the case reportedly involved "state secrets." In detention, Yang had his arms and legs stretched and chained to four corners of an iron bed. According to a released inmate who served time with Yang Chunlin, he had been chained for days in the same position, and then was forced to clean up the excrement of other prisoners subjected to the same torture. (RFA, AP)

Pan-Blue Alliance spokesman **Sun Bu'er** was secretly arrested on subversion charges on May 23, his mother told RFA on September 11. She had been silent about Sun's whereabouts for more than three months because authorities had threatened her with additional punishment for Sun if she publicized his arrest. Sun's mother later changed her mind and asked RFA to reveal Sun's situation because authorities did not let her see her son. On September 11, a Hong Kong NGO reported that it had received an email from Sun. (RFA)

Chinese PEN member **Ouyang Xiaorong** was taken away by Yunnan police on September 27. Ouyang's mother speculated that his arrest was due to essays he posted online. Ouyang had also participated in the hunger strike launched by Gao Zhisheng. (RFA)

Yao Lifa and **Lü Banglie**, two of China's leading democracy campaigners, went missing a week before the 17th Party Congress. They were believed to be part of the crackdown on potential protesters before the key meeting. Lü has been engaged in fighting corruption and other illegal activities in village elections. Yao, who had been missing since October 1, campaigned to win an independent seat in his local Party-controlled congress and organized disgruntled citizens to challenge restrictions on political activity. (AFP, RTR)

Prison conditions

Shanghai petitioner **Du Yangming** has been denied family visitation rights for refusing to admit guilt and wear a prison uniform, it was reported in August. Du is over 60-years-old and has serious health problems, including diabetes and a chronic back disorder. He was arrested prior to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Shanghai in June 2006, and on December 18, 2006, was sentenced to two years and six months' imprisonment on charges of provoking serious public disorder. (HRIC)

There were unconfirmed reports in late August that **Nurmemet (Nurmuhemmet) Yasin**, author of the short story, "Wild Pigeon" (*Yawa Kepter*), had been tortured in prison. Yasin was arrested on November 29, 2004, following publication of "Wild Pigeon" in the Uyghur-language *Kashgar Literature Journal* earlier that month. The Chinese authorities accused Yasin of "inciting to split the state." At the time of Yasin's detention, authorities also seized his personal computer, which contained more than 1,600 poems, short stories and an uncompleted novel. (HRIC)

Shuang Shuying, a 77-year-old imprisoned for petitioning the authorities, was reportedly being denied family visits in an effort to pressure her son, Christian activist **Hua Huiqi**, into becoming a police informant. Hua says that when he refused to provide information, police threatened that he would never see his mother again. Hua Huiqi has been detained repeatedly in recent years for leading an underground house church, as well as for his rights defense efforts on housing and other issues. Shuang reportedly suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, cataracts and neuralgia, and her health is deteriorating rapidly because of abuses in prison, her family said. Shuang was denied medical parole on September 11 on grounds that her health conditions were not severe enough, and that she had not yet served enough of her sentence. (HRIC)

In mid-September, it was reported that Shanghai rights defender **Mao Hengfeng** continued to protest her detention at the Shanghai Women's Prison. After being subjected to 70 days of solitary confinement in prison despite Chinese regulations stipulating the maximum of 15 days, Mao refused to wear a prison uniform as a

protest of her innocence, and had been forced to stay in her cell without clothes. Mao has been active against forced implementation of the family planning policy since the late 1980s, and has been repeatedly harassed and detained for her activism. (HRIC)

Mao's husband, **Wu Xuwei**, was prevented from visiting her in prison until October 26. His visit was delayed for 20 days, reportedly because the authorities did not want him to see Mao's bruises from a September 13 beating. Wu reported that Mao was again abused at the Shanghai Women's Prison and at a hospital she was taken to earlier in October. Mao was beaten and force-fed in retaliation for publicizing mistreatment in July and August. (HRIC)

Prison authorities threatened to deprive dissident **He Depu** of family visits after his wife, **Jia Jianying**, revealed that He had been denied outdoor exercise for nearly half a year. It was reported that Jia was warned by a prison official on September 25 against discussing prison conditions, and that if she did so again, she would not be able to visit her husband for up to six months. He is a veteran activist who has participated in the democracy movements since the 1970s, is currently serving an eight-year sentence for "incitement to subvert state power," and has been abused and beaten in prison. He also suffers from liver disease, hepatitis and substantial weight loss. (HRIC)

Huseyin Celil was visited by his mother and sister in a prison near Urumqi in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) for the first time after 18 months of imprisonment. Huseyin fled China in the 1990s, was accepted as a refugee in Canada in 2001, and became a Canadian citizen in 2005. In 2006, he was arrested in Uzbekistan and extradited to China. In April 2007, Celil was sentenced to life imprisonment on separatism and terrorism charges by the Urumqi Intermediate People's Court. (RFA)

Mongolian dissident **Hada**'s health has continued to deteriorate. According to his son Uiles, he has been separated from other prisoners, and his prison cell does not have any sunlight. Hada was sentenced in 1996 to 15 years in prison on charges of separatism and espionage as a result of organizing the Southern Mongolian

Democratic Alliance, which seeks greater rights for ethnic Mongols inside China. (RTR)

Trial developments

Wu Lihong, an environmental activist detained in April 2007, was sentenced on August 10 to three years' imprisonment for extortion and fraud. Wu has been actively campaigning against the pollution of Lake Tai, and had previously been named as a top environmentalist by the government. Accused of extorting money from business owners, Wu said he had been paid a commission by a factory owner as part of the sale of a wastewater treatment system to factories, but the court refused to hear evidence on this point. Wu's wife said that no witnesses were called to testify during his trial, and that he was tortured during his interrogation. Wu's lawyer, Zhu Xiaoyan, says he plans to appeal the court's decision. Wu's sister was detained by police on August 17 for launching a signature campaign on his behalf. (CSM, RFA)

On August 16, the Hangzhou Intermediate People's Court sentenced Internet essayist **Chen Shuqing** to four years' imprisonment on charges of "incitement to subvert state power." Chen, who is also deprived of his political rights for one year, said he would appeal. (RFA)

Nine Chinese Christians who were arrested in Hubei on July 15 were sentenced to RTL ranging from one to one and a half years, on charges of using a reactionary sect or heretical organization to undermine the implementation of the laws. **Li Mei**, one of those sentenced but released temporarily, told RFA on October 8 that none of them were allowed to appoint lawyers. Li herself suffered from profuse uterine bleeding while detained, but was not given sufficient treatment. Her uterus eventually had to be removed. (RFA)

It was reported on October 24 that **Liu Guiqin** was sentenced to a year and a half in prison for illegally possessing state secrets. Liu was appointed as China's first civil mediator on petitioning matters by the Yunxi County government in Hubei Province in May 2007, but was placed under criminal detention in June. Dissident **Huang Qi** argued that the document in dispute did not actually contain state secrets; rather, Liu was charged because local officials were unhappy with her active involvement with petitioners. (RFA)

On October 30, RFA reported that **Chen Yunfei**'s movements were currently restricted and he was not allowed to do media interviews. Chen was sentenced to six months' residential surveillance for inciting subversion.

Environmental activist Wu Lihong, looks at a polluted and blackened canal next to a vegetable field, outside a factory in Yixing in Jiangsu Province, 16 March 2006. Photo credits: MARK RALSTON/AFP/Getty Images.



He published an advertisement on the *Chengdu Evening News* offering a tribute to Tiananmen mothers on June 4. (RFA)

Sentence reduction

Information emerged in August that dissident **Hu Shigen** had received a second sentence reduction of 17 months in February this year. He received his first reduction of seven months after meeting the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, Manfred Nowak, in 2005. Hu was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment in 1992 on charges of "counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement." (RFA)

Release

Yang Jianli, a permanent U.S. resident and a veteran of the Tiananmen Square student protest, returned to the U.S. after serving a five-year prison sentence for illegal entry and alleged espionage for Taiwan. Yang had been detained after using a friend's passport to enter China in April 2002 to investigate labor unrest in the northeast. On August 21, Yang gave a news conference with U.S. legislators on Washington's Capitol Hill, calling for a "taxpayers' revolution" in China to bring about greater openness and accountability. Yang said he spent more than a year of his sentence in solitary confinement, and was once handcuffed for two full weeks and beaten by several police officers. (The Independent, MP)

It was reported at the end of August that **Li Weihong** will be released in November this year following several reductions on his original sentence of death commuted to life. Li was convicted of "hooliganism" for taking part in street protests during the June 4th crackdown. (AFP)

Cai Zhuohua, a Protestant minister, was released on September 10, after spending three years in prison for printing Bibles and other Christian publications without state approval. (RTR)

Mao Qingxiang, one of the founding members of the China Democracy Party, was released on September 14 after serving eight years in prison. Mao was arrested in 1999 for joining the Chinese Democracy Party and was later sentenced on charges of incitement of subversion. More than 23 other members of the opposition party remain in prison. (RTR)

Zhao Yan, a research assistant at the Beijing bureau of *The New York Times*, was released on September 15 upon completion of a three-year prison sentence on fraud charges. Zhao was detained in September 2004 in connection with a *Times* article that predicted the resignation of Jiang Zemin from his last major post as head of the military. Zhao was held in detention for more than 19 months before trial on suspicion of leaking state secrets to the newspaper. (HRIC)

Li Yuanlong, a Chinese journalist imprisoned for "inciting subversion of state sovereignty," was released on September 16 after spending two years in prison. He was arrested September 2005 for posting politically sensitive essays on the Internet, including one entitled, "Being an American in Spirit." His reporter status has been revoked and, as a result, he is barred from working at state entities for the next two years. (AFP)

Wuhan dissident **Wang Dalin** was reportedly released on September 28 after serving two years in a RTL facility. Wang was detained in September 2005, three months after he wore a shirt printed with "Freedom and Democracy" and conducted a "patriotic cultural shirt campaign" in Tiananmen Square. His friend Liu Feiyue said Wang was beaten and abused. (RFA)

Other news

On September 14, the one-year anniversary of the detention of rights defender **Guo Feixiong** [also known as **Yang Maodong**], his wife **Zhang Qing** sent HRIC a letter entitled, "In Commemoration of the First Anniversary of My Husband Guo Feixiong's Detention: Urging for His Unconditional Release." Zhang Qing's letter details Guo's current detention and treatment, and also examines previous instances in which Guo was detained and otherwise harassed by the police for his rights defense activities. (HRIC)

On September 14, **Ren Wandong**, a veteran pro-democracy activist, was allowed to travel to Hong Kong for the second time in 2007, where he awarded human rights prizes to 21 rights defenders. He will travel to New Zealand and the U.S. after his Hong Kong trip and reportedly was to return to China in late October. Ren spent a total of 11 years in prison for his participation in the democracy movements of the 1970s and 1980s. (RFA)

On September 17, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution urging China to release the children of Uyghur human rights activist **Rebiya Kadeer**. Her two sons, **Ablikim Abdureyim** and **Alim Abdureyim**, are serving nine and seven years in prison, respectively. They have been subjected to torture and other physical abuse. Their charges are widely considered to be in retaliation for their mother's activism. (UNPO)

Chinese human rights defenders **Zeng Jinyan** and **Hu Jia** were announced as finalists for the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought on September 25. Zeng Jinyan reported human rights abuses in her daily blog while her husband, Hu Jia, is an AIDS and environmental activist. (Kuwait News Agency)

LABOR

Deaths from coal mine accidents decrease

According to the State Administration of Work Safety, the number of deaths from coal mine accidents per million tons of coal produced in 2006 has decreased by 60 percent from 2001. In 2006, 4,746 died in coal mine accidents, while 6,078 people died in 2001. China has closed more than 9,000 small mines over the last two years and has invested nine billion *yuan* in the mining industry to improve safety. (XH)

Miners clash with security guards

Two thousand miners at the Tanjiashan Mine in Hunan Province went on strike in early August to protest being laid off without fair compensation. Two miners were injured in violent clashes that broke out between the protesters and security guards when it was announced that nearly 1,000 miners would be fired. (Radio Australia)

Shenzhen workers dispersed

Thousands of workers went on strike on August 20–22 at the Shenzhen factory of Friwo, a multinational cell phone battery manufacturer. German-owned Friwo was accused of imposing unpaid mandatory overtime on workers with already inadequate salaries. Police in riot gear were called to break up the protest, which reportedly involved nearly all of the 18,000 employees working at two Friwo plants in the area. At least four workers were reported arrested. (Helsingin Sanomat)

Conditions unacceptable in toy factories

China Labor Watch issued a report on August 21 stating that several multinational manufacturers use subcontractors in China who ignore international and domestic labor standards. The report stated, "Wages are low, benefits are non-existent, work environments are dangerous and living conditions are humiliating." The report found that major companies "turn a blind eye to safety" and "ignore the labor conditions in their supplier factories," while coaching employees how to answer questions during inspections, and sometimes keeping two sets of books. (RTR)

China passes Employment Promotion Law

On August 30, the Standing Committee of the NPC passed the Employment Promotion Law, which will take effect on January 1, 2008. The law seeks to eliminate discrimination against job seekers on the grounds of gender, religion, race or disability. It also entitles the

A worker processes Santa Claus figures at an electric toy factory on September 29, 2007 in Yiwu, China. Photo credits: China Photos/Getty Images.



disadvantaged to tax reduction or exemption and micro-credit loans in entrepreneurial undertakings, and provides free professional education and training for children from zero-employment households. (XH, CD)

Slave work continues

Nearly two months after the first slave scandal was exposed, migrant laborers were still working in illegal brick kilns. The executive vice governor of Shanxi Province, Xue Yanzhong, reported in August that another 359 migrant workers had been rescued since late June, including 15 children and 121 mentally disabled individuals. Authorities said 147 suspects had been arrested at 17 newly discovered brick kilns. (WSJ)

Report says child labor on rise

On September 4, the Hong Kong-based China Labour Bulletin reported that child labor is a growing problem in China. The monitoring group blames the rise in child labor on poverty, weaknesses in the legal enforcement system and underinvestment in education. Currently, Chinese law bars children under the age of 16 from working, but many under that age enter the labor market every year. (AP)

Disney hit by labor abuse claim

More than 70 Disney toy factory workers in Shenzhen submitted a complaint to the city's labor department on September 10, claiming that they were working under sweatshop conditions. They were paid below minimum wage and overworked. (CD)

China to establish new measures to solve labor disputes

The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) announced on September 21 that it will establish a new mechanism to better prevent and solve labor disputes. The mechanism would encourage disputes to be solved through mediation. (CCTV)

Farmers-turned-workers join trade unions

Approximately 62 million farmers-turned-workers have joined trade unions by the end of September. (XH)

Beijing to close illegal coal mines

Beijing planned to close down 1,000 small, unlicensed coal mines before the 2008 Olympics. On September

30, all of the illegal coal mines in the vicinity of the city were ordered to stop operations immediately, dismantle their equipment, fire their workers and hand in explosives within 15 days. Mine owners who cooperated would face reduced or no punishment. Those who do not would face more than 10 years in jail. (AFP)

Coal mine cafeteria serves tainted food

Eighty-nine of the 136 coal mine workers in the Midong area of Urumqi City, XUAR, were sent to the hospital after they ate half-cooked beans served by the mine's cafeteria. Ten were diagnosed with serious food poisoning. No deaths were reported. The city's health authority suspended the mine's cafeteria. (SHD)

Official defends punishments over slave scandal

On October 20, Yu Youjun, the former governor of Shanxi Province, defended his handling of a slave labor scandal earlier in 2007. The scandal involved more than 1,300 people, including children and mentally handicapped people, who were forced to work at brick kilns under terrible conditions. Of the 95 CPC officials punished, only eight were expelled from the Party and lost their jobs. Yu said the punishments were proportional and unprecedented. (RTR)

China plans to assist unemployed factory workers

To meet its emissions control goal, China will close factories in more than ten industries, including coal mining, steel and iron, construction materials, and electricity. To prepare for the mass unemployment, the central government plans to create new employment incentives to assist the factory workers. (CD)

Punished

It was reported on August 16 that two Chinese sports companies producing products for the Beijing Olympics were fined for exceeding overtime limits and employing child labor. Feida Sports Products Co. Ltd. and Yurongchang Light Industrial Products Co. Ltd. were fined 833,700 *yuan* and 533,700 *yuan* respectively. (Fibre2fashion News Desk)

In late September, it was reported that a factory owner and four supervisors were sentenced to two years in jail for forcing mentally handicapped people to work in brick kilns in Anhui Province without payment. Police

discovered the workers in June and rescued them. The mentally handicapped workers were forced to work during the daytime by means of threats and physical abuse. At night, they were locked in. (RTR)

Three mine managers of Yile Coal Mine in Guizhou Province were prosecuted at the end of September for a gas blast that killed 16 workers on January 28. The deaths were believed to be caused by a combination of poor management, operation and surveillance. (XH)

Chen Zongfei and Huang Shubin, the two owners of the Feida Shoe Factory in Putian City, were arrested on October 24 for failing to prevent a fire that killed 37 workers and injured 19 others. Qui Jincai, an official in charge of work safety with Xiuyu District Government in Putian, was also suspended from duty. In the aftermath of the blaze, a total of 64 workshops have been closed in Xiuyu because they had problems similar to Feida. A citywide campaign to inspect all shoe factories was launched and will last until March 2008. (XH)

Police detained four people suspected of being responsible for an October 25 coal mine explosion in Chongqing Province that left ten dead and one missing. The detained included Wang Dafu, board chairman of Yuejin Coal Mine, Li Shiwu, manager of the mine, a deputy manager and a staff member. (XH)

Labor accidents

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

DEATH PENALTY

The Italian anti-death penalty NGO "Hands Off Cain" said in its report that China executed at least 5,000 people in 2006, while unverified sources suggested a higher number of 8,000. The organization continues to rank China as the world's "top executioner." (VOA)

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

AFP	Agence France Presse
AP	Associated Press
AT	Asia Times
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCTV	China Central Television
CD	China Daily
CRD	Chinese Rights Defenders
CSM	Christian Science Monitor
FT	Financial Times
HRIC	Human Rights in China
MP	Ming Pao
NYT	The New York Times
RTR	Reuters
RFA	Radio Free Asia
SCMP	South China Morning Post
SHD	Shanghai Daily
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization
VOA	Voice of America
WP	Washington Post
WSJ	Wall Street Journal
XH	Xinhua News Agency