



JANUARY 26

Chinese Lunar New Year, Year of the Ox.

The Chinese calendar is an astronomical calendar, organized into cycles of 60 years that are separated into ten stems. These stems are further separated into five elements and twelve branches—the animal astrological signs. January 26 begins the Year of the Ox, predicted to be a year that calls for cautiousness, pragmatism, and endurance.

FEBRUARY 9, 11

First review of China by the UN Human Rights Council in the Universal Periodic Review Mechanism.

The UN General Assembly Resolution 60/251, which created the Human Rights Council, mandates that the Council should conduct a universal periodic review (UPR), “based on objective and reliable information, of the fulfillment by each State of its human rights obligations and commitments.” Each of the UN member states is reviewed once every four years. Under Council Resolution 5/1 adopted on June 18, 2007, NGOs are allowed to actively engage in the UPR mechanism.

MARCH

20th Anniversary of the founding of Human Rights in China.

Human Rights in China (HRIC), a non-profit and non-governmental organization, was founded in March 1989 by Chinese students and scholars in the United States. With a diverse staff now including Chinese lawyers, journalists, scholars, and activists, and a China office in Hong Kong, HRIC is actively engaged in advocacy on behalf of individuals and promoting the institutional protection of human rights in China.

MARCH 5-7

20th Anniversary of the Chinese crackdown on demonstrations against Chinese rule in Tibet in 1989.

After several days of demonstrations that began on March 3, 1989, the PRC State Council declared martial law in the Tibet Autonomous Region on March 7.¹ President Hu Jintao, then Party Secretary of the Provincial Party Committee of the Tibet Autonomous Region (1988–1992), implemented the martial law decree. While only a small number of deaths were officially reported, estimates of Tibetans killed range from 80–400.²

MARCH 10-19

50th Anniversary of the Chinese crackdown on Tibetan protests against Chinese rule and flight of the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, from Tibet (March 17, 1959).

Thousands of Tibetans were killed in the crackdown and thousands more were imprisoned. The Dalai Lama fled with 80,000 other Tibetans to Dharamsala, India, where the Tibetan Government-in-Exile was established.³

Notes

1. “Martial Law Decree of the People’s Government of the Tibet Autonomous Region,” No. 1 (1989), March 7, 1989, http://www.tpprc.org/documents/agreements/1989_martial_law_decree.pdf.
2. The Office of Tibet, *Tibet: Proving Truth from Facts* (1996), <http://www.tibet.com/WhitePaper/white5.html>.
3. International Campaign for Tibet, “The Dalai Lama’s Biography,” <http://www.savetibet.org/resource-center/dalai-lama/the-dalai-lamas-biography>.

MAY 4

90th Anniversary of the May Fourth Movement.

On May 4, 1919, about 3,000 Beijing university students demonstrated in Tiananmen Square to protest the Chinese government's concession at the Paris Conference (April 28) to hand over to Japan the former German leasehold in Shandong Province. Demonstrations and strikes spread to Shanghai, followed by a nationwide boycott of Japanese goods. The demonstrations developed into a patriotic anti-imperialist, cultural, and political movement.

JUNE 4

20th Anniversary of the June 4, 1989 crackdown.

Some key dates of the 1989 democracy movement and crackdown:⁴

- **April 15:** Groups of students began mourning the death of reformist leader Hu Yaobang, CPC General Secretary (1981–1987), in Tiananmen Square. It soon expanded into a protest against economic problems and official corruption and a call for democratic reform that was supported by intellectuals, workers, and other citizens.
- **April 26:** An editorial in the official newspaper, *People's Daily*, declared the protest “turmoil.”
- **May 13:** 160 students began a hunger strike to demand an official retraction of the label “turmoil,” and acknowledgment of the protesters’ patriotism. The number of demonstrators who marched in Beijing—many from other cities—reached one million on May 17 and 18.
- **May 19:** Martial law was declared. People’s Liberation Army (PLA) troops began approaching Beijing. Citizens stopped tanks and troops from reaching the city and donated food to the students on the Square.
- **June 3–4:** PLA troops opened fire on demonstrators. Bodies were quickly removed and no official list of casualties has ever been released. Initially, the Chinese Red Cross reported that 2,600 people had died, but then retracted its report. The official government numbers are 241 dead, 7,000 wounded.



JULY 22

10th Anniversary of the Chinese government crackdown on Falun Gong in 1999.

- **April 25:** An estimated 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners staged a sit-in protest in front of Zhongnanhai to appeal for the release of detained practitioners in Tianjin.
- **July 22:** The Chinese government banned Falun Gong and labeled it a “cult” (*xiejiao zuzhi* [邪教组织]), beginning a systematic crackdown.

AUGUST 26

220th Anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen.

The *Declaration*, a core document of the French Revolution, was approved by the French National Assembly in 1789. Based upon core principles of equality and freedom, it enumerated liberty, property, security, and resistance to oppression as rights inherent to all men. It is viewed as a precursor of modern international human rights.

OCTOBER 1

60th Anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

In 1949, the People’s Republic of China was established after the Communist Party of China defeated the Kuomintang in the Chinese Civil War.

Note

4. Human Rights in China, *China Rights Forum* (2) 2008.

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