

ORGANIZING AND CONTRIBUTING TO POST-OLYMPICS ASSESSMENTS

OCTOBER 21

**New York City Bar Association Foreign and Comparative Law Committee:
“China: Post-Olympics Reflections” | NEW YORK CITY**

Executive Director Sharon Hom presented a post-Olympics assessment to the members of the Foreign and Comparative Law Committee of the New York City Bar Association. Ms. Hom focused on Beijing’s Olympic promises and the legacy of the Games, including the impact of the media regulations for foreign journalists, the real cost of the Games and infrastructure, and the increasingly conservative domestic climate in China.

OCTOBER 27

**HRIC/FIDH/ICT Co-hosted Discussion: “Promoting Human Rights in China:
Post-Olympics Legacy and Opportunities” | BRUSSELS, BELGIUM**

HRIC, along with the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and International Campaign for Tibet (ICT), hosted a discussion on the legacy and opportunities presented by the Beijing Olympics. The discussion was moderated by Jean-Paul Marthoz, Director of Enjeux Internationaux and columnist at the Belgian newspaper *Le Soir*, and featured presentations by a number of speakers. Sam Geall, Deputy Editor of www.chinadialogue.net, spoke regarding the environmental impact of the Games; Greg Walton, SecDev Fellow at Citizenlab, spoke on high technology and security; Pierre Haski, former correspondent to China for Liberation and Director of www.rue89.fr, discussed media freedom and freedom of expression; while Françoise Robin, Lector with the Tibetan Section of Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), Vincent Metten, EU Policy Director at ICT, and HRIC Executive Director Sharon Hom spoke on social development in China and Tibet. *[For articles featuring discussion content, see “Blue Skies over Beijing” by Sam Geall and “Tibet at a Turning Point” by Vincent Metten in this issue.]*

NOVEMBER 17

**Canada/European Union Post-Olympics Assessment:
“Human Rights, Civil Society and Governance in China” | HONG KONG**

Executive Director Sharon Hom spoke at this special Canada/European Union roundtable event organized for the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Participants included government representatives, scholars, and NGOs. Ms. Hom, along with Anthony Spires, Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, presented during a session on “Civil Society Organizations in China: a Rising Trend?” and “How far can Hong Kong influence the Civil Society Organizations in China?”

DECEMBER 15**Post-Olympics Assessment Breakfast Briefing | NEW YORK CITY**

Atlantic Philanthropies hosted a private briefing on the impact of the Olympic Games on the environment and human rights in China, as well as the current political climate and strategies for improvement going forward. Gara LaMarche, President & CEO of Atlantic Philanthropies, moderated the discussion; Elizabeth Economy, C.V. Starr Senior Fellow and Director of Asia Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, spoke regarding the environment; and Executive Director Sharon Hom spoke on the human rights challenges. [For an article featuring discussion content, see “Elizabeth Economy on China’s Environment” in this issue.]

PROMOTING CHINA’S IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS AT THE UN

NOVEMBER 6–10**United Nations Committee Against Torture Review
of the People’s Republic of China | GENEVA**

Executive Director Sharon Hom and Hong Kong Program Director Kenneth Lim participated in the review by the United Nations Committee Against Torture of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) on implementation of the *Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (CAT).

To contribute to the Committee’s review, HRIC submitted an NGO parallel report detailing key areas of concern regarding PRC implementation of CAT, and providing a number of recommendations. On November 6, Ms. Hom also presented an oral intervention to the Committee during its session for NGOs from China, Hong Kong, and Macao. Ms. Hom and Mr. Lim attended the November 7 Committee session, in which members of the Committee raised their concerns about inadequate information provided by the Chinese government on its compliance with CAT, and the November 10 Committee session, in which members of China’s delegation responded to those concerns.

The Committee issued its findings in a sweeping report on November 21, stating that it “remains deeply concerned about the continued allegations, corroborated by numerous Chinese legal sources, of routine and widespread use of torture and ill-treatment of suspects in police custody, especially to extract confessions or information to be used in criminal proceedings.” The Committee’s findings included areas of concern addressed in HRIC’s parallel NGO report, including the state secrets system, Reeducation-Through-Labor, and lack of access to counsel—all of which create situations in which defendants and detainees are vulnerable to abuse and torture. More information on the Committee’s findings, as well as links to HRIC’s parallel report, oral intervention, and related documents, can be found at <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/78014>.

NOVEMBER

United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention

HRIC submitted three cases to this independent international body of human rights experts, to bring attention to the arbitrary detention of these individuals in violation of their human rights. HRIC builds on decisions by the Working Group to push for the release of individuals and raises their cases with governments that participate in human rights dialogues with China, including the European Union (EU), EU member state governments, and the United States (U.S.) government.

ADVANCING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

OCTOBER 29

Launch of the Global Network Initiative

After two years of negotiation in which HRIC took active part, a multi-stakeholder group of companies, civil society organizations (including HRIC and other human rights and press freedom groups), investors, and academics officially launched the “Global Network Initiative,” a collaborative initiative to protect and advance freedom of expression and privacy in the information and communications technology sector. More information on this Initiative, including the core documents detailing the Initiative’s objectives and the key commitments of the participants, can be found at <http://www.globalnetworkinitiative.org>.

OCTOBER 28

European Economic and Social Committee | BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

Executive Director Sharon Hom provided an update on corporate social responsibility and related issues at the European Economic and Social Committee’s preparatory meeting for the Fourth EU-China Round Table.

REACHING BROADER AUDIENCES

OCTOBER 14

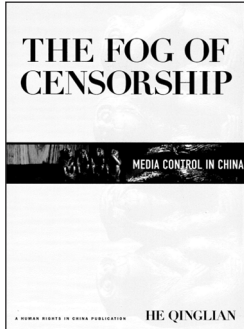
New York University School of Law’s

**Timothy A. Gelatt Dialogue on Law and Society in Asia:
“China’s ‘Re-Education Through Labor’ and Taiwan’s ‘Technical Training Institutions’”**

| NEW YORK CITY

Executive Director Sharon Hom spoke as a commentator at this discussion of “Prospects for Abolishing or Reforming RTL” and of the question “Do Taiwan’s ‘Security Tribunals’ Provide Enough Safeguards for ‘Hooligans’ Targeted by Police?,” presented by U.S.-Asia Law Institute Senior Research Fellows Daniel Ping Yu and Margaret K. Lewis, respectively. U.S.-Asia Law Institute Co-Director Professor Jerome A. Cohen moderated the discussion, and Professors Zhiyuan Guo (China University of Political Science and Law and Guanghua Foundation Visiting Scholar, U.S.-Asia Law Institute) and Frank Upham (Co-Director, U.S.-Asia Law Institute) also provided comments.

PRESENTING HRIC RESEARCH WORK



OCTOBER 24

Discussion and Book Signing: *The Fog of Censorship: Media Control in China* by He Qinglian | NEW YORK CITY

As part of the launch of the English edition of *The Fog of Censorship*, HRIC Senior Researcher in Residence He Qinglian discussed the conclusions of her work and the issue of censorship in China, and fielded questions from an audience of about 20 people, including lawyers, academics, journalists, and others. Executive Director Sharon Hom moderated the discussion.

SPECIAL EVENT

OCTOBER 15

Bernstein Fellow Reception | NEW YORK CITY

HRIC board member William Bernstein hosted a reception to celebrate the Robert L. Bernstein Fellowship in International Human Rights. This fellowship enables an NYU Law School graduate to devote a year to full-time human rights work at HRIC. The fellowship is established in honor of Mr. Robert L. Bernstein, Director and Chair Emeritus of HRIC and Founding Chair and Director Emeritus of Human Rights Watch, who has made lifelong contributions to human rights in China and around the world. The event was attended by Mr. Robert L. Bernstein, HRIC board members including Christine Loh, Andrew Nathan, and R. Scott Greathead, Executive Director Sharon Hom, and 2008 Fellowship recipient Chen Yu-Jie.

HONG KONG HIGHLIGHT: HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

HRIC's Hong Kong staff participated in the annual Human Rights Day Carnival held on December 7 in Mongkok, a busy Hong Kong shopping district. With a total of 27 local NGOs participating, the Human Rights Day Carnival attracted thousands of people.

Hundreds of mainland and Hong Kong visitors stopped by HRIC's booth to take copies of our publications. Books, especially Chinese-language ones, were quickly snapped up and staff had to go back to the HRIC office mid-way through the event to restock Chinese-language materials. Many visitors also stopped by to read HRIC's information display. With a large map of China as a backdrop, and the theme of "Hundred years of dreams" [百年梦], the display mapped out examples of specific human rights issues, such as environment, housing, and health, with accompanying information summaries.

HRIC also had a "free expression" message board, on which members of the public were invited to write down their own dreams/wishes for Chinese human rights development. Even young children came forward to write their messages on the board, for example, "wish everyone in China has a job" [希望中国人人有工做], and "wish Chinese people do not sell pirated goods" [希望中国人唔好卖翻版]. Many of our younger visitors also participated in our games section. Children with their parents played the "building tower" game and learned that China's development, skipping all those "foundation stones" of human rights or environmental protection, would fall down.

HRIC SPEAKS

In the fall of 2008, HRIC actively engaged the media by:

- Issuing news updates and statements to an extensive recipient list of reporters, producers, advocates, and researchers; and
- Speaking with print, broadcast, and online media.

Topics included crackdowns on human rights defenders, the 60th Anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and “Charter 08,” which calls for legal reforms, democracy, and protection of human rights in China.

PRESS RELEASES, STATEMENTS, CASE UPDATES: SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2008

September 10, 2008: HRIC September Take Action: Put an End to Torture in China

HRIC highlighted the case of **Guo Feixiong** (郭飞雄), a human rights defender currently serving a five year sentence for editing a book about a political scandal. Guo was convicted based upon a confession extracted by torture.

September 10, 2008: Open Letter to Meizhou Prison

HRIC sent an open letter to Meizhou Prison in Guangdong to appeal for better treatment for **Guo Feixiong** (郭飞雄).

September 15, 2008: Petitioners Call Sentence Repeal a “Victory for Civilization,” Thank International Media

HRIC published a letter of gratitude from the elderly petitioners **Wu Dianyuan** (吴殿元) and **Wang Xiuying** (王秀英) after an international outcry helped lead to the rescinding of their Reeducation-Through-Labor sentence handed down during the Olympics.

September 16, 2008: Mao Hengfeng, Petitioner on Family Planning Issues, Reports Continued Abuse in Prison

Mao Hengfeng (毛恒凤), later released after serving a two-and-a-half year sentence for destruction of property, reported continued abuse in prison, including being jabbed with needles, being assaulted by prisoners, and being having sound played continuously in her cell.

September 16, 2008: Chengdu House Church Files First Suit in China Against Government Religious Authority

Qiuyu Blessings Church, a house church in Chengdu, filed suit against the Shuangliu County Bureau of People's Religious Affairs for illegally shutting down a religious gathering held by the church on May 2, 2008. Update: On September 23, the Shuangliu County Court informed the plaintiff that the court had requested the higher level court in Chengdu to accept this case because it involves “religion” and impacts on Shuangliu’s area of jurisdiction, and the plaintiff should revise its complaint. On September 23, the Chengdu Municipal Religious Affairs Bureau made an administrative supervision decision to annul the May 6 administrative decision made by the Shuangliu County Bureau of Religious Affairs. On

October 6, the Shuangliu County Court was ordered not to accept the case because the administrative decision which was the basis of plaintiff's suit had been annulled.

September 26, 2008: Sichuan Teacher, Liu Shaokun, was Released to Serve his Reeducation-Through-Labor Sentence Outside of Labor Camp

Liu Shaokun (刘绍坤), who had been sentenced to one year of Reeducation-Through-Labor after photographing collapsed schools in Sichuan, was released to serve his sentence outside the labor camp. Liu's family expressed gratitude to HRIC and the international community for their concern.

October 8, 2008: Security Forces Beat Impoverished Villagers Seeking Redress for Man-Made Disaster

Hundreds of peasants organized a peaceful sit-in and blocked traffic at a major road in Sanjiang town, Guangdong Province, to protest the collapse of a local dam which had been made vulnerable by the official sale of the surrounding palm trees. The sit-in was brutally broken up by over 500 police officers.

October 17, 2008: HRIC Calls for Press Freedom for all Journalists in China

HRIC welcomed the Chinese government's decision to make permanent the temporary regulations governing foreign reporters during the Olympic Games, but called on the government to extend these same basic protections to domestic journalists as well.

October 23, 2008: HRIC Congratulates Hu Jia, Recipient of 2008 Sakharov Prize

HRIC welcomed the conferral of the 2008 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to rights activist **Hu Jia** (胡佳), both for the recognition of his work as an individual and as a symbol of international concern for the situation within China.

October 31, 2008: Lawyers Are Dismissed by Firms for Supporting Beijing Lawyers Association Direct Election, Law Firms are Threatened

Rights defense lawyers **Cheng Hai** (程海) and **Li Subin** (李苏滨) were asked to resign from their positions at Beijing Yitong Law Firm on October 30, after calling for direct election of the officials of the state-controlled Beijing Lawyers Association [equivalent to the Bar Association].

November 3, 2008: Rights Defender Subjected to Torture in Prison is Denied Access to Lawyer

Rights defender **Guo Feixiong** (郭飞雄), who had been tortured in prison, was also denied access to legal counsel when his attorney **Hu Xiao** (胡啸) travelled over 1,000 miles to Meizhou Prison, but was not permitted to meet with Guo.

November 4, 2008: Prominent Advocate of Direct Local Elections is Disappeared by Authorities

Yao Lifa (姚立法), an advocate of direct elections and a teacher in Hubei Province, was disappeared by local authorities prior to the Qianjiang Municipal elections. Yao had angered authorities by working to uncover official manipulation of the election.

November 10, 2008: UN Experts: "Serious Information Gap" on China's Efforts to End Torture

The United Nations Committee Against Torture criticized China for failing to provide substantive answers to the issues it raised regarding torture in China. HRIC participated in China's review before

the Committee by submitting a parallel report, presenting an oral intervention in Geneva, and meeting with the press.

November 13, 2008: Guizhou Police Threaten Rights Group Over Commemoration of 60th Anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

A group in Guizhou that planned to organize a seminar to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*—led by **Chen Xi** (陈西), **Shen Youlian** (申有连), and **Liao Xuangyuan** (廖双元)—was threatened by the police. The group vowed not to back down.

November 18, 2008: HRIC Condemns XUAR Authorities' Plans to Force Six-Month Pregnant Woman to Undergo Abortion

Six-months pregnant **Arzigul Tursun** was detained by authorities in Ghula (Yining Prefecture in Chinese) in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region so as to be forced to undergo an abortion due to population control policies. HRIC later learned that she was released without having undergone the procedure on November 18.

November 21, 2008: UN Committee Says China "Should Take Immediate Steps to Prevent Acts of Torture"

The UN Committee Against Torture issued its report on China's compliance with international obligations regarding torture. The Committee mentioned three "over-arching problems": the 1998 *State Secrets Law*, harassment of legal rights defenders, and physical assaults on rights defenders by unaccountable thugs. The Committee also recommended the abolition of the Reeducation-Through-Labor system, initiation of thorough investigations into allegations of harassment of rights defenders, abolition of any provisions preventing right to legal counsel, and an impartial investigation into the events of June 4, 1989.

November 24, 2008: Rights Activist's Family Sends Appeal After Home was Demolished

Authorities in Beijing's Xicheng District used a bulldozer to demolish the home of rights defense activist **Ni Yulan** (倪玉兰), who has been in detention since April 2008 without a trial. Her husband, **Dong Jiqin** (董继勤), was made homeless and as a result slept in a train station in Beijing after the forced demolition.

December 5, 2008: Two Guizhou Rights Activists Detained

Chen Xi (陈西) and **Shen Youlian** (申有连), two main organizers of the Guizhou Citizens Fourth Annual International Human Rights Symposium and the 60th Anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* commemorative events, were taken away by the police in the afternoon of December 4, 2008. Three other Symposium organizers, **Liao Shuangyuan** (廖双元), **Huang Yanming** (黄燕明), and **Du Heping** (杜和平), had already "disappeared" before December 4.

December 9, 2008: Independent Scholars Detained: Start of 2009 Crackdown?

A diverse group of 303 Chinese writers, intellectuals, lawyers, journalists, retired Party officials, workers, peasants, and businessmen issued an open letter—"Charter 08"—calling for legal reforms, democracy, and protection of human rights in China. On December 8, Beijing public security officers took away two of the Charter's signatories—**Liu Xiaobo** (刘晓波) and **Zhang Zhuhua** (张祖桦). Zhang was released after 12 hours of interrogation, but Liu remains detained on suspicion of "inciting subversion of state power." An English translation of the Charter is available at <http://hrichina.org/public/contents/85717>.

HRIC SELECT INTERVIEW QUOTES—60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE *UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS* AND “CHARTER 08” | DECEMBER 2008

On the 60th Anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

“China has signed and ratified many important international human rights treaties. This reflects that the Chinese government has acknowledged universal values and standards, but from the point of view of Human Rights in China, and from the point of view of the human rights field, China has a saying (听其言观其行): “Judge people by their deeds, not just by their words.” So even though there has been a lot of progress on paper, we need to consider that the state of human rights in China has worsened after the Olympics. A perfect example of this is the current criminal detention of the prominent dissident Liu Xiaobo.”

“The Voice from the North,” Radio Canada International (Mandarin service), December 11, 2008, <http://www.rcinet.ca/rci/console/index.asp?langue=CH&IDExtraits>.

“China is now in its thirty years of economic reform, but yet no political reform. The reality for the vast majority of China’s 1.3 billion people is that they have been left behind by the economic reforms. China presents the most difficult challenge of human rights abuses and will be a test for this emerging human rights system that has been built on top of the *Universal Declaration*.”

“The Universal Declaration of Human Rights turns 60,” BBC Radio 4, *The World Tonight*, December 10, 2008, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/news/worldtonight/>.

On harassment of “Charter 08” signatories

“And [HRIC Executive Director Sharon Hom] says she expects the crackdown to continue into next year, because of many sensitive and significant anniversaries. These include the 20th anniversary of the June 4 Tiananmen Square crackdown, the 50th anniversary of the Dalai Lama’s flight into exile and the 60th anniversary of the founding of modern China.”

Stephanie Ho, “Chinese Protesters Call for Legal Reforms, Human Rights,” Voice of America, December 10, 2008, <http://voanews.com/english/2008-12-10-voa25.cfm>.

HRIC ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES

HRIC welcomed **A.C.** to the New York staff as Program Assistant. A.C. has a BA and master's, both in international relations and China studies. A.C. has spent time studying in Beijing, and has also worked on public health and rural children's education issues in China.

HRIC welcomed **J.C.** to the Hong Kong staff as Technology Program Associate. He has an AS in computer science and over seven years of experience in the information technology and graphic design industry. J.C. has volunteered for several organizations that serve homeless persons and LGBT youth. He also helped to launch the first LGBT youth community theater in Seattle, Washington.

HRIC hosted four Advocacy and Research Program Interns this fall in its New York and Hong Kong offices:

Tiffany Chen is a junior at Columbia University with a double major in political science and East Asian languages and culture. As the current

president of the Chinese Students Club, she serves as the liaison between Chinese culture and the Columbia campus. Recently, she spearheaded a benefit concert and raised money for the victims of the Sichuan earthquake. She has previously interned at the Committee of House Administration in Washington, D.C., as well as various political offices in New York City.

Garrett Traub graduated from Princeton University in May 2008 with a BA in politics, concentrating in international relations. He has worked as a paralegal at Wilmer, Cutler, Pickering, Hale & Dorr LLP, and intends to pursue a JD with a focus on international human rights law.

P.B. is currently studying international human rights law for her Master of International Law at the Australian National University, Canberra. She has completed a Bachelor of Asian Studies, specializing in Chinese language, Asian history and physics. In the course of those studies, she spent a year studying Chinese language and culture at

Zhejiang and Yunnan Universities. In 2006 she worked as a volunteer with the Karen Women's Organization (KWO) in Mae Sot, Thailand. She assisted KWO staff members responsible for health, education, and income generation projects conducted in refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border. She hopes to pursue a career within the human rights NGO community.

O.K. is currently studying government and public administration at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and will graduate with a BA Soc. in 2009. Before joining HRIC, he was a research trainee at the Hong Kong Policy Research Institute in 2004, where he assisted in a research project regarding district board elections. He is also currently a research assistant in the Department of Government and Public Administration at CUHK, and is working on a project to assess the Hong Kong 2008 Legislative Council election. After graduation, he plans to pursue legal studies.