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Freedom in the World 2024 - China

NOT FREE

9

/ 100

[Political Rights](#) -2 / 40

[Civil Liberties](#) 11 / 60

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

9 / 100 Not Free

Global freedom statuses are calculated on a weighted scale. [See the methodology.](#)

Note

The numerical scores and status listed above do not reflect conditions in Hong Kong or Tibet, which are examined in separate reports. *Freedom in the World* reports assess the level of political rights and civil liberties in a given geographical area, regardless of whether they are affected by the state, nonstate actors, or foreign powers. Territories are sometimes assessed separately if they meet certain criteria, including boundaries that are sufficiently stable to allow year-on-year comparisons. For more information, see the report [methodology](#) and [FAQ](#).

Overview

China's authoritarian regime has become increasingly repressive in recent years. The ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) maintains tight control over all aspects of life and governance, including the state bureaucracy, the media, online speech, religious practice, universities, businesses, and civil society. CCP general secretary Xi Jinping has consolidated personal power to a degree not seen in China for decades. Following a multiyear crackdown on political dissent, independent nongovernmental

organizations (NGOs), and human rights defenders, China's civil society has been largely decimated.

Key Developments in 2023

- CCP general secretary Xi received a third term as state president in March. Li Qiang, an ally of the general secretary, was named premier that month.
- Foreign Minister Qin Gang was dismissed in July, a month after he fell out of public view. Officials were reportedly told Qin was dismissed over "lifestyle issues," a euphemism for sexual misconduct.
- Defense Minister Li Shangfu was dismissed in October, two months after he fell from public view. Li was reportedly removed from his post after he was the subject of a corruption probe or was purged.
- A revised Counterespionage Law took effect in July. The revised law restricts the transmission of information related to national security, which is not clearly defined; it also allows authorities to inspect electronic equipment and data and impose entry and exit bans on national security grounds.

Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections? 4

There are no direct or competitive elections for national executive leaders. The National People's Congress (NPC) formally elects the state president for five-year terms. The premier is nominated by the state president and confirmed by the NPC. In practice, both positions are determined in advance by the top CCP leadership and announced at the relevant party congress. The CCP's seven-member Politburo Standing Committee (PSC), headed by the party's general secretary, sets government and party policy.

Xi Jinping was appointed for a third five-year term as general secretary at the 20th Party Congress in 2022, paving the way for him to remain in power indefinitely. This marked a sharp break from the post-Cultural Revolution practice of maintaining a two-term limit for the country's highest leadership position. In March 2023, General Secretary Xi secured a third term as state president with a unanimous NPC vote. Xi also serves as chairman of the state and party military commissions.

Li Qiang, a close ally of Xi, was named premier in March 2023.

A2 0-4 pts

Were the current national legislative representatives elected 0 / through free and fair elections? 4

The NPC has a maximum of 3,000 members. They are formally elected for five-year terms by subnational congresses, but the CCP vets all candidates in practice. Only the NPC's standing committee meets regularly, with the full congress convening for just two weeks a year to approve proposed legislation; party organs and the State Council, or cabinet, effectively control lawmaking decisions. The most recent NPC, with 2,977 members, was seated in March 2023.

A3 0-4 pts

Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they 0 / implemented impartially by the relevant election management 4 bodies?

Political positions are directly elected only at the lowest levels. Independent candidates who obtain the signatures of 10 supporters are by law allowed to run for seats in the county-level people's congresses, and elections for village committees are also supposed to give residents the chance to choose their representatives. In practice, however, independent candidates for these posts are often kept off the ballot or out of office through intimidation, harassment, fraud, and sometimes detention.

Elections are not administered by an independent body. The indirect elections that populate people's congresses at various levels are conducted by those congresses' standing committees, while village-level elections are conducted by a village electoral committee that answers to the local party committee.

B Political Pluralism and Participation

B1 0-4 pts

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, 0 / and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of 4 these competing parties or groupings?

The CCP effectively monopolizes all political activity and does not permit meaningful political competition. Eight small noncommunist parties are represented in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, an official advisory body, but their activities are tightly circumscribed, and they must accept the CCP's leadership as a condition for their existence.

Citizens who have sought to establish genuinely independent political parties or prodemocracy movements are nearly all in prison, under house arrest, or in exile. The authorities continue to hold prodemocracy activists and lawyers in various forms of detention and prison. In April 2023, New

Citizens' Movement (NCM) founder and legal activist Xu Zhiyong, who was detained in 2020, received a 14-year prison sentence on charges of state subversion. Ding Jiayi, another figure within the NCM, received a 12-year sentence.

B2 0-4 pts

Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections? 0 / 4

China's one-party system provides no institutional mechanism for organized political opposition. The CCP has ruled without interruption since winning a civil war against the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) in 1949. Informal factions, sometimes based on personal connections, are known to exist within the CCP, but their functioning is opaque. Xi has steadily increased his personal power and authority within the party since 2012, notably by purging rivals and challengers as part of an anticorruption campaign.

B3 0-4 pts

Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means? 0 / 4

The CCP is not accountable to voters and denies the public any meaningful participation in political affairs. The party uses a broad array of coercive tools and methods to suppress independent political engagement.

B4 0-4 pts

Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities? 0 / 4

The political system is dominated in practice by ethnic Han Chinese men. Women, ethnic and religious minorities, and LGBT+ people have no opportunity to gain meaningful political representation.

Nominal representatives of ethnic minority groups such as Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Mongolians hold administrative offices and participate in party and state bodies like the NPC, but their role is largely symbolic. Women are severely underrepresented in top party and government positions. No women were named to the Politburo in 2022, marking the first time in 25 years that no women were included. Shen Yiqin, who observers regarded as a likely addition to the Politburo, joined the State Council in March 2023. No woman has ever sat on the PSC.

C Functioning of Government

C1 0-4 pts

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government? 0 / 4

None of China's national leaders are freely elected, and the legislature plays a rubber-stamp role in policymaking and the development of new laws. The concentration of power in Xi's hands, a cult of personality centered on Xi, and his regular calls for greater ideological conformity and party supremacy have further reduced the limited space for policy debate, even within the CCP.

C2 0-4 pts

Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective? 1 / 4

Since becoming CCP leader in 2012, Xi has pursued an extensive anticorruption campaign. Well over a million officials have been investigated and punished, according to official figures, including senior state, party, and military officials. Anticorruption functions are currently managed by the National Supervisory Commission, which was established through a 2018 merger of existing state and party entities and is tasked with enforcing political and ideological discipline in addition to compliance with the law.

Recent anticorruption efforts originally focused on law enforcement agencies but have extended to various other government entities. Nevertheless, corruption remains rooted in the one-party system, which does not tolerate the institutions necessary for effectively addressing graft—such as a free press, independent civil society groups, and impartial courts.

In October 2023, Defense Minister Li Shangfu was dismissed without explanation, with observers believing he was the subject of a corruption probe or a purge. Top officers within the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Rocket Force were also removed during the year after facing probes.

C3 0-4 pts

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? 0 / 4

The Chinese government and the CCP are notoriously opaque. Regulations on "open government" do not effectively compel local party and state organs to share critical data or respond to citizen requests. Under Xi's leadership, the government has developed increasingly sophisticated methods for controlling the diffusion of information and shaping public discourse. The government has increasingly stopped publishing economic statistics in recent years. In August 2023, for example, it stopped publishing youth-unemployment data, citing methodology concerns. A June report showed high unemployment for 16-to-24-year-old urban residents. Beijing did not resume sharing that data by year's end.

Beijing did not transparently disclose cabinet dismissals in 2023. Qin Gang was removed as foreign minister in July but was out of public view a month before. The government did not publicly explain his ouster, though officials were reportedly told that Qin was fired over "lifestyle issues," a

euphemism for sexual misconduct. Li Shangfu was out of public view two months before he was removed as defense minister.

Add Q

Is the government or occupying power deliberately changing the ethnic composition of a country or territory so as to destroy a -3 culture or tip the political balance in favor of another group?

Chinese authorities have aggressively pursued policies to deliberately alter the demographics of ethnic minority regions, particularly in Xinjiang, Tibet, and Inner Mongolia. Authorities in Xinjiang have interned more than a million Uyghurs and other members of Turkic ethnic minority groups in prisons, other forms of detention, and in so-called Vocational Skills Education and Training Centers (VSETCs), though some VSETCs have reportedly closed in recent years. According to Beijing, VSETCs are educational centers, Uyghurs and others voluntarily enter them, and VSETCs curb terrorist and extremist activity. However, a cache of internal government documents obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and published in 2022 provided evidence of their coercive and abusive nature. The documents, which date back to 2017, describe facilities secured by armed guards who have been issued shoot-to-kill orders against anyone attempting to escape. Detainees are subjected to aggressive forms of indoctrination and political reeducation that aim to undermine their ethnic identities and religious beliefs.

Uyghur and other Muslim women in Xinjiang, particularly those with two or more children, are subject to a forced-sterilization program. Previous investigations and witness testimony have revealed that Xinjiang authorities have coerced women to accept surgical sterilization, forcibly implanted intrauterine contraceptive devices prior to internment, administered unknown drugs and injections to women in detention, and used fines and internment as punishment for birth-control violations.

Beijing also employs so-called poverty alleviation measures; hundreds of thousands of Uyghurs and other ethnic minority members—mostly farmers and other residents authorities refer to as “surplus rural laborers”—are coerced into taking low-wage jobs away from their hometowns, largely in state-owned factories. Participants described prison-like environments where individuals are subjected to political indoctrination. In a 2022 report, a UN special rapporteur cited evidence that the programs involve forced labor, heavy surveillance, violence, and degrading treatment, and that “some instances may amount to enslavement as a crime against humanity.”

Increasing numbers of ethnic minority children in Xinjiang and Tibet have been separated from their parents and forced to attend state-run boarding schools, where Mandarin is the sole language of instruction and where students are subject to intense political indoctrination. Those who protest are subject to detention and other forms of punishment. In recent

years the Ministry of Education has required preschools across China to make Mandarin the language of instruction, reflecting an ongoing push to impose Mandarin as the dominant language at all educational levels and further weaken the cultural identities of ethnic minority groups and individuals. A multiyear campaign of detaining and imposing long prison terms on ethnic minority writers, scholars, musicians, and religious figures continues to damage the cultural, religious, social, and economic leadership of these communities.

Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? 0 / 4

China is home to one of the world's most restrictive media environments and its most sophisticated system of censorship, particularly online. The CCP maintains control over news reporting via direct ownership, accreditation of journalists, harsh penalties for comments that are critical of party leaders or the CCP, and daily directives to media outlets and websites that guide coverage of breaking news stories.

State management of the telecommunications infrastructure enables website blocks, removal of smartphone applications from the domestic market, and mass deletion of social media posts and user accounts that address banned topics. Thousands of websites have been blocked, many for years, including major news and social media hubs like the *New York Times*, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), YouTube, X, and Facebook.

Rules and regulations governing the media and internet usage include measures that restrict news dissemination and contribute to the banning of mobile apps focused on minority languages, Bible content, and foreign-language learning, among other topics. Censors have also removed large numbers of social media groups, accounts, or posts that dealt with LGBT+ issues, financial advice, critical views of CCP history, and celebrities. The country's network of pro-CCP volunteer internet commentators and paid employees, respectively standing at 20 million and 2 million as of 2021, aggressively monitors and censors online communications.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), 44 journalists were imprisoned in China as of December 2023, though the number of people held for uncovering or sharing newsworthy information is far greater. Numerous citizen journalists and bloggers have been detained, disappeared, or criminally charged in recent years. Ruan Xiaohuan, a dissident blogger who was arrested in 2021, received a seven-year prison term for state subversion in February 2023. In April, Fang Bin, a citizen journalist who was detained for sharing information about the COVID-19

outbreak in Wuhan in early 2020, was released. A relative said Fang had been charged with “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” a charge authorities commonly use to restrict offline and online expression.

D2 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? 0 / 4

The party-state operates a multifaceted apparatus to control all aspects of religious activity, including by vetting religious leaders for political reliability, placing limits on the number of religious authorities such as priests and imams, requiring ideological conformity within religious doctrine, and installing security cameras inside religious establishments. The state recognizes Buddhism, Catholicism, Islam, Protestant Christianity, and Taoism. All religious groups must go through a rigorous process of certification to be officially recognized; those that refuse are labeled illegal and persecuted. Thousands of Buddhist, Taoist, and folk-religion temples and house churches across China were completely or partially demolished by authorities in recent years.

Certain religions and religious groups, including Tibetan Buddhists, Uyghur Muslims, Falun Gong practitioners, and Christian “house churches,” are persecuted harshly. In Xinjiang, peaceful religious practices are routinely punished under charges of “religious extremism,” resulting in detention, prison sentences, and indoctrination for many Uyghur, Kazakh, and Hui Muslims. Authorities have also used digital surveillance to suppress the religious activities of Uyghur and Turkic Muslims; police have been known to interrogate residents who keep text from the Quran in their smartphones’ storage.

A new law regulating religious venues, which came into force in September 2023, reinforced state control over the organizational structure and personnel of religious groups. Under the measures, religious groups must maintain files on staff activities, including contact with foreign entities.

D3 0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? 0 / 4

Academic freedom is heavily restricted. Efforts to police classroom discussions are present at all levels of education, including via installation of surveillance cameras in some classrooms, large-scale recruitment of student informants, and the creation of special departments to supervise the political thinking of teaching staff. The CCP controls the appointment of top university officials, and CCP committees and party branches have significant formal authority over university administration. Many scholars self-censor to protect their careers and personal safety.

Political indoctrination, including the study of “Xi Jinping Thought,” is a required component of the curriculum at all levels of education. A number of universities have removed references to “freedom of thought” from their charters, replacing them with pledges of loyalty to the CCP. Professors and students face reprisal for expressing views that are deemed critical of the CCP’s governance or Xi’s leadership. In October 2023, the NPC’s standing committee approved the Patriotic Education Law, which mandates the teaching and dissemination of “patriotic education” in schools and other settings. The law will take effect in 2024.

D4 0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or 1 / other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? 4

Citizens continue to be charged and sentenced to sometimes long prison terms for critical or satirical social media posts on a variety of subjects, and criticism or perceived criticism of Xi or the CCP. In addition to criminal punishment, internet users face account deletions, job dismissals, arbitrary detention, and police interrogation over such posts.

The government’s vast ability to monitor citizens’ lives and communications inhibits online and offline conversations. Administrators of social media applications like WeChat closely monitor user discussions to ensure conformity with government content restrictions. Surveillance cameras, now frequently augmented with facial-recognition software, cover many urban areas and public transportation, and these networks are expanding into rural regions. Devices used by police to quickly extract and scan data from smartphones, initially deployed in Xinjiang, have spread nationwide.

Police have access to the personal details of broad categories of individuals. China’s Cybersecurity Law obliges companies to store Chinese users’ data within the country and submit to often intrusive security reviews. Telecommunications companies are required to obtain facial scans of new internet or mobile phone users as part of the real-name registration process, which is combined with mass surveillance tools to closely monitor all residents. Electronic surveillance is supplemented with offline monitoring by neighborhood party committees and “public security volunteers” who are visible during large events.

The revised Counterespionage Law gained the NPC standing committee’s approval in April 2023 and took effect in July. The revised law restricts the transmission of information related to national security, which is not clearly defined; it also allows authorities to inspect electronic equipment and data. After the law took effect, the Ministry of State Security called on ordinary citizens to engage in counterespionage activity.

There is an especially heavy police presence in ethnic minority regions, particularly Xinjiang. The ability of Uyghurs and members of other Muslim

minority groups in Xinjiang to express themselves freely, even in private, has been further undermined in recent years by a policy of having Chinese officials live in their homes to monitor and indoctrinate them.

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? 1 / 4

The constitution protects the right of citizens to demonstrate, but in practice protesters seldom obtain approval and risk punishment for assembling without permission. Spontaneous demonstrations have provided some outlet for local grievances, though they are frequently met with police violence and criminal prosecution. Solitary protests—in which an individual holds a placard in public, for example—can be criminally punished. Armed police have been accused of opening fire during past protests, particularly in Xinjiang.

Retirees objecting to health-care changes held several large protests in early 2023. In February, for example, several hundred retirees demonstrated in the cities of Dailan and Wuhan.

E2 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work? 0 / 4

Domestic and foreign NGOs lack meaningful autonomy. While hundreds of thousands of NGOs are formally registered, many effectively operate as government-sponsored entities and focus primarily on service delivery. Nearly all prominent NGOs that focused on policy advocacy, including in previously less politically sensitive areas, have been shuttered under government pressure in recent years. Engaging in NGO work unsanctioned by the state is risky, and many NGO workers have been detained and jailed.

Foreign NGOs are legally required to find a Chinese sponsor and register with the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), and police have the authority to search NGOs' premises without a warrant, seize property, detain personnel, and initiate criminal procedures.

LGBT+ organizations have closed or have had their social media activity restricted. The Beijing LGBT Center announced in May 2023 that it was closing under official pressure. In August, the WeChat accounts of several LGBT+ groups were shut down.

E3 0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? 1 / 4

The only legal labor union organization is the government-controlled All-China Federation of Trade Unions, which has long been criticized for failing to defend workers' rights. Efforts to organize independent trade unions are swiftly shut down by authorities, and the activists involved face harsh penalties. Workers have nevertheless engaged in a number of largely spontaneous strikes, assemblies, or other forms of public action, with at least one thousand being recorded in 2023.

F Rule of Law

F1 0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary? 1 / 4

The CCP dominates the judicial system, with courts at all levels supervised by party political-legal committees that have influence over the appointment of judges, court operations, and verdicts and sentences. CCP oversight is evident in politically sensitive cases, and most judges are CCP members. Judges are expected to conform to CCP ideology and uphold the principle of party supremacy over the judiciary. Many judges complain about local officials interfering in cases to protect powerful litigants, support important industries, or avoid their own potential liability.

F2 0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters? 1 / 4

Violations of due process are widespread in practice. Trials of human rights activists, religious dissidents, and other human rights defenders are routinely held in secret, with even family members being denied information or entry. While adjudication of routine civil and administrative disputes is considered more fair, cases that touch on politically sensitive issues or the interests of powerful groups are subject to decisive "guidance" from party political-legal committees.

Legal counselors are ultimately meant to serve the state as opposed to the client. Clients do not benefit from an expectation of attorney-client privilege.

Prosecutions rely heavily on confessions, many of which are obtained through torture, despite laws prohibiting such practices. Forced confessions are often televised. An ongoing crackdown on human rights lawyers has left many defendants without effective or independent legal counsel.

Extrajudicial forms of detention remain widespread. The practice of "residential surveillance in a designated location" allows the police to hold individuals in secret detention for up to six months and has been deployed against human rights defenders and lawyers, and government critics.

F3 0-4 pts

Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies? 0 / 4

Conditions in places of detention are harsh, with reports of inadequate food, regular beatings, and deprivation of medical care. In addition to their use to extract confessions, torture and other forms of coercion are widely employed in efforts to force political and religious dissidents to recant their beliefs. Impunity is the norm for police brutality and suspicious deaths in custody. Citizens and lawyers who seek redress for such abuse are often met with reprisals or imprisonment. Peaceful protesters are regularly beaten by police or hired aggressors.

Many political and religious dissidents have died in prison or shortly after release due to ill-treatment or denial of medical care. In February 2023, Radio Free Asia reported that Geshe Phende Gyaltsen, a Tibetan Buddhist monk, died in custody in late January. Phende Gyaltsen's condition reportedly deteriorated after he was tortured.

The government has gradually reduced the number of crimes that carry the death penalty but does not publish the number of executions it carries out. Despite the government's claim that it has ended the transplantation of organs from executed prisoners, the scale and speed of the transplantation industry far exceed what is feasible via the voluntary donation system. In 2021, a group of UN human rights experts expressed alarm over ongoing reports of organs being procured from ethnic and religious minority groups.

F4 0-4 pts

Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population? 0 / 4

Chinese laws formally prohibit discrimination based on nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, religion, or health condition, but these protections are often violated in practice. Several laws bar gender discrimination in the workplace, and some indicators of gender equality have reportedly improved over the past decade. Nevertheless, bias remains endemic, including in job recruitment and college admissions.

Women's rights activists and individuals who campaign against sexual harassment and assault have themselves faced harassment, detention, and in some cases criminal prosecution. In September 2023, Sophia Huang Xueqin, a prominent #MeToo advocate, was tried for state subversion along with labor rights campaigner Wang Jianbing. In December, the trial against women's rights campaigner Li Qiaochu, who received the same charge, began in Shandong Province.

Members of ethnic and religious minority groups, LGBT+ people, people with disabilities, and people with illnesses such as HIV, AIDS, and hepatitis B face discrimination in employment and access to education. Members of religious and ethnic minorities are disproportionately targeted and

abused by security forces and in the criminal justice system. In addition to being held in extrajudicial detention in larger numbers, members of these groups tend to be sentenced to longer prison terms than Han Chinese convicts.

Despite China's international obligation to protect the rights of asylum seekers and refugees, law enforcement agencies continue to repatriate North Korean defectors, who face imprisonment or execution upon return.

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education? 1 / 4

While China's constitution gives individuals the right to petition the government concerning a grievance or injustice, in practice petitioners are routinely intercepted in their efforts to travel to government centers, forcibly returned to their hometowns, or extralegally detained.

The *hukou* (household registration) prohibits 295 million internal migrants from enjoying full legal rights as residents in the cities where they work. However, local governments have loosened their enforcement in recent years. The government of Zhejiang Province removed some hukou restrictions in July 2023. In August, the MPS announced that it would lower barriers for obtaining registrations in some urban areas and encouraged local governments to abolish or relax some of their requirements.

Police checkpoints throughout Xinjiang limit residents' ability to travel or even leave their hometowns.

Millions of people are affected by government restrictions on their access to foreign travel and passports, with Uyghurs and Tibetans experiencing the greatest difficulty. Many overseas Chinese nationals who engage in politically sensitive activities abroad are prevented from returning to China, while those who seek refuge abroad often face forced repatriation and arrest.

The revised Counterespionage Law allows authorities to stop individuals from leaving China on national security grounds, including foreigners. The law also allows authorities to impose bans on entry.

G2 0-4 pts

Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors? 1 / 4

The authorities dominate the economy through state-owned enterprises in key sectors such as banking and energy, state ownership of land, and political and regulatory control. Chinese citizens are legally permitted to establish and operate private businesses. However, all enterprises are vulnerable to political interference, arbitrary regulatory obstacles, debilitating censorship, negative media campaigns, demands for bribes, and other forms of corruption.

An ongoing government crackdown on private businesses, particularly large technology and social media firms, has ostensibly been aimed at curbing monopolistic practices, uncontrolled growth, and other economic ills, but has also brought the private sector more firmly under CCP control. In March 2023, Alibaba, a large online commerce company, announced it would disband into six separate units, apparently on regulators' orders. Running a business continues to expose individuals to prosecution and long prison terms.

Property rights protection remains weak. Urban land is owned by the state, with only the buildings themselves in private hands. Rural land is collectively owned by villages. Farmers enjoy long-term lease rights to the land they work, but they have been restricted in their ability to transfer, sell, or develop it. Low compensation and weak legal protections have facilitated land seizures by local officials, who often evict residents and transfer the land rights to developers. Corruption is endemic in such projects, and local governments rely on land development as a crucial source of revenue.

G3 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance? 2 / 4

Following regulatory changes in 2021 allowing couples to have up to three children, out of concern over falling fertility rates, the government in 2022 launched a new campaign instructing local family planning officials to limit the number of abortions, including by discouraging abortions for "nonmedical" reasons. While ethnic minority couples were already permitted to have up to three children prior to 2021, ethnic Tibetans as well as Uyghurs and other Muslims in Xinjiang face abusive policies aimed at limiting their reproduction in practice.

Domestic violence continues to affect a large number of Chinese women, though a State Council report released in August 2023 noted that domestic violence fell since the 2015 introduction of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law. That law does not criminalize spousal rape.

Chinese law defines marriage as the union between a man and a woman, denying marriage rights to same-sex couples. Muslims in Xinjiang face

restrictions and penalties related to aspects of their appearance with religious connotations, such as headscarves on women or beards on men.

G4 0-4 pts

Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from 2 / economic exploitation? 4

While workers in China are afforded important protections under existing laws, violations of labor and employment regulations are widespread. Exploitative employment practices such as wage theft, excessive overtime, student labor, and unsafe working conditions are pervasive in many industries. Forced labor and human trafficking are common, affecting internal migrants as well as Chinese nationals who are trafficked abroad. Forced labor is the norm in prisons and other detention facilities.

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