

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	277
Land:	Kina
Kilde:	Minority Rights Group International
Titel:	State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2011 – China
Udgivet:	6. juli 2011
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	25. august 2011

[Home](#) [China](#)

Search

[Advanced Search](#) | [Search Tips](#)

Regions

[Africa](#)[Americas](#)[Asia](#)[Europe](#)[Oceania](#)

Countries

Categories

[Country Information](#)[Legal Information](#)[Policy Documents](#)[Reference Documents](#)

Browse by

[A-Z Index](#)[Topics](#)[Publishers](#)[Document Types](#)

Resources

[Special Features](#)[Standards and Training](#)[Information Alerts](#)[Protection Starter Kit](#)[Library](#)[News](#)[Refworld Personalization](#)[External Links](#)Text size [A](#) [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)[Email this document](#)[Printable version](#)

Title	State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2011 - China
Publisher	Minority Rights Group International
Country	China
Publication Date	6 July 2011
Cite as	Minority Rights Group International, <i>State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2011 - China</i> , 6 July 2011, available at: http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4e16d379c.html [accessed 23 August 2011]
Disclaimer	This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher.

State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2011 - China

According to figures from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs released in 2006, China's ethnic minority population is almost 124 million. This makes it the largest ethnic minority population in the world, and is evidence of the country's great diversity and cultural wealth. Minorities are found in every province, region and county, in border areas (Bai, Yi and Zhuang in the south, Mongolians and Uighars in the north) or spread throughout the country (Hui and Manchus). Even the majority Han population is culturally and ethnically diverse, and its members have begun to reassert their different identities, histories and cultures. However, shortcomings in the implementation of fundamental rights in autonomous and other areas inhabited by ethnic groups continued to deprive minorities of the full enjoyment of their cultural, religious and linguistic rights. In November 2010, China initiated its sixth population census which will record the demographic changes that have occurred over the last decade.

Civil and political rights

China's human rights record worsened during 2010, and the government responded more aggressively than in the past to international scrutiny and criticism. This was most evident in the Chinese government's reaction to the nomination and subsequent selection of democracy activist Liu Xiaobo for the Nobel Peace Prize, which included a campaign to dissuade foreign dignitaries from attending the award ceremony in Oslo, Norway. Liu is currently serving an 11-year sentence for allegedly 'subverting the country and authority'. On 10 December, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, called for Liu to be released from prison, stating that 'Liu Xiaobo illustrates the dangers and abuse to which human rights defenders around the world are subjected.' In addition, three UN Experts voiced concerns over China's crackdown on rights defenders after receiving numerous reports of arbitrary arrests and detentions, travel restrictions, forced relocations, intimidation, harassment and punishment of activists.

In his report to the 13th Session of the UN Human Rights Council (following a fact-finding mission to China), UN Special Rapporteur on Torture Manfred Nowak wrote:

'China maintains the most institutionalized method of opposing political dissidents that I have encountered. Political dissidents and human rights defenders, ethnic groups that are often suspected of separation (particularly Tibetans and Uyghurs), as well as spiritual groups such as Falun Gong are often accused of political crimes such as endangering national security through undermining the unity of the country, subversion or unlawfully supplying State secrets to individuals outside the country. Such individuals are not only at a high risk of torture when arrested, but the Re-education Through Labor (RTL) Regime that is often used as a sentence for political crimes employs measures of coercion, humiliation and punishment aimed at altering the personality of detainees up to the point of breaking their will.'

Education and linguistic rights

As reported by the Xinhua news agency in September, a White Paper published by the government entitled Progress in China's Human Rights in 2009 referred to 38 publishers producing material in 26 different minority languages, and stated that 'over 60 per cent of the population of China's 55 minority groups, or approximately 60 million people regularly speak their own language, [and] about 30 million of them regularly use their own script'. According to the document, government support to socio-economic development in areas primarily inhabited by ethnic minorities has increased, bringing about a gradual improvement in living conditions among minorities, as demonstrated by the increased levels of education and use of public health care systems among these groups. The paper also stated that:

'The ethnic minorities' rights to study, use and develop their own languages are protected [and] at present, over 10,000 schools with a total of 6 million students use 29 languages of 21 ethnic groups in classroom teaching.'

Previous to this, in June an official notice from China's State Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC) urged the teaching and official use of minority languages in ethnic minority areas. The notice advised local ethnic affairs authorities to pursue 'bilingual' education, train more teachers, and increase the publishing of textbooks for minorities in compliance with national legislation. The notice also called for identity cards in autonomous minority areas to be written in each respective minority language, as well as Mandarin Chinese. Finally, the notice called for the use of minority languages in publishing, broadcasting and online in an attempt to preserve ethnic minority languages on the verge of extinction.

However, China's rhetoric on compliance with international human rights standards clashed with well-documented cases of violations of national and international norms. In October, the Associated Press reported that Tibetan students marched in Tongren (Qinghai province) and Beijing protesting against a plan to establish Mandarin Chinese as the main language of instruction in Tibetan schools in the region. Such a plan would contravene the Chinese Constitution, the 2002 'Regulations on the Study, Use and Development of the Tibetan Language' (in accordance with the Regional National autonomy law), and international standards. In response, the European Parliament passed a resolution on Tibet – Plans to Institute Chinese as Main Language of Instruction in November. It noted that in all areas of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR):

'Tibetan language is gradually being replaced by Chinese in schools at different levels [...] with official documents usually unavailable in Tibetan and textbooks and subjects made available only in Chinese [...]. Despite the claim by Chinese officials that a bilingual teaching system has been adopted in the education sector of Tibet, with priority given to teaching in Tibetan, the Tibetan language is given either 50 per cent weight or no weight at all in university exams.'

In November, RFA reported the dismissal of 518 Uighur teachers in Toksun County (out of a total of 2,000) over the sensitive issue of 'bilingual education' in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR). Bilingual education policies have in fact meant that the use of Mandarin Chinese has been prioritized over the minority language as the main language of instruction in schools and universities across the region, according to a XUAR October directive. Reports and testimonies to MRG also indicated that the situation with regard to linguistic rights has deteriorated in the XUAR, with instances of the forced closure of local publishing houses specialized in the printing of textbooks in Uighur during the reporting period.

Meanwhile, in other regions, UN agencies are supporting the Chinese government in designing and implementing policies aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of smaller ethnic minorities in regions such as Yunnan, Guizhou and Qinghai. Some cultural preservation programmes aimed at smaller communities have apparently been carried out successfully, while others, for instance the UN-China joint programmes aimed at preserving ethnic cultural resources in south-west China, have met with mixed results, according to an evaluation by UN Development Programme (UNDP). The China Culture and Development Partnership Framework (CDPF), a three-year programme begun in 2009 and funded by the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Achievement Fund, as reported by the Director and Representative of UNESCO Beijing Office and Co-Chair of the CDPF, has so far reached:

'More than 5,000 members of ethnic minorities in remote and inaccessible counties in South-West China who directly benefited from the programme [...] that promoted inclusive governance and culturally sensitive basic education; improved the quality and uptake of maternal and child health services; introduced community-based cultural tourism initiatives; strengthened local crafts sectors; and contributed to the understanding and protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage'.

Religious freedom

In 2010, the government strengthened state control over religious practices, continuing to exclude minority religious communities from the minimal room to manoeuvre that is afforded to state-sanctioned religious groups. Relations between the Vatican and China were seriously damaged in the past year, with a series of accusations and heavy criticism from both sides that affected religious freedom for Christians across the country. The Chinese authorities continued to maintain oppressive control over some ethnic groups' religious activities. For example, according to RFA, 'the campaigns include restrictions on the wearing of traditional headscarves and beards' in the XUAR.

In March, the UN Special Rapporteurs on freedom of religion and belief, on torture, and on the status of human rights defenders presented their reports and concluding observations, based on their fact-finding investigations in China at the 13th Session of the UN Human Rights Council. The reports detailed on-going human rights violations against Falun Gong practitioners, including cases of beatings, harassment, torture and deaths while in police custody. Instances of lawyers defending Falun Gong practitioners being jailed were also documented. The Chinese government ignored the reports or denied the validity of their findings.

Minorities in Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang

In the White Paper, Progress in China's Human Rights in 2009, the Chinese government publicized what it considered to be the successful achievements of the First National Human Rights Plan, and reaffirmed that 'citizens of all ethnic groups in China enjoy equal rights and special rights' and that 'the state guarantees by law ethnic minorities' equal rights in participation in the administration of state and regional affairs'. However, during the year the government continued to implement restrictive measures to limit civil society engagement and action on minority rights issues, particularly in the three autonomous regions of Inner Mongolia (IMAR), the TAR and the XUAR. In these regions, Chinese majority and minority journalists, editors and activists advocating or reporting on minority rights faced intimidation, harassment and punishment by the authorities, and continued to be denied their fundamental rights of freedom of speech and expression over the course of the year. In part, this was through the use of vaguely worded criminal laws furthering the mechanism of 'prior restraints' to curb or deny groups or individuals the right to freedom of assembly and expression. Punishments included, for example, confiscation of books, educational or religious materials, as well as imprisonment of minority individuals including webmasters, editors and activists for alleged crimes against the state.

Local authorities' arbitrary interpretation and application of laws in minorities' autonomous areas heavily circumscribed the rights of minorities in many other spheres of life. In fostering economic development policies in autonomous areas such as the IMAR, the TAR and the XUAR, persecution, harassment, punishment and forced assimilation is steadily wiping out minorities' hopes for meaningful expression of their identity and genuine public participation. In a poignant testimony to MRG, an ethnic minority source from the XUAR stated:

'the Chinese authorities harden state policies and adopted measures that control, interfere and deliberately manipulate minority communities' life. Local authorities abuse their power to police and dictate the day-to-day existence of our communities. It is an impossible way of living that is gradually erasing our culture and tradition. China is staging a silent cultural genocide in the XUAR that no one seems willing to halt.'

Other reports from human rights activists and civil society groups pointed to the on-going forced removal of girls and younger women from the XUAR by the authorities, as reported in previous editions of the *State of the World's Minorities*. This process of forced assimilation is destroying the fragile social fabric of Uighur families that during the year endured abuse, mistreatment, punishment and violations of their individual and collective rights. Elsewhere, local governments continue to be unofficially instructed to target migrant workers and ethno-linguistic and religious minorities through population planning policies that interfere and control the reproductive lives of women using forced sterilization and abortion, arbitrary detention and forced disappearances, including of Mongol activists and their families.

In April, the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee adopted a revision to the Law on Guarding State Secrets by narrowing the definition of 'state secrets', boosting transparency and ensuring the people's right to know. However, in August, Human Rights House reported that, in a series of closed trials, Urumqi Intermediate People's Court sentenced three ethnic Uighur webmasters to life in jail for alleged separatist offences and for 'endangering state security'.

There were indications that some of the economic and social issues underlying the 2009 violent unrest in the XUAR and discontent among minority groups more generally were being addressed, although many others remained ignored. In the XUAR, communication channels that had remained shut down for months after the riots were re-established, and in March, unpopular Party Secretary Wang Lequan was suddenly removed. Secretary Wang had been in place since 1995, and had overseen harsh policies in the region, resented by both Han and ethnic minorities alike. Some commentators take the view, looking back over 2010, that the very promising genuine concern and dialogue being built between Uighurs and a growing number of Han Chinese holds the potential for a meaningful solution to Uighur issues. However, news in December of the deportation of seven Uighur asylum-seekers from Laos, who fled there after the July 2009 incidents, raised serious concerns over the situation of Uighur people who have been forcibly returned to China, where they face possible persecution.

Gender equality and minority women's rights

The promotion of equality between men and women is a basic objective in China's social development. According to official Chinese statistics, women's economic, social and cultural rights are being more effectively guaranteed with women accounting for 38 per cent of the workforce. However, no updated government statistics regarding ethno-linguistic minority women in employment are available. Historically, unemployment rates among ethnic minority women and girls have been higher than among Han women; outdated estimates indicate figures of less than 10 million ethnic minority women in employment at that time.

In May 2001, the Chinese government promulgated the Program for the Development of Chinese Women (2001-10) (PDCW), with the goal of fostering women's development, including by promoting women's employment and enhancing their participation in administration, management and decision-making regarding social affairs. After the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests was revised and enacted in December 2005, legislative bodies at

© UNHCR the provincial, autonomous region and municipal levels, including the XUAR, Hunan and Jiangxi provinces, revised implementation measures significantly, taking into account local conditions and characteristics. According to the Legal Department of the All China Women's Federation (ACWF), the measures have helped to secure some breakthroughs, in terms of stipulating the percentage of women candidates for local people's congresses, reinforcing the functions of local working committees on women and children, fighting domestic violence, defining and outlining punishment for sexual harassment, signing collective contracts with women workers, and ensuring specific funding for efforts aimed at protecting women's rights.

Despite China's commitment to women's equality and empowerment, women's political representation remains state-supported; that is, there is token representation where state policies are used to increase the numbers of women in leadership positions rather than promoting them into roles with real influence. In part to address this, in 2010 the ACWF received US \$2.4 million from the UN Fund for Gender Equality towards implementing a programme to increase women's political profiles and their participation in institutions of governance at national and local levels by 2013. It is unclear whether the programme will also include and benefit minority women representatives.

Copyright notice: © Minority Rights Group International. All rights reserved.

2011 | [About](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy](#)

Page generated in 0.024 seconds