

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	332
Land:	Kina
Kilde:	Minority Rights Group International
Titel:	State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2012 – China
Udgivet:	24. september 2013
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	13. januar 2014



State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2013 - China

Publisher [Minority Rights Group International](#)

Publication Date 24 September 2013

Cite as Minority Rights Group International, *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2013 - China*, 24 September 2013, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/526fb75312.html> [accessed 28 November 2013]

Disclaimer This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

Despite China's once-in-a-decade leadership transition, political developments and legal reforms in 2012 failed to signal a departure from long-standing policies towards minorities and indigenous peoples. The lead-up to the transition was marked by a crackdown in which over 130 human rights activists were detained or faced restrictions between September and November. During the week of the National Party Congress, 11 Tibetans set themselves on fire, reflecting a sense of desperation for political change in Tibet.

On 15 November, the Chinese Communist Party unveiled its new leadership, including Party Secretary Xi Jinping and six others, notably excluding two senior reformist members. Unlike the last grouping, the majority of new Politburo members have coastal constituencies, prompting concern that they may have even less reason to tackle ethnic issues in inland China. Xi became the country's president in March 2013.

In a speech following the congress, Xi only mentioned 'ethnic groups' as part of a narrative celebrating the Party's transformation of 'the impoverished and backward Old China into the New China that has become prosperous'. China's leaders continue to emphasize ethnic unity and modernization but have failed to address the grievances of the country's ethnic minorities, who comprise 8.5 per cent of the population.

In May 2012, the dramatic escape of blind disability rights activist Chen Guangcheng brought China's human rights issues to world headlines. Chinese and international NGOs highlighted his case in September when China participated in its first-ever review under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which it adopted in 2008.

The UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities criticized the then draft mental health act for violating the free and informed consent of the individual. The new mental health law was passed in October and prompted mixed responses from human rights groups. According to Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), the law marks a 'step in the right direction', but fails to close loopholes allowing police and government officials to commit political dissidents to psychiatric institutions against their will. The year 2012 also saw major reforms in China's Criminal Procedure Law, a process that has been ongoing for almost ten years. The Danish Institute for Human Rights argues that the law has created a 'two track criminal system', representing progress in areas of procedural rights and a ban on torture, but only for 'ordinary

criminals'. The legislation simultaneously legalizes the detention without charge of those suspected of terrorism, corruption or jeopardizing national security, charges often brought against Tibetan, Uighur and other minority dissidents. However, controversial 'disappearance' clauses (which would have allowed authorities to detain suspects without family notification) were removed due to overwhelming criticism, according to the *Dai Hua* human rights journal.

The government continued to crack down on activists in China's ethnic autonomous regions. The government intensified its crackdown in Tibetan regions after a record number of self-immolations by Tibetans, reflecting a wider trend in heightened surveillance and repression since protests in 2008. Eighty-two Tibetans self-immolated in 2012; self-immolations continued in 2013. The government opened fire on Tibetan protesters in January 2012, and those involved in self-immolation-related protests have received sentences of up to 13 years. In February 2013, repression intensified with authorities detaining 70 'criminal suspects' linked to 'inciting' acts of self-immolation.

Environmental degradation linked to natural resource extraction in Tibet came to the forefront in April 2013, with a deadly mine-related landslide killing 83 in the Gyama Valley near Lhasa. The Gyama mine, along with other major development projects, is part of the government's five-year plan to make Tibet a mining centre and hydropower engine of China.

Amnesty International highlighted the cases of several Uighur political prisoners, including a famous writer who died in prison due to ill health in 2012. Another prisoner remains critically ill with cancer. Amnesty International also reported on new testimony which shows that hundreds of Uighurs disappeared during the Urumqi riots of 2009, many of whom are still missing. This is part of wider repression in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, as indicated by the alarming number of Uighurs on trial for 'endangering state security'. Uighurs, who account for less than 1 per cent of the population in China, comprise about half of all those on trial for endangering state security, according to *Dai Hua* journal.

In Inner Mongolia the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center celebrated the news that, after years of efforts by activists, the regional government has agreed to consider a proposal to bring in new legislation to promote the use of the Mongolian language in 2013.

In November, local NGOs Green Sina and Green Earth Volunteers found evidence that toxic water from a coal-processing factory was being illicitly dumped in the Tengger desert of Inner Mongolia, contaminating the underground water and endangering herders in the area.

China's socialist health care system was once lauded by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an example for other developing countries, with 'Barefoot doctors' (*chijiao yisheng*) providing basic services to some of the most rural ethnic areas.[10] Market reforms of health care since the 1980s led to widespread public discontent over the lack of affordable health care. In response, the Chinese government launched major health reforms in 2009, with a goal of achieving universal health coverage by 2020. More than 95 per cent of the population is now covered by some public health insurance, but patients still have to pay for at least 60 per cent of out-patient costs and 50 per cent of in-patient costs, according to a 2012 review published in *The Lancet* medical journal. [11] Critics argue that without a focus on structural causes of discrimination, such reforms will have uneven impacts.

China is 'on track' towards meeting all of its health-related Millennium Development Goals, but given the lack of data disaggregated for minorities, it is doubtful that national statistics are representative of remote ethnic areas, which often lack basic health infrastructure.

Rural migrant workers living in urban areas, including minorities, are denied access to social services and health care under the *hukou* – or household registration system. Most of the estimated 200 million migrants are still registered as rural residents and so are excluded from accessing

health insurance, or must pay higher prices for health care they can rarely afford. In December, the government announced it will speed up household registration reform but the details have yet to be revealed.

Notes

10. Hood, J., 'Between entitlement and stigmatization: the lessons of HIV/AIDS for China's medical reform', in W. Sun and Y. Guo (eds), *Unequal China*, London, Routledge, 2013, pp. 141-2.

11. Yip, W.C., Hsiao, W.C., Chen, W., Hu, S., Ma, J. and Maynard, A., 'Early appraisal of China's huge and complex health-care reforms', *The Lancet*, vol. 379, no. 9818, 3 March 2012, pp. 1880-1.

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

Search Refworld

by keyword
and / or country

All countries 

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

Countries

- [China](#)

Topics

- [Abuse of psychiatry](#)
- [Disabled persons](#)
- [Indigenous persons](#)
- [Minorities](#)
- [Minority rights](#)
- [Tibetan](#)
- [Uighur](#)