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World Report 2022 - China

With President Xi Jinping at the helm, the Chinese government doubled down on repression inside and outside the country in 2021. Its “zero-tolerance” policy towards Covid-19 strengthened the authorities’ hand, as they imposed harsh policies in the name of public health.

Beijing’s information manipulation has become pervasive: the government censors, punishes dissent, propagates disinformation, and tightens the reins on tech giants. The once-cacophonous internet is now dominated by pro-government voices that report to the authorities on people whose views they deem insufficiently nationalistic.

The Chinese government pushed for more conservative values in 2021, shrinking space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) and women’s rights—issues previously considered less sensitive. Beijing grew less tolerant of criticism from private entrepreneurs. In July, courts imposed a sentence of 18 years on Sun Dawu, an agricultural tycoon supportive of rights activists, for vague crimes, after handing down a similarly harsh sentence to Ren Zhiqiang, an outspoken real estate mogul.

Xi’s latest promise to tackle inequality and deliver “common prosperity” rings hollow as his government suffocates grassroots voices. After the self-immolation of a delivery truck driver in January, the government tightened regulatory controls to protect gig workers, yet also cracked down on their activism. China’s rapidly expanding inequality led some young people to advocate a form of passive resistance known as “tang ping”—opting out of consumption and demeaning work—a concept that the government condemned and censored.

Authorities devastated human rights protections and civil liberties in Hong Kong, recasting much of the peaceful behavior that had undergirded Hong Kong life, such as publishing news, as acts of subversion. An April 2021 report by Human Rights Watch found authorities were committing crimes against humanity as part of a widespread and systematic attack on Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, including mass detention, torture, and cultural persecution. Tibetans continued to be subjected to grave abuses, including harsh and lengthy imprisonment for exercising their basic rights.

The Chinese government’s rights record and its “wolf warrior” diplomacy resulted in increasingly negative public perceptions of the government in some countries abroad. New research from AidData revealed US\$385 billion in “[hidden debt](#)” owed by developing countries to Chinese authorities. Some foreign governments took more concrete measures to press the Chinese government to improve its rights record, at home and abroad, but those remained inadequate to effectively challenge the scope and scale of Beijing’s abuses.

Hong Kong

Beijing and Hong Kong authorities moved aggressively to roll back rights in Hong Kong.

Pro-democracy activists were arbitrarily arrested and detained. In January, authorities arrested 53 politicians for “subversion” for their involvement in a July 2020 public opinion poll. In September, three members of the group [Student Politicism](#) were arrested for “conspiracy to incite subversion” for delivering snacks to imprisoned protesters. Ordinary people were arrested for public defiance, such as for displaying flags bearing the banned 2019 protest slogan, “Reclaim Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Times.”

At time of writing, over 150 people had been arrested for violating the draconian National Security Law (NSL) since it was imposed on June 30, 2020. Some NSL suspects held in custody were mistreated; pro-democracy activist Tam Tak-chi has been held in solitary confinement since he was detained in September 2020.

Authorities turned Hong Kong’s quasi-democratic institutions into rubber-stamp bodies. In March, Beijing imposed “electoral reforms,” requiring that only those loyal to the Chinese Communist Party could win a seat in Hong Kong’s legislature. In April, following citizens’ calls to cast blank ballots to protest the changes, the government revised the electoral laws to prohibit “incitement of others to cast blank ballots,” with sentences of up to three years in prison. In September, when the government required elected members to the District Council—a consultative body that advises the government on local issues—to take a loyalty oath, about half resigned as they anticipated being disqualified by the government for their pro-democracy views.

Authorities banned the annual Victoria Park vigil commemorating victims of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing. On the day of the vigil, police arrested the vice-chair of the organizing group, Hong Kong Alliance, cordoned off the park, and stationed officers throughout the city to prevent remembrances. In September, police froze the Alliance’s HK\$2.2 million (US\$283,000) in assets, closed its June 4th Museum about the massacre, revoked its registration, deleted its social media accounts, and arrested its four leaders for “inciting subversion.”

Dozens of civil society organizations disbanded in 2021, including protest organizer Civil Human Rights Front in August and the legal aid group 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund in November. Major labor groups, including the Hong Kong Professional Teachers’ Union and Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU), disbanded in August and September respectively.

Throughout 2021, Beijing’s newspapers smeared the Hong Kong Bar Association and its chairperson, Paul Harris, and called for his resignation. In August, citing threats to himself and his family, a pro-democracy candidate [withdrew](#) from a council election of the Law Society, a solicitors’ association. Candidates with Beijing ties later [won](#).

Authorities attacked press freedom. They forced the city’s second most popular newspaper, *Apple Daily*, to close in June, after arresting its owner, Jimmy Lai, top executives, and editors, freezing Lai’s HK\$500 million (US\$64 million) worth of assets, and raiding the paper’s headquarters. Lai was also sentenced to a total of 14 months in prison in April for attending protests; he faced an additional six charges in four other cases.

The government also transformed the previously independent Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK). In May, it replaced the head of RTHK with Li Pak Chuen, who had no prior media experience. Li then censored current affairs programs, prohibited staff from attending press award events that honored their coverage of the 2019 protests, and fired journalists and talk show hosts for their views critical of the government.

Police censored the internet through website blocking for the first time. In January 2021, the police ordered internet service providers to block access to HKChronicles.com, a website that documents police abuse but had also revealed personal information about police officers. In June, an Israeli hosting company took down the website of a Hong Kong exile initiative, 2021 Hong Kong Charter, at the request of the Hong Kong police, though it reinstated the site following an international outcry. In September, Hong Kong police blocked the website of the June 4th Museum.

Academic freedom deteriorated. University administrations were hostile towards student unions throughout 2021, while a number of academics were fired, or their contracts were not renewed, because of their pro-democracy views.

Authorities censored art, forcing theaters to pull a documentary about the 2019 protests in March, and forcing a new museum, M+, to pull a work by Chinese dissident-artist Ai Weiwei from its opening in November.

Xinjiang

The Chinese authorities are committing crimes against humanity against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang. Abuses committed included mass arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, mass surveillance, cultural and religious persecution, separation of families, forced returns to China, forced labor, and sexual violence and violations of reproductive rights. Little news trickled out of Xinjiang in 2021, however, as the authorities maintained tight control over information, and as access to the region, already limited, was further constrained due to Covid-19 movement restrictions.

Some Uyghurs who disappeared into Xinjiang’s abusive “Strike Hard Campaign against Violent Terrorism” were confirmed imprisoned, including prominent academic Rahile Dawut, though her alleged crime, length of sentence, and location of imprisonment remained unclear. There were also reports of Uyghurs dying in detention, including biotech researcher Mihriy Erkin, 31, businessman [Yaqub Haji](#), 45, and poet and publisher [Haji Mirzahid Kerimi](#), 82.

A report by the Uyghur Human Rights Project showed the Xinjiang government dispossessed Uyghurs by confiscating \$84.8 million worth of assets from 21 jailed Uyghurs and auctioning the assets online.

Neighboring governments continued to facilitate Beijing’s abuses. In September, Kazakh authorities banned a Russian-American researcher, Yevgeniy Bunin, from the country in apparent efforts to stymie his work documenting Xinjiang’s abuses. Also in September, Turkey denied entry to Dolkun Isa, president of the Uyghur exile organization Uyghur World Congress. Uyghurs abroad from Afghanistan to Morocco feared deportations to China as the Chinese government continued to seek their return for alleged terrorism, a term vaguely defined under Chinese law that encompasses peaceful expression and advocacy.

[Businesses](#) continued to be subjected to heightened scrutiny over their Xinjiang involvement. In March, Chinese consumers boycotted international clothing brands for vowing to stop purchasing cotton from Xinjiang due to reports of forced labor. In April, Shenzhen police shut down the Chinese affiliate of a US labor auditing nonprofit, Verite. In July, US photography company Kodak deleted from Instagram a photographer’s post calling Xinjiang “dystopian.” The US Customs and Border Protection agency issued [numerous](#) import bans related to Xinjiang, including cotton and tomatoes from Xinjiang, and all downstream products that use Xinjiang cotton and tomatoes manufactured outside the region. There are growing calls for other countries to impose similar bans on Xinjiang imports.

Tibet

Authorities in Tibetan areas continue to severely restrict freedoms of religion, expression, movement, and assembly. They also fail to address popular concerns about mining and land grabs by local officials, which often involve intimidation and unlawful use of force by security forces.

Following a November 2020 announcement tightening controls on online communications that “undermine national unity,” there was a surge of reported detentions of Tibetans in 2021 for alleged online offenses. In particular, Tibetans who communicated with people outside China were harassed and punished, regardless of the content of their communications.

The government stepped up coercive assimilationist policies. Chinese language classes were already compulsory for schoolteachers, local officials, and vocational trainees. In July, authorities announced that kindergartens in ethnic minority areas must use Chinese as a medium of instruction. In August, President Xi emphasized the subordination of minority identities to a single national identity at the national “Ethnic Work” conference.

Authorities’ [heightened surveillance and intimidation](#) at all levels, from online to neighborhoods to schools, and have rendered protests—such as those over the downgrading of minority language in Inner Mongolia in 2020—virtually impossible in Tibetan areas.

At least eight Tibetan prisoners or suspects were released due to ill health, some due to torture, four of whom died soon after, though the true number is unknown due to extreme information controls in Tibet.

Covid-19

Authorities continued to detain or prosecute people for criticizing the government’s handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Between January 2020 and June 2021, the Twitter account SpeechFreedomCN [recorded at least 663 arrests](#) for Covid-19-related speech. In March, retired professor Chen Zhaozhi was put on trial on charges of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” for posting on social media, “The Wuhan pneumonia is not a Chinese virus, but Chinese Communist Party virus.”

In August, a Beijing court sentenced activists [Chen Mei and Cai Wei](#) to 15 months in prison after convicting them of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” They were detained in April 2020, for archiving censored online articles and social media posts about the pandemic. In the same month, imprisoned citizen journalist Zhang Zhan became seriously ill following a hunger strike. In December 2020, Zhang was sentenced to four years in prison after travelling to Wuhan to document the pandemic in February. Citizen journalist Fang Bin, who was detained in April 2020 in Wuhan, remained missing.

In 2021, authorities launched a nationwide vaccination campaign. Though the central government insists that the scheme is voluntary, many complained online about local authorities’ abusive tactics to drive up vaccination rates. In some cases, the police physically restrained people to forcibly inoculate them; in others, authorities announced that they would suspend government benefits for anyone who refused vaccination or conditioned school enrollment on the vaccination of the student’s entire family. Vaccine safety activist He Fangmei, taken into custody by Henan authorities in October 2020, remained forcibly disappeared.

Human Rights Defenders

Authorities continued to crack down on [human right defenders](#). Police in Hunan province detained activist Ou Biao in December 2020, and later charged him with “inciting subversion.” Ou has been an outspoken critic of the Chinese government and a supporter of Dong Yaoqiong, who was held in a psychiatric hospital for over a year after she splashed ink on a poster of President Xi in 2018. In February, Dong was reportedly taken into a psychiatric hospital again after she posted on Twitter about being subjected to police surveillance.

In January 2021, a court in Guizhou province sentenced former journalist Zhang Jialong to one-and-a-half years in prison for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” for criticizing the government’s censorship and urging the US to help “tear down” the Great Firewall in a 2014 meeting with then-US Secretary of State John Kerry.

In April, Beijing police detained food delivery worker and labor activist [Chen Guojian](#), accusing him of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” after he tried to unionize delivery workers, undermining the government’s vow to protect gig workers from dangerous working conditions.

In May, Guangzhou police detained human rights activist and writer Wang Aizhong on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.”

In July, a court in Hebei province sentenced outspoken agricultural mogul Sun Dawu to 18 years in prison on charges including “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” and “assembling a crowd to attack state agencies.” Sun was also a longtime supporter of human rights activists and lawyers.

In August, a court in Anhui province sentenced activist [Zhou Weilin](#) to three-and-a-half years in prison for his tweets critical of the government and articles he wrote for the overseas-based Rights Defense Network website.

Also in August, Cheng Yuan, Liu Yongze, and Wu Gejianxiong, the founder and two staff members of the anti-discrimination group Changsha Funeng, were sentenced to between two and five years in prison in a secret trial. Authorities detained the three in July 2019, on charges of “subversion.”

In September, prominent rights lawyers Ding Jiaxi and Xu Zhiyong were indicted for “subversion.” Authorities detained the activists in late 2019 and early 2020, for participating a gathering where attendees discussed human rights and China’s political future. In February, Beijing police detained Li Qiaochu, a women’s and labor rights activist, and partner of Xu, charging her with “subversion.” While in detention, Li was taken to a hospital several times for treatment of mental and physical illnesses.

Also in September, the authorities forcibly disappeared Huang Xueqin, a journalist and leading voice in China’s #MeToo movement, and Wang Jianbing, a labor activist. In the same month, detained human rights lawyer Chang Weiping was allowed by authorities to meet with his lawyer for the first time since he was forcibly disappeared in 2020.

Freedom of Expression

Authorities harassed, detained, or prosecuted numerous people for their online posts and private chat messages critical of the government, bringing trumped-up charges of “spreading rumors,” “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” and “insulting the country’s leaders.” A 2021 *Wall Street Journal* report found that 58 Chinese users were punished with prison sentences between six months and four years since 2017 for their posts on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube—all platforms banned in China.

An increasing number of people were punished for speeches deemed “unpatriotic.” In February, at least seven people were detained for comments in relation to the border clash with Indian troops. In March, the government passed a provision stipulating that slandering “heroes and martyrs” could be punished with up to three years in prison. Former journalist Qiu Ziming was sentenced to an eight-month prison term for suggesting the real death toll of Chinese soldiers in the clash was higher than the official figure.

Authorities continued to suppress online content not in line with “[core socialist values](#).” They targeted “[misbehaving](#)” celebrities and their online fan groups, and banned some reality shows. In April, censors deleted from WeChat and other websites an article penned by former premier Wen Jiabao in which he wrote, “China, in my vision, should be a country of justice and fairness.”

In December 2020, the Beijing police detained Haze Fan, a journalist for Bloomberg News, on suspicion of endangering national security. In July, the Communist Youth League encouraged the harassment and doxing of foreign journalists who were covering the flood disaster in Zhengzhou.

Freedom of Religion

Chinese law allows people to practice only five officially recognized religions in officially approved premises, and authorities retain control over personnel appointments, publications, finances, and seminary applications. Since 2016, when President Xi called for “Sinicization” of religions—which aims to ensure that the Chinese Communist Party is the arbiter of people’s spiritual life—state control over religion has strengthened.

In 2021, police arrested those who worshipped outside of state-sanctioned parameters. In May, a Shenzhen court sentenced four employees from a company that sold audio devices broadcasting the Bible to between 15 months and six years for “operating an illegal business.” In July, five members of an unauthorized “house church” in Shanxi province were [detained](#) on suspicion of “illegally crossing the border” after they went to a January 2020 religious conference in Malaysia. In August, police took nine people involved with the Golden Lamp Church, an unauthorized “house church” in Linfen, Shanxi province, into custody.

Authorities continued efforts to alter the architectural style of mosques and landmarks to make them look more “Chinese” across the country, while Hui Muslim activists said police had harassed them for criticizing the policy.

Mass Surveillance

Authorities devoted resources to expanding mass surveillance systems nationwide, in the absence of meaningful legal protections against unlawful or abusive government surveillance. [Chinese companies](#) with reported links to the government continue to draw global scrutiny for their data collection practices.

The Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress passed the Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) in August, making significant progress to regulate companies’ collection of consumer data. While it could potentially empower citizens to hold companies accountable by filing a complaint with the government or getting a government-approved organization to file a lawsuit, it will unlikely check the state’s use of mass surveillance.

Women’s and Girls’ Rights

March marked the fifth anniversary of the landmark Anti-Domestic Violence Law, yet victims continued to face an uphill battle in seeking authorities’ protection and accountability for their abusers. In February, an article by former journalist Ma Jinyu on the violent abuses she suffered by her husband ignited a heated discussion on social media about the government’s persistent failure to prosecute domestic violence.

Women’s rights issues continued to face online censorship. In April, dozens of [social media accounts](#) run by women’s rights activists, including those of prominent feminists Xiao Meili and Liang Xiaomen, were abruptly shut down after they were attacked and reported by nationalistic trolls online.

In June, the Chinese government announced that it would further relax the country’s birth quotas from two to three children after the previous strict “one-child” policy led to a demographic crisis—and human [trafficking](#). Many women expressed concerns that without measures to increase access to equitable parental leave and caregiving, the policy change could further exacerbate gender inequality. Human Rights Watch research shows that the two-child policy, in effect from 2016 to 2021, had worsened workplace gender discrimination.

In September, the State Council, China’s cabinet, in its “Chinese Women’s Development Guidelines” for 2021-2030, identified “reducing non-medically necessary abortions” as a step toward women’s development. Many expressed concerns that the Chinese government could further restrict reproductive rights.

The #MeToo movement gained new traction in 2021, after more women came forward to accuse well-known men of sexual harassment. In August, the Beijing police arrested Chinese-Canadian singer Kris Wu for rape. Authorities in Hangzhou investigated a manager at the online commerce giant Alibaba after rape allegations surfaced online. In September, a Beijing court dismissed a landmark sexual harassment case brought against a prominent TV host at the state broadcaster CCTV, after the judge refused the plaintiff’s requests to retrieve corroborating evidence, including security camera footage.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

While China decriminalized same-sex conduct in 1997, it still lacks laws protecting people from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, and same-sex partnerships are not legal. The Chinese government showed greater rigidity towards sexual orientation and gender norms in 2021.

In February, a court in Jiangsu province ruled in favor of a publisher that described homosexuality as a “psychological disorder” in a university textbook. In July, social media platform WeChat [removed](#) dozens of LGBT accounts run by university students, claiming some had broken rules on online information. In September, the Chinese government banned “sissy” effeminate men and “abnormal esthetics” in the entertainment sector. It called for media to establish “correct beauty standards” and spread “positive values.”

Belt and Road Initiative

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), announced in 2013, is the government’s trillion-dollar infrastructure and investment program stretching across some 70 countries. Some BRI projects have been criticized for lack of transparency, disregard of community concerns, and negative environmental impacts.

Human Rights Watch published a report, in August, that documented economic, social, and cultural rights violations in Cambodia resulting from the Lower Sesan 2 dam’s displacement of nearly 5,000 people between 2013 and 2018 and impacts on the livelihoods of tens of thousands of others upstream and downstream. The dam was a BRI project funded mainly by a Chinese-state owned bank and built by a Chinese-state owned electricity generation company.

China Labor Watch, an NGO, [reported](#), in April, that overseas Chinese workers working on BRI infrastructure projects in Algeria, Indonesia, Pakistan, and other countries were victims of human trafficking and forced labor, including being deceived into working illegally, held against their will, and forced to work while infected with Covid-19 in early and mid-2020.

Climate Change Policies and Actions

China is by far the largest emitter of greenhouse gases globally, making a major contribution to the climate crisis that is taking a mounting toll on human rights around the globe. China accounts for nearly 70 percent of [global emissions](#) in 2018, although its per capita emissions put it only in the top 40 countries. Much of the considerable energy that has fueled China’s economic growth comes from coal, [driving these emissions](#). It produces [half of the world’s coal](#) and is also the largest importer of oil, gas, and coal.

China is the world’s largest funder and builder of [overseas coal projects](#), some of which are through the BRI. President Xi announced at the UN General Assembly in October, that China would no longer “build new coal-fired power projects abroad.” China continues to develop coal projects domestically.

In September 2020, Xi [announced](#) China would reach carbon neutrality by 2060, and reach peak carbon emissions before 2030. Despite these improved targets, the [Climate Action Tracker rates](#) China’s domestic target as “highly insufficient” to meet the Paris Agreement goal to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

China also leads the world in renewable energy use and is the largest funder of [overseas renewable projects](#), some of which, however, have been [linked to human rights abuses](#). China has much of the global production capacity for the materials needed for a global transition to renewable energy including wind turbines, solar panels, and minerals. Some of these [materials](#) are reportedly [processed in Xinjiang](#), raising concerns about the use of [forced labor](#).

China’s imports of agricultural commodities drive more deforestation globally than those of any other market—including the imports of all 27 member states of the European Union combined. This deforestation is largely [illegal](#). In November, in a [joint China-US statement](#) issued in the context of the global climate summit in Glasgow, the two countries said they would contribute to eliminating global illegal deforestation by [enforcing their respective laws](#) that ban illegal imports of timber. China has yet to enforce a restriction on illegal timber imports it adopted in 2019.

Key International Actors

Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States imposed coordinated and bilateral targeted sanctions on Chinese government officials and companies responsible for serious human rights violations, including international crimes, in Xinjiang. The US also imposed sanctions on several senior Hong Kong officials for imposing the National Security Law. In August, the US gave Hong Kong people in the US a temporary 18-month “safe haven.”

In September, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet expressed “regret” that the authorities had not given her meaningful access to Xinjiang, and said that her office would issue an assessment of human rights in that region. Her announcement followed a [joint statement of concern](#) by 44 governments at the 47th session of the UN Human Rights Council. A similar statement was [delivered](#) by 43 governments at the UN General Assembly in October 2021.

Parliamentarians in Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and the UK passed resolutions accusing the Chinese government of committing genocide against Uyghurs; some also called on their governments to limit participation in the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. The UK Parliament passed a non-binding motion supporting a diplomatic boycott of the Games. Members of the European Parliament halted the EU’s proposed Comprehensive Agreement on Investment with China, citing human rights concerns, and freezing consideration of the deal for as long as they are subject to Beijing’s counter sanctions. In September, they also adopted a recommendation for a new, more assertive, and better coordinated EU strategy on China, placing human rights at its core.

EU member states continued to [issue strong statements](#) of condemnation of China’s [human rights abuses](#) at the UN. In July, the European Commission issued a [guidance note](#) to help businesses address the risk of forced labor, and, in September, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [pledged](#) that the EU would introduce legislation banning goods produced through forced labor to enter the EU market.

Multinational companies came under greater pressure to withdraw operations from Xinjiang over concerns about forced labor. Those who publicly expressed concerns about that issue, including H&M and Nike, were then targeted for a boycott by consumers in China.

International technology companies continued to facilitate censorship in their operations in China. According to a May *New York Times* report, Apple created a mechanism to proactively reject or remove apps the company believes could run afoul of government censors. In June, Apple [announced](#) that it would not roll out its new privacy measure, Private Relay, in China. (Apple declined to respond on the record to a Human Rights Watch letter regarding the issues.) Also in June, the *New York Times* [reported](#) that the search engine Bing, owned by Microsoft, blocked image and video results for the phrase “tank man” in countries including the US, Germany, and Switzerland. Microsoft attributed the incident to “accidental human error.” LinkedIn, also owned by Microsoft, citing the need to comply with local laws, [blocked](#) the profiles of some Chinese government critics and people associated with organizations deemed critical of the government, including a Human Rights Watch employee. In October, LinkedIn [announced](#) it was shutting down its professional networking service in China, citing “challenging operating environment.”

Few universities in democracies took steps to protect their students’ and scholars’ free speech involving criticism of the Chinese government. In Australia, Human Rights Watch research showed only weak efforts to push back against such problems. At the same time, none of the universities with ties to academia in Hong Kong publicly challenged Hong Kong authorities’ clear assault on academic freedom—including harassing student unions and firing pro-democracy faculty—in the territory.

Foreign Policy

The Chinese government [confirmed](#) its use of “hostage diplomacy” when it released two Canadians, Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, within hours of Canada allowing Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou—detained for alleged violations of US sanctions law—to return to China.

At the United Nations, Chinese authorities continued to push back against criticism of its human rights violations. The government advanced a resolution on “combating legacies of colonialism,” and continued to present other resolutions—prioritizing economic development, “mutually beneficial cooperation,” and “realizing a better life for

everyone” (the last of which was withdrawn due to lack of support)—that would weaken international norms by shifting focus away from accountability for rights violations. It also blocked access to UN forums for civil society groups that referred to Taiwan as an independent country.
Annual report on the human rights situation in 2021

In August and September, the Chinese government moved quickly to offer support to Afghanistan’s new, abusive Taliban-controlled government, making clear its concerns that instability in that country should not allow for security threats to Xinjiang or the BRI.

Source search shows that Chinese government-linked [disinformation campaigns](#) have spread in scope, languages and platforms. Human Rights Watch including in 2021 on the origin of Covid-19.

Original link sanctions imposed on Chinese government officials, companies, and agencies, in March, Chinese authorities accused several EU officials and civil society groups of “maliciously spread[ing] lies and disinformation” and imposed various sanctions on them. In July, Beijing announced another round of sanctions on US-based individuals and organizations, including Human Rights Watch.

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