

CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

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IMAGE OF THE MONTH

Ice Cream Tank Censored

Famous Chinese brand influencer Li Jiaqi [was subject to](#) Chinese-government blanket censorship when he participated in the promotion of an ice cream cake that resembled a tank on June 3, the day before the Tiananmen Massacre anniversary. Li's show, which has 170 million subscribers, was immediately pulled off the air when his copresenter displayed the cake before the camera. Curious viewers then began speculating why the show was unavailable, with a [related](#) hashtag on Weibo reaching 100 million views; amid the conversation some users appeared to learn of the massacre for the first time. Li and many of his followers were born after 1989—a generation where many may not know what happened at Tiananmen due to Chinese government censorship.

Credit: [The Guardian](#)



ANALYSIS

Hong Kong Is Unrecognizable after Two Years under the National Security Law

By Angeli Datt

Angeli Datt is a senior research analyst for China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan at Freedom House.

Five ways the law has deepened authoritarianism in the territory as conditions about to worsen

On June 10, FactWire announced that it was [shutting down](#) with immediate effect, becoming the 10th Hong Kong news organization to close in less than 12 months. It had used an innovative crowdfunding model to produce Chinese-language investigative journalism, exemplifying the type of award-winning independent media that once flourished in the territory. But just as many [feared](#) when Beijing imposed the National Security Law (NSL) on June 30, 2020, the landscape for free expression in Hong Kong is now increasingly desolate.

Under the NSL, Hong Kong's [total score](#) in *Freedom in the World*, Freedom House's annual report on political rights and civil liberties, has dropped by 12 points, from 55 to 43, on a scale of 0 to 100. The score declined by nine points in 2021 alone, marking the year's third-worst decline globally after Myanmar and Afghanistan, which experienced a military coup and conquest by the Taliban, respectively. This is especially significant given that most of the countries and territories with deteriorating freedoms only see their scores decline a point or two in any given year.

The security law has served as a crucial tool in Beijing's devastating authoritarian takeover of Hong Kong, enabling the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to bring a free and vibrant society to heel.

The following are among the five most significant changes to freedom of expression under the NSL:

1. Independent media demolished

Since the NSL was introduced, the authorities have [crushed](#) major prodemocracy media outlets like Apple Daily and Stand News, which closed after police raided their offices and arrested staff on national security charges. Police [visited](#) another outlet in May and told the founder to delete articles that supposedly endangered national security. In the past 12 months, seven additional Chinese-language media organizations [closed](#), and two have limited their operations, though some smaller outlets or individual journalists [continue](#) to publish on social media.

All told, approximately 20 percent of Hong Kong's Chinese-language media workers have [lost their jobs](#) in the national security crackdown. English-language outlets like Hong Kong Free Press and the *South China Morning Post*, which is owned by the mainland company Alibaba, still produce independent content and may be a target for future enforcement efforts.

2. Journalists added to a growing list of political prisoners

At least 12 journalists and media professionals have been charged with NSL or sedition crimes for their work, including *Apple Daily* owner Jimmy Lai and senior staff at Stand News. Lai's trial is [expected](#) to take place this summer.

The NSL charge of “collusion with foreign forces,” which has been applied to journalists who published opinion pieces calling for international sanctions against those undermining basic rights and political autonomy in Hong Kong, carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment. Charges of sedition, under a colonial-era law enacted in 1938, draw lighter sentences and have been filed against some press workers, probably to enable punishment of actions that took place before the NSL was in force. One media professional was [convicted](#) and sentenced in April to 40 months in prison for sedition and other charges unrelated to his media work.

These cases have led the Committee to Protect Journalists to include Hong Kong journalists on its [annual global census](#) of imprisoned reporters for the first time. They have also contributed to the growing number of prisoners of conscience in the territory: at least 183 people have been [arrested](#) for national security–related crimes since June 2020, and there are [over 1,000 political prisoners in total](#), including those convicted for protest-related activities. Faced with such repression, many Hong Kongers have fled into exile. Some journalists and activists have created diaspora media outlets like [Flow HK](#), [Commons](#), and the Chaser to cover Hong Kong news and serve the burgeoning exile community.

3. Growth of mainland-style state media

As independent media are targeted by police crackdowns, the government has worked to convert the once-respected public broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) into a government mouthpiece. RTHK no [longer](#) has editorial independence, and its staff can be held financially liable for producing programs that are later censored. RTHK [deleted much](#) of its pre-NSL content from the internet, depriving millions of residents of access to historic archives. In August 2021, the station [partnered](#) with Beijing's China Media Group to broadcast programming that would “nurture a stronger sense of patriotism.”

Two newspapers directly owned by the Chinese state—*Ta Kung Pao* and *Wen Wei Po*—increasingly play a role similar to that of state media on the mainland, issuing [denunciations](#) that may signal future police crackdowns. In September 2020, a senior Hong Kong official [praised](#) *Ta Kung Pao* as a “golden microphone for the central government.” On June 13, the CCP mouthpiece *People's Daily* carried on its front page a letter from Chinese leader Xi Jinping in which he congratulated *Ta Kung Pao* on its 120th anniversary and for “contributing to maintaining Hong Kong's stability.”

4. Internet censorship and surveillance

Hong Kongers enjoyed a relatively free and open internet before the introduction of the NSL, but internet censorship has become increasingly common. To date, eight websites have been blocked inside Hong Kong. While this is still a far cry from conditions on

the mainland, where the Great Firewall blocks thousands of websites, it represents a significant change.

In May, progovernment lawmakers called on the Hong Kong government to [consider](#) blocking access to the messaging platform Telegram under revised October 2021 legislation related to doxing—the unauthorized release of personal information online. While Telegram is still accessible in Hong Kong, the company recently [shut down](#) three channels for alleged doxing in response to requests from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data. The law allows the commissioner to arrest users, order online content taken down, block websites, and arrest local employees of overseas technology companies if their companies fail to comply with takedown requests, drawing a potential two-year prison sentence. So far, authorities have [used](#) the law to arrest at least six people and remove thousands of posts across 14 platforms.

Even [watching](#) a documentary about prodemocracy protests on streaming platforms may constitute a NSL offense, and authorities are expanding their ability to monitor online activity. On March 1, a law requiring residents to register their SIM cards under their real names came into effect, replicating a system used on the mainland to surveil and arrest internet users. Within a month, 1.4 million cards were [linked](#) to real names.

5. Attempted erasure of Tiananmen collective memory

In another shift toward mainland conditions, authorities have sought to erase Hong Kongers' collective memory of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, whose anniversary is marked on June 4. The long-standing annual vigil in Victoria Park has been [banned](#) since the NSL came into effect, and the area is now heavily policed, with six people [arrested](#) on the sensitive date this year. Police also arrested four people for [spray-painting](#) the numbers “six” and “four” around the city. In January, an activist was [sentenced](#) to 15 months in prison for writing a Facebook post calling on residents to light a candle for the June 4 anniversary in 2021. Beijing has sent [letters](#) to the consulates of foreign democracies in Hong Kong to complain about their online memorials on the anniversary. Officials have also [removed](#) memorial statues at universities and [restricted](#) RTHK from reporting on the topic. Despite the closing space, some Hong Kongers marked the recent anniversary with small [gestures](#) of protest.

More to come

On July 1, former police officer and security official John Lee will become the fifth chief executive of Hong Kong. The selection of Lee, through a process [imposed](#) by Beijing, indicates that the national security crackdown is not over. With the government already [banning](#) media outlets from covering his inauguration and the 25th handover ceremony, it is clear he will continue to restrict press freedom. In fact, the government has announced several pieces of draft legislation that would lead to further restrictions on media freedom and freedom of expression.

For example, since May 2021 the government has been [working](#) on “fake news” legislation that could yield more criminal charges against journalists, closures of outlets, and self-censorship. In January 2022, the security secretary [announced](#) the government's intention to enact Article 23 of the Basic Law, a long-dormant provision that calls for

legislation prohibiting treason, secession, sedition, subversion, theft of state secrets, and activities by foreign political organizations. “State secrets” charges are regularly used against journalists on the mainland, while [academic](#), [artistic](#), and [religious](#) expression have already been targeted under the NSL and could face even more severe restrictions under Article 23. On May 25, the government also announced that it was [working](#) on a Cybersecurity Law to deal with national security threats online. The Legislative Council has been devoid of prodemocracy opposition members since a mass resignation in 2020 and the imposition of a repressive new electoral system in 2021, meaning any government-backed legislation will likely pass with little scrutiny.

Next month, the UN Human Rights Committee will [review](#) Hong Kong’s compliance with its legal obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Freedom House submitted a [report](#) to the committee about the severe violations of press freedom and internet freedom in recent years. It is vital for the committee’s experts to publicly and clearly describe how the Chinese and Hong Kong governments have utterly failed to comply with the treaty. In addition to supporting such international accountability mechanisms, democratic governments should provide assistance to those fleeing the territory. The reality is that Hong Kong democracy advocates have few options left besides jail or exile, and the trend since 2020 suggests that human rights conditions will continue to deteriorate.

IN THE NEWS

COVID-19 propaganda, pushback, and censorship

- Changing narrative on Shanghai lockdown:** As Shanghai COVID-19 lockdown restrictions began to lift at the end of May, a leaked censorship [directive](#) suggested that local media were prohibited from writing about the end of the restrictive two-month period in the city on grounds that it was never declared in the first place. “Unlike Wuhan, Shanghai never declared a lockdown, so there is no ‘ending the lockdown,’” according to the leak. Instead, the media were told to clarify that “static management-style suppression” was lifting only in certain districts. “Maybe this was nothing but a dream,” one WeChat user wrote in response to the leaked directive, “collectively dreamed by 23 million, even 1.4 billion people.” The government’s extensive propaganda campaign has continued to meet pushback from locals. [Shanghaiers called a national fraud hotline](#) in mid-May to report the city government after state media reported, falsely, that grocery stores and restaurants were fully stocked and open for business.
- Ongoing censorship of COVID-19 pushback:** Residents in Shanghai and other cities continued pushing back against stringent lockdown measures, offering an alternative to propaganda efforts to downplay their severity but ultimately prompting state censorship of their grievances. Law professor Tong Zhiwei wrote an [article](#) on Weibo about the often dubious legal measures used to enforce the lockdown, including police’s use of emergency laws to forcibly enter people’s homes to disinfect them or remove individuals to isolation shelters. Tong pointed out among other

things that Shanghai had never actually entered a state of emergency; his article was deleted and his account banned. In another incident, a [despairing meme](#) that censors [quickly](#) quashed was born from May 11 video that showed police raiding an apartment and attempting to force the residents into an isolation camp, despite their recent negative COVID-19 tests. In the [video](#), the officer shouts, “You will be punished, and your family will suffer the consequences for three generations.” One resident replies, “We are the last generation, thank you very much!” In another case in late May, Weibo [banned](#) the account of the head of Trip.com, one of China’s largest online travel agencies, for commenting on the COVID-19 lockdown’s impact on Chinese people’s life expectancy.

- **“Runology” and leaving China:** An unpredictable future and seemingly “forever lockdowns” are [leading](#) China’s youth to look for a permanent way out. Runology 润学, borrowing the pronunciation of the character run 润 (which means profitable), describes the practice of leaving China: where to emigrate and how to do it. At the same time, the Chinese government [announced](#) that it is “strictly limiting” unnecessary outbound travel, expanding measures for the majority Han population that ethnic groups like [Tibetans](#) and [Uyghurs](#) have been subject to for years. Immigration controls are now more [constricted](#) than they have been in decades even as demand to emigrate rises, according to an immigration lawyer interviewed by NPR, who said he has seen a 50 percent increase in inquiries from China over the past two months.

Propaganda updates: UN human rights chief tour, retired cadres warned, educational sovereignty

- **UN human rights chief’s visit a propaganda coup:** UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet’s six-day trip to China at the end of May was a propaganda victory for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The first visit by the UN’s highest human rights official to China in 17 years, Bachelet met virtually with Xi Jinping and in person with other senior officials. She made a two-day trip to Xinjiang and [visited](#) a reeducation camp in Kashgar, one of several that over one million Uyghurs and other minority Muslims have been sent to since 2017. Bachelet stated that the “visit was not an investigation,” and repeated Chinese government propaganda talking points that its policies towards Uyghurs are related to “counterterrorism” and the camps are “vocational education and training centers”—even in light of reams of evidence to the contrary including recently leaked police [documents](#) exposing that “students” could be shot to death if they tried to leave. She [later said](#) she was accompanied by government officials throughout her trip to Xinjiang and didn’t meet with a single detained Uyghur or any family members of those detained. Her office’s assessment of the human rights situation in Xinjiang, which it said was being [finalized](#) in December 2021 [still has](#) not been released. The *Global Times* [called](#) Bachelet’s visit “a ray of sunlight piercing through the dark cloud of lies surrounding Xinjiang,” and used her visit to [attack](#) UN independent human

rights experts who [repeated](#) calls for an investigation. Amid international [uproar](#) about her visit and the delayed report, Bachelet has announced that she will not pursue a second term at her post. Her term ends August 31; she has said the China report will be released before she leaves office.

- **Retired cadres warned against commenting on CCP policies:** The General Office of the CCP Central Committee [released](#) an “Opinion on Strengthening Party Building among Retired Cadres in the New Era” on May 16, [demanding](#) that former cadres and party members “resolutely oppose and resist all kinds of wrong thinking,” among them trading in “negative political remarks” and openly discussing Central Committee policy. The new rules come in the lead-up to the 20th Party Congress, and seem to be targeted at retirees who may speak out against the regime, as has former Central Party School lecturer Cai Xia. On June 7, the Yunnan Province Education Department opened an [investigation](#) into its former director, Luo Chongmin, after he posted a challenge to the premise of the Dragon Boat Festival on WeChat. Luo claimed the premise of the festival was made up to influence and control people.
- **Elite Chinese university pulls out of global rankings after Xi speech:** Renmin University announced in early May that it would no longer provide data to foreign ranking systems. The move followed a campus visit a month before by Xi, who had [called](#) on students to “blaze a new path” independent of foreign institutions and models. Retired propaganda officer Chen Xianyi [lauded](#) the decision as the “return of China’s educational sovereignty,” as Renmin and other institutions following suit will no longer be subjecting themselves to evaluation based on “Western values.” According to an [announcement](#) by the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the National Supervisory Commission, Nanjing University also “no longer considers overseas rankings as a development target.”

Censorship updates: June 4 takedowns, open-source platform closes; foreign tech companies depart

- **Popular influencers expose millions to June 4 imagery:** The anniversary of the Tiananmen Massacre was observed by the censors according to [custom](#): chasing down memes and references to the event. The social media accounts of popular pro-CCP blogger Sai Lei Huajin [went dark](#) in May after he posted an anti-CNN video to Bilibili that included a clip of the anonymous 1989 protester known worldwide as Tank Man. The video stayed online for several days before his accounts were suspended; his Weibo, with 2.6 million followers and Zhihu account, with over 500,000 followers, will stay dark for a year according to notices on the accounts. On June 3, Li “Lipstick King” Jiaqi’s e-commerce livestream was [cut off](#) when he held up an ice cream and cookie sculpture resembling a tank. This confused many of Li’s 170 million followers, sparking their curiosity and leading some to learn for the first time about the events of 1989. Censorship controls for June 3–5 included a moratorium on user customizations on forums and games, “self-inspection” for images of

candles and tanks, and the numbers 89 and 64, according to a [propaganda directive](#) leaked to China Digital Times. The Canadian and Germany embassies in Beijing posted messages and images of [candles](#) on Weibo, which were quickly censored, while a UK embassy WeChat post about a massacre in England was also restricted from being shared.

- **Gitee temporarily closes over apparent CCP review order:** China’s largest open-source code platform [closed](#) its public repositories on May 18, releasing a [statement](#) later that day that “all new open-source repositories shall be manually reviewed before they are officially made public.” It was widely assumed that the platform closed due to a related CCP directive. Gitee was [launched](#) in 2013 as a Chinese alternative to GitHub, and in 2020 was tasked with building an “independent open-source hosting platform for China” by the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. It has 8 million [users](#), some of whom [expressed](#) shock but resigned acceptance over the announcement. GitHub has been used as an uncensored [forum](#) and [archive](#) by users in China, and by Chinese activists abroad.
- **Foreign tech companies leaving China:** Amazon has [stopped](#) selling its Kindle e-readers in China and will close its Chinese Kindle store on June 30, 2022. Amazon described the decision as a strategic move for its China operations, and not a response to pressure by the Chinese authorities. Days after Amazon’s announcement, the Nike Run Club notified its 8 million Chinese users that its service would too be [suspended](#) in China in July as a “business adjustment.” These closures come on the heels of the announcement of [Airbnb’s](#) exit from mainland China on May 24, where it lost business to [local platforms](#) and the COVID-19 pandemic. Airbnb had been [criticized](#) internationally for hosting listings in Xinjiang on land owned by a company sanctioned by the United States for complicity in rights abuses against Uyghurs.

June 4 and Tibetan activists detained, imprisoned rights defenders denied contact with families

- **Activists detained around June 4:** Leftist activist Ye Hongwen was apparently arrested in Shantou, Guangdong Province, after [reenacting](#) the iconic 1989 Tiananmen protest by the “Tank Man” on June 4. He had announced his plans ahead of time on Twitter and is now missing, believed to be detained. In Hangzhou, former 1989 student leader Xu Guang was [detained](#) on June 1 on charges of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,” a charge commonly used against activists. His detention came after he publicly protested the confiscation of his mobile phones by police the day before, who likely took them to suppress his ability to go online during the anniversary. Meanwhile, in Hunan Province, democracy activist Wang Yifei has been [unreachable](#) since publishing an article titled “Anniversary of My Transfer from Detention to Prison” to his public WeChat account on May 9. The article was about the prison sentence handed down to him for attempting to commemorate the June 4 anniversary in 2018.

- **Detained journalist denied access to seriously ill family member:** Pu Wenqing, the elderly mother of detained journalist Huang Qi has [beseeched](#) Chinese authorities to let her see her son before her metastatic cancer takes her life. It has been nearly two years since she last spoke to Huang, who is serving a 12-year sentence for “leaking state secrets overseas.” Huang, who created the [award-winning](#) citizen journalist website 64 Tianwang, [suffers](#) from kidney and heart disease himself. Separately, the health of rights defense lawyer Tang Jitian has also deteriorated over six months of enforced disappearance, after he was [blocked](#) from attending a meeting with EU diplomats in December. Mainland website Rights Defense Network reported that Tang was [concussed](#) in a fall on June 3. He has been unable see his daughter in Japan, who is also critically ill.
- **Tibetan writer confirmed detained, another denied access to family:** Radio Free Asia has confirmed that popular Tibetan author Rongwo Gangkar, who went missing at the beginning of 2021, has in fact been [arrested](#). The reason for his arrest remains unknown. Meanwhile, the [family](#) of Rinchen Tsultrim has been unable to see the young monk in over a year. Rinchen Tsultrim is serving a four-and-a-half year sentence for “[inciting separatism](#)” by writing about Tibetan issues on WeChat.
- **Academic casebook on free expression prosecutions:** William Farris, an attorney who monitors censorship on his blog [Fei Chang Dao](#), has released a [casebook](#) of over 100 legal documents related to the repression of free speech in China between 1998 and 2020, including original text and translations of trial transcripts, indictments, and other material. The two-volume [casebook](#) is free and available to the public.

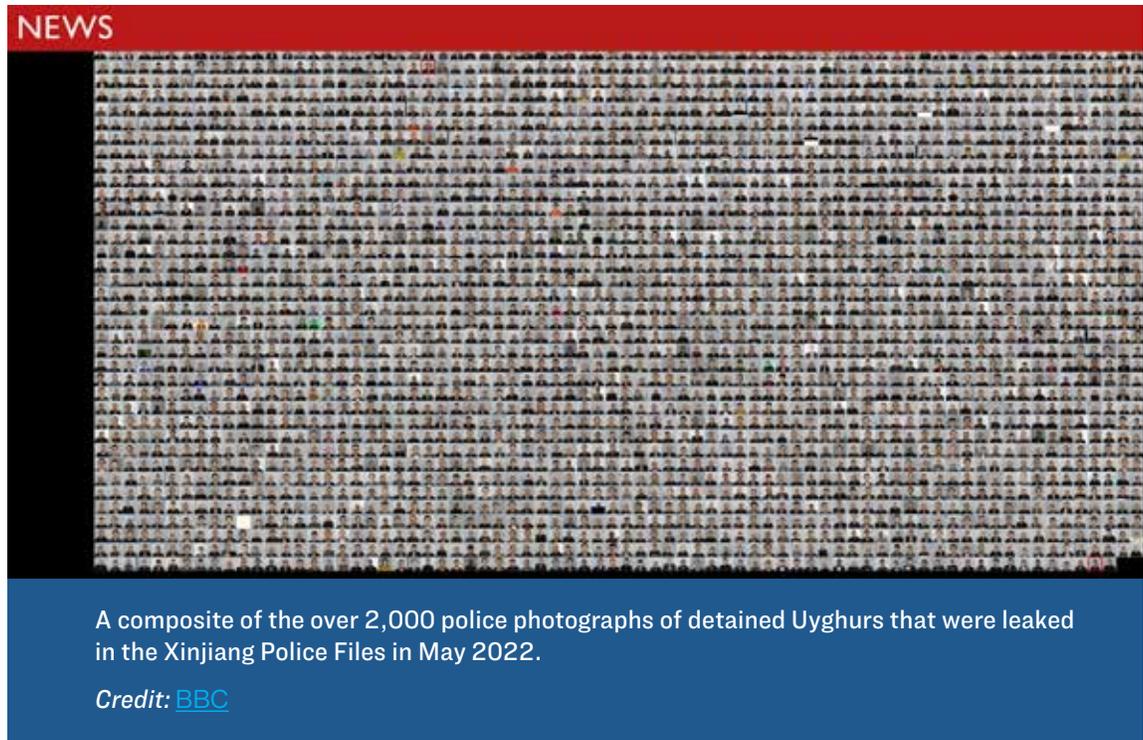
BEYOND CHINA

Pacific journalists blocked, embassy threats, and global search engine controls

- **Chinese diplomats block local journalists during foreign minister’s trip:** Ahead of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi’s ten-day visit to eight Pacific Island nations beginning May 26, local reporters were [blocked](#) from attending press conferences or restricted from asking questions. In response to these restrictions, allegedly imposed as COVID-19 safety measures, the Media Association of Solomon Islands (MASI) [boycotted](#) the official “press event.” The Media Association of Vanuatu declared [solidarity](#) with MASI, while the Fijian Media Association [expressed concern](#) about press restrictions by Chinese and other foreign dignitaries, including the United States. While the “excuse” of the pandemic is new, the limitations on Pacific journalists during visits by top Chinese officials are not, as was seen when Xi Jinping visited [Papua New Guinea](#) in 2018.
- **Chinese embassy threats to Prague exhibition center, *Jerusalem Post*:** On May 11, the Chinese embassy in Prague [called](#) a gallery ahead of its show featuring dissident artist Badiucao, and ordered them to cancel the exhibit. The gallery refused. Chi-

nese diplomats had also tried to stop Badiucao's show in Italy last year. On May 30, the Chinese embassy in Israel [called](#) the editor of the *Jerusalem Post* and demanded he take down an interview the paper conducted with Taiwanese foreign minister Joseph Wu. The paper refused and [published](#) an editorial about the threats. In both instances, the embassy threatened that going ahead with the exhibit and articles at hand would damage bilateral relations.

- **CCP exploitation of search engines boosts propaganda:** A May Brookings Institute [report](#) found that Chinese state media appears prominently in search results for “Xinjiang” and “COVID-19” in webpage and news search from Google, Microsoft Bing, and YouTube. As a result, propaganda promoting Beijing’s official stance and even [state-sanctioned conspiracies](#), such as that COVID-19 came from a US Army research facility, are more likely to be read. The authors recommended platforms more clearly label results from state media.
- **Bing censorship of sensitive CCP terms:** A May 19 report from the Citizen Lab [found](#) that Microsoft Bing consistently censors autosuggestions when users look up politically sensitive Chinese names. Such censorship occurs in the United States and Canada, as well as in China, and also applies to search functions in Microsoft Windows and the search engine DuckDuckGo. The authors concluded that platforms cannot “facilitate free speech for one demographic of its users while applying extensive political censorship against another demographic of its users.”
- **Inauthentic Twitter campaigns globally target journalists, particularly women of Asian descent:** A June 3 Australian Strategic Policy Institute analysis of virulent online [campaigns](#) targeting prominent journalists and human rights activists found that such messaging is often promoted by inauthentic accounts. Hundreds of Twitter accounts have been created to smear specific individuals. It found that Asian women targets are often bombarded with generic accusations of “betraying their ‘motherland’;” other campaigns weaponize details of the women’s professional and personal lives, suggesting they are under surveillance. Twitter has suspended some of these fake accounts, but new accounts continue to proliferate, and the smear campaigns continue.



FEATURED PUSHBACK

Despite failure of UN rights chief, evidence of Xinjiang abuses keeps growing

During her May trip to China, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet [declared](#) that her visit wasn't an investigation, and [repeated](#) Chinese government propaganda about its policies towards Uyghurs. Her failure to uphold her mandate, including a failure to release the report her office has prepared on Xinjiang, has not deterred civil society organizations, victims and their [families](#), scholars, and media, from continuing to do the job of the world's leading human rights body by documenting and exposing human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

On May 24, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) [reported](#) on an enormous cache of leaked Xinjiang Police files from 2017–18 that further exposed the scale and magnitude of the CCP detention and surveillance apparatus used against ethnic Uyghurs. According to the files, police at the internment camps had orders to shoot to kill any “student” that tried to escape. The leak also [included](#) 2,884 police photographs of detained Uyghurs, including children as young as 15 and women in their 70s. The [Xinjiang Victims Database](#) has recorded 38,359 individual cases, to date. A June 14 [report](#) from Sheffield Hallam University tracked how Uyghur forced labor may be involved in producing 10 percent of the world's vinyl, a product that usually requires an extremely hazardous process to create.

As the volume of evidence grows, Bachelet's weak assessment of events in Xinjiang becomes even more untenable. The European Parliament [passed](#) a motion on June 8 regretting that she "failed to clearly hold the Chinese government accountable." On June 10, 42 UN independent experts appointed by the UN Human Rights Council [called](#) again for an investigation, an implicit rebuke of the High Commissioner's statements. Several NGO have [called](#) for resignation. As her term comes to an end on August 31, she has [announced](#) she will not see a second term, and [promised](#) to release her report on Xinjiang before she leaves.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Speculation over Xi's media presence ahead of party congress:** In May, China watchers and Chinese social media [speculated](#) over the absence of Xi Jinping from the front page of *People's Daily*, and disappearance for a week from public appearances. At the time, rumors were swirling that he had stepped down, been sidelined over criticism of his COVID-19 management, or had health problems. While the rumors now appear unfounded, watch for heightened speculation on Xi Jinping's status as the party congress looms this autumn.
- Hong Kong government drafting cybersecurity law:** On May 25, the Hong Kong government [announced](#) it was carrying out preparatory work on cybersecurity legislation that officials [described](#) as necessary to protect national security; officials added that foreign-owned online platforms pose a threat, as they were used to organize protesters in 2019. Watch for the draft legislation and provisions or criminal penalties similar to the Cybersecurity Law in China, which is used to restrict free expression online, as well as further enforcement of the National Security Law (NSL) on online expression.
- Stronger enforcement of foreign-agents registration laws to counter the CCP:** On May 17, the US Department of Justice [sued](#) businessman Stephen A. Wynn for not registering as an agent of China and official of the Chinese Ministry of State Security under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA). Wynn had [lobbied](#) US government officials to have a Chinese asylum seeker deported back to China at the request of the Chinese government. Watch for increased enforcement of FARA and other US legislation to expose the Chinese Communist Party's activities in the US and overseas.

TAKE ACTION

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- **Support a prisoner:** Learn how to take action to help journalists and free expression activists, including those featured in passed issues of the *China Media Bulletin*, [here](#).
- **Visit the *China Media Bulletin Resources* section:** Learn more about how policy-makers, media outlets, educators and donors can help advance free expression in China and beyond via a [new resource section](#) on the Freedom House website.

For more information

- For archives, go to: www.freedomhouse.org/China-media
- For additional information on human rights and free expression related to China, see: *Freedom in the World 2021*, *Freedom on the Net 2020*, *Beijing's Global Megaphone*, and *The Battle for China's Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance under Xi Jinping*



Freedom House is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports democratic change, monitors freedom, and advocates for democracy and human rights.

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