**Cancelled camera ad**

In mid-April, a promotional video for camera-maker Leica was released that culminated with this image of a photographer capturing the famous “Tank Man” scene from June 4, 1989. The cinematic ad titled “The Hunt” follows the journalist and his encounters with aggressive Chinese police until he is able to snap the photo. Almost immediately, the ad was met with blanket censorship in China and any post containing the keyword “Leica” in English or Chinese could no longer be published on Sina Weibo’s microblogging platform. Executives at Leica—which has extensive business in China and with tech giant Huawei—sought to distance the firm from the video, which had not been officially approved, and expressed regrets for “any misunderstandings”. Despite the restrictions in China, the ad survives online and has garnered extra attention. As of April 24, two videos of the ad on YouTube had accrued over 300,000 views.

Visit [http://freedomhou.se/cmb_signup](http://freedomhou.se/cmb_signup) or email cmb@freedomhouse.org to subscribe or submit items.
Indoctrination, censorship, and surveillance are robbing a generation of their right to free thought.

Chinese president Xi Jinping wants children and students not just to obey, but to love the Communist Party. At an April 19 conference organized by the Politburo to mark the 100th anniversary of the student-led anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement, he said, “We need to ... strengthen political guidance for young people, guide them to voluntarily insist on the party’s leadership, to listen to the party and follow the party.”

Political indoctrination has long been a required component of the curriculum at all levels of education in China. Under Xi, however, new steps are being taken to tighten the Communist Party’s ideological control over universities, schools, teachers, and students.

Disciplining teachers
The party's system for influencing students depends in large part on their teachers and professors. In a speech at a Beijing seminar attended by teachers from across the country in March, Xi called on educators to instill patriotism in the country's youth and reject “wrong ideas and ideology.” He also emphasized that teachers themselves “should have strict self-discipline, be consistent in class and out of class, online and offline, should consciously carry forward the main melody and actively convey positive energy.”

In recent months, a number of teachers have faced dismissal, detention, and other penalties after falling short of these expectations. On March 25, the Financial Times reported that prominent constitutional law professor Xu Zhangrun had been barred from teaching at the prestigious Tsinghua University in Beijing. He had written numerous essays that sharply and eloquently criticized the top leadership's decisions, often drawing on ancient Chinese philosophy, literature, and political theory to make his arguments. Xu was subsequently stripped of his other positions and teaching responsibilities. On April 8, scholar Yu Jianrong, known for his research on China’s peasants, had his Sina Weibo microblogging account, which had 7.2 million followers, silenced such that he could no longer post comments, only read others' messages.

In two other cases, educators have faced jail time for sharing information about the persecuted Falun Gong spiritual group in their private capacities. In January, Zeng Hao, a business professor at Tianhe College in Guangdong Province, was sentenced to 3.5 years in prison after posting images related to Falun Gong on Tencent's QQ messaging platform. On April 15, Amnesty International issued an urgent action for high school chemistry teacher Chen Yan, who is expected to face trial for handing out a calendar with information about Falun Gong to someone on a Beijing street.
In early March, the Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project published a report outlining the details of 386 Uighur scholars, students, and other intellectuals who have been swept into detention amid a massive reeducation effort targeting Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.

**Surveillance inside and outside the classroom**

In an April 8 article, Radio Free Asia noted increased efforts to monitor Chinese university students. Reporters found online documents showing how institutions like Wuhan University of Science and Technology are continually recruiting students to act as informants on their classmates and teachers, typically submitting reports to authorities every two weeks. One former professor said the recruitment began in earnest in 2014, shortly after surveillance cameras began being widely installed on campuses in 2013.

More recently, surveillance cameras linked to facial recognition software and brainwave-detecting headbands have appeared in elementary and secondary schools, provoking nervousness and anger among some pupils. Although the monitoring is ostensibly for the purpose of tracking students’ focus and study habits, it could also be used to detect ideological transgressions by teachers or students.

Universities, government agencies, and private companies are increasingly trying to gain access to students’ social media accounts and other online information. Officials at universities in Beijing and Anhui Province have reportedly asked students to register the details of their private and public accounts on Tencent’s WeChat and QQ platforms. In February the company China Youth Credit Management (CY Credit), working with the Communist Youth League, launched an application called “Unictown,” which aims to serve as the foundation for a specialized social credit system for China’s youth. The app is meant to track young adults' behavior and incentivize activities that are considered positive or socially beneficial. The South China Morning Post reports that the firm has already collected data from 70 million people, is building a database of 90 million youth league volunteers, and aspires within a few years to cover all 460 million Chinese aged 18 to 45.

**Curriculum controls and direct indoctrination**

The Unictown app is not the only new party-linked mobile application targeting China’s youth. When the “Study Xi, Strengthen China” app was launched in January by the party’s propaganda department, a corresponding version for young people also sprung up on the website, mobile app, and social media accounts of the party’s media mouth-
piece, the People's Daily. According to the *South China Morning Post*, the app requires "schoolchildren to study texts related to Xi's political ideology."

In Xinjiang, young Muslim minority children are more directly exposed to indoctrination. Those whose parents have been detained for "reeducation" are themselves placed in state-run orphanages, where they are reportedly required to speak Chinese, eat pork, and read slogans like "I'm Chinese; I love my country." In some instances children are being used to inform on their parents. An April 4 multimedia report by the New York Times on conditions in the ancient city of Kashgar included a chilling account of kindergarteners being interrogated. As one interviewee described it, "My daughter had a classmate who said, 'My mom teaches me Quran.' The next day, they are gone."

In addition to indoctrinating students on Communist Party ideology, the authorities are clamping down on access to alternative ideas, including those associated with democratic governance. Over the past year, China's Education Ministry has conducted *countrywide audits* of constitutional law textbooks, and books by reform-minded professors have reportedly been removed from online booksellers. A series of *foreign academic publishers* have come under pressure to remove certain articles from collections available in China, and at least some have complied.

**Global reach**
The Communist Party's watchful gaze also follows Chinese students who study abroad, whether through student informants, consulate-linked Chinese Student and Scholar Associations, or monitoring of WeChat accounts. One 2018 survey by Cheryl Yu, then a graduate student at the University of Washington, found that among 72 Chinese respondents from at least 31 American universities, 58 percent were aware of potential Chinese government surveillance in the United States. Yu also found that 80 percent of the students reported self-censoring (whether or not they demonstrated awareness of official surveillance) by choosing not to attend university events on politically sensitive topics, discuss such topics with large groups of fellow Chinese, or even admit to a willingness to learn about the issues.

Students who overstep the party's redlines while abroad risk serious reprisals. On April 10, *Mirror Media* published an emotional account by Li Jiabao from Shandong Province, who had criticized China's authoritarian system in a live-stream broadcast while studying in Taiwan. Soon afterward, he found that his QQ, WeChat, Taobao, and Alipay accounts were all deleted. As he counted down the days before he had to return to China, he reported having nightmares.

**Impact and ramifications**
Recent activism by *Marxist students* from elite universities on behalf of exploited Chinese workers hints at the ways in which ideological indoctrination could backfire for the party, whose actual governance is often in conflict with its loftier principles. Many other young people may reject or disregard the stilted propaganda entirely, and even high school students have balked at the onerous surveillance being imposed on them, in at least one case *dismantling* their classroom cameras.
Nevertheless, the Chinese authorities’ efforts to shape students’ minds have clearly had some success. Young Chinese studying abroad are often unwilling to explore forbidden topics, and domestic graduates who are employed as censors require crash courses on events like the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, suggesting that they have large blind spots in their knowledge of the world and their country.

China’s youth, in other words, are growing up in a more manipulated information environment than their parents’ generation or their foreign counterparts. There is a very real danger that this generation will be less open-minded, more nationalistic, more supportive of authoritarian rule, and more isolated from a common set of facts and norms that previously facilitated peaceful international exchanges.

To mitigate such an outcome, foreign educational institutions should reexamine the terms of their partnerships with Chinese universities, safeguard the academic freedom and security of their Chinese students, and find alternative channels for engaging students in China with the full spectrum of ideas necessary for a 21st-century education.

IN THE NEWS

**Authorities escalate crackdown on Twitter and virtual private networks**

A police crackdown on users of Twitter and virtual private networks (VPNs) that was first reported in late 2018 appears to be expanding and escalating, with relatively low-profile individuals facing reprisals for previously tolerated activities like opening an account, following overseas news, “liking” posts, or using VPN software on mobile phones. It remains unclear what has triggered the crackdown or how Chinese authorities have been able to trace accounts to individual users, but the shift suggests tighter enforcement of a 2017 ban on unauthorized VPN services and an effort to silence and isolate independent Chinese voices on a global social media platform. Specifically, the Financial Times, Radio Free Asia, and other outlets have reported the following cases from at least five different provinces, most within the past two months:

- **Zhu Xiuyuan**, a lawyer from Haining in Zhejiang Province, was warned by police in March that he had “liked many harmful posts that insulted the party.”
- An **anonymous lawyer** who had registered but never used “anti-China software” was cautioned for violating regulations governing the professional conduct of attorneys.
- **An editor** at a provincial state broadcaster in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, was demoted and docked pay for registering a Twitter account and following “harmful information from illegal overseas websites.”
- **Sun Yuanping** of Hebei Province was detained by police on March 22 for “disorderly
behavior” after he forwarded content that was critical of the Chinese government via his personal Twitter account; he was then sentenced to seven days’ administrative detention.

- On March 25, police warned a man in Pengxi, Sichuan Province, “not to use illegal channels to access the international internet,” having found VPN software on his mobile phone.

- A man in Guangdong Province was fined 1,000 yuan ($148) in December 2018 for using the circumvention app Lantern Pro.

Meanwhile, in late March, Google confirmed that it had long had a policy of banning VPN providers from purchasing banner ads in China and other “countries where such servers are illegal.” Users wishing to continue using Twitter may consider ensuring that no personally identifying information is publicly available on their profiles or removing their phone number from the account and using the application only on a computer.

**Surveillance updates: Uighur faces, prisoners, street cleaners, rental homes**

As artificial intelligence (AI) and other advanced surveillance technologies spread across China and are used in ever more intrusive ways, new questions are being raised—internationally and by Chinese citizens themselves—about the systems' ethical implications, and investors are under pressure to disassociate themselves from surveillance companies as a result.

- **AI and racial profiling:** An April 14 article by the *New York Times* revealed that Chinese authorities have been using facial recognition technology since 2018 to surveil the minority Uighur population, not only in Xinjiang but throughout China. The AI software that powers the system has been trained to recognize the facial features of Uighurs and distinguish them from those of China’s ethnic Han majority. According to the website of CloudWalk, one of the Chinese AI companies that developed the product, the system is able to alert police if there is an unexpected increase in the number of Uighurs living in a neighborhood. Police departments in 16 provinces have expressed interest in acquiring the technology to monitor their local Uighur populations. In the city of Sanmenxia in Henan Province, local law enforcement officials conducted half a million face scans over the course of a single month to test the capacity of the system to register Uighur faces.

- **AI and a ‘smart prison’:** A high-security prison in Yanjiao, Hebei Province, has installed a security camera system and hidden sensors powered by artificial intelligence. A joint product of surveillance technology company Tiandy and domestic public research institutes, the system is purportedly able to monitor each of the prison’s 1,600 detainees simultaneously and register any abnormal activity, all without the assistance of a human operator. Facial recognition and movement
analysis capacities allow the system to track individuals throughout Yancheng prison—home to numerous high-profile detainees, including former Chongqing mayor Bo Xilai's wife, Gu Kailai—and produce comprehensive daily reports. While project representatives have claimed that the system will make prison breaks a thing of the past, critics have noted that it could violate the dignity and impact the mental health of prisoners subjected to round-the-clock surveillance. A 2017 Freedom House study and accounts by human rights lawyers indicate that in some cases, local police have been more lenient with religious and political prisoners who gain their sympathy than their supervisors would likely approve; widespread use of this type of surveillance could undermine the limited protection that such prisoners occasionally receive.

- **Street-cleaner monitoring:** Chinese netizens have responded with anger to reports that street cleaners in the city of Jiangsu have been required since March to wear wristbands that monitor their location and warn them against “slacking off.” The wristbands are part of a local government effort aimed at promoting “intelligent cleaning” through real-time tracking of the city's public cleaners and the issuing of warnings to any wearer who remains in one place for more than 20 minutes. China's urban street cleaners are widely considered to be underpaid and overworked, and Chinese internet users ridiculed the plan as a waste of public resources, with some recommending that the program instead be applied to lazy government officials.

- **Surveillance of rental properties:** The online magazine *Bitter Winter* reports that since November a number of landlords in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, have been ordered by local authorities to install security cameras in the living rooms of rental units. Police are said to be conducting inspections of local units to ensure that security cameras have been installed, and have been issuing fines of 500 yuan ($75) to landlords who fail to comply. Gated communities have also been ordered to install surveillance cameras in elevators, and cameras equipped with facial recognition software at entrances to the community. The moves have been justified on the grounds of “maintaining public security”, though residents have already complained about violations of their privacy.

- **Pressure grows on surveillance company investors:** The Financial Times reported on March 29 that two of the largest US pension funds—the New York State Teachers’ Retirement System and the California State Teachers’ Retirement System—have stakes in Hikvision, a partly state-owned Chinese surveillance company linked to the network of detention camps for Muslim minorities in Xinjiang. In another form of apparent complicity, research collaborations on AI projects between the People's Liberation Army’s University of Defense Technology and the US companies Google and Microsoft were reported in recent weeks. Writing in a March 19 piece in Foreign Policy, Lindsay Gorman and Matt Schrader of the Alliance for Securing Democracy warned that foreign investors may “end up owning some of the responsibility for human rights abuses in Xinjiang and elsewhere” if they fail to fully understand the plans of their Chinese partners. While Chinese companies often seem immune to foreign criticism, on April 15 the Financial Times reported that Chinese AI company...
SenseTime had sold its 51 percent stake in the joint venture Tangli Technologies, which is building surveillance systems targeting Uighurs, out of concern that its association with the controversial program would alienate potential foreign investors in the run-up to its initial public offering.

Censorship updates: ‘People’s Daily’ innovations, streamer purges, music and drama culls

• ‘People’s Daily’ aids other media with censorship: On March 28, Reuters reported that the Communist Party mouthpiece People’s Daily is increasing the number of AI-assisted internet censors working for its website, People.cn. The Shanghai-listed People.cn is also earning income and attracting investors as other websites and mobile applications turn to its staff for guidance amid stricter censorship rules, taking advantage of its special relationship with the party and presumed grasp of top leaders’ redlines. News aggregator Jinri Toutiao and tech company Liangziyun are among those that have signed lucrative deals with People.cn to help delete content that violates state and party guidelines. This news comes on the heels of a March 26 report from Supchina that People.cn had partnered with the municipal government of Jinan, Shandong Province, to turn the city into a hub for a new unit dedicated to enhancing the website’s censorship capabilities.

• Influential bloggers, live-streamers banned: An April 15 report on Technode highlights the disappearance of thousands of Chinese live-streaming accounts in the latest example of tightening government controls on such media. In 2018, government censors deleted roughly 5,000 channels for allegedly promoting “vulgar” content, while platforms were told to engage in greater self-censorship. The deleted channels included some of China’s most popular live-streamers, like Li Tianyou, Lu Benwei, Chen Yifa, and Yang Kaili, each of whose followers numbered in the tens of millions. Some were banned for using profane language, while others mocked the national anthem or relayed an unofficial narrative on the 1937–38 Nanjing Massacre. According to a March 16 report in the New York Times, recent targets have also included influential bloggers like Ma Ling, whose lifestyle blog was shuttered on February 21 for spreading “false news.” Commentator Wang Yongzhi told the Times that “the party simply can’t tolerate anyone who has a big influence on society.”

• Hong Kong singers and dramas censored: A Jacky Cheung song released 30 years ago to comment on the Tiananmen massacre of June 4, 1989, has been removed from Apple Music’s mainland Chinese platform. According to a Standnews report from April 7, the removal of the 1990 song “The Path of Man” seems to have occurred after March 28. Two Hong Kong singers and prodemocracy activists, Denise Ho and Anthony Wong, have also had their music removed from Apple Music’s mainland China services. The two celebrities have been persona non grata in mainland China since 2014, after they publicly offered support to the Occupy Central protests in Hong Kong. Separately, one of China’s most popular television shows, Yanxi Palace, has been pulled from the airwaves after it and other period dramas were criticized...
in state media for “propagating a luxurious and hedonistic lifestyle, encouraging admiration for imperial life and a glorification of emperors overshadowing the heroes of today,” according to a February 8 report by the BBC. Other costume dramas have also fallen afoul of China’s media controls. An episode of Qin Empire 3, aired on China Central Television on February 29, was partially censored after netizens circulated screenshots showing a two-second clip in which a character reads a list of “traitors” that includes the names of Xi Jinping and other top party leaders.

HONG KONG
Amid Umbrella Movement convictions, new threats to free speech emerge

On April 8, a Hong Kong judge convicted nine democracy activists—including Pastor Chu Yiu-ming and Professors Benny Tai and Chan Kin-man—for their role in the 2014 Occupy Central or Umbrella Movement protests. The group was sentenced on April 24, with four heading to jail for between eight and 16 months (including Tai and Chan), while others received suspended sentences, community service, or sentencing postponement. The judge rejected the defendants’ free speech claims, finding that the occupation of some of the city’s busiest intersections “impinge[d] unreasonably upon the rights of others.”

A series of other recent developments also suggest that freedom of speech is in serious danger in Hong Kong:

• Museum commemorating 1989 Tiananmen Massacre vandalized: A museum in Hong Kong commemorating the June 1989 massacre of pro-democracy protesters in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square and other locations was vandalized earlier this month. Staff at the museum, which was set to open on April 26, alerted the police after discovering on April 7 that the lock on the front door had been removed, electrical outlets and a fuse box had been splashed with salt water, and holes had been punched in a chair. Speaking to reporters, Albert Ho, chair of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democracy Movements in China, which established the museum, said “those who did this must be wanting to please those in power.” Security cameras have since been installed at the museum.

• ‘Apple Daily’ advertisers intimidated: Reporters Without Borders has called on Hong Kong’s former chief executive, C.Y. Leung, to cease his attacks on the pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily and its advertisers. Since February, Leung—in his current capacity as vice chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, a mainland government advisory body—has been using his Facebook page to denounce companies by name for taking out advertisements in Apple Daily. Leung has a history of press intimidation. In 2018, he brought a defamation suit against a journalist who had written about his possible links with organized crime. In August of that year, Leung denounced the Foreign Correspondents Club of Hong Kong for hosting a talk by a proponent of Hong Kong independence. Apple Daily has also
faced interference with its advertising in the past. The paper has long been the subject of an ad boycott by the powerful and pro-Beijing real-estate industry, and in 2014, Apple Daily reported that the London-based banks HSBC and Standard Chartered had pulled their ads under pressure from the Chinese government.

- **Electronic ID contract given to mainland tech firm**: It was announced on April 2 that mainland Chinese firm Ping An Technology had been awarded a contract to build an electronic identification (eID) system for the Hong Kong government. As part of the territory’s “Smart City Blueprint,” the eID system will allow residents to access a hundred online services, like registering for public housing or a vehicle license plate. The Hong Kong government claims that the system will not store personal data and that measures have been taken to ensure the privacy of the city’s residents. Yet Human Rights Watch’s Hong Kong office has noted the possibility that eID may become a tool of government surveillance.

**BEYOND CHINA**

**Australia and Taiwan meddling, 1989 ad, Uighurs trolled, Zambia broadcasting**

- **WeChat use by Australian politicians, media outlets**: Concerns have been raised that politicians in Australia may be forced to self-censor when communicating on Tencent’s WeChat messaging service. Many Australian politicians—including the prime minister and the head of the opposition—use the Chinese application to reach out to Chinese-speaking Australian voters. Yet critics allege that use of WeChat may lead Australian politicians to avoid discussing subjects that are considered politically sensitive by the Chinese government, in order to avoid losing access to their accounts. Several of the accounts are registered with Chinese phone numbers, increasing the risk that WeChat itself or the Chinese person or company that was used to create the account could alter content under Chinese government pressure. Professor John Fitzgerald of Swinburne University said, “We are entering uncharted territory. WeChat was not designed to work in a democracy, and a democracy can’t work with WeChat.”

- **Local Australian council ends partnership with independent Chinese media**: China’s consulate in Sydney stands accused of bullying a local council into banning an Australian Chinese-language newspaper from sponsoring a Chinese New Year event. Over a 14-month period ending in January 2018, Georges Rivers Council received eight warnings from the Chinese consulate about Vision China Times, a newspaper that regularly publishes critical news about China’s government. The consulate claimed that ties between the council and the paper, if allowed to continue, would damage Sino-Australian relations. The council subsequently restricted the paper’s sponsorship.

- **China attempts to influence Taiwan elections through social media**: Suspected Chinese government agents have made quiet offers to buy popular pro-Taiwan Face-
Recruitment advertisements for live-streamers with pro-unification views have also emerged online. The efforts seem to be part of a coordinated attempt by the Chinese government to influence Taiwan's elections. The Taiwan government has responded by placing greater restrictions on video streaming services from the Chinese companies Baidu and Tencent.

- **Leica backs away from Tiananmen ad**: German camera company Leica has backed away from a promotional video that depicts the iconic “Tank Man” who attempted to block a Chinese military crackdown on prodemocracy protesters in 1989. A report by the South China Morning Post on April 19 notes that discussion of Leica was banned on Chinese social media following the release of the video. The company soon issued a public disavowal of the short film, which was produced by the public relations firm F/Nazca Saatchi Saatchi. The video arrived just weeks before the 30th anniversary of the 1989 massacre.

- **Coordinated troll attack on Uighur activists' Facebook pages**: On April 10, pro-Beijing trolls launched a coordinated attack against Uighur rights groups on Facebook, bombarding their pages with hostile comments. In a tweet on April 10, the World Uyghur Congress noted that many of the comments simply pasted text from a Communist Party white paper on Xinjiang. That same day, the campaign received enthusiastic coverage from state-run tabloid Global Times, which praised the attackers as “patriotic Chinese netizens” fighting against “terrorists” and “separatists.”

- **Digital migration in Zambia**: Chinese investment in the Zambian state broadcaster’s move from analog to digital transmission has raised concerns about the impact of growing Chinese influence in the country. The partnership between Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) and Chinese service provider StarTimes to create a joint venture—TopStar—reportedly violates domestic laws against any single media entity having licenses for both content transmission and content creation. The deal was also made without approval from either ZNBC's board or Zambia's parliament, leading to suspicions of corruption. Zambia is not the only regional market StarTimes has entered. It has actively partnered with state broadcasters across Africa as part of a soft-power drive by the Chinese government.

**FEATURED PUSHBACK**

**Chinese engineers mobilize on GitHub**

The widely used code-sharing site GitHub has become a platform for Chinese tech employees to expose and protest exploitative working conditions. The site, used by 31 million software developers worldwide, is accessible in China. The movement began in late March, when a user posted a repository complaining about the 996 work schedule—9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week—and naming two e-commerce firms that required it. The post used the term 996.ICU (based on a joke that the harsh schedule will land workers in a hospital’s intensive care unit), which has since become the move-
Run-up to Tiananmen anniversary:

Within two days, the post had garnered over 30,000 stars, a function that allows GitHub users to bookmark a project they like, pushing it to the top-ranked spot on the site’s trending page.

By mid-April, the number of stars had reached 230,000, and the activism had evolved in a more sophisticated and international direction. Developers began posting firsthand accounts about particular companies that employed the 996 schedule. They argued that such practices violate China’s labor laws, which limit work weeks to 44 hours or require overtime payments. Meanwhile, Shanghai-based programmer Suji Yan and his wife, Katt Gu, designed a free software license for the 996.ICU GitHub campaign. It allows companies to signal that they follow labor laws. Yan told National Public Radio that within 48 hours “a lot of small and medium companies started to put all their work in the anti-996 license to show that they are a good company.”

The campaign has also encountered some backlash. The web browsers of several big Chinese tech firms like Tencent and Xiaomi have reportedly blocked the page. This may be because they are among the companies that employ the harsh 996 schedule. Chinese government censors so far have not taken action to block the site, however, because doing so would cut off a wide array of content and collaboration that is critical to innovation in the country.

But fears remain that the government will instead put pressure on Microsoft, which owns GitHub and has extensive business interests in China, to remove the page. In an effort to preempt such a move, employees from Microsoft and other international tech firms like Google and TripAdvisor posted an open letter on GitHub on April 22 expressing solidarity with the campaign and encouraging “Microsoft and GitHub to keep the 996.ICU GitHub repository uncensored and available to everyone.” By April 24, the letter had garnered 250 signatures from software engineers and other tech workers around the world.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- **Run-up to Tiananmen anniversary:** Watch for increased censorship, surveillance, and harassment or “forced vacations” for activists, particularly in Beijing, in advance of the 30th anniversary of the army’s suppression of prodemocracy protests on June 4, 1989. Outside China, watch for various events and public statements by foreign governments and civil society groups to commemorate those killed in the crackdown.

- **GitHub censorship:** Watch for any steps by the Chinese government to limit access to GitHub or compel Microsoft to remove the 996.ICU page.
• **More pressure on teachers, students:** As more educational institutions, tech companies, and local party cadres seek to implement Xi Jinping’s orders to raise a generation of young people who are fiercely loyal to the Communist Party, watch for new examples of reprisals, surveillance, and indoctrination aimed at instructors, college students, and children.

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• **Visit the China Media Bulletin Resources section:** Learn more about how policymakers, media outlets, educators and donors can help advance free expression in China and beyond via a [new resource section](http://greatfire.org) on the Freedom House website.

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**For more information**

• For archives, go to: www.freedomhouse.org/China-media

• For additional information on human rights and free expression in China, see: *Freedom in the World 2018, Freedom of the Press 2017, Freedom on the Net 2018*, and *The Battle for China’s Spirit: Religious Revival, Repression, and Resistance under Xi Jinping*