THE DARKEST MOMENT

The Crackdown on Human Rights in China, 2013-16

A Report of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

June 2016

www.conservativehumanrights.com

"This is a comprehensive and well researched analysis of China's increasingly deplorable human rights record. I am obviously concerned about what has been happening in Hong Kong.

"The British Government must take account of this first class piece of work."

Lord Patten
Governor of Hong Kong (1992-1997) and Chairman of the Conservative Party (1990-1992)

"I very much endorse this report and its recommendations. It is an excellent, professional and well researched study. Its recommendations are spot on.

"As Foreign Secretary I had to negotiate with the Chinese Foreign Minister over the future of Hong Kong.

"When I pressed the need for the rule of law to be respected in China he responded that the Chinese Government believed in the rule of law. In China, he said 'the people must obey the law'. I had to remind him that the Government must obey the rule of law as well.

"This report highlights the urgent need for reform in China. It deserves to be read and implemented."

Sir Malcolm Rifkind
Foreign Secretary (1995-1997)

THE DARKEST MOMENT:

THE CRACKDOWN ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA 2013-2016

A Report by

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

www.conservativehumanrights.com

About the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission was set up by the then Shadow Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Liam Fox MP, in 2005 to highlight international human rights concerns, to inform, advise and enhance the party's foreign policy. Freedom and human dignity should be at the heart of foreign policy and the Commission aims to ensure that the importance of fundamental human rights is kept high on the political agenda.

The Chair of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission is appointed by the Leader of the Conservative Party, and is currently Fiona Bruce MP. Since its creation the Commission's Chairs have included Gary Streeter MP, the Rt Hon Stephen Crabb MP, Sir Tony Baldry MP, and Robert Buckland MP.

Commissioners to this report:-

Fiona Bruce MP (Chair)
Benedict Rogers (Vice-Chair)
David Burrowes MP
Baroness Hodgson
Charles Tannock MEP
Jo Barker
Luke de Pulford

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission is independent of both Her Majesty's Government and the Conservative Party. The views and opinions expressed in this report do not reflect the views and opinions of either the Government or the Conservative Party.

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Foreword

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission recognises that no country has a perfect human rights record and indeed that in the 19th Century the influence of the UK on human rights in China was in many instances not positive. We recognise how important it has been for the UK in the intervening years to review and change its own approach to human rights, and that this is a journey which still continues today. We also acknowledge the distance which China has travelled over time in terms of its global contribution to culture, academia, science and the arts; however we believe there is still a significant distance which China needs to travel with regard to human rights, as this report highlights.

In October 2015, China's President Xi Jinping came to the United Kingdom on a State visit, the first by a Chinese President in a decade. The United Kingdom and China signed business deals worth up to £40 billion, including securing Chinese investment in two new nuclear reactors.[1] The United Kingdom government described a "golden era" in Sino-British relations, and positioned itself as China's closest "friend" in the West.

This comes at a time when, according to many sources, China has unleashed an unprecedented crackdown on civil society, human rights defenders, religious minorities, the media and others. According to everyone who provided evidence to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission inquiry, the period 2013-2016 is the worst in China's human rights situation since the Tiananmen massacre in 1989. In addition, according to evidence received from the former Chief Secretary of Hong Kong Anson Chan and the founder of the Democratic Party in Hong Kong Martin Lee, as well as Professor Victoria Tin-bor Hui of the University of Notre Dame and others, very serious threats to Hong Kong's freedoms have emerged as a source of grave concern.

For this reason, I tabled an Urgent Question in the House of Commons on 22 October 2015 to raise the specific case of Zhang Kai, a human rights lawyer in China who had been arrested and was facing a severe prison sentence.[2] Zhang Kai has since been released, though believed by his lawyer to be on bail, and while we may never know the factors that led to his release, it is widely believed that raising his case publicly in the international arena may have contributed. It is our view in the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission that our government, along with other governments, should place human rights at the centre of our relationship with China, should raise human rights concerns at every appropriate opportunity, and should do so publicly as

[1] "Chinese state visit: up to £40 billion deals agreed", UK government press release, 23 October 2015 - https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chinese-state-visit-up-to-40-billion-deals-agreed

[2] "Urgent Question on China and human rights lawyer Zhang Kai", 22 October 2015 - http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2015/october/urgent-question-on-china-and-human-rights-lawyer-zhang-kai/

well as in private discussions; we acknowledge that the latter certainly have an important role to play – so too do more public challenges.

We recognise that the relationship with China is of significant importance on many levels, economic and strategic, and that trading with China, as well as working with China to address many global challenges including climate change and security, is vital. But we believe, particularly at a time when there have been allegations of such a severe deterioration in the human rights situation, these concerns must also be at the forefront of that relationship and should not be sidelined. If China is to be a reliable partner and a place where British businesses can invest with confidence, the rule of law is essential, and therefore the reports of harassment, arrest, abduction and imprisonment of over 300 lawyers and their associates, colleagues and family members in 2015 should be of very grave concern. It cannot be in Britain's interests, or that of the wider world, to witness a lack of respect for human rights or the rule of law by any country with whom we seek to have a meaningful relationship, without challenging this when we become aware of it.

There will be those who will argue that the United Kingdom's influence is limited, or that in the age of austerity the UK's economic interests and job-creation are a priority. We disagree profoundly with the first argument. The United Kingdom, as the fifth largest economy in the world, a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council and a leading member of the G8, has significant influence. We agree that we should continue to engage with China, but as already stated, engagement should include human rights as a central focus. As we argue later in the report, it is a misnoma to believe that it is impossible to pursue engagement and speak out about human rights at the same time. Others have done so and continued to trade and invest.

In addition to the Urgent Question, I have tabled other Parliamentary Questions, and authored two articles, highlighting our concerns: on *Politics Home* on 19 October,[3] and on *CapX* on 29 February 2016.[4] The Deputy Chair of the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, Benedict Rogers, contributed a similar article to *The Huffington Post* on 1 March 2016.[5]

Following the Urgent Question and other work on China, the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission decided to conduct an inquiry into the human rights situation in the country, so that we could gather a more detailed, in-depth and comprehensive assessment. The scope, criteria and methodology are set out in the

[3] "Fiona Bruce MP: UK must be China's critical friend on human rights," 19 October 2015 - https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/opinion/house-commons/60675/fiona-bruce-mp-uk-must-be-chinas-critical-friend

[4] "China has enjoyed the limelight, now it must experience the spotlight," by Fiona Bruce, 29 February 2016 - https://www.politicshome.com/news/uk/foreign-affairs/opinion/house-commons/60675/fiona-bruce-mp-uk-must-be-chinas-critical-friend

[5] "China is a bully we need to stand up to – because no one is safe in China today," by Benedict Rogers, 1 March 2016 - http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/ben/china_b_9353618.html

Introduction. I had the privilege of chairing two hearings in the House of Commons, where we heard from ten very impressive witnesses. Our witnesses included Chinese dissidents and foreign experts, including academics, lawyers, journalists and human rights advocates. We are indebted to everyone who provided evidence, analysis and recommendations, either in person or in writing, and we hope that this report does justice to the information we have received.

I hope that this report, and the written submissions we received which are available online as an appendix to our report, will serve as a valuable source of evidence and recommendations for our government, which continues to pledge to place human rights at the centre of foreign policy.

The Foreign Secretary, the Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP, says in his Preface to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy 2015 that human rights has been "mainstreamed … making it a core part of the everyday work of all British diplomats". Human rights, he said, are "the fundamental building blocks of economic development, and thus of a more stable, peaceful and prosperous world." The promotion of human rights, he concluded, "is a fundamental part of the promotion of the British national interest".[6]

We agree, but as our report sets out, we believe there is much more that the United Kingdom can do to put those principles into action in the context of our relationship with China.

I want China and Britain to develop a good friendship. However, this relationship should not be at all costs. Being a friend to China does not mean we resist speaking out when something is wrong. Indeed, being a true friend to *the people* of China involves *the people* – and the government – of the United Kingdom speaking up for them. I hope the government will give serious consideration to the evidence and recommendations we set out in this report, that the United Kingdom's policy towards China will be reviewed and recalibrated appropriately, and that the United Kingdom will play a leadership role in the international community in speaking out for the promotion and protection of human rights in China.

Finally, in relation to organ harvesting, so disturbing was the evidence put before this Commission that we will be looking into this as a separate study in the near future. This will include China and other parts of the world where we are concerned involvement in this practice may be on the increase.

Fiona Bruce MP
Chairman, the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission
June 2016

[6] Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy 2015 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2015

Introduction

Xi Jinping became President of the People's Republic of China on 14 March 2013, having already assumed office as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China four months earlier, on 15 November 2012. He is China's sixth leader since the Communist revolution, following Mao Zedong, Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. Initially, there had been hopes that he would be a reformer, and that as China continued to open up economically, a new era of political liberalisation would follow.

It has become apparent, however, that the opposite seems to be the case. Under Xi Jinping's leadership, human rights in China appear to have deteriorated severely. According to Yang Jianli, founder of Initiatives for China, in evidence to our inquiry, "this is the darkest moment for Chinese human rights in years".

For this reason, the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission decided to hold this inquiry, to establish the truth about the current human rights situation in China and to gather recommendations for UK policy.

Human rights in China is a vast topic, and so the scope and criteria for our inquiry needed to be carefully defined. We decided to focus solely on the situation since Xi Jinping became President, so the three-year period from 2013-2016. The inquiry focused on the arrests, detention and continuing harassment of lawyers in China; the abduction and detention of booksellers from Hong Kong and exiled Chinese activists from Thailand and other locations; the continued detention of dissidents, bloggers and journalists in China; the increased repression of the media; the proposed new legislation governing the conduct of NGOs in China; the use of televised forced confessions; the use of torture; organ harvesting; the arrest and deportation of foreign activists; the destruction of Christian crosses in Zhejiang province and the wider implications for freedom of religion or belief; the ongoing repression in Tibet and Xinjiang; and the deteriorating political situation in Hong Kong.

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission held two hearings, chaired by Fiona Bruce MP, in the House of Commons. Both hearings lasted almost three hours, and we heard from ten witnesses, to whom the commission records here its appreciation.

We heard from Bob Fu, founder and President of China Aid, who fled China in 1997 after having been imprisoned for two months. He had been a student leader during the Tiananmen protests in 1989 and had previously taught English to Communist Party officials at the Beijing Party School of the Chinese Communist Party.

Anastasia Lin, a Chinese-born Canadian actress and winner of Miss World Canada 2015, also testified at our first hearing. Ms Lin had been barred from entry to China for the Miss World final in Sanya, Hainan Island, in December 2015 because of her

public advocacy on human rights in China. She has appeared in over twenty films and television productions, many of which focus on human rights themes. She had previously testified before the US Congress. Her forthcoming film, *The Bleeding Edge*, highlights the persecution of Falun Gong and the issue of organ harvesting.

We heard oral evidence from three foreign experts, including Dr Eva Pils, Reader in Transnational Law at the Dickson Poon School of Law at King's College, London and author of *China's Human Rights Lawyers: Advocacy and Resistance* (2014); Nicola Macbean, founder of The Rights Practice; and Dr Corinna-Barbara Francis, an independent consultant and former China researcher at Amnesty International.

In our second hearing, we heard oral evidence from Dr Teng Biao, a Chinese human rights lawyer; Yaxue Cao, founder of ChinaChange.org; Dr Sophie Richardson, China Director at Human Rights Watch; a representative of Christian Solidarity Worldwide; and Ethan Gutmann, an independent researcher and journalist, author of *The Slaughter: Mass Killings, Organ Harvesting and China's Secret Solution to Its Dissident Problem* (2015) and co-author with David Kilgour and David Matas of the forthcoming new report *Bloody Harvest/The Slaughter: An Update* (May 2016).

In addition to the two hearings, the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission received over 30 written submissions, including from: the award-winning blind human rights activist Chen Guangcheng, who had been in detention in China until his escape to the United States in 2012 and whose story is told in his book *The Barefoot Lawyer*; the founder of the Democratic Party in Hong Kong, Martin Lee, together with the former Chief Secretary of the Hong Kong government, Anson Chan; Joshua Wong, leader of Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement; Nathan Kwun Chung Law, Chair of Demosisto, Hong Kong; Amnesty International; Human Rights Watch; PEN International; Christian Solidarity Worldwide; Freedom Now; The Rights Practice; the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China; China Aid; Initiatives for China; the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD); Umbrella Walkers, June 4th New Generation and June 4th Action; the World Uyghur Congress; Free Tibet; Tibet Society; Yeshe Choesang, editor of the Tibet Post International; Falun Gong; Dr Christopher Hancock, Oxford House; Professor Victoria Tin-bor Hui, University of Notre Dame; Dr Eva Pils, King's College, London; Corinna-Barbara Francis, independent consultant and former China Researcher at Amnesty International; Ethan Gutmann, co-author of a forthcoming report *Bloody Harvest/The Slaugher: An Update*, on the issue of organ harvesting; Yaxue Cao, Editor of ChinaChange.org; and Rose Tang, who participated in the Tiananmen protests in 1989 and is a journalist, artist and activist.

Furthermore, the Commission conducted its own research of secondary sources, consulting the United States State Department's Annual Report on Human Rights 2015; the US Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2015; the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and its various hearings and

reports; and an extensive range of news reports and analysis from international media including *The Economist, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph,* BBC, CNN and others.

The evidence and analysis presented in this report draws from many of the above-mentioned sources. The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission particularly notes the extent to which such a wide range of sources served to confirm and reinforce the overall impression that human rights in China have suffered from a very severe deterioration in the period of focus for the Commission, from 2013-2016. An unprecedented crackdown on civil society, human rights defenders, freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief, to name just some thematic issues, is unfolding. Due to the limitations of time and capacity we were unable to examine in detail the following aspects: human trafficking, the situation for North Korean refugees in China, women's rights, forced abortions, gendercide, labour rights, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) rights, disability rights and a number of other areas of human rights. We received harrowing evidence on the issue of organ harvesting, which is referred to later in this report. While large uncertainties exist as to the scale of this crime and the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission is not yet in a position to verify one estimate or another, we have chosen to reference the issue as one of grave concern which requires comprehensive investigation, verification and appropriate action.

This report concentrates on those areas which were the focus of our hearings and written submissions, namely:

- Intimidation, abductions, televised confessions, a propaganda war and a climate of fear
- Crackdown on lawyers and human rights defenders
- Repressive legislation
- Freedom of expression
- Freedom of religion or belief
- Tibet
- Xinjiang
- Falun Gong
- Hong Kong
- Organ harvesting
- UK Policy

Torture is a consistent theme running through almost all the sections of the report and therefore we have not devoted a separate, specific section to torture.

Much of the detail is contained in the written submissions, which the Commission will publish as an online appendix to our report, available on our website: www.conservativehumanrights.com. This report does not aim to be comprehensive but rather to summarise and synthesise, concisely, certain major points and concerns conveyed to our inquiry, which can be studied in more detail in the written submissions and other sources. Finally, for the purposes of full disclosure, we did not seek to receive evidence from the Government of the People's Republic of China or her Majesty's Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It is the view of this Commission that they will want to contribute to this debate once this report is published.

Executive Summary

Without exception, every single oral and written submission to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission's inquiry on human rights in China 2013-2016 detailed a severe deterioration in human rights in China during this period and concluded that the situation was the worst it has been in many years.

Some say it is the worst time for human rights in China since the Tiananmen massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in 1989. The vast majority of submissions use the phrase "unprecedented" to describe the situation.

According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide's submission, the scale of the crackdown is "wider and deeper" than any previous crackdown in recent years, impacting not only traditional targets – political dissidents and religious minorities, for example – but also new targets, such as lawyers and academics. Prison sentences imposed on those convicted of particular political crimes are longer than previously seen, and the threshold of behaviour deemed to be "unacceptable" is lower. New phenomenon, in particular the abduction of activists from outside China, the arrest and detention of foreign activists in China, the introduction of new and repressive legislation restricting the activities of civil society, and the use of forced televised confessions are particularly alarming. Increasingly, China's control and surveillance of the Internet is exploited as a space of entrapment, show-trials and mass disinformation.

According to most sources, torture continues to be widely used. Amnesty International told the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission that "torture and other ill-treatment remain widespread in detention and interrogation". Prisoners in poor health have been, according to Amnesty International, "either denied or unable to access adequate medical treatment". The UN Committee against Torture reviewed China's implementation of its treaty obligations under the Convention against Torture in 2015, and expressed multiple concerns.[7]

China continues to execute more people than any other country in the world, according to Amnesty International's report on the death penalty.[8] Even though in 2015 worldwide executions rose by 54%, China remained the world's top executioner. Although China removed nine particular crimes from being punishable by death in 2015, these were crimes that according to Amnesty International were already rarely punished by death. Forty-six crimes for which the death penalty is available remain,

[7] UN Committee Against Torture - http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/MasterCalendar.aspx?Type=Session&Lang=En

[8] Amnesty International, *Death Sentences and Executions Report 2015* (Index: ACT 50/3487/2016) - https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/act50/3487/2016/en/

including many designated crimes which "do not qualify as being punishable by death under international law."[9]

Freedom of expression, particularly through the media and social media, is severely repressed. China ranks 176 out of 180 in a survey of press freedom conducted by Reporters Without Borders.[10]

Perhaps the most blatant example of the deterioration in human rights in China is the crackdown on lawyers and human rights defenders that began on 9 July 2015 (known as the '709' Crackdown). The Hong Kong-based China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, as of 13 April 2016, records a total of 317 individuals affected by this crackdown. These include lawyers, their associates, para-legals and relatives. After an initial period where hundreds were arrested, many were subsequently released but at least 21 have been formally charged with specific crimes including the very serious crime of sedition and many others have been subjected to harassment, monitoring, interrogation and threats. The '709' lawyers, as they are known, were held for six months in incommunicado detention. According to the submission of Dr Eva Pils from King's College, London, "the scope of the currently ongoing crackdown is unprecedented" and it signifies that "the authorities have attempted to silence virtually all persons self-identifying as rights lawyers".

The situation in Tibet continues to be severely restricted. Freedom House ranks Tibet as among the very worst in the world for freedom and human rights.[11] There are believed to be over 640 known political prisoners in Tibet, according to the Tibet Society in their submission, although some other sources put the figure as high as 2,081. The death in prison in July 2015 of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche, a Tibetan religious and community leader serving a life sentence, and the continuing self-immolations by Tibetans illustrate the alarming absence of human rights protection.

The Muslim Uyghurs in Xinjiang continue to face severe discrimination and persecution. The case of Ilham Tohti, a Uyghur public intellectual sentenced to life imprisonment in September 2015, was brought to our attention. Ilham Tohti had worked tirelessly for two decades "to foster dialogue and understanding between Uyghurs and Chinese" and he "remains a voice of moderation and reconciliation," according to Yaxue Cao, Editor of ChinaChange.org, in her submission.

In Zhejiang Province, an area with a significant Christian population, between 1,500 and 2,000 crosses have been forcibly removed or destroyed from both Catholic and Protestant and registered and unregistered churches since early 2014, according to

[9] "China is the world's top executioner, but it doesn't want you to know that," by James Griffiths, CNN, 7 April 2016 - http://edition.cnn.com/2016/04/06/asia/china-death-penalty/

[10] World Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders, 2016 - https://rsf.org/en/ranking

[11] Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2016* - https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016

reports cited in Christian Solidarity Worldwide's submission. In 2016, several pastors, from both registered, state-sanctioned churches and unregistered churches, have been detained and imprisoned. On 27 January 2016, Gu Yuese, senior pastor of one of the largest registered churches in China, was detained and accused of misuse of funds. He was released on 31 March 2016, but with severe restrictions.[12] According to the evidence of Bob Fu, President of China Aid, there is an increasing tendency by the authorities to use tactics designed to cause reputational damage of church leaders, such as making allegations of corruption.

The rapid erosion of basic freedoms in Hong Kong is of particular concern to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission. Evidence received indicates a severe breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. According to Hong Kong's former Chief Secretary Anson Chan and the founder of the Democratic Party of Hong Kong, Martin Lee, SC QC, in their joint submission, "precious rights and freedoms guaranteed under 'one country, two systems' such as freedom of the press, of publication and of academic thought – are being chipped away, while our local government seems to turn a blind eye – more bent on pleasing the Central Authorities in Beijing than standing up for Hong Kong and its core values." They argue that following the abduction of the Hong Kong booksellers in December 2015 and early 2016, "none of us is safe". Professor Victoria Tin-bor Hui, Associate Professor in Political Science, University of Notre Dame, argues in her submission that "Hong Kong's young people who have grown up under the 'one country, two systems' model are convinced that Hong Kong is dying."

The arrest and detention, and ultimate deportation, of at least two foreign activists in 2016 is yet another sign of increasing repression in China. Peter Dahlin, a Swedish human rights activist working with civil society in China, was arrested in January 2016 and detained for approximately two weeks before being forced to make a televised 'confession'.[13] Mr Dahlin, who worked for the Chinese Urgent Action Working Group (CUAWG), was accused of being a threat to China's national security. He was eventually released and deported from China.[14]

The abduction of Chinese activists, including those with foreign citizenship, of whom one, Lee Po, has British citizenship, from locations outside mainland China, notably

[12] "Authorities place new restrictions on released pastor's freedom," China Aid, 7 April 2016 - http://www.chinaaid.org/2016/04/authorities-place-new-restrictions-on.html

[13] "Swedish activist Peter Dahlin paraded on China state TV for 'scripted confession', by Tom Phillips, The Guardian, 20 January 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/20/swedish-activist-peter-dahlin-paraded-on-china-state-tv-for-scripted-confession

[14] "China frees Swedish human rights activist," by Tom Phillips, The Guardian, 25 January 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/china-releases-swedish-human-rights-activist-peter-dahlin

from Hong Kong and the case of Gui Minhai, abducted from Pattaya, in Thailand, is unprecedented and extremely alarming.[15]

Equally concerning is the increased harassment of the relatives in China of Chinese activists living abroad. According to an article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, "increasingly the Chinese Communist Party is trying to muzzle those dissidents by intimidating family members at home."[16] As Anastasia Lin, a Chinese-born Canadian citizen who is an actress and winner of Miss World Canada 2015, told our hearing: "My feeling of duty to speak up was tested by the threats endured by my father after I was crowned Miss World Canada – he was paid a visit by state security agents and, under great pressure, tried to have me abandon human rights concerns. At one point I wanted to withdraw from the whole thing rather than put my future and family in danger by speaking up for people I didn't know. In the end, I felt that the only thing I could do was follow my conscience rather than submit to fear and silence." Ms Lin was, however, denied entry to China to participate in the Miss World final, held in Sanya, Hainan Island. "I was declared *persona non grata* … Still not satisfied, the Chinese consulate even threatened my dress sponsor in Toronto, telling them they had to end my sponsorship." A Reuters investigation titled *The Long Arm of China* encapsulates many of these issues.[17]

In conducting this inquiry, the Commission reviewed Foreign and Commonwealth Office statements and reports on China. We were deeply concerned by how understated they are, given the overwhelming evidence of a very grave deterioration in the human rights situation in China over the past three years and especially when as a Government there is a commitment to place human rights and democracy as a central pillar in foreign policy. Furthermore, commentators have strongly argued that China itself does not respect such an approach. James MacGregor, Chairman of the consulting company APCO based in Shanghai, said on the BBC Radio 4 Today Programme: "If you act like a panting puppy, the object of your attention is going to think they've got you on a leash. China does not respect people who suck up to them."[18] And the British Prime Minister's former strategic advisor Steve Hilton claimed that "Kowtowing to China's despots is morally wrong and makes no economic sense."[19] Dr Christopher Hancock of Oxford House told our Commission that "China per se is

[15] "China's Search for Dissidents Has Now Expanded to Foreign Countries," by Hannah Beech, TIME, 18 January 2016 - http://time.com/4184324/gui-minhai-dissident-search/

[16] "To silence its critics abroad, China goes after their families at home," Stuart Leavenworth, Christian Science Monitor, 29 March, 2016 - http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2016/0329/To-silence-its-critics-abroad-China-goes-after-their-families-at-home

[17] "The Long Arm of China," Reuters, 2016 - http://www.reuters.com/investigates/section/the-long-arm-of-china/

[18] "UK 'acting like a panting puppy' to China," BBC Radio 4 Today Programme, 20 October 2015 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p035qb8z

[19] "Kowtowing to China's despots is morally wrong and makes no economic sense," Steve Hilton, The Guardian, 18 October 2015 - http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/18/kowtowing-to-china-does-nothing-for-british-economic-health

now as unworthy a trading partner as South Africa was under apartheid because it generally sanctions the freedoms of its intellectuals, media, religious communities, youth, dissenters and citizens."

An article by the China scholar Orville Schell headlined "Crackdown in China: Worse and Worse" sums up and confirms the evidence our Commission received.[20] "The consequences of running afoul of government orders have become ever more grave". Another veteran China scholar David Shambaugh confirms that there is "an atmosphere of repression worse than at any time since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre",[21] with "an unremitting crackdown on all forms of dissent".[22] Policy makers in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office would do well to study these two academics' observations.

We therefore urge the United Kingdom Government to conduct a thorough review of its China policy; to study seriously our recommendations; to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law, and democratic values are at the centre of our relationship with China; to explore what steps can be taken to recalibrate this relationship; and to engage actively with human rights Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Chinese activists in exile, and, where possible, dissidents and civil society within China, as well as academics and other experts.

In 1949, Chairman Mao declared that the Chinese people had stood up. Now it is time for the United Kingdom and others in the international community to stand up for the Chinese people.

[20] "Crackdown in China: Worse and Worse," by Orville schell, New York Review of Books, 21 April 2016 - http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/04/21/crackdown-in-china-worse-and-worse/
[21] "Writing China: David Shambaugh, 'China's Future'," The Wall Street Journal, 14 March 2016 - http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2016/03/14/writing-china-david-shambaugh-chinas-future/
[22] Who is Xi?", by Andrew Nathan, New York Review of Books, 12 May 2016 - http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/05/12/who-is-xi/

Recommendations

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission makes the following recommendations to Her Majesty's Government:

1. To speak publicly, as well as privately, to China about its deteriorating human rights situation;
2. To conduct a thorough, comprehensive, open and radical review of British foreign policy towards China, to inform and recalibrate the United Kingdom's relationship with China; and for such a review to involve consultation with human rights Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), human rights lawyers, activists, religious communities and NGOs in China where possible, exiled Chinese dissidents, journalists, academics and other experts;
3. To raise specific cases, publicly and privately, such as the cases of jailed Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Liu Xiaobo, disabled human rights lawyer Ni Yulan under house arrest, and jailed Uyghur intellectual Ilham Tohti, among others;
4. To engage with greater consultation, transparency and accountability around the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue, and to include civil society and UK-based and international human rights NGOs; we would like to think they have already been involved in such exchanges, and encourage this on an ongoing basis;
5. To establish specific benchmarks for progress in the UK-China Human Rights Dialogue, and the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue;
6. To report publicly on the outcomes of discussions with China on human rights;
7. To commit to meeting regularly with prominent human rights activists, including the Dalai Lama, from mainland China, Tibet, Xinjiang and Hong Kong;
8. To invest funding in desperately needed initiatives for medical and psychological services for rehabilitation of torture survivors and their family members;
9. To intensify and increase efforts on behalf of British citizens detained in China. The cases of Lee Po from Hong Kong; Akmal Shaikh, executed in Xinjiang in 2009; Neil Heywood, murdered in Chongqing in November 2011; and Peter Humphreys, arrested in August 2013 should prompt a review of the deaths, detentions and executions of UK citizens in China, especially if we are to have a "golden era" of relations;
10. To urgently review mechanisms for monitoring the obligations under the Sino-British Joint Declaration for Hong Kong, and to convene internal discussions to devise redress mechanisms that can be proposed to the authorities in mainland China and Hong Kong, unequivocally supporting the basic rights of the people of Hong Kong;
11. To utilise the UN Human Rights Council mechanisms and the Universal Periodic Review of China's human rights record, coming up in 2018, to press for real progress in China;

12. To urge China to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
13. To urge China to extend an invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief to visit the country, and to be permitted unrestricted access to all parts of the country, including Tibet and Xinjiang;
14. To urge China to engage in a substantive and meaningful dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives and to work towards a peaceful and mutually acceptable resolution for Tibet;
15. To increase funding for independent civil society and lawyers in China, as long as care is taken a) not to provide funding only to government-associated Non-Governmental Organisations; and b) within the parameters of the new laws, to avoid any steps which might jeopardise Chinese domestic civil society organisations through association with foreign funding;
16. To encourage, organise and support civil society exchanges between China and the United Kingdom, including by lawyers, human rights organisations, independent bloggers and other civil society groups;
17. To continue and increase funding for specialised training programmes to strengthen capacity, knowledge and skills in international law, human rights, rule of law and other related areas, especially for professionals such as lawyers, judges and academics;
18. To consider supporting specific measures to target sanctions against individual senior Chinese officials implicated in human rights violations such as torture, including the enforcement of travel bans and asset freezes;
19. To review the conduct of Confucius Institutes, cultural exchanges utilised for propaganda purposes in the United Kingdom, and Chinese funding of other educational institutions and initiatives overseas;
20. To commission an international, independent review of the issue of organ harvesting in China, to establish the truth about where organs are sourced from;
21. To initiate legislation to prohibit organ tourism to China, at least until a comprehensive investigation has been completed, to review hospital confidentiality on organ tourism, and to consider releasing the statistics on the number of British citizens who travel to China for organ transplants each year;
22. To work with the European Union and others to prepare a list of doctors engaged in organ harvesting in China, and to introduce a travel ban for those associated with such practices.

1. Intimidation, abductions, televised confessions, a propaganda war and a climate of fear

A climate of fear prevails in mainland China, and is creeping into Hong Kong. That is the conclusion to which all the evidence received by the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission points.

Xi Jinping has accumulated for himself powers unprecedented since Mao Zedong, according to many analysts. A personality cult is developing which, according to *The Economist*,[23] among several sources, is profoundly dangerous.[24] According to Andrew Nathan, Xi Jinping has "reinstated many of the most dangerous features of Mao's rule: personal dictatorship, enforced ideological conformity, and arbitrary persecution."[25] A renewed demand for absolute allegiance to the Communist Party of China has been set out repeatedly, which has resulted in a ruthless suppression of dissent.[26]

One form of suppressing dissent is through intimidation and fear. In addition to arrests, imprisonment and torture, which have long been the tools of the state in China, there are three new practices which have emerged under Xi Jinping: the increased intimidation and harassment of relatives of critics of the regime;[27] the abduction of dissidents from outside mainland China; and the introduction of televised confessions.

Chang Ping (Zhang Ping), a Chinese dissident living in Germany, reported in March 2016 that several of his relatives in China had been detained as part of an investigation into an open letter which he wrote calling for Xi Jinping's resignation. His two brothers and a sister were "abducted" by Chinese police on 27 March 2016 near their father's home in Sichuan province.[28] Following an article Chang wrote for *Deutsche Welle* and an interview he gave on Radio France Internationale about the power-struggle within the Chinese Communist Party, his relatives were detained in an effort to pressurise him to withdraw his remarks.

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[23] "Chairman of everything," The Economist, 2 April 2016 - http://www.economist.com/news/china/21695923-his-exercise-power-home-xi-jinping-often-ruthless-there-are-limits-his

[24] "Beware the cult of Xi," The Economist, 2 April 2016 - http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21695881-xi-jinping-stronger-his-predecessors-his-power-damaging-country-beware-cult

[25] "Who is Xi?", by Andrew Nathan, New York Review of Books, 12 May 2016 - http://www.nybooks.com/articles/2016/05/12/who-is-xi/

[26] "'Love the party, protect the party': how Xi Jinping is bringing China's media to heel," by Tom Phillips, The Guardian, 28 February 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/28/absolute-loyalty-how-xi-jinping-is-bringing-chinas-media-to-heel

[27] "China 'rounds up overseas dissidents' relatives over letter," AFP, 28 March 2016 - http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3512051/China-rounds-overseas-dissidents-relatives-letter.html

[28] "Chinese dissident Chang Ping says brothers 'abducted' over letter criticising president," by Stuart Leavenworth, The Guardian, 28 March 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/28/chinese-dissident-chang-ping-says-brothers-abducted-over-letter-criticising-president

The relatives of another exiled activist, Wen Yunchao, based in New York, were also abducted.[29] According to *The Washington Post*, the message from the regime is "no matter whether you are in New York, rural Germany or Hong Kong, you'd better think twice before criticising Chinese President Xi Jinping."[30] Increasingly, the Chinese Communist Party is "trying to muzzle those dissidents by intimidating family members at home."[31]

The plight of the Hong Kong booksellers will be explored in the section on Hong Kong, but it is of course at the centre of this concern. One of those who disappeared was not even abducted from Hong Kong which, of course, despite 'one country, two systems', has been under Chinese sovereignty since 1997. Gui Minhai was allegedly abducted by Chinese agents from Pattaya, a seaside resort town in Thailand. Furthermore, he is a Swedish citizen. Yet he disappeared and then suddenly reappeared in mainland China making a confession on national television. Similarly, according to Dr Corinna-Barbara Francis in her submission, in November 2015 a political cartoonist, Jiang Yefei, was forcibly sent back to China from Thailand after he drew satirical cartoons of Xi Jinping, even though he already had political asylum status from the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and a third country was ready to receive him.[32] As *The Washington Post* put it, "it is not unheard of in years past for China's Communist rulers to reach beyond their borders to silence critics. In 2002, they kidnapped democracy activist Wang Bingzhang from Vietnam; he remains in a Chinese prison to this day. But the brazenness and frequency of such actions have been growing."[33]

Rose Tang, who participated in the pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in 1989 and is a journalist and artist, claims in her submission to our inquiry that "the arbitrary abduction, detention, interrogation, harassment and forced repatriation of Chinese and Chinese-born foreign nationals and Hong Kong residents has reached an unprecedented scale." She cites state media reports about its so-called "Fox-Hunt" operations reaching a historical record – 857 people were arrested by Chinese agents overseas and repatriated in 2015. On 21 April 2016, the Chinese

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[29] "Family members detained as backlash over open letter intensifies," by Yuli Yang and Katie Hunt, CNN, 28 March, 2016 - http://edition.cnn.com/2016/03/28/asia/china-open-letter-xi-jinping-jia-jia-activists/

[30] "With Hong Kong booksellers silenced, China now goes after exiled dissidents," by Simon Denyer, The Washington Post, 28 March 2016 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/03/28/with-hong-kong-booksellers-silenced-china-now-goes-after-exiled-dissidents/

[31] "To silence its critics abroad, China goes after their families at home," Stuart Leavenworth, Christian Science Monitor, 29 March, 2016 - http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2016/0329/To-silence-its-critics-abroad-China-goes-after-their-families-at-home

[32] "Dissident Cartoonist Jian Yefei 'Repatriated' to China," see: http://cartoonistsrights.org/dissident-cartoonist-jiang-yefei-repatriated-to-china/

[33] "A publisher's daughter grapples with her father's abduction by China," by Fred Hiatt, The Washington Post, 24 April 2016 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/a-publishers-daughter-grapples-with-her-fathers-abduction-by-china/2016/04/24/7cb986c4-08d4-11e6-b283-e79d81c63c1b_story.html

government announced the launch of a new Sky Net campaign on "overseas fugitives," according to Ms Tang.

And yet the courage of activists and relatives is inspiring. Gui Minhai's daughter Angela, who is studying in the United Kingdom, told *The Washington Post* that: "Even though he told me to keep quiet, I don't believe that's his actual wish, and I believe that if I did keep quiet, I would just be assisting in a crime against international law."[34] Anastasia Lin, who gave evidence at one of our hearings, wrote in *The Washington Post*: "My father is afraid to speak to me. The reason for this is all too familiar to Chinese people who speak their minds while living abroad. Shortly after my victory [as Miss World Canada], my father started receiving threats from Chinese security agents complaining about my human rights advocacy. As an actress, I frequently take on roles in films and television productions that shed light on official corruption and religious persecution in China, and my Miss World Canada platform reflects these passions … Many Chinese rights advocates have had similar experiences. Even after they immigrate to the West, the Communist Party uses their family members in China as leverage to silence and intimidate them … This method is reminiscent of how, during the Cultural Revolution, children were encouraged to denounce and inform on parents, and family members were turned against each other under threat of persecution." She added, however, her belief that speaking out is better than staying silent. Of her father, Ms Lin wrote: "I know he is safer in the light of international attention than in the shadows sought by the authoritarians."[35]

The increasing use of forced televised confessions has been criticised by a senior Chinese judge. "Outside of a court, no one has the right to decide whether someone is guilty of a crime," said Zhang Liyong, chief judge of the High People's Court in Henan Province. "The police aren't qualified to say someone is guilty. Prosecutors aren't qualified to declare someone guilty. News media are even less qualified to determine guilt."[36] He is right, but the practice continues.

Another form of intimidation is the implied threat to Western governments, businesses, media organisations, publishers and others if they speak out. An astonishing number of international governmental and non-governmental and commercial organisations are appallingly cowed into self-censorship and silence by the Chinese government. Just one example is the case of the American Bar Association's

[34] Ibid.,

[35] "I won Miss World Canada. But my work puts my father at risk in China," by Anastasia Lin, The Washington Post, 26 June 2016 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-i-cant-talk-to-my-father-in-china/2015/06/26/296e856e-19f1-11e5-ab92-c75ae6ab94b5_story.html

[36] "Chinese judge criticises televised confessions," The Wall Street Journal, 15 March 2016 - http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2016/03/15/chinese-judge-criticizes-televised-confessions/

decision[37] to rescind an agreement to publish a book by Chinese dissident lawyer Dr Teng Biao,[38] who gave evidence to our inquiry, allegedly for fear that publishing his book might hinder their activities in China. The American Bar Association have since argued that their decision was for commercial reasons relating to the viability of book sales,[39] but the impression has certainly been created that China's intimidation reaches into the depths of respectable international organisations.[40] The Co-Chairs of the US Congressional Executive Commission on China, Congressman Christopher Smith and Senator Marco Rubio, were sufficiently concerned about this to write to the ABA[41] seeking clarification on whether the book project was cancelled because of fear of China.[42]

By all accounts, the Chinese regime appears to be intensifying its propaganda war against human rights and democracy. With the rise of Donald Trump as the potential Republican nominee, Chinese State media have used this as an argument against democracy.[43] "Democracy is a mess – just look at India – and sometimes violent – viz the Arab Spring," argued China's state-owned *Global Times*.[44] Similarly, the Education Minister Yuan Guiren has prohibited the teaching of so-called 'Western' values in classrooms in China;[45] and noticeably, the Chinese language translation of the United Nations covenants on human rights are problematic.[46] According to Dr Christopher

[37] "Leaked email: ABA Cancels Book for Fear of 'Upsetting the Chinese Government', by Isaac Stone Fish, *Foreign Policy*, 15 April 2016 - http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/15/leaked-email-aba-cancels-book-for-fear-of-upsetting-the-chinese-government-american-bar-association-teng-biao/

[38] "Book debate raises questions of self-censorship by foreign groups in China," by Edward Wong, The New York Times, 27 April 2016 - http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/28/world/asia/china-teng-biao-american-bar-association.html?_r=0

[39] "ABA To Lawmakers: We Didn't Bow to China," The Wall Street Journal, 27 April 2016 - http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2016/04/26/aba-denies-censoring-book-by-chinese-activist-in-letter-to-lawmakers/

[40] "China and the American Bar Association – Another Sad Story," by Jerome A. Cohen, 18 April 2016 - http://www.jeromecohen.net/jerrys-blog/china-and-the-american-bar-association

[41] "Lawmakers Pounce After ABA Scraps Book by China Rights Lawyer," Susan Beck, The American Lawyer, 20 April 2016 - http://www.americanlawyer.com/home/id=1202755481918/Lawmakers-Pounce-After-ABA-Scraps-Book-by-China-Rights-Lawyer?mcode=1202617075486&curindex=0&slreturn=20160328162030

[42] "Chairs Write to ABA President, Seek Information on Whether Fear of Offending China Led to Book Project Cancellation," 19 April 2016 - http://www.cecc.gov/media-center/press-releases/chairs-write-to-aba-president-seek-information-on-whether-fear-of

[43] "Democracy is a joke, says China – just look at Donald Trump," Tom Phillips, The Guardian, 17 March 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/mar/17/democracy-is-a-joke-says-china-just-look-at-donald-trump

[44] "China paper says rise of 'racist' Trump shows democracy is scary," by Simon Denyer, The Guardian, 14 March 2016 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/03/14/china-paper-says-rise-of-racist-trump-shows-democracy-is-scary/

[45] "Chinese official: No Western Values in the Classroom …. Except for Marxism," The Wall Street Journal, 10 March 2016 - http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2016/03/10/chinese-official-no-western-values-in-the-classroom-except-for-marxism/

[46] "Suppressed in translation: How Chinese versions of UN covenants gloss over human rights," The Economist, 19 March 2016 - http://www.economist.com/news/china/21695095-how-chinese-versions-un-covenants-gloss-over-human-rights-suppressed-translation

Hancock of Oxford House in his submission, some in China are now describing what is happening as a "New Cultural Revolution".

Other issues that are beyond the scope of this report but which require review by the United Kingdom Government include the role of cultural and academic institutions such as the Confucius Institutes in China's 'soft-power' armoury; its influence over other countries at the United Nations; its reported intimidation towards other countries to prevent them permitting visas and entry to Chinese dissidents; the seeming deployment of Chinese people living overseas to hold propaganda parades celebrating Xi Jinping when he travels and overshadowing human rights and democracy protests; and its bellicose threats towards those considering meeting His Holiness the Dalai Lama, exiled Uyghur representatives or other dissidents. For example, just before Xi Jinping visited the United States in March 2016, China protested against a decision by the US-based Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation in Washington, DC to present an honour to Dolkan Isa, the head of the World Uyghur Congress. China's foreign ministry issued a formal demarche to the US State Department, simply for allowing him entry to the country.[47]

To sum up this section, one cannot do better than the words of Hong Kong legislator Leung Kwok-hung: "Xi Jinping stressed that China should be and will be ruled by law. But what happened in China after he is in power: he threatened, he arrest[ed], and kidnapped all kinds of activists from different parts of civic society."[48] Xi Jinping has completely confused the concept of "rule of law" with a dictator's idea of "rule by law".

[47] "Xi's Washington Visit Crashed by Unwelcome Guest," by Eli Lake, Bloomberg, 31 March 2016 - http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2016-03-31/xi-s-washington-visit-crashed-by-one-of-his-victims

[48] "Signs of growing discontent for Xi Jinping in China," PBS Newshour, 31 March 2016 - http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/signs-of-growing-discontent-for-xi-jinping-in-china/

2. The crackdown on lawyers and human rights defenders

On 9 July 2015, the authorities in China launched a nationwide crackdown on lawyers and their assistants. From 9-16 July, over 120 lawyers were summoned by the police for questioning, and while most were released within hours, 13 lawyers and legal assistants remain in detention today. Eight have been formally charged with "subversion", including prominent lawyers Wang Yu and Li Heping. All were initially detained under a form of secret detention, where they were held incommunicado and denied access to their lawyers. In total, however, according to the China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group (CHRLG), as cited in a submission by Dr Eva Pils from King's College, London, as of 13 April 2016 at least 317 people have been affected by the crackdown, of whom 21 have been formally arrested and charged. In several cases, it has been reported by the authorities that the detainees have dismissed their legal counsel. Dr Pils states in her submission, "forced lawyer 'dismissals' have been used on previous occasions [and] … It must be assumed that the defence lawyer 'dismissals' are not genuine and that the right to fair trial of the detainees has been violated."

Dr Pils states that the lawyers who were targeted had represented a variety of social, political and religious cases, including involvement in cases related to land rights, housing, labour disputes, food safety, the environment, as well as more sensitive issues such as Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Falun Gong and unregistered Christian churches. Lawyers involved in such cases have always faced risks, but the scale and intensity of the current crackdown is unprecedented. In the past lawyers have faced the risk of losing their licence to practice law, electronic surveillance, regular questioning by the police, monitoring, travel restrictions and informal house arrest, and several, such as Gao Zhisheng, have been disappeared, been detained in secret detention and severely tortured previously. Dr Teng Biao, one of China's best-known human rights lawyers now living in exile in the United States, gave evidence to one of our hearings of how he had been disbarred, sacked from his position as a lecturer at the University of Politics and Law in Beijing, banned from teaching since 2009, kidnapped several times, held in detention and tortured because of his work defending human rights cases.

In addition to lawyers and their assistants, other human rights defenders have also been targeted. According to CHRD in their submission, in 2015 over 700 human rights defenders were arbitrarily detained for at least five days, and more than 100 spent part or all of 2015 under prolonged pre-trial detention. At least 30 human rights defenders (including but not limited to lawyers) were held in secret detention in 2015, and at the time of their submission to our inquiry 22 human rights defenders, including lawyers, remain in custody, 19 of whom have been formally arrested. In January 2016 alone, 16 individuals were arrested, 13 of whom face the extremely seriously charges of "subversion" or "inciting subversion of state power".

Relatives of lawyers have also been impacted. The most extreme example is that of Bao Zhuoxuan, the 17 year-old son of lawyers Wang Yu and Bao Longjun, who was originally detained with his parents on 9 July, but who escaped from the country to Burma (Myanmar). There he and his two friends who travelled with him, Tang Zhishun and Xing Qingxian, were, according to Dr Pils, "forcibly retrieved back to China from the border region" and he is now held under the strictest surveillance with his grandmother and aunt's family. "According to his friends", writes Dr Pils in her submission, "his movements are strictly controlled; and based on recent reports he is understood to live in a state of very great distress, anguish and indignation about the strict controls he has been subjected to. Adding this current experience to his being held for over 40 hours without any grounds, being forcibly retrieved from Myanmar, and his doubtless great concern about his parents, a friend described his state as 'utterly desperate'." Tang Zhishun and Xing Qingxian have disappeared.

According to CHRD in their submission, human rights defenders continue to be subjected to torture in detention, including "violent assault, deprivation of proper medical treatment, solitary confinement, deprivation of food … and extended shackling of hands and legs." A culture of impunity appears to prevail for the police and other state agents perpetrating torture.

Furthermore, since 2013, according to CHRD, "there has been a new surge in incidents of violent assaults against human rights lawyers in retaliation for their professional work defending clients in politically 'sensitive' cases." No one has been held to account for these assaults and indeed several lawyers who were physically assaulted were then accused of committing 'crimes', leading to a new phenomenon of "the criminalisation of human rights lawyers for defending their clients and challenging unlawful conduct by police and judicial officials".

Denial of medical treatment for those in detention is a serious concern. On 27 April 2016 Zhang Qing, wife of Guo Feixiong (sometimes known as Yang Maodong), a human rights defender and writer, wrote an open letter to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.[49] She said that her husband, who has been detained four times since 2005 and is currently held in prison in Yangchun, Guangdong Province, is seriously ill. "Guo Feixiong's body has been seriously ravaged. He suffers from bleeding in multiple places. I believe that his situation is life-threatening, but he is not receiving the medical examination and treatment that he needs," she wrote. "I am very worried … The Chinese government uses prison to not only deprive him of

[49] "Open Letter from Guo Feixiong's wife, Zhang Qing, to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights," 27 April 2016 - http://www.hrichina.org/en/press-work/hric-bulletin/wife-guo-feixiong-appeals-un-high-commissioner-human-rights-regarding-his

his freedom, but also directly damage his health, letting him face life-threatening risks. His request for a medical assessment and treatment was rejected."

Several lawyers have been forced to make televised 'confessions', a new practice referred to in an earlier section. Zhang Kai, a Beijing lawyer who has defended Christian congregations against the removal and destruction of crosses was forced to confess on television in February 2016, before his release, believed to be on bail, in March. Zhang Kai was detained on 25 August 2015 and accused of "disturbing social order", stealing and spying, among other crimes. During six months' detention under "residential surveillance at a designated location", Zhang had no contact with his family or his lawyer, and was then placed in criminal detention. On 25 February, Zhang was shown on state media giving a televised "confession" admitting to "disturbing social order", "endangering state security" and behaving in an unprofessional manner.[50]

The crackdown continues to this day. In April 2016, one of China's best known human rights lawyers, Pu Zhiqiang, had his licence to practice law revoked.[51] Another lawyer, Ge Yongxi, was briefly detained after posting an edited image mocking Xi Jinping after the revelations in the "Panama Papers".[52] Ni Yulan, a disabled lawyer who specialises in housing rights, was refused permission to travel to the United States to receive the International Women of Courage Award from the US State Department in March,[53] and was then placed under house arrest in April.[54]

A former senior staff member of Yirenping, a civil society organisation in China, who gave evidence to our inquiry concluded that human rights defenders in China "face nearly insurmountable challenges." Yirenping works through legal means to counter discrimination and promote equality. Since 2006, it has launched hundreds of lawsuits and policy advocacy campaigns on issues ranging from HIV/AIDS, the rights of people with disabilities, and women's rights. On 28 May 2014, human rights lawyer Chang Boyang, co-founder of Yirenping's member organisation in Zhengzhou, was detained on charges of "gathering in a public place to disturb public order," and was later charged with "picking quarrels" (a common charge used against human rights defenders) and then "conducting illegal business operations", according to the submission of a former Yirenping employee. On 6 and 7 March 2015, five women's

[50] "Chinese lawyer Zhang Kai in TV confession," Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 25 February 2016 - http://www.csw.org.uk/2016/02/25/press/2993/article.htm
[51] "Pu Zhiqiang: China rights lawyer has licence revoked," BBC, 14 April 2016 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-36042739
[52] "China briefly detains rights lawyer Ge Yongxi over Panama Papers post," BBC, 15 April 2016 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-36055000
[53] "Rights activist Ni Yulan 'barred from leaving' China," BBC, 30 March 2016 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-35924192
[54] "Chinese rights lawyer Ni Yulan placed under house arrest," The Guardian, 25 April 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/25/chinese-rights-lawyer-ni-yulan-under-house-arrest

rights activists, known as "the Feminist Five", who worked for Yirenping, were arrested and detained for over a month. On 12 June 2015, two former directors of Yirenping, Guo Bin and Yang Zhanqing, were detained without charges for 29 days.

"Such an assault," submitted the former senior staff member of Yirenping, "requires an extraordinary response from the international community and especially from countries who have cultivated strong bilateral trade and commercial relationships with China. The UK government's relationship gives you a unique responsibility to match partnerships with the Chinese with pressure when the government violates its own domestic – as well as international – law, in its pursuit of 'the China dream', which in reality is the dream of the Chinese Communist Party to tighten its grip on the country and silence dissenting voices."

Chen Guangcheng, the international award winning blind human rights defender who was held under house arrest in China before his escape to the United States in 2012, told our Commission: "Many of the methods for cracking down [on] and persecuting human rights lawyers and human rights defenders used during the period of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao have continued, such as the use of black jails, abductions, disappearances, forced confessions through torture, making family members guilty through association … But especially since the sweeping arrests that began on 9 July last year, a new method has been added: forcing these brave people to publicly admit their guilt through the mouthpieces of the Communist Party, something that is a humiliation to their dignity. This method not only violates international law, it also violates relevant articles of China's own Criminal Procedure Law." He added: "In looking back on the last three years, we see that there is as yet no explanation for the case of the torturing to death of human rights legal defender Cao Shunli in the Beijing Chaoyang Detention Centre; there are also no conclusions from the investigation into the breaking of 24 bones of the four lawyers who had travelled to Nongken Bureau in Heilongjiang Province to demand the release of citizens who had been illegally detained; the case of the farmer Xu Chunhe who was shot to death at the train station because he had been petitioning – several of the human rights lawyers and human rights defenders who were involved in uncovering this case, including Xie Yang, Tu Fu[55] and Wang Yu were later detained and to this day have not been able to see their lawyers."

As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in February 2016, "we are seeing a very worrying pattern in China that has serious implications for civil society and the important work they do across the country. Civil society actors, from lawyers and journalists to NGO workers, have the right to carry out their work, and it is the States' duty to support and protect them … Lawyers should never have to suffer prosecution or any other kind of sanctions or intimidation for discharging

[55] 'Tu Fu' is the nickname of Wu Gan.

their professional duties. I urge the Government of China to release all of them immediately and without conditions."[56] In July 2015 the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment all made a statement urging China to stop its campaign of harassment of lawyers and their associates. "Lawyers are essential to ensure the rule of law; they need to be protected not harassed."[57]

These reports of unprecedented assaults on lawyers, human rights defenders and civil society in China, which strike at the very heart of values which the United Kingdom holds dear, should be a cause for considerable concern and public challenge, and therefore pose very grave questions for Sino-British relations. A country which develops, protects and promotes the rule of law and the role of civil society is more likely, in the long-term, to be prosperous and stable – and therefore a more reliable partner with which to pursue a 'golden era' – than one that undermines the rule of law and attempts to destroy civil society.

[56] "UN Human Rights chief deeply concerned by China clampdown on lawyers and activists," 16 February 2016 - http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=17050

[57] "'Lawyers need to be protected not harassed' – UN experts urge China to halt detentions," 16 July 2015 - http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16241&LangID=E

3. Repressive legislation

Several new laws and regulations have been introduced in the past three years which contribute to the deteriorating human rights situation in China. Of particular concern to the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission are the following which were highlighted in many submissions we received: Document 9, a notice from the Central Committee of the Communist Party's General Office, issued in April 2013; the National Security Law, adopted on 1 July 2015; and a new law imposing stricter regulations on foreign Non-Governmental Organisations, adopted in 2016.

Document 9 presents 'Western' values, Western constitutional democracy and Western-style media as "at odds with the Chinese socialist system of government and the Party's own values," according to Christian Solidarity Worldwide in its submission. "The notice specifically claims that letters and petitions calling for human rights and political reform are the work of 'Western anti-China forces' – including Western embassies and consulates – and internal 'dissidents'. Echoes of Document 9 appear in the televised confessions … and in the state media's condemnation of lawyers and activists."

The new National Security Law provides for "extraordinarily broad scope," according to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein. Its vague terminology, he argues, leaves "the door wide open to further restrictions of the rights and freedoms of Chinese citizens, and to even tighter control of civil society" by the government.[58]

Article 27 of the new law concerns religion and belief. As Christian Solidarity Worldwide notes, "the inclusion of religious activities in a law concerning national security gives weight to existing policies and measures curtailing freedom of religion or belief, by making these activities a national security issue." This is particularly the case in Xinjiang, as detailed later in this report.

On 28 April, 2016 the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed the long-awaited Management of Foreign Non-Governmental Organisations Activities in China (the NGO Law). It will come into force on 1 January 2017. According to Sophie Richardson, China Director at Human Rights Watch, "Beijing hardly needs more ammunition to crack down on civil society groups. The NGO law is like many others of the Xi Jinping era: ever-stronger tools to legalise China's human rights abuses." The law will, according to Human Rights Watch, give the police unprecedented power to restrict the work of foreign groups in the country, and limit the ability of domestic

[58] "UN human rights chief says China's new security law is too broad, too vague," 7 July 2015 - http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16210&LangID=E

groups to receive foreign funding and work with foreign organisations.[59] Foreign NGOs will be required to have a Chinese government organisation as a sponsor, be registered with the police and come under the supervision of the Public Security Bureau rather than the Ministry of Civil Affairs, which was the case until now. Police will have extensive new investigation and enforcement powers, including the ability to arbitrarily summon representatives of foreign organisations, cancel activities, blacklist groups, enter the premises of foreign organisations in China, seize documents, examine bank accounts and revoke registration. If foreign organisations are deemed to be engaged in acts that involve "splitting the state, damaging national unity or subverting state power," the police can now impose administrative detentions. Foreigners can either be barred from leaving China, or deported.

It is estimated that more than 7,000 foreign NGOs will be affected, according to state media reports.[60] As Lu Jun, a well-known social activist now based in the United States, says: "The real purpose of the foreign NGO law is to restrict foreign NGOs' activities in China and to restrict domestic-rights NGOs' activities in China by cutting the connection between [the two]. They consider foreign NGOs and some domestic NGOs as a threat to their regime."[61]

According to Nicola Macbean, Executive Director of The Rights Practice, in her submission, "a new regulatory framework for civil society in China is now taking shape" which is likely to lead to the withdrawal of foreign funding for Chinese NGOs and of foreign NGOs working in China "as the operating environment deteriorates and the risks increase". Civil society space "will be further restricted" and such "diminishing space" will mean that many of China's urgent social concerns will not be addressed.

[59] "China: New law escalates repression of groups," Human Rights Watch, 28 April 2016 - https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/04/28/china-new-law-escalates-repression-groups
[60] "China approves strict control of foreign NGOs," by Edward Wong, The New York Times, 28 April 2016 - http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/29/world/asia/china-foreign-ngo-law.html?_r=0
[61] "China passes law imposing security controls on foreign NGOs," by Tom Phillips, The Guardian, 28 April 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/28/china-passes-law-imposing-security-controls-on-foreign-ngos?CMP=share_btn_tw

4. Freedom of Expression

According to PEN International in their submission to our inquiry, "between March 2013 and March 2016, China has continued to jail writers, journalists and bloggers simply for their writings, and the sentences it has imposed on them have remained consistently harsh. Authorities have also carried out a series of crackdowns aimed at silencing critical voices that have included not just arrests and prosecutions but also beatings, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary detentions."

Since Xi Jinping came to power, censorship of the media, the Internet and academia has intensified. In February 2016, he toured China's top three state media organisations and called for absolute loyalty to the Communist Party.[62] This message was repeated a week later, as the Chinese government sought to increase control of the media for propaganda purposes.[63]

At the same time, however, some courageous individuals within China have spoken out about increased censorship and propaganda. Yu Shaolei, an editor at the *Southern Metropolis Daily*, resigned in March 2016, saying he could no longer follow the Communist Party line.[64] At the same time Jiang Hong, a Chinese university professor who is also a Chinese Government adviser, criticised growing censorship. While attending the National People's Congress, he gave an interview to the BBC in which he said: "If society only listens to one voice, then mistakes can be made. A good way to prevent this from happening is to let everyone speak up, to give us the whole picture."[65] Jiang Hong also gave an interview to the respected magazine *Caixin*. A few days later, Zhou Fang, a journalist at China's state news and propaganda agency Xinhua, criticised censors' "crude" and "extreme" violations of online freedom of expression, which has "triggered tremendous fear and outrage among the public".[66] Property tycoon Ren Zhiqiang has also spoken out, asking: "Since when did the people's government become the party's government?" His social media accounts were then closed.[67] New restrictions on television productions in China have drawn

[62] "Xi Jinping asks for 'absolute loyalty' from Chinese state media," The Guardian, 19 February 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/19/xi-jinping-tours-chinas-top-state-media-outlets-to-boost-loyalty

[63] "'Love the party, protect the party': How Xi Jinping is bringing China's media to heel," by Tom Phillips, The Guardian, 28 February 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/28/absolute-loyalty-how-xi-jinping-is-bringing-chinas-media-to-heel

[64] "China editor resigns over media censorship," BBC, 29 March 2016 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-35915056

[65] "Rare act of dissent at China's annual parliament," BBC, 15 March 2016 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-35817196

[66] "Chinese government adviser attacks rise in censorship," by Tom Phillips, The Guardian, 16 March 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/16/chinese-government-adviser-jiang-hong-attacks-rise-censorship

[67] "China muzzles outspoken businessman Ren Zhiqiang on social media," by Josh Chin, The Wall Street Journal, 28 February 2016 - http://www.wsj.com/articles/china-muzzles-outspoken-businessman-ren-zhiqiang-on-social-media-1456712781

criticism from the film industry.[68] Yang Jisheng, a retired journalist who was banned from travelling to the United States to receive an award in March 2016,[69] published the speech he would have delivered. He concluded: "Fact is a powerful bomb that blasts lies to smithereens. Fact is a beacon in the night that lights the road of progress. Fact is the touchstone of truth; there can be no truth without facts."[70] And veteran dissident journalist Gao Yu, a 72 year-old who was jailed in 2015 for "leaking state secrets" and is now on parole for medical reasons, spoke out in defiance of an official ban on her talking to the media,[71] a day after twenty plainclothes police raided her house, harassed her and her son and destroyed her garden.[72]

In March 2016, a letter calling on Xi Jinping to resign was published, allegedly by "loyal Communist Party members", on the website Wujie News.[73] This led to the arrest and disappearance of Jia Jia, a Chinese journalist who denied being the author of the letter. He disappeared from Beijing airport, where he was attempting to fly to Hong Kong.[74] He was subsequently released.[75] Chinese journalist Chang Ping, now living in Germany, spoke out on Jia Jia's disappearance and shortly afterwards his own two younger brothers and younger sister were abducted by the Chinese police.[76] Amnesty International condemned the detentions of family members of dissidents and of people suspected of being involved with the letter.[77]

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[68] "No More Drama: China's TV Insiders Lash Out at Censorship During Legislative Gathering," The Wall Street Journal, 8 March 2016 - http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2016/03/08/no-more-drama-chinese-screenwriters-anger-over-tv-censorship-bubbles-over-at-npc/

[69] "China's censors battle mounting defiance," by Andrew Browne, The Wall Street Journal, 15 March 2016 - http://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-censors-battle-mounting-defiance-1458021415

[70] "The speech Yang Jisheng, barred from going to US, planned to give at Harvard," by Michael Forsythe, The New York Times, 10 March 2016 - http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/11/world/asia/yang-jisheng-china-nieman-harvard.html?_r=0

[71] "'Today, I must break my silence': Veteran Journalist Gao Yu," Radio Free Asia, 1 April - http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/china-gaoyu-04012016143948.html

[72] "RSF appalled by harassment of journalist Gao Yu's family," Reporters Without Borders, 31 March 2016 - https://rsf.org/en/news/rsf-appalled-harassment-journalist-gao-yus-family

[73] "Chinese website publishes, then pulls, explosive letter calling for President Xi's resignation," by Emily Rauhala and Xu Yangjingjing, 16 March 2016, The Washington Post - https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/03/16/government-linked-website-published-then-pulled-call-for-president-xis-resignation/

[74] "Chinese journalist 'disappears' while trying to fly to Hong Kong," by Tom Phillips, The Guardian, 17 March 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/17/chinese-journalist-disappears-fly-beijing-hong-kong

[75] "Chinese journalist detained over 'Xi resignation letter' is released," BBC, 26 March 2016 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-35903178

[76] "Chang Ping: my statement about the open letter to Xi Jinping demanding his resignation," by Chang Ping, ChinaChange, 27 March 2016 - https://chinachange.org/2016/03/27/chang-ping-my-statement-about-the-open-letter-to-xi-jinping-demanding-his-resignation/

[77] Amnesty International, "China: Prominent blogger's family detained over letter lambasting President Xi," 25 March 2016 - https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/03/china-prominent-bloggers-family-detained-over-letter-lambasting-president-xi/

In January 2016, Xinjiang-based blogger Zhang Haitao was sentenced to 19 years in prison for "incitement to subvert state power" after posting comments critical of government policy in Xinjiang.[78]

In April 2016, another online commentator, Chen Qitong (known by his pseudonym Tian Li), was put on trial, charged with "incitement to subvert state power", because of a series of six political essays posted online by Chen, three of which he had authored.[79]

Perhaps the most prominent example of the suppression of freedom of expression in China is the case of Liu Xiaobo, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 and a writer who led an initiative known as 'Charter 08', a manifesto calling for respect for human rights and democracy in China. According to Freedom Now in their submission to this inquiry, Liu Xiaobo was arrested on 8 December 2008, and sentenced on 25 December 2009 to eleven years in prison. In June 2014 Liu Xiaobo applied for early parole, but the application was denied. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has concluded that his detention is arbitrary under international law. His relatives continue to be harassed and his wife Liu Xia is under house arrest, which the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention also found to be arbitrary under international law.

According to Human Rights Watch in its submisson, China's government censors politically sensitive information through its "Great Firewall" which PEN International in their submission claim has between 20,000 and 50,000 employees working to remove content from the public sphere. The government has also shut down or restricted access to Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), which many users depend on to gain access to websites otherwise blocked inside the country, Human Rights Watch add. In March 2015, authorities deployed a new tool, the "Great Cannon", to disrupt the services of GreatFire.org, an organisation that has worked to undermine China's censorship. Foreign media websites such as The Economist, TIME magazine and some BBC websites are banned, as are Google, Facebook, Twitter and Youtube.

Foreign correspondents in China face increasing restrictions. According to Rose Tang in her submission to our inquiry, Paul Mooney, who had been working as an accredited reporter in China for eighteen years, was offered a position with Reuters in Beijing but was denied a visa in 2013. In 2012, Melissa Chan, a correspondent in China for al-Jazeera, had her credentials revoked by the authorities and was forced to leave the

[78] "Small voice of dissent pays big price as China guards its image," by Nathan Vanderkippe, The Globe and Mail, 6 April 2016 - http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/small-voice-of-dissent-pays-big-price-as-china-guards-its-image/article29548416/

[79] "Court in China's Guangdong tries another online commentator for subversion," Radio Free Asia, 22 April 2016 - http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/another-04222016112652.html

country.[80] In December 2015, Ursula Gauthier, the Beijing correspondent of the French magazine, *L'Orbs*, was expelled after she questioned the treatment of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

Freedom of expression, as set out in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is one of the most basic, foundational freedoms; it is being denied to people in China. China has recently regressed in this regard so significantly that it cannot be right for the UK Government to remain silent about this at the same time as talking of a "golden era" in Sino-British relations. This Commission considers that it is similarly incumbent on others in the UK with a public voice to strongly express concerns regarding this issue, hence this report.

[80] "Why al-Jazeera correspondent Melissa Chan's expulsion from China matters," by Mark Mackinnon, The Globe and Mail, 8 May 2012 - http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/worldview/why-al-jazeera-correspondent-melissa-chans-expulsion-from-china-matters/article4105297/

5. Freedom of religion or belief

In April 2016, Xi Jinping addressed senior Communist Party officials at a meeting on religion, and said that "religious groups … must adhere to the leadership of the Communist Party of China." Party members must be "unyielding Marxist atheists" who "resolutely guard against overseas infiltrations via religious means".[81] This statement is the latest in a series of steps by the Communist Party to tighten control of religion.

According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide in their submission, the Communist Party has been looking at the issue of religious belief among its own members. Party rules state that members may not hold religious beliefs or take part in religious activities, but it is widely acknowledged that some party members do hold religious beliefs. A newsletter published by the party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection in May 2015 stated that a small number of party members had "turned to religion … attracting serious concern, to the extent that it now falls within the purview of disciplinary work".

In 2015, Party authorities in Zhejiang province warned that applicants for party membership would be rejected if they were found to have "embraced religious beliefs", while existing members would need to submit "a written promise rejecting religion beliefs".

This attitude towards religion partially explains the continuing violations of freedom of religion or belief, as set out in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Five religions are officially recognised – Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism and Catholicism – but are overseen by their respective state-sanctioned associations. Those who wish to practice their faith outside the state-approved organisations can potentially face harassment, restrictions and sometimes criminal charges.

According to China Aid in their submission, "during 2015 religious freedom … continued to deteriorate at an alarming rate". The state of religious freedom in China "has worsened to conditions not seen since the Cultural Revolution, with the most severe violations … during 2015 occurring in the provinces of Zhejiang, Guangdong, Guizhou, Guangxi, Sichuan, Xinjiang and Tibet". China Aid has documented at least 634 violations of freedom of religion or belief in China in 2015, an increase of 10.84% from 2014. As Senator Marco Rubio said in his introductory remarks at a hearing on "Religion with 'Chinese Characteristics': Persecution and Control in Xi Jinping's China", held by the US Congressional Executive Commission on China (CECC): "Without question, religious freedom is under assault in China. Irrespective of belief, the

[81] "Religious groups 'must adhere to the leadership of the Communist Party' – Pres. Xi Jinping," Hong Kong Free Press, 24 April 2016 - https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/04/24/religious-groups-must-adhere-to-the-leadership-of-the-communist-party-pres-xi-jinping/

government's oppression knows no bounds".[82] The US State Department Office of International Religious Freedom[83] and the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) confirm continuing violations of freedom of religion or belief. In their 2015 Annual Report, USCIRF described the "unprecedented violations" of freedom of religion or belief affecting Uyghur Muslims, Tibetan Buddhists, Catholics, Protestants and Falun Gong practitioners.[84]

On 18 June 2015, the USCIRF wrote to US Secretary of State John Kerry, highlighting violations affecting all religions, but noting: "In 2014, Chinese Protestants and Catholics experienced religious freedom violations markedly more severe than at any time in recent memory. The Chinese government's unprecedented and deliberate interference, harassment, and demolition of religious structures targeted both unregistered and registered churches, as well as clergy and lay people."[85]

Destruction of crosses in Zhejiang province

In Zhejiang province, according to Christian Solidarity Worldwide's submission, the authorities have removed hundreds of crosses from churches, "in some cases destroying part or all of the church at the same time". China Aid claims that more than 30 churches were demolished. Some estimates put the total number of churches affected at over 2,000; more conservative estimates are between 1,500-1,700.

What is particularly striking about this campaign is that it has affected both registered and unregistered churches, and Catholic and Protestant churches. On 24 July 2015, Catholic Bishop Vincent Zhu Weifang of Wenzhou led a protest outside government offices, and three days later he and his clergy circulated a public letter alleging that the authorities' campaign had become "a naked attempt to rip down the crosses atop every single church", according to Christian Solidarity Worldwide. Other bishops and priests have similarly spoken out.

As Christian Solidarity Worldwide's submission notes, "although there are different theories about the Zhejiang cross removals, most agree that the campaign was launched by the provincial authorities, rather than at the central government level. Nevertheless, the cross removals have provoked a strong reaction from both local Christians and the international community. The fact that the campaign has continued

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[82] Congressional Executive Commission on China, "Religion with 'Chinese Characteristics': Persecution and Control in Xi Jinping's China", Hearing on 23 July, 2015, Statement by US Senator Marco Rubio, Co-chairman of the CECC - http://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/religion-with-%E2%80%9Cchinese-characteristics%E2%80%9D-persecution-and-control-in-xi-jinping%E2%80%99s

[83] US State Department Office of International Religious Freedom – China: http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/religiousfreedom/index.htm#wrapper

[84] US Commission on International Religious Freedom – China: http://www.uscirf.gov/countries/china

[85] USCIRF Letter to Secretary Kerry on the Seventh Session of the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue, 18 June 2015 - http://www.uscirf.gov/advising-government/government-correspondence/uscirf-letter-secretary-kerry-the-seventh-session-the

in the face of this opposition suggests that it has the approval of the central leaders, even if it did not originate in Beijing."

Detention and imprisonment of Christians

In 2016, several Christian pastors have been arrested and imprisoned, including notably from registered, state-sanctioned churches. According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide, on 27 January 2016 Gu Yuese, senior pastor of one of the largest registered churches in China was detained and accused of misuse of funds. Two days later, Pastor Li Guanzhong, a leader of another state-sanctioned church, was detained. On 25 February, Pastor Bao Guohua and his wife Xing Wenxiang were sentenced to 14 and 12 years respectively for 'corruption' and 'gathering people to disturb social order'. On 9 March, Pastor Zhang Chongzhu, who had been held under criminal detention since 5 February, was formally arrested and accused of 'stealing, spying, buying or illegally providing state secrets or intelligence to entities outside China'. All of these individuals are believed to have been detained in connection with their opposition to the removal of crosses in Zhejiang. Furthermore, according to China Aid in their submission, more than 500 Christians were detained in Zhejiang, including at least 28 pastors who were arrested; more than 130 Christians were beaten and assaulted by government officials; and, according to church officials in Zhejiang, more than 1,000 Christians have been punished for protesting the cross demolitions and related persecution.

Several Catholic priests and bishops are in detention or their whereabouts are unknown. Bishop James Su Zhimin (also known as Su Zhemin) has been in prison since 8 October 1997, and prior to this he had been arrested five times and spent nearly 27 years in prison. His whereabouts are unknown. In July 2012 Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin, auxiliary bishop of Shanghai, was placed under house arrest after he resigned from the state-sanctioned Catholic Patriotic Association at his ordination Mass. In August 2013, a Catholic priest from Xiwanxi diocese was arrested in Hebei province and his whereabouts are unknown. On 15 April 2016, Father Yang Jianwei went missing in Hebei province, the third Catholic priest to have disappeared and suspected to have been detained by the authorities in one month.[86]

In April 2016, a Hong Kong pastor was reportedly prosecuted in mainland China for printing Christian books. Rev. Ng Wah disappeared in July 2015, and was put on trial in February 2016. His colleague, Rev Phillip Woo, was summoned by police to Shenzhen, and ordered to stop preaching in mainland China.[87]

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[86] "China: Catholic priests missing; woman reportedly buried alive in church demolition," Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 19 April 2016 - http://www.csw.org.uk/2016/04/20/press/3080/article.htm

[87] "Hong Kong pastor prosecuted on mainland for printing Christian books," UCA News, 6 April 2016 - http://www.ucanews.com/news/hong-kong-pastor-prosecuted-on-mainland-for-printing-christian-books/75683

According to China Aid's submission, on 11 April 2016, six house church leaders from Changji, Xinjiang province, were all formally arrested for leading a house church worship service. They were charged with "gathering a crowd to disturb social order".

On 14 April 2016, it was reported that Ding Cuimei, a pastor's wife, was buried alive while protesting against the destruction of a church in Henan province. She and her husband, Pastor Li Jiangong, stepped on a bulldozer as a local developer supported by the government attempted to demolish their church building.[88]

On 26 April 2016, also according to China Aid, Wen Xiaowu, leader of a house church in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, was detained together with his wife and son for "gathering a crowd to disturb social order" and "obstruction of public service".

Hong Kong's retired Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun has been an outspoken voice for freedom of religion or belief in China. On 25 April 2016, he led a prayer service in front of China's liaison office in Hong Kong, calling for an end to the persecution of Christians. "Facing all this persecution, we cannot take it for granted. We cannot stand idly by. If we keep silent, we are accomplices," he said. [89] When Xi Jinping visited the Czech Republic, Prague's Cardinal Dominik Duka presented him with a letter highlighting violations of freedom of religion or belief in China. "I cannot ignore the fate of the brothers and sisters [in China]," the Cardinal said.[90]

The case of Wu Ze Heng

Wu Ze Heng is the founder of the Guangdong-based Buddhist group Hua Zang Dharma, which has a significant number of followers both within China and around the world. He founded the group in the early 1990s.

According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide's submission, Wu Ze Heng was jailed for eleven years in 1998 after sending a letter to the Communist Party and the State Council, denouncing human rights violations and calling for reform. In prison, he was reportedly tortured. He was released in 2010, but was sentenced to life imprisonment on 30 October 2015.[91]

On 9 May 2011, just over a year after his release from his first prison term, Wu Ze Heng was beaten, threatened and arrested by Zhuhai police who subjected him to interrogation and warned him not to leave his home town and not to participate in

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[88] "China: Catholic priests missing; woman reportedly buried alive in church demolition," Christian Solidarity Worldwide, 19 April 2016 - http://www.csw.org.uk/2016/04/20/press/3080/article.htm
[89] "Cardinal Zen calls on Beijing to end religious persecution," UCA News, 25 April 2016 - http://www.ucanews.com/news/cardinal-zen-calls-on-beijing-to-end-religious-persecution/75856
[90] "Zen backs Czech cardinal's support for China's believers," UCA News, 18 April 2018 - http://www.ucanews.com/news/zen-backs-czech-cardinals-support-for-chinas-believers/75765
[91] "China harshly sentences founder of Huazang Dharma," ChinaChange.org, 3 November 2015 - https://chinachange.org/2015/11/03/china-harshly-sentences-founder-of-huazang-dharma/

Buddhist ceremonies or to have his students visit him. He was detained for 24 hours. His sister and two students were also arrested. Following this, he filed a complaint. The Xiangzhou Public Security Bureau responded on 4 July 2011, stating that no illegal enforcement of the law had occurred.

Three years later, on 29 July 2013, Mr Wu and some of his followers were again taken into custody after the police raided a number of his followers' businesses and homes. They were arrested for "using cult activities to undermine law enforcement, to defraud, to commit sexual assaults and to engage in other criminal activities". The police presented no warrant or any official documents to justify the raid. In the first 24 hours of his detention, Mr Wu was kept awake for sixteen hours, denied food and water, and questioned by four different groups of police officers.

Mr Wu and the other detainees were charged with "organising and making use of evil cults to destroy the implementation of the law" on 5 September 2014. The media began a defamatory campaign against him, accusing him of raping his female students and money laundering. On 30 October 2015, he was sentenced to life imprisonment for "organising or using an illegal cult to undermine implementation of the law", alleged rape, fraud and production and sale of harmful food. While neither the submission by Christian Solidarity Worldwide, nor our inquiry, seeks to prejudge the accuracy of these allegations, the conduct of his trial and the harassment of him and his followers over many years suggest that Mr Wu has been, as the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief and the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers concluded, "deprived arbitrarily" of liberty, the right to fair trial, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, the right not to be subjected to torture, as set out in articles 5, 9, 10, 12, 18, 19 and 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

6. Xinjiang

The persecution of the Uyghur Muslim people in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Zone is not exclusively an issue of freedom of religion or belief – it is also an issue of ethnic discrimination. However, violations of freedom of religion or belief are a very significant dimension to the human rights abuses faced by the Uyghurs.

According to the World Uyghur Congress in their submission to our inquiry, there is "a worsening climate of fear and helplessness". The Chinese authorities continue "to abuse the entire Uyghur population of Xinjiang under the guise of 'stability maintenance' or 'counter-terrorism'". Increased restrictions on religious practice are continuing as mosques are monitored, religious teachers restricted and limits placed on religious expression. Only people over the age of 18 are permitted to practice their religion and only within state-sanctioned mosques, "which have been dwindling in number in recent years". According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide's submission, China's new national security law adopted on 1 July 2015 "appears to continue the practice of approaching religion as a security issue, and follows the launch of a 'strike hard' campaign in Xinjiang allegedly aimed at combating religious extremism and other security threats. As part of the campaign, police have raided so-called illegal religious meetings. In May 2015 Imam Eziz Emet was arrested and later received a nine-year sentence for 'teaching religion illegally'."

Government employees and students have been banned from participating in Ramadan since 2011 and this ban has been enforced more intensely each year since then. The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom notes that in Xinjiang, "observing Ramadan … is difficult, if not impossible."[92]

Uyghur Muslims are subjected to demeaning and dehumanising abuse. One man from Kashgar was sentenced to six years in prison for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" after he refused to trim his long beard.

The World Uyghur Congress notes "periodic and scattered attempts at banning Islamic dress, including headscarves for women, and crescent shaped beards worn by a group of men". In addition, the World Uyghur Congress report that Chinese authorities have ordered restaurants and supermarkets in Laskuy township to sell cigarettes and alcohol along with "eye-catching" displays, or risk being closed down. A total of 22 traditional Uyghur Muslim names have also been banned for children, with the authorities threatening to deny their right to attend school if the policy is not followed.

On 15 January 2014, a prominent Uyghur economist and writer, Ilham Tohti, who was a professor at Minzu University in Beijing, was detained. For six months he was denied

[92] "China: Ramadan restrictions violate religious freedom," USCIRF, 18 June 2015 - http://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/press-releases/china-ramadan-restrictions-violate-religious-freedom

access to a lawyer, one of his lawyers was forced to give up the case due to pressure from the authorities, and lawyers who had represented him in the past were arrested and imprisoned. In September he was put on trial for two days, and sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of "inciting separatism". According to the World Uyghur Congress in their submission, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found that his detention is arbitrary, "in contravention of articles 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20 and 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights". The President of the United States Barack Obama personally urged China to release him, and US Secretary of State John Kerry said that "this appears to be retribution for Professor Tohti's peaceful efforts to promote human rights for China's ethnic Uyghur citizens."

Ilham Tohti is a moderate voice in the Uyghur community, promoting reconciliation between Uyghurs and Han Chinese. He founded a website – Uighurbiz.cn – and, according to Yaxue Cao in her submission to us, "for two decades he has worked tirelessly to foster dialogue and understanding"; he "adamantly rejected separatism and sought reconciliation by bringing to light repressive Chinese policies and Uyghur grievances". In April 2016, he was nominated for the Martin Ennals Award for human rights defenders. His daughter told the organisers of the Martin Ennals Award: "My father Ilham Tohti has used only one weapon in his struggle for the basic rights of the Uyghurs of Xinjiang: words. Spoken, written, distributed and posted. This is all he has ever had at his disposal, and all that he has ever needed. And this is what China found so threatening. A person like him doesn't deserve to be in prison for even a day."[93]

Uyghurs who escape from China to other countries in Asia are extremely vulnerable to forced repatriation. On 8 July 2015, 109 Uyghurs were returned to China from Thailand, in clear violation of the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Although it was reported that the Thai government sent a delegation to China in order to check on the state of those returned, there has been no official report or statement concerning their situation or whereabouts.

[93] "Uyghur intellectual Ilham Tohti nominated for human rights award," by Chantal Yuen, Hong Kong Free Press, 27 April 2016 - https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/04/27/uyghur-intellectual-ilham-tohti-nominated-for-human-rights-award/

7. Tibet

"Every aspect of Tibetan life is under siege and Tibetans have even fewer civil and political rights than Chinese people also ruled by the Communist Party," says Yeshe Choesang of Tibet Post International in his submission to us. "The regime enforces its control over every aspect through the threat and use of arbitrary punishments, at times including severe violence."

Since the Chinese invasion in 1949, an estimated 1.2 million Tibetans have been raped, tortured and murdered, thousands imprisoned and over 6,000 Tibetan Buddhist monasteries destroyed, according to Yeshe Choesang.

Illustrative of the sheer desperation felt by many Tibetans, recent years have seen a significant number of monks self-immolating. On 29 February 2016 Kalsang Wangdu, an 18 year-old monk, self-immolated, bringing the total verified number of self-immolations in Tibet to 143 since February 2009. Of these, 123 died while the others were either critically injured or their whereabouts and status are unknown.

According to Yeshe Choesang, "the main causes of the Tibetan people's grievances are China's policies of political repression, cultural assimilation, economic marginalisation, social discrimination and environmental destruction in Tibet."

The US Congressional Executive Committee on China records 646 political prisoners in Tibet, although the Tibetan Human Rights Group, as cited by Yeshe Choesang, claims that there are a total of 2081 Tibetan political prisoners, including 967 monks. Of these, 68 were detained in 2015, according to Yeshe Choesang's submission. They are frequently subjected to extreme forms of torture and denial of medical care. In 2014, an increasing number of Tibetans died in detention as a result of their treatment. Tenzin Choedak had every bone in his feet broken and his jaw dislocated before he was returned to his family on 'medical parole'. He died two days later, on 5 December 2014. On 12 July 2015, Tenzin Delek Rinpoche, a highly respected Tibetan Buddhist leader, died in prison. On 13 July 2015, Chinese police fired upon Tibetans protesting his death.

According to the Tibet Society, "Tibetans charged with political crimes are often tried in secret, not allowed independent legal representation and evidence against them is extracted by torture".

On 10 April 2013, eight Tibetan students were jailed for their involvement in mass protests against education policies which included the restriction of the use of the Tibetan language. On 27 January 2016, Tashi Wangchuk, an advocate of Tibetan language education, was detained and charged with "inciting separatism".

The possession and display of the Tibetan national flag and images of the Dalai Lama are banned. On 7 November 2014, two young monks were jailed after peaceful

protests earlier in the year which had involved waving hand-drawn versions of the Tibetan flag. On 17 February 2016, Gomar Choephel, a 47 year-old monk, was sentenced to two years for sharing a photo of the Dalai Lama on social media. In the same month, two senior monks, Khenpo Pagah and Geshe Orgyen, were detained following a large prayer ceremony at their monastery held for the good health of the Dalai Lama.

According to Free Tibet in their submission, "a number of political prisoners escaped from Tibet between 2013 and 2016 and provided testimonies about their treatment in prison in the years immediately before 2013, including beatings by police and other security services during interrogation sessions, mock executions, receiving electric shocks during interrogations and being locked in cells that were pitch black or so small that they could not move around. There are also several clear indications that these practices continue. For example, several former political prisoners reported being shackled to a device known as an iron chair, which forces the detainee to bear their entire weight on their wrists and legs. They would be hung from this chair for periods of up to four or five hours at a time, sometimes accompanied by electric shocks and intervals when they are removed from the chair and beaten."

Freedom of religion or belief is severely violated in Tibet. According to Free Tibet, China has "restricted religious freedom through tight controls on monasteries". According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide's submission, in March 2016 the authorities imposed new restrictions on Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Rebgong (Tongren) county in Qinghai province. In September 2014, according to Free Tibet, 26 nuns were expelled from their nunnery after they refused to criticise the Dalai Lama. In September 2015, authorities expelled a further 106 nuns from the nunnery, making many of them homeless, and then demolished the nuns' living quarters under the pretext of carrying out renovations.

The Panchen Lama, Gedhun Choeki Nyima, remains missing following his abduction in 1995 when he was just six years old. China refuses to provide any evidence of his whereabouts or well-being.

It is important to note Free Tibet's observation that the reduction in the number of the most egregious abuses in Tibet over the past three years, such as the comparatively less frequent instances of lethal force being employed to control protests, should not be regarded as any sign of improvement. "This does not indicate a softening of China's approach in Tibet, or greater acceptance of Chinese rule by Tibetans," argue Free Tibet. "Instead, it reflects China's current effectiveness in implementing policies that have so restricted Tibetans' ability to express opposition to its rule in both private and public spheres that the need to systematically employ violence arises more rarely."

8. Falun Gong

Falun Gong (also known as Falun Dafa) is described as "an ancient Buddha School practice", introduced to the public in China in 1992 by Li Hongzhi. According to a submission by Misha Halu and Zek Halu of the Epoch Times, on behalf of UK Falun Gong practitioners, by 1998, China's National Sports Commission estimated that as many as 70 million people in China were practicing Falun Gong. The following year, at a meeting of the Communist Party leadership, the then President of China Jiang Zemin announced a directive to eradicate Falun Gong, reportedly declaring: "Destroy their reputations, cut them off financially, and eradicate them physically."

Misha Halu and Zek Halu, in their submission on behalf of UK Falun Gong practitioners, state that "there is no legal instrument in China making Falun Gong illegal to practice". The persecution of Falun Gong, which is severe and has continued relentlessly since 1999, is "without any legal basis or accountability".

Anastasia Lin, a Chinese-born Canadian actress and Falun Gong practitioner who testified at our first hearing, told the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission that "a systematic and sustained persecution is being carried out that permeates every level of society". Having herself interviewed many Falun Gong victims of persecution, Ms Lin explained: "When practitioners were taken into custody, the one goal of the labour camp guards was to force them to sign a statement renouncing the practice, and to accept the Communist Party's propaganda against it. Extreme measures, like torture with electric batons or sleep deprivation, are used widely. Practitioners who were released reported being told that it didn't matter if they died in custody: they would just be written up as suicides. Their lives were worthless, they had ceased to officially exist, and they had no legal protections – they were non-people."

One survivor of the persecution of Falun Gong, Ms Yin Liping, testified at a hearing in the United States Congress to the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, on 14 April 2016, on the theme of "China's Pervasive Use of Torture". A Falun Gong practitioner from Liaoning province, China, she described how she had been arrested seven times. "I was … tortured to the verge of death six times, and detained in labour camps three times, where I was made to do slave labour for nine months. I was sexually attacked and humiliated, and videotaped by a group of male prisoners in police custody, all because I refused to give up my faith in Falun Gong." In Masanjia Forced Labour Camp,[94] she was handcuffed to a bed and injected with unknown drugs for over two months, after she had gone on hunger strike. "This caused me to temporarily lose my vision. I was also put through involuntary ultrasound, electrocardiogram, and blood tests at a nearby hospital. They injected two or three bottles each day. As a result, I developed endocrine disorders, incontinence and had

[94] See also the documentary *Above the Ghost's Heads: The Women of Masanjia Labour Camp* - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhoVrg3lvGA

blood in my urine. In addition, their frequent violent force-feeding almost suffocated me". She described in her testimony how she was brutally beaten and sexually abused.[95]

According to the UK Falun Gong practitioners' submission to our inquiry, in 2013 at least 4,942 practitioners were arrested and 74 died due to persecution; 737 were detained in "brainwashing centres"; 16 were detained in forced labour camps; and 796 were tried and sentenced to prison. The following year, 6,415 were arrested, a 29.8% increase on 2013. Of these, 91 were confirmed to have died; 969 held in brainwashing centres, a 31.5% increase on 2013; and 963 practitioners were put on trial, 635 sentenced, with at least 65 sentenced to prison terms of seven years or more. The average sentence was about four years. In 2015, 3,736 practitioners were arrested from January to July 2015, and 140 were confirmed to have died due to persecution. At least 878 were tried and jailed, a 38% increase from 2014. Although total figures for the second half of 2015 are not yet available, it is claimed that in December alone, 1,008 practitioners were arrested and detained for an indefinite period or with whereabouts unknown. The submission notes that "the abuse of Falun Gong practitioners in China does not appear to be easing".

Several reports have indicated that Falun Gong practitioners have been the target of China's horrific organ harvesting practice. This will be examined briefly in a later section on organ harvesting.

Freedom House has said that the Communist Party "devoted considerable resources to suppressing Falun Gong and coercing adherents into renouncing their beliefs, typically through the use of violence. Hundreds of thousands of adherents were sentenced to labour camps and prison terms, making them the largest contingent of prisoners of conscience in the country."[96] In her testimony in the US Congress in April 2016, Yin Liping recalled the director of Masanjia Forced Labour Camp addressing the jailed Falun Gong practitioners with these words: "This is a war without guns. Our government has spent more money persecuting Falun Gong than fighting an international war".[97]

[95] Testimony of Ms Yin Liping, Hearing on "China's pervasive use of torture," Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 14 April, 2016 - http://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/china%E2%80%99s-pervasive-use-of-torture

[96] Freedom House, China report 2014 - https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/china

[97] Testimony of Ms Yin Liping, Hearing on "China's pervasive use of torture," Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 14 April, 2016 - http://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/china%E2%80%99s-pervasive-use-of-torture

9. Organ harvesting

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission heard from at least two witnesses on the harrowing practice of forced organ harvesting, notably from Ethan Gutmann who has spent several years investigating this appalling practice – the forced removal of internal organs from live individuals for transplant – and notes the information provided on behalf of UK Falun Gong practitioners in their written submission. The Commission is not in a position to investigate this in depth, but does believe that the UK Government and the international community should do so urgently.

In our first hearing, Anastasia Lin told us: "There have been persistent allegations that large numbers of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience have been killed to supply China's lucrative trade in vital organs. Uyghurs and other prisoners of conscience may have been victimised in a similar way."

Former Falun Gong prisoners report being subjected to targeted medical examinations and blood tests in custody, that would appear designed to assess the health and compatibility for potential transplant of their organs, Ms Lin claimed.

"Concern stems in part from the significant discrepancy between the number of organ transplants performed and the known sources of organs: even when we include death row inmates, the number of transplants performed in China is far too high," she told us. "The short wait times achieved by transplant hospitals suggest that people are killed on demand for their organs."

The issue of organ harvesting has been documented principally in two major books so far. The first, *Bloody Harvest: The Killing of Falun Gong for their organs*, was researched and written by a former Canadian Parliamentarian, David Kilgour, and a respected human rights lawyer, David Matas, and was first published on the Internet in 2006 and re-published for print in 2009.[99] The second, *The Slaughter: Mass Killings Organ Harvesting, and China's Secret Solution to Its Dissident Problem*, by Ethan Gutmann, was published in 2014.[100] Other studies, including by the World Organisation to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong, and by Doctors Against Forced Organ Harvesting, have also been published.

A new report, which brings together *Bloody Harvest* and *The Slaughter* with new, updated findings, is published in May 2016, authored by David Kilgour, David Matas and Ethan Gutmann, under the title *Bloody Harvest/The Slaughter: An Update*. Ethan Gutmann testified at our second hearing, and informed our inquiry that based on meticulous research into individual hospital accommodations for transplant recipients,

[99] *Bloody Harvest: The Killing of Falun Gong for their organs* - http://bloodyharvest.info/
[100] *The Slaughter: Mass Killings Organ Harvesting, and China's Secret Solution to Its Dissident Problem* - http://ethan-gutmann.com/the-slaughter/

occupancy rates, and a full accounting of the overall number of hospitals in China carrying out organ transplants, the authors conclude that the Chinese claims of performing 10,000 organ transplants a year are intentionally low. The new report estimates that at a minimum 56,000 and perhaps as many as 110,000 organ transplants per year are being conducted, leading to an estimated overall total of 1.8 million organ transplants since 2001. Previous speculation that approximately 40,000 to 65,000 organs were extracted from prisoners of conscience are now seen as serious underestimates, particularly as the number of Chinese hospitals that have informally confirmed the use of Falun Gong prisoners as a primary organ source continues to grow. In 2014, the Chinese medical establishment pledged that it would stop all organ harvesting from prisoners, yet velocity of China's organ harvesting industry does not suggest a retraction, but further acceleration of the practice.

According to Ethan Gutmann in a testimony to the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China on 18 September 2015, the practice began in 1994 when "the first live organ harvests of death-row prisoners were performed on the execution grounds of Xinjiang". In 1997, Uyghur political prisoners were the target of organs to be forcibly donated to high-ranking Chinese Communist Party officials. By 2001, Chinese military hospitals were "unambiguously targeting select Falun Gong prisoners for harvesting", and by 2003 the first Tibetans were being targeted as well. "By the end of 2005, China's transplant apparatus had increased so dramatically that a tissue-matched organ could be located within two weeks for any foreign organ tourist with cash."[101]

In 2010, Professor Jacob Lavee, the director of the Heart Transplantation Unit at Israel's largest medical centre, led an initiative that resulted in Israel legislating to prohibit "organ tourism" to China. "The transplants committed in China thrive on transplant tourists," he said, although local candidates for organs could also receive organs from executed prisoners and prisoners of conscience. "They are acting against every convention and against every basic principle of ethics that conducts the entire business of transplants worldwide. The basic principle is that organ donation should be done only, only on the free will of the donor or his family. And they're breaching this principle. Once that's breached, it becomes a crime against humanity." He called for the international community to work together, to "make parliaments press politically and diplomatically through their own connection with China and through the United Nations so that the process will stop in China altogether."

[101] Ethan Gutmann, "The Anatomy of Mass Murder: China's Unfinished Harvest of Prisoners of Conscience," Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 18 September, 2015 - http://www.cecc.gov/sites/chinacommission.house.gov/files/CECC%20Hearing%20-%20Human%20Rights%20Abuses%20-%2018Sept15%20-%20Ethan%20Gutmann.pdf

In 2013, the European Parliament passed a resolution expressing its "deep concern over the persistent and credible reports of systematic, state-sanctioned organ harvesting from non-consenting prisoners of conscience" in China, "including from large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners imprisoned for their religious beliefs, as well as from members of other religious and ethnic minority groups."[102]

In 2015, the Canadian Parliament, the Italian Senate and the Taiwanese legislature all passed legislation prohibiting organ tourism, the Council of Europe adopted a treaty against forced organ harvesting, and the US House of Representatives adopted a resolution.

As Anastasia Lin told the inquiry, "United Nations Special Rapporteurs have taken up this question and called on the Chinese government to account for the sources of organs. This has not happened. Recent reforms to the transplant system have seen prisoners reclassified as regular citizens for the purpose of organ 'donation' – thereby further obscuring the truth about organ sourcing and concealing gross violations of medical ethics".

This is an issue that emerged in 2006 and was initially met with official scepticism. Yet it is now 2016, the evidence has continued to accumulate, and the issue shows no sign of fading away. The United Kingdom should address it head on. Working with others within the international community, Britain could help commission an independent investigation to examine the size of China's organ transplant industry, using every available lead, including selective immunity, to determine the source of the organs, and conclusively evaluate whether prisoners of conscience are being targeted as an organ source and at what scale. Until such a time as there has been an honest accounting of the situation and genuine reform has been implemented and verified the United Kingdom could enact legislation making it a criminal offence to travel to China for organs. The UK Government should raise detailed questions about organ transplant processes and facilities with the Chinese Government, specifically around how waiting times for compatible organs are so short and where organs are sourced from. A list of the doctors who have engaged in extracting organs could be drawn up, and those responsible for unethical conduct could be subject to a travel bans.

The tragic practice of forced organ harvesting, as Ms Lin put it, "forces us to confront the question of how humans – doctors trained to heal, no less – could possibly do such great evil?" And she answers her own question with these words: "The aggressors in China were not born to be monsters who take out organs from

[102] European Parliament resolution, 11 December 2013 - http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+MOTION+P7-RC-2013-0562+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

people…It's the system that made them do that. It's the system that made them so cold-bloodedly able to cut people open and take out their organs and watch them die. No one is born to be so cruel."

10. Hong Kong

"One country, two systems", the model established for the governance of Hong Kong under Chinese sovereignty, is being "progressively undermined", according to Hong Kong's former Chief Secretary Anson Chan and the founder of Hong Kong's Democratic Party Martin Lee in their joint submission to our inquiry. "Precious rights and freedoms guaranteed under 'one country, two systems', such as freedom of the press, of publication and of academic thought, are being chipped away, while our local government seems to turn a blind eye, more bent on pleasing the Central Authorities than standing up for Hong Kong and its core values." A new film, *Ten Years*, depicts Hong Kong's future based on recent trends and "paints a grim picture of Hong Kong ten years into the future, increasingly under Central Government's influence and control." The Hong Kong government, argue Mrs Chan and Mr Lee, "has shown itself completely powerless to uphold the fundamental rights guaranteed to Hong Kong residents in the Basic Law."

Professor Victoria Tin-bor Hui, Associate Professor in Political Science at the University of Notre Dame, puts it even more strongly in her submission: "Hong Kong's young people who have grown up under the 'one country, two systems' model are convinced that Hong Kong is dying. To paraphrase the film *Ten Years*, is it 'already too late' to save Hong Kong or is it 'not too late' to give it urgent life support? … Most pillars of freedom have been made increasingly hollowed."

While the erosion of Hong Kong's freedoms has continued slowly and steadily since 1997, three key events in the past two years have illustrated the threats to basic human rights in Hong Kong in a particularly stark way: China's decision to abandon its promise to allow genuine multi-party democracy and universal suffrage in elections for Chief Executive of Hong Kong in 2017, sparking the 'Umbrella Movement' (sometimes known as the 'Occupy' movement) which saw thousands of protesters on the streets for 79 days in 2014; the authorities' handling of the protests; and then, towards the end of 2015, the disappearance of five Hong Kong-based booksellers, one of whom, Lee Po, a British national, was believed to have been abducted by Chinese authorities from Hong Kong and taken across the border to mainland China, while one was abducted from Thailand and three were detained while visiting mainland China.

As early as 1993, China's chief negotiator on Hong Kong, Lu Ping, told *The People's Daily*: "The [method of universal suffrage] should be reported to [China's Parliament] for the record, whereas the central government's agreement is not necessary. How Hong Kong develops its democracy is completely within the sphere of autonomy of Hong Kong. The central government will not interfere." According to the former Governor of Hong Kong Lord Patten, China's foreign ministry confirmed this the

following year.[103] In a report by the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee in 2000, it was noted that: "The Chinese government has therefore formally accepted that it is for the Hong Kong government to determine the extent and nature of democracy in Hong Kong."[104] China appears to have reneged on that promise, proposing instead to allow universal suffrage but with the candidates handpicked by the Central Government. As Martin Lee noted, "Hong Kong people will have one person, one vote, but Beijing will select all the candidates – puppets. What is the difference between a rotten apple, a rotten orange and a rotten banana? We want genuine universal suffrage and not democracy with Chinese characteristics."[105]

A protest movement began in response, bringing tens of thousands of people onto the streets in Hong Kong's financial district and elsewhere for 79 days. The demonstrators were entirely peaceful on 28 September 2014 (though there were some violent confrontations later in the year, possibly due to *agents provocateurs*), but they were met with teargas, beatings and arrests by the police.[106] Cardinal Joseph Zen, who at 82 years-old participated in the demonstrations and was arrested, said the police fired 87 canisters of tear-gas – "but the people just regrouped [peacefully]".[107] Martin Lee described in *The New York Times* his own experience: "At 76 years old, I never expected to be tear-gassed in Hong Kong, my once peaceful home. Like many of the other tens of thousands of calm and non-violent protestors in the Hong Kong streets …, I was shocked when the pro-democracy crowd was met by throngs of police officers in full riot gear, carrying weapons and wantonly firing canisters of tear gas. After urging the crowd to remain calm under provocation, I got hit by a cloud of the burning fumes. The protesters persevered. They ran away when gassed, washed their faces and returned with raised hands. But the police continued to escalate the crisis. Their aggressive actions hardened the resolve of Hong Kongers, many of them too young to vote, to defend our freedoms. These include the long-promised right to elect our leader."[108]

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[103] "What China promised Hong Kong," by Chris Patten, The Washington Post, 3 October 2014 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/chris-patten-with-hong-kong-chinas-honor-is-at-stake/2014/10/02/ebc4e9b2-4a5f-11e4-a046-120a8a855cca_story.html

[104] House of Commons Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, Tenth Report, Hong Kong, 2000 - http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmselect/cmfaff/574/57410.htm

[105] "Hong Kong democracy activists vent their anger against Beijing," by Demetri Sevastopulo and Julie Zhu, Financial Times, 1 September 2014 - http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e57acc96-30e9-11e4-b2fd-00144feabdc0.html#slide0

[106] "Hong Kong police use tear gas and pepper spray to disperse protesters," by Tanya Branigan and Jonathan Kaiman, The Guardian, 28 September 2014 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/28/kong-kong-police-teargas-pepper-spray-pro-democracy-protesters

[107] "The sinister aftermath of the Hong Kong crackdown," by Benedict Rogers, Conservativehome, 6 January 2015 - http://www.conservativehome.com/thecolumnists/2015/01/benedict-rogers-the-sinister-aftermath-of-the-hong-kong-crackdown.html

[108] "Who will stand with Hong Kong?," by Martin Lee, The New York Times, 3 October 2014 - http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/04/opinion/martin-lee-hong-kongs-great-test.html?_r=1

Many of the leaders of what became known as the Umbrella Movement or the 'Occupy' movement were arrested, charged and put on trial. There were also more sinister repercussions, including attempts to separate at least two 14 year-olds from their families and put them into care – not because there was any problem with their parents, but simply as a political punishment for participating in the protests.[109] Democratic politician Emily Lau was denied entry into Macau, on the grounds that she might threaten public safety. Hong Kong democrats have long been banned from mainland China, but Macau – which returned to Chinese rule two years after Hong Kong with a similar special autonomy status – is surprising.[110]

Martin Lee described the Umbrella Movement as "a last stand in defence of Hong Kong's core values, the values that have long set us apart from China: the rule of law, press freedom, good governance, judicial independence and protection for basic human rights. Beijing's heavy-handed response … made it clearer than ever that our future as a free society is at stake."[111]

The abduction of five Hong Kong booksellers, and particularly Lee Po, a British citizen, is described by Anson Chan and Martin Lee in their submission as "the most serious and most blatant breach of the Joint Declaration and the principle of 'One Country, two Systems." The European Union voices similarly serious concerns: in the 2015 annual report on Hong Kong by the European Commission's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the European Parliament and the Council, the EU notes that "the functioning of the 'one country, two systems' principle was called into serious doubt by the disappearance, in late 2015, of five individuals, two of whom hold EU citizenship, associated with a Hong Kong publishing house and bookshop known for printing and selling material critical of the Central Government. The circumstances of the disappearances were suspicious; the fifth person who disappeared from Hong Kong SAR territory seems to have been abducted. The EU considers the case of the five book publishers to be the most serious challenge to Hong Kong's Basic Law and the 'one country, two systems' principle since Hong Kong's handover to the PRC in 1997. The case raises serious concerns about respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms … The case has potentially lasting implications for Hong Kong's rule of law …."[112] The European Parliament also passed

[109] "The sinister aftermath of the Hong Kong crackdown," by Benedict Rogers, Conservativehome, 6 January 2015 - http://www.conservativehome.com/thecolumnists/2015/01/benedict-rogers-the-sinister-aftermath-of-the-hong-kong-crackdown.html

[110] "Pan-democrat law maker Emily Lau turned away from Macau," South China Morning Post, 3 January 2015 - http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1673100/pan-democrat-lawmaker-emily-lau-turned-away-macau

[111] "Who will stand with Hong Kong?," by Martin Lee, The New York Times, 3 October 2014 - http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/04/opinion/martin-lee-hong-kongs-great-test.html?_r=1

[112] "European Commission and European External Action Service Issue 2015 Annual Report on Hong Kong Special Administrative Region", 25 April 2016 - http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2016/160425_02_en.htm

a resolution in February 2016 expressing its "grave concern" about the five booksellers.[113] In a rare but welcome intervention, in February 2016, the UK Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond MP stated that "I am particularly concerned by the situation of Mr Lee Po, a British citizen. The full facts of the case remain unclear, but our current information indicates that Mr Lee was involuntarily removed to the mainland without any due process under Hong Kong SAR law. This constitutes a serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong and undermines the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" which assures Hong Kong residents of the protection of the Hong Kong legal system."[114]

Hong Kong's Basic Law guarantees the following rights and freedoms:

- Article 22: "No department of the Central People's Government and no province, autonomous region or municipality directly under the Central Government may interfere in the affairs which the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region administers on its own in accordance with this Law."
- Article 27: "Hong Kong residents shall have the freedom of speech, of the press and of publication …"
- Article 28: "The freedom of the person shall be inviolable. No Hong Kong resident shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or imprisonment".

Anson Chan and Martin Lee state, "Mr Lee's abduction and detention are a clear breach of the above Articles of the Basic Law. The explanation of their disappearances and reappearances that Mr Lee and his colleagues have been coerced into giving are an insult to the intelligence of Hong Kong people and the international community, reminiscent of the grotesque distortions of the facts by George Orwell's Ministry of Truth in the iconic novel '1984'. In particular, it is clear that Mr Lee's television interview and other public comments were carefully scripted by the Mainland authorities, as a quid pro quo for allowing him to return to Hong Kong." Five questions posed in an article in *The South China Morning Post*, including how did Lee Po get to the Mainland and what was the role of the Hong Kong government, have yet to be answered.[115]

The Hong Kong Government's handling of Lee Po's case is deeply troubling. Although Lee Po disappeared on 30 December 2015, Hong Kong's Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying did not comment until 5 January 2016, when he said that there was no indication

[113] European Parliament resolution on the case of the missing book publishers in Hong Kong, 2 February 2016 - http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=B8-2016-0187&language=EN

[114] The Six-Monthly Report on Hong Kong, 1 July to 31 December 2015, Deposited in Parliament by the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 11 February 2016 - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/500119/Six_Monthly_Report_on_Hong_Kong_-_1_July_to_31_December_2015.pdf

[115] "Lee Po, the main actor in the mystery of the missing booksellers, and the five questions to be solved," by Jeffie Lam, South China Morning Post, 30 January 2016 - http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/1907061/lee-po-main-actor-mystery-missing-booksellers-and-five

that anyone had been abducted. Anson Chan and Martin Lee set out in more detail in their submission their criticisms of the Hong Kong Government, and conclude that the case shows that "China considers it can act with impunity and complete disregard for 'one country, two systems' when its national interests are deemed to be under threat". The Hong Kong Government has shown itself to be, they state, "powerless", and has "quietly acquiesced in the absurd fiction foisted upon Hong Kong and the rest of the world as to the circumstances of the booksellers' disappearances and detention". The Joint Declaration between the United Kingdom and China was meant to guarantee that "no Hong Kong resident would have to fear a midnight knock on the door". The reality now, they add, is that "what happened to Lee Po can happen to any Hong Kong resident whom the Mainland authorities wish to silence or bring before their own system of 'justice'. In short, none of us is safe."

Other serious concerns include threats to the independence of the judiciary, the rule of law, academic freedom and press freedom. In June 2014 China announced in a White Paper on *The Practice of One Country, Two Systems* that judges in Hong Kong are mere "administrators"[116] subject to a "basic political requirement" to love the country.[117] Martin Lee has said Hong Kong is now ruled "by Communist Party cadres" and "the rule of law is under attack".[118] A senior retired Hong Kong judge, Judge Kemal Bokhary, concluded in a speech in April 2016 that his warning in 2012 of "a storm of unprecedented ferocity" facing the judiciary has now come about, noting that his "fears have been realised, much as I wish they were not". There are, he confirmed, "very serious problems now … grave challenges". If the situation continues, "the things which were second nature to you and I may recede to the back row where judicial independence is eroded."[119]

Professor Victoria Tin-bor Hui, in her submission, notes that "the official pronouncement that the Chief Executive should have 'overriding power' over the judicial branch may be seen as the prelude to the next stage of Beijing's campaign. Pro-regime forces have criticised judges for releasing the majority of protestors. Mainland legal scholars have even criticised judges for interpreting the Basic Law in

[116] "Lawyers defend Hong Kong rule of law in show of unity against Beijing," by Alan Wong, The New York Times, 27 June 2014 - http://sinosphere.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/06/27/lawyers-defend-hong-kong-rule-of-law-in-show-of-unity-against-beijing/?_r=0

[117] "A Hong Kong judge's warning," The Wall Street Journal, 21 April 2016 - http://www.wsj.com/articles/a-hong-kong-judges-warning-1461280717

[118] "The sinister aftermath of the Hong Kong crackdown," by Benedict Rogers, Conservativehome, 6 January 2015 - http://www.conservativehome.com/thecolumnists/2015/01/benedict-rogers-the-sinister-aftermath-of-the-hong-kong-crackdown.html

[119] "Gloomy verdict: Hong Kong appeal judge says courts face 'grave challenges' in years ahead," by Stuart Lau, South China Morning Post, 18 April 2016 - http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1936964/gloomy-verdict-hong-kong-appeal-judge-says-courts-face-grave

the Common Law tradition which, of course, is what the principle of 'one country, two systems' is intended to preserve."

Threats to academic freedom were highlighted by the decision of the University of Hong Kong to refuse to appoint pro-democracy academic Professor Johannes Chan Man-mun as its Pro-Vice-Chancellor, despite the recommendation of the selection committee. Furthermore, students at the University are outraged by the appointment by the Chief Executive of Professor Arthur Li Kwok-cheung as Chairman of the University's Council, "a needlessly provocative act at a time when the goal should be to heal the divisions," argue Anson Chan and Martin Lee. "It is widely perceived," add Mrs Chan and Mr Lee, "that Leung Chun-ying is systematically abusing his position as Chancellor of all eight Hong Kong universities to appoint to their governing bodies persons who can be relied upon to toe the Government line. This is a blatant threat to academic freedom."

Joshua Wong, the 19 year-old Convenor of Scholarism, leader of the Umbrella Movement and founder of a new political party, Demosisto, highlighted the threats to academic freedom inherent in the proposed National Education curriculum in his submission. The proposed curriculum emphasised the need for students to demonstrate "obedience as well as pride towards the Chinese Communist government, with … students expected to feel touched and burst into tears before the national flag during the national flag ceremony," he said. "That means, the national education [curriculum] was in fact more than an education subject, but a brain-washing tool."

It is worth noting that after Joshua Wong's decision to launch a new political party, HSBC refused to allow him to set up a bank account,[120] as did every other financial institution. The party had to resort to channelling funds through a personal bank account, which Hang Seng Bank then froze. Its initial preferred domain name for a website was immediately taken by an anonymous user before a website could be established.[121]

Three other concerns are worth briefly noting. The first is the closure of a museum dedicated to the Tiananmen movement of 1989. According to news reports, the museum, established in 2014, is in a location where the building management records the identities of all visitors. Approximately half of the museum's 20,000 visitors since

[120] "HSBC accused of 'censorship' for refusing Hong Kong student leader's account," The Guardian, 6 April 2016 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/apr/06/hsbc-accused-of-censorship-for-refusing-hong-kong-student-leaders-account

[121] "Joshua Wong's new political party is off to a rocky start," Jason Y. Ng, Ejinsight, 12 April 2016 - http://www.ejinsight.com/20160412-joshua-wong-s-new-political-party-off-rocky-start/

it opened have come from mainland China, but the fact that their identities are registered when they visit may make many reluctant to come.[122]

Press freedom has declined dramatically, as shown in Reporters Without Borders' 2015 survey which places Hong Kong 70th in the world press freedom index, a significant fall from its position of 18th in 2002.[123] Journalists have been subjected to physical assaults or forced to resign for criticising the Chinese government, and a creeping self-censorship has emerged. Edward Chin, a hedge fund manager and pro-democracy manager, told VICE News that over the past 18 to 24 months, Hong Kong's media has been "under heavy attack, heavy control under Beijing".[124]

Lastly, a new movement campaigning for 'localism', self-determination and at its most radical, independence has emerged. As Anson Chan and Martin Lee say, "the fact is that the concept of 'independence' for Hong Kong has never hitherto been mooted. It is a symptom of the current disillusionment among young people, rather than the cause." Even so, as Anson Chan put it in a speech at Tufts University, this "is not supported by the vast majority of Hong Kong people who accept that independence is neither a desirable nor realistic aspiration. Hong Kong people do not want independence from China; they simply want to preserve the values, freedoms and lifestyle that make the city so special. If Hong Kong becomes just like any other Chinese city, it will lose the ability to continue its current unique and enormously valuable contribution to China and to the world.[125]

[122] "Hong Kong Tiananmen museum to close after legal dispute," BBC, 14 April 2016 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-china-36041972

[123] Hong Kong press freedom sinks to new low in global index," by Ng Kang-chung, South China Morning Post, 13 February 2015 - http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1711311/hong-kong-press-freedom-sinks-new-low-global-index

[124] "Hong Kong braces for fresh protest as electoral reform vote looms," by Sally Hayden, VICE News, 16 June 2016 - https://news.vice.com/article/hong-kong-braces-for-fresh-protests-as-electoral-reform-vote-looms

[125] "Hong Kong government turning 'blind eye' as Beijing 'chips away' at rights and freedoms, says ex-chief sec. Anson Chan," Hong Kong Free Press, 6 April 2016 - https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/04/06/hk-govt-turning-blind-eye-as-beijing-chips-away-at-rights-and-freedoms-says-ex-chief-sec-anson-chan/

11. UK Foreign Policy towards China and Hong Kong

"These are deep concerns about freedom of expression, of religion, about the extensive use of the death penalty, about the degree to which the media – and access for example to the Internet – are curtailed. We make these arguments not because we think we are the moral majority … that somehow we think we have a monopoly on civilised principles … but instead, because our experience has taught us that in the long-term, progress – whether economic, social or environmental – is underpinned by the rule of law, good governance, pluralism and freedom." Those were the words David Cameron spoke, as Leader of the Opposition, in a speech at Chongqing University in China in 2007.[126]

In 2008, as Leader of the Opposition, David Cameron met the Dalai Lama in Parliament, and urged the then Prime Minister Gordon Brown to do so too. He also raised Tibet at Prime Minister's Question Time, urging Gordon Brown to denounce the most recent crackdown. The then Shadow Foreign Secretary William Hague said that the Prime Minister should be prepared to meet all leaders in Downing Street.[127]

In 2010, David Cameron, then Prime Minister, made a speech to students in Beijing in which, according to media reports, he went "further than previous British prime ministers visiting China by urging the world's new economic superpower to embrace human rights and democracy."[128] His remarks were reported to be "unprecedented in their directness", taking Britain's push for human rights in China to "another level".[129]

In 2012, as Prime Minister, David Cameron met the Dalai Lama again, together with Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, although they met privately in St Paul's Cathedral, not in Downing Street.[130] This drew a furious reaction from China, and a planned visit to UK by a senior Chinese leader was cancelled.[131] The following year, the Prime Minister warned China not to use its economic influence to dictate which leaders and

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[126] David Cameron: Speech at Chongqing University in China, 2007 - http://conservative-speeches.sayit.mysociety.org/speech/599724

[127] "Brown refuses to see Dalai Lama in Downing Street to avoid confrontation with China," Evening Standard, 12 May 2008 - http://www.standard.co.uk/news/brown-refuses-to-see-dalai-lama-in-downing-street-to-avoid-confrontation-with-china-7289433.html

[128] "David Cameron tells China: embrace freedom and the rule of law," by Patrick Wintour and Phillip Inman, The Guardian, 10 November 2010 - http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2010/nov/10/david-cameron-china-freedom

[129] "David Cameron lectures China on value of democracy," by Andrew Porter, The Daily Telegraph, 10 November 2010 - http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8121804/David-Cameron-lectures-China-on-value-of-democracy.html

[130] "David Cameron's Dalai Lama meeting sparks Chinese protest," BBC, 16 May 2012 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-18084223

[131] "China cancels UK visit over David Cameron's meeting with Dalai Lama," by Tania Branigan, The Guardian, 25 May 2012 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/25/china-cancels-uk-visit-dalai-lama

countries Britain can deal with. He refused China's demand for an apology for meeting the Dalai Lama. His spokesman insisted Britain would not be bullied by China.[132]

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission wholeheartedly supports the approach taken by the Prime Minister between 2007-2013. We are, however, concerned that UK policy on China appears to have shifted considerably since 2013; that the UK appears reluctant to raise human rights in China publicly; that the UK's response to the deteriorating human rights situation in Hong Kong is disappointing; and that economic interests appear to be overriding other important concerns in our relationship with China. The position set out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, who stated that "We want a golden relationship with China that will help foster a golden decade for this country. Simply put, we want to make the UK China's best partner in the West",[133] is deeply troubling, without commensurate public expressions of concern about the gravely deteriorating human rights situation in China, given the evidence presented to this Commission of this deterioration, as detailed in this report.

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission welcomes the comments of the former Chairman of the Conservative Party and former Governor of Hong Kong, Lord Patten, who has criticised government policy on China and Hong Kong repeatedly. "There has always been quite a strong group in government and the business community which believes that you can only do business with China if you carefully avoid in all circumstances treading on China's toes or saying anything the Chinese disagree with. It encourages China to behave badly that we go on doing that," he told a Parliamentary Inquiry into Hong Kong.[134] Ministers should speak out publicly, he said, instead of speaking "behind their hands and behind closed doors … I am not one of those people who ever think it is as helpful to say those kind of things privately … We have kept shtoom as much as we could in the bizarre anticipation that that would be the best way of developing our relationship with China." Those who believe that raising difficult issues with China, such as human rights, would affect trade are mistaken, he argued, because China is "more sophisticated" in its approach to international affairs. "Why does Germany export more to China than we do?," he added. "It is because Germany has more things that China wants to buy. It is not because [Chancellor] Angela Merkel is nicer to the Chinese leaders."[135] He told a

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[132] "You cannot tell me who I can meet, Cameron warns China as his talks with the Dalai Lama threaten to cost Britain billions," by Matt Chorley, Daily Mail, 7 May 2013 - http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2320749/You-tell-I-meet-Cameron-warns-China-talks-Dalai-Lama-threaten-cost-Britain-billions.html

[133] "It's in Britain's interests to bond with China now," by George Osborne, The Guardian, 19 September 2015 - http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/19/george-osborne-britain-should-bond-china-now

[134] "Britain soft on China over Hong Kong crisis, says Chris Patten," The Guardian, 5 November 2014 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/05/britain-soft-on-china-over-hong-kong-crisis-says-chris-patten

[135] "Patten criticises UK's 'keep shtoom' policy on Hong Kong," BBC, 4 November 2014 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-29899250

hearing in the US Congress in November 2014: "In the days of the Soviet Union, when the Soviet Union was locking up dissidents … we used to say to dissidents sometimes when they were let out, 'Was it a help or was it a hindrance when Western countries raised your case?' … The dissidents themselves would always say it made a difference when you raise their cases publicly, when you raised the ante for the authorities. I think it is exactly the same with dissidents in China. I think it is exactly the same with those who are arguing for democracy in Hong Kong. I am quite surprised, I have to say, that we don't raise the questions about dissidents as much as we used to or about religious freedom as much as we used to, when we talk to Chinese officials. I think we should do it more. But I certainly think that by talking about the importance of Hong Kong continuing to have its autonomy, continuing to have its freedoms and having those freedoms underpinned by democratic development, I think simply talking about that, I think shining a spotlight on that really does matter."[136]

We believe the Government would do well to listen to Lord Patten, and also to the Prime Minister's former strategic adviser Steve Hilton, who spoke out during Xi Jinping's visit to the UK in 2015 in a series of articles and interviews.

There are some steps taken by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) which are welcome. Its Annual Report on human rights[137] and its periodic human rights updates[138] continue to highlight the human rights situation in China, and its occasional statements on individual cases are helpful.

We welcome the fact that on 10 March, 2016 the United Kingdom signed a joint statement on human rights in China, together with Australia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States. The statement, delivered at the United Nations Human Rights Council, expressed concern about China's "deteriorating human rights record, notably the arrests and ongoing detention of rights activists, civil society leaders and lawyers", as well as about the "unexplained recent disappearances and apparent coerced returns of Chinese and foreign citizens from outside mainland China". Such extraterritorial actions are "unacceptable, out of step with the expectations of the international community, and a challenge to the rules-based international order". The statement also noted with concern the increasing use of forced, televised confessions, expressed support for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights' press release on 16 February 2016 which highlighted China's human rights record, and called upon China to release

[136] "The Future of Democracy in Hong Kong," the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, November 20 2014 - http://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/the-future-of-democracy-in-hong-kong
[137] Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-rights-and-democracy-report-2015
[138] Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Updates - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/china-in-year-update-july-2015

"all rights activists, civil society leaders, and lawyers detained for peacefully exercising their freedom of expression or lawfully practicing their profession".[139]

As mentioned, we welcome this statement, and the United Kingdom's recent willingness to sign other letters and statements.[140] However, we believe that there is more that could be done. The FCO's Annual Report could be strengthened both in language used and in specific detail of issues and cases. The section on China in the 2015 Annual Report on human rights appears to be remarkably understated given the scale of the human rights situation, and comes to little more than half a page. In contrast, the United States State Department annual human rights report devotes 141 pages to China.[141] Whilst we welcome the FCO's commitment in their report to "continue to raise human rights issues through whichever channel is most effective," this Commission notes with regret the absence of appropriate public challenge by the UK Government on the concerning deterioration of human rights in China during the years covered by this report. Such absence appears to detract from this commitment.

In regard to Hong Kong, the United Kingdom has a specific responsibility under the Sino-British Joint Declaration to continue to ensure that guarantees given under that agreement are protected at least until 2047. As Lord Patten has said, the UK Government has "a right and a moral obligation to continue to check on whether China is keeping its side of the bargain."[142] Yet he indicates that there is a perception that Britain has not lived up to its obligations.[143] "When China asserts that what is happening in Hong Kong is nothing to do with us we should make it absolutely clear publicly and privately that that is not the case," said Lord Patten. "It is amazing that when they say that sort of thing the [British] Foreign Office doesn't make a fuss – because the Joint Declaration provides obligations on China to us for 50 years. [It] is the Joint Declaration, not the Chinese declaration."[144] In a hearing at the US Congress, Lord Patten said that the United Kingdom has been "restrained in its comments" on Hong Kong. The Six-Monthly Report on Hong Kong produced by the Foreign and

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[139] United Nations, Joint Statement – Human Rights Situation in China, 10 March 2016 - https://geneva.usmission.gov/2016/03/10/item-2-joint-statement-human-rights-situation-in-china/

[140] "Is China heading in the wrong direction? For once, the West calls Beijing out," by Simon Denyer, The Washington Post, 23 March 2016 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/is-china-heading-in-the-wrong-direction-for-once-the-west-calls-beijing-out/2016/03/22/c4cad76e-eacb-11e5-a9ce-681055c7a05f_story.html

[141] US State Department Annual Human Rights Report 2015 - http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper

[142] "What China promised Hong Kong," by Chris Patten, The Washington Post, 3 October 2014 - https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/chris-patten-with-hong-kong-chinas-honor-is-at-stake/2014/10/02/ebc4e9b2-4a5f-11e4-a046-120a8a855cca_story.html

[143] "Patten criticises UK's 'keep shtoom' policy on Hong Kong," BBC, 4 November 2014 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-29899250

[144] "Britain soft on China over Hong Kong crisis, says Chris Patten," The Guardian, 5 November 2014 - http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/nov/05/britain-soft-on-china-over-hong-kong-crisis-says-chris-patten

Commonwealth Office is, he added, "a fairly neutral and … rather anodyne document".[145]

Martin Lee criticised the UK and US reaction to the crackdown on the Umbrella Movement. "In order for us to attain the rights that Beijing has promised, the rest of the world has to stand with Hong Kong," he argues. "Hong Kongers deserve more vigorous backing from Washington and London, which pledged to stand by us before the handover in 1997, when Beijing made the promises it is now so blatantly breaking. Both Washington and London, in their failure to come out strongly in favour of the peaceful democracy protesters, have effectively sided with Beijing in a disgraceful display of power politics."[146]

In their submission, Anson Chan and Martin Lee say: "We need the UK to speak up forcefully in defence of the rights and freedoms that distinguish Hong Kong so sharply from the rest of China. Where it leads the rest of the international community will follow. If it does not lead, then the future of 'one country, two systems' is at best troubled and at worst doomed."

To be fair to the Government, as mentioned, the most recent Six-Monthly Report on Hong Kong presented to Parliament by the Foreign Secretary on 11 February 2016 is more robust than previous reports, stating that the "unexplained disappearance" of the five booksellers "constitutes a serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration on Hong Kong and undermines the principle of 'One Country, Two Systems'."[147] The Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond MP, also raised the case during a visit to Beijing and made a similar statement, and the Prime Minister has raised the case. The Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Hugo Swire MP reiterated those statements in a debate in the House of Commons on 23 March 2016.[148]

However, as Professor Victoria Tin-bor Hui notes in her submission to our inquiry, on a visit to Hong Kong in April 2016, the Foreign Secretary claimed that "one country, two systems" was "generally working well … although concerns have been raised over the recent booksellers' case." Professor Hui argues that "in returning to the usual term 'concern', Mr Hammond seemed to back down from the unusually blunt language employed in the latest report on 11 February 2016. She urges the United Kingdom to "diligently exercise its treaty obligations as a signatory to the Sino-British Joint

[145] "The Future of Democracy in Hong Kong," the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, November 20 2014 - http://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/the-future-of-democracy-in-hong-kong

[146] "Who will stand with Hong Kong?," by Martin Lee, The New York Times, 3 October 2014 - http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/04/opinion/martin-lee-hong-kongs-great-test.html?_r=1

[147] The Six-Monthly Report on Hong Kong, 1 July-31 December 2015 - https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/six-monthly-report-on-hong-kong-july-to-december-2015

[148] "Hong Kong: Sino-British Joint Declaration," Hansard, 23 March 2016 - https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-03-23/debates/16032346000001/HongKongSino-BritishJointDeclaration

Declaration". Publishing six-monthly reports "as a public relations exercise", she states, is not enough – the United Kingdom should "point out on-going breaches as they happen … and call out every instance of violation." She concludes: "Pulling Hong Kong from the brink would help the UK regain its lost global leadership."

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission is concerned by reports that the BBC World Service plans to relocate its Chinese news service from Britain to Hong Kong.[149] We note the National Union of Journalist (NUJ)'s statement on 25 April, which argued that this decision "poses a genuine threat to the BBC's editorial independence and integrity in the region, as well as the UK's national interest". The safety of BBC staff particularly journalists with a history of being critical of China, could be jeopardised, the NUJ claim. We further note with concern the fact that the Chinese service has not received any increased funding, despite the additional £85 million overall funding per year for the BBC World Service from the Government.[150]

The Conservative Party Human Rights Commission is deeply concerned by the apparent tendency among many in the international community to allow China to intimidate them into silence about human rights violations in China. We note with sadness that India denied visas to a number of Uyghur, Hong Kong and other activists to attend a conference in Dharamsala with the Tibetan government in exile. One such person denied a visa was Dolkun Isa, a representative of the World Uyghur Congress.[151]

However, we also note examples of governments and political leaders who have spoken up, and whose interests have not been significantly adversely affected. For example, the King of the Netherlands raised human rights in a speech at a banquet in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.[152] The President of Germany Joachim Gauck made a speech in Shanghai[153] condemning "dictatorship" and arguing that "vibrant and active civil society always means an innovative and flexible society".[154] Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel met with human rights activists in China during her visit in

[149] "Plan to move BBC Chinese service to HK deemed 'cynical, illogical, plain mad' by journalists," by Karen Cheung, Hong Kong Free Press, 26 April 2016 - https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/04/26/plan-to-move-bbc-chinese-service-to-hk-deemed-cynical-illogical-plain-mad-by-journalists/

[150] "BBC bows to Beijing and off-shores Chinese news service," National Union of Journalists, 25 April 2016 - https://www.nuj.org.uk/news/bbc-bows-to-beijing-and-off-shores-chinese-news-service/

[151] "Uighur activist in Germany sees China's hand in revocation of Indian visa," by Javier Hernandes, The New York Times, 25 April 2016 - http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/26/world/asia/uighur-india-china-visa.html?emc=edit_tnt_20160425&nlid=16428923&tntemail0=y&_r=0

[152] "Dutch King mentions human rights during China speech," Dutch News, 26 October 2015 - http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2015/10/dutch-king-mentions-human-rights-during-china-speech/

[153] "German president Joachim Gauck's speech at Tongji University in Shanghai," Chinafile, 24 March 2016 - https://www.chinafile.com/viewpoint/german-president-joachim-gaucks-speech-tongji-university-shanghai

[154] "German president slams communism in provocative speech to Shanghai students on his China visit," South China Morning Post, 23 March 2016 - http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1929422/german-president-slams-communism-provocative-speech

2015,[155] and spoke out about human rights on previous visits.[156] In 2014, Chancellor Merkell addressed an audience in Tsinghua University, and spoke of the importance of "free dialogue", and cited her own experience growing up in East Germany. "To me, this dialogue is very important because 25 years ago, when the peaceful revolution took place in the former GDR, this finally led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and enabled us to have a free dialogue … I think it's also important here in China to have such a free dialogue," she said. "It's important that citizens can believe in the power of the law, and not the law of the powerful … It's important to have laws on this regard, that function as a guardian of principles. You need an open, pluralistic and free society in order to shape the future successfully."[157] Germany continues to be a key trading partner with and a significant investor in China.

On 16 February 2016, United States Congressman Chris Smith, Chairman of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and a long-time outspoken voice on human rights in China, was invited to the country and delivered a speech at New York University's Shanghai campus. He spoke on the topic of "The Duty to Defend Universally-Recognised Human Rights", highlighting the crackdown on human rights lawyers, the continued imprisonment of Liu Xiaobo and the proposed new laws restricting the activities of foreign Non-Governmental Organisations. "Over the past several years, I hear the same thing – human rights conditions have gotten worse," he said. "Even those making modest calls for reforms, in areas prioritised by the government – anti-corruption, public health, legal reform and environmental concerns – have faced increased harassment, detention and arrest … The space for freedom and human rights advocates – already small – seems to be shrinking." He highlighted the 'one child policy', saying: "Over the years, I have met many Chinese women who have been victimised by the policy. Their tears and the agony they have suffered motivates me and others to help."[158]

In 2015, Congressman Smith introduced a bill in the US House of Representatives, known as the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, to reinstate reporting requirements for the US government on Hong Kong.[159] If he could take such a step in the United States, surely there is more that those in this country concerned about the issues highlighted in this report could and should be doing?

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[155] "Germany's Angela Merkel meets with rights activists, dissidents during China trip," Radio Free Asia, 30 October 2015 - http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/merkel-10302015132820.html

[156] "Merkel raises human rights on China trip," 8 July 2014 - http://www.thelocal.de/20140708/merkel-raises-human-rights-on-china-trip

[157] "Angela Merkel raises human rights on China trip," NDTV, 8 July 2014 - http://www.ndtv.com/world-news/angela-merkel-raises-human-rights-on-china-trip-585293

[158] **"**Smith Delivers Historic Speech on Human Rights at NYU-Shanghai Campus**,"** 17 February 2016 - http://chrissmith.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=398735

[159] Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, HR 1159 - https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr1159/text

Lord Patten has said: "There is a very quaint notion that you can never disagree with China, that whatever China does, it is the Middle Kingdom and you have to go along with it and that if you don't go along with it, you risk not being able to sell things to China, you risk doing damage to your economy. I think I am right in saying that China's exports to the United States went up by 1,600 percent in 15 years. So who needs whom? We live … in an interdependent world. I think it is ridiculous to suggest that any attempt to stand up for our values or for what we believe in means risking economic damage in our relationship with China."[160]

On 10 December 2015, the Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond MP, wrote an op-ed on human rights and argued that the British approach is three-fold. "First, we are focusing on efforts that get tangible results," he argued. "In some cases, where we have concerns, high-profile statements from ministers or ambassadors can be the right way to proceed. But that isn't always the right course of action. Often, a different, more nuanced approach is more likely to yield results. Quiet and continued engagement behind the scenes, nurturing a relationship and not being afraid to raise testing issues in private can sometimes achieve surprising results; lecturing people in public doesn't always work and can sometimes prove counter-productive."[161] In principle, we agree that there are certainly occasions where private advocacy can be effective. However, we would welcome hearing from the Foreign Secretary with examples of where this has been successful in recent years in the case of China, and what "tangible results" the current UK approach is yielding. We urge greater transparency in this regard, and that the FCO meet regularly with human rights NGOs for a two-way exchange of information and ideas and for feedback on discussions that have been held on human rights with the Chinese Government. Further specific recommendations are detailed earlier in the report, and we urge the United Kingdom to review its approach on such issues thoroughly.

Dr Corinna-Barbara Francis, an independent consultant and former China researcher at Amnesty International, argues in her submission that: "The correlation between democracy and higher levels of per capita income remains robust, and a basic tenet of modernization theory is still that there is a bundle of features, including industrialization, urbanization, education, and wealth, that tend to progress together. As countries grow economically, new middle classes tend to increase their demands for political liberalization, and in the longer run democratic transitions." She adds: "There is no room, however, for complacency on the part of the international community with regard to this trend. First, this historical pattern has repeatedly been challenged, with the current resurgence of authoritarianism, including among some of

[160] "The Future of Democracy in Hong Kong," the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, November 20 2014 - http://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/the-future-of-democracy-in-hong-kong
[161] "Standing up for human rights in a British way," Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 10 December 2015 - https://www.gov.uk/government/news/standing-up-for-human-rights-in-a-british-way

the fastest growing economies such as China, being only the latest example. The emerging Chinese regime perhaps best captures this latest challenge in its ability to adapt and strengthen its authoritarian foundation even as the economy grows rapidly. The level of sophistication, resources, and pro-active strategies to maintain power that the Chinese regime displays is striking. Not being content with mere censorship, for instance, the Chinese authorities seek to pro-actively control their domestic media and public opinion, as well as seeking to extend their influence to the foreign media." Furthermore, she concludes: "Historical processes, moreover, do not happen solely through large, faceless, mechanisms but must be driven by dedicated and courageous individuals who make enormous personal sacrifices to push the process forward. The international community cannot stand by and wait for the "inevitable" historical process to take place without risking the outcome, let alone abandoning the brave Chinese citizens who look to us for support. The window of opportunity for a peaceful transition away from authoritarianism appears to be closing rapidly in China as the antagonism between state and civil society sharpens."

International pressure can have an effect. Sarah Cook, senior research analyst at Freedom House, argues that many of the human rights lawyers detained, and the Hong Kong booksellers, were released because of international pressure. "It is clear that the situation would have been much worse absent domestic and international pressure on their behalf," she writes. "Moreover, their releases are consistent with a broader pattern. Freedom House research has found that despite an atmosphere of tight political controls and new arrests, Chinese leaders made more concessions to international and domestic pressure on media and internet freedom issues in 2015 than in any other year in recent memory … At a time when Xi is facing increased internal challenges to his authority, even as he attempts to tighten the screws on criticism inside and outside the party, the powers that be may be more susceptible than in the past to external calls for leniency. For the sake of these individuals, their families, and the broader battle for democracy and human rights in the world's most populous nation, it's certainly worth a try."[162]

[162] "Amid signs of Xi's weakness, appeals for detained activists get results," by Sarah Cook, The Diplomat, 8 April 2016 - http://thediplomat.com/2016/04/amid-signs-of-xis-weakness-appeals-for-detained-activists-get-results/

12. Conclusions

This report is the result of a very extensive inquiry involving first-hand evidence received by the Conservative Party Human Rights Commission, and a considerable amount of secondary source material gathered by the Commission.

We would recommend reading the written submissions received by the Commission as further background and detail. They will be published as an online appendix to the report on our website, www.conservativehumanrights.com. The submissions are impressive in their quality and detail. It was not possible to include more than a few extracts from a few submissions in this report, but they are all worth reading in full.

We would also recommend reading the secondary source material which we examined, including the US State Department's Annual Human Rights Report, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom report, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China Annual Report and testimonies from its hearings on China, and a variety of other reports and media articles which are referenced throughout our report.

As this report demonstrates through numerous sources, the period from 2013-2016 has seen, as Rose Tang puts it in her submission, "the scope of human rights abuses in China and the Chinese Communist Party's infiltration and expansion in the world reaching a level unprecedented since the Tiananmen Massacre in 1989." Perhaps "the most noticeable development", she adds, "is how China has turned state-owned mass media into a quasi court to convict detained human rights defenders before they appear for trial."

Perhaps the most chilling example of China's recent crackdown on dissent is the case of Zhang Haitao, jailed for 19 years in January 2016 simply because he had engaged in discussions on universal human rights with Chinese-language media overseas and had written articles for a news website popular with dissidents. He himself was not a dissident, a lawyer or an activist – instead, he sold SIM cards and broadband Internet for a living. But he had encountered the writings of Burma's democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and, according to *The Globe and Mail*, "fell in love" with the ideas they contained. His sentence is longer than many dissidents, even longer than the jailed Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo's eleven-year sentence.[163] A country that imprisons a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and a sim-card salesman for well over a decade each simply for speaking out should surely be recognised as a country with very grave human rights problems.

[163] "Small voice of dissent pays big price as China guards its image," by Nathan Vanderkippe, The Globe and Mail, 6 April 2016 - http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/small-voice-of-dissent-pays-big-price-as-china-guards-its-image/article29548416/

As the human rights situation deteriorates, dissent is growing. A recent article in *The Sunday Times* headlined "Young burn for change behind Xi's Great Firewall" describes the discontent in China.[164] Jasmine Yin, a Chinese student in the United States and granddaughter of China's former head of state Ye Jianying, wrote another recent article in *The Australian* in which she described Xi Jinping's 'China Dream' and went on to argue: "My millennial generation has a different dream, one that more resembles the traditional American one: less political interference in our lives, more openness to the outside world, dismantling the detested Great Firewall that blocks indispensable websites such as Google, Facebook and YouTube, and more freedom and democracy like that enjoyed by our peers in Taiwan and Hong Kong." She argued that Xi Jinping "is taking China in a frightening, reactionary, ideologically driven direction. He is creating a personality cult the likes of which hasn't been seen since Mao and Deng Xiaoping (both of whom earned their credentials leading the revolutionary war, while Xi has never seen a battlefield)."[165]

US Senator Marco Rubio was right when he said that China's writers, lawyers, activists, students and dissidents "represent the future of China … They have democratic aspirations and dreams for their country that do not include harassment, abuse and imprisonment."[166]

Lord Patten was similarly right when he said of the situation in Hong Kong: "This is a big and defining issue for how China is going to behave in the 21st century. I have absolutely no doubt at all that Joshua Wong and the other students who have been supporting him … own the future and I don't think it is owned by those whose view apparently is that the problem about allowing people elections is that you don't know the results in advance."[167]

In the relationship between the United Kingdom and China, we must make it clear that we are on the side of the people of China – especially in what is described by Yang Jianli, founder of Initiatives for China, in his evidence to this inquiry, as "the darkest moment" for human rights in China in years.

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[164] "Young burn for change behind Xi's Great Firewall," by Michael Sheridan, The Sunday Times, 27 March 2016 - http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/news/world_news/Asia/article1682236.ece

[165] "Emperor Xi Jinping must offer hope, rather than personality cult," by Jasmine Yin, The Australian, 9 March 2016 - http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/emperor-xi-jinping-must-offer-hope-rather-than-personality-cult/news-story/dfd753a93825f69cf7441bf7b43ab91f

[166] Statement of US Senator Marco Rubio, CECC Hearing on "Urging China's President to stop state-sponsored human rights abuses," 18 September 2015 - http://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/urging-china%E2%80%99s-president-xi-to-stop-state-sponsored-human-rights-abuses

[167] "The Future of Democracy in Hong Kong," the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, November 20 2014 - http://www.cecc.gov/events/hearings/the-future-of-democracy-in-hong-kong