

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/chine-communist-party-celebrates-01-07-2011,40572.html>

Asia - China

Obscene celebrations

Communist Party celebrates longevity, but activist says it has gone deaf

1 July 2011

As China's Communist Party celebrates the 90th anniversary of its founding today, beginning with a flag-raising ceremony in Tiananmen Square attended by 30,000 people, Reporters Without Borders insists that the toll from the crackdown of the past 90 days outweighs all the achievements of the past 90 years that the party has been proclaiming.

"The party's efforts to present a festive image of national cohesion are designed to hide a disturbing deterioration in freedom of expression and information, especially during the last five months," Reporters Without Borders said. "The ceremonies and political speeches must not be allowed to eclipse the wave of arrests of dissidents and human rights lawyers, and the censorship in Inner Mongolia."

"The international community must not let itself be hypnotised by the splendour of these celebrations either. It must reject what some call the 'Chinese development model,' which is just a euphemism for a policy that puts all the emphasis on economic development and mocks fundamental freedoms."

Imprisonment

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, at least 30 journalists and 75 netizens are currently detained. In recent months, when dissidents were released on completing a sentence, they were in fact covertly placed under house arrest, subjected to other forms of harassment or, even more disturbingly, were simply made to disappear.

This was the case with **Hu Jia** and his wife **Zeng Jinyan**, who were placed under house arrest when Hu completed a jail sentence on 26 June. Although prevented from talking to the media, these two human rights activist have managed to post information on Twitter about the close surveillance to which they are being subjected.

The dissident artist **Ai Weiwei** has also been denied the right to express himself since his release on 22 June, and has been banned from leaving Beijing. The government seems to have negotiated his release in return for his silence, in order to encourage other dissidents to censor themselves. Reporters Without Borders is worried about the fate of **Huang Qi**, who was freed on 10 June and was "escorted" to his home in the western province of Sichuan.

Censorship and repression in Inner Mongolia and Tibet

When a protesting a herdsman was knocked down by a truck and killed, triggering a wave of protests in May in Inner Mongolia, which usually has little unrest, the authorities responded by blocking many websites and blocking mobile phone access to the Internet in the region. In the city of Tongliao, bloggers and other Internet users were summoned to the Public Security Bureau. Police also harassed two Reuters journalists.

In Tibet, the authorities did not wait for new protests in order to reinforce censorship, especially Internet censorship. The closure of a number of Tibetan websites was ordered in March. One of them was *Tibetcul*, a Chinese-language site specializing in the economy that was closed on 16 March. Co-founder **Wangchuk Tseten** reported on his personal microblog that "higher authorities" ordered the server operators to close it for reasons that have not been disclosed.

MyBudala, a website affiliated to *Tibetcul*, and the *MyBudala* social network were also closed in the first 10 days of March. Two other Tibetan-language sites, *DobumNet* and *Sangdhor*, and possibly others, were also rendered inaccessible.

Harassment by the Chinese authorities of Tibetan monks in the Ngaba region in eastern Tibet resulted in the arrests of journalists and writers. **Sherab Gyatso**, a writer and monk, was reportedly arrested for the third time in early March in Chengdu. He was subsequently released but was prevented from leaving the city. Sherab Gyatso previously served jail sentences from 1998 to 2002 for protesting against Chinese reeducation programmes and from 2008 to 2009 for leading a protest by months in Lhasa.

Tashi Rabten, the editor of the banned literary magazine *Shar Dungri*, who uses the pen-name of **Theurang**, was sentenced to four years in prison on 2 June on a charge of "inciting activities aimed at dividing the nation." Originally from Ngaba and a student at the University of Lanzhou, he was previously jailed in April 2010 following the publication of "Written in Blood," a book about the brutal crackdown by Chinese police on peaceful Tibetan demonstrators in 2008. The book has been banned and copies that were already distributed have been confiscated.

"Jasmine revolution" and change

On 22 May, Reporters Without Borders interviewed **Wan Yanhai**, a defender of online freedom of information, a leading campaigner against discrimination against AIDS victims and founder of the Aizhixing (AIDS) Institute for Education and Health. His website was shut down after he posted a report about trafficking in blood in the Henan region, the cause of many HIV infections.

Wan spoke about the demands made by Chinese citizens during the "Jasmine Revolution" unrest, which the authority portrayed as an attempt to overthrow the party. He also spoke about Nobel peace laureate **Liu Xiaobo**. Here are some extracts from the interview, which was filmed and will be released soon.

On the "Jasmine" demonstrations:

"The authorities reacted in a very violent manner because they were afraid of being overthrown. But they overestimated the people's power.

"The slogan of those who initiated the 'Jasmine Revolution' is not the 'Communist Party's overthrow.' They want a society with more justice, in which all of its members have more opportunities, all children can go to school and all adults can work. These are fundamental demands for social justice.

"The authorities, who were under tension for a while, arrested people and took harsh measures. And then they released some detainees. But people are still in prison, including people who are very influential on the Internet, for example Ai Weiwei [since released] and **Ran Yunfei**.

"At the same time, arrests of this kind embarrass the government, because the arrests of leaders of popular movements generate the most virulent forms of opposition and the Communist Party derives no benefit. At the present time in China, when the authorities adopt extreme measures to oppress the people and social movements, nothing can be done about it.

"It is very hard to imagine real change being initiated by the [party's] leaders. There could of course be change, because there are divisions within the Communist Party, but you cannot pin all your hopes on that."

On Liu Xiaobo:

"He really is a good person. In 2008, in a social context in which violence and extreme views dominated, Charter 08 was a peaceful initiative with the aim of promoting democracy and protecting human rights. In my view, this charter is extremely important. Nowadays there is a lot of discussion about him and his works.

"I would like to ask all of Liu Xiaobo's defenders to get organized and to develop concrete actions to implement Charter 08 at the social level. They could transform it into an entity intended to serve the people and represent the interests of the population. If we want to

support Liu Xiaobo, we must perform concrete work on behalf of society, democracy, citizen rights and [improving] the life of the people.”
