

ETHNIC MINORITY RIGHTS

State Minority Policy

During the Commission's 2015 reporting year, central government officials in China emphasized the importance of "ethnic unity" and a shared national identity over ethnic identity and religious beliefs.¹ Reports from the past year noted the concern of scholars and others regarding the impact that official policies carried out in the name of "ethnic unity" may have on ethnic minority populations' cultural and religious identities.² A "mass line" program implemented in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region for a second consecutive year, for example, promotes "ethnic unity" and requires grassroots officials to monitor and control Muslim residents' religious practices.³ At a Central Ethnic Work Conference held in late September 2014, Chinese President and Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed the importance of "ethnic cohesion" in achieving common "prosperity and development" and emphasized ethnic minorities' identification with Chinese culture and the "great motherland."⁴

Central and regional officials developed counterterrorism measures that some international observers said increase the possibility of official abuses and human rights violations against ethnic minority groups.⁵ For instance, in January 2015, Human Rights Watch stated that the draft of the country's first counterterrorism legislation⁶—made public for consultation in November 2014⁷—would "establish a counterterrorism structure with enormous discretionary powers, [and] define terrorism and terrorist activities so broadly as to easily include peaceful dissent or criticism of the government or the Communist Party's ethnic and religious policies"⁸ In February 2015, officials in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) announced rewards of up to 300,000 yuan (US\$48,000) for information on "terrorist attacks," including information on "terrorist organizations" or individuals crossing international borders and the use of the Internet in carrying out "terrorist activities."⁹ The announcement followed a June 2014 statement by the Ministry of Public Security that officials would develop a nationwide system of rewards for reporting "terrorist activities."¹⁰ An American scholar wrote in February 2015 that the newly announced TAR rewards system policy was vaguely worded, and that Chinese officials could potentially use it as justification to crack down on legitimate dissent.¹¹

Grasslands Protests in Inner Mongolia

During the 2015 reporting year, Mongol herders and villagers in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR) protested against state and private exploitation of their traditional grazing lands and the resulting environmental degradation. Authorities reportedly restricted independent reporting on herders' protests and pollution-related grievances by harassing journalists and threatening herders.¹² IMAR officials continued to detain and beat Mongol herders who engaged in grasslands-related protests.¹³ At least two deaths reportedly were related to grasslands protests in the IMAR.¹⁴ An international advocacy group reported that in April 2015, 1 pro-

tester died, 100 people were injured, and 50 people were detained in a police crackdown on more than 1,000 residents protesting pollution from a chemical refinery in Naiman Banner, Tongliao municipality, IMAR.¹⁵ In January 2015, Tumur, a herder in Zargalant Sum (Ji'ergalangtusumu),¹⁶ Abag (Abaga) Banner, Xilinhot (Xilinhaote) municipality, IMAR, committed suicide in front of a local government building to protest state appropriation of his grazing land.¹⁷

Representative examples of protests by Mongol herders and villagers during the 2015 reporting year also include:

- On January 26, 2015, in Hohhot city, IMAR, around 300 Mongol herders from different locations demonstrated in front of the IMAR Department of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry to protest the loss of their grazing lands.¹⁸ Approximately 200 security officials who came to the scene detained more than 30 of the protesters and forced others to return home.¹⁹
- In January 2015, in Beijing municipality, dozens of Mongol herders from Durbed (Siziwang) Banner, Ulanqab (Wulanchabu) municipality, and Sunid (Sunite) Right Banner, Xilingol (Xilinguole) League, IMAR, demonstrated in front of central government buildings over their forced resettlement from traditional grazing lands due to the expansion of a military base and official policies regarding the use of grasslands.²⁰
- On January 31, 2015, security officials in Durbed Banner detained five herders who had protested the previous day.²¹ Also on January 31, security officials in Sunid Right Banner detained at least five herders and reportedly beat dozens of others.²² Approximately 200 herders in each location had protested for weeks over state appropriation of their grazing lands and forced resettlement.²³
- In May and June 2015, herders numbering in the hundreds staged numerous protests in several different locations in the IMAR over grievances related to their traditional grazing lands.²⁴ Authorities reportedly detained at least 17 herders and beat many protesters.²⁵

Release of Hada and Continued Restrictions

On December 9, 2014, authorities released Mongol rights advocate Hada from extralegal detention at Jinye Ecological Park in Hohhot municipality, IMAR.²⁶ Authorities had continued to detain Hada despite his completion of a 15-year prison sentence on December 10, 2010.²⁷ Following Hada's December 2014 release, authorities froze his bank account and restricted his movements and freedom of speech.²⁸ In April 2015, Hada reported that Hohhot officials had denied his application for a passport, which he had planned to use to travel overseas to seek medical treatment.²⁹ Hada said following his release that he suffered from more than 10 different health conditions that resulted from inhumane treatment during his detention.³⁰ On February 21, 2015, security personnel detained two French reporters who tried to visit Hada at his home and expelled them from Hohhot after holding them at a police station for several hours.³¹ On March 4, public security authorities in

Hohhot reportedly beat and detained Hada, and also detained his son Uiles, when Hada was on his way to meet with a Canadian reporter.³² On the evening of March 4, public security officers expelled the Canadian reporter and his Chinese interpreter from Hohhot.³³ Authorities imprisoned Hada in 1995 after he organized peaceful protests for Mongol rights and for his role in the banned organization he founded, the Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance (SMDA).³⁴

In January 2015, Mongol rights advocate and author Govruud Huuchinhuu, who was a member of the SMDA, called on Chinese authorities to cease her own home confinement and end restrictions on Hada.³⁵ Also in January 2015, Huuchinhuu reported that local authorities had frozen her bank account.³⁶ Hada's wife Xinna, moreover, said authorities seized money her son sent to Huuchinhuu because they suspected it was meant for Hada.³⁷ In November 2010, public security officers in Tongliao placed Huuchinhuu under home confinement in apparent connection to her plans to welcome Hada upon his anticipated release from prison.³⁸

Notes to Section II—Ethnic Minority Rights

¹James Leibold, “A Family Divided: The CCP’s Central Ethnic Work Conference,” China Brief, Vol. 14, No. 21, 7 November 14. See also “Unswervingly Take the Correct Path of Resolving Ethnic Problems With Chinese Characteristics” [Jianding buyi zou zhongguo tese jie jue minzu wenti de zhengque daolu], Seeking Truth, 16 October 14; “Ethnic Unity Is the Lifeline of People of All Ethnicities in Xinjiang” [Minzu tuan jie shi xinjiang ge zu ren min de sheng ming xian], Tianshan Net, 10 October 14; “China To Favor Minority Officials in Ethnically-Diverse Regions,” Xinhua, 22 December 14.

²See, e.g., Tom Phillips, “China Launches Massive Rural ‘Surveillance’ Project To Watch Over Uighurs,” Telegraph, 20 October 14; Julia Famularo, “Chinese Religious Regulations in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region: A Veiled Threat to Turkic Muslims?” Project 2049 Institute, 8 April 15, 1; Ben Blanchard, “China Says Bilingual Education a Key for Xinjiang’s Stability,” Reuters, reprinted in Yahoo! News, 10 December 14.

³Tom Phillips, “China Launches Massive Rural ‘Surveillance’ Project To Watch Over Uighurs,” Telegraph, 20 October 14; Reza Hasmath, “Ethnic Violence in Xinjiang: Causes, Responses, and Future Outlook,” China Policy Institute Policy Paper, No. 7, 2014, 3. These articles refer to the “mass line” program in the XUAR. For more information on this education and ideology campaign, see CECC, 2014 Annual Report, 9 October 14, 42, 100, 140, 168.

⁴“Unswervingly Take the Correct Path of Resolving Ethnic Problems With Chinese Characteristics” [Jianding buyi zou zhongguo tese jie jue minzu wenti de zhengque daolu], Seeking Truth, 16 October 14. See also “Ethnic Unity Is the Lifeline of People of All Ethnicities in Xinjiang” [Minzu tuan jie shi xinjiang ge zu ren min de sheng ming xian], Tianshan Net, 10 October 14.

⁵See, e.g., Human Rights Watch, “China: Draft Counterterrorism Law a Recipe for Abuses,” 20 January 15; Julia Famularo, “Do China’s New Terrorism Laws Go Too Far?” National Interest, 13 February 15; International Campaign for Tibet, “New Aggressive ‘Counter-Terrorism’ Campaign Expands From Xinjiang to Tibet With Increased Militarization of the Plateau,” 15 October 14.

⁶“China Focus: Lawmakers Weigh China’s Draft Anti-Terrorism Law,” Xinhua, 25 February 15.

⁷Michael Martina, “Draft Chinese Law Paves Way for Counter-Terror Operations Abroad,” Reuters, 27 February 15; National People’s Congress Standing Committee, PRC Counterterrorism Law (Draft) [Zhonghua ren min gong he guo fan kong bu zhuyi fa (cao’an)], issued 3 November 14. See also “Counter-Terrorism Law (Initial Draft),” translated in China Law Translate (blog), 8 November 14.

⁸Human Rights Watch, “China: Draft Counterterrorism Law a Recipe for Abuses,” 20 January 15.

⁹Zhang Lili, “Reporting Information on Terrorist and Violent Activities Can Be Rewarded With Up to 300,000 Yuan” [Jubao she kong she bao xiansuo zuigao ke huo 30 wan yuan jiangli], Tibet Daily, 30 January 15; Michael Martina and Norihiko Shirouzu, “China’s Tibet To Reward Tips on ‘Terror Attacks,’” Reuters, 31 January 15.

¹⁰“Interpreting ‘Ministry of Public Security’s Circular on the Public Security Organs’ Establishment and Improvement of Reward Mechanisms for Reporting Violent Terrorist Criminal Activities” [Jiedu “gong’an bu guanyu gong’an jiguan jianli wan shan baoli kong bu fan zui huodong jubao jiangli jizhi de tongzhi”], China Police Daily, reprinted in Ministry of Public Security, 27 June 14.

¹¹Julia Famularo, “Do China’s New Terrorism Laws Go Too Far?” National Interest, 13 February 15.

¹²Simon Denyer, “In China’s Inner Mongolia, Mining Spells Misery for Traditional Herders,” Washington Post, 7 April 15; “Detained Inner Mongolian Herder Monitored Following Release” [Neimenggu bei ju mum in huoshi hou zao jian kong], Radio Free Asia, 17 February 15; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Mongolian Herders Held Simultaneous Protests,” 21 January 15.

¹³Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Herder Hanged Himself at Government Building Gate, Over 30 Arrested in Protest in the Regional Capital,” 26 January 15; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Protests Escalate, 15 Arrested, 6 Detained,” 3 February 15; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “2,000 Police Mobilized, 100 People Injured, 50 Arrested, 1 Killed, Internet Cut Off, Highways Shutdown in Naiman Banner of Southern Mongolia,” 6 April 15. See also Ben Blanchard, “One Reported Dead After Pollution Protest in Northern China,” Reuters, 6 April 15. For a review of protests and authorities’ use of force against protesters in the 2014 reporting year, see CECC, 2014 Annual Report, 9 October 14, 100–01.

¹⁴Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “2,000 Police Mobilized, 100 People Injured, 50 Arrested, 1 Killed, Internet Cut Off, Highways Shutdown in Naiman Banner of Southern Mongolia,” 6 April 15; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Herder Hanged Himself at Government Building Gate, Over 30 Arrested in Protest in the Regional Capital,” 26 January 15.

¹⁵Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “2,000 Police Mobilized, 100 People Injured, 50 Arrested, 1 Killed, Internet Cut Off, Highways Shutdown in Naiman Banner of Southern Mongolia,” 6 April 15; Ben Blanchard, “One Reported Dead After Pollution Protest in Northern China,” Reuters, 6 April 15.

¹⁶A “sum” (“*sumu*”) is an administrative division equivalent to a township in the IMAR. See, e.g., Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region People’s Congress Standing Committee, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Sum, Township, Ethnic Township, Town People’s Congress Work Regulations [Neimenggu zizhi qu sumu, xiang, minzu xiang, zhen ren min daibiao dahui gongzuo tiaoli], issued and effective 2 June 95.

¹⁷Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Herder Hanged Himself at Government Building Gate, Over 30 Arrested in Protest in the Regional Capital,” 26 January 15;

Sui-Lee Wee, “Herder Kills Himself in Inner Mongolia Over Land Grab,” Reuters, 26 January 15.

¹⁸ Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Herder Hanged Himself at Government Building Gate, Over 30 Arrested in Protest in the Regional Capital,” 26 January 15. ¹⁹ Ibid. “Chinese Police Detain Protesters Outside Regional People’s Congresses,” Radio Free Asia, 27 January 15.

²⁰ Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Mongolian Herders Held Simultaneous Protests,” 21 January 15; “Mongolian Herders Travel to Beijing Amid Grassland Dispute With Army,” Radio Free Asia, 13 January 15.

²¹ Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Protests Escalate, 15 Arrested, 6 Detained,” 3 February 15; Su Rongfu, “Herders Continue To Fight Authorities’ Repression, At Least 13 People Detained and Summoned” [Mumin jixu kangzheng dangju kaishi zhenya, zhixiao 13 ren bei zhua chuanhuan], Mongolia News (blog), 31 January 15. For information on the cases of four of the five herders detained in Durbed Banner, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database records 2015-00286 on Odonhuaar, 2015-00287 on Davshilt, 2015-00288 on Naranhuaar, and 2015-00289 on Adiyaa.

²² Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Protests Escalate, 15 Arrested, 6 Detained,” 3 February 15.

²³ Ibid.; “Chinese Police Jail Four Herders Over Grasslands Protest,” Radio Free Asia, 3 February 15.

²⁴ Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Protests Spread in Southern Mongolia, Many Arrested,” 9 June 15; “Chinese Police Detain 17 Ethnic Mongolians as Grasslands Protests Spread,” Radio Free Asia, 10 June 15.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ “China Releases Veteran Mongolian Activist, Who Says He Was Tortured,” Radio Free Asia, 9 December 14; Ben Blanchard, “China Releases One of Its Longest-Serving Political Prisoners, Relative Says,” Reuters, 9 December 14.

²⁷ “Wife of Inner Mongolian Political Prisoner Writes to Chinese President,” Radio Free Asia, 19 March 14; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Hada: ‘Ready To Sue the Authorities,’ Xinna: ‘Ready To Go to Jail Again,’” 19 March 14; “Inner Mongolian Activist in Safe, Healthy State: Official,” Xinhua, 6 March 13; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Hada and Family Members Still Missing,” 24 February 13.

²⁸ “Mongolian Dissident Hada Denied ID Card, Bank Account After Interview,” Radio Free Asia, 23 January 15; “China Releases Veteran Mongolian Activist, Who Says He Was Tortured,” Radio Free Asia, 9 December 14; “Hada Is Issued Identity Card and Plans To Apply for Passport in Order To Go Abroad, Donations From Overseas Are Again Frozen by Authorities” [Hada huofa shenfenzheng jiang shenqing chuguo huzhao jingwai juankuan zai bei dangju dongjie], Radio Free Asia, 26 March 15.

²⁹ “China Denies Ethnic Mongolian Dissident a Passport To Seek Medical Help,” Radio Free Asia, 30 April 15.

³⁰ Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Hada, Discharged From ‘Black Jail,’ But Not Free,” 10 December 14; “China Releases Veteran Mongolian Activist, Who Says He Was Tortured,” Radio Free Asia, 9 December 14.

³¹ “Two French Reporters Attempting To Interview Hada Detained for Several Hours by Public Security and Then Expelled” [Liang ming faguo jizhe ni caifang hada bei gong’an kouliu shu xiaoshi hou quzhu], Radio Free Asia, 23 February 15.

³² “RFA Exclusive: Hada Kidnapped in the Street by Public Security Authorities When Going To Meet Foreign Journalist” [RFA dujia: hada jian waimei jizhe dangjie zao gong’an bangjia], Radio Free Asia, 5 March 15; “Hada and Son Kidnapped and Beaten in Broad Daylight, Canadian Reporter Expelled From Hohhot” [Guangtianhuari bangjia ouda hada fuzi jia’nada jizhe zao quli huhehaote], Radio Free Asia, 5 March 15.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ “Inner Mongolian Dissident’s Family Targeted,” Radio Free Asia, 5 December 10; Hada, Xinna, and Uiles, Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Open Letter From Hada and His Family Members,” 2 July 14; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “SMHRIC Statement to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association,” 19 February 14. For Commission analysis on Hada and Uiles, see “Authorities Heighten Persecution of Detained Mongol Rights Advocate’s Wife and Son,” CECC China Human Rights and Rule of Law Update, No. 1, 3 January 13, 2. For more information on these cases, see the following records in the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database: 2004-02045 on Hada and 2010-00705 on Uiles.

³⁵ Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Statements From Southern Mongolian Dissident Writer Huuchinhuu Govruud,” 6 January 15; “Mongolian Writer Hits Out at China Over Treatment of Dissident,” Radio Free Asia, 6 January 15.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Mongolian Writer Hits Out at China Over Treatment of Dissident,” Radio Free Asia, 6 January 15.

³⁸ Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Southern Mongolian Dissident Detained and Put Under House Arrest,” 16 November 10; “Author Under House Arrest,” Radio Free Asia, 18 November 10. For Commission analysis, see “Mongol Activist, Family Members Harassed and Detained as Release Date of Political Prisoner Hada Nears (Updated),” CECC China Human Rights and Rule of Law Update, No. 9, 8 December 10, 2. For more information on Govruud Huuchinhuu, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database record 2010-00597.