

ETHNIC MINORITY RIGHTS

Introduction

During the Commission's 2014 reporting year, Chinese authorities enforced harsh restrictions and crackdowns on ethnic minorities, particularly those living in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and other Tibetan autonomous areas, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR). Authorities tightened controls on ethnic minority advocates who sought to peacefully assert their distinct cultural, linguistic, or religious identity and who criticized state policies using methods conforming to both domestic and international law. [See Section IV—Xinjiang and Section V—Tibet for additional information on these areas.]

State Minority Policy

State measures to address ethnic minorities' grievances remained limited in the 2014 reporting year, while authorities emphasized the role of stability and ethnic unity in promoting development in areas with large ethnic minority populations. Communist Party authorities in the XUAR and TAR assigned cadres to rural grassroots positions as part of a "mass line" campaign aimed, in part, at enhancing stability and ethnic unity.¹ In February 2014, Zhu Weiqun, Director of the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, stated that instead of heeding Western criticism of perceived rights violations in Tibet and the XUAR, China "should be focused on its development and stability."² Official campaigns linking stability and ethnic unity with development have raised concerns over assimilative pressures and a failure to respect ethnic minority languages, religious beliefs, and traditions.³ In late October 2013, Yu Zhengsheng, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party and head of the Central Committee Coordinating Group for Tibet Affairs, urged officials to actively foster ethnic unity and promote the "three inseparables" and "four identifies."⁴ Under the "three inseparables" ideology, a concept official media reports prominently featured during the reporting year in relation to state ethnic policy,⁵ "the Han ethnicity is inseparable from ethnic minorities, ethnic minorities are inseparable from the Han ethnicity, and all ethnic minorities are mutually inseparable."⁶ The "four identifies" ideology refers to identification with "the great motherland," "the Chinese nationality," "the Chinese culture," and "the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics."⁷

Grasslands Policy and Protests in Inner Mongolia

IMAR officials continued to detain and beat Mongol herders and nomads who protested authorities' appropriation of their traditional grazing lands for development projects. National and regional regulations stipulate penalties for unauthorized use of grasslands, but lack protections for the rights of herders.⁸ In a number of instances during the 2014 reporting year, Mongol herders protested state and private appropriation of their traditional grazing lands, raising concerns such as inadequate compensation, loss of

livelihood due to environmental destruction, and involuntary resettlement. Representative examples include:

- On May 4, 2014, in Ezenee (Eji'na) Banner, Alshaa (Alashan) League, IMAR, security officials armed with automatic weapons prevented the advance of a demonstration by Mongol herders protesting the use of their grazing lands by Han Chinese migrants.⁹
- On April 12, 2014, security officials in Horqin (Keerqin) district, Tongliao city, IMAR, detained more than 40 Mongol herders, beating and threatening some, who had protested against a coal transportation company's use of their grazing lands.¹⁰
- In April 2014, authorities in Heshigten (Keshiketeng) Banner, Chifeng municipality, IMAR, detained between seven and eight Mongol herders who had protested a mining company's dumping of toxic waste on their grazing lands since January 2014, which the herders claimed had caused the death of their livestock.¹¹
- In late March 2014, during and following a visit to the IMAR by Premier Li Keqiang, authorities in Bayannuur (Bayannao'er) municipality and Hohhot city reportedly arrested, detained, and beat a number of Mongol herders protesting against mining companies' destruction of grasslands and lack of compensation for losses they incurred as a result of official grazing bans and resettlement initiatives.¹²

In January 2014, authorities in Ongniud (Wengniute) Banner, Chifeng municipality, sentenced six Mongol herders to one- to two-year prison terms for causing damage to the property of a forestry company.¹³ Local authorities detained the six herders in late May 2013 and formally arrested them on June 24, 2013, following an April 2013 incident in which they clashed with Han Chinese workers from a state-run forestry company they said had "occupied" their traditional grazing lands for decades.¹⁴ Twelve herders were reportedly beaten and hospitalized in the April 2013 clash.¹⁵ According to the official indictment from the Ongniud Banner People's Procuratorate, the six men caused damage to the forestry company's property during the clash totaling nearly 87,000 yuan (US\$14,000).¹⁶ However, the herders asserted they only caused minimal damage to the company's property, with an agency hired by the herders reportedly assessing the damage at 2,400 yuan (US\$392).¹⁷

Forced Return of Mongol Chinese Citizens

On May 13, 2014, Mongolian authorities reportedly forcibly returned Mongol rights advocates Dalaibaatar Dovchin and Tulguur Norovrinchen to China, a move an overseas rights advocate suggested may have been carried out under pressure from the Chinese government.¹⁸ Mongolian authorities had last forcibly returned a Mongol rights advocate to China in October 2009, when they deported former medical school principal Batzangaa and members of his family.¹⁹ Friends of the two rights advocates said Mongolian police detained them while they prepared to attend a press conference regarding another Mongol rights advocate, Alhaa Norovtseren, whom Mongolian authorities had reportedly threat-

ened with deportation.²⁰ At the time of their deportation, Dovchin reportedly had a valid student visa and Norovrinchen reportedly had a valid Asylum Seeker Certificate issued by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.²¹

Political Prisoners

Authorities continued to extralegally detain Mongol rights advocate Hada, despite his completion of a 15-year prison sentence on December 10, 2010.²² According to Hada's wife Xinna, during the 2014 reporting year, authorities threatened her with detention after she spoke publicly about her husband's continued extralegal detention,²³ and maintained restrictions on the freedom of movement and telephone and Internet access of her and the couple's son, Uiles.²⁴ Xinna also stated in March 2014 that authorities had not recently allowed her to visit Hada.²⁵ As of July 9, 2014, Hada remained in poor health in extralegal detention in Jinye Ecological Park in Hohhot municipality, IMAR.²⁶ 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.²⁷

In late 2013, Bayanhuaar, the wife of rights advocate Batzangaa, reported that he was in poor health, and authorities had denied her request for his release on medical parole. Batzangaa is now serving a three-year prison sentence for economic crimes that authorities originally imposed as a suspended sentence in 2011 after he and his family sought asylum in Mongolia.²⁸ Bayanhuaar stated that the couple's daughter was suffering from severe depression as a result of her father's imprisonment.²⁹

In January 2014, herders' rights advocate Yunshaabiin Seevendoo reportedly stated that due to poor conditions and inadequate medical treatment during his detention, doctors had diagnosed him with kidney failure.³⁰ Authorities in Uzumchin Right (Xiwuzhumuqin) Banner, Xilingol (Xilinguole) League, IMAR, arrested Seevendoo in July 2013 and released him in December 2013 after sentencing him to three years' imprisonment suspended for five years.³¹ [For information on Uyghur and Tibetan political prisoner cases, see Section IV—Xinjiang and Section V—Tibet.]

Notes to Section II—Ethnic Minority Rights

¹ "Unified Legal Standards Can Help Battle Terror," *Global Times*, 11 March 14; "Xinjiang Officials Flock to Villages for Mass Line Campaign," *Global Times*, 20 April 14; Li Yuan and Wen Tao, "Tibet Sends More Than 60,000 Cadres to the Grassroots Over Two Years, the Most Extensive in 60 Years" [Xizang liang nian xuanpai yu 6 wan ganbu xia jiceng wei 60 nian lai zui da guimo], *Xinhua*, 10 September 13. According to *Xinhua*, "[m]ass line" refers to a guideline under which CPC officials and members are required to prioritize the interests of the people and persist in representing them and working on their behalf." "Officials Urged To Promote 'Mass Line' Campaign," *Xinhua*, 16 July 13. For information on the "mass line" and how it applies to religion, see Wang Zuo'an, "Religious Work Is by Nature Mass Work" [Zongjiao gongzuo benzhi shang shi qunzhong gongzuo], *People's Daily*, 26 November 13.

² Zhu Weiqun, "Why Has the West Been So Hard on China on 'Tibet and Xinjiang Issues,'" *China Tibet Online*, 18 February 14; Zhu Weiqun, "Why Does the West Interfere in Tibet and Xinjiang Issues and Make Things Difficult for China?" [Xifang weihe zai she zang she jiang wenti shang yu zhongguo guobuqu], *China Tibet Online*, 19 February 14.

³ James Leibold, Jamestown Foundation, "Xinjiang Work Forum Marks New Policy of 'Ethnic Mingling,'" *China Brief*, Vol. 14, No. 12, 19 June 14; Edward Wong, "China Moves To Calm Restive Xinjiang Region," *New York Times*, 30 May 14. For Commission analysis, see "New Science and Technology Plan for Ethnic Minorities Raises Questions About Ethnic Minority Rights," CECC China Human Rights and Rule of Law Update, December 2008, 3; "Central Leaders Hold Forum on Xinjiang, Stress Development and Stability as Dual Goals," CECC China Human Rights and Rule of Law Update, No. 6, 12 July 10, 3.

⁴“Yu Zhengsheng Visits Guangxi: Continue To Consolidate the Excellent Situation of Ethnic Unity and Harmony” [Yu zhengsheng zai guangxi kaocha: buduan gonggu minzu tuanjie hexie de dahao jumian], People’s Daily, reprinted in State Ethnic Affairs Commission, 31 October 13.

⁵Zhou Yifan, “Yu Zhengsheng Investigates Xinjiang, Stresses Need To Ensure Xinjiang’s Social Stability and Long-Term Peace” [Yu zhengsheng zai xinjiang diaoyan qiangdiao quebao xinjiang shehui wending he changzhi jiu’an], Tianshan Net, 31 March 14; Nicholas Dynon, Jamestown Foundation, “The Language of Terrorism in China: Balancing Foreign and Domestic Policy Imperatives,” China Brief, Vol. 14, No. 1, 9 January 14; Nur Bekri, “Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Government Work Report” [Xinjiang weiwuer zizhiqu zhengfu gongzuo baogao], Tianshan Net, 22 January 14.

⁶“How To Understand ‘the Han Ethnicity Is Inseparable From Ethnic Minorities, Ethnic Minorities Are Inseparable from the Han Ethnicity, and All Ethnic Minorities Are Mutually Inseparable’” [Ruhe lijie “hanzu libukai shaoshu minzu, shaoshu minzu libukai hanzu, ge shaoshu minzu zhijian ye xianghu libukai”], People’s Daily, reprinted in China Ethnicity and Religion Net, 18 March 13; Nicholas Dynon, Jamestown Foundation, “The Language of Terrorism in China: Balancing Foreign and Domestic Policy Imperatives,” China Brief, Vol. 14, No. 1, 9 January 14.

⁷Liu Lei, “Come Together To Achieve the ‘Three Guarantees’ and Do a Solid Job of Ethnic Unity Work” [Juli shixian “san ge quebao,” zhashi zuohao minzu tuanjie gongzuo], Seeking Truth, 1 January 14; Nicholas Dynon, Jamestown Foundation, “The Language of Terrorism in China: Balancing Foreign and Domestic Policy Imperatives,” China Brief, Vol. 14, No. 1, 9 January 14.

⁸State Council, Several Opinions on Promoting and Speeding Up Sound Development in Grazing Areas [Guowuyuan guanyu cujin muqu you hao you kuai fazhan de ruogan yijian], PRC Central People’s Government, 9 August 11; UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Mission to the People’s Republic of China from 15 to 23 December 2010, Preliminary Observations and Conclusions, 23 December 10; China’s Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law: Does It Protect Minority Rights? Staff Roundtable of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 11 April 05, Written Statement Submitted by Christopher P. Atwood, Associate Professor, Department of Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University. For Commission analysis, see “State Council Opinion Bolsters Grazing Ban, Herder Resettlement,” Congressional-Executive Commission on China, 18 October 11.

⁹Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Protesting Herders Stopped by Machine Guns,” 4 May 14; “Nearly a Hundred Herders Protest, Soldiers Face Public With Guns” [Jin bai mumin shiwei junbing yi qiangkou dui minzhong], Radio Free Asia, 5 May 14.

¹⁰Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Resisting Land Grab, at Least 48 Mongolian Herders Arrested,” 17 April 14.

¹¹“Seven Herders Held After Inner Mongolia Clashes,” Radio Free Asia, 17 April 14; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Resisting Land Grab, at Least 48 Mongolian Herders Arrested,” 17 April 14.

¹²Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Fresh Wave of Herders’ Protests Erupts Following Chinese Premier’s Visit to Southern Mongolia,” 3 April 14.

¹³Sui-Lee Wee, “China Sentences Six Mongol Herders in Land-Grab Case,” Reuters, reprinted in Yahoo! News, 6 January 14; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Herders Defending Their Grazing Lands Face Long Jail Sentences,” 4 October 13. According to the herders’ lawyer, authorities had charged them with “sabotaging production management.”

¹⁴Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Herders Defending Their Grazing Lands Face Long Jail Sentences,” 4 October 13; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “100 Days and Counting, Six Mongolian Herders in Detention for Defending Their Grazing Land,” 16 September 13.

¹⁵Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “100 Days and Counting, Six Mongolian Herders in Detention for Defending Their Grazing Land,” 16 September 13.

¹⁶Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Herders Defending Their Grazing Lands Face Long Jail Sentences,” 4 October 13.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Two Southern Mongolian Exiles Deported From Mongolia to China,” 16 May 14.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Southern Mongolian Exile Chooses Self-Immolation Over Deportation,” 12 May 14; David Chace, Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “‘Where Is My Homeland?’: Alhaa Norovtseren Fears the Power of China in Mongolia,” 2 July 14.

²¹Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Two Southern Mongolian Exiles Deported From Mongolia to China,” 16 May 14.

²²“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.

²³“Hada’s Appeal to Beijing and UN Blocked, Inner Mongolian Politics and Law Officials Threaten Retaliation Against Xinna” [Hada xiang beijing ji lianheguo ti shensu bei zu neimeng zhengfa guanyuan deng men konghe baofu xinna], Radio Free Asia, 24 March 14; “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; “Why Are Authorities Still Obstructing Me?” Radio Free Asia, 2 May 14.

²⁴Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, “Hada: ‘Ready To Sue the Authorities,’ Xinna: ‘Ready To Go to Jail Again,’” 19 March 14.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ "Tibetan, Mongolian Dissidents Silenced During Kerry Visit," Radio Free Asia, 9 July 14.

²⁷ "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, Xinna, 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; 2010-00704 on Xinna; and 2010-00705 on Uiles.

²⁸ "China Denies Medical Parole for Inner Mongolian Dissident," Radio Free Asia, 10 December 13; "Inner Mongolian Dissident Ill in Prison" [Neimeng yijian renshi yu zhong huanbing], Radio Free Asia, 7 October 13.

²⁹ "China Denies Medical Parole for Inner Mongolian Dissident," Radio Free Asia, 10 December 13.

³⁰ Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, "Two Other Herders Sentenced to 3 Years in Jail, One Suffers From Kidney Failure," 19 January 14; Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, "Mongolian Herder's Rights Defender in Poor Health at Chinese Detention Center," 2 September 13.

³¹ Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, "Two Other Herders Sentenced to Three Years in Jail, One Suffers From Kidney Failure," 19 January 14.