

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Findings

- Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), all persons are entitled to equal treatment in the course of seeking enforceable legal remedies within the legal system for violations of their rights. During the 2019 reporting year, the Commission observed examples in which Chinese authorities violated the right to equal treatment by influencing the judiciary, controlling the legal profession, and persecuting human rights lawyers, all of which are inconsistent with the relevant ICCPR provisions.
- The Chinese Communist Party issued regulations to formalize its control over the judiciary through political-legal work committees, which are Party entities. In January 2019, the Central Political-Legal Committee led an investigation into a case involving allegations that Supreme People’s Court President Zhou Qiang interfered with the adjudication of a case. The investigation’s conclusion was based on a possibly coerced confession and did not address Zhou’s involvement.
- The Party’s absolute leadership over the judiciary, as promoted by official media, had a negative impact on the overall judicial process. The Supreme People’s Court planned to amend past judicial interpretations to conform to approved political ideology and announced that it would not issue any new judicial interpretations unless the topic was specified by the Party. With respect to the legal profession, the Minister of Justice urged lawyers to “unify their thoughts” and to accept the Party’s complete leadership over their work.
- Authorities continued to criminally prosecute human rights lawyers on charges such as “subversion of state power,” viewing legal representation provided by them as a threat to the Party’s political security. Authorities also restricted the speech and movement of human rights lawyers, and in some cases stripped them of their law licenses.
- Citizens continued to use the petitioning system as a channel to express their grievances, but the system’s opacity made the effectiveness of their efforts difficult to determine. Some local governments answered calls from central authorities to improve data-sharing capability with anticorruption agencies to better monitor conduct of local officials, suggesting a new focus for the petitioning system.
- The Ministry of Justice announced changes to the legal aid system to standardize services, including the prompt assignment of and compensation for legal aid workers. Acting jointly with the Supreme People’s Court, the Ministry of Justice also expanded a legal aid service pilot program for criminal cases to cover more locations. These new developments do not appear to expand the space for civil society groups to provide public interest legal aid services, and authorities banned a group formed to provide legal aid and consultation.

Access to Justice

Recommendations

Members of the U.S. Congress and Administration officials are encouraged to:

- Highlight and discuss with Chinese officials the report in which the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found human rights lawyers **Wang Quanzhang, Jiang Tianyong, Li Yuhao,** and **Yu Wensheng** to have been arbitrarily detained. Urge the Chinese government to unconditionally exonerate the above-named lawyers and other similarly situated lawyers.
- Highlight and discuss with Chinese officials cases of human rights lawyers such as **Sui Muqing, Tan Yongpei, Liu Zhengqing, Xie Yanyi,** and **Chen Keyun,** whose law licenses were revoked or whose ability to practice law was otherwise restricted because of their legal representation and advocacy in cases that Chinese authorities deem politically sensitive.
- Urge the Chinese government to protect the fundamental civil and professional rights of China's lawyers, to investigate all allegations of abuse against them, and to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice. Urge the Chinese government to end all forms of harassment or persecution against the family members of human rights lawyers and advocates, including surveillance and restrictions on their freedom of movement.
- Urge the Chinese government to stop all forms of persecution or prosecution of petitioners who use the petitioning system to peacefully seek redress for their grievances.
- Urge leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and government to grant the judiciary true independence and warn them of the negative impact on the rule of law when the judiciary is involved in political campaigns.
- Increase support for programs that promote dialogue between U.S. and Chinese legal experts to determine how China can structure and implement legal reforms. Concomitantly increase support for collaboration between U.S. and Chinese academic and non-governmental entities to help develop programs that enhance the capacity of the Chinese legal system to protect citizens' rights.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which China signed and expressed its intention to ratify,¹ provides that all persons are equal before the courts; it also obligates a State Party to ensure that people have enforceable legal remedies for any violation of the rights and freedoms recognized in the convention, even if the violation has been committed by an official.²

Although Supreme People’s Court President Zhou Qiang reported improvements in different aspects of the judicial system,³ the examples of political interference with the judiciary, control over the legal profession, and persecution of human rights lawyers that the Commission observed during the 2019 reporting year are inconsistent with the relevant ICCPR provisions.

Communist Party’s Control Over the Judicial Process

COMMUNIST PARTY EXERTS CONTROL THROUGH POLITICAL-LEGAL COMMITTEES

The Chinese Communist Party Central Committee issued Regulations on the Chinese Communist Party’s Political-Legal Work, effective in January 2019, to formalize its control over a range of state functions, including the judiciary.⁴ Under the regulations, Party-run political-legal committees at the central and provincial levels are tasked with promoting judicial transparency, as well as reporting instances of judicial interference by cadres in leadership positions.⁵ According to an official interpretation of the new regulations, political-legal committees are responsible for setting general directions and policies but are not authorized to manage substantive work in individual cases.⁶ In practice, however, political-legal committees have a record of influencing individual cases.⁷

In March 2018, Central Party authorities expanded the scope of the Central Political-Legal Committee’s⁸ jurisdiction to domestic public security concerns,⁹ including integrated “social order management,” “social stability maintenance,” and prevention and handling of “cult” issues,¹⁰ which have been the bases for prosecuting citizens in connection to their legitimate and peaceful exercise of internationally recognized human rights.¹¹ [For more information on Chinese authorities’ use of criminal provisions to suppress religion and human rights activities, see Section II—Criminal Justice and Freedom of Religion.]

Judicial Interference and Party-Led Investigation

In January 2019, the Central Political-Legal Committee led an investigation into a case involving allegations of judicial interference, including those involving the Supreme People’s Court (SPC) President Zhou Qiang. According to Radio Free Asia, some lawyers pointed out that the Central Political-Legal Committee lacks constitutional authority to investigate the Supreme People’s Court since such authority lies with the National People’s Congress.¹²

Access to Justice

Judicial Interference and Party-Led Investigation—Continued

The subject of the investigation was a case that commenced in 2006, when entrepreneur Zhao Faqi's company sued a state-owned enterprise over a contract dispute concerning mining rights in Shaanxi province.¹³ Despite initial success, Zhao's company lost on appeal, and the case twice came before the SPC.¹⁴ In November 2016, Zhao Faqi published an open letter in which he alleged that several high-ranking officials in Shaanxi had intervened in the judicial process and thereby affected the disposition of the case.¹⁵

Beginning in December 2018, Wang Linqing, a former SPC judge who handled the case, released several pre-recorded video clips and confirmed unofficial information¹⁶ that the case file had gone missing since 2016.¹⁷ Wang further recounted that an SPC leader—whom another source identified as SPC President Zhou Qiang—gave him two sets of instructions through another court official, initially to remand the case, and later to dismiss the appeal, which would have had the effect of reversing the collegial panel's decision¹⁸ to rule in favor of Zhao's company.¹⁹ In February 2019, official media outlet China Central Television broadcasted a recording showing Wang admitting to stealing the file himself ostensibly in order to prevent the case from being transferred away, given the amount of time he had spent working on it.²⁰

The Party-led investigation team found that the SPC's case file security measures were defective and that the adjudication process was delayed beyond the statutory timeframe.²¹ The team, however, did not make a finding specific to the alleged involvement of Zhou Qiang.²² Zhou promptly expressed support for the investigation results, as reported in an editorial in the People's Court Daily entitled "Upholding the Party's Absolute Leadership over the Work of People's Courts."²³ Observers questioned the voluntariness of Wang Linqing's recorded confession and the credibility of the investigation.²⁴

FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO CONFORM JUDICIAL INTERPRETATIONS TO PARTY VALUES

Following a Chinese Communist Party directive,²⁵ the Supreme People's Court (SPC) in September 2018 issued a five-year plan requiring that the selection, drafting, and amendment of judicial interpretations must conform to "socialist core values"²⁶ as guided by the political ideology of Party General Secretary and President Xi Jinping.²⁷ While the full text of the plan was not publicly available,²⁸ the head of the SPC Research Office explained that the SPC planned to revisit existing judicial interpretations and amend portions that were in conflict with socialist core values, with an intention to incorporate the ideological aims of socialist core values into judicial adjudication standards.²⁹ He also said that the SPC in principle would not issue new judicial interpretations in the next five years unless the topic was specifically listed in the five-year plan.³⁰

CONTROL OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

In September 2018, the Ministry of Justice convened a meeting about Party-building in the legal profession nationwide,³¹ echoing a provision in the Measures on Managing Law Firms that requires

law firms to engage in Party-building.³² “Party-building” encompasses a range of activities such as improving the Party’s organizational structure, as well as Party members’ discipline and their ideological commitment.³³ At the meeting, Minister of Justice Fu Zhenghua urged attendees to further “unify [their] thoughts” and to “unabashedly support the Party’s complete leadership over lawyers’ work.”³⁴ The meeting specified that Party-building work must be a priority within the entire legal profession by 2020.³⁵ In May 2019, three non-governmental organizations submitted a joint analysis to the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, in which they observed that recent administrative measures imposed on lawyers and law firms facilitated political interference by granting authorities “the power to deny, temporarily or indefinitely, the right to practice to lawyers without reasonable and effective avenues for appeal.”³⁶

Persecution of Human Rights Lawyers

Chinese authorities continued to persecute human rights lawyers, including Wang Quanzhang, Jiang Tianyong, Li Yuhan, and Yu Wensheng, whom the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (Working Group) found to have been detained for their rights defense work, in contravention of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.³⁷ The Working Group requested that the Chinese government immediately release the lawyers.³⁸ Chinese authorities, however, continued to subject them to criminal prosecution and penalty.

In January 2019, the Tianjin No. 2 Intermediate People’s Court sentenced **Wang Quanzhang** to four years and six months in prison for “subversion of state power.”³⁹ In June 2019, authorities permitted Wang’s wife Li Wenzu to visit him for the first time in nearly four years.⁴⁰ Li reported that Wang had lost a significant amount of weight, exhibited robotic reactions and hazy memory, and was reading from a piece of paper when he asked her not to visit him anymore.⁴¹ In February 2019, authorities extralegally detained **Jiang Tianyong** upon completion of his two-year prison term for “inciting subversion of state power.”⁴² Authorities eventually permitted Jiang to return home but continued to subject him to strict surveillance,⁴³ a measure not provided for in the PRC Criminal Procedure Law.⁴⁴ Jiang’s wife reported that authorities tortured Jiang and that he suffered from depression and significant memory loss.⁴⁵ In April 2019, **Li Yuhan**’s lawyers reported that Li’s health had deteriorated further at a detention center in Shenyang municipality, Liaoning province, and that the court had postponed a scheduled trial without giving them notice.⁴⁶

As of March 2019, authorities continued to hold **Yu Wensheng** in pretrial detention for over a year and deny him legal representation by lawyers hired by his family.⁴⁷ Yu’s wife Xu Yan reported that in March over 10 public security officials and residential committee personnel were stationed outside her residence and prevented her from leaving.⁴⁸ Xu previously filed an administrative review and an administrative appeal over the public security bureau’s rejection of clothing that she had sent to her husband in detention.⁴⁹

Access to Justice

Besides criminal prosecution, Chinese authorities used other methods to persecute human rights lawyers, including revoking their law licenses,⁵⁰ placing obstacles in the license renewal process,⁵¹ and restricting their freedom of speech⁵² and movement.⁵³ In one example, police physically assaulted a lawyer when she was performing her duties as a criminal defense lawyer:⁵⁴

- **Sun Shihua.** In September 2018, lawyer Sun, the wife of human rights lawyer Sui Muqing,⁵⁵ went to a police station in Guangzhou municipality, Guangdong province, in connection with her client's criminal case.⁵⁶ An officer surnamed Chen reportedly declined to discuss Sun's client's case with her and accused Sun of attacking him.⁵⁷ A group of officers then gathered and beat Sun, during which time Officer Chen choked her and rendered her unconscious.⁵⁸ Officers then ordered Sun to take off her clothes and provide a urine sample.⁵⁹ During Sun's six-hour long detention, officers also reportedly ordered her client to strip naked.⁶⁰ The Guangzhou Public Security Bureau said it investigated the incident and concluded that the officers "had a rigid attitude and acted uncivilly," but it denied physical assault or insult having taken place.⁶¹ While at the police station, Sun overheard two officers saying to each other that someone had asked the police station to "handle her case."⁶²

Citizen Petitioning

The petitioning system (*xinfang*), also known as the "letters and visits system," has been a popular mechanism outside of the formal legal system for citizens to present their grievances to authorities, either in writing or in person.⁶³ The petitioning system reportedly has been ineffective in addressing citizens' grievances due to factors such as the large number of petitions,⁶⁴ staff shortages,⁶⁵ officials' fraudulent use of data,⁶⁶ and corruption.⁶⁷

Although the director of the National Public Complaints and Proposals Administration said that the petitioning system was highly efficient and had a public satisfaction rate of over 95 percent,⁶⁸ such claims remained unverifiable due to a lack of transparency. A group of 57 petitioners from Shanghai municipality previously asked the government to release information to verify a similar claim made in 2016.⁶⁹ The Shanghai government called the information "state secrets" and refused to disclose it.⁷⁰ The petitioners then sought administrative review with the State Council, which had not provided them with a response as of October 2018,⁷¹ far exceeding the statutory 90-day case processing time limit.⁷²

This past year, some local governments focused their efforts on enhancing the petitioning system's capability to collect data for anticorruption agencies.⁷³ For example, an official news outlet reported that officials in Beijing municipality created a system by which they would make appointments with petitioners to individually hear complaints concerning significant misconduct.⁷⁴ In Guizhou province, officials developed a system to sort through this type of complaint and set case completion time limits.⁷⁵

During this reporting year, petitioners continued to face official repression. Authorities detained petitioners, alleging criminal or administrative offenses including "disrupting order in a public

place,”⁷⁶ “picking quarrels and provoking trouble,”⁷⁷ and “obstructing official business.”⁷⁸ In addition, authorities reportedly detained petitioners in the period leading up to and during the annual meetings of the National People’s Congress and Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in March 2019.⁷⁹

Legal Aid

The legal aid system remained a state-controlled institution. State Council regulations require that justice bureaus of local governments appoint legal aid organizations and administer legal aid programs through them.⁸⁰ Legal aid organizations may assign eligible applicants to in-house lawyers or make referrals to law firms, grassroots legal services, or other social organizations.⁸¹ Lawyers are legally obligated to provide legal aid services and may be disciplined or fined for refusing to do so.⁸²

This past year, authorities expanded and standardized legal aid services across China. In January 2019, the Supreme People’s Court and the Ministry of Justice expanded a legal aid pilot program from 8 locations to 31.⁸³ The pilot program required authorities to advise unrepresented criminal defendants of their right to legal counsel; it also required better coordination between courts, procuratorates, public security bureaus, justice bureaus, and legal aid offices to improve allocation of legal aid resources.⁸⁴

Following this, the Ministry of Justice in February 2019 issued a document to standardize legal aid services in criminal cases, covering different stages of a criminal case, from pretrial investigation to appellate work.⁸⁵ Around the same time, the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Finance issued a guiding opinion delineating specific standards for setting the amount of compensation for legal aid workers and lawyers in administrative, civil, and criminal cases.⁸⁶

These documents, however, do not contain provisions for legal aid services provided by civil society groups operating outside the officially sanctioned framework. In at least one instance, authorities banned one such group and effectively shut down its operations.⁸⁷ In September 2018, several rights lawyers who lost their law licenses after a crackdown in 2015 formed a public interest group based in Nanning municipality, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, to provide legal aid and consultation services.⁸⁸ In January 2019, authorities in Nanning banned the group, alleging that it operated in violation of the Regulations on the Registration and Management of Social Organizations.⁸⁹

Other Developments in the Judicial System

Parallel to the repressive campaign against rights lawyers and advocates, Chinese authorities continued to carry out “the most systematic and structural legal reform, unprecedented since Chinese reform started 40 years ago,” as observed by a Hong Kong-based scholar.⁹⁰

- Supreme People’s Court President Zhou Qiang reported an increase in the number of successfully resolved enforcement cases in the past three years,⁹¹ thereby accomplishing a goal set at the Fourth Plenum of the 18th Chinese Communist Party Central Committee held in November 2014.⁹² In January

Access to Justice

2019, however, the U.S. Department of State cautioned that Chinese authorities could prohibit U.S. citizens from leaving China in order to compel them to resolve civil disputes in favor of Chinese parties.⁹³

- Court officials used technology to make it more convenient for citizens to access the court system, such as developing on-line case opening systems and promoting mobile courts housed in vehicles.⁹⁴

- In October 2018, the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC) revised the PRC Organic Law of People's Courts, which codified certain judicial reforms in the past 40 years, including the establishment of specialized courts, a judicial responsibility system, and a judge quota system.⁹⁵

- In April 2019, the NPCSC revised the PRC Judges Law to codify the selection and review process for judges.⁹⁶ The revised law also added the requirement to support the Party's leadership and the socialist system.⁹⁷

Notes to Section III—Access to Justice

¹United Nations Treaty Collection, Chapter IV, Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, accessed July 8, 2019; State Council Information Office, “Guojia renquan xingdong jihua (2016–2020 nian)” [National human rights action plan of China (2016–2020)], September 29, 2016, sec. 5.

²International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of December 16, 1966, entry into force March 23, 1976, arts. 2(3), 14.

³“Zuigao Renmin Fayuan gongzuo baogao” [Supreme People’s Court work report], March 12, 2019. For examples of the judicial improvements presented in the SPC Work Report, see “Other Developments in the Judicial System” in this section.

⁴Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, *Zhonggong Gongchandang Zhengfa Gongzuo Tiaoli* [Regulations on Chinese Communist Party Political-Legal Work], effective January 13, 2019, art. 3.

⁵*Ibid.*, arts. 21(8), 31.

⁶Liu Ziyang, “Wanshan jiandu zhiyue tixi tisheng zhifa sifa gongxinli ‘Zhonggong Gongchandang Zhengfa Gongzuo Tiaoli’ jiedu zhi san” [Improve a system of supervision and constraints to augment the judiciary’s public trust, an explanation of “Regulations on the Chinese Communist Party’s Political-Legal Work” (iii)], *Legal Daily*, January 31, 2019.

⁷See, e.g., “Zhengfawei lingdao diaocha Zuigaofa shi juanzong falu jie zhi weixian” [Political-Legal Committee leads investigation in SPC’s loss of case file, legal community calls it unconstitutional], *Radio Free Asia*, January 9, 2019; Yuan Feng and Qing Ping, “Zhonggong sifa gaige xin dongzuo xuezhe jiedu ‘Zhengfa Gongzuo Tiaoli’ (shang)” [New movement in CCP judicial reform, scholar explains “Regulations on the Chinese Communist Party’s Political-Legal Work” (1)], *Duowei*, February 16, 2019; Wu Laosi (@wulaws), “Weishenme shuo fayuan fujian shi Zhongguo sifa de hei xiazi” [Why are court copies of case files considered to be the judicial black box], July 13, 2015, reprinted in WeChat post, 2019; Chen Guangcheng, “How China Flouts Its Laws,” *New York Times*, May 29, 2012.

⁸The Central Political-Legal Committee is also known as “Central Committee of Political Science and Law” and as the “Central Commission for Political and Legal Affairs.” Susan V. Lawrence, “China’s Political Institutions and Leaders in Charts,” Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, November 12, 2013, 8 n.8.

⁹Yuhua Wang and Carl Minzner, “The Rise of the Chinese Security State,” *China Quarterly*, no. 222 (June 2015): 339–59.

¹⁰“Zhonggong zhongyang yinfa ‘Shenhua Dang he Guojia Jigou Gaige Fang’an’” [Chinese Communist Party Central Committee issues “Plan for Deepening Reform of Party and Government Agencies”], *Xinhua*, March 21, 2018, sec. 1(18), (19), (20).

¹¹“Zhongguo dangju qiangli weiwen zhongpan canyu tuiwu junren weiwan shijian laobing” [Chinese authorities forcefully maintain stability, heavily sentence old soldiers who joined veterans’ rights defense incident], *Voice of America*, April 19, 2019; Jiang Tao, “Quannengshen Jiaohui shangceng dailing zao zhongpan 13 nian” [Almighty God Church leader given heavy sentence of 13 years], *Bitter Wind*, November 21, 2018. For more information on the associated Almighty God Church member detentions, see the Commission’s Political Prisoner Database records 2013-00025 on Chen Hong, 2019-00107 on Bao Shuguang, 2019-00108 on Jiang Xingmei, 2019-00109 on Bai Lanxiang, and 2019-00110 on Gu Liya.

¹²“Zhengfawei lingdao diaocha Zuigaofa shi juanzong falu jie zhi weixian” [Political-Legal Committee leads investigation in SPC’s loss of case file, legal community calls it unconstitutional], *Radio Free Asia*, January 9, 2019.

¹³“Wang Linqing qianyi kuangquan an juanzong diushi shijian yu diaocha jieguo” [Investigation result in loss of case file incident in 100 billion mining rights case involving Wang Linqing], *BBC*, February 23, 2019.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Zhao Faqi, “Zhao Faqi shiming jubao quanwen: Shanxi yuan Shengzhang Yuan Chunqing, Shengwei Shuji Zhao Zhengyong huotong Shaanxi Sheng Zhengxie Changwei Liu Juan daoguoyou zichan” [Full text of Zhao Faqi’s complaint under his real name: former Shaanxi Governor Yuan Chunqing, provincial Party Secretary Zhao Zhengyong stole state assets with the aid of Shaanxi CPPCC Standing Committee member Liu Juan], WeChat post, November 3, 2016, reprinted in *China Digital Times*, January 18, 2019.

¹⁶“Wang Linqing qianyi kuangquan an juanzong diushi shijian yu diaocha jieguo” [Investigation result in loss of case file incident in the 100 billion mining rights case involving Wang Linqing], *BBC*, February 23, 2019; Chris Buckley, “Chinese Entrepreneur Takes On the System, and Drops Out of Sight,” *New York Times*, March 9, 2019; “Chinese Supreme Court Judge under Criminal Investigation after Whistleblowing,” *Radio Free Asia*, February 25, 2019.

¹⁷“Cui Yongyuan baoguang qianyi kuang an hou, Zhongguo Zuigao Fayuan faguan Wang Linqing, zibao shipin zuixin 4 duan (20 fenzhong wanzheng ban)” [Complete collection of newest 4 video clips of China’s supreme court judge Wang Linqing, recorded for self-protection after Cui Yongyuan exposed 100 billion mining right case] [Video file], YouTube, January 6, 2019. A compiled version of the video clips showing Cui Yongyuan’s interview with Wang Linqing is available on YouTube.

¹⁸A collegial panel is responsible for case adjudication; it may consist of a single judge or a judge and people’s assessors. *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo Renmin Fayuan Zuzhi Fa* [PRC Organic Law of People’s Courts], passed July 1, 1979, revised October 26, 2018, effective January 1, 2019, arts. 29, 30.

¹⁹“Cui Yongyuan baoguang qianyi kuang an hou, Zhongguo Zuigao Fayuan faguan Wang Linqing, zibao shipin zuixin 4 duan (20 fenzhong wanzheng ban)” [Complete collection of newest 4 video clips of China’s supreme court judge Wang Linqing, recorded for self-protection after Cui Yongyuan exposed 100 billion mining right case] [Video file], YouTube, January 6, 2019. A compiled version of the video clips showing Cui Yongyuan’s interview with Wang Linqing is avail-

Access to Justice

able on YouTube. Chris Buckley, “Chinese Entrepreneur Takes On the System, and Drops Out of Sight,” *New York Times*, March 9, 2019.

²⁰“Shipin: ‘Kaiqilai an’ juanzong diushi deng wenti diaocha jeguo gongbu” [Video clip: announcement of result of investigation into issues such as loss of case file in “Kaiqilai case”], CCTV, February 22, 2019.

²¹“Zhongyang Zhengfawei qiantou de lianhe diaocha zu gongbu ‘Kaiqilai an’ juanzong diushi deng wenti diaocha jeguo” [Investigation team led by Central Political-Legal Committee releases investigation results concerning issues including missing file in “Kaiqilai Case”], *Xinhua*, February 22, 2019.

²²“Zhongyang Zhengfawei qiantou de lianhe diaocha zu gongbu ‘Kaiqilai an’ juanzong diushi deng wenti diaocha jeguo” [Investigation team led by Central Political-Legal Committee releases investigation results concerning issues including missing file in “Kaiqilai Case”], *Xinhua*, February 22, 2019; “Zhonggong guanmei yuanhe didiao chuli Wang Linqing an ‘diaocha jeguo’” [Why did Chinese official news outlets treat “investigation results” in Wang Linqing Case in a low-profile manner], *Radio Free Asia*, February 25, 2019.

²³“Jianchi Dang dui renmin fayuan gongzuo de juehui lingdao” [Upholding the Party’s absolute leadership over the work of people’s courts], *People’s Court Daily*, February 24, 2019.

²⁴Chris Buckley, “Chinese Entrepreneur Takes On the System, and Drops Out of Sight,” *New York Times*, March 9, 2019; “Weixin: zhi lianhe diaochazu Wang Linqing renzui hou de shi ge yiwen” [WeChat: To the joint investigation team: ten questions that Wang Linqing’s confession raised], WeChat post, reprinted in *China Digital Times*, February 23, 2019.

²⁵“Zhonggong Zhongyang yinfa ‘Shehui Zhuyi Hexin Jiazhi Guan Rongru Fazhi Jianshe Lifa Xiufa Guihua’” [CCP Central Committee issues “Plan to Fuse Socialist Core Values into Rule of Law Development, Legislation, and Amending Laws”], *Xinhua*, May 7, 2018.

²⁶According to official news outlet China Daily, “socialist core values” “comprise a set of moral principles summarized as prosperity, democracy, civility, harmony, freedom, equality, justice, the rule of law, patriotism, dedication, integrity and friendliness.” Zhang Yunbi, “New Laws to Apply Socialist Core Values,” *China Daily*, May 8, 2018. There are examples of authorities justifying censorship and academic control using these principles. See, e.g., Sophie Richardson, Human Rights Watch, “China Cracks Down on Entertainment News,” June 12, 2017; Hannah Beech, “China’s College Counselors Told to Join the Party—The Communist Party,” *Time*, November 19, 2015.

²⁷“Yi shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhi tixi wei hun, quanmian zhu lao sifa jieshi de jiazhi jichu—jiu ‘Zuigao Renmin Fayuan guanyu zai Sifa Jieshi Zhong Quanmian Guanche Shehui Zhuyi Hexin Jiazhiguan de Gongzuo Guihua (2018–2023)’ fang Zuigao Renmin Fayuan Yanjiushi fuzeren” [Having socialist core values as the soul, comprehensively bolster foundation of value of judicial interpretations—interview with head of Supreme People’s Court Research Office concerning “Supreme People’s Court Plan on Comprehensively Implementing Socialist Core Values in Judicial Interpretation (2018–2023)”], *Zuigao Renmin Fayuan Wang* [Supreme People’s Court Net], September 18, 2018.

²⁸Commission research staff performed a search on April 16, 2019, and was unable to locate the full text of the plan.

²⁹“Yi shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhi tixi wei hun, quanmian zhu lao sifa jieshi de jiazhi jichu—jiu ‘Zuigao Renmin Fayuan guanyu zai Sifa Jieshi Zhong Quanmian Guanche Shehui Zhuyi Hexin Jiazhiguan de Gongzuo Guihua (2018–2023)’ fang Zuigao Renmin Fayuan Yanjiushi fuzeren” [Having socialist core values as the soul, comprehensively bolster foundation of value of judicial interpretations—interview with head of Supreme People’s Court Research Office concerning “Supreme People’s Court Plan on Comprehensively Implementing Socialist Core Values in Judicial Interpretation (2018–2023)”], *Zuigao Renmin Fayuan Wang* [Supreme People’s Court Net], September 18, 2018; Xu Jun, “Quanmian zhulao sifa jieshi de jiazhi jichu” [Comprehensively build a firm foundation for values in judicial interpretations], *People’s Daily*, September 19, 2018.

³⁰“Yi shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhi tixi wei hun, quanmian zhu lao sifa jieshi de jiazhi jichu—jiu ‘Zuigao Renmin Fayuan guanyu zai sifa jieshi zhong quanmian guanche shehui zhuyi hexin jiazhiguan de gongzuo guihua (2018–2023)’ fang Zuigao Renmin Fayuan yanjiushi fuzeren” [Having socialist core values as the soul, comprehensively bolster foundation of value of judicial interpretations—interview with head of Supreme People’s Court Research Center concerning “Supreme People’s Court Plan on Comprehensively Implementing Socialist Core Values in Judicial Interpretation (2018–2023)”], *Zuigao Renmin Fayuan Wang* [Supreme People’s Court Net], September 18, 2018.

³¹Wang Yu, “Sifabu zhaokai quanguo lushi hangye dangjian gongzuo tuijin hui” [Ministry of Justice convenes meeting on advancing party-building in legal profession nationwide], *Legal Daily*, September 17, 2018.

³²Ministry of Justice, *Lushi Shiwusuo Guanli Banfa* [Measures on Managing Law Firms], issued May 28, 2008, amended September 6, 2016, effective November 1, 2016, art. 4.

³³“Hu Jintao zai Zhongguo Gongchandang Di Shiba ci Quanguo Daibiao Dahui shang de baogao” [Hu Jintao’s report at the 18th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party], *Xinhua*, November 17, 2012, sec. 12. See also Gerry Groot, “The Rise and Rise of the United Front Work Department under Xi,” *China Brief*, Jamestown Foundation, April 24, 2018.

³⁴Wang Yu, “Sifabu zhaokai quanguo lushi hangye dangjian gongzuo tuijin hui” [Ministry of Justice convenes meeting on advancing party-building in legal profession nationwide], *Legal Daily*, September 17, 2018.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, Chinese Human Rights Defenders, and International Service for Human Rights, “Joint Analysis of the Measures on the Administration of Law Firms and Administrative Measures for the Practice of Law by Lawyers of the People’s Republic of China,” reprinted in Chinese Human Rights Defenders, May 22, 2019.

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Access to Justice

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