

VII. Worker Rights

WORKER RIGHTS

Findings

- The Chinese government describes digital platform workers, including food delivery workers, couriers, ride-hailing drivers, and truckers, as “flexibly employed.” Many of these workers face violations of international labor standards with regard to access to fair pay, employment contracts and agreements, and pensions and other insurance categories. They handle on-the-job risks that endanger their health and safety, and often lack residential permits (*hukou*) in the urban areas where they work, which limits their options for education, healthcare, and housing. Gig workers played a crucial role in transporting and delivering food and other essential goods to ordinary citizens in China held under restrictive lockdowns due to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreaks this past year.
- Officials have increasingly pressured technology and e-commerce companies to improve gig workers’ conditions. The campaign included a legislative amendment to allow gig workers to join the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), the issuance of multiple joint opinions that aim to establish employment norms for gig work and the platform economy, the publication of typical court cases involving overtime, and new provisions on algorithm management.
- The Chinese Communist Party-led ACFTU remains the only trade union organization legally recognized under Chinese law, and workers are not allowed to establish independent unions. The Party and government revised the PRC Trade Union Law to allow gig workers to join the ACFTU, and instructed the ACFTU to redouble outreach to unionize gig workers.
- The government does not publish official data on the number of strikes and labor actions, and its censorship of news and social media, along with its harassment and detention of citizen journalists and labor advocates, further limits access to information about labor unrest. The Hong Kong-based non-governmental organization (NGO) China Labour Bulletin (CLB) documented 1,094 strikes and other labor actions in 2021, which may only reflect between 5 and 10 percent of total worker actions. CLB found that more than 68 percent of those labor actions were related to wage arrears.
- Official repression of non-governmental advocacy for workers’ rights intensified during the past 10 years. The detentions of graduate student **Fang Ran** and labor advocate **Wang Jianbing** in August and September 2021, respectively, reflect local authorities’ aggressive approach to individuals engaged in worker rights research and advocacy. Authorities appear to have released food delivery workers’ organizer **Chen Guojiang** from detention in January 2022, but the circumstances of his release were not reported.

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Recommendations

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

- Promote and support bilateral and multilateral exchanges among government officials, academics, legal experts, and civil society groups to focus on labor issues such as freedom of expression, collective bargaining, employment discrimination, occupational health and safety, and wage arrears. Seek opportunities to support capacity-building programs to strengthen Chinese labor and legal aid organizations defending the rights of workers. Moreover, recognizing the challenges of safeguarding the rights of gig economy workers, convene exchanges to develop international standards on labor rights for workers in the digital platform economy, such as transparency in contractual labor relationships, data privacy, and dispute resolution, among others.
- Advocate for the immediate release of detained labor advocates such as **Fang Ran** and **Wang Jianbing**, and other individuals who have been detained because of their labor advocacy.
- Call on the Chinese government to respect internationally recognized rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining and allow workers to organize and establish independent labor unions. Raise concern in all appropriate trade negotiations and bilateral and multilateral dialogues about the Chinese Communist Party's role in collective bargaining and elections of trade union representatives, emphasizing that wage rates should be determined by free bargaining between labor and management.
- When appropriate, integrate meaningful civil society participation into bilateral and multilateral dialogues, meetings, and exchanges. Invite international unions and labor NGOs and domestic civil society groups from all participating countries, to observe relevant government-to-government dialogues.
- Encourage compliance with fundamental International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions. Request that the ILO increase its monitoring of core labor standards in China, including freedom of association and the right to organize.

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Delivery Workers during COVID-19 Lockdowns

During the Commission’s 2022 reporting year, food delivery workers, couriers, and truck drivers played a critical role in helping ordinary citizens in China who were held under restrictive lockdowns due to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreaks, primarily by transporting and delivering food and other essential goods.¹ The government’s restrictive “zero-COVID” policy made work and navigation more difficult for the workers providing these crucial services.² Caixin, a media outlet known for its investigative journalism, reported from Shanghai municipality that delivery workers were mostly left to fend for themselves to secure housing, leading many to sleep in the streets, under bridges, and in railway stations during the Shanghai lockdown in spring 2022.³ Some “rest stations” set up at hotels to house drivers in Shanghai reportedly did not permit delivery drivers to stay because of the perception that the drivers were at risk for having COVID-19.⁴ Taiwan’s Central News Agency reportedly estimated in April 2022 that 30 million long-haul truck drivers in mainland China had been stranded between cities or on major highways,⁵ often without sufficient food.⁶ Local pandemic rules were not uniform, with some requiring truck drivers to take multiple nucleic acid tests per day in order to obtain official authorization to drive on the highway to another destination.⁷ Travel between areas designated as high or medium risk could result in having an asterisk displayed on truck drivers travel itinerary code apps, which prevented drivers from entering or leaving a location.⁸ Access to big data allowed government monitoring of long-haul truck drivers whom authorities could designate as high-risk pandemic targets even if they had only driven by a high-risk city.⁹ [For more information about the zero-COVID policy, see Section VIII—Public Health. Developments this past year regarding Chinese government-sponsored forced labor and the issue of gender discrimination in the workplace are examined in Section VI—Status of Women, Section VIII—Business and Human Rights, and Section X—Xinjiang.]

Protecting the Rights of Gig Workers

The Chinese government describes digital platform workers, including food delivery workers, couriers, ride-hailing drivers, and truckers, as “flexibly employed”¹⁰ and engaged in “new forms of employment” that are yet to be defined in Chinese labor law.¹¹ The “flexibly employed” also comprise workers who provide elder and child care, construction workers, and cleaners, among others,¹² and numbered around 200 million in official estimates.¹³ Many of these workers are at risk of being subjected to violations of international labor standards¹⁴ in access to fair pay, employment contracts and agreements, and pensions and other insurance categories.¹⁵ They face on-the-job risks that endanger their health and safety, and often lack residential permits (*hukou*) in the urban areas where they work, which limits their options in education, healthcare, and housing.¹⁶ Workers in the digital platform economy number around 84 million, according to official data,¹⁷ and are subject to the plat-

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form economy companies' use of big data, algorithms,¹⁸ and surveillance.¹⁹ Couriers and food delivery workers, for example, face financial penalties if they fail to meet delivery times based on platform algorithms.²⁰ This often leads drivers to speed and results in traffic incidents and injuries; moreover, drivers have inadequate recourse to occupational compensation,²¹ reinforcing the public perception that e-commerce companies value efficiency and profits over worker health and safety.²² Tech company employees and gig workers have drawn attention to labor law violations and the risks to worker health and safety resulting from the culture of overwork characteristic of the e-commerce sector.²³

MULTI-AGENCY APPROACHES TO PRESSURING BIG TECH

As People's Republic of China (PRC) authorities shifted to rein in big tech in the past two years, the government has increasingly put pressure on technology and e-commerce companies to improve gig workers' conditions.²⁴ This past year, the government's campaign was conducted across multiple agencies, including a legislative amendment meant to allow gig workers to join the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU),²⁵ the issuance of multiple joint opinions that aim to establish employment norms for gig work and the platform economy,²⁶ the publication of 10 "typical" court cases involving overtime,²⁷ and new provisions on algorithm management.²⁸ At a press conference following the March 2022 meeting of the National People's Congress, Premier Li Keqiang emphasized the urgency of developing policies to protect the rights of gig workers.²⁹

The joint opinions issued over the past year primarily address safeguarding wages, worker safety, and insurance coverage for gig workers³⁰ by requiring that employers provide "employment relationships" (*laodong guanxi*), to which social insurance benefits are tied.³¹ Few gig workers have contracts or written agreements with e-commerce companies.³² Delivery drivers, for example, typically are hired "outside of the scope" of China's labor laws through third-party dispatch labor agencies³³ or by registering on an app as self-employed.³⁴ The July 2021 guiding opinion on safeguarding the rights of workers in "new forms of employment" provided that both e-commerce and third-party dispatch companies have responsibilities toward workers in their employ, including providing a formal contract or a written agreement regarding employment.³⁵ The July 2021 guiding opinion on "new forms of employment" also noted that workers without a formal contract also should be considered as having an employment relationship with the enterprise, albeit "less than complete [sic]."³⁶ State media outlet Xinhua reiterated that having an employment relationship will safeguard gig workers' rights and provide the full array of social insurance benefits that cover workers' compensation, occupational injury, unemployment, pension, and healthcare.³⁷

Some China labor advocates observed that the government's effort to improve gig workers' rights "appears driven more by efforts to consolidate top-down control than by workers' concerns."³⁸ While e-commerce companies like Didi and JD.com announced the formation of enterprise unions in September 2021³⁹ and Meituan purportedly modified its delivery algorithms,⁴⁰ a researcher from the

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Hong Kong-based non-governmental organization China Labour Bulletin (CLB) pointed out that it is not clear how tech companies will implement the guidelines.⁴¹ The July 2021 guiding opinion on “new forms of employment,” for example, devolves enforcement and oversight of the substance of the opinion,⁴² such as projects to improve worker compensation, to local government agencies.⁴³ Local officials, however, are under pressure to prioritize economic growth and have little incentive to enforce labor protections.⁴⁴ The mechanisms to protect the rights of workers are chronically under resourced and understaffed,⁴⁵ and penalties are weak or unenforceable and can be too time-consuming and expensive for ordinary workers in cases of litigation and mediation.⁴⁶ At the same time, observers commented that the guidelines do not have the force of law, and have recommended amending labor laws to address gaps with regard to safeguarding the rights of platform economy workers.⁴⁷ Given the economic impact of COVID-19 lockdowns this past year, local governments reportedly waived oversight of labor violations in favor of bolstering the position of employers.⁴⁸ Central authorities convened multiple in-person meetings in Beijing municipality with tech executives during the past year to emphasize official priorities regarding gig workers.⁴⁹ But as China’s economy began to slow in spring 2022, tech companies began laying off tech employees in the tens of thousands and government pressure toward these companies eased.⁵⁰

EXCESSIVE OVERTIME

Long working hours among gig workers like food delivery workers⁵¹ and the tech sector’s “white collar” employees,⁵² are “a built-in feature of the whole model of industrial development in China,” according to a U.S.-based expert on Chinese labor.⁵³ In October 2021, several thousand tech workers posted their work hours to a publicized spreadsheet reportedly as a means of holding companies accountable for excessive overtime.⁵⁴ Public concern about the consequences of excessive overtime is widespread in China,⁵⁵ especially where excessive hours and the culture of overwork reportedly continued to be a significant factor in workers’ deaths in the past year.⁵⁶ That many of the deceased were in their twenties and thirties was a striking characteristic of the reported deaths,⁵⁷ including the following examples.

- China Labour Bulletin noted that in February 2022 alone there were three deaths at tech companies linked to excessive hours.⁵⁸
- In April 2022, four workers reportedly attempted suicide at a BYD car factory in Changsha municipality, Hunan province.⁵⁹ While it is unclear if excessive work hours contributed to all of those attempts, workers at the Changsha BYD factory reportedly worked 14-hour days.⁶⁰ Family members of a BYD worker in Xi’an municipality, Shaanxi province, linked his sudden death in November 2021 to excessive hours.⁶¹
- In June 2021, a 17-year-old vocational school student died by suicide in connection with the excessive hours and harsh working conditions at a factory in Shenzhen municipality where he was completing a mandatory “internship”;⁶² and

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- Multiple COVID-19 outbreaks across China and implementation of the PRC's zero-COVID policy required hospital staff and workers at testing facilities to work excessive hours this past year.⁶³ The death of the deputy director of a hospital laboratory in Shandong province from cardiac arrest in March 2022 was ascribed to overwork and exhaustion in connection with her participation in COVID-19 prevention activity.⁶⁴

In August 2021, the Supreme People's Court and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security jointly issued 10 typical cases of overtime,⁶⁵ which highlighted examples of employer violations of Chinese labor law.⁶⁶ The first case featured a delivery person who was fired for refusing to work a "996" schedule—short-hand for working from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week⁶⁷—which many companies demand of workers.⁶⁸ The court found that the "996" schedule is in violation of Chinese labor law.⁶⁹ In spite of the guidance provided by these typical cases, reports of excessive overtime continued following their publication.⁷⁰ At Tesla's Giga factory in Shanghai municipality, for example, workers reportedly worked 12-hour days for six days a week and slept on the factory floor during Shanghai's citywide lockdown in April 2022, until production was suspended due to a lack of parts.⁷¹

PROMOTING GIG WORKERS' MEMBERSHIP IN THE ACFTU

Promoting gig workers' membership in the ACFTU—the Party's "mass organization" for workers⁷²—has been a key part of the government's plan to improve labor conditions for gig workers.⁷³ The ACFTU previously recruited gig workers during campaigns in 2015 and 2018.⁷⁴ The July 2021 guiding opinion on safeguarding gig worker rights included a directive that the ACFTU actively engage in unionizing gig workers.⁷⁵ In a separate opinion, also released in July, the ACFTU framed its responsibilities to gig workers as communicating Xi Jinping's ideology, promoting legal rights education, communicating with employers, and providing social welfare services and vocational training, among other tasks.⁷⁶ The National People's Congress, moreover, formalized the right of gig workers to become union members in an amendment to the PRC Trade Union Law in December 2021.⁷⁷ The amended Trade Union Law also added "social organizations" to the list of employer groups.⁷⁸ This revision may be linked to the ACFTU's interest in increasing interaction with gig workers at the grassroots⁷⁹ by building the presence of the ACFTU in "social organizations" (*shehui zuzhi*)⁸⁰—the official term to refer to non-governmental organizations such as social groups, community-based social welfare groups, and foundations.⁸¹

Chinese law violates international worker rights standards⁸² with regard to trade unions in that the Party-led ACFTU is the only legally recognized trade union organization⁸³ and Chinese workers are not allowed to create or join independent trade unions.⁸⁴ As a mass organization, the ACFTU acts as an intermediary organization between the Party and workers, and is required to "adhere to the leadership of the Party" and thus is compromised in its mission to protect workers' rights.⁸⁵ Although the ACFTU has prioritized reforms in recent years,⁸⁶ it has not been known for effectively representing workers' rights to employers.⁸⁷

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and generally has been aligned with enterprise management rather than workers.⁸⁸ The ACFTU's capacity to negotiate with employers, mediate disputes, or provide legal aid as anticipated in the July 2021 guidelines on new forms of employment⁸⁹ also may be compromised by its responsibility to disseminate Party propaganda and engage in Party projects, as has been the case during poverty alleviation efforts.⁹⁰ As a labor researcher observed, "As the Chinese economy gradually transforms from the industrial economy to service and on to today's digital economy, the ACFTU has become less relevant and increasingly incapable of protecting workers' rights and settling worker disputes in the emerging economic sector . . ."⁹¹

Worker Strikes and Protests

Chinese law does not explicitly prohibit Chinese workers from striking, but authorities have prosecuted such activity in prior years by accusing Chinese workers who have participated in strikes and worker demonstrations of disturbing public order in violation of Chinese criminal law.⁹² China Labour Bulletin (CLB) documented 1,094 strikes and other labor actions in 2021,⁹³ over 200 more than it documented in 2020,⁹⁴ marking a steady return to pre-pandemic rates.⁹⁵ CLB uses traditional media and social media reports to compile its data, but speculates that it can document only approximately 5 to 10 percent of total worker actions.⁹⁶ One difficulty is the Chinese government does not publicly report on the number of worker strikes and protests, making it difficult to obtain comprehensive information on worker actions.⁹⁷ Pervasive government censorship of news media outlets and social media, as well as the harassment and detention of citizen journalists and labor advocates, also limits access to information about labor unrest.⁹⁸

WORKER STRIKES AND OTHER LABOR ACTIONS BY SECTOR BASED ON CHINA LABOUR BULLETIN'S STRIKE MAP⁹⁹

Year	Manufacturing	Construction	Transportation*	Services	Other	Total number documented
2021	6.0% (66)	38.4% (420)	33.6% (368)	14.4% (158)	7.5% (82)	1,094
2020	10.9% (87)	44.8% (358)	19.5% (156)	18% (144)	6.9% (55)	800
2019	13.8% (191)	42.8% (593)	12.3% (171)	23.0% (319)	8.0% (111)	1,385
2018	15.4% (263)	44.8% (764)	15.9% (272)	16.8% (286)	7.1% (121)	1,706
2017	21.1% (265)	41.4% (521)	9.2% (116)	20.7% (261)	7.6% (95)	1,258

*CLB data for the transportation sector includes digital platform services, such as food delivery, couriers, hauling, and ride-hailing services. It also includes regular taxi service as well as bus and train transportation.¹⁰⁰

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Although CLB has cautioned against drawing firm conclusions from year-to-year comparisons,¹⁰¹ its data for 2021 points to the following trends:

- Wage arrears in China were a significant source of worker unrest.¹⁰² In 2021, 748 (68.4 percent) of the strikes and other labor actions that CLB documented specified wage arrears.¹⁰³ In the wage arrears category, 413 (55.2 percent) strikes and actions involved the construction industry.¹⁰⁴ Forty-eight of the wage arrears cases involved the continuing education and tutoring sector.¹⁰⁵ The bulk of these latter cases took place following the government's release of new rules for the private tutoring sector in summer 2021, which resulted in the closure of many tutoring centers.¹⁰⁶ [For more information on the crack-down in the private education sector, see Section V—Governance.]
- CLB observed that an increasing number of worker protests are taking place in Henan and other inland areas, which it believes marks a shift from the earlier center of protests in the manufacturing municipalities in Guangdong province.¹⁰⁷
- The majority of the labor actions documented by CLB were small in scale: In 2021, 825 incidents (75.4 percent) involved 100 people or fewer, and only 12 (1.1 percent) involved over 1,000 people.¹⁰⁸
- CLB observed an uptick in the number of protests in connection with COVID-19-related restrictions in spring 2022¹⁰⁹ when as many as 44 cities in China were under full or partial pandemic lockdowns.¹¹⁰ For example, in late May 2022, hundreds of workers reportedly left a Quanta factory in Shanghai municipality because they were dissatisfied with being sealed in the factory as part of the “closed-loop” system to prevent the spread of COVID-19.¹¹¹

Continued Suppression of Labor Advocacy & Civil Society

Non-governmental advocacy for workers' rights has been an ongoing target of official repression in China.¹¹² Over the past decade, the Commission has observed harassment of labor NGOs and advocates in the manufacturing centers of Guangdong province in 2012,¹¹³ and suppression and detentions in 2015,¹¹⁴ 2018,¹¹⁵ and 2019¹¹⁶ that led to prison sentences for non-affiliated labor advocates and staff from prominent Guangdong NGOs.¹¹⁷ Many of those individuals and organizations provided support to the collective bargaining process, ran programs to integrate rural migrant workers into urban environments, conducted advocacy for victims of industrial accidents and occupational diseases, and assisted workers in resolving grievances, such as for payment of wage and social insurance arrears.¹¹⁸

China Digital Times, a U.S.-based news portal about human rights in China,¹¹⁹ highlighted the closure this past year of the Masses and Pepper Tribe, two websites that provided information on worker rights.¹²⁰ Whether those closures were directly linked to official directives or harassment is not clear, but the farewell letter from the Masses implied that official pressure contributed to its closure.¹²¹ Pepper Tribe reported on conditions for women workers.

Its closure in August 2021 is also likely connected to a wave of shutdowns of feminist social media accounts by Weibo earlier in 2021 for alleged content violations.¹²² CLB continued to provide robust reporting on worker rights developments in China on its website, including by mapping strikes and workplace accidents.¹²³

The incommunicado detentions of **Fang Ran** and **Wang Jianbing** in August and September 2021,¹²⁴ respectively, illustrate local authorities' aggressive approach toward individuals engaged in worker rights research and advocacy. Fang—a Ph.D. student at Hong Kong University studying labor relations in China¹²⁵—reportedly was conducting fieldwork in his hometown of Nanning municipality, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region.¹²⁶ Wang, who resided in Guangzhou municipality, Guangdong province, focused his advocacy on workers with occupational health problems.¹²⁷ In a case that drew attention to the travails of food delivery workers, **Chen Guojiang**—leader of an alliance of food delivery workers who had created several WeChat groups with approximately 15,000 food delivery workers¹²⁸—was seen walking outside and waving in a short video posted in January 2022,¹²⁹ after more than 10 months of detention in Beijing municipality.¹³⁰ As of June 30, 2022, the Commission had observed no further reports on Chen's status since the video's release.¹³¹

DETENTIONS OF SELF-IDENTIFIED “LEFTIST” SUPPORTERS OF WORKER RIGHTS

The reemergence of a leftist critique of working conditions and inequality in China reportedly has had a broad appeal among a younger generation of Chinese, associated in part with Xi Jinping's greater emphasis on patriotic education in schools.¹³² The awareness of worker rights also has led some to participate in university-based Maoist or Marxist labor groups and websites.¹³³ While leftist supporters of worker rights have been highly critical of China's “capitalist” class, they also point to the Chinese Communist Party's promotion of economic growth that has fostered inequality.¹³⁴

The Party has responded to the “leftist” critique by portraying it as destabilizing.¹³⁵ Authorities from several provinces detained six leftist critics in May 2021, in advance of the Party's centenary celebration in July 2021, including an elderly former professor who previously served time in prison for attempting to establish an independent political party.¹³⁶ Authorities in Henan province detained six people in May 2021 who were associated with a group called the Red Culture Association on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.”¹³⁷ In December 2021, a court in Xuhua district, Pingdingshan municipality, Henan, sentenced five of the six to prison terms of between nine months and two years not only because of the group's online activity but also for having monetized access to articles.¹³⁸ Evidence brought against the five included social media posts or reposts of essays on their WeChat group accounts that allegedly “slandered” the Chinese Communist Party, Party history, and senior leaders.¹³⁹

Notes to Section VII—Worker Rights

¹Beiyi Seow and Yuanhao Zhang, “Battle the Algorithms: China’s Delivery Riders on the Edge,” *Agence France-Presse*, reprinted in *Hong Kong Free Press*, November 14, 2021; Chinese Human Rights Defenders, “China: Immediately Release Frontline Delivery Worker Chen Guojiang,” March 18, 2021; Meaghan Tobin and Viola Zhou, “China’s Gig Workers Pay a Heavy Price for the Country’s Zero-Covid Policy,” *Rest of World*, March 31, 2022.

²Meaghan Tobin and Viola Zhou, “China’s Gig Workers Pay a Heavy Price for the Country’s Zero-Covid Policy,” *Rest of World*, March 31, 2022.

³Jiang Moting, “Reng you bushao songhuo qishou lusu Shanghai jietou” [Still quite a few delivery drivers sleeping on Shanghai streets], *Caixin*, April 27, 2022.

⁴Jiang Moting, “Reng you bushao songhuo qishou lusu Shanghai jietou” [Still quite a few delivery drivers sleeping on Shanghai streets], *Caixin*, April 27, 2022.

⁵Jane Tang and Jia Ao, “Seriously Ill Patients Die after Being Denied Hospital Care in Shanghai Lockdown,” *Radio Free Asia*, April 11, 2022.

⁶“Voices of May,” *China Digital Times* [Video file], June 21, 2022, 3:27–3:35.

⁷Peng Leyi, Tang Jiayan, and Cai Jingyuan, “Baogong fangyi jia ji huoche siji” [Ensuring supply and preventing disease squeezes truck drivers], *Caixin*, April 14, 2022.

⁸China Labour Bulletin, “Yiqing xia de huoche siji: Kun zai lushang, shouru xiajiang, mei fan chi” [Truck drivers during the pandemic: Stuck on the road, falling incomes, nothing to eat], May 3, 2022; Peng Leyi, Tang Jiayan, and Cai Jingyuan, “Baogong fangyi jia ji huoche siji” [Ensuring supply and preventing disease squeezes truck drivers], *Caixin*, April 14, 2022.

⁹Peng Leyi, Tang Jiayan, and Cai Jingyuan, “Baogong fangyi jia ji huoche siji” [Ensuring supply and preventing disease squeezes truck drivers], *Caixin*, April 14, 2022.

¹⁰“Zhongguo liang yi ren ‘linghuo jiuye’, ‘zhudong xuanze’? Xuezhe: Meihua shiye renkou” [Did China’s 200 million “flexibly employed” persons “actively choose this” for themselves? Scholar: It’s a euphemism for the unemployed population], *Radio Free Asia*, February 14, 2022.

¹¹Jiang Lin and Fan Xi, “Waimai qishou, wang yueche siji deng quanyi baozhang you na xie tupu?—Ba bumen fawen guifan pingtai yonggong jiaodian wenti” [What are the breakthroughs in the guaranteed rights and interests of food delivery workers, web-based ride-hailing drivers among others?—Eight agencies issue standards for digital platform workers’ central problems], *Xinhua*, July 27, 2021.

¹²Chen Yun and Cao Jia, “Linghuo jiuye zhong zai zuo hao fuwu he baozhang” [The crux of flexible employment is in providing good services and safeguards], *Economic Daily*, April 28, 2022.

¹³Zhang Jun et al., “Woguo linghuo jiuye guimo da 2 yi, Li Keqiang: Baozhang laodong quanyi, gei qishoumen ‘xishang anquan dai!’” [The scale of China’s flexible employment has reached 200 million, Li Keqiang: Safeguard the rights and interests of workers, help delivery men “fasten their seatbelts!”], *Shanghai Observer, Liberation Daily*, March 11, 2022; Kelsey Cheng, Yuan Ruiyang, and Guan Cong, “In Depth: Plight of China’s Gig Workers Poses Policy-making Dilemma,” *Caixin*, August 26, 2021.

¹⁴Irene Zhou, “Digital Labour Platforms and Labour Protection in China,” International Labour Organization, ILO Working Paper 11, October 2020, secs. 3.2–3.3. See also International Labour Organization, *World Employment and Social Outlook 2021: The Role of Digital Labour Platforms in Transforming the World of Work 2021*, Executive Summary, February 3, 2021, 1–10.

¹⁵Kelsey Cheng, Yuan Ruiyang, and Guan Cong, “In Depth: Plight of China’s Gig Workers Poses Policy-making Dilemma,” *Caixin*, August 26, 2021.

¹⁶Zhao Limei, “Lianghui zonglun: Baozhang linghuo jiuyezhe quanyi, bie rang chenda de shuzhi zhezhu weixiao de suqiu” [Broad discussion at the Two Sessions: Safeguard the rights and interests of flexibly employed workers, don’t let the huge numbers obstruct smaller-sized demands], *China Youth Daily*, March 11, 2022; Jonathan Isaacs, Zheng Lu, and Bofu An, “China Employment Law Update October 2021,” Baker McKenzie FenXun, October 6, 2021.

¹⁷Chen Yun and Cao Jia, “Linghuo jiuye zhong zai zuo hao fuwu he baozhang” [The crux of flexible employment is in providing good services and safeguards], *Economic Daily*, April 28, 2022. According to official estimates, there are 10 million food delivery drivers in China. Li Na, “Waimai qishou quanyi baozhang de beixi yu gongming” [Delivery drivers’ joys and sorrows, and the public cries to safeguard their rights and interests], *Procuratorial Daily*, April 28, 2022.

¹⁸Beiyi Seow and Yuanhao Zhang, “Battle the Algorithms: China’s Delivery Riders on the Edge,” *Agence France-Presse*, reprinted in *Hong Kong Free Press*, November 14, 2021; Rita Liao, “Viral Article Puts the Brakes on China’s Food Delivery Frenzy,” *TechCrunch*, September 9, 2020.

¹⁹Greg James, “Chinese Tech Workers Outraged by Surveillance Tool That Flags Employees Who Look Likely to Quit,” *SupChina*, February 21, 2022; Nikki Sun, “China’s Tech Workers Pushed to Limits by Surveillance Software,” *Nikkei Asia*, June 9, 2021.

²⁰Beiyi Seow and Yuanhao Zhang, “Battle the Algorithms: China’s Delivery Riders on the Edge,” *Agence France-Presse*, reprinted in *Hong Kong Free Press*, November 14, 2021; Rita Liao, “Viral Article Puts the Brakes on China’s Food Delivery Frenzy,” *TechCrunch*, September 9, 2020.

²¹“Delivery Riders, Trapped in the System,” *Renwu*, translated and reprinted in *Chuang* (blog), November 12, 2020.

²²“Qianwan Zhongguo waimai qishou: ‘luoben’ dajun haishi ‘xin lanling’” [Ten million Chinese take-out delivery workers: Are they a new army of “naked streakers” or the new “blue collar [workers]?”], *BBC*, June 6, 2021; China Labour Bulletin, “Reimagining Workers’ Rights in China,” March 2022, 89.

²³China Labour Bulletin, “Attempts to Regulate Overtime Work at China’s Tech Giants Are Not Going Well,” February 25, 2022.

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