

THE ENVIRONMENT

Introduction

During the Commission's 2017 reporting year, the Chinese government reported modest progress in air and water pollution reduction,¹ while Chinese and international media reports detailed the ongoing severity of China's air, water, and soil pollution, and related health concerns.² Chinese President and Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping reiterated the government's commitment to environmental protection.³ Some reports noted improvements in data disclosure for air pollution and on pollution sources,⁴ yet lack of transparency with respect to environmental data remains a problem.⁵ Government inspectors this past year found widespread violations of domestic environmental standards by firms in China,⁶ and in at least one incident of data falsification, prosecuted environmental officials for manipulating air quality monitoring readings.⁷ Chinese officials continued to make statements calling for public participation in environmental protection;⁸ in terms of holding polluters accountable, however, as highlighted in a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, "the Government tends to rely almost entirely on top-down processes."⁹ During this reporting year, authorities detained environmental advocates,¹⁰ censored media reporting on the environment¹¹ and natural disasters,¹² and cracked down on environmental protests,¹³ highlighting the government's conflicting goals of improving the environment and "maintaining social stability."¹⁴

Reported Environmental Progress

During this reporting year, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Chinese authorities reported modest progress toward achieving the government's goals of improving air quality and reducing water pollution. According to analysis of official data by Greenpeace, an international environmental advocacy group, "74 percent of Chinese cities fail[ed] to meet China's national air quality standards" in 2016,¹⁵ an improvement from the 80 percent of cities that failed to meet the standards in 2015.¹⁶ The government reported that in 2016, national targets for surface water pollution were met, with 67.8 percent of surface water meeting officially designated moderate to high standards and only 8.6 percent of surface water failing to meet the lowest standards.¹⁷ In the first half of 2017, 70.0 percent of surface water reportedly met the moderate to high standards and 8.8 percent of surface water failed to meet the lowest standards.¹⁸ Authorities and independent sources nevertheless noted continuing areas of concern, such as deteriorating water quality in some areas and the prevalence of cancer villages and groundwater pollution.¹⁹

Environmental Health Concerns

Reports from this past year continued to demonstrate that air,²⁰ water,²¹ and soil pollution²² caused serious harm to the health of persons living in China. In February 2017, a U.S.-based research team published a report finding that air pollution globally may be

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responsible for approximately one out of five dementia cases for persons living in areas with high concentrations of fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}).²³ Many cities in China have high annual average concentrations of PM_{2.5}.²⁴ In May 2017, a group of international scientists published research on the “striking” consequences of diesel emissions on public health, finding that 31,400 premature deaths in China per year may be caused by diesel emissions.²⁵ In July 2017, a European non-profit organization reported the health costs in China “from fossil fuels through air pollution-caused premature deaths” at approximately US\$1.7 trillion in 2015.²⁶ Chinese and international media reported that health concerns motivated some urban residents to move away from polluted areas²⁷ or take other action, such as beginning to monitor pollution or requesting government information on pollution, to protect their health.²⁸

Transparency Regarding Environmental Data

During this reporting year, environmental NGOs and the Chinese government expressed concern regarding the transparency or accuracy of pollution-related data. The Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs (IPE), a Beijing-based NGO, reported there were still “significant issues” with air pollution disclosures by many cities, and that in some key cities, monitoring data was still withheld from public disclosure.²⁹ IPE developed Blue Map, a mobile application (app) that provides real-time information on environmental quality.³⁰ As of January 2017, users had reportedly downloaded the app over 3 million times.³¹ In January 2017, a provincial environmental protection bureau reportedly ordered developers of another mobile application, Air Matters, to stop reporting pollution levels above a certain amount.³² In October 2016, Chinese authorities reportedly detained three environmental officials in Xi’an municipality, Shaanxi province, for “falsification” of air quality data.³³ In June 2017, the Xi’an Intermediate People’s Court sentenced seven environmental officials, including the three officials previously detained, to prison terms ranging from 1 year and 3 months to 1 year and 10 months for “damaging the computer information system.”³⁴ In July 2017, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP), following a month-long inspection, strongly criticized the Tianjin municipal government for “wantonly covering up” its failed environmental protection efforts, finding that although Tianjin authorities had convened many meetings and launched campaigns, “it was more lip service than action.”³⁵ MEP inspectors discovered that officials from the Binhai New Area and Wuqing districts in Tianjin had “taken shortcuts” (*zou jiejing*) to report better air quality by spraying water and reducing traffic near air quality monitors, and that Jinghai district water bureau officials had fabricated official documents.³⁶

Public Interest Litigation

The Supreme People’s Court (SPC) continued to take steps to strengthen the legal framework that provides for environmental organizations to file environmental public interest lawsuits.³⁷ The number of organizations filing this type of lawsuit, however, remained low.³⁸ In March 2017, the SPC released for the first time

summaries of 10 public interest lawsuits as model cases.³⁹ The plaintiffs in some of the model cases were entities under government supervision, including procuratorates in three cases, rather than independent non-governmental organizations (NGOs).⁴⁰ Although an estimated 700 environmental NGOs in China have standing to bring public interest lawsuits, the number of environmental NGOs that filed litigation in China reportedly decreased from 11 in 2015 to 6 in the first 11 months of 2016.⁴¹ Some foreign experts remain optimistic about the future of environmental public interest litigation in China due to the government’s apparent support for such litigation,⁴² although significant challenges exist, including the high costs of litigation.⁴³

Soil Pollution Litigation in Changzhou

In April 2016, Chinese media reported that hundreds of students had fallen ill at the Changzhou Foreign Languages School in Changzhou municipality, Jiangsu province.⁴⁴ Following these reports, two environmental NGOs—Friends of Nature (FON) and the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF)—sued three chemical manufacturers that allegedly polluted the soil near the school.⁴⁵ In January 2017, the Changzhou Intermediate People’s Court ruled in favor of the chemical manufacturers and held that the two NGOs were responsible for court fees totaling 1.89 million yuan (US\$270,000).⁴⁶ The head of the litigation department at CBCGDF expressed concern that this case “would set a precedent for courts to use similar charging standards for future environmental public interest lawsuits.”⁴⁷ In February 2017, FON and CBCGDF reportedly appealed the judgment.⁴⁸

Suppression of Environmental Protests and Advocates

Chinese citizens continued to raise their concerns about health issues related to the environment through street-level protests and other forms of public advocacy.⁴⁹ China’s Constitution provides for freedom of speech, assembly, association, and demonstration,⁵⁰ as do the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁵¹ and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁵² The following cases illustrate the ongoing lack of protection for citizens’ rights to freedom of speech, assembly, association, and demonstration when they raise environmental concerns:

- **Shaanxi province.** In October 2016, residents in Xi’an municipality, Shaanxi, protested plans to build a waste incinerator in a local drinking water priority protection area.⁵³ Local residents reportedly estimated that the crowds numbered over 10,000 people.⁵⁴ Following the protests, authorities reportedly restricted residents’ movement and censored media coverage.⁵⁵
- **Sichuan province.** In December 2016, authorities reportedly briefly detained a number of advocates in Chengdu municipality, Sichuan, after they gathered wearing face masks to protest air pollution.⁵⁶ In addition, authorities in Chengdu responded to the local pollution protests by prohibiting students from wearing face masks, issuing censorship instructions to the media, and sending text messages to local students urging

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them to “trust in the government to carry out anti-pollution work.”⁵⁷

- **Henan province.** Between September 29 and October 10, 2016, public security officials in Gushi county, Xinyang municipality, Henan, took into custody seven residents of Tianhu village, Yangji township, Gushi,⁵⁸ initially holding them at the Gushi PSB Detention Center and criminally detaining them on suspicion of “sabotaging production and business operations.”⁵⁹ The detentions were reportedly connected to the residents’ protests against and attempts to prevent illegal sand mining that threatened village fields and irrigation systems.⁶⁰ One detained villager reported that authorities tortured him to obtain his signature on investigation documents.⁶¹

- **Hunan province.** According to Radio Free Asia, on October 9, 2016, police in Changsha municipality, Hunan, took environmental NGO leader Liu Shu into custody.⁶² On October 10, authorities ordered Liu to serve 10 days of administrative detention for “leaking counter-espionage work state secrets”; her alleged offense was sharing pollution data.⁶³ Liu is the director of the Shuguang Environmental Protection and Public Interest Development Center, an NGO in Changsha.⁶⁴

- **Liaoning province.** In August 2016, the Panjin Intermediate People’s Court in Panjin municipality, Liaoning, rescinded a 12-year prison sentence against Tian Jiguang.⁶⁵ Upon retrial, however, the Shuangtaizi District People’s Court in Panjin sentenced him to four years and six months in prison in June 2017.⁶⁶ Tian was the founder and leader of the Panjin City Association of Volunteers for the Protection of the Spotted Seal.⁶⁷ Authorities in Panjin detained Tian in October 2013 on charges including “extortion” after he wrote a blog post in which he criticized a state-owned enterprise for water pollution.⁶⁸

Regulatory Developments

During this reporting year, the Chinese government implemented or drafted regulatory changes affecting environmental monitoring and wildlife protection. In December 2016, the National People’s Congress (NPC) passed the PRC Environmental Tax Law.⁶⁹ The legislation, which will take effect in January 2018,⁷⁰ provides for new environmental taxes that will be jointly managed by environmental and tax authorities,⁷¹ superseding the previous pollution discharge fees that had only been managed by environmental authorities.⁷² Some legal experts believe the potential for tax authorities to collect taxes from polluters may result in a strengthening of pollution monitoring systems.⁷³ In July 2016, the NPC amended the PRC Wildlife Protection Law, which took effect in January 2017.⁷⁴ An international non-governmental organization noted “positive changes” and areas of concern with the law, including that the breeding and selling of protected animals like the tiger may continue.⁷⁵ During this reporting year, the NPC reportedly was in the process of drafting a new soil pollution law,⁷⁶ and in June 2017, the NPC amended the PRC Water Pollution Prevention and Control Law.⁷⁷ China Daily, a state-run media outlet, highlighted a new “river chief system” that gives provincial and

local officials “major responsibility for addressing water pollution” in the amended law.⁷⁸

In December 2016, the Supreme People’s Court (SPC) and Supreme People’s Procuratorate issued an interpretation on environmental crimes that, if implemented, may lead to more criminal enforcement for environmental data manipulation.⁷⁹ The interpretation, which took effect on January 1, 2017, provides that criminal penalties for companies found in violation of environmental standards may be based on the amount of money the company saved by not operating the pollution control equipment;⁸⁰ criminal charges of more than three years could be imposed if the money saved totaled over 1 million yuan (US\$140,000).⁸¹ The Director of the SPC research office said that the new interpretation would enhance the effectiveness of relevant legislation to allow for the prosecution of environmental crimes.⁸²

The government continued to develop and release comprehensive plans for improving the environment, although the government also announced plans to increase coal-fired power capacity. In December 2016, the National Development and Reform Commission released China’s 13th Five-Year Energy Development Plan (Energy Development Plan),⁸³ which builds upon mandatory environmental targets in China’s overall 13th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development adopted in March 2016.⁸⁴ The Energy Development Plan set a mandatory target that energy from coal will account for 58 percent or less of energy production by 2020, a 6-percent decrease from 2015.⁸⁵ The 13th Five-Year Electricity Development Plan, however, included plans to increase coal-fired power capacity from 900 gigawatts in 2015 to no more than 1,100 gigawatts in 2020,⁸⁶ despite plans to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and existing coal overcapacity.⁸⁷

Notes to Section II—The Environment

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²Alice Yan, “Smog Linked to Third of Deaths in China, Study Finds,” South China Morning Post, 23 December 16; Ruan Yulin, “61 Chinese Cities Begin Air Pollution Warnings” [Zhongguo 61 ge chengshi qidong kongqi wuran yujing], China News Service, 31 December 16; “Local Govts Need To Be Tougher on Polluters,” China Daily, 6 January 17; Deng Tingting, “In China, the Water You Drink Is as Dangerous as the Air You Breathe,” Guardian, 2 June 17; Zheng Jinran, “Water Quality To Be Prioritized,” China Daily, 20 December 16; “The Most Neglected Threat to Public Health in China Is Toxic Soil,” Economist, 8 June 17.

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⁴Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs, “Seeking Blue Together: Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs 2016 Annual Report,” 19 January 17, 7, 9; Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs, “Blue Sky Roadmap Phase IV: Managing the ‘Gap Effect,’” August 2016, 3; Angel Hsu et al., “Addressing Gaps in China’s Environmental Data: The Existing Landscape,” Yale Data-Driven Environmental Solutions Group, January 2017, 4; Beth Gardiner, “China’s Surprising Solutions To Clear Killer Air,” National Geographic, 5 May 17.

⁵Deng Tingting, “In China, the Water You Drink Is as Dangerous as the Air You Breathe,” Guardian, 2 June 17; Angel Hsu et al., “Addressing Gaps in China’s Environmental Data: The Existing Landscape,” Yale Data-Driven Environmental Solutions Group, January 2017, 8–9; Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs, “Blue Sky Roadmap Phase IV: Managing the ‘Gap Effect,’” August 2016, 1.

⁶Ministry of Environmental Protection, “Bulletin on Strengthening the State of Supervision and Investigation of Air Pollution Prevention in Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, and Neighboring Areas” [Huanjing baohubu tongbao jing jin ji ji zhoubian diqu daqi wuran fangzhi qianghua du cha qingkuang], 8 June 17; “Inspections Find 70 Pct of Firms Violated Environmental Rules,” Xinhua, 11 June 17; Ministry of Environmental Protection, “Bulletin on 2017 First Quarter Air Quality Special Inspection Situation” [Huanjing baohubu tongbao 2017 nian di yi jidu kongqi zhiliang zhuanxiang du cha qingkuang], 30 March 17; Ministry of Environmental Protection, “Bulletin on Strengthening the State of Supervision and Investigation of Air Pollution Prevention in Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, and Neighboring Areas” [Huanjing baohubu tongbao jing jin ji ji zhoubian diqu daqi wuran fangzhi qianghua du cha qingkuang], 19 April 17; Bibek Bhandari, “Polluting Plants Shut by Officials Found Still in Use,” Sixth Tone, 21 April 17.

⁷Ning Jun, “For Giving Air Quality Monitoring Equipment ‘Facemask,’ Chang’an Environmental Protection Bureau Branch Director Among Seven People Sentenced” [Gei kongqi caiyangqi “dai kouzhao” huanbao chang’an fenju juzhang deng 7 ren huoxing], Chinese Business View, 16 June 17; Zhou Dongxu, “Wang Shekun: Falsification of Environmental Protection Data, Air Quality Monitor ‘Wearing a Facemask’ Is Just the Tip of the Iceberg” [Wang shekun: huanbao shuju zaojia kongqi caiyangqi “dai kouzhao” zhi shi bingshan yijiao], Caixin, 28 October 16; “China Holds Five Officials Over ‘Falsification’ of Air Monitoring Data,” Radio Free Asia, 27 October 16; Edward Wong and Vanessa Piao, “When China Wants Better Air Readings, Cotton Does the Trick,” New York Times, Sinosphere (blog), 28 October 16.

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⁹UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights on His Mission to China, Philip Alston, A/HRC/35/26/Add.2, 28 March 17, para. 68.

¹⁰See, e.g., Chinese Human Rights Defenders, “Earth Day: China Must Protect Human Rights To Effectively Protect the Environment,” 20 April 17; “China Jails Environmental Activist for ‘Revealing State Secrets,’” Radio Free Asia, 11 October 16; “Chinese Environmental Protester Seeks Refuge in Thailand Ahead of Earth Day,” Radio Free Asia, 21 April 17.

¹¹China Digital Times, “Minitrue: Notice on Chengdu Environmental Coverage,” 12 December 16; “China Cracks Down on Chengdu Smog Protests, Detains Activists, Muzzles Media,” Radio Free Asia, 13 December 16; “Xian Under Security Alert After Thousands Protest Incinerator Plant,” Radio Free Asia, 17 October 16.

¹²See, e.g., China Digital Times, “Minitrue: Delete Report on Causes of Deadly Landslide,” 27 June 17; China Digital Times, “Minitrue: Follow Xinhua on Jiuzhaigou Earthquake,” 8 August 17.

¹³See, e.g., “Xian Under Security Alert After Thousands Protest Incinerator Plant,” Radio Free Asia, 17 October 16; Benjamin Haas, “China Riot Police Seal Off City Centre After Smog Protesters Put Masks on Statues,” Guardian, 12 December 16.

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¹⁵Greenpeace, “Almost Three Quarters of Chinese Cities Yet To Reach Air Quality National Standards,” 17 January 17. See also Ministry of Environmental Protection, “2016 Report on Environmental Conditions in China” [2016 nian zhongguo huanjing zhuangkuang gongbao], 31 May 17, 5.

¹⁶Greenpeace, “China Saw Average PM_{2.5} Levels Fall by 10% in 2015, but 80% of Cities Still Fail To Meet National Air Quality Standards,” 20 January 16.

¹⁷Ministry of Environmental Protection, “MEP Releases the Developments in Water Pollution Control,” 27 March 17; Dongmei Han et al., “Deep Challenges for China’s War on Water Pollution,” Environmental Pollution, Vol. 218 (November 2016), 1223, 1227. The Chinese government’s surface water quality standards range from the highest quality rating, Grade I, to the lowest of Grade VI.

¹⁸Ministry of Environmental Protection, “Ministry of Environmental Protection Bulletin for First Half of 2017 on Water Quality in Every Province (Autonomous Region and Municipality) and Places Where Water Quality Declined” [Huanjing baohubu tongbao 2017 nian shangbannian ge sheng (qu, shi) shuizhi qingkuang he shuizhi xiajiang duanmian], 14 August 17; “China Reports Uneven Progress in Reducing Water Pollution,” Xinhua, 14 August 17. See also Ministry of Environmental Protection, “MEP Releases the Developments in Water Pollution Control,” 27 March 17; Dongmei Han et al., “Deep Challenges for China’s War on Water Pollution,” Environmental Pollution, Vol. 218 (November 2016), 1223, 1227.

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²⁰Die Fang et al., “Mortality Effects Assessment of Ambient PM_{2.5} Pollution in the 74 Leading Cities of China,” Science of the Total Environment, Vols. 569–70 (1 November 16), 1551; Alice Yan, “Smog Linked to Third of Deaths in China, Study Finds,” South China Morning Post, 22 December 16; Lisa Marshall, “Diesels Pollute More Than Tests Detect; Excess Emissions Kill 38,000 Yearly,” CU Boulder Today, 15 May 17.

²¹Dongmei Han et al., “Deep Challenges for China’s War on Water Pollution,” Environmental Pollution, Vol. 218 (November 2016), 1222–23, 1229–30; Matthew Currell, “Deep Challenges: China’s ‘War on Water Pollution’ Must Tackle Deep Groundwater Pollution Pathways,” American Geophysical Union, Water Underground (blog), 16 March 17.

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²⁴Die Fang et al., “Mortality Effects Assessment of Ambient PM_{2.5} Pollution in the 74 Leading Cities of China,” Science of the Total Environment, Vols. 569–70 (1 November 16), 1546; Ministry of Environmental Protection, “2016 Report on Environmental Conditions in China” [2016 nian zhongguo huanjing zhuangkuang gongbao], 31 May 17, 8. See also Edward Wong, “Pollution Leads to Greater Risk of Dementia Among Older Women, Study Says,” New York Times, Sinosphere (blog), 4 February 17.

²⁵Lisa Marshall, “Diesels Pollute More Than Tests Detect; Excess Emissions Kill 38,000 Yearly,” CU Boulder Today, 15 May 17.

²⁶Health and Environment Alliance, “Hidden Price Tags: How Ending Fossil Fuel Subsidies Would Benefit Our Health,” July 2017, 27; Catherine Early, “Health Costs of China’s Fossil Fuel Subsidies Highlighted,” China Dialogue, 2 August 17.

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²⁹Shen Su'nan et al., Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs, "Blue Sky Roadmap Phase IV: Managing the 'Gap Effect,'" August 2016, 1.

³⁰Institute of Public & Environmental Affairs, "About IPE," last visited 15 June 17. The Blue Map App can be downloaded from the IPE website at www.ipe.org.cn. Real-time maps of water quality, wastewater, air emissions, and air quality are also available.

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³⁴Xi'an Intermediate People's Court, "Seven Defendants, Including Li Sen, Openly Sentenced in Two First-Instance Cases of Damaging the Computer Information System" [Beigaoren li sen deng qi ren pouhuai jisuanji xinxi xitong yishen liang'an gongkai xuanpan], 16 June 17; "China Court Sentences Seven Over Falsifying Air Quality Data," Xinhua, 16 June 17.

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³⁷PRC Environmental Protection Law [Zhonghua renmin gongheguo huanjing baohu fa], issued 26 December 89, amended 24 April 14, effective 1 January 15, art. 58. The PRC Environmental Protection Law established the legal framework for environmental organizations to file public interest lawsuits. For an example of Supreme People's Court efforts to strengthen this legal framework in the past, see, e.g., Supreme People's Court, Interpretation Regarding Certain Issues Related to Application of the Law in Environmental Civil Public Interest Litigation [Guanyu shenli huanjing minshi gongyi susong anjian shiyong falu ruogan wenti de jieshi], issued 6 January 15, effective 7 January 15.

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³⁹"Supreme People's Court Releases Public Interest Environmental Litigation Model Cases" [Zuigao renmin fayuan fabu huanjing gongyi susong dianxing anli], Xinhua, 7 March 17; Zhang Chun, "Six Important Environmental Cases," China Dialogue, 11 April 17; Yanmei Lin, "China's Supreme Court Releases Ten Model Environmental Public Interest Litigation Cases," Vermont Law School, Asia Environmental Governance Blog, 13 March 17.

⁴⁰"Supreme People's Court Releases Public Interest Environmental Litigation Model Cases" [Zuigao renmin fayuan fabu huanjing gongyi susong dianxing anli], Xinhua, 7 March 17; Zhang Chun, "Six Important Environmental Cases," China Dialogue, 11 April 17. See also Zhang Yan, "Public Interest Lawsuits To Grow Over Pollution, Food and Drugs," China Daily, 14 March 17. The China Daily article quotes a senior Supreme People's Procuratorate official as saying that a public interest lawsuit by the procuratorate should be "the last resort," and that governmental and non-governmental organizations should be urged to file cases first.

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⁴²See, e.g., Dimitri de Boer and Douglas Whitehead, "Opinion: The Future of Public Interest Litigation in China," China Dialogue, 8 November 16; "How China Is Using the Law To Protect the Environment," Client Earth, 24 October 16.

⁴³Scott Wilson, "China's NGO Regulations and Uneven Civil Society Development," University of Nottingham, China Policy Institute: Analysis (blog), 15 February 17; Zhang Chun, "Environmental Law Blunted by Crippling Court Costs," China Dialogue, 22 August 16.

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⁴⁷Michael Standaert, “Chinese Ruling Threatens Environmental Public Interest Suits,” Bloomberg, 24 February 17.

⁴⁸Zhang Chun and Tang Damin, “The Changzhou Soil Pollution Case Is Far From Over,” China Dialogue, 24 February 17.

⁴⁹See, e.g., “Clashes Flare Amid Mass Incinerator Protests in China’s Guangdong,” Radio Free Asia, 8 May 17. See also Michael Standaert, “As China Pushes Waste-to-Energy Incinerators, Protests Are Mounting,” Yale Environment 360, 20 April 17.

⁵⁰PRC Constitution, issued 4 December 82, amended 12 April 88, 29 March 93, 15 March 99, 14 March 04, art. 35.

⁵¹International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 66, entry into force 23 March 76, arts. 19, 21, 22; United Nations Treaty Collection, Chapter IV, Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, last visited 10 September 17; State Council Information Office, “National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2016–2020)” [Guojia renquan xingdong jihua (2016–2020 nian)], 29 September 16, sec. 5. China has signed and stated its intent to ratify the ICCPR.

⁵²Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by UN General Assembly resolution 217A (III) of 10 December 48, arts. 19, 20.

⁵³“Xian Under Security Alert After Thousands Protest Incinerator Plant,” Radio Free Asia, 17 October 16; “10,000 in Xi’an Protest Against Construction of Waste Incinerator, Many Are Detained” [Xi’an wan ren kangyi lese fenshao chang jianshe duo ren bei bu], Radio Free Asia, 17 October 16.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵“Xian Under Security Alert After Thousands Protest Incinerator Plant,” Radio Free Asia, 17 October 16.

⁵⁶See, e.g., “The Artist Protesters in a Polluted City on Edge,” BBC, China Blog, 13 December 16; “China Cracks Down on Chengdu Smog Protests, Detains Activists, Muzzles Media,” Radio Free Asia, 13 December 16.

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⁶¹Rights Defense Network, “Gushi County, Henan Province, Public Security Used Brutal Torture Against Rural Rights Advocate Xu Jiande” [Henan sheng gushi xian gong’an shiyong canbao kuxing zhemo weiquan nongmin xu jiande], 19 March 17.

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⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Zhou Tailai and Li Rongde, “Environmental Activist Convicted of Blackmailing Oil Giant Has Sentence Commuted,” Caixin, 28 June 17. See also Love Is One Hundred Over Zero (Ai shi yibai bi ling), “March 1, International Spotted Seal Day. China’s Number 1 Protector of Spotted Seals—Tian Jiguang, Remains in Prison!” [3 yue 1 ri, guoji haibao ri. zhongguo ban haibao baohu di yi ren—tian jiguang, reng zai jianyu zhong!], Weibo post, 1 March 17, 3:13 p.m.; Liu Ji, “Environmentalist Tian Jiguang’s Extortion Conviction Rescinded: Original Verdict Had Unclear Facts and Violated Procedures” [Huanbao renshi tian jiguang qiaozha an youzui panjue bei chexiao: yuanpan shishi bu qing weifan chengxu], The Paper, 12 August 16.

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