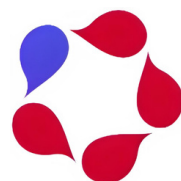


2024

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT China

Prepared By:



**Washington Center
For Human Rights**

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Executive Summary

In 2024, human rights in China continued to face significant challenges, with widespread violations affecting ethnic minorities, political dissidents, and civil society. The Chinese government's campaign against Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang remained one of the most severe issues. Reports documented mass arbitrary detentions, torture, enforced disappearances, and the erasure of cultural identities. Despite being described as crimes against humanity by international observers, these abuses persisted unabated. Beijing dismissed calls for accountability and reform, instead intensifying its surveillance and control in the region.

The suppression of political dissent also escalated, with authorities utilizing national security laws to silence freedoms of expression, assembly, and association. Activists, journalists, and human rights defenders faced arbitrary detentions and harsh sentences under charges such as subversion. These measures created an environment where public discourse was heavily censored, and online platforms were meticulously monitored. Any form of dissent, whether in public or private, often led to severe repercussions.

While the overall human rights situation remained dire, some limited progress was noted. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights maintained dialogue with Chinese authorities, advocating for improvements. However, meaningful action or reforms from the government were largely absent. On a global scale, advocacy efforts gained momentum as international scrutiny of abuses in Xinjiang and other regions increased. Human rights organizations worked tirelessly to push for greater accountability, raising awareness of the plight of those affected by China's policies.

Ongoing concerns included cultural assimilation policies that threatened the identities of ethnic minorities, particularly Tibetans and Uyghurs. Efforts to assimilate these groups into mainstream Chinese culture intensified, further eroding their cultural heritage. Additionally, enforced disappearances targeting dissidents and activists both within China and abroad continued to raise alarms. Such practices reinforced the precarious position of human rights defenders under the current regime.

To address these issues, the Chinese government must immediately end practices such as arbitrary detention and torture in Xinjiang and cooperate with international human rights bodies, allowing independent monitoring of conditions. International organizations and governments have a responsibility to strengthen accountability mechanisms, including sanctions and investigations, while supporting civil society groups advocating for victims. Civil society organizations must amplify their efforts to raise awareness, promote global solidarity, and encourage coordinated international pressure on China to reform its policies.

The situation in China reflects a grim reality of persistent human rights violations, with limited signs of change. However, a unified and robust international response remains critical to ensure accountability and push for tangible improvements in the protection of human rights.

Methodology

The methodology used in collecting data for human rights reports on China typically involves a comprehensive approach that combines various sources of information and data collection methods. This process is essential for accurately assessing the human rights situation in the country, particularly given the complexities and challenges involved.

Sources of Information

Interviews:

Direct interviews with victims of human rights abuses, activists, and local civil society members are crucial. These interviews can be conducted in-person or virtually, allowing for a wide range of perspectives to be gathered. Organizations like Human Rights Watch often rely on these firsthand accounts to understand the nuances of human rights violations [4].

Reports from NGOs:

Data is also collected from reports published by local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). For instance, the Dui Hua Foundation has compiled extensive lists of political prisoners, which serve as critical data points for understanding systemic issues within China [3].

Field Research:

Field research includes visits to areas where human rights violations are reported, such as refugee camps or regions with significant political unrest. This allows researchers to gather qualitative data and observe conditions firsthand [4].

Secondary Data:

Existing literature, media reports, government documents, and previous assessments provide a backdrop against which new findings can be contextualized. This secondary data helps identify trends and corroborate information obtained through interviews [2][4].

Statistical Analysis:

Quantitative data from various sources, including government statistics and international databases, is analyzed to support qualitative findings. This can include demographic information about affected populations or statistics on arrests and detentions [6].

Data Collection Methods

Qualitative Methods:

These include in-depth interviews and focus groups that provide rich, detailed insights into personal experiences of rights violations. The emphasis is on understanding the context and impact of these violations on individuals and communities [2][4].

Quantitative Methods:

Surveys and statistical analyses help quantify the extent of human rights abuses. These methods can reveal patterns over time and across different regions within China [6].

Collaboration with Local Organizations:

Engaging with local human rights organizations is vital for gaining access to information and ensuring that the voices of affected individuals are heard. These organizations often facilitate connections with interviewees and provide critical local context [4][5].

Limitations and Challenges

Access Restrictions:

Researchers often face significant barriers when attempting to enter sensitive areas or engage with populations at risk of reprisal from authorities. This can limit the scope of field research [4][5].

Safety Concerns:

The safety of both researchers and interviewees is a paramount concern, especially in environments where dissent is met with harsh penalties. This can lead to self-censorship among potential interview subjects [3][5].

Censorship and Misinformation:

The Chinese government heavily censors information related to human rights issues, making it challenging to obtain reliable data. Researchers must navigate a landscape where misinformation can skew perceptions of the reality on the ground [5][6].

Verification Difficulties:

Ensuring the accuracy of testimonies can be challenging due to the potential for coercion or manipulation by state authorities. Cross-referencing multiple sources is essential but can be labor-intensive [4][6].

In summary, the methodology for collecting data on human rights in China involves a multifaceted approach that integrates various sources and methods while navigating significant challenges related to access, safety, and verification.

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Human Rights Overview

The human rights landscape in China in 2024 remains deeply concerning, characterized by systemic repression, particularly targeting ethnic minorities and critics of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This overview examines the political, economic, and social dynamics that have shaped this trajectory, alongside notable events influencing human rights in the country.

Political Context

Under President Xi Jinping's leadership, the CCP has intensified its authoritarian grip. Civil liberties—such as freedoms of expression, assembly, and religion—are severely restricted. Human rights defenders and lawyers have faced arrest under vaguely defined national security laws, while independent media and opposition voices are systematically silenced[2][6].

In Hong Kong, the National Security Law introduced in 2020 continues to erode freedoms. The enactment of Article 23 in March 2024 has further entrenched Beijing's control, effectively criminalizing dissent and leading to additional arrests of pro-democracy activists[4][5].

The situation in Xinjiang remains dire, with credible reports of crimes against humanity targeting Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims. The United Nations has urged Beijing to halt these abuses, but recommendations have been dismissed. As of August 2024, hundreds of thousands remain detained under harsh conditions, facing forced labor and cultural assimilation[1][5].

Economic Context

China's slowing economy has compounded public dissatisfaction. Rising costs of living and unemployment have heightened grievances, prompting protests such as pensioners rallying against medical insurance cuts in early 2024. However, rather than addressing these concerns, authorities have doubled down on surveillance and repression[2][6].

Economic difficulties have also deepened ethnic disparities. Lockdown measures during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed systemic inequalities, with marginalized communities bearing the brunt of these policies. Protests against these measures, particularly among minority groups, have been met with state violence and suppression[3][5].

Social Context

Aggressive state-led assimilation policies in regions like Tibet and Xinjiang threaten the preservation of minority cultures. In Tibet, the state's control over religious practices has intensified, while Uyghurs face severe restrictions on their faith and traditions[3][5]. Reports highlight that Tibetan Buddhist monasteries are now under direct state supervision, and linguistic and cultural erasure is widespread.

China's extensive surveillance apparatus further restricts citizens' freedoms, creating an environment of pervasive fear. Advanced technologies monitor online and offline activities, making it nearly impossible for individuals to express dissent without facing severe repercussions[6][7].

Significant Events

Key developments shaping the human rights environment in 2024 include:

1. **Ongoing Abuses in Xinjiang:** Continued reports of mass detentions and forced labor prompted a renewed call for accountability by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in August[1].
2. **Legislative Changes in Hong Kong:** The implementation of Article 23 in March consolidated Beijing's dominance over Hong Kong's autonomy, further eroding democratic freedoms[4].
3. **Economic-Driven Protests:** Small-scale demonstrations, driven by frustrations over economic insecurity, have emerged despite the risks posed by the CCP's repressive measures[5].

China's human rights record in 2024 reflects a troubling intensification of state-led repression, furthering political control and eroding freedoms. The combination of authoritarian governance, economic stagnation, and aggressive social assimilation policies has created a climate of fear and discontent. While international actors have raised concerns, achieving meaningful progress in China's human rights environment remains a daunting challenge.

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Civil and Political Rights

The civil and political rights situation in China during 2024 remains dire, characterized by severe restrictions on freedoms of expression, assembly, and the pervasive use of arbitrary arrests and torture. The Chinese government continues to employ national security as a justification for its repressive policies, effectively stifling dissent and curtailing civil liberties.

Freedom of Expression

In 2024, the Chinese authorities maintained stringent censorship across both online and offline platforms. Discussions on sensitive topics were heavily monitored, with individuals facing severe repercussions for expressing dissenting views. The government has systematically targeted human rights defenders, journalists, and activists, often accusing them of vague charges related to national security. For instance, prominent activists like Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiaxi received lengthy prison sentences for their involvement in informal gatherings discussing civil society issues[1][2][3].

Specific incidents highlight the oppressive environment: in April 2024, several individuals who participated in protests commemorating victims of a deadly fire in Urumqi faced harassment and detention. Among them were Cao Zhixin and Li Yuanjing, who were held for months before being released on bail[1]. Furthermore, the case of Zhang Zhan, a journalist who reported on the COVID-19 outbreak, exemplifies the risks faced by those who attempt to speak out; she remains imprisoned under harsh conditions due to her reporting activities[7].

Freedom of Assembly

The right to peaceful assembly is virtually nonexistent in China. Protests are met with immediate suppression by law enforcement agencies. The government has enacted laws that criminalize public gatherings without prior approval, which is nearly impossible to obtain. Following the widespread protests against COVID-19 restrictions in late 2022, many demonstrators were arrested and subjected to intimidation tactics. Reports indicate that authorities have continued to retaliate against participants from these protests throughout 2024[1][8].

In Hong Kong, the situation has deteriorated further due to the implementation of new security laws that severely restrict civil society activism. The Safeguarding National Security Ordinance passed in March 2024 imposes heavy penalties for peaceful dissent and expands police powers significantly[4][5]. This law not only affects local residents but also extends its reach globally, allowing authorities to target individuals abroad for their political activities.

Arbitrary Arrests

Arbitrary arrests remain a hallmark of China's approach to governance. The government routinely detains individuals without formal charges or access to legal representation. Reports from various human rights organizations indicate that those accused of political

dissent face incommunicado detention and are often subjected to torture or ill-treatment during their confinement[6][9].

For example, human rights lawyer Lu Siwei was forcibly repatriated from Laos back to China in September 2024 after being detained for advocating against internet censorship[1]. His case reflects a broader pattern where activists are pursued across borders and subjected to harsh treatment upon return.

Instances of Torture or Ill-Treatment

Torture and ill-treatment are pervasive issues within China's detention system. Reports indicate that detainees often face physical abuse, psychological torture, and inadequate medical care. In Xinjiang, where the government has implemented policies targeting Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, allegations of torture are particularly alarming. Survivors have recounted experiences of forced indoctrination, sexual violence, and other forms of abuse within state-run facilities[3][7][9].

The European Union has expressed deep concern over these practices, calling for accountability and urging China to engage with international human rights mechanisms to address these violations comprehensively[9]. The ongoing repression has created an atmosphere of fear among the population, where even minor expressions of dissent can lead to severe consequences.

Overall Impact on the Population

The cumulative effect of these policies is a society marked by fear and repression. Citizens are increasingly wary of expressing their opinions or engaging in collective actions due to the potential repercussions from state authorities. The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) tight grip on civil society has led to a significant decline in public trust towards governmental institutions and a widespread sense of helplessness among those who wish to advocate for their rights[6][7].

In summary, 2024 has seen an intensification of China's crackdown on civil and political rights, with significant implications for freedom of expression, assembly, arbitrary arrests, and instances of torture or ill-treatment. The government's relentless pursuit of control over its citizens continues to erode the foundations of civil society in China.

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Rights of Specific Groups

In 2024, the human rights situation in China remains dire, particularly for women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic or religious minorities. This examination highlights the ongoing violations, legal protections, and any progress made for these groups.

Women

Rights Violations:

Women in China face significant challenges, including gender-based violence, discrimination in the workplace, and reproductive rights violations. Reports indicate that women from ethnic minorities, particularly Uyghurs, have been subjected to forced sterilizations and abortions as part of state policies aimed at controlling population growth among these groups[1][3][5]. The Chinese government has also been criticized for its failure to protect women from domestic violence and for not implementing effective legal frameworks to combat such issues[4].

Legal Protections:

Although there are laws intended to protect women's rights, enforcement is often weak. The Anti-Domestic Violence Law was enacted in 2016; however, its implementation has been inconsistent across different regions[4]. Activists continue to face harassment when advocating for women's rights, indicating a lack of genuine governmental support for these issues[6].

Children

Rights Violations:

Children in China, particularly those from ethnic minorities like the Uyghurs, are at risk of being separated from their families and placed in state-run indoctrination facilities. Reports have documented instances where children are removed from their parents under the guise of "re-education" efforts[1][3][5]. Additionally, children face restrictions on their cultural expression and are often subjected to surveillance[6].

Legal Protections:

While China has ratified international conventions on children's rights, enforcement remains a challenge. The government has made some strides in improving educational access; however, the quality of education for minority children is often subpar compared to their Han counterparts[4].

LGBTQ+ Individuals

Rights Violations:

LGBTQ+ individuals in China continue to face significant discrimination and lack legal recognition. Same-sex couples are unable to marry or adopt children, and there are no comprehensive anti-discrimination laws protecting LGBTQ+ rights[2][6]. In 2024, there were reports of increased censorship against LGBTQ+ organizations and events; notable advocacy groups have been forced to shut down due to governmental pressure[6].

Legal Protections:

While same-sex sexual activity is legal, the absence of legal protections against discrimination leaves LGBTQ+ individuals vulnerable. Gender-affirming treatments remain limited and access is further complicated by recent regulations restricting online sales of necessary medications[2][6].

Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Rights Violations:

Ethnic minorities, particularly Uyghurs and Tibetans, continue to endure severe repression. Reports indicate ongoing mass detentions in Xinjiang, where over a million Uyghurs have been detained under the pretext of counter-terrorism efforts. These individuals face torture, forced labor, and cultural erasure[1][3][5]. The Chinese government has also intensified its surveillance measures across minority regions[6].

Legal Protections:

Legal frameworks ostensibly protect minority rights; however, these laws are often manipulated to justify repression. For example, laws against separatism are used to suppress any form of cultural expression or dissent among ethnic minorities[4][5]. Despite international calls for accountability regarding human rights violations in Xinjiang, the Chinese government has dismissed these claims as unfounded and continues its oppressive policies without significant pushback from within or outside the country[1][3].

Progress Made

Despite the grim landscape of human rights conditions in China for 2024, some international bodies have begun to apply pressure on the Chinese government to address these issues more comprehensively. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has called for stronger actions against abuses in Xinjiang and acknowledged that many problematic laws remain in place[1][8]. However, tangible progress remains elusive as the Chinese government maintains a firm grip on dissent and continues its repressive measures against vulnerable populations.

In summary, while there are isolated instances of advocacy and international attention towards human rights conditions in China, systemic violations persist across multiple groups with little indication of meaningful reform or improvement.

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Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

In 2024, China continues to navigate the complexities of economic, social, and cultural rights, particularly concerning the right to health, education, and adequate housing. This analysis highlights the current state of these rights, focusing on healthcare access, educational opportunities, and housing conditions.

Right to Health

China's healthcare system is undergoing significant reforms aimed at improving public health services and reducing the financial burden on patients. The National Health Commission has outlined several key initiatives for 2024:

Healthcare Reform Initiatives:

The government plans to enhance public healthcare service capacity at the primary level and reform payment systems in public hospitals. The aim is to make healthcare more accessible and affordable for the population[1][3].

Bulk Drug Procurement:

To tackle high medical costs, China has implemented a bulk drug procurement program that is expected to cover 500 medications in 2024. This initiative is part of a broader strategy to lower out-of-pocket (OOP) expenses for patients[1][3].

Technological Integration:

Advances in medical technology and digital health services are being prioritized to improve service delivery. Over 3,000 medical institutions now offer online consultations, which is crucial for patients unable to visit healthcare facilities in person[1][3].

Despite these improvements, challenges remain. Access to healthcare for migrant workers and rural populations continues to be hindered by the household registration system (*hukou*), which restricts access to local services for those without urban registration[4][6]. Additionally, high OOP expenses still pose a significant financial strain on families, with individuals covering nearly 29% of total healthcare costs as of recent years[5].

Right to Education

The right to education in China has seen notable advancements but also faces persistent barriers:

Educational Opportunities:

The Chinese government has committed to improving access to education through various initiatives aimed at reducing disparities between urban and rural areas. However, children of

migrant workers often encounter difficulties accessing quality education due to their rural *hukou* status[4][6].

Policy Framework:

The Human Rights Action Plan emphasizes equal access to education as a priority. Measures include increasing funding for schools in rural areas and promoting inclusive policies that support children from disadvantaged backgrounds[2].

Nevertheless, significant gaps remain in educational quality and resources available to rural students compared to their urban counterparts. This inequality continues to affect educational outcomes and opportunities for social mobility.

Right to Adequate Housing

Housing rights are also a critical aspect of China's economic and social framework:

Housing Initiatives:

In 2024, the government aims to provide affordable housing solutions through public rental homes and housing subsidies for low-income families. The renovation of dilapidated housing is also a focus area[2].

Joint Ownership Schemes:

New policies are being introduced to facilitate joint ownership schemes, allowing individuals who cannot afford full market prices to invest in property ownership[2].

Despite these efforts, challenges persist regarding housing quality and availability. Urbanization pressures have led to increased demand for housing in cities, resulting in inflated prices that often exceed the means of lower-income residents. Additionally, migrant workers frequently face discrimination in housing markets due to their non-local status[6].

Conclusion

In summary, while China has made strides in enhancing economic, social, and cultural rights related to health, education, and housing in 2024, significant barriers remain. Ongoing reforms aim to address these issues; however, the effectiveness of these measures will depend on their implementation and the government's ability to tackle systemic inequalities rooted in the *hukou* system and urban-rural divides. Continued monitoring and advocacy will be essential in ensuring that all citizens can fully enjoy their rights.

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Refugees and Migrants

In 2024, the situation for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers in China remains complex and challenging. Various factors contribute to the treatment of these groups, including living conditions, access to asylum procedures, and instances of exploitation or abuse. Additionally, both international and domestic responses to their plight have evolved.

Treatment of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Living Conditions

Refugees and asylum seekers in China often face precarious living conditions. Many live in informal settlements or overcrowded urban areas with limited access to basic services such as healthcare and education. The lack of legal status exacerbates their vulnerability, making them susceptible to exploitation and discrimination in the labor market[2][6]. Reports indicate that refugees are frequently restricted to low-paid jobs in the informal economy, which further isolates them from local communities and hinders their ability to integrate[2].

Access to Asylum Procedures

Access to asylum procedures in China is fraught with difficulties. The Chinese government does not have a comprehensive legal framework for asylum seekers, leading to inconsistencies in how claims are processed. While some asylum seekers manage to navigate the system successfully, many face bureaucratic hurdles that delay their applications or result in denial without adequate justification[1][3]. Notably, Chinese nationals seeking asylum abroad have increased significantly; many cite political persecution and economic instability as driving factors for their migration[1][3][5].

Exploitation and Abuse

Instances of exploitation are prevalent among migrant workers and refugees. Many are subjected to labor abuses, including wage theft, unsafe working conditions, and lack of access to legal protections. Vulnerable groups such as women, children, and ethnic minorities experience heightened risks of trafficking and forced labor[2][6]. Reports suggest that the lack of awareness regarding their rights further perpetuates these abuses, leaving many without recourse[2].

International and Domestic Responses

International Responses

International organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have been vocal about the need for better protection mechanisms for refugees and asylum seekers in China. They advocate for improved access to asylum procedures and greater support for integration into

host communities[2][6]. However, China's response has often been characterized by a reluctance to fully engage with international norms regarding refugee protection.

Domestic Responses

Domestically, there have been limited efforts by the Chinese government to address the challenges faced by refugees and migrant workers. While some local governments have implemented initiatives aimed at providing basic services, these efforts are inconsistent across regions. Furthermore, the government's focus on maintaining social stability often leads to crackdowns on undocumented migrants rather than addressing their needs through policy reform[1][4].

While there is a growing recognition of the issues faced by refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers in China, significant challenges remain. The treatment of these groups is influenced by a combination of inadequate legal frameworks, socio-economic pressures, and governmental policies that prioritize control over humanitarian considerations.

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Legal Framework and Accountability

In 2024, China's legal framework concerning human rights remains complex, characterized by a combination of legislative reforms and ongoing challenges regarding accountability for violations. This examination covers recent developments in legislation, the role of the judiciary, and instances of impunity.

Recent Legislation and Reforms

China has undertaken several legislative initiatives aimed at enhancing human rights protections. Notably, the Human Rights Action Plan (2021-2025) emphasizes the integration of human rights into the legal framework, focusing on economic, social, and cultural rights while promoting a people-centered approach to development[3]. In June 2024, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress reviewed a draft preschool education law aimed at improving access for children in rural areas, which reflects an ongoing commitment to social rights[1].

Additionally, guidelines were issued in February 2024 to protect the rights of workers in new employment forms, addressing the evolving labor market[1]. However, despite these advancements, concerns persist regarding the practical enforcement of these laws and their effectiveness in safeguarding individual rights.

Role of the Judiciary

The judiciary in China is often criticized for its lack of independence and its role in upholding state interests over individual rights. Reforms to the **Criminal Procedure Law** have aimed to align more closely with international standards; however, significant gaps remain in practice. Reports indicate that while legal provisions exist for fair trial rights, including presumption of innocence and access to legal counsel, these are frequently undermined by systemic issues such as arbitrary detention and lack of transparency during trials[2][4].

For instance, prominent cases like that of Chen Guangcheng, a blind legal activist sentenced to prison under dubious circumstances, highlight the judicial system's failures. His case exemplifies how political considerations can overshadow legal principles[2].

Impunity for Human Rights Violations

Impunity remains a critical issue within China's human rights landscape. The Chinese government has been known to systematically target human rights defenders through vague national security laws. For example, prominent activists such as Xu Zhiyong and Ding Jiaxi received lengthy prison sentences for charges related to subversion after participating in discussions about civil society[6]. Furthermore, amendments to laws like the Counter-Espionage Law have expanded the government's ability to prosecute individuals on broad grounds, raising fears about increased repression against dissenting voices[6][7].

Despite international calls for accountability, many perpetrators of human rights abuses continue to evade justice. The lack of independent oversight and the government's control over judicial processes contribute significantly to this culture of impunity.

In summary, while China has made strides in formalizing human rights protections through new legislation and reforms, significant challenges remain regarding their implementation and enforcement. The judiciary's role is often compromised by political influence, leading to widespread impunity for those committing human rights violations. Cases involving high-profile activists illustrate the ongoing struggle for justice within China's legal system, highlighting a need for genuine reform that prioritizes individual rights over state interests.

Citations:

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International Relations and Human Rights

China's international relations in 2024 continue to be marked by complex dynamics involving human rights issues, especially regarding its engagement with UN bodies, responses to international pressure, and the implications of these actions for its domestic human rights situation.

Engagement with UN Bodies

China has been an active participant in various UN mechanisms, particularly within the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). In 2024, it continued to assert its position against Western interference, especially in relation to allegations about human rights abuses in Xinjiang and Tibet. During the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, over 100 countries rallied behind China, opposing claims of human rights violations. This support often comes from nations with similar governance styles or strategic interests, particularly within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and numerous African nations[1]. This coalition highlights China's ability to garner international backing for its stance on sovereignty.

Additionally, China has been accused of manipulating UN processes to limit scrutiny over its domestic human rights record. One of the notable strategies involves promoting resolutions that prioritize state sovereignty over individual human rights, a move that critics argue weakens international accountability. For example, China's proposals emphasize "mutually beneficial cooperation" rather than directly addressing concerns related to individual freedoms[2]. Moreover, China has been resistant to granting UN special rapporteurs access to investigate alleged abuses, further limiting oversight and accountability[4].

International Pressure and Sanctions

Despite these diplomatic maneuvers, China faces significant international pressure regarding its human rights practices. Reports from organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International continue to document widespread human rights abuses, particularly against Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities in Xinjiang, with some going as far as calling these actions crimes against humanity[5][7]. In response, China has frequently dismissed these allegations as "political manipulation" by Western powers, framing them as an attempt to destabilize the country[3].

In 2024, the impact of international sanctions, particularly those imposed by Western countries, remains a contentious issue. Critics of these sanctions argue that they are ineffective and even counterproductive, worsening China's human rights abuses rather than prompting change. A UN expert voiced concern that such sanctions could exacerbate China's impunity on the global stage, reinforcing its resistance to addressing human rights issues[9].

Impact on Domestic Human Rights Situation

International pressure and sanctions have had a tangible impact on China's domestic human rights policies. The Chinese government, in response to external criticism, has intensified its

internal crackdown on dissent. This includes heightened censorship, arbitrary detentions of activists and lawyers, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly. These actions are often framed as necessary to protect national security and sovereignty against external threats[7][8].

Furthermore, while some reports suggest the closure of political education camps in Xinjiang, many Uyghurs remain detained without due process, signaling a broader systemic issue within the country[5][6]. This lack of accountability, paired with the continued suppression of civil liberties, reflects a strategy where the government focuses on silencing domestic opposition while attempting to project an image of international legitimacy through diplomatic actions at the UN.

In 2024, China's approach to human rights on the international stage reveals a balancing act between defying Western criticism and attempting to reshape global norms to suit its interests. While it has succeeded in rallying support from certain nations, the underlying human rights concerns, especially regarding ethnic minorities and civil liberties, persist. The interplay between international pressure, sanctions, and domestic policies will continue to shape the future of human rights in China, with the government seemingly prioritizing state sovereignty and national security over international norms of individual rights.

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Recommendations

To the Chinese Government

1. End Repressive Policies in Xinjiang:

- Immediately cease the mass arbitrary detention, torture, and enforced disappearances of Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang.
- Dismantle internment camps and ensure the unconditional release of individuals detained without due process.

2. Legal Reforms:

- Repeal laws that enable discrimination against ethnic minorities and restrict fundamental freedoms such as expression, assembly, and religion.
- Revise national security laws to prevent their misuse against dissidents and minority groups.

3. Engagement with UN Mechanisms:

- Cooperate fully with UN human rights bodies by allowing independent investigations into human rights violations.
- Facilitate unrestricted access for UN experts to Xinjiang and other regions where violations have been reported.

4. Protection of Human Rights Defenders:

- Implement legal protections for human rights defenders to ensure their safety and freedom from harassment or intimidation.
- Investigate and hold accountable those responsible for targeting or attacking these individuals.

5. Cultural and Religious Rights:

- Safeguard the rights of ethnic minorities to freely practice their culture and religion.
- Ensure the preservation and transmission of the Uyghur language, cultural practices, and other ethnic identities.

To International Bodies

1. Increased Diplomatic Pressure:

- Encourage member states of the UN to collectively pressure China to adhere to international human rights standards.
- Hold special sessions at the UN Human Rights Council focused on China's human rights violations.

2. Establishment of Monitoring Mechanisms:

- Advocate for the creation of an independent international body to monitor and report on human rights violations in China annually.
- Ensure ongoing attention is maintained on human rights issues within the country.

3. Support for Civil Society Organizations:

- Provide financial support and resources to civil society groups working on human rights in China, particularly those advocating for victims in Xinjiang.
- Strengthen efforts to ensure the safety of local activists while they work to secure reforms.

4. Public Awareness Campaigns:

- Launch global campaigns to raise awareness about the human rights violations in China, focusing especially on the Uyghurs and other marginalized groups.
- Mobilize global public opinion to increase pressure on governments and international bodies to take decisive action.

To Civil Society Organizations

1. Documentation of Human Rights Violations:

- Continue documenting and publishing detailed reports on human rights abuses in China, especially in Xinjiang.
- Use testimonies from victims and their families to build comprehensive and credible evidence.

2. Advocacy for Policy Change:

- Engage with policymakers globally to advocate for sanctions or other measures against Chinese officials involved in human rights abuses.
- Rely on well-documented evidence from independent investigations to drive change.

3. Building Coalitions:

- Collaborate with other civil society organizations to amplify the advocacy efforts for human rights in China.
- Strengthen global pressure on the Chinese government and international bodies to address abuses.

4. Support Networks for Victims:

- Establish comprehensive support networks for victims of human rights violations, providing legal, psychological, and social assistance.
- Help victims navigate their recovery processes and seek justice.

By adopting these recommendations, significant improvements can be made in the human rights situation in China. These steps will address systemic abuses, protect the rights of minorities, and foster a future where fundamental freedoms are respected and upheld.

Conclusion

The human rights situation in China in 2024 remains deeply concerning, with critical violations persisting across various regions. The ongoing crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, including mass arbitrary detention, torture, and cultural repression of Uyghur and other Turkic Muslim populations, highlight the government's systematic abuse of power. Despite international calls for accountability, the Chinese government has shown little willingness to address these grave human rights concerns.

In addition to the situation in Xinjiang, the government's increasingly repressive stance on freedoms of expression, assembly, and association further exacerbates the human rights environment. Dissidents, human rights defenders, and political activists face severe consequences, including arbitrary detention, as the government cracks down on civil society. The repression extends to regions like Tibet and Hong Kong, where the suppression of cultural and political expressions continues unabated.

As we conclude this report, it is crucial to emphasize the need for ongoing monitoring, advocacy, and international pressure to address these violations. The global community must maintain vigilance and take action to hold China accountable for its human rights abuses. The upcoming Universal Periodic Review offers a pivotal opportunity for member states to advocate for the rights of those suffering under the current regime. While there are frameworks in place aimed at improving human rights, such as the Human Rights Action Plan, meaningful progress remains elusive. Therefore, continued pressure from the international community is essential to ensuring that human rights are respected and protected in China.

Appendices

Appendix A: Statistical Data on Human Rights Issues

Key Statistics

- **Uyghur Detentions:** An estimated 500,000 Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims remain imprisoned in Xinjiang as of 2024, with ongoing reports of torture and enforced disappearances.
- **Arbitrary Detention Cases:** The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention reported 145 outstanding cases of enforced disappearances related to human rights defenders and activists.
- **UN Communications:** Since 2018, there have been 118 communications from UN Special Procedures regarding human rights violations in China, involving 149 individuals, including 110 human rights defenders.

Human Rights Violations

- **Censorship and Surveillance:** The Chinese government continues to impose strict censorship and surveillance measures, affecting freedoms of expression, assembly, and association.
- **Women's Rights:** Women's rights activists face harassment and arbitrary detention; the government has been criticized for failing to protect these individuals.

Appendix B: Glossary of Legal and Human Rights Terms

- **Arbitrary Detention:** The arrest or detention of individuals without due process or legal justification.
- **Crimes Against Humanity:** Widespread or systematic attacks against civilians, including acts such as torture, enslavement, and enforced disappearances.
- **Censorship:** The suppression of speech, public communication, or other information deemed objectionable by the government.
- **Human Rights Defender:** Individuals who promote and protect human rights through peaceful means.
- **Universal Periodic Review (UPR):** A process established by the UN Human Rights Council to review the human rights records of all UN member states.