

## TURNING RESEARCH INTO ACTION

HRIC launched ***State Secrets: China's Legal Labyrinth***, a report examining the Chinese government's complex and opaque system of state secrets. Executive director Sharon Hom's presentation of the report at a **Council on Foreign Relations** event hosted by professor Jerry Cohen in June drew a standing-room-only audience. The report garnered extensive media coverage in both English and Chinese-language press, and prompted a response from China's Foreign Ministry that resulted in rare exposure for HRIC in the mainland press. HRIC will continue to actively advance recommendations made in the report, the publication of which dovetails with the State Council's current review of the state secrets law and other ongoing domestic reforms.

HRIC attended the **5th session of the Human Rights Council** in Geneva, where law program officer Elisabeth Wickeri and law intern Vivian Shen shared the state secrets report in meetings with numerous UN special procedures, special rapporteurs, working groups and NGO representatives. The team also presented HRIC's research on issues ranging from environmental pollution to the rights of children and strategized over how to implement the report's recommendations.

To bring attention to cases of individuals detained in violation of international human rights and to promote an international independent review of those cases, HRIC regularly makes submissions to the **UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention** with factual information and analysis of international and Chinese law. Since 2002, HRIC has submitted a total of 43 cases to the Working Group, including those of journalist Shi Tao and pro-democracy activist **Hu Shigen**. In September 2007, HRIC is preparing to submit the cases of **Chen Shuqing, Chi Jianwei, Shuang Shuying** and **Zhang Jianhong**.

## KEEPING JUNE 4TH IN THE SPOTLIGHT

HRIC's Web sites received an upsurge in visitors around the eighteenth anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, and **HRIC's June 4th podcast series** of interviews with participants of the 1989 movement drew an increase in downloads, topping 79,000 since its launch in June 2006. The Chinese-language report ***Media Control in China***, written by He Qinglian, HRIC's senior researcher-in-residence, was downloaded more than 23,000 times during the same period. Meanwhile, the **June 4th Archive** ([www.64memo.org](http://www.64memo.org)), HRIC's Chinese-language Web site documenting the crackdown, received almost 3 million more hits than the previous peak one year ago.

HRIC staffed a table at the annual **Candlelight Vigil and Commemoration for June 4th at Victoria Park in Hong Kong**, which attracted an estimated 55,000 people. The annual event commemorates the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown and calls for official accountability. Staff from HRIC's Hong Kong office distributed 5,000 copies of a June 4th podcast booklet, which included quotes from interviews with participants and witnesses of the events of 1989.

HRIC senior researcher Bonny Ling gave a talk entitled "Looking at China's Environmental Protection from a Human Rights Perspective" at an event arranged by the **Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China** in the run-up to the June 4th anniversary.

## CREATING USEFUL TOOLS AND RESOURCES

In June, HRIC unveiled its Action Bulletin, a new resource designed to complement international news coverage with concise analysis on current human rights issues, and suggestions on specific actions readers can take to address the problem. The first Action Bulletin dealt with the slave labor cases in Shanxi and Henan provinces. To join others in getting involved, visit <http://www.hrichina.org/public/contents/44173>.

A revised and updated version of He Qinglian's report on media control (mentioned above), circulated widely on Chinese Web sites since its original publication, has been translated into English and will be published by HRIC this fall as ***The Fog of Censorship: Media Control in China.***

## AMPLIFYING CHINESE VOICES THROUGH INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

HRIC's press strategies target specific audiences in China and abroad with updates on cases of individual human rights defenders, as well as critical analyses and perspectives on human rights issues, including preparations for the Olympics. In 14 of 16 press releases issued from June through August, HRIC advocated on behalf of mainland Chinese rights activists, including rights defender **Guo Feixiong**, rights defense lawyer **Zheng Enchong**, Christian activist **Hua Huiqi** and petitioners **Du Yangming** and **Shuang Shuying**.

## COMMUNICATING WITH POLICY MAKERS AND CORPORATE LEADERS

HRIC executive director Sharon Hom participated in a panel discussion entitled "**Hong Kong, Ten Years After**" at the **Heritage Foundation** in Washington, DC, in June. The event provided a significant opportunity for HRIC to share its research and insights with policy researchers and policy makers. Other panelists included representatives from the Committee for Policy Studies, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office and Human Rights Watch.

HRIC EU liaison officer Isabella Nitschke and the International Campaign for Tibet informally briefed the **European Parliament Interparliamentary Delegation to China** in preparation for its visit to Tibet and China in late June. The briefing aimed to inform the delegation members of human rights concerns in Tibet and help them create a strategic roadmap to maximize the visit's impact. Another goal was to provide officials with important leverage points that would put political pressure on

Tibetan and Chinese authorities to advance reforms.

Information technology companies have been feeling the sting of criticism for acquiescing to censorship limitations in their business operations in China. HRIC has been participating in an effort to identify practical solutions to the human rights challenges faced by these companies. This **private multi-stakeholder process**, convened by **Business for Social Responsibility (BSR)** and the **Center for Democracy and Technology (CDT)**, involves companies, academics, investors and human rights organizations in drafting and adopting human rights guidelines for participating companies on human rights. HRIC executive director Sharon Hom participated in the June meeting in San Francisco with Hong Kong program director Roseann Rife.

## SHARING INFORMATION AND STRATEGIES

As the Chinese government continues to tighten control over domestic groups, especially in the run-up to major events such as the Party Congress and the Olympics, HRIC executive director Sharon Hom spoke at "**Defending Civil Society**," a meeting hosted by the **World Movement for Democracy** in Bangkok, Thailand, in July. The World Movement is a global network of democracy activists and policy makers initiated by the **National Endowment for Democracy**. Ms. Hom spoke about the strategies Chinese civil society organizations develop to cope with constricted legal and political space.

Civil society groups inside China, as well as those outside providing them with invaluable assistance, are facing unique challenges and advocacy opportunities in the lead-up to the 2008 Olympics. At the **Rights Now! Forum** organized by the **China Rights Network** in June, HRIC program officer Carol Wang conducted a workshop that explored this dynamic playing field with a spotlight on freedom of speech and Internet censorship. China Rights Network is a coalition of Toronto-based NGOs formed to address pressing human rights issues in China, as well as the bilateral relationship between Canada and China.

senior researcher Bonny Ling spoke to a group of MBA students led by an associate dean of the Babcock Graduate School of Management and a professor of international business of Wake Forest University in June. The group was passing through Hong Kong at the conclusion of their China study tour and wanted to learn more about the human rights situation in China from an advocacy perspective.

## HRIC ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES

Continually building staff capacity and program reach, this summer HRIC welcomed four new staff members to its office in New York, including an experienced mainland Chinese lawyer. T.R., a Leitner Fellow, practiced law for more than 12 years in China before coming to New York to pursue an LLM degree at Fordham Law School. Her practice areas included criminal defense and corporate litigation.

**Victoria Kwan**, program assistant, graduated from Columbia University in 2007 and previously worked as an intern at HRIC, Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor and Senator Hillary Clinton's 2006 re-election campaign. **Annie Cheng**, program assistant, graduated from Cornell University in 2007 and has worked as an intern for the Orange County Public Defenders and a corporate law firm.

In August, **Cynthia Wong** joined HRIC as the first Robert L. Bernstein Fellow in International Human Rights. She received her BS from the University of Texas and her JD from New York University in 2007. During law school, she worked as a law clerk at the Center for Democracy & Technology, as well as volunteering as a legal intern at HRIC. Prior to law school, Ms. Wong served as an Americorps\*VISTA volunteer at two non-profit organizations with a focus on technology and education.

This summer, HRIC's New York and Hong Kong offices were buzzing with a total of **9 energetic and gifted interns**: the New York crew included three law students from the University of Bern, the University of Virginia and the University of Michigan, and three undergraduates from National Taiwan University,

## HRIC SPEAKS

HRIC actively fields press inquiries and provides insights to international media. Recent press coverage has focused on preparations for and concerns surrounding the 2008 Beijing Olympics, as well as the publication of HRIC's state secrets report. Following are quotes by HRIC executive director Sharon Hom.

"This kind of vast surveillance and security system is like a hanging sword over the whole games."

"Will Olympic Security Chill Protests?" **TIME** magazine online edition, August 9, 2007, <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1651206,00.html>

"On ideological control, it has been a clear policy of this particular regime to equate any assertion of cultural, religious or ethnic identity—in language, in rhetoric, in propaganda, in law—with terrorism."

**WNYC Public Radio's Leonard Lopate show, "Underreported: China's Uighurs" August 9, 2007. You can listen to or download the mp3 of the broadcast at:**<http://www.wnyc.org/shows/lopate/episodes/2007/08/09>

"The scope and comprehensiveness and retroactivity of this system is not really known. Environment issues, natural disasters, population statistics, health hazards—all of these can be swept in and retrospectively classified as state secrets."

"China's culture of secrecy 'deadly to society,'" **The Independent**, June 12, 2007, <http://news.independent.co.uk/world/asia/article2646263.ece>.

Princeton University and Columbia University, while the Hong Kong team included two undergraduate interns from Occidental College and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and a graduate intern from the Sorbonne University.

HRIC also said goodbye to three staff members: **Tina Nguyen**, who will be pursuing a master's degree at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in the fall, **Roberta Raine** who accepted a teaching position at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, and **Madeline Earp**, who plans to start working at the Committee to Protect Journalists this fall. We wish them all the best of luck!