



ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
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## **The PRC’s Universal Periodic Review and the Real State of Human Rights in China**

**Chairman Chris Smith (NJ)**

Good morning. Today’s hearing, “The PRC’s Universal Periodic Review and the Real State of Human Rights in China,” will come to order.

Last week, at the Universal Periodic Review of the People’s Republic of China at the United Nations, the Chinese Communist Party thought that it could drown out the truth of its shameful human rights record, enlisting its allies to offer pampering praise instead of probing questions, while giving a platform to Party-controlled civil society groups over independent non-governmental organizations – something that is covered in a stand alone special CECC report that was released just yesterday.

But even Xi Jinping, the Chinese Communist Party, and the PRC’s massive 60-person delegation could not make a lie true.

And it is indeed a baldfaced lie that the Chinese Communist Party respects, honors, or abides by international human rights norms.

The truth is that Xi Jinping intends to rewrite and reshape these norms, to manipulate even international bodies dedicated to protecting human rights to serve his agenda. The truth—on stark display at last week’s UPR—is that Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party constitute a systemic challenge to the international, rules-based order, and reject the very concept of universal human rights.

In its sham submission for the Universal Periodic Review, the PRC claimed that it protects freedom of religion and freedom of expression, and looks out for workers, women, ethnic minorities and the vulnerable.

In reality, Xi Jinping poses an existential threat to these and other rights essential for human flourishing.

He tells journalists that they must be so loyal to the Chinese Communist Party that “Party” becomes their last name.

He tells leaders of religions whose roots in China date back to middle of the first millennia that they must “sinicize”—which means putting allegiance to the Party and to Xi himself before their faith and their God.

He claims that women’s equality is a state policy, while the Chinese Communist Party decides how many children a woman should have, including by the appalling practice of forced abortion, which is still a terrible reality in Uyghur and ethnic minority communities, even as restrictions have been eased for Han women, a blatantly eugenic policy.

Despite its best efforts, China has not succeeded at silencing those courageous men and women who insist on telling the truth about the real state of human rights in China, often at great cost to themselves—a cost some have paid with their lives.

Today, we will hear from a panel of witnesses who will do just that: Rana Siu Inboden has devoted her distinguished academic and professional career to exposing the PRC’s insidious attempts to undermine human rights in international organizations.

Ben Rogers has been a passionate and effective advocate for religious freedom in China and now for democracy and human rights in Hong Kong, for which he has been denied entry to Hong Kong, threatened with prison, and repeatedly harassed.

Emile Dirks has conducted groundbreaking research exposing China’s totalitarian surveillance and censorship regimes, documenting the PRC’s use of dystopian technology to target ethnic and religious groups for biometric monitoring and data collection, and scrubbing China’s internet to create alternate realities.

And we are particularly honored to have with us today two women who have taken extraordinary risks for the cause of human rights, fighting on behalf of

their family members who are imprisoned by the CCP: Rushan Abbas, a powerful advocate for the Uyghur people, whose sister was abducted by the Chinese government in retaliation for her activism, and Sophie Luo, wife of imprisoned rights defender Ding Jiayi [Ding Jia-she], now herself a dedicated advocate for victims and their families, all while working by day as an accomplished engineer.

Ms. Luo, it is my privilege to share with you that the CECC has nominated your husband, **Ding Jiayi**, for the Nobel Prize, for his tremendous service to the dream of a democratic China. We have also nominated his ally and close collaborator, **Xu Zhiyong**, democracy campaigner and free speech champion, **Jimmy Lai** – whose son Sebastien testified before this commission last May – and, finally, Uyghur activist and scholar **Ilham Tohti**.

Today I am also keenly aware of those who are not here, whose voices we can no longer hear from—especially the voice of **Cao Shunli**, who died in 2014 at the hands of the Chinese Communist Party precisely *because* of her work to amplify the voices of independent civil society as part of China’s Universal Periodic Review, the very process we are here to talk about today.

She was taken into custody on her way to Geneva in 2013, where she was to participate in a training on human rights for the UPR. The Chinese Communist Party cruelly objected to even a moment of silence for Cao at the UN Human Rights Council. In a hearing I held with this Commission after her death, I said Cao Shunli is *exactly* the type of person the Chinese government should embrace--not jail, discredit, and leave to die!

She is not here but her voice is not silent. She speaks, along with Liu Xiaobo, who also died in PRC custody, and with Ding Jiayi and Xu Zhiyong, who wrote from jail about their hopes for a democratic China. They made enormous sacrifices to tell the truth about the real state of human rights in China because they believed in and fought for a better China.

I urge my colleagues and all those joining us today to insist that the UN and its member states demand the truth about the PRC’s human rights violations and hold Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party to account, in the names of Cao Shunli, Liu Xiaobo, Ding Jiayi, Xu Zhiyong, Jimmy Lai, Ilham Tohti, our brave witnesses and all of those who have risked so much for the sake of these most fundamental rights and freedoms.

With that, I'd like to yield to my good friend and colleague, Co-Chair of our Commission, Senator Merkley.