

Introduction

The role of non-governmental organizations is growing in the world today. However, the reverse process is taking place in the People's Republic of China – it is still challenging for such organizations to develop, let alone survive. The space for their existence is still minimal.

Even since 1971, the start of the reform and opening started in China, the Chinese government was called to be freer to give freedom of speech, freedom of the press the freedom of association, and enact specific laws that control the freedoms mentioned above. Even when the Tiananmen massacre happened in 1989 and the whole world was calling on China to be more liberal and more democratic, there was no luck in changing the Chinese government's policy (*The Diplomat, 2020*).

China, a country in which, since the 1970s, many non-governmental organizations have been established, but the exact number is still unknown due to how it tries to cover all the traces. In 2016 a former vice foreign minister of China Fu Ying, Let it slip and said that at that moment they were more than 7,000 foreign NGOs working in China. How much is there right now we still do not know. A bigger problem is domestic nonprofit organizations. Those suffer a lot only because they are part of China's identity. China does not accept those, and it does not refer to non-governmental organizations as NGOs; the state calls all its domestic nonprofit organizations "social organizations" (*The Diplomat, 2020*).

China's domestic nonprofit organizations do exist in China, but media coverage is relatively low on this issue. The fact that China's domestic NGOs have to tiptoe around, whether they are a research institute, social-economic, or even political Institute, is already a tremor. Unfortunately, there have been quite a few incidents when China's government would close domestic NGOs without even explaining. In this paper, the unlawful human rights violation, NGO's urge to fight and survive will be covered on the Transition Institute example.



Image source: CNN

The TI think tank

The think tank Transition Institute for Social and Economic Research was established in 2007. One night policemen blasted Guo Yushan's apartment, a founder of the Transition Institute, and took him into custody. These military men did not have an arrest order, neither explained to him or his wife what was going on. Guo Yushan has helped the human rights activist Chen Guangcheng finding asylum in the United States, and this act of bravery and good turned against him. Guo's partner He Zhengjun, the now barred Institute's administered director, was taken into custody (*UTS ePRESS*, 2017).

The traditional profile of a provocateur does not suit Mr Guo, 38. The Institute he helped set up used scholarships and hard data to promote the taxi industry's restructuring and eliminate residency laws that hinder the lives of rural migrants living in large cities. He kept clear of more assertive calls for reform, including a short-lived movement organized by a colleague, Xu Zhiyong, to expose official corruption and education disparities using protest marches. The government immediately suppressed the New Citizens Movement campaign, and its founders, including Mr Xu, were jailed. Although the Transition Institute's work was not exceptionally provocative, the source of so much support, liberal Western organizations, worried the government when Beijing worried that China would gain momentum in the Arab Spring revolutions in the Middle East (*UTS ePRESS*, 2017).

However, Mr Guo's role in assisting Mr Chen, who is blind, to get inside Beijing's U.S. Embassy, an event that hinged the world and profoundly humiliated the Chinese government, which most probably triggered his Institute to be closed and provoked his subsequent arrest. The two men were eventually charged with "illegal business activity," an accusation relating to 19,000 writings that the authorities had said that the Institute had published without official approval. Guo's attorney, who applied for anonymity because he did not want the officials to bring awareness to him, said the police lacked arguments to confirm their charges (*The New York Times*, 2015).

Mr Guo and a colleague of his have been in jail for a year. Many anti-government individuals defined his release as a "diplomatic card" that the state hoped would alleviate criticisms of Beijing's attack on independent journalists, lawyers for rights, and democratic reform advocates. The state unlocked 1% of the imprisoned political activists but is relieved of 80% of the threat they face (*The New York Times*, 2015).



Image source: PEN America

While Guo's release is undeniably optimistic, it does not adjust any of the dynamics of the overwhelmingly negative path of human rights. It just falls into another usual trend shown

over the generations of an extended-release of one or two dissidents instead of a significant international ceremonial occasion. An example of Guo's attorney, Mr Xin Lia, agreed to defend Mr Guo. Guo Yushan was released in September 2014, and only two months later, his lawyer Mr Xin has been accused of having an illegal business in November 2014. Mr Xin was convicted to 12 years in jail, three years of deprivation of his political rights, and a fine of €16,000. He also had to pay back 640,000 in money allegedly defrauded. Moreover, all this was only because he wanted to do his job as an attorney and protect an innocent person (*The Irish Times, 2016*).

Moreover, more people were imprisoned in those years, including Pu Zhiqiang, a prominent rights lawyer suspected of inciting ethnic hatred, and Gao Yu, a journalist accused of revealing national secrets. The last one was poor health, but it was no concern of the state (*The New York Times, 2015*).

Three proofs that incrimination lays out

A bunch of robust analysis has indeed been provided with precise control of the law on the claim that the convicted are innocent and that both the felony in dispute could not be proven, or it leads to intentional framing (*China Change, 2015*).

As per the official census, China's share of foreign investments in NGO aid is quickly spiralling but still is at 15 percent. A large number of Chinese organizations used international donors to extract the brunt of their funding. A certain number of organizations are still beneficiaries of their support, even though these financiers are increasingly overlooked. Besides, considering the humanitarian work of reducing poverty and humanitarian aid in China has been funded by many international donors, they have been singled out to look like vilification. It is also symbolic of the brutal methods that Russia targeted overseas financial backers. This funding seems to have become the weapon by which the officials are threatened in these two accused (*China Change, 2015*).

Secondly, the TI is charged with researching problems in society and examining them. We are unfamiliar with their core tasks of discussing social concerns, writing papers, and delivering courses; these are the typical ways special interest groups perform their work to enhance cultural and well-being institutional changes, like the public's project of interest. In this respect, the TI hardly varies from all other parties (*China Change, 2015*).

Third, lacking authorization, TI was tasked with publishing and releasing its papers. A so-called "illegal business operation" corresponds to nothing more than assembling research

data into texts that were then produced and circulated. If the TI had purchased a book number provided by the authorities, they might have had to spend about RMB 20,000-plus (\$3,220). Hence they published those on their own without thinking of selling them. Also, the number of readers was pretty insufficient as it is, and this sort of printing has no possibility of continuation inside a market-based and censored system (*China Change, 2015*).

For instance, public security perception notes that the TI released many publications over seven years, but the sum was estimated to be just 19,000 prints. If we put this in financial terms, any publisher doing things this way would have lost its shirt a long while ago (*China Change, 2015*).

Given the sheer number of Chinese NGOs, what is politically controversial is far more controlled and accurate. It is challenging to find other initiative organizations that fit the criteria so closely to avoid political sensitivity, judging by both the organization's strategy and actual action (*China Change, 2015*).



Image source: Reuters

Three-part intimidation of individuals, organizations, and society

The Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau's even has the Recommendation in which it blames Guo Yushan and He Zhengjun for "illegal business activity." This establishes a three-part threat to individuals, organizations, and the public by the Chinese governments (*Probe International, 2020*).

The first desired object of intimidation is human. In this case, Guo Yushan is the main target, mainly because he played a leading role in the rescue of Chen Guangcheng (the blind lawyer), which caused the CCP's mortification vastly. Institutions are the second targeted object of coercion. The CCP will never allow a well-surveyed entity with professional job performance (like the Transformation Institute) to survive and the state's forced to bring about the downfall of such an institution - this is the government's vengeance on civilized society. The third target of intimidation is society at large. The Chinese government aims to threaten the population at large by revealing the State Security Apparatus' opinions through the Recommendation, which they knew would be released publicly (*Probe International, 2020*).

By hitting NGOs too rough, the government is sending a clear signal: if western anti-China powers participate in peaceful evolutionary practices with Chinese civil organizations, the officials will take those individuals backed by foreign anti-China forces, bring them in the bowl, and fry them deep (*Probe International, 2020*).

Non-existing freedom of association

Chinese workers have long been deprived of their freedom of association and the right to organize independent unions. Under Chinese labour law, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), which is effectively subordinated to the Communist Party, can regulate all trade unions, including the establishment of local unions. Thus, legally registered unions are rarely organized independently and in employees' interests, forcing many employees to resort to their means of self-organization in cases of labour disputes and complaints (*The Wall Street Journal, 2019*).

In the summer of 2018, Jasic Technology employees, a welding equipment factory in southern China, were fired by the company for forming its union and later detained by government officials on charges of "gathering crowds to disrupt public order." Today, more than 40 people are still in custody, including workers' representatives, student supporters, community centre workers, and NGO staff (*The Wall Street Journal, 2019*).

In January 2019, several labour rights defenders from various NGOs were also detained. It is clear that the Chinese government is using coercive measures to suppress activists seeking to respect the fundamental rights to freedom of association and expression, and such detentions are a flagrant violation of labour rights (*The Wall Street Journal*, 2019).



The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) and the Globalization Monitor (GM) are demanding that the Chinese government release and drop charges against all workers, activists, and their supporters detained for seeking to respect their fundamental rights to freedom of association and end repression against all human rights defenders and independent trade unions, and demand that the ILO's fundamental principles of freedom of association be respected (*The Wall Street Journal*, 2019).

More censorship and sanctions

The censorship body of the Communist Party, the Information Bureau of the State Council, has issued a directive back in 2014 forcing all media outlets to remove this high-profile report and any content that links to it and the unattractive part about China.

According to the World Press Freedom Index, Reporters Without Borders took to China 175th place among 180 countries. Worse only in Eritrea (180th place), North Korea (179), Turkmenistan (178), Syria (177), and Somalia (176). The promulgation of directives by the Chinese Communist Party's various censorship bodies is a bargaining chip that allows Beijing authorities to control information flow (*Media Sapiens, 2014*).

Furthermore, On December 2, 2019, Beijing imposed sanctions on several American non-governmental organizations. This decision was taken in response to the United States of the law's adoption on the support of democracy and human rights in Hong Kong.

China has decided to impose sanctions on several US NGOs, including the National Democratic Institute, Human Rights Watch, and Freedom House. China stressed that the US law on human rights and democracy in Hong Kong violates international law and the primary international relations principles and interfering in China's internal affairs (*DW, 2019*).



Image source: AP

Conclusion

China is living the human rights crisis, which started due to its government's appetite for going against civic organizations and institutions. All the legislations that China has and will pass on domestic NGOs will cut its findings and peaceful freedom of speech.

Human rights lawyers, civil society reformers, combined with ludicrous media and internet regulations, limit social gatherings - these repressions grow more and more every day in China. Hundreds of lawyers and activists have been caged in so-called the "709 Crackdown" (*The Irish Times*, 2019) and see the sky only through the prison bars.

For independent nongovernmental organizations in China, these are dangerous days, particularly for those that take on politically divisive causes such as labourers' rights, legal advocacy, and violence against individuals with AIDS. These individuals, groups, and society as a whole have suffered for years to survive within the boundaries of the Chinese state. The most outrageous fact is that Chinese society has not been told what all those boundaries that are forbidden to cross.

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