

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/china-china-dares-to-praise-its-own-09-06-2015,47985.html>

Asia - China

Shocking claims

China dares to praise its own human rights record

10 June 2015

Reporters Without Borders is shocked by the Chinese government's praise of its human rights performance last year in a white paper published yesterday and points out that the regime continues to be one of the worst in the world for persecuting journalists and bloggers and censoring the news.

"The tremendous achievements China has made in its human rights endeavours fully demonstrate that it is taking the correct path of human rights development that suits its national conditions," the State Council Information Office said in a release about the white paper.

Entitled "[Progress in China's Human Rights in 2014](#)," it emphasizes the government's commitment to "fundamental rights," "universal values," "democracy" and "civil society."

"The white paper's hypocrisy and presumptuousness would be good for a laugh if they were not matched by the severity of the government's treatment of journalists, bloggers and cyber-dissidents," said Benjamin Ismaïl, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

"By using statistics in a way that renders them meaningless, the report's authors try in vain to hide the long list of human rights violations being carried out at the direct behest of President Xi Jinping's government. We urge the international community to condemn this report's mendacious self-assessment. China must stop pretending to respect human rights and must stop jailing all party and government critics with impunity."

The white paper devotes just a few hundred out of a total of 14,000 words to media freedom and freedom of expression.

"Freedom of speech [is] better protected," it says, citing a series of figures that supposedly support this claim: "In 2014 China published 46.5 billion copies of newspapers, 3.2 billion copies of periodicals, and 8.4 billion copies of books, with 6.12 copies of books per person. By the end of 2014 the population of netizens in China was 650 million, and the Internet penetration rate was 47.9 percent."

This paragraph ends with three phrases that suggest an interest in qualitative indicators but they are no more than a series of baseless claims about an imaginary reality:

"The public can air opinions, and raise criticisms and suggestions freely through the news media, and discuss problems of this country and society. The government encourages enterprises to provide various Internet services to the public in accordance with the law so as to create a good environment for the public to acquire and exchange information. A cleaner cyber space is becoming an ever important place for the public to get information and make their voices heard."

In fact, the Chinese government tightened its grip on the media in 2014. [Regulations were issued banning journalists from "making unauthorized criticisms"](#) while well-known journalists and respected human rights activists were jailed.

The journalist [Gao Yu](#), the cyber-dissident [Xu Zhiyong](#) and the Uyghur blogger [Ilham Tohti](#) joined the hundred or so journalists and information activists already jailed in China. "Confessions" became the fashion. [Gao Yu and another journalist, Xiang Nanfu, were forced to deliver televised "self-criticisms"](#) in May 2014.

One of the world's [online censorship pioneers](#), the Chinese government has continued to dedicate a

great deal of resources to keeping the Internet under close control.

The pro-democracy "[Occupy Central](#)" movement in Hong Kong and attempts to commemorate the [25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre](#) were both subjected to carefully orchestrated media blackouts that used censorship, content blocking and news manipulation.

Independent news websites such as *64Tianwang* are often the targets of cyber-attacks by hackers in the party's service.

The world's biggest prison for news and information providers, China is ranked 176th out of 180 countries in the [2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

You can download those documents on our website :

- , (JPEG - 16.2 kb)
-