



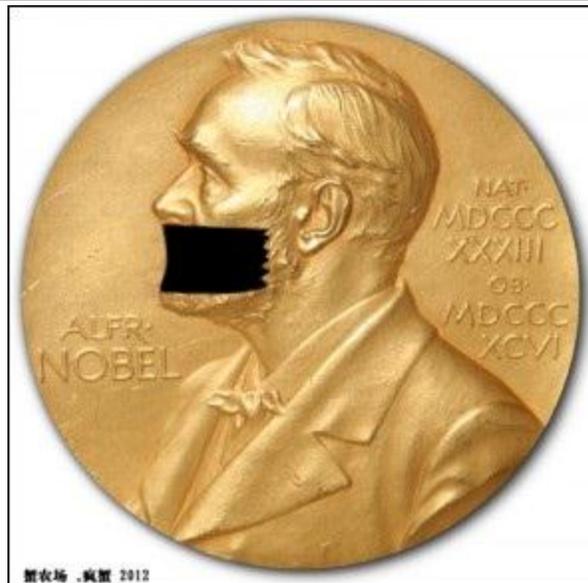
CHINA MEDIA BULLETIN

*A weekly update of press freedom and censorship news
related to the People's Republic of China*

Issue No. 72: October 18, 2012
Headlines

-  Controls on dissidents ahead of party congress spread nationwide
-  Environmental activist, once lauded, is tried for self-publishing books
-  Mobile devices to be seized over maps with 'inaccurate' China borders
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PHOTO OF THE WEEK: 'DON'T SPEAK' NOBEL



Credit: [China Digital Times](#)

BROADCAST / PRINT MEDIA NEWS



Controls on dissidents ahead of party congress spread nationwide

Human rights groups and overseas Chinese-language media outlets have reported an increase in restrictions on activists and petitioners throughout China in recent weeks as the leadership prepares for the 18th Communist Party Congress, scheduled to begin on November 8 in Beijing (see CMB No. [71](#)). On October 5, Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch, a grassroots monitoring group, published a list of over 90 activists who had been targeted for harassment, abduction, house arrest, or beatings during the month of September, with at least 10 still in custody. The clampdown on petitioners in Beijing has been especially intense, with police clearing out temporary residences commonly used by those coming from afar to lodge their grievances with the central authorities. On October 2, a Beijing resident told the overseas Sound of Hope radio network that “there are old women wearing red armbands watching every station and street in Beijing,” while another resident reported having her ID checked in the subway. Mao Hengfeng, a well-known Shanghai-based activist, was detained on September 30 in Beijing, where she had gone to petition for an unpaid pension. The crackdown has extended well beyond the capital, with the list published by Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch registering incidents of harassment and detention in Shanghai, Hubei, Shaanxi, and elsewhere. Radio Free Asia reported that Ye Du, a writer and member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center from Guangzhou, had been summoned for “tea” by the local Public Security Bureau on October 13. After questioning him for six hours, the security agents warned Ye not to leave the city or receive visitors until after the end of the party congress.

- **Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch 10/5/2012 (in Chinese): [Nearly a hundred people monitored in September 2012](#)**
- **Radio Free Asia 10/15/2012: [Guangzhou writer under strict control from authorities in lead-up to 18th Party Congress](#)**
- ***Epoch Times* 10/4/2012 (in Chinese): [Chinese regime sweeps up petitioners, dissidents, before party congress](#)**
- **Human Rights in China 10/2/2012: [Shanghai rights defenders detained in advance of 18th Party Congress](#)**
- **Amnesty International 10/12/2012: [China human rights briefing October 2 to 10, 2012](#)**
- **NTDTV Canada News 10/10/2012: [Dissidents under strict control in China](#)**



Environmental activist, once lauded, is tried for self-publishing books

Liu Futang, a former forestry official turned blogger in Hainan Province who became known for his investigative reports on illegal forest destruction, was put on trial on October 11 in Haikou City. The verdict has not yet been handed down, but legal experts said Liu could face up to five years in prison. He was detained in July while hospitalized with high blood pressure and diabetes, and formally charged on September 19 for “conducting illegal business.” Liu had spent about \$30,000 to publish and distribute his own writing, including *The Tears of Hainan II*, a book that apparently

angered local officials and businessmen with its descriptions of citizen opposition to a planned coal-fired power plant in Yinggehai. Prosecutors claimed that Liu had illegally obtained 78,000 yuan (\$12,470) from his publishing activities, though they acknowledged that he had given most of the 18,000 copies away for free. In April he was awarded the “best citizen journalist” prize in the China Environmental Press Awards (see CMB No. [54](#)), organized by the international environmentalist group ChinaDialogue, Britain’s *Guardian* newspaper, and the Chinese online media company Sina. Official media such as Xinhua news agency and the *People’s Daily* had also hailed Liu as an “eco-guard,” until his efforts ran afoul of powerful economic and political interests.

- *South China Morning Post* 10/16/2012: [Green activist Liu Futang in court over books he gave away](#)
- *Guardian* 10/11/2012: [Chinese environmental activist goes on trial over books](#)
- *Washington Post* 10/12/2012: [Chinese environmental activist faces prison sentence for publishing books](#)

NEW MEDIA / TECHNOLOGY NEWS



Censors target Nobel Prize blowback, mentions of Liu Xiaobo

After Chinese novelist Mo Yan was announced as the winner of the 2012 Nobel Prize for literature on October 11 (see CMB No. [71](#)), the State Council Information Office (SCIO) reportedly ordered online social-networking platforms to increase monitoring of content posted by users. An October 12 notice, leaked online, reportedly instructed website administrators to remove comments that disgraced the Communist Party leadership or mentioned two past Chinese Nobel laureates: jailed democracy advocate Liu Xiaobo and exile writer Gao Xingjian. It added that users whose writing contained “malicious details” should be blocked from accessing their accounts for 10 days. While Mo’s writing is sometimes seen as implicitly critical of social conditions in China, he has remained on good terms with the authorities—serving as vice chairman of the state-run Chinese Writers’ Association—by avoiding overt criticism. Several Chinese netizens consequently used his pen name, which literally means “Don’t Speak” in Chinese, to create a series of satirical images. A blogger nicknamed Crazy Crab of Hexie Farm depicted a gag over the mouth of Alfred Nobel on the Nobel Prize medal. A drawing by popular online cartoonist Rebel Pepper shows Mo walking by a jail cell as the anonymous prisoner reaches out to congratulate him. On October 12, the Paris-based media rights group Reporters Without Borders posted a rare video of Liu Xiaobo’s wife, Liu Xia, in her apartment in Beijing, where she has been kept under house arrest for more than two years. According to Hong Kong newspaper *Ming Pao*, a *Financial Times* journalist at an October 10 press conference asked an SCIO spokesperson about the situations of Liu Xiaobo and his wife, but subsequent coverage of the conference in state media replaced their names with the phrase “some individuals.”

- *China Digital Times* 10/12/2012: [Drawing the news: Mo Yan and the Nobel](#)
- *China Digital Times* 10/14/2012: [Ministry of truth: Mo Yan’s Nobel](#)
- IFEX 10/12/2012: [Nobel laureate’s wife at a window, the only freedom she is allowed](#)
- China Media Project 10/12/2012: [Post alluding to Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo deleted](#)

- *Ming Pao* 10/10/2012 (in Chinese): [Officials dodged questions about which crimes Liu Xia had committed](#)
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Microbloggers expose another low-paid official's luxury property

State-run Xinhua news agency reported on October 11 that Cai Bin, an urban management official in Guangdong Province's Guangzhou megacity, was under investigation for his undeclared possession of an extensive array of real estate. The scandal first broke on October 8, when a posting on the Chinese online discussion forum Tianya revealed land registry records for 21 properties owned by Cai, his wife, and his son. The land and structures, which ranged from a luxury villa to a factory building, are worth an estimated 40 million yuan (\$6.4 million) in all, whereas Cai's monthly salary is about 10,000 yuan. On the popular microblogging platform Sina Weibo, users circulated photos of the houses and dubbed Cai "Uncle Properties." Chinese netizens have recently stepped up efforts to expose corruption among local and provincial officials. A predecessor to "Uncle Properties" whose nicknames included "Uncle Watches" had drawn public attention in September after microbloggers circulated photos of the Shaanxi official wearing various expensive wristwatches (see CMB No. [69](#)). A similar case, this time involving a Fujian Province official, emerged almost simultaneously with that of Cai (see CMB No. [71](#)).

- *Financial Times* 10/12/2012: [Property 'uncles'—the bloggers are coming](#)
 - Indo-Asian News Service 10/11/2012: [Chinese official being probed for owning 21 houses](#)
 - Agence France-Presse 10/16/2012: [China bloggers expose more corruption: reports](#)
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Mobile devices to be seized over maps with 'inaccurate' China borders

Beijing-based newspaper *Legal Daily* reported on October 15 that the National Administration of Surveying, Mapping, and Geoinformation (NASMG) had ordered Chinese customs officials to strengthen inspections of mobile phones and tablet computers with internet-based mapping services. According to the article, NASMG, which vowed to "increase propaganda campaigns over state sovereignty," said mobile phones that use "illegal maps," including those with unauthorized or inaccurate information regarding a country's territory, would be confiscated and sent to local bureaus of the NASMG for further investigation. The official notice also required telecommunications companies to cooperate with authorities to provide users with "proper maps." It added that failure to do so would result in revocation of network licenses. The notice made clear references to a worsening territorial dispute between China and Japan over the Diaoyu Islands, known in Japan as the Senkaku Islands (see CMB No. [70](#)). According to state-run Xinhua news agency, current regulations impose a fine of up to 10,000 yuan (\$1,600) for publishing maps that are deemed inaccurate. A draft law that will be open to public consultation until October 26 seeks to increase the fine tenfold, to 100,000 yuan (\$15,850).

- Xinhua 10/16/2012: [Chinese customs to seize devices with illegal maps](#)

- *Legal Daily* 10/15/2012 (in Chinese): [Foreign maps showing information inconsistent with our position will be severely punished](#)
 - *Tech in Asia* 10/16/2012: [Chinese customs to seize mobile devices for ‘illegal maps’](#)
 - Agence France-Presse 9/25/2012: [China may toughen laws on ‘illegal’ mapping: state media](#)
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INNER MONGOLIA



Wife of detained Mongol activist seeks international help

Xinna, the wife of ethnic Mongolian journalist Hada, spoke to the Associated Press on October 15 about the persecution of her family, calling on the international community to help secure her husband’s release from custody (see CMB No. [58](#)). Hada, founder of the pro-Mongol newspaper *Voice of Southern Mongolia*, has been held in extralegal detention since December 2010, when he completed a 15-year prison sentence for “separatism.” While his whereabouts remain unknown to the public, his wife, speaking by telephone from Inner Mongolia’s capital, Hohhot, said she had been allowed to see him once a month recently. She noted that his mental state had sharply deteriorated, and that the prison administration had ignored a doctor’s suggestion that he be transferred to a mental health hospital. Xinna and her son, Weilesi (Uiles), were detained in December 2010. He was released on bail in September 2011, and the authorities subsequently decided not to pursue drug charges against him. She was released after receiving a suspended three-year prison sentence in April for “engaging in illegal business.” However, both mother and son, who deny the charges, have remained under strict house arrest since their releases. “There are several cameras that have been installed around my house,” Xinna told the Associated Press. “If I go out I need to get approval from authorities and I am followed by police.”

- Associated Press 10/15/2012: [Wife of Mongolian activist speaks out against Chinese harassment](#)
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HONG KONG



Hard-hitting online magazine ‘iSun Affairs’ launches print edition

The Hong Kong–based independent online magazine *iSun Affairs* unveiled a print edition on October 14. Launched just a year ago, the weekly publication has won four press awards for its reporting on sensitive topics related to China (see CMB No. [45](#)), including activist lawyer Chen Guangcheng’s escape from illegal house arrest and a revolt against corrupt officials in the Guangdong Province village of Wukan. The magazine and its satellite television channel, Sun TV, are banned on the mainland. About 30 of its employees are from mainland China, and most have reported harassment by Chinese authorities, which has led many to quit. The company’s internet marketing director, Wen Yunchao, better known by the blogging name Bei Feng, said his family in

Guangdong had been ordered by the authorities to stop him from criticizing the government. He said he feared retribution if he returned to the mainland to renew his permit to travel to Hong Kong. Despite a series of ongoing obstacles, *iSun Affairs* founder Chen Ping, a businessman and former government policy researcher in China, said in an interview with the *South China Morning Post* published on October 13 that he was determined to see his media business play a role in changing China.

- **Voice of America 10/18/2012 (in Chinese): [Mainland liberal launched Hong Kong-based magazine to promote democratic reforms in China](#)**
- ***South China Morning Post* 10/13/2012: [iSun Affairs magazine expands, betting on hard-hitting reports](#)**
- **[iSun Affairs](#)**

BEYOND CHINA



Next Media pulls out of Taiwan, threatening media pluralism

According to an agreement unveiled on October 17, Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai's Next Media group will sell its Taiwan-based print and television operations to Taiwanese financier Jeffrey Koo Jr. for NT\$17.5 billion (US\$600 million). The deal includes Next Media's Taiwan television outlet, Next TV, and the Taiwan versions of its print publications *Apple Daily* and *Next Magazine*, among other assets. *Apple Daily* is the most widely read daily newspaper in Taiwan. Next Media said it had pulled out of an earlier agreement to sell Next TV to ERA Communications, a Taiwanese cable and satellite company; the sale was motivated in part by regulatory delays related to the television station that had hurt the profitability of the media group as a whole (see CMB No. 70). Lai will retain his Hong Kong media assets. Several Taiwanese media analysts expressed concern over the planned change of ownership, as Koo's family has business interests in China, whereas Next Media is known for its critical reporting on the Chinese Communist Party and nonpartisan coverage of Taiwanese politics. Media owned by Taiwanese financial groups have increasingly practiced self-censorship to protect the holding companies' business operations in China and ties to the Taiwanese government. Kuang Chung-shiang, a prominent Taiwanese journalism professor, warned that the concentration of outlets in the hands of such financial groups would harm the media's watchdog role.

- **Bloomberg News 10/17/2012: [Jimmy Lai sells embattled Taiwan news media for \\$600 million](#)**
- **Reuters 10/17/2012: [Next Media to sell Taiwan print, TV business for \\$600 million](#)**
- **Associated Press 10/16/2012: [China critic to sell Taiwan media holdings to local businessman with close China ties](#)**
- ***Financial Times* 10/16/2012: [Lai's Taiwan media exit raises China fear](#)**
- ***China Post* 10/16/2012: [Koo inks joint deal to buy Next Media](#)**



Dissident writer Liao Yiwu accepts German award, blasts Beijing

Chinese dissident writer Liao Yiwu, who has lived in exile since fleeing to Germany in July 2011 (see CMB No. [33](#)), was awarded the German Book Trade Peace Prize in Frankfurt on October 14. German Booksellers' and Publishers' Association president Gottfried Honnefelder said Liao had “restored a voice to the people of his country suffering from repression and oppression.” During the award ceremony, which was attended by German president Joachim Gauck, Liao denounced the Chinese state under Communist Party leadership as an “inhuman empire with bloody hands.” Prior to receiving the prize, he told Deutsche Welle that the goal of his recently published book, *Bullets and Opium*, was to preserve and spread the memory of the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. In an interview with *Der Spiegel* published on October 15, the writer said he was stunned by the previous week's announcement that Chinese novelist Mo Yan had won the 2012 Nobel Prize for literature (see above, CMB No. [71](#)), as Mo's ties to the Chinese authorities had made him a cultural symbol of the Chinese Communist Party. Liao recalled meeting the laureate once in his hometown of Chengdu, Sichuan Province, but said Mo had subsequently avoided him. “He knows that he represents a superficial China,” Liao said, “whereas I stand for a grassroots China, it dregs, its dirt.” Liao was also critical of what he called “the West's fuzzy morals” with respect to the Chinese government. At the Frankfurt ceremony, he accused the West of “colluding with the executioners under the cover of free trade.”

- Agence France-Presse 10/15/2012: [Peace winner in feral attack](#)
- Deutsche Welle 10/10/2012: [Liao Yiwu: 'Freedom is a long process'](#)



Baidu expands business in Thailand

Chinese search engine giant Baidu has recently strengthened its foothold in Southeast Asia. On October 15, the company released Baidu PC Faster 2.0, a package of security and optimization tools that includes a Thai-language interface. A trial version launched in June had reportedly reached one million downloads in just four months. Baidu spokesman Kaiser Kuo said the company hoped to contribute to the “healthy development” of Thailand's internet environment. Baidu is reportedly building its relationship with Thai users as it prepares to launch search-related products in 2013 (see CMB No. [34](#)). In July, the company opened a research lab in Singapore to study natural language processing technology with a focus on Thai and Vietnamese—a move that would suggest plans to expand the use of its flagship search engine, which dominates in China but trails far behind Google in the global market. Baidu is known for its adherence to Chinese government censorship directives, raising the question of whether it plans to enforce local censorship rules in countries like Thailand and Vietnam, whose governments extensively block websites that are critical of the monarchy or the ruling Communist Party, respectively. At the same time, Baidu has recently championed China's cause in a territorial dispute with Japan, casting doubt on its future role among China's smaller neighbors (see CMB No. [68](#)). Its efforts to enter the Vietnamese market, for example, have been hampered by licensing difficulties amid an ongoing territorial dispute between China and Vietnam (see CMB No. [64](#)). Thailand and Vietnam are both rated Not Free in Freedom House's latest report on internet freedom, *Freedom on the Net 2012*.

- *The Next Web* 10/15/2012: [China's Baidu digs deeper into Thailand with release of PC Faster 2.0 optimization software](#)
 - *Tech in Asia* 10/14/2012: [China's Baidu pushes into Thailand with revamped anti-virus apps](#)
 - *Bangkok Post* 10/16/2012: [Baidu seeks Thai fan base via security](#)
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U.S. ad firm to aid Xinhua's mobile news service

Red Loop, a mobile marketing company based in Redmond, Washington, announced on October 11 that it had been selected by China's state-run Xinhua news agency to provide global advertising services for its television broadcasting division, China Xinhua News Network (CNC). The network was created in 2010 to deliver official news in Chinese and English to both domestic and international audiences. With increased government funding, Xinhua has established a total of 160 bureaus abroad—including a North American hub on New York City's Times Square and over 20 bureaus in Africa (see CMB Nos. [31](#), [54](#))—and claims to serve an audience of more than two billion people. The Red Loop deal comes two months after Xinhua was accused of using its foreign bureaus not just to spread propaganda, but also to gather intelligence for Beijing (see CMB No. [67](#)). According to a company statement, Red Loop will provide CNC with targeting and campaign analysis tools for advertisements on the news network's recently launched mobile applications, which offer live and recorded videos of news programs. The Chinese authorities have been tapping into their country's booming population of smartphone users to retain media influence. The news blog *PaidContent* noted on October 11 that the Chinese Communist Party mouthpiece *People's Daily*, whose website went public on the Shanghai Stock Exchange in April (see CMB No. [57](#)), had raised about 1.55 billion yuan (\$245 million) to revamp its own mobile news service.

- *PaidContent* 10/11/2012: [US app ads help fund Chinese mobile 'propaganda'](#)
 - *GeekWire* 10/11/2012: [Red Loop lands ad deal with major Chinese media network](#)
 - *AdotasWire* 10/12/2012: [Xinhua's CNC selects Red Loop Media as global mobile advertising service provider](#)
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NOTABLE ANALYSIS



U.S. commission finds threats to free expression, citizen pushback in China

On October 10, the Congressional-Executive Commission on China released its 2012 Annual Report, a 284-page document that assesses rule of law and human rights developments in China from September 2011 to September 2012. The report highlights a contradictory trend in which Chinese people at all levels of society have taken great risks to exercise basic freedoms and demand recognitions of their rights, even as officials appear increasingly concerned with preserving the status quo rather than addressing such grassroots calls for reform. The section on freedom of expression

identified a similar paradox: growing access to online communication technologies amid intensified political control, including large-scale deletions, real-name registration, and politicized use of vague laws to punish those who express dissenting views. The report also noted an official campaign to supervise journalists that had the alleged aim of combating corruption, but was in fact “heavily imbued with political indoctrination.” In what is becoming a routine response, on October 11, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson referred to the report as “groundless remarks” and said the ministry hoped the commission would “respect facts.” Those comments appeared to ignore the report’s more than 1,700 supporting citations, many of which refer to Chinese government sources.

- **Congressional-Executive Commission on China: [2012 Annual Report](#)**
- **Xinhua 10/11/2012: [China slams U.S. report on human rights](#)**

For additional information on human rights and free expression in China, see:

[*Freedom in the World 2012*](#)

[*Freedom on the Net 2012*](#)

[*Freedom of the Press 2011*](#)

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