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China: Government efforts to crack down on corrupt officials (2005 - 2007)
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Corruption is an "endemic" problem in China (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 3; *The Guardian* 30 Apr. 2007; BBC 24 Oct. 2006). Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2006*, which measures perceptions of the degree of corruption among public officials and politicians in a country (2006, 9), rates China as a 3.3 on a scale where 0 is highly corrupt and 10 is highly clean (TI 2006, 5-6).

In 2006, China's annual national audit found that 37 billion yuan [approximately CAD 5.17 billion (Canada 29 June 2007)] of public funds had been "mismanaged" and that 6.8 billion yuan [approximately CAD 1 billion (Canada 29 June 2007)] of these funds had been "embezzled" (AFP 27 June 2007). The annual audit is apparently referred to as an "audit storm," since it generally leads to new anti-corruption campaigns and arrests of corrupt officials (ibid.). In 2006, approximately 100,000 Communist Party members were punished for corruption, the majority of whom had taken bribes or broken party rules concerning finances (RFE/RL 13 Feb. 2007).

Officials in China's judicial system are also susceptible to corruption (AP 10 May 2007; US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 1.e). According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006*, in 2005, China conducted investigations of 378 judges for accepting bribes and found 66 of them criminally liable (ibid.).

During the first five months of 2007, over 1,000 Chinese government officials above the county level were punished for corruption (Xinhua 25 June 2007). According to a 10 May 2007 Associated Press (AP) article, from January 2003 to March 2007, approximately 18,200 Chinese officials were tried for neglecting their duty or abusing their power and 12,392 of them were convicted. Some officials have been executed for their corrupt activities (AP 10 May 2007; US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 1.a). Ten percent of China's annual executions, which number as high as 12,000 people, are thought to be for economic crimes, particularly corruption (ibid.).

The media in China apparently must obtain permission from the authorities before reporting on official corruption (ibid., Sec. 2.a; *The Economist* 19 Apr. 2007); however, in 2006 and 2007, several high profile cases of corruption were reported (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 2.a; AP 10 May 2007; Xinhua 29 May 2007; BBC 24 Oct. 2006). In 2006, Shanghai's Communist Party chief was fired when it was found that approximately 480 million United States dollars (USD) had been illegally placed in road and real estate investments (AFP 27 June 2007; see also Freedom House 2007). During the same year, the vice-mayor of Beijing, involved in overseeing construction related to the 2008 Olympics, was also fired for alleged corruption (AP 10 May 2007; *The Guardian* 13 June 2006). The vice-mayor is said to have taken over 10 million yuan [approximately CAD 1.4 million (Canada 29 June 2007)] from developers (*The Guardian* 13 June 2006). In May 2007, a Beijing court sentenced former head of the State Food and Drug Administration Zheng Xiaoyu to death for accepting bribes worth approximately 850,000 US dollars to approve new drugs (Xinhua 29 May 2007; *The New York Times* 29 May 2007; BBC 29 May 2007). Zheng was executed in July 2007 (ibid. 10 July 2007; *The Guardian* 10 July 2007).

China has reportedly implemented several anti-corruption campaigns out of fear that corruption could weaken the power of the Communist Party (BBC 24 Oct. 2006; VOA 1 Mar. 2005; *The Economist* 19 Apr. 2007). However, country analysts do not believe that such campaigns are effective (ibid.; VOA 1 Mar. 2005; Freedom House 2007). Cited in a 1 March 2005 Voice of America (VOA) broadcast, University of Michigan political science professor Kenneth Lieberthal states that

[t]he problem for [China] is that the Communist Party itself has become very corrupt, along with government officials and along with many who don't serve in the political apparatus. It's hard to clean up corruption when the instruments you're relying on are themselves corrupt.

The 2007 *Freedom in the World* report indicates that the impact of China's crackdown on corruption has been "limited" at the local level; connections among business leaders and party and government officials are believed to "perpetuate the problem" (Freedom House 2007).

A 19 April 2007 article in *The Economist* indicates that the government of China plans to establish a Corruption Prevention Bureau and has been studying anti-corruption agencies in other jurisdictions, such as Hong Kong and Singapore. The article notes, however, that the new Bureau will likely have little impact on corruption (*The Economist* 19 Apr. 2007). The Communist Party's own anti-corruption agency, the Central Disciplinary Inspection Agency (CDIC), will maintain its authority to determine which officials are investigated and punished (ibid.).

Another anti-corruption effort, announced by China in April 2007, includes the introduction of a new code of conduct for the country's civil servants (*The Guardian* 30 Apr. 2007; *China Daily* 30 Apr. 2007; see also *The Guardian* 4 June 2007). The new code, which reportedly came into effect in June 2007, outlines a number of "misconducts" and their consequent punishments (*China Daily* 30 Apr. 2007). For example, under the new code of conduct, civil servants who have mistresses, who gamble, who overstay on overseas trips or who obtain foreign citizenship could be demoted or fired (ibid.; see also *The Guardian* 30 Apr. 2007). Other activities to be avoided by civil servants, as described in a 30 April 2007 article in the Beijing-based *China Daily*, include:

Using influence to benefit a lover;

Engaging in corruption, organizing superstitious gatherings, taking drugs, and engaging in sex trade;

Abusing or abandoning family members or refusing to support elderly relatives;

Embezzling or losing public funds meant for disaster relief, poverty relief, resident resettlement, social security and land appropriation compensation;

Engaging in fraud and misleading ... superiors and the public; and

Repressing criticism or retaliating against whistleblowers, destroying evidence or disclosing personal details of whistleblowers to the accused.

Information on the effects of these new regulations and whether they are being enforced could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Internet sites, including: Amnesty International (AI), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Factiva, Human Rights in China (HRIC), Human Rights Watch (HRW), United Kingdom Home Office, United States Department of State.

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