



WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
of Philadelphia

China

People's Republic of China



Key Facts



World Freedom Press Global Index Ranking (Overall): 177 (78.92)

Head of State: President Xi Jinping; Vice President Wang Qishan

Head of Government: Premier Li Keqiang (since 16 March 2013); Executive Vice Premiers Han Zheng (since 19 March 2018), Sun Chunlan (since 19 March 2018), Liu He (since 19 March 2018), Hu Chunhua (since 19 March 2018)

Capital city: Beijing

Population: 1,384,688,986 (July 2018 est.)

Official Language(s): Standard Chinese or Mandarin (official; Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages

Ethnic Groups: Han Chinese 91.6%, Zhuang 1.3%, other (includes Hui, Manchu, Uighur, Miao, Yi, Tujia, Tibetan, Mongol, Dong, Buyei, Yao, Bai, Korean, Hani, Li, Kazakh, Dai, and other nationalities) 7.1% (2010 est.)

Currency: Renminbi (Yuan)

Gross domestic product (PPP): \$23.21 trillion (2017 est.)

Internet penetration: 55.8 %

Most trusted medium of information: Digital Media

Legal System: civil law influenced by Soviet and continental European civil law systems; legislature retains power to interpret statutes

Political system: communist party-led state

Journalists Killed/Jailed 2019: 238 (Imprisoned)

Media Environment: TV is available in most homes and the sector is competitive, especially in cities. There are more than 3,300 local, regional and national TV channels. State-run Chinese Central TV (CCTV) is China's largest media company. Its dominance is challenged by provincial TVs, which are on the air nationally via satellite. China is a major market for pay TV, which is almost entirely delivered by cable. All

of China's 2,600-plus radio stations are state-owned. There are around 1,900 newspapers. Each city has its own title, usually published by the local government, as well as a local Communist Party daily. China spends hugely on TV, radio, online and press outlets targeted at international audiences, aiming to extend its political influence and boost its image. It is less keen to allow foreign players into the domestic market. With 829 million users (China Internet Network Information Centre, CNNIC, February 2019), China has the world's largest internet-using population. Around 26.7 per cent of the online population live in rural areas. The CNNIC says 98.6% of China's online population can access the internet via a smartphone. An extensive web filtering system, dubbed the "Great Firewall of China", blocks tens of thousands of sites using URL filtering and keyword censoring. Thousands of cyber-police watch the web and material deemed politically and socially sensitive is filtered. Blocked resources include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and human rights sites. The use of circumvention tools, including virtual private networks (VPNs), became harder after China strengthened its firewall to allow it to intercept data traffic to and from individual IP addresses. This was coined the "Great Fire Cannon" when it came into effect in 2015. The government since has signaled that it will ban unapproved VPNs.

Media Issues: As of 2019, 238 journalists have been imprisoned. 135 of them are Chinese citizens, and 16 of them are media assistants. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has described President Xi Jinping as the "planet's leading censor and press freedom predator". It says government policies are aimed at achieving complete hegemony over news coverage and the creation of an international media order heavily influenced by China". Beijing tries to limit access to foreign news by restricting rebroadcasting and the use of satellite receivers, by jamming shortwave broadcasts and by blocking websites. Overseas Chinese-language news outlets that are not state-owned are blocked in mainland China. However, international English language websites like the BBC are often available to view. But content that is contrary to Communist Party rhetoric is filtered and English-language news sites can be filtered at times of tension.

Popular Forms of Media Consumption

Social Media: The most popular social network in China currently is Weibo (China's variation of *Twitter*). It is the country's most popular microblogging site. Introduced in August 2009, by the Chinese technology company *Sina* Corporation and boasts 430 million active users per month (for comparison, Twitter has about 326 million).