

China issues report on US human rights

China published a report on the United States' human rights situation on Thursday.

The report, titled "The Human Rights Record of the United States in 2016," was released by the Information Office of the State Council, China's cabinet, in response to "the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2016" issued by the U.S. State Department on March 3 local time.

China's report says that the United States poses once again as "the judge of human rights".

"Wielding 'the baton of human rights,' it pointed fingers and cast blame on the human rights situation in many countries while paying no attention to its own terrible human rights problems," it says.

"With the gunshots lingering in people's ears behind the Statue of Liberty, worsening racial discrimination and the election farce dominated by money politics, the self-proclaimed human rights defender has exposed its human rights 'myth' with its own deeds," it added.

Concrete facts show that the United States saw continued deterioration in some key aspects of its existent human rights issues last year, according to the report.

The United States had the second highest prisoner rate, with 693 prisoners per 100,000 of the national population, the report says.

Roughly 2.2 million people were incarcerated in the United States in 2014. And there had been 70 million Americans incarcerated – that's almost one in three adults – with some form of criminal record, the report cites media reports as saying.

Occurrence of gun-related crimes also sustained a high level, according to the report.

There were a total of 58,125 gun violence incidents, including 385 mass shootings, in the United States in 2016, leaving 15,039 killed and 30,589 injured, says the report, citing figures from a toll report by the Gun Violence Archive.

In 2016, the U.S. social polarization became more serious, with the proportion of adults who had full-time jobs hitting a new low since 1983, income gaps continuing to widen, the size of middle class reaching a turning point and beginning to shrink, and living conditions of the lower class deteriorating, the report says.

According to consulting firm Gallup, the percentage of Americans who said they were in the middle or upper-middle class had fallen by 10 percentage points, from an average of 61 percent between 2000 and 2008 to 51 percent in

2016.

“That drop meant 25 million people in the United States fared much worse in economic terms,” it says.

Besides, one in seven Americans, or at least 45 million people, lived in poverty, the report quotes the Daily Mail as saying.

[4 grave robbers killed by poison](#)



The crime scene. [Photo/gywb.cn]

Four of 10 grave robbers who managed to break into a tomb built during the Song Dynasty (960-1297) died from the poisonous air wafting from below the graveyard in Xishui Town, Guizhou Province, on March 7, 2017.

The grave they attempted to loot has been preserved as a county-level cultural heritage relic.

Around 1:00 am last Monday, a man brought to a local hospital claimed he'd inhaled deadly gas while working underground in a mining area. However, when the doctors tried to rescue the man as he fell into coma, three of his friends outside the emergency room collapsed.

Realizing the complexities of the issue, the doctors called police.

Until the arrival of the police and local officials, the men who were still

conscious admitted that they tried to break into an ancient tomb with the help of an old generator, the emission of which had made them feel uncomfortable. They rushed to the hospital after several fainted inside the grave.

According to the local government, three of the 10 men involved in the grave robbery died inside the mausoleum, while another died after being hospitalized. Four were in stable condition and two were arrested.

A cave going eight meters deep into the grave has been capped and restored. It is highly assumed that the robbers who tried to reach the mausoleum were obstructed by rocks, so they switched on the generator hoping to break their way through. But when attempting to mitigate the noise of the rumbling machine, they covered the entrance with quilts and caused the poisonous air to condense.

Burundian authorities 'shut doors' to engagement, cooperation – Security Council told

9 March 2017 – Nearly two years after the political impasse started in Burundi, national authorities are reducing their cooperation with the United Nations system which risks undermining efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the crisis and cutting assistance to a population in need, the Security Council was told today.

Presenting the first Secretary-General's report on the situation in Burundi, the Special Adviser on the topic noted that "the report is factual and speaks for itself."

Jamal Benomar told the Council the UN has tried to constructively engage with the Government and support the people of Burundi in their search for peace and stability, to no avail.

"We have engaged quickly, refrained from public criticism and encouraged modest, small steps to build confidence with the parties. Despite this modelled approach, the doors to engagement and cooperation have been largely shut by the authorities," Mr. Benomar said.

In the past several months, the Government has decided to withdraw from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, suspend cooperation and collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and refused cooperation with the commission of inquiry mandated by the Human Rights Council.

The Government has also avoided signing a document with the African Union that would allow human rights observers and military experts to be deployed, to aid Burundians.

These actions were taken as human rights violations and abuses continue to be reported on a worrying scale, according to the report.

In addition, at the end of February, President Pierre Nkurunziza suggested that he might seek a change to the Constitution allowing him to seek a fourth term in office. The move, as written in the report, has the potential to plunge the country into an even deeper crisis.

Referring to the report, Mr. Benomar called on the Burundian Government to fulfil its moral obligation and political responsibility to return the country to a path of peace.

He noted that most Burundians do not want to continue on the track of international isolationism, violence and repression.

The UN envoy urged the international community guided by the Security Council to do its part to support those who seek a peaceful resolution of this crisis, and underscored the UN's continued commitment to helping the Burundian people.

The Security Council also heard by video-conference from former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa, who is facilitating discussions between the Government and the opposition in accordance with the Arusha Agreement. Mr. Benomar stressed in his statement that Mr. Mkapa has the UN's full support in his work.

Also speaking to the Council today was Jurg Lauber, the Chair of the Burundi Configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. Mr. Lauber will visit Burundi at the end of this month to get first-hand impression of the situation and meet with the Government, opposition and civil society representatives.

In his statement, Mr. Labuer echoed Mr. Benomar's call to the international community to remain active in Burundi: Abandoning Burundi now would mean wasting past efforts and putting the country and its people at risk of recurring conflict.

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