

China releases human rights action plan

by UPI

BEIJING -- China says it has adopted a national human rights action plan that guarantees the rights to fair trials and to participate in government decisions.

The document, released Monday by China's Cabinet, also commits Beijing to implementing measures discouraging torture and includes measures designed to protect children, women, the elderly, disabled people and ethnic minorities, the state-run Chinese news agency Xinhua reported.

"The realization of human rights in the broadest sense has been a long-cherished ideal of mankind and also a long-pursued goal of the Chinese government and people," the document stated.

"It's a step forward, I think -- it's also good there are some concrete benchmarks with 2010 as a deadline," Roseann Rife, the deputy program director for Asia and the Pacific at Amnesty International, told the New York Times. But, she added, "There are very serious abuses omitted from the plan."

Analysts told the newspaper that while the plan guarantees rights to detainees and petitioners, there is no specific promise to close the unregistered jails set up by local governments to detain petitioners looking to present their grievances to upper government echelons.

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