Developments in criminal justice and human rights: Four years into the Xi Jinping era

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Four years into the Xi Jinping leadership, it is appropriate to begin assessing the effects of his ‘governing the nation according to the law’ 依法治国 platform. Socialist rule of law discourse is now pervasive and has shaped a variety of justice system reforms. The Party is confident that its strengthening of control over criminal justice reform will help to build institutional credibility. Yet, this tight control over the narrative and practice of law threatens to undermine the justice system, especially when the party makes enemies of lawyers and rights advocates who seek to assert an alternative vision of rule of law. This panel discussion will look at the renewed relationship between law and politics in the Xi’s era. It will examine specific developments concerning criminal justice and human rights in relation to criminal defence, death penalty and the handling of minor crimes.

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