

WEEK 19, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES

CHINA INSIDER

Employees wearing face masks work on an assembly line at Dongfeng Honda in Wuhan in China's central Hubei Province.

NO SIGN OF RECOVERY

FOR CHINA'S ECONOMY

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CCP VIRUS

Victims of CCP Virus in China Begin Lawsuits to Hold Regime Accountable

EVA FU

As the Chinese regime comes under increasing international scrutiny over its mishandling of the virus outbreak, anger and grief are on the rise within China's borders.

All across China, people are mourning the loss of loved ones to the virus, which has ravaged the country amid authorities' massive coverup. Researchers estimate that millions were likely infected across the country, and an untold number have died, some without the benefit of basic care in their final moments.

For those who survived, their livelihoods are at stake: The pandemic has also shuttered businesses and plunged the country's economy into its first contraction in decades. Economic losses due to the virus were likely 1.3 trillion yuan (\$183.7 billion) for the January-February period alone, according to estimates by Zhu Min, former deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund.

The devastation has sparked a growing number of Chinese citizens to begin legal action against the ruling regime.

Holding the Regime Liable

On March 6, about two dozen lawyers and rights advocates from nine Chinese provinces joined forces with Chinese dissidents in the United States to offer advice to families of victims who are seeking compensation from the Chinese regime.

"The responsibility is on the government. It caused a massive outbreak, deaths, and aftermaths, but now commoners are bearing the losses," Li Fang, a member of the consultancy group, told The Epoch Times.

The group has received at least seven inquiries so far. Two Chinese citizens said their family had lung infections but were unable to get treatment, as hospitals were also overloaded. Both family members died as unconfirmed cases less than two hours after they were eventually hospitalized.

Another claimant, who recovered from the virus, has yet to receive the diagnostic report and is thus unable to file insurance claims.

Yi An, who lost his parents to the virus, accused the government of "murder." Poring over internet posts, Yi said he read about countless tragedies mirroring his.

"There has been no apology ... not even a word of condolence from [the government]," he said in an interview. He is currently contemplating legal action.



Members of the Chinese People's Armed Police march through Tiananmen Square during a national mourning in Beijing on April 4, 2020.

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Li Fang, Chinese rights advocate

"It's not for the money. I want to seek an explanation," he said.

"Someone has to be held responsible," said Tan Jun, a Chinese civil servant who has filed a lawsuit at the Yichang Xining People's Court against the provincial government of Hubei, the region where the outbreak emerged.

The 52-year-old, an administrator at the Children's Park in Yichang, Hubei province, was the first known person in the country to challenge the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in court for its botched virus response. He blamed the government for allowing the Baibuting community in the city of Wuhan to go ahead with a 40,000-household potluck dinner, days before the city was placed under lockdown. By mid-February, residents from dozens of apartment buildings in the neighborhood reported infections.

For the lives lost and upended, the Hubei government must issue a public apology on the front page of the local state-run newspaper, Hubei Daily, Tan wrote in a court filing, which he shared with The Epoch Times.

Pressure

The Chinese regime acted swiftly to crack down on such acts of defiance.

Just over a week after the lawyers' group was formed, China's justice ministry issued an informal order banning lawyers from "creating trouble" by getting involved in lawsuits seeking compensation, signing on joint statements, contacting rights lawyers, or accepting interviews from overseas media. It was seemingly a direct response to the group's efforts, Li said.

At least one person withdrew their legal claim after his workplace discovered his plans. He was criticized for making a "political mistake."

Yang Zhanqing, a human rights advocate in the group, said local police recently summoned his family in China twice to ask about his activities. They were required to sign a nondisclosure form, promising not to speak about their discussions at the police station.

He said that officials will likely do all they can—from offering small favors to making threats—to discourage such legal action, which motivates the group more to fight for people's rights.

"Once it's filed, it will be a landmark case—whether the court puts it on hold or processes it," Yang said.

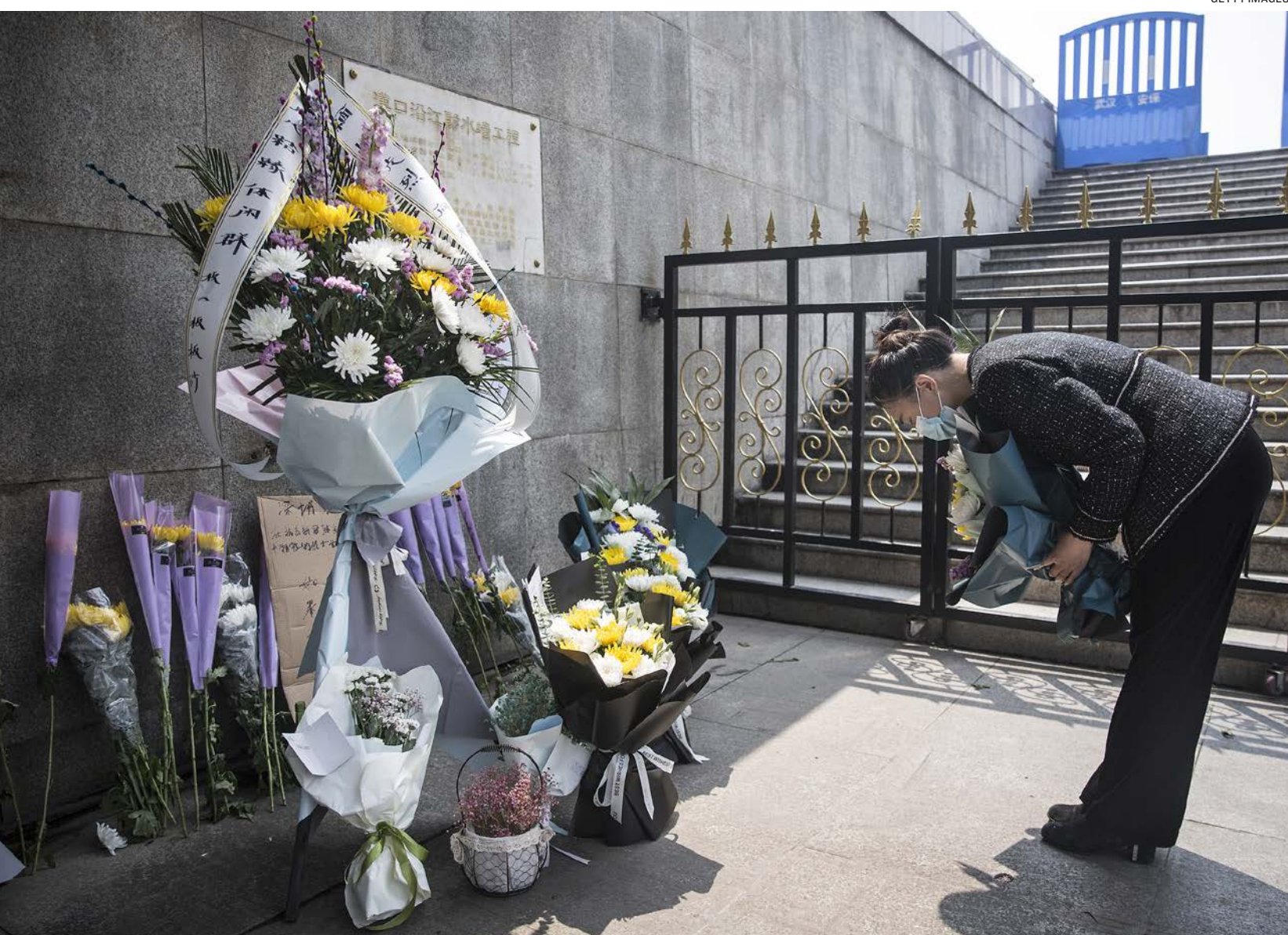
Despite the pressure, Tan vowed that he will carry on.

"The evidence I collected are all government documents. I didn't make anything up," he said, adding that he has made sure to keep a copy of each document he filed.

Tan knows the risks of offending the regime: in 2008, he was detained for 10 days after writing a social media post that authorities claimed "defamed national leaders."

Noting the opaque Chinese legal system that favors Party interests, Tan acknowledged that his chances of winning the lawsuit are slim. He said he is taking it "lightly."

"They have deployed the national mechanism and exhausted all resources against citizens," he said. "Winning the lawsuit or not is no longer important for me ... it's better if I can win, but I have nothing to regret."



A resident presents flowers during a silent tribute to martyrs who died in the fight against the COVID-19 outbreak and compatriots who died of the disease in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on April 4, 2020.

ECONOMY

'No Sign of Recovery' for Chinese Economy as Virus Cripples Export Orders



An employee works at a textile factory in Handan in China's northern Hebei Province, on April 29, 2020.

EVA FU

Before the virus hit, the woodworking machines at a Chinese furniture factory never stopped humming, even through the night, as orders from Europe and Japan flew in.

Now, workers get two days off each week and count themselves lucky if they have two hours of work on the other days.

"This has never happened before," Chen, who oversees the factory in Shenzhen, said in an interview.

Chinese factories are ramping up production as the country struggles to get back on its feet from the pandemic-induced recession. Around 80 percent of the small and medium-sized businesses, and nearly all large firms have returned to work, according to China's commerce authorities.

But analyses of recent data from the country—the world's largest export economy—suggests a quick rebound is nowhere in sight.

Export orders, including to China's top export markets of the United States and Europe, have dwindled as the virus shatters the world economy and workforces continue to shrink, and companies are uncertain about the outlook ahead.

China's Purchasing Managers' Index, an indicator of manufacturing industry confidence, slipped to 50.8 from 52 in April, barely topping the 50-point mark that divides expansion and contraction.

According to a China Beige Book (CBB) survey of 547 companies released late April, 81 percent of executives expressed concern about the virus possibly making a comeback in the fall.

Local Woes for Small Business

The private sector, which contributes to 60 percent of China's gross domestic product, is feeling the pain of the virus crisis. More than two-fifths of the mostly private-owned companies participating in the CBB survey reported operating under half capacity, with merely 4 percent reaching full capacity.

One of every four companies have reported output declines.

Unlike state firms, private and small enterprises have no access to "free credit" during difficult times, making them especially important indicators for gauging the state of the country's

This is not just a Chinese problem, this is really a global problem.

Shehzad Qazi, managing director of China Beige Book

economic recovery, said Shehzad Qazi, the data analytics firm's managing director.

"There's no sign of recovery over there at the moment," he told The Epoch Times.

Manufacturers and service firms continued to see declining sales in April, and three-fifths of the firms attributed their loss of revenue to the lingering virus impact, according to the survey. Around 69 percent of the companies interviewed considered the past month "as good as it gets," with business conditions either staying the same or becoming worse, it stated.

Bao, who runs a popular sausage shop with his wife in Mudanjiang, a city in northeastern China, has furloughed all employees to cut costs.

The shop had been making only one-tenth of its pre-outbreak revenues since reopening about five weeks earlier—not even enough to cover rent and utility costs. Meanwhile, nearly half of the restaurants in the area have gone out of business.

"Even 100 yuan is still better than nothing," he said, adding that they are just "hanging in there."

Tang Renjian, governor of the north-central province of Gansu, made a plea to help small businesses through the "harsh winter" in an April 27 press conference. While not many companies in his province have closed since

January, he cautioned that the effects of the outbreak are just now beginning to show.

Some are "hanging by a thread," he said.

"If we don't walk past this hurdle, the risks it brings will definitely create a butterfly effect," he said, naming social unrest and political crises as "very likely" consequences.

In Harbin, the northern Chinese city that has become the focal point of fears of a second wave of outbreaks, produce and food stands have popped up as people struggle to make ends meet.

A shoe factory in China's southern province of Guangdong has stopped its three production lines and furloughed all except the CEO and a few managers, according to a worker. He recently learned that he "needs not come back this year."

A cab driver from Hunan, the province immediately south of Wuhan's Hubei Province, said his business has plummeted by 30 to 40 percent in the wake of the virus.

"No one can stay intact or keep out of it," he said.

Qazi said: "This is not just a Chinese problem, this is really a global problem. ... Unless we see Europe get back to business, and unless we see the United States really get back to business, China is not going to see that recovery, regardless of what the official narrative might be."



A worker produces baby carriages at a factory in Handan in China's northern Hebei Province on April 29, 2020.



A man wearing a protective suit aboard a train heading to Shanghai at Wuhan Railway Station in Wuhan, China's central Hubei Province, on April 21, 2020.

COVERUP

China Knew Virus Was Contagious But Kept Silent for Days: Leaked Documents

FRANK FANG

Chinese health officials were drawing up plans to combat the CCP virus, which they knew to be infectious, days before they informed the public about its potential to spread, according to internal government documents obtained by The Epoch Times.

The CCP (Chinese Communist Party) virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus, originated in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. The virus has since spread to more than 200 countries and territories, causing more than 61,000 deaths in the United States alone.

China officially confirmed that the virus could be transmitted between humans on Jan. 20, when top respiratory expert Zhong Nanshan made the announcement.

Now, internal documents provided to The Epoch Times show that Beijing covered up what it knew, as central authorities were secretly providing directives to regional governments on how to cope with the outbreak.

On Jan. 15, the regional health commission in northern China's Inner Mongolia issued a "super urgent" emergency notice to its municipal counterparts, explaining how medical facilities should respond to a new form of pneumonia. The notice said that China's National Health Commission had implemented treatment and prevention measures for local health agencies to deal with the new disease (now known as COVID-19).

Three measures stated in the notice clearly indicated that Chinese officials knew the disease was infectious.

First, it asked hospitals to take measures to prevent the disease from spreading inside their facilities and train staff on such actions. Second, it asked

For several weeks, the Heilongjiang health commission has announced new patients and asymptomatic carriers in Mudanjiang and Harbin nearly every day—most of them having contracted the virus at hospitals.

hospitals to set up fever clinics and to "pre-screen and triage" anyone experiencing a fever, to determine levels of urgency for treating patients.

Hospitals also were directed to ask those patients if they had been to markets in Wuhan in the previous two weeks. While Wuhan authorities initially claimed that the virus likely originated from a local fresh food market, studies have since shown that some of Wuhan's first patients had no link to that market.

Finally, hospitals were instructed to set up special treatment teams that included infectious disease experts, the notice stated.

The Inner Mongolian health commission had no intention of informing the public about these plans, stating that the notice was "for internal use only, and cannot be distributed on the internet."

In another internal document, issued Jan. 15 by the local health commission in Xilingol League—one of 12 administrative divisions within Inner Mongolia—authorities also emphasized fever as a key symptom.

The league's health commission stated that local health agencies must "strengthen their management of screening and triage patients with fever," adding that it called for such management based on teleconferences held by officials in Central and Inner Mongolia about the virus.

On Jan. 19, a top Wuhan health official took questions from reporters, saying that he couldn't "rule out" human-to-human transmission, "but its risk was rather low."

On Jan. 23, three days after Zhong's public statement, China's National Health Commission publicly released the third edition of a document, titled "Diagnosis and Treatment Plan for the New Coronavirus."

The document stated that cases reported in Wuhan hospitals beginning in December 2019

were confirmed to be caused by "an acute respiratory infectious disease caused by a new coronavirus." That statement was also included in the second edition of the document, issued on Jan. 18—two days before Zhong's announcement.

The second edition, which was leaked to The Epoch Times, was previously kept secret. The notice is marked with the words: "not to be disclosed."

The second edition contains a section explaining that medical personnel in hospital departments that treat patients with fever, respiratory problems, and infectious diseases should wear a surgical mask, goggles, and one-time-use protective clothing.

Despite instructions that showing central authorities knew the virus could be spread among medical staff, they kept silent until Jan. 20.

The Inner Mongolian documents showed that local health commissions were already warned about virus prevention measures by Jan. 15. But that day, the Wuhan Health Commission wrote on its website that the "risk of human-to-human infection is low."

The World Health Organization (WHO) also initially repeated China's claims that the virus wasn't contagious.

"Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) identified in Wuhan," the WHO tweeted on Jan. 14.

A recent report by The Associated Press, also citing a series of internal memos, similarly found that Beijing marked "not to be disclosed" for six days before publicly conceding that on Jan. 20.

It took another two days before the WHO's mission to China issued a statement confirming that "human-to-human transmission is taking place in Wuhan."

COVERUP

China Goes on Holiday With Restrictions, as Virus Spreads in Northeast

NICOLE HAO

As China entered its five-day Labor Day weekend, many regions placed travel restrictions in an attempt to prevent the spread of the CCP virus.

Meanwhile, in northern China, the outbreak is growing in severity. Authorities in the cities of Harbin and Mudanjiang banned dine-in services for restaurants that serve communal meals.

The two cities, both located in the northeastern province of Heilongjiang, also reported new cluster outbreaks within hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Heilongjiang government issued strict regulations to control and prevent outbreaks inside hospitals, noting that they should adopt measures similar to those in the central

Chinese city of Wuhan, where the epidemic first erupted, internal documents recently obtained by The Epoch Times revealed.

May 1 Holiday

Chinese authorities arranged a five-day public holiday from May 1 to 5, the longest such break in more than a decade. In previous years, Labor Day was a three-day or four-day holiday.

But many weren't able to enjoy the holiday.

Six municipalities in Henan Province announced that teachers or students wouldn't be allowed to leave the city during the holiday, and schools that recently reopened wouldn't observe the holiday.

Hangzhou city in Zhejiang Province and Huizhou in Guangdong Province also canceled the holiday for students.

A student at Jiangnan University in Wuxi city, Jiangsu Province, told The Epoch Times that he and his classmates were forced to stay. He said the university didn't allow any students to leave campus, or be visited by parents or relatives.

Some were asked by their employers to stay put during the holiday.

A woman from Shanghai identified as Ms. Li said her cousin works for the state-run Shanghai Stock Exchange, which ordered all employees to stay in the city.

Restaurants Close

On May 2, the Mudanjiang city government ordered restaurants in the city that supply barbecue, hot pot, wok stew, and other communal meals to bar inside dining at the restaurant beginning May 3. The city asked other types of

restaurants to maintain social distancing for patrons.

The Harbin city government sent out the same directive on May 1.

The Epoch Times' previous reporting showed that authorities in northern China have underreported infections. But even going by official statistics, it showed that the virus was spreading within multiple hospitals.

For several weeks, the Heilongjiang health commission has announced new patients and asymptomatic carriers in Mudanjiang and Harbin nearly every day—most of them having contracted the virus at hospitals.

Mudanjiang currently has three designated COVID-19 hospitals: Hongqi Hospital is dedicated to treating patients in severe and critical condition, while Kang'an Hospital is dedicated to treating patients in mild and medium condition, and Suifenhe People's Hospital treats asymptomatic carriers. Suifenhe also has a makeshift hospital.

Suifenhe is a county-level city that is experiencing a second outbreak, and is under the administration of Mudanjiang.

Internal documents from the Heilongjiang government revealed more details about how hospitals were dealing with the outbreak.

According to memos of a recent conference with Heilongjiang health officials held in Harbin on April 15, officials said they would encourage Harbin residents to take nucleic acid tests to test for the virus, but they must pay for the tests themselves.

At another conference held on April 19, officials spoke about adopting similar measures as in Wuhan inside COVID-19 designated hospitals of Mudanjiang, according to the meeting memos.

For example, hospitals would rearrange their layout to have

three zones: "the red zone," the area where a virus patient is being treated; "the clean zone," an area not exposed to the virus; and "the buffer zone," an area where medical staff can disinfect themselves and take off their protective suits.

For several weeks, the Heilongjiang health commission has announced new patients and asymptomatic carriers in Mudanjiang and Harbin nearly every day—most of them having contracted the virus at hospitals.

All medical staff at designated hospitals in Mudanjiang can't go back to their homes, and can only stay at the hospital or a designated hotel. Furthermore, the Mudanjiang medical teams who were previously dispatched to Hubei Province in February and March to assist in treating the large number of virus patients will now lead treatment teams in the city.

Hubei Province, where Wuhan is capital, is the hardest-hit region in China.

Inside the city's quarantine centers, officials requested that patients be monitored similarly to patients in Hong Kong, meaning all must wear an electronic tracker wristband. The wristband is part of a geofence system; when the person walks outside the allowed perimeter, the system will alert authorities.

Mudanjiang also decided to prolong the quarantine period for people returning to China from overseas—from 14 days to 35 days. The city will also temporarily stop flights and trains to and from Beijing.



A medical worker is checking notes in front of food delivery employees, who are waiting in line to have their nucleic acid test, at a health services center in Suifenhe, China, on April 24, 2020.

COVERUP

Leaked Documents: China's Lab Biosafety Concerns Point to Beijing's Coverup of CCP Virus

A series of internal Chinese government documents on biosafety guidelines for research labs has revealed that Beijing issued guidelines on how to study the CCP virus and knew of its potential to spread among humans before disclosing such risks with the public.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) virus, commonly known as the novel coronavirus, emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019 and quickly spread across the country.

In early January, Chinese authorities initially instructed a genomics company to stop testing virus samples, and delayed informing the public that they mapped out the virus' entire genome, according to media reports.

Authorities also downplayed the virus' risk of spreading—until Jan. 20, when China's top respiratory expert Zhong Nanshan publicly announced that the virus could be transmitted between humans.

New internal documents provided to The Epoch Times have revealed more about the extent of China's coverup: officials knew of the virus' hazards weeks before Jan. 20, and prohibited labs from disclosing any research conducted on the virus.

'Major Sudden Outbreak'

On Jan. 3, China's National Health Commission issued a document to all regional health commissions and top-level biosafety labs in the country "that may deal with pathogenic microorganisms that are infectious among people." The document was marked "not to be disclosed."

It set out guidelines to strengthen the management of biological samples and research activities with regard to "the prevention and control of a major sudden outbreak of infectious diseases." However, the document did not specify the disease.

The document was issued just days after Wuhan authorities publicly confirmed the CCP virus outbreak on Dec. 31.

The document elaborated that such biological samples included blood samples, respiratory fluids, urine, and feces from patients.

Agencies under the supervision of provincial-level health commissions were "prohibited from providing biological samples, pathogens, and culture samples to any other institutes or individuals."

Furthermore, it stated that during the spread of infectious diseases, agencies and individuals were not allowed to publish papers or information about their research without approval.

In another classified document on lab biosafety issued on Jan. 14, the health commission of Changping district in the capital Beijing stated that it was passing on guidelines from the Beijing municipal health commission in connection to "the prevention and control of a major sudden outbreak of infectious diseases."

The Beijing commission asked the city's

pathogenic microbiology labs, including those in health institutes, disease control institutes, third-party testing institutes, government customs departments, and companies that study pathogenic microorganisms, to conduct self-evaluations on Jan. 15 and 16, before health officials will begin random inspections of these facilities from Jan. 17 until 20.

Addressing the CCP Virus

During this time, Wuhan officials maintained that the CCP virus' risk of human-to-human transmission was low.

On Jan. 16, China's National Health Commission issued an internal notice, "Novel Coronavirus Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines," addressed to regional health commissions and disease prevention and control centers about how to study the CCP virus.

The Jan. 16 document was marked "not to be disclosed" and "internal use only; cannot be distributed on the internet."

The guidelines showed that Chinese health officials were aware that the CCP virus had high risks. For example, lab researchers were instructed to adopt protective equipment in accordance with any level-three biosafety laboratories (while handling uncultured samples (uncultured only contains the microorganism, as opposed to a cultured sample, where pathogen is placed in a lab culture so that it can grow).

Level three is the second-highest classification for labs studying dangerous pathogens, with level four being the highest.

Also, staff must be trained and equipped with protective gear to handle waste coming from these labs.

Finally, the guidelines stated that certain scientific procedures in studying the CCP virus, including "separation, cultivation, titration, purification, and obtaining nucleic acids," must be performed at level-three biosafety laboratories.

These guidelines were made public on Jan. 23, three days after Zhong's public statement.

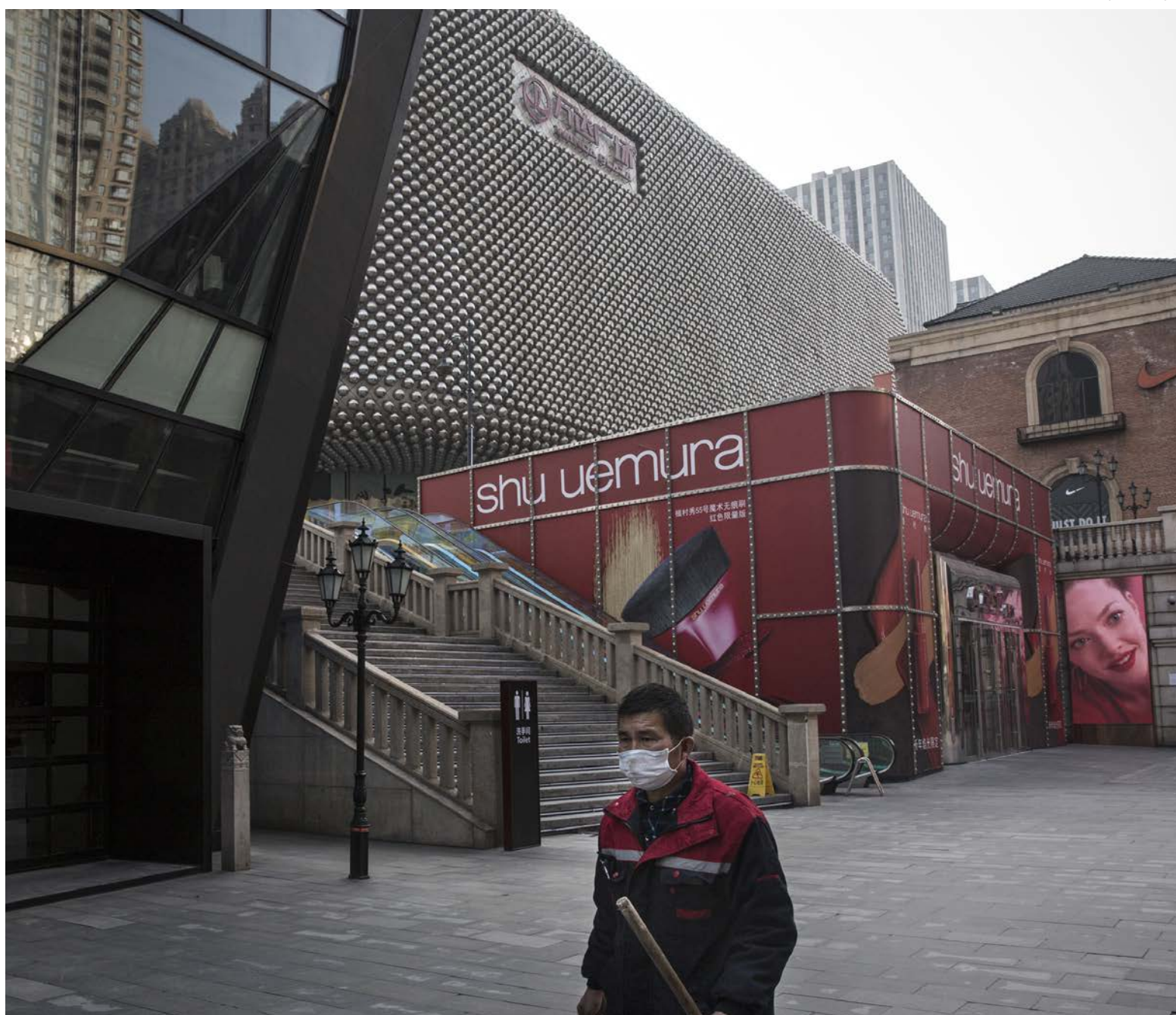
The Epoch Times also obtained an internal document issued by the Beijing Hospitals Authority on Jan. 16. Pointing to the aforementioned guidelines, the hospital authority said it would carry out an inspection of 22 local hospitals for six days until Jan. 21, to ensure lab biosafety.

These documents—along with documents reported by The Epoch Times on April 30—showed that Beijing concealed the virus' ability to spread among humans. Health authorities issued a notice on Jan. 15 instructing local hospitals and facilities on how to respond to a new form of pneumonia spreading among patients.

The Associated Press uncovered similar findings—that Beijing knew of the virus' transmissibility for days before conceding it on Jan. 20—in a recent report also based on the Chinese regime's internal memos.



Chinese paramilitary police wear protective masks as they guard the entrance to the Forbidden City in Beijing on May 2, 2020.



A cleaner wears a protective mask as he walks down an empty street in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, on Feb. 3, 2020.

China's Fuzzy Math on Unemployment

CCP struggles with transparency as 70 million plus workers could be jobless

FAN YU

News Analysis

China is facing widespread unemployment as the nation struggles to emerge from the CCP virus epidemic.

The country's true economic picture remains hidden, however, as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) continues its policy to withhold information from the rest of the world.

Officially, the Chinese economy contracted by 6.8 percent during the first quarter. The country was under lockdown during much of that time due to the CCP virus, commonly referred to as the novel coronavirus. The real rate of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) deterioration may never be known, but is believed to be far higher than the officially disclosed figures.

On the unemployment front, Beijing said the nation's official unemployment rate increased to 5.9 percent in March, up from 5.2 percent in December 2019. That's an increase from 26 million people to 23 million in raw numbers.

Meanwhile, the number of people officially receiving state jobless benefits did not budge. Chinese Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security said only 2.3 million workers were given jobless benefits as of March 2020, the same figure as those receiving benefits three months earlier, before the CCP virus pandemic became widespread and much of the country's economy was shut down.

Higher Than 20 Percent

Those are some incredulous figures. So much so that a report by a major domestic Chinese brokerage firm revealed that unemployment could be four times higher than the official numbers indicate.

Shandong-based Zhongtai

Aside from arguments about numbers, it's undeniable that such levels of unemployment pose a threat to China's social stability and support of the ruling CCP regime.

Securities wrote in an April 24 note that as many as 70 million people were jobless in China and the country's real unemployment rate was 20.5 percent.

"The urban surveyed unemployment rate is obviously flawed in depicting the unemployment situation, because of China's special condition that there is a very large group of migrant workers," the note read, according to a Bloomberg report.

The report was quickly rescinded and was no longer mentioned on Chinese social media by April 27.

It was a rare public rebuke of China's sensitive economic data by a major brokerage firm. And its stakes were apparent a few days later. Li Xunlei, head of research at Zhongtai Securities, was removed from his post and was replaced by deputy director Dai Zhifeng.

Fuzzy Math

The reality is that China's unemployment figures only count urban workers, as Zhongtai pointed out. The vast majority of its 50 million migrant workers likely remained unemployed in March as travel restrictions were still hindering the movement of workers.

China's power generation levels also seem to corroborate a contraction far greater than official Beijing statistics.

Huaneng Power International, China's largest publicly listed domestic power generator, revealed in a securities filing that its power output declined by 18.5 percent from December to March on an annualized basis. Most of Huaneng's power generation capacity is in China's central and eastern regions. Another listed generator, China Resources Power Holdings, said its output decline was 12.5 percent during the same time period.

Morgan Stanley's estimates using consumer consumption

also arrive at far higher levels of unemployment than official data suggest.

"We estimate the numbers of de facto unemployment (no work due to business suspension) and underemployment (working part time or fewer hours than they desire due to insufficient demand) could peak at 80mn and 100mn respectively in the near term, based on our channel check on the resumption status of industrial and service sectors," Morgan Stanley analysts wrote in an April 17 report to clients.

Assuming China's jobless figures are north of 70 million, how does that square with the disclosure that only 2.3 million people are receiving benefits?

Again, those figures are cherry-picked. Workers who have jobless benefit insurance are those who work for large, state-owned employers—most of which likely did not lay off or furlough workers.

The country's small and medium-sized companies, including privately-owned companies, do not have unemployment insurance. So those workers are likely jobless, yet are not counted to receive jobless benefits.

Aside from arguments about numbers, it's undeniable that such levels of unemployment pose a threat to China's social stability and support of the ruling CCP regime. Regulators are likely forced to continue monetary easing measures to support the job market, including handing out cash directly to poorer families.

Yu Jiantuo, deputy secretary-general of the China Development Research Foundation, wrote in an op-ed (in Chinese) on Caixin to call for direct cash transfers, stating that those are more relevant than discounts on travel and consumption.

"How many families want to travel when they are worried about buying rice, vegetables, and meat?" he wrote.

The Case for Suing the Chinese Communist Party

ROGER L. SIMON



Commentary
Whether we should allow Americans to sue China (or, more specifically, the Chinese Communist

Party and its minions, as the Chinese people are victims as well) is rapidly becoming an important issue in light of the massive carnage caused by the novel coronavirus that emanated, it is largely believed, from Wuhan.

We do not yet know the full extent of the malfeasances and prevarications of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in this regard—although we have a good idea of some—but to begin to explore how justice could be served what we do know is enough—the obfuscation of the extent of the epidemic for many days, and the fact that doctors and others were forbidden to communicate what was happening, with some actually disappearing while the virus spread to the entire world.

President Donald Trump and others have been discussing seeking recompense from China on the governmental level, but what of the private citizen? What of us, the man and woman on the street, the actual victims?

Seeking Compensation

The purposes of a lawsuit are to compensate plaintiffs for damages suffered from the actions of defendants and to discourage those defendants from repeating said actions or something similar.

Would either of these ends be served by individuals or class-action groups suing communist China for its conduct in and around the novel coronavirus—called hereabouts, quite accurately, the CCP virus?

It's hard to imagine any compensation being sufficient recompense for the more than 200,000 virus-caused deaths, nearly 60,000 in the United States, as of this writing, not to mention the destruction of economies worldwide that could have yet greater negative consequences for the

health and welfare of the human race in the future.

Who could calculate all that? And how could that compensation be collected anyway?

As for the behavior of the CCP, why would lawsuits exercise any deterrence over such a totalitarian entity? Isn't that finally the burden for the Chinese people to overcome, extraordinarily daunting as that task may be?

Or so it would seem.

Yet in the real world, something must be done, some restitution must be made. To not do so would be an irresponsible insult to our citizens, almost all of whom have suffered to one degree or another, and a travesty of justice. To ignore this and go through the "usual channels" would change little, if anything.

And, yes, such lawsuits can work, even financially—surprisingly so. There is a "proof of concept" for suing China that I will get to in a moment.

Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.)

legislation, sometimes adamantly.

The gist of their criticism is that in bypassing the recognized concept of "sovereign immunity," codified in the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act (1976), so that a state (or its minions) can be sued, the United States, with more interests throughout the world than any country, would be inviting reprisals, principally from China itself.

In all, the critics are telling us to leave it to the big boys and girls, those in our government and diplomatic corps who "know how to do this." The citizens should stay out of it. They will negotiate with China and solve matters as they always do.

When The Epoch Times asked Blackburn about this criticism and the general fear of our citizens suing China, she responded: "In the real world, reciprocity with China has not played out well for the U.S.

"China does not reciprocate with freedom of the press, intellectual property protections, or bilateral criminal enforcement.

"For states that respect the rule of law, reciprocity in sovereign immunity matters. But for communist states like China, Americans stand to lose little in a system notorious for kangaroo courts and violating the rights of Chinese citizens."

Indeed, As Blackburn indicates, "sovereign immunity" may be an interesting subject for academic debate, but has less relevance, again, "in the real world."

Emotionally, too, it will be more satisfying, give more closure, if individuals can sue. We can all begin to move on. U.S. citizens who sue the CCP will also encourage citizens of other countries, if it hasn't already, to do the same, helping to create a worldwide public rejection of communism.

And Congress has, in the past, gone around the sovereign-immunity doctrine, enacting an exception for state-sponsored terrorism in 1996 and in 2016 passing legislation to allow individuals to hold Saudi Arabia accountable for 9/11.

Nevertheless, all three are on the right path and may eventually join forces down the line. That these legislators are all Republicans speaks to the degree to which our two main political parties are willing to confront the People's Republic of China at this time.

However, some highly respected conservative legal thinkers are arguing against the proposed

Suing Terrorists

But what of that "proof of concept" I mentioned earlier?

Back in 1999, attorney Nitsana Darshan-Leitner of the Israel Law Center with her husband, Avi Leitner, pioneered a system of suing terrorists and their sponsors worldwide on behalf of their victims. As of now, they have won a staggering \$2 billion in judgments with \$300 million collected, according to their website.

Did Darshan-Leitner face the same initial resistance to this approach in her country as Blackburn et. al. are facing? She responded to The Epoch Times' query this way:

"When we initiated the first lawsuits against the terrorist groups and state sponsors of terrorism we received a great deal of resistance and cynicism. Most of the government officials did not believe that civil actions brought against the terrorists and rogue regimes could work, could actually be litigated or would accomplish anything good.

"Our Foreign Ministry and some of the intelligence agencies believed our lawsuits were interfering with matters in their exclusive realm.

"At first we couldn't convince the reporters either. They thought at best it was a publicity stunt. The terror victim families, who had very little support from anyone, were not convinced we could succeed and only reluctantly agreed. There was a lot of suspicion and skepticism."

Sound familiar?

Darshan-Leitner is now a hero in Israel and works closely with the Mossad fighting terrorism across the globe.

Let's not be afraid of citizen plaintiffs in the fight against the Chinese communist regime. We may get similar results.

Roger L. Simon is The Epoch Times' senior political columnist. He is also an award-winning novelist, an Oscar-nominated screenwriter, and the co-founder of PJ Media. His most recent book is "The GOAT."

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

CHARLOTTE CUTHBERTSON/THE EPOCH TIMES



Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) at the CPAC convention in National Harbor, Md., on Feb. 28, 2019.

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