

**THE DECLINE OF CHINA'S COMMUNIST
YOUTH LEAGUE AND ITS STRIVE
FOR SURVIVAL**

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Executive Summary

1. In October 2017, China's ruling Communist Party held its 19th National Congress to unveil its quinquennial leadership reshuffle. The once powerful "Youth League faction" largely did not make it to the new Politburo.
2. Once led by former President Hu Jintao, the Youth League faction is a political network of members who had work experience in the Communist Youth League (CYL) of China.
3. Since President Xi Jinping came to power, the CYL faction has begun to face its greatest challenge in decades. Xi has shown his dissatisfaction with the faction and taken measures to crack down on the faction and the League.
4. Many leaders with CYL background have been purged or remain stagnant in their career. The most promising among them, Hu Chunhua, failed to enter the 19th Politburo Standing Committee.
5. The League has been compelled to streamline its organisation and restrict its scope of activities. Its funding and financial resources have also been cut.
6. Under unprecedented pressure from the top, the CYL has to redefine its role in the party-state system by transforming itself into a parental organisation to develop and oversee non-governmental organisations, and acting as opinion leaders in cyberspace, guiding and mobilising Chinese youth in favour of the regime.
7. In the short run, the political prospects of CYL will be gloomy as the League will continue to be restructured and weakened financially and organisationally.
8. In the long term, however, the prospects of CYL leaders are optimistic as they remain salient for the Party in their role of connecting and guiding the younger generation. The young age and high education level of CYL cadres put them in good stead for leadership roles in the future.