

**CHINESE SOCIETY IN 2018:  
SOCIAL STABILITY AND  
GOVERNMENT RESPONSES**

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## **Executive Summary**

1. China enjoyed a relatively “stable” and peaceful 2018. Violent incidents such as terrorist attacks and massive riots were largely absent, indicating strengthened social stability maintenance.
2. The most striking phenomenon in the year was the involvement of left-wing students and activists in a labour movement, politicising the issue.
3. The massive collapse of online lending platforms led to protests by tens of thousands of investors from the middle class. The impact was restricted to this specific group and did not invoke sympathy from other non-investors.
4. Economic slowdown and weak fiscal revenues in many cities resulted in unrest related to unpaid wage and pension. Elementary and secondary school teachers protested for their low remuneration in a number of provinces.
5. Protests by military veterans have been haunting the Chinese government for many years. In 2018, Beijing established a special central ministry to deal with the veteran issue, but the problem remains unresolved to date.
6. Following the trend in recent years, control of online and offline public opinion has been strengthened. This year also witnessed increasing control in academia and colleges.
7. A social credit system based on big data technology has been under construction. This system aims to score citizens’ financial credit and social and political behaviour. Facial and gait recognition technologies have also been extensively deployed in social surveillance.
8. An eye-ball catching incident was the massive detention of Uighurs or other ethnic minorities in “re-education camps” in Xinjiang. Many locals were put into the

camps to be trained in job skills and Mandarin language abilities without due legal process.

9. Beijing has sought to deepen its control of society without substantially opening the political system. This strategy has yielded temporary success but may not work in the long run. Further changes may be inevitable.