



BRIEFING NOTE

FOR INFORMATION

SUBJECT: Anti-Chinese Sentiment in Mongolia

There exist considerable anti-Chinese sentiments in many parts of Mongolia, which has led to an increase in tensions between Mongolian and Chinese communities, especially in rural areas. The rise of the extractive sector in Mongolia has contributed negatively to local perceptions on Chinese residents, both permanent and temporary. Anti-Chinese sentiment can be attributed to multiple factors, including Cold War propaganda by the Soviet Union, social and cultural differences, and economic development.¹

Anti-Chinese sentiment has been used as a political tool by government and private interest groups to gain support and increase their influence in urban and rural areas. This tactic has resulted in widespread negative depiction of China, Chinese people, and Chinese culture. It is not uncommon to see anti-Chinese rhetoric being used during television and radio broadcasts, as well as in marketing campaigns for private businesses. Illustrations and rhetoric are not the only instances of the manifestation of anti-Chinese sentiment, with some radical groups such as the Tsangaan Khass and Dayal Mongol leading protests outside Chinese businesses and residences, and in some instances physically attacking Chinese individuals.

Recently there has been an increase in Chinese migrant workers traveling to Mongolia to work in the country's expanding extractive industry. The increase in migrant workers has led to the development of formal and informal settlements around mining concessions, with nearby towns often being used by workers as areas to spend their leisure time. This development has attracted various types of businesses, both legal and illegal, that have not existed in the communities previously. There are reports of clashes between local residents and Chinese miners over a variety of issues, with the former viewing the latter as infringing on their communities and damaging their cultural integrity.

Apart from Chinese migrant workers in the area, there has also been an increase in Chinese extractive companies investing in mining projects in Mongolia, especially around coal deposits in the south. The increased investment by Chinese companies into the extractive sector has raised concerns over if the profits from these developments will be redistributed to Mongolian communities. This has prompted many politicians to push for increasing mining regulations and taxes, not only concessions owned by Chinese companies, to diminish the chances of unfair economic treatment. Chinese companies face significant political resistance in developing operations in Mongolia, with politicians oftentimes making decisions to diminish the country's reliance on the Chinese economy. In 2010 the Mongolian government decided that it would build a 5,682-kilometre railway to connect the country with Russian seaports, yet has been met with

opposition from the business community who want a more realistic and profitable railway built to connect with China.ⁱⁱ

With forecasts predicting the continual growth of the Mongolian extractive sector, as well as the increased interest from Chinese mining companies and Chinese migrant workers in the area, it is likely that anti-Chinese sentiment will continue to exist in Mongolia. Mining companies should continue to pay attention to sentiments surrounding the Chinese community, with a focus on migrant-community relations and the expansion of Chinese mining industry developments in the region, and how they may affect a company's operations.

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ⁱ Mendee Jargalsaikhan, "Lingering anti-Sinic sentiments in post-Communist Mongolia: Why dislike the Chinese?" *Voices from Central Asia*, No. 19 (January 2015): 1-15. <http://centralasiaprogram.org/blog/2015/01/01/7342/>

ⁱⁱ Justin Li, "Chinese investment in Mongolia: An uneasy courtship between Goliath and David," *East Asia Forum* (February 2nd, 2011). <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/02/02/chinese-investment-in-mongolia-an-uneasy-courtship-between-goliath-and-david/>