China's Communist Party Appears to Loosen Rules for Central Committee Promotions

2 NOVEMBER 2026

Christian Wehrmann



A hostess prepares drinks before a press conference on the Communist Party Central Committee's fifth plenum, in Beijing on October 30.

The Communist Party of China has promoted 10 alternate members to full membership of its Central Committee during the fifth plenum of the 20th Central Committee held in Beijing this week. According to the South China Morning Post, five officials were passed over despite traditionally being next in line for promotion. The reshuffle followed the expulsion of 24 full members and 11 alternate members amid an expanding anti-corruption campaign. The departures have created an unusually large number of vacancies, with only 10 positions filled. The reasons behind the departures from established promotion procedures remain unclear, potentially signaling greater discretion in the Party's leadership selection process.

Political Loyalty Takes Precedence Over Party Tradition

The latest promotions could be another sign of Xi Jinping tightening his grip on the Chinese Communist Party. By moving away from established promotion procedures, the leadership has more freedom to decide who rises through the ranks. Political loyalty and personal reliability may increasingly matter more than seniority or traditional promotion criteria. The ongoing anti-corruption campaign also gives the leadership an opportunity to remove officials and reshape the party from within. In doing so, Xi can strengthen his influence over the people holding important positions. However, this also makes political careers less predictable, as officials must increasingly prove their loyalty to the leadership.

EPIS