China spent the crucial first days of the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak arresting people who posted about it online and threatening journalists

In the early days of the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak, Chinese officials arrested citizens they accused of spreading rumors about the illness online.

Journalists have also reported being detained and threatened by Chinese authorities while covering the outbreak.

Experts are now faulting the Chinese government for its harsh crackdown on the flow of information about the virus.

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As the Wuhan coronavirus death toll rose to at least 18 on Thursday, the Chinese government is facing questions over its vice grip on the flow of information in the early days of the outbreak.

In early January, the Wuhan police said they had arrested eight people accused of spreading “rumors“ about what was then a mysterious pneumonia causing serious complications in