

URGENT ACTION

TRANSFERRED 1000KM FROM FAMILY, MEDICAL CARE NEEDED

Prominent human rights lawyer Yu Wensheng was transferred without notice to Nanjing Prison in Jiangsu Province on 26 January, 1000km away from his family. Yu's wife only found out that he had been transferred after continuously calling Xuzhou City Detention Centre on 3 February for news about his whereabouts. Once the authorities finally confirmed the move, Xu immediately travelled to Nanjing and was able to have a 30-minute video call with Yu on 5 February. During the call, Yu shared that despite the prison conditions being somewhat better, he had not received the necessary health and medical care for his teeth, right hand and right arm and continues to show signs of malnutrition. Yu Wensheng is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, and must be immediately and unconditionally released.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Director Zhu Yonghong
Nanjing Prison
9 Ning Shuang Lu, Yuhuatai Qu,
Najing City, Jiangsu Sheng, 210012
People's Republic of China

Dear Director Zhu:

I am writing to express my grave concern for the health of **Yu Wensheng (余文生)**, a human rights lawyer sentenced to four years' imprisonment and deprivation of political rights for three years on the charge of "inciting subversion of state power" (煽动颠覆国家政权罪) for peacefully expressing his right to freedom of expression. First arrested in 2018, Yu's health has dramatically deteriorated due to poor conditions and alleged torture and other ill-treatment while in detention.

I am relieved to learn that Yu Wensheng was granted a 30 minutes video call with his wife on 5 February 2021, the first since being transferred to your facility from Xuzhou City Detention Centre. Yu shared that the condition at Nanjing Prison are better; however, he said he has yet to receive medical attention for his teeth, arms and hands. His wife further expressed concern that Yu was still showing signs of malnutrition.

Since being detained, Yu had lost four teeth and his right arm is weak due to nerve damage which makes it impossible for him to write. I am afraid that if Yu does not get the immediate medical care that he so desperately needs, his condition will further deteriorate and result in permanent damage.

Yu Wensheng is a prisoner of conscience detained and sentenced solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

I therefore call you to:

- **Ensure that Yu Wensheng has access to adequate food, health care and prompt access to medical attention;**
- **Ensure Yu Wensheng has regular, unrestricted access to a lawyer of his choice and his family and while in detention, he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment;**
- **Release Yu Wensheng immediately and unconditionally, as he is imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his human right to freedom of expression.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Yu Wensheng is a prominent human rights lawyer in Beijing. He represented a number of high-profile human rights cases, including Falun Gong practitioners and fellow human rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang, who was detained and charged with “subverting state power” during the mass crackdown on lawyers and activists starting in July 2015.

Previously detained at the Xuzhou City Detention Centre, Yu Wensheng was transferred to Nanjiing Prison in Jiangsu Province, which is about 1000km away from Beijing. Yu’s wife, Xu Yan, has expressed her deep disappointment with the transfer, which makes visits much more difficult.

On 17 June 2020, Yu was sentenced to four years’ imprisonment and deprivation of political rights for three years in a secret trial. Shortly after Yu’s sentencing, an appeal to the Jiangsu Provincial People’s High Court was filed. On 27 December 2020, Yu’s lawyers received the decision in writing from Jiangsu Provincial People’s High Court that Yu’s appeal was rejected, and the court upheld the original sentencing. According to the judgement, Yu is scheduled to be released on 1 March 2022.

When Yu was granted the first meeting with his lawyer in August 2020, after more than 18 months in detention, he shared that he had been sprayed with pepper spray water and was at times required to sit on a metal chair for an extended period of time, until he partially lost consciousness. Yu also said that he was often not given enough food and that he suffered heatstroke in the summer and was cold in the winter.

Yu’s family and friends believe that his conviction is related to an open letter in which he criticized President Xi Jinping as ill-suited to lead China due to his strengthening “totalitarian” rule over the country.

Yu Wensheng is the winner of the [2021 Martin Ennals Award](#), an annual prize for human rights defenders that was announced on 11 February 2021. The winner and the finalists are selected by a jury of 10 of the world’s leading human rights NGOs. The award provides protection and support human rights defenders who are at risk. His wife shared this news with him, and Yu sincerely appreciates the work that the international community have done and grateful that he is the winner of the 2021 Martin Ennals Award.

Yu Wensheng’s wife, Xu Yan, has been tirelessly fighting for the release of her husband in the past three years. Xu made numerous attempts to visit her husband, who has been detained 800km away from their home in Beijing. Xu Yan has been under constant surveillance and harassment by the authorities since she started to advocate for her husband. She has been summoned, detained and banned from travelling.

Activists and human rights defenders in China continue to be systematically subjected to monitoring, harassment, intimidation, arrest and detention.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or Chinese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 22 April 2021

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Yu Wensheng (He/Him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/3554/2021/en/>