

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER TRIED IN SECRET

Huang Qi, founder and director of Sichuan-based human rights website “64 Tianwang”, was secretly tried at Mianyang City Intermediate People’s Court on 14 January 2019 after being held in detention for more than two years. No verdict has yet been announced but, if convicted, the maximum punishment could be up to life imprisonment. Pu Wenqing, his 85-year-old mother, was taken away by Sichuan police in December 2018 and only released after more than a month in detention.

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

President of the People’s Republic of China Xi Jinping
 Zhongnanhai
 Xichangan’jie
 Xichengqu, Beijing Shi 100017
 Fax: +86 10 6238 1025
 Email: english@mail.gov.cn:

Dear President:

Huang Qi, founder and director of Sichuan-based human rights website “64 Tianwang”, was tried in secret by the Mianyang City Intermediate People’s Court on 14 January 2019. Detained for over two years before the trial, he was first formally arrested in December 2016 for “providing state secrets to a foreign entity” and then in October 2018 he was further charged with “leaking state secrets”. Diplomats from the US and British embassies reported that they were not allowed to attend the hearing.

Huang Qi suffers from chronic kidney disease, hydrocephalus as well as other conditions affecting his heart and lungs. There have been grave fears that he might die in custody due to his poor health and lack of appropriate and adequate treatment.

In addition to concerns about Huang Qi’s health and lack of access to a fair trial, I raise the urgent issue that Huang’s 85-year-old mother, Pu Wenqing, was taken away by Sichuan police in early December 2018 while travelling from Sichuan province to Beijing to seek help from diplomats for her son. According to sources, she was repeatedly threatened by the police during detention before being released on 21 January 2019.

I call on you to

- a) **Release Huang Qi immediately and unconditionally unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that he has committed an internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards, and ensure that he has regular and unrestricted access to adequate medical care on request or as necessary, and**
- b) **End all harassment against Huang Qi’s family.**

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 28 July 2017, Huang Qi told his lawyer that he was being ill-treated and had been made to stand for hours at a time and repeatedly questioned and insulted by officers since his detention in late 2016. Huang Qi told his lawyer on 3 November 2017 that he had been beaten up by other detainees at the Mianyang City Detention Centre, Sichuan Province, on 24-26 October, with knowledge of at least one of the detention centre's officers.

Most recently, Huang Qi told his lawyer on 23 October 2018 that doctors and detention centre officers provided false reports of his blood pressure and understated the extent of his critical medical conditions.

“64 Tianwang”, founded by Huang Qi and his wife Zeng Li in 1998, is one of the few major mainland-based websites that report and document petitioners' protests in China. Most of the website's contributors were petitioners before becoming citizen journalists to report on other petitioners' protests and arrests.

Over the years, Huang Qi and other “64 Tianwang” contributors have been frequently detained or harassed by the Chinese authorities. Huang Qi has been imprisoned twice. He was first detained in June 2000 – the 11th anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown – before being convicted of “inciting subversion of state power” and sentenced to five years in prison in May 2003. He was again imprisoned for three years after exposing the substandard building scandal following the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan.

According to “64 Tianwang”, the website's citizen journalists have been questioned or placed under brief detention more than 100 times since President Xi Jinping took power in 2012, and at least 30 have been imprisoned or placed under criminal detention. Ten “64 Tianwang” journalists are currently in prison, including Wang Jing, Zhang Jixin, Li Min, Sun Enwei, Li Chunhua, Wei Wenyuan, Xiao Jianfang, Li Zhaoxiu, Chen Mingyan and Wang Shurong.

Huang Qi's lawyers have also faced retaliation by the authorities. In February 2018, the Guangdong Provincial Department of Justice notified Guangzhou-based lawyer Sui Muqing that he was being disbarred. The lawyer, who had previously represented Huang Qi, believes his disbarment was related to his legal representation for human rights defenders. Another of Huang Qi's lawyers, Liu Zhengqing, was also disbarred in January 2019.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English, Chinese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 5 March 2019

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Huang Qi (m)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/9297/2018/en/>