

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: ASA 17/016/2014

21 March 2014

## **China blocks attempt to observe a moment's silence for human rights defender Cao Shunli**

### ***Human Rights Council adopts Universal Periodic Review outcome on China***

Amnesty International welcomes China's commitment to ensure that all citizens can engage freely in the UPR process<sup>1</sup> and reiterates its call to China to create an environment in which such participation can take place without fear of reprisals or physical harm. As such the organization deeply deplores the death of Chinese activist Cao Shunli who paid the ultimate price for campaigning for greater transparency and civil society participation in the UPR process. On 14 March 2014, she died in a hospital in Beijing after being denied proper medical treatment for months while in detention. Her death demands that China gives full and immediate effect to the recommendations. We regret that China has gone to such lengths to block efforts to observe a minute of silence in the Human Rights Council in her memory.

The trials of members of the "New Citizens Movement" have shown numerous procedural flaws. Chinese citizens' legitimate and peaceful public participation has been criminalized, under charges such as "disturbing public order" and "illegal assembly". Amnesty International urges China to reconsider its rejection of the recommendation to remove obstacles to freedom of information on the Internet and to guarantee freedom of expression, assembly and association for all.<sup>2</sup>

Amnesty International is encouraged that China is "actively preparing for the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights",<sup>3</sup> and urges the government to speed up these efforts and announce a timeline.

The abolition of the *Re-education Through Labour* system is indeed a welcome step; however, Amnesty International questions the government's claim that "there are no arbitrary or extrajudicial detentions in China".<sup>4</sup> Rather, evidence points to the continued use of various forms of arbitrary detention – including in legal education centres, "abnormal petitioning" centres, and house detention.

Amnesty International is concerned that no state raised the issue of forced evictions in China. Forced eviction of people from their homes and farmland has become a routine occurrence in China and represents a gross violation of human rights.

Ethnic minorities in China, including Tibetans, Uighurs and Mongolians, continue to experience severe discrimination. Amnesty International therefore regrets that China did not accept the recommendation to fully respect the rights of ethnic minorities, including peaceful political and religious practices and expressions of cultural identity,<sup>5</sup> and calls on China to immediately release Karma Tsewang, Illham Tohti, and all other prisoners of conscience.

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<sup>1</sup> A/HRC/25/5, paragraph 186.61-62 (Czech Republic, Switzerland) and A/HRC/25/5/Add.1, page 5

<sup>2</sup> A/HRC/25/5, para 186.159, (France)

<sup>3</sup> A/HRC/25/5/Add.1, 186.1

<sup>4</sup> A/HRC/25/5/Add.1, 186.115

<sup>5</sup> A/HRC/25/5/Add.1, 186.230

**Background**

The UN Human Rights Council adopted the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of China on 20 March 2014 during its 25<sup>th</sup> session. Prior to the adoption of the review outcome, Amnesty International delivered the oral statement above.

Amnesty International had earlier submitted information on the situation of human rights in China: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA17/013/2013/en>

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International Secretariat, Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW, UK

[www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)

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