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## **Liu Xiaobo's Nobel Peace Prize win puts spotlight on China rights violations**

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Amnesty International today called on the Chinese authorities to release all prisoners of conscience detained in the country after imprisoned human rights activist Liu Xiaobo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The 54-year-old scholar and author, who won the prize for his outstanding contribution to human rights, is currently serving an 11-year sentence on charges of “inciting subversion of state power” imposed after an unfair trial.

Liu is a prominent government critic who has repeatedly called for human rights protections, political accountability and democratization in China.

"Liu Xiaobo is a worthy winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, we hope it will keep the spotlight on the struggle for fundamental freedoms and concrete protection of human rights that Liu Xiaobo and many other activists in China are dedicated to," said Catherine Baber, Deputy Asia-Pacific Director at Amnesty International.

"This award can only make a real difference if it prompts more international pressure on China to release Liu, along with the numerous other prisoners of conscience languishing in Chinese jails for exercising their right to freedom of expression."

Liu Xiaobo co-authored Charter 08, a proposal calling for legal and political reform in China to establish a democratic system that respects human rights. It was originally signed by around 300 Chinese scholars, lawyers and officials, and timed to mark International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2008.

Liu was detained on 8 December 2008, and the Charter was published online the next day. Since then, many of the original signatories have been questioned and harassed by the Chinese authorities. Meanwhile a further 12,000 people have signed in support online.

Liu Xiaobo was sentenced on 25 December 2009, the day after a two-hour trial and more than a year after he was first detained. Articles he wrote about the June 1989 pro-democracy movement were also cited in his verdict as evidence of “inciting subversion”.

Amnesty International has campaigned for his release, along with that of other activists who signed Charter 08 including Liu Xianbin, who was arrested in June.

Several other signatories of Charter 08 have asked to share the responsibility with Liu Xiaobo and a group of senior Communist Party members have questioned the legality of Liu Xiaobo's sentence.

Former president of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate the Dalai Lama were among those who supported the nomination of Liu Xiaobo for the 2010 award. Vaclav Havel co-wrote Charter 77, the 1977 document calling for respect of human rights in Czechoslovakia on which Charter 08 was modeled.