

URGENT ACTION

TWO PROMINENT BLOGGERS DETAINED FOR TWEETS

Lawyers met with Lu Yuyu and his girlfriend Li Tingyu, two bloggers who compiled and released data on protests in China. They were criminally detained on 15 June 2016 on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”. They are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Lu Yuyu and his girlfriend **Li Tingyu**, who live in Dali, Yunnan province, managed a blog (wickedonna.blogspot.com) and a Twitter account (@wickedonna) account name “Not News”. The last message posted was on 15 June, and for a while it was unclear if they were missing or criminally detained.

On 6 July, two lawyers met with Lu Yuyu at the Dali Zhou Detention Centre. They said that Lu appeared to be in good spirits. Lu has been detained for “picking quarrels and provoking troubles” in relation to information about strikes, protests and rural unrest that was compiled on his blog and shared on Twitter and other social media. Lu claimed that the information that he compiled were objective facts, and thus he was innocent. The crime of “picking quarrels and provoking troubles” when applied to online behaviour requires that the user has fabricated information that defames others.

Two different lawyers met with Li Tingyu on 6 July at the same detention centre. According to the lawyers she said the subject of her interrogations were the information she compiled on her blog and put on Twitter and she likewise maintained that she had not fabricated the information, and had just compiled and collected it. Li also said that on 15 June, several unidentified men grabbed her, put her into a car without a license plate, and forcibly put a black hood over her head.

Please write immediately in Chinese, English or your own language:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Lu Yuyu and Li Tingyu who have been detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression.
- Urging authorities to ensure that while in detention Lu Yuyu and Li Tingyu have regular, unrestricted access to family and lawyers of their choice, and are not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 AUGUST 2016 TO:

Director

Bao Ronggui
Dali City Public Security Bureau
66 Cangshanlu
Dali Shi, Yunnan province 671000
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 872 212 4460 (Chinese only)
Salutation: Dear Director

Dali Detention Centre Suozhang

Dali Zhou Kanshou-suo
Xiaguan Zhen, Wenxian Cun
Dali Shi, Yunnan Sheng
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 872 231 2985 (Chinese only)
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security
Guo Shengkun
14 Dong Chang'an Jie
Dongcheng Qu, Beijing Shi 100741
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 10 66262114 (in Chinese only)
Email: gabzfwz@mps.gov.cn
Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 147/16. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/4313/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 2013, Lu Yuyu and Li Tingyu have been compiling and releasing data about protests in China and published them daily on different social media channels including blogger.com, Google Drive, Twitter and Weibo. They documented nearly 30,000 “mass incidents” in 2015 alone. Mass incidents include collective actions ranging from villagers’ protests against land grabs, to workers’ strikes and protests, to demonstrations of homeowners cheated by developers.

The last time the Chinese government released an official figure was in 2007 when the year’s figure was over 100,000 “mass incidents” but the government stopped releasing such official statistics. Estimates made by mainland academics on the number of “mass incidents” in recent years vary greatly and range from 30,000 to 180,000 per year.

According to sources, Lu Yuyu and Li Tingyu had been forced to move homes in the past due to intimidation from the police due to their blogging project.

China maintains one of the most extensive censorship apparatuses in the world, and publishing unauthorized letters or opinions criticizing leaders or government policy can have enormous professional and criminal ramifications for editors.

The authorities continue to use vaguely-worded laws to arbitrarily target individuals for solely exercising their right to freedom of expression. Since President Xi Jinping came to power in November 2012, hundreds of people have been detained solely for expressing their views online.

President Xi Jinping has repeatedly reiterated the need to uphold the “Marxist view of journalism”, which sees all state media outlets as defenders of Communist Party interests. At the same time, leaked ideological memo “Document Number 9” warned about the “false trend” of promoting “freedom of the press” and the “free flow of information on the internet”.

On 19 February, President Xi Jinping toured China Central Television (CCTV), the newspaper *People’s Daily*, and Xinhua News Agency to encourage the outlets to “safeguard the Party’s authority, and safeguard the Party’s unity”. He also told party media that they “must be surnamed Party”. Historically, discussions about the “surnames” of institutions or political structures are debates about the fundamental direction and ideology to be undertaken by that body.

Name: Lu Yuyu (m) Li Tingyu (f)

Gender: both

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