

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST JAILED, RISKS TORTURE

Human rights activist Wang Lihong has been sentenced to nine months' imprisonment. She is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

The presiding judge at Beijing Chaoyang District People's Court announced Wang Lihong's sentence in the morning of 9 September. Wang Lihong immediately announced that she was innocent of the charge of "provoking quarrels and making trouble," and would appeal. Her son, Qi Jinxiang, told the media and his mother's supporters that Wang Lihong should not have been sentenced to even one day, and should be released immediately.

Wang Lihong's trial was held on 12 August. At the trial, the charge against her was changed from "assembling a crowd to block traffic or disturb traffic order" to "provoking quarrels and making trouble." This stemmed from Wang Lihong's participation in a peaceful protest in April 2010 in support of three Fujian internet activists charged with defamation for posting questions online about an alleged police cover-up related to the death of a young woman.

On 21 March 2011, police had taken Wang Lihong, 56, from her home as part of a wave of detentions sparked by the Jasmine protests in the Middle East and North Africa. Police searched her home and confiscated her personal computer. On 21 April, Beijing Chaoyang District Police told her family she had been formally arrested and was detained at Beijing Chaoyang District Police Centre. According to Wang Lihong's lawyer, police limited the number of times lawyers could visit her and the Procuratorate did not allow lawyers to access all case documents, violating China's legal provisions guaranteeing lawyers the right to access their clients and documents related to their cases.

Wang Lihong suffers from chronic back pain and her health has deteriorated since she has been in detention.

Please write immediately in English, Chinese or your own language, urging the authorities to:

- release Wang Lihong immediately and unconditionally;
- ensure that Wang Lihong has access to her family, legal representation of her choosing and any medical attention she may require;
- guarantee that Wang Lihong will not be tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- take effective measures to guarantee freedom of expression, association and assembly, in line with China's constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which China has signed and declared an intention to ratify.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 OCTOBER 2011 TO:

Director of the Beijing Public Security Bureau

Fu Zhenghua Juzhang
Beijingshi Gong'anju
9 Dongdajie, Qianmen
Dongchengqu
Beijingshi 100740
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 65242927
Salutation: Dear Director

President of the Beijing Municipal Higher People's Court

CHI Qiang Yuanzhang
Beijingshi Gaoji Renmin Fayuan
10 Jianguomennan Dajie
Chaoyangqu
Beijingshi 100022
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 65290390
Email: bjgy_mygt@chinacourt.org
Salutation: Dear President

And copies to:

Premier
WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie, Xichengqu,
Beijingshi 100017,
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 65961109 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

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

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 230/11 (Index: ASA 17/038/2011).
Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA17/038/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Wang Lihong is a widely-known human rights activist who often visits petitioners and provides food and clothes for those living on the street waiting to seek justice. She also frequently moves in with activists under police surveillance in order to provide them with emotional support. She has visited the wives of detained activists to help them with cooking and child care, and has often helped them find financial support and secure legal aid for their spouses. "Her support is always timely and practical, and she is always on the frontline of human rights!" said activists launching a campaign for her release. For example, she went straight to Chen Guangcheng's village after he was released and placed under illegal house arrest and allegedly beaten. She wrote 23 letters to the Fujian government to lobby for the release of three internet activists when they were being held for posting questions online about an alleged police cover-up related to the death of a young woman.

Amnesty International issued a web action on Wang Lihong on 5 May 2011 (see: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/china-s-jasmine-activists-2011-05-05>). Many activists in China are campaigning for Wang Lihong's release. Wang Lihong has been quoted as saying, "If I remain silent in the face of suffering and evil, then the next evil that should be struck down is myself."

Name: Wang Lihong
Gender m/f: F

Further information on UA: 230/11 Index: ASA 17/042/2011 Issue Date: 12 September 2011

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