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## **Yahoo's data contributes to arrests in China: free Shi Tao from prison in China!**

Yahoo has admitted to providing the Chinese authorities with information that led to the eventual arrest and imprisonment of journalist Shi Tao; considered by Amnesty International to be prisoner of conscience.

Shi Tao is serving a ten-year prison sentence in China for sending an email which included information on the government response to the Tiananmen Square massacre. Shi Tao sent the email to the US using his Yahoo account. The Chinese authorities accused him of "illegally providing state secrets to foreign entities".

According to the Court transcript, the evidence that led to Shi Tao's sentencing included account-holder information provided by US internet company Yahoo.

Shi Tao was accused of sending an email summarizing an internal Communist Party directive to a foreign source. The Communist Party directive had warned Chinese journalists of possible social unrest during the anniversary of the June 4 Movement (in memory of the Tiananmen crackdown), and directed them not to fuel it via media reports.

Imprisoned for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, a right entrenched in international law and the Chinese Constitution, Amnesty International considers Shi Tao a prisoner of conscience.

Companies must respect human rights, wherever they operate. Yahoo's actions are not justifiable: the company unconditionally met the Chinese government's request for information on Shi Tao, and allegedly contributed to Li Zhi's detention.

Paradoxically, Yahoo has stated that it believes in the core values of "excellence, innovation, customer fixation, team work, community and fun". Yet, the company has signed the *Public Pledge on Self-Discipline for the Internet Industry*, effectively agreeing to implement China's draconian system of censorship and control.

Amnesty International has raised its concerns with Yahoo. The company has responded but has not addressed all the concerns raised.

Find out more about Yahoo's and Amnesty International's position on the Shi Tao case

Learn more about human rights in cyberspace

Write to Yahoo now, expressing your concern about the company's role in assisting in the violation of Shi Tao's rights. Yahoo must use its influence to secure Shi Tao's release.

Use your freedom of expression to highlight Yahoo's responsibility towards human rights in China and wherever it operates.

## Sample letter

Dear Jerry Yang and David Filo,

I am writing to you to express my deep concern over recent allegations that your company has assisted authorities in China in events which led to the imprisonment of Shi Tao, a Chinese journalist, considered by Amnesty International to be prisoner of conscience.

On April 27, 2005, Shi Tao received a ten-year prison term for sending information about a Communist Party decision through his Yahoo email account to a website based in the United States. Amnesty International considers him a Prisoner of Conscience, as he was imprisoned for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression and opinion.

I am alarmed that in the pursuit of new and lucrative markets, your company is contributing to human rights violations. Yahoo should urgently give consideration to the human rights implications of its business operations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights calls upon every organ of society, which includes companies, to respect human rights.

Yahoo's conduct in Shi Tao's case has exposed your company to the risk of being complicit in human rights violations. I therefore call upon Yahoo to:

- Use its influence to secure Shi Tao's release
- Exhaust all judicial remedies and appeals in China and internationally before complying with States directives where these have human rights implications
  - Develop an explicit human rights policy, that states the company support for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and complies with the principles articulated in the UN Norms for Business and ensure that all parent companies, subsidiaries and partners do the same. In this light, make clear to the Chinese authorities as well as to the global community that Yahoo is not willing to assist Governments in implementing their systems of internet censorship, or to provide information directed at restricting freedom of expression.

Sincerely,