URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST FINALLY REUNITED WITH HIS FAMILY AFTER 3 YEARS

Human rights lawyer Yu Wensheng completed his three-year prison sentence and was released on 13 April 2026. His wife, activist Xu Yan, was released on 13 January 2025 after serving a one year and nine months sentence. The couple had been detained since April 2023. Following Yu Wensheng's release, the family was finally reunited and able to embark on a healing journey together, allowing them to begin recovering from the physical and psychological impact of years of detention, separation and uncertainty. However, they reportedly continue to face restrictions and monitoring by the authorities. Amnesty International will continue to monitor their situation.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED; MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS ALREADY.

Human rights lawyer Yu Wensheng and his wife, activist Xu Yan, were taken into police custody on 13 April 2023 while travelling to meet representatives of the European Union Delegation in Beijing. They were initially accused of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" before prosecutors added the more serious charge of "inciting subversion of state power". In October 2024, a court in Suzhou convicted both activists. Yu Wensheng's appeal was subsequently rejected in January 2025.

Yu Wensheng was finally released on 13 April 2026 after serving a three-year prison sentence for "inciting subversion of state power". Xu Yan was released on 13 January 2025 after serving a one year and nine months sentence on the same charge. Both convictions stemmed solely from the peaceful exercise of their human rights.

Throughout their detentions, reports indicated serious concerns regarding their health and well-being. Yu Wensheng reported dental problems, which he attributed to malnutrition; Xu Yan reportedly lost 14kg during her detention, the conditions of which may have amounted to torture or other ill-treatment. Their son, a minor at the time of their arrest, also experienced severe psychological distress while both parents were imprisoned.

Although Yu Wensheng and Xu Yan have now completed their sentences and been released, both were subject to "deprivation of political liberties", a punishment in China's Criminal Law that allows authorities to restrict rights after release from prison in certain cases. We understand both Yu and Xu received this "supplemental sentence" alongside their prison sentences, and that at least Xu's should have already been completed.

Amnesty International has learned that the family was recently prevented from leaving the country; border guards asserted that the refusal was on the grounds of "endangering national security." There may be some grounds in Chinese law for limiting Yu's freedom of movement, despite the fact that Amnesty International has found that criminal provisions allowing for "supplemental sentences" are not compliant with international human rights law. However, Amnesty is not aware of any legal grounds that would permit authorities to refuse to allow Xu or their son to travel internationally.

Amnesty International will continue to closely monitor the situation and respond with further advocacy or efforts to mobilize, as appropriate.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Yu Wensheng (he/him); Xu Yan (she/her)

THIS IS THE TENTH AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 19/18

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/7861/2024/en/

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL