

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ARBITRARILY DETAINED

**Human rights defender Cao Shunli, who was taken away by police on 14 September at Beijing Capital International Airport, has been arbitrarily detained. She is a prisoner of conscience and may have been subjected to enforced disappearance. Her whereabouts and legal status are unconfirmed.**

**Cao Shunli** was at Beijing Capital International Airport on 14 September on her way to Geneva, Switzerland, to attend a training programme on UN human rights mechanisms. She was stopped by public security officers after she had passed the immigration counter and taken away for interrogation. She has not been heard from or seen since. She is believed to be in custody at Beijing No. 1 Detention Centre, but her current whereabouts and legal status are unconfirmed.

Cao Shunli is one of the key advocates for genuine and diverse civil society participation in the drafting of China's National Human Rights Action Plan and report for the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Review of China's human rights record in the UPR Working Group is scheduled for 22 October in Geneva.

Cao Shunli and a larger group of activists had started a sit-in protest in front of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 18 June to demand greater transparency and civil society participation in the UPR process. The authorities have broken up this peaceful protest at least four times. Most recently, on 3 October, around 10 of the remaining protestors were taken away by the police. Since then, police cars have been stationed in front of the Ministry and it is no longer possible for the protestors to gather there.

Cao Shunli was sent to Re-education Through Labour for one year in April 2010, and for one year and three months in April 2011 because of her peaceful activism and human rights work.

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

- Calling on the authorities to release Cao Shunli immediately and unconditionally as she has been detained solely for exercising her right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to ensure that Cao Shunli is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- Calling on them to tell Cao Shunli's family immediately of her whereabouts, and ensure her wellbeing;

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 NOVEMBER 2013 TO:**

Director of the Beijing City Public  
Security Department

Fu Zhenghua  
9 Dongcheng Menqian Dajie  
Beijing 100740  
People's Republic of China  
Fax: +86 10 6524 2927  
**Salutation: Dear Director**

Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs

Li Baodong  
No. 2 Chaoyangmen Nandajie  
Chaoyang District  
Beijing 100701, China  
Tel: +86 10 6596 1114 (Chinese only)  
**Salutation: Dear Vice Minister**

### **And copies to:**

Minister of Public Security  
Guo Shengkun  
Gong'anbu  
14 Dong Chang'anjie  
Dongcheng District  
Beijing 100741, China

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Cao Shunli and a group of human rights defenders, victims of forced evictions, former Re-education Through Labour inmates and democracy activists wrote a letter to China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in October 2012 to enquire about public participation in the drafting of the state report for the UPR, and to request that the details of the process be made public. In November, they received a response from the MFA stating that the work of compiling the state report had not started yet. There was no further response, and on 18 June 2013, they began their sit-in protest in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing. According to the protestors themselves, the number of people who joined the sit-in reached approximately 400 at times,, including 200 from Beijing and 200 from elsewhere in China. They are mostly women. At the end of June, the MFA sent representatives to negotiate with the protestors. Both sides agreed to select a group of representatives to attend a meeting but the meeting did not take place as no mutually agreeable venue was found.

The group also filed an administrative lawsuit requesting the disclosure of information related to the preparation for the state report for the UPR. A Beijing court in August turned down the case on the grounds that the state report to the UPR is a diplomatic action.

On 1 July the authorities briefly detained and dispatched back to their homes the protestors who had come from outside Beijing. They have broken up the protest at least three times since then. Due to a continued campaign of intimidation, the number of Beijing-based protestors in front of the Ministry also gradually diminished.

The UPR is a mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council under which it reviews, on a regular basis, the fulfilment of the human rights obligations and commitments of all 193 UN Member States. The UPR is an inter-state review process aimed at the improvement of the human rights situation on the ground. While the UPR is a state-driven process, civil society plays an important role in the review. The Human Rights Council has recommended that States prepare their report for the review through a broad consultation process at the national level with all relevant stakeholders, and civil society can also play an important role in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations adopted during the UPR.

The upcoming review of China will be the second time China's human rights record has been reviewed in this way.

Name: Cao Shunli

Gender m/f: f

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