

URGENT ACTION

CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ARRESTED

Human rights defender Cao Shunli was formally arrested on charges of "picking quarrels and making trouble" on 21 October. She is in poor health and is not receiving the medical treatment she requires during detention.

Cao Shunli was taken away from Beijing Capital International Airport on 14 September while she was on her way to Geneva, Switzerland, to attend a training programme on UN human rights' mechanisms. She had not been seen or heard from for more than five weeks. Her family received an arrest notice dated 21 October for charges of "picking quarrels and making trouble". She is still detained in Chaoyang District Detention Centre. Amnesty International considers her a prisoner of conscience.

Amnesty International has received information that Cao Shunli is suffering from severe cirrhosis complications and malnutrition which requires urgent treatment. She has not received any medical treatment during her detention.

Cao Shunli is one of the key advocates for genuine civil society participation in the drafting of China's National Human Rights Action Plan and reports for the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review (UPR). The review of China's human rights record in the UPR Working Group was held in Geneva on 22 October. 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 broke up this peaceful protest at least four times. On 3 October, approximately 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 or your own language, urging the authorities to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Cao Shunli, who is a prisoner of conscience;
- Ensure that her release takes place urgently particularly in view of her specific need for health care which has not been provided in detention;
- Ensure that for as long as she remains in detention Cao Shunli is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, she has access to lawyers of her choosing and can receive visits from family members, and she is provided with the nutrition and health care she requires;
- Ensure that the treatment of detainees, including Cao Shunli, meets standards provided for in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, in particular with regard to the provision of adequate nutrition and health care.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 DECEMBER 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

People's Republic of 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

People's Republic of China

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 282/13. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA17/033/2013/en>

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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 2012, 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. 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 review of China on 22 October was the second UPR review of China's human rights record.

Name: Cao Shunli

Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 282/13 Index: ASA 17/040/2013 Issue Date: 31 October 2013