

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 17/061/2002

11 December 2002

UA 357/02

Fear for safety/Incommunicado detention

**PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**    Liu Di, (f), aged 22 - student

---

Liu Di, a university student from Beijing, has reportedly been detained for using the Internet to express views critical of the Chinese government. She is being held incommunicado at an unknown location, and there are fears for her safety.

According to reports, Liu Di was taken into custody by police in Beijing on 7 November, ahead of the 16<sup>th</sup> Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Congress. Her family has not yet been officially notified of the reasons for her detention and relatives have allegedly been denied access to her by the police. Her current whereabouts remain unclear and it is not known whether she has been formally charged.

Using the pseudonym "Stainless Steel Mouse" ("*bu xiu gang laoshu*"), Liu Di had reportedly posted various items on the Internet, including a message in support of Huang Qi, a computer engineer detained in June 2000 and charged with "subversion" for setting up a human rights website. Liu Di viewed Huang Qi's case as a miscarriage of justice and had proposed that other Internet users who had spread "reactionary" ideas give themselves up to the police at an appointed time, as a sign of protest and solidarity with Huang Qi.

Liu Di was allegedly detained by the police on the campus of Beijing Normal University where she is a student of psychology. Police from the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau later searched her home and confiscated notebooks, floppy disks and a computer. They reportedly told one of Liu Di's teachers that she was detained for her links "with an illegal organization", apparently a reference to other Internet-users, whom she had met in an Internet chat-room.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

As the Internet industry has continued to expand in China after its commercialisation in 1995, the Chinese government has continued to tighten controls on on-line information. Means of control have included filtering or blocking some search engines and foreign websites, the creation of special Internet police, and actions to shut down websites that are critical of the government. Internet users in China are increasingly caught up in an array of rules and regulations restricting their fundamental human rights to freedom of expression. Anyone using the Internet to access or transmit information deemed "sensitive" by the authorities could potentially be at risk of arbitrary detention and imprisonment. Those who cause "especially serious harm" by disseminating "state secrets" over the Internet could even face the death penalty.

Amnesty International had earlier documented the cases of 33 people, including Huang Qi, who have been detained or imprisoned for offences related to their use of the Internet. They range from political activists and writers to members of unofficial organizations. Most have been sentenced under the Criminal Law for "subversion" to between two and twelve years' imprisonment. Two of those detained for Internet-related offences have died in custody, apparently as a result of torture or ill-treatment. Both were members of the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement. For further information, see *People's Republic of China: State Control of the Internet in China* (AI Index: ASA 17/007/2002) and *People's Republic of China: State Control of the Internet in China – Appeal Cases* (AI Index: ASA 17/046/2002), issued on 27 November 2002.

Arrests of Internet users have occurred in the context of widespread restrictions on freedom of expression and association in general. Reports of the detention and harassment of dissidents and political activists have increased over recent months, particularly in the run-up to and during the 16<sup>th</sup> CCP Congress which took place in Beijing between 8-14 November.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Chinese or your own language:**

- expressing concern at reports that Liu Di has been detained solely for peacefully exercising her right to freedom of expression;
- urging the authorities to release her immediately and unconditionally unless she is charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- calling on the authorities to make public any official reason for Liu Di's continued detention and to inform the family of her whereabouts;
- urging the authorities to provide immediate guarantees for her safety and to ensure that she has access to a lawyer, her family and a doctor of her choosing;
- calling on the government to take immediate steps to ensure that everyone in China is able to use the Internet to receive and transmit their ideas and opinions in line with their fundamental human rights to freedom of expression and association.

**APPEALS TO:**

Director of the Beijing Municipal Justice Bureau

Wang Chongxun Juzhang

Beijingshi Sifaju

199 Haihutuncun

Yongdingmenwai

Beijingshi 100075

People's Republic of China

**Telegram:** Director, Municipal Justice Bureau, Beijing, China

**Email:** [webmaster@bjmf.gov.cn](mailto:webmaster@bjmf.gov.cn)

**Salutation:** Dear Director

Director of the Beijing Public Security Bureau

Ma Zhenchuan Juzhang

Gong'anju

19 Qianmen Dongdajie

Xuanwuqu

Beijingshi 100740

People's Republic of China

**Telegram:** Director, Beijing Public Security Bureau, Beijing, China

**Email:** [110@mps.gov.cn](mailto:110@mps.gov.cn)

**Fax:** + 86 10 6524 1596

**Salutation:** Dear Director

Minister of Public Security

Jia Chunwang Buzhang

Gonganbu (Ministry of Public Security)

14 Dongchang'anjie

Beijingshi 100741

People's Republic of China

**Telegram:** Public Security Minister, Beijing, China

**Fax:** + 86 10 6524 1596

**Email:** [110@mps.gov.cn](mailto:110@mps.gov.cn)

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**COPIES TO:**

Director of the Ministry of Information Industry

Wu Jichuan

13 Xichang'anjie

Beijingshi 100804

People's Republic of China

**Fax:** + 86 10 6601 1370

**Email:** [webmaster@mii.gov.cn](mailto:webmaster@mii.gov.cn)

and to diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic of China accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 January 2003.