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Amnesty International condemns harsh sentence for Chinese poet Zhu Yufu

Today's sentencing of veteran activist Zhu Yufu to seven-years for writing a poem deemed to incite subversion of state power" is further evidence of the Chinese government's continuing repression of anyone it perceives as directly or indirectly criticizing it policies, Amnesty International said.

For many years the Chinese government has stamped on dissent and today's decision should be seen in the context of a growing demand in the country for more freedom.

Amnesty International condemns this direct and unjustified assault on Zhu Yufu's basic human right to freedom of expression

"We believe this is a sign that the Chinese leadership is afraid. Why else would they sentence someone to seven years in prison for writing a poem? The Chinese government has seen the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa. It has seen the people coming out in the tens of thousands to protest a repressive regime in Russia. And it has seen the Chinese people themselves grow stronger in their demands for more freedoms and a say over their country's future. And now the leaders at the very top have clearly given out orders that any hint of dissent must be crushed," said Sarah Schafer, Amnesty International's China Researcher.