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China: World leaders and IOC should demand release of human rights activist Hu Jia

Amnesty International today condemned the decision by Chinese authorities to convict human rights defender Hu Jia on charges of 'inciting subversion of state power'. Hu Jia is being punished for exercising his freedom of expression and speaking out on human rights violations in China. The organization considers Hu Jia a prisoner of conscience and has from the outset opposed his detention and the 'house arrest' of his wife and baby.

"Hu Jia should be immediately and unconditionally released and his conviction overturned," said Amnesty International. "This verdict makes a mockery of the notion that Chinese citizens are free to hold opinions and to speak their mind without retribution from the authorities, and serves as a warning to other activists in China who might dare raise human rights concerns publicly." It demonstrates that promises made by Chinese officials that human rights would improve in the run-up to the Olympics remain unfulfilled.

Amnesty International is appealing to world leaders and the International Olympics Committee to call for the unconditional release of Hu Jia and other activists in China who have been silenced and imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their freedoms of expression and association in the lead-up to the Olympics. Silence from other governments around the world may embolden the Chinese authorities to pursue further acts of repression in the run-up to the Olympics.

Background:

As co-founder of the Beijing Aizhixing Institute of Health Education, Hu Jia began as an activist on HIV/AIDS issues, but his focus broadened to include a variety of other human rights concerns. In September 2007, he published an article together with fellow activist Teng Biao about human rights violations in the run-up to the Olympics. The police formally charged him with 'inciting subversion' on 28 January 2008, an accusation regularly used to silence and imprison peaceful activists in China.

Please see our latest related report: [China: The Olympics countdown – crackdown on activists threatens Olympics legacy](#) and special [Tibet update](#).

Note to editors:

Amnesty International has obtained broadcast rights for Hu Jia's film: *'Prisoners in Freedom City'*, which he shot from the window of his home while under house arrest. It explores the confinement and harassment to which he and his family were subjected, along with footage of plain-clothed police outside his house and his own commentary on day-to-day life. The film is 30 minutes and cleared for broadcast use. It has burnt in subtitles in English and Chinese and is available in tape format DVCAM (PAL).

Should any broadcasters be interested, AI can ship the film by courier (i.e. the film is not available to download). Please call A/V Producer David Whitbourn in London, UK, on +44 (0)7778 472 107.