



Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House

May 27, 2009

The Honorable Hu Jintao
President
People's Republic of China

Dear President Hu:

I am writing to ask for your assistance in obtaining the release of certain individuals detained or imprisoned in China. It is my understanding that these individuals are prisoners of conscience and they are detained or imprisoned for exercising rights that are guaranteed to them under Chinese law or under international human rights conventions that have been signed or ratified by the Chinese government.

Attached is a list of selected prisoners and brief descriptions of their cases. I look forward to working with you on a positive outcome on these cases and for the welfare of these individuals. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Pelosi".

NANCY PELOSI
Speaker of the House

SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI
Key Prisoners in China Who Should Be Released
Submitted May 27, 2009

Liu Xiaobo was detained and transported to an undisclosed location in December 2008 without any legal proceeding. He was one of the original signers of Charter 08 that calls for new policies to improve human rights and democracy in China. Liu is reportedly under residential surveillance at a location outside of his residence, in violation of China's Criminal Procedure law. It is my understanding that he has not been allowed to meet with his lawyer or family except for one brief visit with his wife. Under Chinese law, a person under residential surveillance does not need permission to meet with his lawyer.

Dr. Wang Bingzhang was abducted by Chinese authorities in Vietnam in June 2002 and brought to China. He was then convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in solitary confinement in a trial that produced no evidence or witnesses to prove the charges against him. Dr. Wang is an internationally recognized pro-democracy activist and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found that Wang's detention is arbitrary. Dr. Wang is a permanent resident of the United States and his sister and daughter are U.S. citizens. He is currently held in Beijiang Prison in Shaoguan, Guangdong province, and suffers from phlebitis and has had three major strokes. At minimum, he should be released on medical parole

Hu Jia was detained in December 2007 and sentenced to 3.5 years in prison in March 2008. The decision to take him into custody seems to have been made after leaders in several Chinese provinces issued a manifesto demanding broader land rights for peasants whose property had been confiscated for development. Hu pleaded not guilty on charges of "inciting subversion of state power" at his trial.

Shi Tao is a Chinese journalist serving a ten-year prison sentence for sending an email description of a government order prohibiting Chinese media from recognizing the fifteenth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square protests to a New York-based democracy website. Shi Tao was convicted with email account information provided by Yahoo! China. His lawyer, Guo Guoting, was repeatedly harassed in an effort to prevent him from representing Shi Tao.

Chen Guangcheng, a self-trained legal advocate who tried in June 2005 to investigate reports that officials in Linyi city, Shandong province, had subjected thousands of people to forced abortions, beatings, and compulsory sterilization in order to meet population control targets. Although central government officials agreed that the officials used illegal means, authorities rejected the class-action lawsuit Chen tried to file. Chen was tried on August 24, 2006, and sentenced to four years and three months for "intentional destruction of property" and "gathering people to disturb traffic order." Chen, who is blind, has reportedly been severely beaten in jail and has gone on a hunger strike to protest the beatings. He is serving his sentence in Linyi Prison.

Gao Zhisheng, founder of a Beijing law firm, has represented numerous activists, religious leaders, and writers. On October 18, 2005, Gao wrote an open letter to Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, exposing widespread torture against Falun Gong practitioners. On November 4, officials shut down his law firm and began a campaign of harassment against Gao, his family, and associates. Authorities abducted Gao on August 15, 2006 and convicted him on December 22 of “inciting subversion of state power” and subject to a three-year sentence, suspended for five years. After Gao sent an open letter to the U.S. Congress in September 2007, he was taken away by the police for over 50 days, and tortured. Gao disappeared again on January 19, 2009. His current whereabouts are unknown.

Yan Zhengxue, a 63-year old writer and painter, was detained on October 18, 2006, during a police raid on his home in the Jiaojiang district of Taizhou city, Zhejiang province. The Taizhou People’s Intermediate Court convicted him on April 13, 2007, of inciting subversion and sentenced him to three years in prison after he attended a conference in the U.S. several years earlier and published on the Internet three articles critical of the Chinese government. Yang’s cell mate reportedly attacked him, causing head injuries. Yang’s family is concerned about his diminishing physical and mental health due to harsh treatment in prison.

Pastor Zhang Rongliang is a Christian leader who was detained in Zhengzhou city, Henan province, in December 2004 and sentenced in June 2006 to seven years and six months in prison. Authorities charged him with “fraudulently obtaining border-exit documents” and illegally crossing the border in an effort to attend missions conferences. He had been beaten, detained, and harassed a number of times since his conversion to Christianity in 1969. He is reportedly in poor health and suffering from diabetes.

Bangri Chogtrul Rinpoche, a lama who lived as a householder, was convicted of inciting splittism and sentenced to life imprisonment in September 2000. He and his wife managed a children’s home in Lhasa. The Lhasa Intermediate People’s Court commuted his sentence from life imprisonment to a fixed term of 19 years in July 2003, and then reduced his sentence by an additional year in November 2005. He is serving his sentence, which will be complete on July 30, 2021, in Qushui Prison near Lhasa. He suffers from heart disease and gall stones.

Ronggyal Adrag, a nomad, climbed onto a stage at a horse-racing festival in Litang county, Sichuan province, on August 1, 2007, and shouted slogans calling for the Dalai Lama’s return to Tibet, the release of Gedun Choekyi Nyima (the Panchen Lama identified by the Dalai Lama), freedom of religion, and Tibetan independence. The Ganzi Intermediate People’s Court sentenced him on November 20, 2007, to eight year’s imprisonment for inciting splittism.

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