

Human Rights Defenders Representative Cases of Concern

Liu Xiaobo

刘晓波

Beijing police detained prominent intellectual Liu Xiaobo on December 8, 2008, after Liu and more than 300 other Chinese signed Charter 08, a statement calling for political reform in China, which was publicly released shortly after Liu's detention and timed to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Liu is currently under residential surveillance at an undisclosed location in Beijing.

Suggested Questions for Officials: Is Liu able to meet with his lawyer? Since Liu is being detained under residential surveillance, why is he not being held in his home?

Hu Jia

胡佳

Beijing officials detained human rights activist Hu Jia in December 2007, and on March 18, 2008, Hu was tried for "inciting subversion of state power" by the Beijing Number 1 Intermediate People's Court. On April 3, Hu Jia was sentenced to three years and six months' imprisonment. Hu advocates on behalf of HIV/AIDS patients, environmental issues, and other rights defenders. Hu is currently serving his sentence at the Beijing Municipal Prison, and suffers from liver cirrhosis. On October 23, the European Parliament awarded Hu Jia the 2008 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

Suggested Questions for Officials: Is Hu receiving adequate medical care in police custody? Are visits with his wife (and daughter) occurring as guaranteed by law? Does he have access to his lawyers?

Guo Feixiong

郭飞雄, 郭飞熊, 杨茂东

Guo (also known as Yang Maodong) is a prominent lawyer who was active in helping Chinese citizens defend their rights. In November 2007, the Tianhe District Court in Guangzhou city, Guangdong province, sentenced Guo to five years in prison for "illegal operation of a business," for distributing a publication without the necessary government license. The publication, which concerned a political scandal, reportedly angered local officials. Officials reportedly tortured Guo with electric batons in an attempt to coerce a confession. Guo is serving his sentence at the Meizhou Prison in Guangdong province. Earlier this year, Guo's family reported that a prisoner beat Guo and that Guo lost considerable weight following a hunger strike. Guo was detained for several months in 2005 after he advised villagers on the recall campaign of an allegedly corrupt official.

Suggested Questions for Officials: Will there be an investigation into alleged torture against Guo Feixiong? How is his health?

Yang Chunlin

杨春林

A land rights activist, Yang collected more than 10,000 signatures from farmers for a petition titled "We Want Human Rights, Not the Olympics," protesting the farmers' loss of land. The Jiamusi City Intermediate People's Court in Heilongjiang province sentenced Yang to five years in prison on March 24, 2008 for inciting subversion. Officials alleged that the petition Yang helped organize harmed China's image, and also accused him of writing essays critical of the Communist Party. Officials at the Heitong Detention Center, where Yang was previously held, allegedly tortured him because he failed to confess. Yang's case was cited in a November 2008 UN Committee Against Torture report on China as an example of a case in which China's reliance on confessions for evidence may have led to torture or ill-treatment of a suspect. Yang is serving his sentence at the Xianglan Prison in Heilongjiang province.

Suggested Questions for Officials: Will there be an investigation into alleged torture against Yang Chunlin?

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