

URGENT ACTION

RIGHTS LAWYER DETAINED WITHOUT OFFICIAL CHARGE

Sixty year old human rights lawyer Li Yuhua has been criminally detained for nearly a month without any official information about the charges against her. Last heard from on 9 October 2017, there has been no confirmation that she has access to a lawyer of her own choice. She is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Li Yuhua was last heard from on 9 October 2017 after she sent a text message to her brother about being taken away by the police. According to her family, she is being criminally detained by the Heping District Branch of the Shenyang City Public Security Bureau in Liaoning province.

After losing contact, Li Yuhua's family repeatedly asked the local authorities about her whereabouts. Finally, on 31 October, they revealed that a police officer who heads the criminal investigation division of the Shenyang City Public Security Bureau confirmed during a telephone call that Li Yuhua had been detained and the officer further claimed that she had given him legal authorization to hire a lawyer on her behalf.

The officer claimed that Li Yuhua was being detained for "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" but did not provide any official documentation, nor confirm any further details. It is unclear whether she has hired a lawyer of her own choice or has been assigned one by the authorities.

The day after receiving confirmation of her detention, Heilongjiang lawyer Wang Qiushi went to the Shenyang City No. 1 Detention Centre to try meet Li Yuhua. The officers refused his request, and only confirmed that Li Yuhua had been detained at the centre since 9 October. When asked, the officers said they could not disclose on what charges Li Yuhua was being detained and further refused to show Li Yuhua's written legal authorization hiring a lawyer.

There are concerns for Li Yuhua's health, she suffers from a heart condition and, as a result, had major surgery in March 2017. Detained incommunicado, without confirmed access to a lawyer of her choice, Li Yuhua is at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Please write immediately in English, Chinese or your own language urging authorities to:

- Release Li Yuhua unconditionally and immediately unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that she has committed an internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards;
- Ensure that Li Yuhua is protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in detention, and she has regular, unrestricted access to her family, lawyers of her choice, and medical care on request or as necessary.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 DECEMBER 2017 TO:

Director
Shenyang City No. 1 Detention Centre
Gaolicun, Zaohuazhen
Yuhongqu, Shenyangshi
Liaoningsheng
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

Director
Heping District Branch of Shenyang City
Public Security Bureau
109 Minzhulu
Shenyangshi, Liaoningsheng 110000
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 24 23863537 (Chinese only)
Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:
Minister of Public Security
Guo Shengkun Buzhang
Gonganbu
14 Dongchangjie
Dongchengqu, Beijingshi 100741
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 10 66262114 (Chinese only)
Email: gabzfwz@mps.gov.cn

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR LIU XIAOMING, Embassy of the People's Republic of China, 49-51 Portland Place W1B 1JL, 020 7299 4049, press_uk@mfa.gov.cn
Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Li Yuhan started practising law in 1991 and has worked on a number of human rights cases. She was one of two lawyers that represented Beijing human rights lawyer Wang Yu, who was the first of approximately 250 lawyers and activists detained or questioned during the mass crackdown beginning in July 2015.

During Wang Yu's detention, Li Yuhan made numerous trips to Tianjin, north-eastern China, to try meet her. However, the public security officials consistently refused, claiming that they could not allow Li Yuhan to meet her as Wang Yu was accused of "state security crimes". Detained for about a year, Wang Yu was released on bail in June 2016.

In late June 2017, a year after she was released, Li Yuhan and her co-lawyer visited Wang Yu in Inner Mongolia where she and her family have been placed under tight police surveillance. Many of Li Yuhan's friends and fellow human rights lawyers believe that her detention might be related to her being Wang Yu's lawyer and representing other human rights cases.

According to the NGO Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD), in May 2015 Li Yuhan was assaulted by Beijing police after she reported illegal behaviour by local officials, who she said had obstructed justice in a civil lawsuit. When detained by the police at that time, an officer shoved her head against a toilet and she was unconscious for hours. After her release, Li Yuhan was diagnosed with a concussion and injuries to her back, head, limbs and abdomen. She continued to suffer from unremitting headache, dizziness, nausea, blurred vision, and irregular heartbeat and as a result had to suspend her work for some time.

Activists and human rights defenders continue to be systematically subjected to monitoring, harassment, intimidation, arrest and detention. Police detained increasing numbers of human rights defenders outside of formal detention facilities, sometimes without access to a lawyer for long periods, exposing the detainees to the risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

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