

URGENT ACTION

POET UNDER ILLEGAL HOUSE ARREST 'PREPARED TO DIE'

Liu Xia, widow of late Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, kept crying during a recent recorded telephone conversation and said that she is prepared to die. Diagnosed as clinically depressed, Liu Xia's well-being is the subject of serious concern after repeated empty promises by the Chinese authorities to allow her to leave China.

Liu Xia had a seven-minute telephone call on 8 April 2018 with Liao Yiwu, an exiled Chinese writer based in Germany, during which she stated that she was prepared to die if the Chinese government did not allow her to leave China. Crying throughout the conversation, Liu Xia said: "Now, I have nothing to be afraid of. If I can't leave, I'll die in my home. Xiaobo is gone, and there's nothing for me now. It's easier to die than live. Using death to defy could not be any simpler for me."

In addition to sharing the audio recording, Liao Yiwu wrote an article – published on the US-based human rights website China Change (chinachange.org) on 2 May 2018 – revealing that Chinese authorities have repeatedly promised Liu Xia that she would be able to leave China and seek treatment for her clinical depression. State security officers apparently first told Liu Xia to wait for the conclusion of the Communist Party's 19th Party Congress in October 2017. Then, once that had passed, the officers told her to wait until after the annual sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which concluded in March 2018.

Liu Xia's mental state continues to be of concern to her friends and activists, while German and American authorities have reportedly renewed their calls for Liu Xia to be allowed to travel overseas. Held in illegal house arrest since her late husband Liu Xiaobo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, Liu Xia continues to face restrictions and surveillance following Liu Xiaobo's death on 13 July 2017.

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

- End the illegal house arrest, surveillance and harassment of Liu Xia and allow her to travel freely;
- Take effective measures to ensure that all human rights defenders and their families, including Liu Xia, can carry out their peaceful activities without fear of hindrance, intimidation, arbitrary detention or imprisonment, in line with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders;
- Take effective measures to ensure the right to freedom of expression is upheld and in line with Chinese constitutional guarantees and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which China has signed and repeatedly stated its intention to ratify.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 JUNE 2018 TO:

President
Xi Jinping
Zhongnanhai
Xichang'anjie
Xichengqu, Beijing Shi 100017
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 63070900
Salutation: Dear President

Premier
Li Keqiang
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie
Xichengqu, Beijing Shi 100017
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 62381025
Salutation: Dear Premier

And copies to:
Minister of Public Security
Zhao Kezhi
14 Dong Chang'anjie
Dongchengqu
Beijing Shi 100741
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 10 66262114 (Chinese only)

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. This is the first update of UA 270/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/7591/2017/en/>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Artist and poet Liu Xia has been placed under illegal “house arrest” since her late husband, Liu Xiaobo, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. Following the prize announcement on 8 October 2010, police took Liu Xia to Liaoning province to keep her away from the media and to meet with Liu Xiaobo in prison.

Liu Xiaobo passed away on 13 July 2017 due to organ failure. His funeral and a burial at sea were hastily held two days later on 15 July. They were attended by Liu Xia and other family members. However, she was absent from the press briefing organized by the authorities later that same day.

Amnesty International later confirmed that Liu Xia was taken on a forced “vacation” by state security agents to Yunnan, southwest China. While she did know people there, authorities would not allow her to talk to anyone. Liu Xia has since been taken back to Beijing but continues to be closely monitored by state security officials and is unable to be reached by her closest friends.

On 18 August, a short video was posted on YouTube in which Liu Xia said she was recuperating and asked for time to mourn. A subsequent video with a partially obscured person dressed like Liu Xia only raised further questions as to whether the videos were made under duress or were otherwise coerced.

According to reports from Radio Free Asia, Liu Xia received surgery to remove uterine fibroids (noncancerous growths in the uterus) in 2017. In addition to her physical health, there are continued concerns for her mental well-being as her depression is feared to be ‘extremely severe’. Last year a letter that Liu Xia wrote to German 2009 Nobel Literature Prize laureate, Herta Müller, was posted online where she shares her feelings of constant anxiety: “I can’t leave. I talk to myself. I’m going to be insane” and that “I have no right to speak, speak loudly. I live like a plant. I lie like a corpse.”

Liu Xia reportedly told friends that, during an hour-long meeting in prison with Liu Xiaobo on 10 October 2010, the newly announced Nobel laureate had broken into tears and dedicated his prize to all those who have sacrificed their lives in non-violent struggle for peace, democracy and freedom. Liu Xia was returned to Beijing the same day and since then has been kept as a prisoner in their home, or in other locations under round the clock surveillance.

Five years ago, on 12 June 2013, Liu Xia sent an open letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping protesting her illegal house arrest and the sentencing of her brother, Liu Hui, to 11 years’ imprisonment on fraud charges earlier that month – charges seen by some as further persecution of Liu Xiaobo’s family. The families of both Liu Xiaobo and Liu Xia have also been consistently put under surveillance.

Liu Xia has been diagnosed with a heart condition and suffered a heart attack in January 2014, but authorities prevented her from receiving the treatment she needed. Liu Xia also suffers from severe depression, and there are fears that her psychological condition has worsened in light of, her ongoing imprisonment, the deaths of her father in September 2016, her mother in April 2017 and her husband in July 2017. Family members of detained human rights defenders are often subject to police surveillance, harassment and restriction of their freedom of movement.