

URGENT ACTION

RIGHTS LAWYER ABUSED AND AT RISK OF TORTURE

Li Yuhan, a sixty-year-old human rights lawyer, has been formally arrested for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”. She has suffered physical abuse while in detention and is at risk of further torture and other ill-treatment.

On 15 November, Li Yuhan’s family was asked to pick up an arrest notice from the Heping Branch of the Shenyang City Public Security Bureau. On 16 November, they picked up the arrest notice which stated that Li Yuhan was formally arrested for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”. If convicted, she could face a maximum of five years in prison. She is now detained at Shenyang City No.1 Detention Centre.

After being held incommunicado for over a month, Li Yuhan finally met with lawyer Lin Qilei on 10 November. According to Lin Qilei, Li Yuhan told him that on the afternoon of 9 October, an officer from the Shenyang City Public Security Bureau Heping Branch took Li Yuhan from her home to a bus stop near the branch office, where four to five unidentified individuals grabbed her backpack, handcuffed her arms behind her back, and forced her into a vehicle.

She was then reportedly taken to the Shenyang City Heping District Beishi Police Station, where she remained handcuffed. When she requested to use the toilet, a male police officer demanded that he had to be present in the toilet with her. When she refused to disclose her mobile phone password, the police officer violently dragged her back and forth across three rooms for approximately 20 minutes. The officer who assaulted her said, “[we could] torment you for a few more rounds. Even if you died, your old age would be a legitimate explanation.” At around 11pm, Li Yuhan was taken to a hospital for a medical check-up and transferred to Shenyang City No.1 Detention Centre later. Li Yuhan told her lawyer that she was shaking very badly and had bruises on her wrists when she entered the detention centre.

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

- Release Li Yuhan 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 Yuhan 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.
- Conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the alleged physical abuse against Li Yuhan and bring those responsible to justice

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 DECEMBER 2017 TO:

Director
Shenyang City No. 1 Detention Centre
Gaolicun, Zaohuazhen
Yuhongqu, Shenyang Shi
Liaoning Sheng
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

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

And copies to:
Minister of Public Security
Zhao Kezhi Buzhang
Gonganbu
14 Dongchanganjie
Dongchengqu, Beijing Shi 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. This is the first update of UA 227/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/7472/2017/en/>

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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 to meet with 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 in Beijing 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 headaches, 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.

Further information on UA: 227/17 Index: ASA 17/7472/2017 Issue Date: 17 November 2017