

TAKE ACTION



In the 2008 *Take Action Campaign* (www.ir2008.org), Human Rights in China (HRIC) highlighted 12 individuals in prison and 12 human rights issues in China. Each month on its website, HRIC provided background information on one individual case and an overview of a specific related issue, and suggested actions that the Chinese government, the international community, and the general public could take to promote positive change in China.

The 12 persons highlighted included well-known rights defenders and activists such as **Chen Guangcheng** (陈光诚), a blind, self-taught lawyer now serving a three-year-and-four-month prison sentence for “intentional damage of property” and “blocking traffic,” as well as lesser known individuals such as **Wang Jinjiu** (黄金秋), an Internet essayist serving a 12-year prison sentence for “subversion of state power.” The highlighted issues ranged from the rule of law to minority rights to torture. The campaign concludes with the December featured case of **Nurmuhemmet Yasin**, a Uyghur writer serving ten years in prison on the charge of “inciting separatism.”

HRIC welcomed the release in 2008 of two individuals featured in this campaign: petitioner **Mao Hengfeng** (毛恒凤), after completing her two-year-and-six-month prison sentence, and democracy advocate **Hu Shigen** (胡石根), after serving 16 years of a 20-year prison sentence.

HRIC’s post-Olympics work will build on this campaign as we continue to advocate on behalf of individuals and broad issues. We invite our readers to send in their ideas for actions. Please email your suggestions to communications@hrichina.org, and put “take action” in the subject line.



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**Name**

Nurmuhemmet Yasin

Date & Place of Birth

March 6, 1974
Maralbesh County
(Bachu County, 巴楚县)

Date of Formal Arrest

November 29, 2004

Charge

Inciting separatism
(煽动分裂国家)

Trial Date

February 2, 2005

Sentence

10 years' imprisonment

Current Location

Urumqi No. 1 Prison,
Xinjiang Uyghur
Autonomous Region

Anticipated Release

November 28, 2014

DECEMBER: NURMUHEMMET YASIN

Nurmuhemmet Yasin is a Uyghur writer, poet, and freelance journalist from Maralbesh County, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). In late 2004, he published his novella, “The Wild Pigeon,” in the *Kashgar Literature Journal*, which was nominated for an award by a major Uyghur literary website. Chinese authorities reacted differently. Interpreting the allegorical story as a repudiation of Chinese rule in the restive Xinjiang region, they detained Yasin on November 29, 2004, on charges of “inciting separatism.” Authorities also recalled all 2,000 copies of the literary journal and seized Yasin’s personal computer, which contained more than 1,600 poems, short stories, and an uncompleted novel.

Between November 30, 2004, and May 17, 2005, Yasin was interrogated by the State Security Bureau, beaten, and threatened. He was denied legal representation, and was convicted of inciting separatism in a closed trial in February 2005, a verdict that Manfred Nowak, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, said was given “possibly on the basis of information extracted by torture.” Yasin was sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment. His appeal was denied. He has been denied visitors ever since his arrest. In May 2005, he was transferred to the Urumqi No. 1 Prison. In an interview conducted on November 30, 2005, Yasin told Manfred Nowak that he had been beaten by other prisoners in his cell for not speaking Mandarin. Nowak also received reports that detainees at this prison were not allowed to pray in detention. Nowak’s interview is the last reliable report on Yasin’s condition. In 2006, Nowak appealed to the Chinese government for Yasin’s release and detailed the conditions of Yasin’s imprisonment in the “Report of the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

In August 2007, HRIC received unconfirmed reports that Yasin had been tortured to death in prison. Attempts by exiled Uyghur groups to contact his wife and mother have been unsuccessful.

ABOUT THE ISSUE: ETHNIC MINORITIES

With a view to “properly treating” relations among China’s 56 different ethnic groups, the Chinese government has established a system that allows autonomous governments in areas where ethnic minorities are highly concentrated. These autonomous regions—five provinces, 30 prefectures, 120 counties, and well over 1,100 ethnic townships—were established to guarantee ethnic minorities self-governance, proportional representation in the government, and greater control over local economic development initiatives. The Chinese Constitution and other laws regarding regional autonomy entitle all nationalities the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve their customs. Despite these measures, rights for ethnic minorities have been severely curtailed in pursuit of “national unity.” There are dramatic inequalities between China’s ethnic minorities and the dominant Han Chinese in education, health, and employment opportunities. Ethnic minorities make up around nine percent of the total population, but account for 46 percent of the national total living in conditions of extreme poverty.

Today, repression has a particularly grave impact on Mongols in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Tibetans in the Tibet Autonomous Region, and Uyghurs in XUAR. Repression is explicitly or implicitly carried out under the guise of “development” and “security,” through the means of ongoing exclusion from political participation, inequitable development policies, and lack of protection of minority cultural identity and religious practices. Such repression has resulted in widespread discontent, unrest, and protest.

INDIVIDUAL CASES FEATURED IN TAKE ACTION CAMPAIGN 2008 | JANUARY–DECEMBER 2008

JANUARY



Shi Tao (师涛) was a freelance writer and journalist in Hunan. In 2004, he sent notes regarding the government’s security preparations for the 15th anniversary of the June Fourth crackdown to an online forum in the U.S. using his *Yahoo!* email account. He is serving a ten-year sentence for “illegally providing state secrets overseas.”

Current Status and Take Action: Shi Tao is currently held at Deshan Prison, in Hunan, and is slated for release in 2014. The World Association of Newspapers has launched a campaign to free Shi Tao; support their work at <http://www.wan-press.org/china>.

FEBRUARY



Chen Guangcheng (陈光诚), a blind, self-taught (“barefoot”) lawyer and activist, fought for numerous rural causes, including abuses in implementation of the one-child policy in Shandong. He was convicted in 2006 for “intentional damage of public property” and “gathering people to block traffic,” and is serving a four year and three month prison term.

Current Status and Take Action: Chen is currently held at Linyi City Prison, Shandong Province. He is slated for release in 2010. Take action for Chen by sending an appeal, available at <http://www.ir2008.com/02/action.php>.

MARCH



Mao Hengfeng (毛恒凤), a petitioner since 1988 on family planning and housing issues, was detained multiple times, forcibly admitted to a psychiatric hospital, and sentenced to various terms of Reeducation-Through-Labor. In 2007, Mao was sentenced to two years and six months in prison for “intentional damage of property.”

Current Status: Mao Hengfeng was released from prison on November 29, 2008.

APRIL



Hada (哈达) was active for 27 years in defending indigenous Mongol culture and language and promoting political participation by Mongols. He was detained in 1995 for his involvement with the Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance, tried in 1996 on charges of “separatism” and “espionage,” and is serving a 15-year prison sentence.

Current Status and Take Action: Hada is currently held at the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR) Prison No. 4 (Chifeng [Ulanhad] Prison). He is slated for release in 2010. Take action for Hada by sending an appeal, available at <http://www.ir2008.com/04/action.php>.

MAY



Yao Fuxin (姚福信) was secretly detained in 2002 and formally charged with “gathering a crowd to disturb social order” for his role in Liaoyang labor demonstrations. He was later charged with subversion due to alleged involvement in the banned China Democracy Party. In 2003, he was sentenced to seven years in prison.

Current Status and Take Action: Yao is currently held at Lingyuan No. 2 Prison, in Liaoning. He is slated for release in March 2009. Take action for Yao by sending an appeal, available at <http://www.ir2008.com/05/action.php>.

JUNE



Hu Shigen (胡石根) is one of the “Beijing Fifteen,” the largest group of labor and democracy activists tried and sentenced after the June Fourth crackdown. In 1994, Hu was convicted of “organizing and leading a counterrevolutionary group” and “counterrevolutionary propaganda instigation” because of his involvement with organizations critical of the government. Hu was sentenced to 20 years’ imprisonment.

Current Status: Hu Shigen was released from Beijing No. 2 Prison on August 26, 2008, but is subject to an additional five years’ deprivation of political rights.

JULY



Tenzin Delek Rinpoche (བསྟན་འཛིན་པ་ལྷུན་མགས་) sought to strengthen the Tibetan community, including by working to build schools and monasteries and reaching out to the poor. In 2002 he was sentenced to life in prison for “crimes of terror” and “inciting separatism” after being linked to a bombing in Sichuan through the confession of another Tibetan, though no record of that confession exists.

Current Status and Take Action: Tenzin Delek Rinpoche is currently serving his life sentence in Chuandong Prison, Sichuan. Take action for Tenzin Delek Rinpoche by sending an appeal, available at <http://www.ir2008.com/07/action.php>.

AUGUST



Shuang Shuying (双淑英) is a 76-year old evictions petitioner and religious rights activist. In 2007, Shuang and her son Hua Huiqi were beaten and detained by the police when they tried to petition for compensation for the Olympics-related demolition of their Beijing home. After Shuang hit an oncoming police car with her cane in fear, she was sentenced to two years in prison for “intentional damage of public and private property.”

Current Status and Take Action: Shuang Shuying is currently held at Beijing Women’s Prison and is slated for release in February 2009. Take action for Shuang by sending an appeal, available at <http://www.ir2008.org/08/action.php>.

SEPTEMBER



Guo Feixiong (郭飞雄), aka **Yang Maodong** (杨茂东), an activist and writer, was formally arrested in 2006 on the charge of “illegal business activity” in connection with the 2001 publication of *Shenyang Political Earthquake* (沈阳政坛地震), a book he edited about a political scandal in Shenyang, Liaoning. In 2007, he was sentenced to five years in prison.

Current Status and Take Action: Guo is currently held at Meizhou Prison in Guangdong, and is slated for release in 2011. At this prison, Guo has been subject to beatings, forced feeding, and solitary confinement. Send an appeal for better treatment for Guo, available at <http://www.ir2008.com/09/action.php>.

OCTOBER



Starting in 2000, while studying overseas, **Huang Jinqiu** (黄金秋) wrote a series of essays critical of the Communist Party under the pen name Mr. Clear Water, and published the essays on Boxun.com, a U.S.-based dissident news website. In 2003, he returned to China; one year later he was convicted of “subversion of state power” and sentenced to 12 years in prison.

Current Status and Take Action: Huang is currently held at Pukou Prison in Jiangsu Province, and is slated for release in 2013. More information about Huang is available at <http://www.ir2008.org/10/about.php>.

NOVEMBER



Li Chang (李昌) is a former high-ranking government official. In 1999, Li was convicted of “organizing and using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law” and other charges, for helping to organize the Falun Gong mass protest in Beijing on April 25 that year. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison, a term later reduced to 18 years in prison and five years’ deprivation of political rights.

Current Status and Take Action: Li Chang is currently held at Qianjin Prison, in Tianjin, and is not slated for release until 2017. More information about Li is available at <http://www.ir2008.org/11/about.php>.

DECEMBER



Nurmuhemmet Yasin is a Uyghur writer, poet, and freelance journalist from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. In late 2004, he published a novella, “The Wild Pigeon,” in the *Kashgar Literary Journal*. Authorities saw the story as an allegorical repudiation of Chinese rule in Xinjiang, recalled all 2,000 copies of the journal, and sentenced Yasin to ten years in prison for “inciting splittism.”

Current Status and Take Action: Nurmuhemmet Yasin was transferred to Urumqi No. 1 Prison in May of 2005. He has not been heard from since November of 2005. To date, the only information on Yasin that HRIC has been able to obtain are unconfirmed reports from August 2007 that Yasin has died as a result of torture.