

11 July 2018

Update – China: Qin Yongmin tried, convicted, sentenced

Following over three years of incommunicado detention, on 11 July 2018, China Human Rights Watch founder **Qin Yongmin** was convicted of “subversion of state power” and sentenced to thirteen years in prison with three years’ deprivation of political rights. Qin Yongmin had been in detention since his arrest in January 2015. His wife, Zhao Suli, had also been kept by authorities in an unknown location from early 2015 until February this year, when she was permitted a visit from family.

[Qin Yongmin](#) is a human rights defender and one of the co-founders of the China Democracy Party. He is the Director of China Human Rights Watch and the Rose Group, two domestic organisations which pursue equal rights for all, highlight cases of human rights abuses and assist those who have had their rights violated.

For the majority of Qin Yongmin’s detention, Chinese authorities refused to disclose any information about the defender’s whereabouts, health, or legal status. Attempts by Qin Yongmin’s legal counsel and supporters to obtain information were all unsuccessful. In August 2015, under suspicion of “receiving excessive foreign media interviews and writing too many articles”, the defender was placed under “residential surveillance in a designated location” (RSDL) by Wuhan City police. Under the RSDL system, police may detain an individual in any location of their choosing outside of the formal judicial system.

On 17 June 2016, authorities officially indicted Qin Yongmin on charges of “subverting state power”, which is among China’s most serious crimes. The defender’s trial took place on 11 May 2018, almost three years and four months after he was first taken into custody. According to reports of the trial, immediately upon entering the courtroom, Qin Yongmin declared that he would “teach the Communist party a lesson” and began explaining the links between the Communist Party and China’s endemic issue of forced demolitions. In the ensuing shouting match with the judge, Qin Yongmin fainted due to high blood pressure. When court was resumed the following day, the defender was still unwell, and required the support of three court officers to enter the courtroom. In protest of the Court’s decision to continue the trial given Qin Yongmin’s condition, his defence counsels refused to answer any questions from the judge, or sign any documents at the close of the trial. Two months later, on 11 July, the Court announced the defender’s 13-year sentence. No other information about the verdict was announced.

Zhao Suli, Qin Yongmin’s wife, was allowed a brief, five-hour visit with her sister on 5 February 2018. Since that time, she has reportedly been kept under incommunicado house arrest in her home.

Front Line Defenders condemns the ongoing persecution of Qin Yongmin and his wife, the unfair trial to which the defender was subjected, and the draconian sentence that the Wuhan Intermediate People’s Court has handed down to him. Front Line Defenders calls on Chinese

authorities to immediately release Qin Yongmin and his wife from all restrictions and to allow Qin Yongmin to return to his peaceful work upholding human rights in China.