

TIMELINE: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

SEPTEMBER 10–DECEMBER 2, 2008

September 10

New York Times researcher **Zhao Yan** (赵岩) was detained for two days after interviewing several petitioners who had travelled to Beijing to apply to protest. Zhao was previously imprisoned for three years (2004–2007) on fraud charges after being detained in connection with a 2004 *Times* article that accurately predicted the retirement of Jiang Zemin that year; the initial charge of “revealing state secrets” was later dropped, and Zhao was convicted of fraud.

September 18

Henan-based HIV/AIDS activist **Li Xige** (李喜阁) was prevented from leaving her home to attend an HIV/AIDS symposium in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, organized by the China Global Fund to Fight AIDS. Li, who contracted HIV through a tainted blood transfusion, is a frequent petitioner for compensation on behalf of those suffering from HIV/AIDS due to tainted transfusions, and is under tight surveillance by local authorities.

September 19

Jiamusi Intermediate People’s Court in Heilongjiang Province upheld the sentence of Olympics critic **Yang Chunlin** (杨春林). Yang was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment in March 2008 on charges of “inciting subversion of state power” after organizing an open letter campaign entitled “We want human rights, not the Olympics.” The letter received over 10,000 signatures.

September 19

Tao Jun (陶君), a student leader in the 1989 democracy movement, was granted political asylum in the U.S. In early June, Tao evaded state security police who were following him and went to Hong Kong; he then arrived in Los Angeles on June 19, 2008. Previously, he was imprisoned for three years (2001–2004) for “inciting subversion of state power” and was constantly monitored and harassed following his release.

September 22

Yang Peiqun (杨培群), a representative for victims of the May earthquake living in Dujiangyan, Sichuan Province, was detained after travelling to Beijing to petition against local corruption and was made to attend a “law study session.” On October 10, 2008, an official from the Dujiangyan Municipal Political and Legislative Affairs Committee demanded that Yang’s husband, **Guo Xinpan** (郭新盼), pay 5000 *yuan* for Yang’s “law study session” and to retrieve her from Beijing. Guo refused to pay. Yang was released on October 15, 2008, and sent to the hospital due to beatings she suffered during her detention.

September 22 & 25

Yang Chunlin’s (杨春林) wife, son, and sister were denied visits to Yang at Jiamusi Detention Center as well as Xianglan Prison (香兰监狱), where Yang was transferred on September 25, 2008. Prison officials told Yang’s family that prisoners are not permitted visits during their first month in prison.

September 24

Liu Shaokun (刘绍坤), who had been sentenced to one year of Reeducation-

Through-Labor (RTL), was released to serve his sentence outside the labor camp. Liu, a middle school teacher in Sichuan Province, was detained on June 25, 2008, and later sentenced to RTL for “inciting a disturbance” after posting photographs of collapsed school buildings in quake-affected areas online.

September 25

Liu Yao (刘尧), a lawyer who had been sentenced to a four-year prison term for inciting protests against a developer, was granted a retrial. Liu represented villagers in Dongyuan County, Guangdong Province, who sought redress for land requisitioned by local authorities. Thirty lawyers from ten provinces had petitioned for a new trial on Liu’s behalf.

September 25

Wuhan-based petitioner **Jin Guangming** (靳光明) was released after being held in a black jail for 68 days in Wuhan, Hubei Province. Jin, a librarian at Wuhan No. 1 Commerce School, has petitioned for compensation for demolished homes and was detained in a “law study class” during the Olympics.

Late September

Ji Sizun (纪斯尊) was formally arrested by the Fuzhou Public Security Bureau on suspicion of “forging an official seal.” Ji applied twice to demonstrate during the Olympics in Beijing’s officially-designated protest zones, but was refused. On August 11, 2008, after his second application was refused, Ji was dragged back to Fujian Province by petitioner retrievers and initially held incommunicado. He is currently being held in Fuzhou No. 2 Detention Center.

October 8

Li Guohong (李国宏), a representative for laid-off workers based in Henan Province, was released on bail for medical treatment. On October 31, 2007, Li and a fellow worker were detained when they went to the Zhongyuan Oil Field public security bureau in Puyang, Henan, to speak on an administrative suit against the oil field. Li was later sentenced to 18 months of RTL on November 16, 2007.

October 10

Hu Jia (胡佳) was transferred from Tianjin-based Chaobai Prison to Beijing Municipal Prison. Hu, a prominent HIV/AIDS activist, is serving a sentence of three-and-a-half years on charges of “inciting subversion of state power.” He was detained on December 27, 2007, and sentenced on April 3, 2008. Hu was reported to have been a candidate for the 2008 Nobel Peace Prize.

October 15

Housing activist **Ye Guozhu** (叶国柱) was released on bail and allowed to return home. On July 26, 2008, the date of his release after serving a four-year sentence for “picking a quarrel and making trouble,” his family was informed by the Xuanwu branch of the Beijing Public Security Bureau that Ye was under criminal detention for suspicion of gathering a crowd to disturb public social order and that he was transferred to the Beijing Xuanwu Detention Center. In 2004, before his prosecution, Ye had sought permission for 10,000 people to demonstrate against forced evictions related to Olympics construction.

October 16

Officers from the Beijing Public Security Bureau forced their way into the family home of house church pastor **Zhang Mingxuan** (张明选), intending to kick out Zhang (who was not home) and his wife, **Xie Fenglan** (谢凤兰). Their eldest son,

Zhang Jian (张健), was beaten by several officers using iron bars. Their younger son, **Zhang Chuang** (张闯), arrived shortly after and was also beaten. Zhang Mingxuan, who serves as President of the China House Church Alliance, was also detained that day in Kunming, Yunnan Province. Zhang has been arrested 26 times. Most recently, he and his wife were detained outside of Beijing during the Olympics.

October 19

Xie Fenglan (谢凤兰), wife of house church pastor **Zhang Mingxuan** (张明选), and her younger sister were detained and sent to Nanyang, Henan Province. On October 22, Zhang Mingxuan managed to contact his injured son, Zhang Jian, to state that he would also likely be sent to Nanyang on October 24.

October 20

Activist, writer, and legal adviser **Guo Feixiong** (郭飞雄, aka **Yang Maodong**, 杨茂东) was denied access to his lawyer, Beijing-based lawyer **Hu Xiao** (胡啸). **Hu** and **Mo Shaoping** (莫少平), Guo's other lawyer, later managed to meet with Guo in the prison's glass partition meeting booth on November 5, 2008, under the surveillance of two prison officers. Guo had provided legal advice on a number of controversial human rights cases. He was convicted on November 14, 2007, for "illegal business activity" based on a confession extracted through torture, and is currently serving a five-year sentence.

October 20

Heilongjiang petitioner **Liu Jie's** (刘杰) husband **Fu Jingjiang** (付景江) was refused a visit on the visiting day for families at the Harbin Women's RTL Center. Fu was told by the center's administration that Liu could not receive visits because she was not obedient. Liu Jie was sentenced to 18 months of RTL in November 2007 after organizing a public letter calling for political reform and improvement to the petitioner system, which received over 12,000 signatures.

October 23

Hu Jia (胡佳) was awarded the European Parliament's 2008 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

October 24

Beijing-based petitioner **Yang Qiuyu** (杨秋雨) was detained for questioning by the Longtan Public Security Bureau Substation for three hours. Yang, along with over a hundred other petitioners, applied to demonstrate on October 24, when the Seventh Asia-Europe Meeting was scheduled to open. On October 26, Yang was again detained by four unidentified men; he was released the same day.¹⁹

October 25

Chen Guangcheng (陈光诚) and **Hu Jia** (胡佳) were awarded San Francisco-based Chinese Democracy Education Foundation's 2007 Distinguished Democracy Activist Award. Chen, a blind "barefoot lawyer," provided legal aid to people in Linyi, Shandong Province, in cases regarding forced sterilization and late-term abortion. He was detained in March 2006, and sentenced to four years and three months' imprisonment on August 24, 2006, for "intentional damage of property" and "instigating public unrest."

October 30

Prominent rights defense lawyers **Cheng Hai** (程海) and **Li Subin** (李苏滨) were asked to quit the Beijing Yitong Law Firm after involvement in an online campaign calling for the direct election of officials in the Beijing Lawyers Association. On

August 26, 2008, 35 Beijing lawyers published the campaign appeal online, and by mid-November, the number of signatories had increased to 82.

October 31

Yao Lifa (姚立法), a primary school teacher in Qianjiang, Hubei Province, and a vocal advocate for direct local elections, disappeared. Yao was one of China's first independent candidates in local elections and has competed in Qianjiang's municipal elections since 1987. Yao was released on November 12, 2008, the day that local elections were taking place for the Qianjiang Municipal People's Congress. Authorities from Yao's school admitted that they had sent him away to "study." In 1999, he won a seat on the Fourth Qianjiang Municipal People's Congress.

November 6

Democracy activist **Liu Xianbin** (刘贤斌) was released from prison early, four years before his anticipated release date. On August 6, 1999, Liu, a leading member of the China Democracy Party in Sichuan Province and director of China Human Rights Observer, was sentenced to 13 years in prison and deprived of his political rights for three years on charges of "subversion of state power."

November 11

For a second time, rights activist **Huang Qi's** (黄琦) case was sent from the procuratorate to the public security bureau for further investigation. As a result, Huang's lawyers, **Mo Shaoping** (莫少平) and **Ding Xikui** (丁锡奎), were still unable to view his case files—five months after he was first detained on June 10, 2008, after he published news on his website following the Sichuan earthquake about the plight of parents who lost children. Huang was formally arrested on July 18, 2008, on suspicion of "illegally possessing state secrets." Huang is the founder of the website Tianwang Human Rights Center (64tianwang.com) and was previously imprisoned for five years (2000–2005) on charges of subversion.

November 12

Lawyers for Henan-based land rights petitioner **Liu Xueli** (刘学立) attempted to file an administrative lawsuit against the Luoyang, Henan Province RTL Management Committee, for sentencing Liu to RTL. But the Xigong District People's Court refused to accept the case. During the Olympics, Liu had applied to demonstrate in Beijing's official protest parks but was refused. Liu was detained on September 23, 2008, and told that he had been sentenced to RTL, but was not informed of the cause or duration of the sentence. Liu previously served one year of RTL in 2004 on charges of "disturbing social order."


November 13

Nanjing-based democracy activist **Guo Quan** (郭泉) was detained by police on suspicion of "subversion of state power." Police told Guo's wife, Li Chang, that Guo would be detained for a long time and put on trial. Guo was formerly an associate professor in humanities at Nanjing Normal University and is a founding member of the Chinese New People's Party. He has been detained several times over the past year, most recently during the Olympics.

Mid-November

China Democracy Party member **Xie Changfa's** (谢长发) case was formally sent by the public security bureau to the local procuratorate for examination and indictment. Xie was first detained by Changsha state security officers on June 25, 2008, and was formally arrested on August 1, 2008, on the charge of "subversion."

<p>November 20</p>	<p>Shanghai-based rights defense lawyer Zheng Enchong (郑恩宠) announced that he was withdrawing from the Communist Party of China. Zheng had previously participated in the Communist Youth League and the Young Pioneers. He was imprisoned in 2003–2006 on charges of “illegally providing state secrets abroad,” and was beaten and harassed in April 2008 for writing essays on the sensitive situation in Tibet following the March protests in Lhasa.</p>
<p>November 20</p>	<p>Eight democracy activists in Shenzhen were detained by police for seven hours after handing out leaflets on democracy to passersby.</p>
<p>November 21</p>	<p>Writer and journalist Chen Daojun (陈道军) was sentenced to three years in prison and an additional three years of deprivation of his political rights on charges of “inciting subversion of state power” after a 30-minute trial. Chen was detained on May 9, 2008, on suspicion of subversion of state power, five days after he had participated in a demonstration against a chemical plant in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. He was formally arrested in June.</p>
<p>November 21</p>	<p>The home of Beijing housing rights activist Ni Yulan (倪玉兰) was bulldozed, leaving her husband homeless. Ni, who is handicapped, was arrested in April 2008 on suspicion of “obstructing official business.” Her trial was originally scheduled for August 4, 2008, but it was postponed without explanation just before the Olympics. She is currently detained at Xicheng District Detention Center of Beijing. Ni was previously imprisoned for one year in 2002 for fighting evictions in Beijing.</p>
<p>November 25</p>	<p>A visit by European Parliament official Helga Trüpel to rights activist Zeng Jinyan (曾金燕) was blocked by police and guards at Zeng’s apartment building. Zeng and Trüpel had previously met in 2006. Zeng, who is married to imprisoned HIV/AIDS activist Hu Jia (胡佳), is currently under house arrest, along with the couple’s infant daughter.</p>
<p>November 27</p>	<p>Although Shanghai-based rights defense lawyer Zheng Enchong (郑恩宠) is usually under surveillance, he was able to accept a visit from European Parliament official Helga Trüpel. The state security police normally outside Zheng’s door were absent at the time of Trüpel’s arrival. However, as soon as Trüpel departed, Zhabei District police returned to their posts outside Zheng’s home, preventing ordinary people and foreign reporters from entering.</p>
<p>November 27</p>	<p>The trial for Beijing activist Ni Yulan (倪玉兰) was again postponed from the rescheduled date of November 27, 2008. The trial was postponed as Ni’s husband, Dong Jiqin (董继勤), decided to relieve Ni’s defense attorney and instead represent her himself.</p>
<p>November 27</p>	<p>Prominent Beijing-based rights defense lawyer Li Heping (李和平) was prevented by Customs from leaving the PRC. Li was travelling to Belgium to receive the 2008 Human Rights Award from the Council of Bars & Bar Societies of Europe.</p>
<p>November 29</p>	<p>Shanghai family planning petitioner Mao Hengfeng (毛恒凤) was released from</p>



Shanghai Women's Prison. Mao, who petitioned after losing her job for refusing to abort her second pregnancy, was detained on May 30, 2006, and sentenced to two years and six months in prison on January 22, 2007. She was sentenced for "intentional damage of property" after breaking two table lamps and other objects during her detention. She previously served a year-and-a-half of RTL, has been forcibly admitted to a psychiatric hospital three times, and has been detained several times.

November 30

It was revealed that Shenzhen, Guangdong Province labor activist **Xiao Chun** (肖春) had been secretly arrested and detained in Shenzhen Longgang Detention Center. Xiao disappeared without any official announcement in the summer of 2008. Xiao Chun represented migrant workers and other laborers in judicial suits, helping them with retrieving back pay and other labor issues.

December 2

Henan-based HIV/AIDS activist **Li Xige** (李喜阁) was taken from her hotel room in Beijing by local police officers and escorted back to Henan Province. Li, who contracted HIV/AIDS in 1995 through a blood transfusion, had travelled to Beijing to participate in several activities for World AIDS Day, including a symposium on HIV/AIDS and a ceremony at the Bird's Nest stadium.