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# JOINT STATEMENT: URGENT CALL FOR THE RELEASE AND ADEQUATE TREATMENT OF CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER LI YUHAN

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(9 October 2023)

Today marks the sixth year of Chinese human rights lawyer Li Yuhua's arbitrary detention, who first went missing on 9 October 2017. In an official communication (AL CHN 11/2023 (<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=28205>)) issued in July 2023, Special Rapporteurs and the Working Group of the UN Human Rights Office expressed serious concerns about Li Yuhua's arbitrary detention and mistreatment in China. Li Yuhua, a lawyer in her seventies, has represented human rights lawyers and victims of human rights abuses. A confidentiality period of 60 days was allotted to allow the Chinese Government sufficient time to respond, however, China failed to respond in the given time period.

Li Yuhua faces charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" and "fraud". Her trial was also repeatedly postponed. After undergoing a secret trial in October 2021 - almost 1,500 days or four years after her initial detention - no verdict has been issued. This delay is in clear violation of Chinese Criminal Procedure Law, which stipulates under Section 208 that a verdict should be rendered within three months at most. As it stands, nearly 700 days have elapsed. Li Yuhua's right to a timely criminal process and the right to an appeal have been violated.

In October 2022, when Li Yuhua met with her lawyer, it was revealed that her ability to walk had been severely affected due to significant injuries to her knees, necessitating the use of two crutches. She also suffers from cardiovascular issues, high blood pressure and significant deterioration in both vision and hearing. It was further disclosed that medication, food and warm water were deliberately withheld at the detention center, and that officers had urinated on her food (<https://msguancha.com/a/lanmu4/2022/1009/22291.html>), a clear violation of China's obligations under Article 12(1) of the ICESCR, which stipulates China's duty to fulfil the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Conditions improved only after multiple complaints were lodged by Li Yuhua's lawyer.

During her years as a human rights lawyer, Li Yuhua faced frequent reprisals from Chinese authorities due to her defence of sensitive cases involving freedom of religion, such as Falun Gong and Christian house churches. She also served as the legal representative for Chinese human rights lawyer Wang Yu during the "709 Crackdown". These reprisals include threats to her family, verbal harassment, violence, and personal attacks.

These instances mentioned above highlight a trend of repression against human rights lawyers in China, and calls for urgent action to address these grave human rights concerns. Therefore we urge the Chinese government to:

1. Immediately release lawyer Li Yuhua and cease her arbitrary detention.
2. Ensure Li Yuhua is afforded the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, both during and subsequent to her detention.
3. Take tangible steps to ensure that Li Yuhua receives full and effective reparations. This should involve financial compensation, rehabilitation programs, and measures to restore the dignity of the victims, including but not limited to public apology and/or official declaration.
4. Stop the repression against Li Yuhua and other human rights lawyers in China immediately.

## Signatories

### NGOs:

The 29 Principles

Amnesty International

Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)

Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L)

Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

Hong Kong Rule of Law Monitor (香港法治監察)

Judicial Reform Foundation

Monitoring Committee on Attacks on Lawyers, International Association of People's Lawyer (IAPL)

New Yorkers supporting Hong Kong

Humanitarian China

Hongkongers in Britain (HKB)

Hong Kong Forum, Los Angeles

Australian and New Zealand Alliance for Victims of the Chinese Communist Regime

Northern California Hong Kong Club

The Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation

**Lawyers or legal scholars:**

Michael Polak, Barrister Church Court Chambers, Director Justice Abroad

Prof Stuart Russell, Canadian lawyer, Australian administrative judge (retired)

Lara Roque Figueiredo, portuguese lawyer

Prof.Gill H. Boehringer, Academic (ret.) Macquarie University Law School. Sydney, Australia

Dr Chongyi Feng, University of Technology Sydney

Chongyi Feng, Associate Professor, University of Technology Sydney

Australian and New Zealand Alliance for Victims of the Chinese Communist Regime

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