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<http://www.rsf.org/chine-call-for-immediate-release-of-20-11-2014,47257.html>

Asia - Asia

Rigged trial

Call for immediate release of journalist who goes on trial tomorrow

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Gao Yu, a well-known journalist who was formally arrested on 8 May, is to go on trial tomorrow in Beijing on a charge of divulging state secrets to persons outside the country. Reporters Without Borders calls on the authorities to cancel the trial and release her at once.

After going missing on 23 April, **Gao Yu** reappeared on 8 May when CCTV News showed her making [a forced confession](#) in front of cameras. In a press release the next day, Reporters Without Borders condemned the pressure used to make her give a televised confession.

"As the Communist Party controls the judicial apparatus, Gao will be subjected to a rigged trial with a predetermined outcome," Benjamin Ismaïl, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk said.

"The party is trying to punish all those who denounce its dictatorial nature. It is not surprising that a regime that regards democracy and human rights as ideas that threaten its legitimacy should be trying to silence independent opinions and hopes of free speech and freedom of information. The trial must be stopped and Gao must be freed without delay."

Gao is accused of passing official documents to the German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle, to which she was a regular contributor. The authorities have not said what documents, just that they have solid proof.

It could be an internal party document called ["Document No. 9"](#), which warns against "western concepts" that pose a danger because they have been exported with the aim of destabilizing the Chinese government.

Gao already spent seven years in prison in connection with her political writing and, if convicted this time, she could be facing a possible 15-year jail sentence.

The winner of many awards, including the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize in 1997, Gao disappeared in April while on her way to an event commemorating the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy demonstrations. Her arrest marked the start of a crackdown on dissidents in the run-up of the 25th anniversary of the June 1989 massacre.

In China, a national department for the protection of state secrets is responsible for classifying sensitive information. However, its lack of transparency and the vague way it defines "classified information" give the authorities a free hand to charge journalists and bloggers with divulging "state secrets."

The department announced in 2005 that it had withdrawn information about natural disasters from the lists of classified information. But that did not prevent the authorities from [arresting many journalists and bloggers](#) in connection with their coverage of the Sichuan earthquake in 2008.

They included blogger and human rights activist **Huang Qi**, who was sentenced to [three years in prison](#) for "possession of state secrets."

China is ranked 175th out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).
