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Asia - China

Two released

Two citizen-journalists freed on bail, third still held

9 April 2014

Two citizen-journalists, **Liu Xuehong** and **Xing Jian**, were released on bail on 7 April, a month after being [arrested for covering incidents in Tiananmen Square](#) during the annual National People's Congress. **Wang Jing**, a third citizen-journalist who was arrested for the same reason, is still being held.

Liu and Xing were arrested on 8 March after covering the defacing of Mao's big portrait in Tiananmen Square for the *64 Tianwang* website, whose editor, **Huang Qi**, was detained for several hours on 13 March and then released.

Wang, who was arrested on 7 March for reporting for *64 Tianwang* that a woman had tried to set fire to herself, was transferred to a detention centre in Jilin province, where she has been denied access to her lawyer, Li Jingli.

Li tried to visit her but was refused permission. He was also prevented from filing a formal complaint against the prison authorities.

"We are relieved to learn that the arbitrary detention of two of these three *64 Tianwang* contributors is over, but we are outraged by the way Wang is being treated and we call for her immediate and unconditional release," said Benjamin Ismail, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

Xing said he was threatened with being imprisoned again if he contacted Huang or foreign news media. He also reported that his interrogators tried to get him to name Huang as the "brain" behind their activities and to portray *64 Tianwang* as a mouthpiece of foreign media and "enemy forces."

The conditions in which Liu was held were also trying. Her hands and feet were constantly shackled and obstructed by steel bars, to the point that several police officers had to carry her whenever she needed to use a latrine. After being released, police escorted her to Hubei province, where she is not answering the phone.

"We are very worried by the justice system's obvious determination to fabricate a case against Huang," Ismail added. "We urge the authorities to stop harassing this recognized human rights defender and to put an end to the surveillance and threats to which he is constantly subjected."

The winner of the Reporters Without Borders Cyber-Freedom Prize in 2004, Huang has already spent a total of eight years in prison. His second spell in prison began in 2008 when he was jailed on a charge of "illegal possession of state secrets" for helping the parents of children killed in a major earthquake in Sichuan.

Classified as an "[Enemy of the Internet](#)", China is ranked 175th out of 180 countries in the 2014 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).

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