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Asia - China

False rumour charge

During Bo Xilai trial, journalist arrested for reporting corruption

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Reporters Without Borders condemns the arrest of **Liu Hu**, a journalist with the Guangzhou-based daily *Xin Kuai Bao* (*Modern Express*), on 23 August on a charge of "spreading false rumours" on his Weibo account because he urged the authorities to investigate an official suspected of corruption.

"The charge of spreading false rumours brought against Liu Hu is very disturbing," Reporters Without Borders said. "It shows that, although the Bo Xilai trial is supposed to send a message that the party is waging an all-out fight against internal corruption, in fact the authorities continue to persecute news providers who cover corruption cases."

Members of the Beijing police arrested Liu in Chongqing and took him to the capital. Police also searched his home, seizing computer hard disks and laptops, and the authorities closed his Weibo account, on which he posted a message accusing Chongqing chamber of commerce and industry deputy director Ma Zhengqi of professional "negligence" and urging the authorities to investigate him.

In the weeks preceding the start of former senior official [Bo Xilai's trial](#), the authorities cracked down on several journalists and netizens who openly support him. They included Time Weekly journalist Song Yangbiao, who was arrested on 5 August after posting a message supporting Bo on his Weibo account.

The charge of "spreading false rumours" is often used to arrest bloggers and netizens. **Yang Xiuyu**, the founder of a company specializing in Internet public relations, and one of his employees, **Qin Zhihui** (Qin Huohuo), were arrested on this charge in Beijing on 22 August.

China is on the Reporters Without Borders list of "[Enemies of the Internet](#)" and is ranked 173rd out of 179 countries in the [2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).

It is also named in the [2013 special report on surveillance, "Enemies of the Internet" - China](#).

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