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Free Gao Yu!

China urged to free leading journalist Gao Yu and drop charges

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Reporters Without Borders calls for the release of Deutsche Welle China correspondent Gao Yu, whose trial on a charge of disclosing state secrets began last November. The authorities have announced that a verdict will finally be issued tomorrow morning.

A well-known freelance journalist who won the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize in 1997, Gao has been [held since 24 April 2014](#). She is facing up to ten years in prison for sending to "foreign media" an internal Communist Party memo (identified as "Document 9") that the Chinese authorities regard as "secret" although it had already been posted online.

"The international community will be able to gauge from tomorrow morning's verdict and Gao Yu's fate how far the Chinese authorities are ready to go in order to suppress those who speak with an independent voice," said Benjamin Ismail, the head of the Reporters Without Borders Asia-Pacific desk.

"Sanctions must be adopted if she is given a prison sentence, regardless of the duration. The international community must stop giving carte blanche to President Xi Jinping for the sake of the economic interests that tie it to China."

Shortly after her arrest, state-owned *China Central Television (CCTV)* broadcast a video of her making a "confession." At a hearing held on 21 November, she said she made the [confession under duress](#), because threats had been made against her son.

Her arrest marked the start of a [crackdown on dissidents](#) in the final weeks before last June's [25th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre](#). Several hundred activists, writers, poets, journalists, bloggers and ordinary citizens were arrested for expressing their views on the massacre or just posting information about it.

China is ranked 176th out of 180 countries in the [2015 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index](#).
