

# Reporters Without Borders

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Asia - China

Call for sanctions

## EU urged to sanction CCTV for broadcasting journalist's forced confession

20 August 2014

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Police cite Xiang Nanfu's "confession" as a reason for freeing him on parole

While welcoming freelance journalist **Xiang Nanfu's** release, announced yesterday, Reporters Without Borders calls on the European Council to sanction state-owned *CCTV13's* executives for violating his right to a fair trial by broadcasting his forced confession in order to incriminate him.

Xiang wrote about land confiscation and organ trafficking for the US-based Chinese-language news website *Boxun*. When he [was arrested on 3 May](#), the police accused him of receiving sums of from abroad, and his articles were said to have undermined China's image.

On 13 May, ten days after his arrest, he was shown on CCTV13 confessing to having "smeared the Party and the government."

Announced his release yesterday, the police said he was being freed on parole "because of his poor health and above all because of a relatively good attitude in pleading guilty."

Xiang's forced confession was broadcast just five days after a similar "confession" by the well-known journalist [Gao Yu](#). Broadcasting forced confessions is often used to discredit dissident news and information providers. It was used with the journalist **Chen Yongzhou** in November 2013 and with the blogger and businessman **Charles Xue** in September 2013.

*"We are relieved by Xiang's release but we are very shocked by the way it was obtained,"* said Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire. *"The Chinese authorities flout their own justice system by making journalists 'confess' publicly to crimes they did not commit. The sole aim of these forced confessions is to destroy the credibility of those charged."*

*"We call on the European Council to adopt sanctions against CCTV13 and its executives – China Central Television CEO Hu Zhanfan, CCTV board member Jiao Li and CCTV vice-president Zhang Changming – for broadcasting these forced confession. This is intolerable on the part of a news organization, even one controlled by the state."*

Such sanctions would be in line with a previous European Union measure. In decision [2013/124/PESC](#) of March 2013, the European Council found that certain Iranian officials had violated the right to a fair trial by their use of forced confessions and were complicit in the use of violence to make detainees "confess."

The way that the forced confessions were broadcast in China was similar to the Iranian cases considered by the European Council.

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

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