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Asia - China

Televised "confession"

RWB appalled by Chinese journalist's forced confession on TV

9 May 2014

The Chinese authorities announced yesterday that **Gao Yu**, a well-known journalist [who had been missing since 23 April](#), has been placed in criminal detention on suspicion of transmitting "state secrets" to news outlets outside China.

State-owned *China Central Television* yesterday broadcast video of Gao confessing to having made a "big mistake" and admitting her "guilt."

The state-owned *Xinhua news* agency reported that Gao has been detained since 24 April for sending a copy of a "highly confidential" document to a foreign entity and that the police had found "substantial" evidence of her guilt at her home. Revealing state secrets carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

"The staging of Gao Yu's confession is outrageous", Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Christophe Deloire said. *"The Chinese authorities, who constantly flout freedom of information, are trying to set an example by targeting this well-known journalist."*

"We demand Gao's immediate release and the withdrawal of these charges. Extracting a confession under duress and broadcasting it on state TV constitute a grave violation of fundamental rights. The authorities must end their policy of persecuting those who just do their job by informing their fellow Chinese citizens."

Gao recently posted articles on the Chinese-language version of the *Deutsche Welle* website about an internal party document called "Document No. 9: On the situation in the ideological sphere." It warns against western values that are considered dangerous, including constitutional democracy, the universality of human rights, the independence of the media and civil society, economic neo-liberalism, and "nihilist" criticism of the party's past errors.

The winner of many awards, including the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize in 1997, Gao was already sentenced in 1993 to six years in prison on a charge of divulging state secrets.

[Censorship](#) and dissident arrests tend to increase every year in the run-up to the anniversary of the June 1989 Tiananmen Square and this year's anniversary will be the 25th. Pu Zhiqiang, a human rights lawyer known for defending the dissident artist Ai Weiwei and members of the New Citizens Movement, was arrested 6 May on a charge of "causing trouble."

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

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