



UN Calls For Liu Xiaobo's Release: A United Nations panel of independent experts has called for China to free Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo and his wife immediately

Editorials
August 7, 2011

A United Nations panel of independent human rights experts has called for China to free Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo and his wife immediately and that he and his wife have a claim to compensation from the government. The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention said China has acted in a manner contrary to its human rights commitments and obligations by imprisoning Liu and holding his wife, Liu Xia, under house arrest. U.S. State Department deputy spokesperson Mark Toner said the United States joins with the U.N. working group in calling for the release of Liu Xiaobo and his wife from detention and urges China to uphold its international human rights obligations and commitments.

Liu, winner of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize, was arrested in December 2008 and sentenced to 11 years in prison for allegedly inciting subversion of state power. Liu is a prominent intellectual and democracy activist and was co-author of Charter 08, a manifesto calling for an end to single party rule and advocating peaceful democratic reforms. His wife has not been charged with any crime, but since Liu was awarded the Nobel Prize, she has been under house arrest with limited movement and no communication with the outside world.

The U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention said that China acted in contravention to provisions in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights against arbitrary arrest and detention as well as its provisions regarding fair trial and freedom of opinion and expression. The U.N. panel, made up of human rights experts from five countries, noted that 55 year old Liu was limited to 14 minutes to defend himself at his two-hour trial.

The U.N. panel's views were made public by the U.S.-based human rights group Freedom Now, which represents Liu and his wife. Organization founder Jared Genser said, "This is a critical affirmation from the United Nations that the Chinese government's detention of Dr. Liu and Liu Xia are in flagrant violation of international law." Mr. Genser went on to say that the U.N. panel's "decisions are an important reminder that the crackdown against democracy activists - and members of their families - continues in China unabated."

The United States again joins the voices of all those calling for the immediate release of Liu Xiaobo and his wife Liu Xia.