

– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –

**SICHUAN-BASED RIGHTS DEFENDERS LIU ZHENGYOU (刘正有) AND WIFE SENTENCED TO 2 YEARS OF IMPRISONMENT AFTER A TRIAL RIFE WITH IRREGULARITIES AND VIOLATIONS OF LAW**

CHINESE URGENT ACTION WORKING GROUP / 人权卫士紧急救援协会, Beijing, China, August 20, 2010 --- At a 4 pm (16 O'clock) session in the Ziliujiang district court in Zigong city on August 20, 2010, Liu Zhengyou (刘正有), an award winning Sichuan province rights defender, was sentenced to two years of imprisonment, while his wife Hu Yulan (胡玉兰) received one and half year but with a reprieve, on charges of “fraud”. The beginning of the trial attracted some 500 supporters of Liu, while his daughter Liu Jing was apprehended by police and brought to police station, not released until the trial proceedings had ended later that evening. The court violated its own governing regulation in their delay of delivering a verdict, which should have been provided no later than August 5.

Liu is a longtime rights defender, and winner of a human rights award by Geneva-based *Centre of Housing Rights and Evictions*, who has been persecuted by the local government of Zigong city over several years, which have included detentions, physical assaults, forced repatriation, being denied to travel overseas to a UN summit, as well as long list of minor violations such as harassment, questioning, surveillance and house arrests.

Liu has been a problem for the local government since 1993 when he started organizing protests against government land grabs, in this case Hongqi township farmland that was to be used for a new “high-tech park”. In 2003 police attempt to quell a large-scale protest organized by Liu in regards to a land grab which led to four farmers death and tens of people injured. Liu has also spent considerable time investigating various human rights abuses, and he did some of the first investigations into the now well-known system of “Black jails”.

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**PRESS RELEASE:**

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Liu has also undertaken similar work on the use of psychiatric institutions as detention centers. His main activity, organizing farmers to resist encroachment by local governments, has also led him to other provinces than Sichuan where he has assisted in organizing. Liu has published a fair amount of essays and investigations online, and has regularly spoken openly to both domestic and international media.

Liu was detained by Police at 1 pm on November 11, 2009 and placed in criminal detention on the charge of “fraud”. The charge is based on the police's suspicion of Liu and his wife fabricating their work experience documentation for the purpose of qualifying for an insurance policy, something Liu and his wife denies. While in detention awaiting a much delayed trial, Liu went on hunger-strike twice to protest that his wife was denied bail, despite the non-violent crime they are accused of, and as his wife's health has been deteriorating while in detention. The procuratorate has had to return the case to the police twice for further investigation as the evidence collected was deemed insufficient.

Liu's lawyer Zheng Jianwei (郑建伟) have pointed out irregularities before as well as during trial, amongst others not being allowed access to all the evidence, nor given enough time to analyze the evidence. We strongly believe that the charge against Liu is a way for the Zigong government to silence Liu, and prevent him from continuing his work to block government redevelopment plans in Hongqi township.

**--- END OF PRESS RELEASE ---**

**About the Chinese Urgent Action Working Group**

The Chinese Urgent Action Working Group (人权卫士紧急救援协会) undertakes direct interventions on behalf of Human Rights defenders in distress, through investigations, public advocacy, communication with international institutions and organizations, and through providing legal aid. The group is located inside mainland China, and was formed as a response to increased persecution of Human Rights defenders in the run up to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. The organization also regularly releases reports and background briefs on issues concerning human rights defenders in China.

FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION ON LIU ZHENGYOU AND HIS CASE, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE

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