

7 July 2017

China: Nobel Peace Prize Winner Liu Xiaobo is refused visitors during medical parole

On 7 July, 2017, friends and relatives continue to be denied access to writer, Nobel Peace Prize winner, and prisoner of conscience **Liu Xiaobo (刘晓波)**, who has been on medical parole for treatment of what has been described as ‘terminal cancer’ since 26 June, 2017. On 5 July, 2017, a friend of the human rights defender who travelled to Shenyang City, Liaoning Province with the intention of visiting Liu Xiaobo in hospital was held incommunicado for eight hours by security officials.

[Liu Xiaobo](#) is a 56 year old writer, human rights defender and advocate of political reform in China who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010, "for his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China". Liu Xiaobo has written extensively in favour of democracy despite regular government harassment and four instances of incarceration for his activism. In 2000, Liu Xiaobo founded the Independent Chinese **PEN Centre**, where he served as president from 2003 to 2007. In 2008, he helped compose [Charter 08](#), a manifesto calling for further democratization, economic liberalisation, freedom of expression, and respect for human rights in China. For his participation, Liu Xiaobo was found guilty in December 2009 of ‘inciting subversion against state power’ and sentenced to eleven years’ imprisonment.

After eight years in prison, on 26 June, 2017, Liu Xiaobo’s state-appointed lawyer announced that his medical parole had been approved, and that he had been transferred to a hospital in Shenyang City, Liaoning Province for treatment of advanced-stage liver cancer. Since then, Liu Xiaobo has had some access to his wife, Liu Xia, and other family members, however, friends, other family, media personnel, and other well-wishers attempting to visit him the defender during his medical parole have been denied access.

On 4 July, 2017, a friend of Liu Xiaobo and fellow Charter 08 signer, Wen Jianke arrived in Shenyang City in order to visit the defender, and was instructed by security officials from his home city of Hangzhou that he would be escorted back to Hangzhou the following day. On the morning of 5 July, Wen Jianke was contacted by Shenyang City security officers, who held him incommunicado for eight hours. Other visitors to the hospital reported that roughly one hundred police and security officers have been stationed around the hospital, and are occupying the 23rd floor, where many suspect Liu Xiaobo is currently receiving treatment.

Liu Xia, the wife of the defender, has been kept in [extreme isolation](#) since the arrest of Liu Xiaobo. Her communication with the outside world has been severely monitored and restricted by local authorities. Liu Xiaobo and Liu Xia have made multiple requests to seek medical treatment for Liu Xiaobo outside of China, however these requests have been denied.

Front Line Defenders expresses its deep concern for Liu Xiaobo’s health and well-being, and strongly condemns the denial of access and isolation of Liu Xiaobo and his family from their friends and associates by Chinese authorities. Front Line Defenders strongly urges Chinese authorities to allow friends to visit the defender during this critical stage of his illness and to reconsider requests made by Liu Xiaobo and his family for him to seek advanced medical care abroad.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in China to:

1. Immediately release Liu Xiaobo and quash his conviction as Front Line Defenders believes that he has been targeted solely as a result of his legitimate human rights work;
2. Immediately and unconditionally grant full parole and remove all restrictions on the free movement of Liu Xiaobo so that he may seek medical treatment abroad.
3. Immediately and unconditionally remove all restrictions on the free movement and communication of Liu Xia, and cease all further forms of surveillance or harassment against her, as it is believed that these measures are not only solely related to her connection with Liu Xiaobo, but, furthermore, constitute a direct transgression of the rights of Liu Xia;
4. Refrain any and all forms of harassment, including the incommunicado detention of friends, associates, and persons attempting to visit Liu Xiaobo;
5. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in China are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.