

# World's Press calls on China to release journalist Gao Yu

PARIS, FRANCE / FRANKFURT, GERMANY: The World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the World Editors Forum have called on the Chinese authorities to release 71-year-old Chinese journalist Gao Yu, who has been sentenced to seven years in jail for supposedly leaking state secrets.



Authorities in Beijing are very sensitive to anything smacking of criticism.  
(Image: Heather Baker)

Gao Yu, a freelance journalist and laureate of WAN-IFRA's 1995 Golden Pen of Freedom award, denies leaking an internal Communist Party document urging authorities not to tolerate support for democracy, press freedom, civil society and human rights.

In a letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping, WAN-IFRA and the WEF expressed grave concern at the sentencing, calling for her immediate release and all charges to be dropped. "We respectfully remind you that jailing Gao Yu for carrying out her professional duties constitutes a clear breach of the fundamental right of freedom of expression, which is guaranteed by numerous international conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," the letter said.

Gao Yu has been detained since 24 April 2014 and claims that her conviction was based solely on her confession, which was made under pressure because her son was also in custody at the time. She will reportedly appeal the sentence.

Gao Yu has been repeatedly jailed and held under house arrest for her work as a journalist. She was awarded the 1995 Golden Pen of Freedom in recognition of her courage, self-sacrifice and contribution to the struggle for freedom of expression in China. The 2015 Golden Pen of Freedom will be awarded in Washington, D.C. in June, honouring 'Journalists Killed in the Line of Duty'.

To read WAN-IFRA's full letter visit <http://www.wan-ifra.org/node/130402/>

For more information on WAN-IFRA's press freedom work, visit <http://www.wan-ifra.org/pressfreedom>

For more information on the Golden Pen of Freedom, visit <http://www.wan-ifra.org/node/31099/>

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