

Sakharov Prize 2008 Year for China

Hu Jia

On behalf of the silenced voices of China and Tibet



Hu Jia and his wife, Zeng Jinyan, were nominated for last year's Sakharov Prize and were among the final three short-listed candidates. Hu Jia was consequently imprisoned and remains in prison to this day.

Hu Jia is a prominent human rights activist who works on various issues including civil rights, environmental protection and AIDS advocacy.

He was arrested shortly after his testimony on 26 November 2007 via conference call before the European Parliament's sub-committee on Human Rights. In his statement, he expressed his desire that 2008 be the "year of human rights in China". He also pointed out that the Chinese national security department was creating a human rights disaster with one million people persecuted for fighting for human rights and many of them detained in prison, in camps or mental hospitals. He also said: "The irony is that one of the people in charge of organising the Olympics is the head of the Public Security Bureau in Beijing who is responsible for so many human rights violations. The promises of China are not being kept before the games."

As a direct result of his address to members of the European Parliament, Hu Jia was arrested, charged with "inciting subversion of state power", and sentenced on 3 April 2008 to three-and-a-half years' in jail with one year denial of political rights. He was found guilty of writing articles about the human rights situation in the run-up to the Olympic Games.

He has been repeatedly calling for an official enquiry into the 1989 Tiananmen massacre as well as compensation for the victims and their families. He is also

one of the coordinators of the "barefoot lawyers", an informal group of legal advisers who defend, among others, human rights activists in China.

On 8 August 2008, Hu Jia and 42 Chinese intellectuals signed an open letter entitled *"One World, One Dream: Universal Human Rights"*, calling for more attention to human rights in China. On 6 September 2007, he and his lawyer, Teng Biao, published another open letter, *"The Real China and the Olympics"*, detailing the situation of human rights in the run-up to the Olympics.

Fifty-seven Chinese activists and writers signed an open letter on 6 January 2007 calling for Hu Jia's immediate release and urging the police to ensure that his health does not deteriorate while in detention. He suffers from a liver ailment.

On 7 August 2008, his wife Zeng Jinyan, was taken to Tianjin to see Hu Jia in prison and only brought home to Beijing on 23 August. A few days later, she reported that Hu Jia had said that the prison's methods infringe upon convicts dignity and human rights. He didn't just make his disagreement known to the prison, he also began spreading his views among other convicts, which created difficulties for the prison staff.

Hu Jia became a leading symbol of China's human rights problems as well as a symbol of resistance to Beijing's authority. He represents all the other Chinese and Tibetan citizens who are repressed: lawyers, journalists, petitioners, human rights activists, writers and cyber-dissidents.

On behalf of:

Bu Dongwei; Chen Guangcheng; Dolma Kyab; Du Daobin; Gao Zhisheng; Gong Shenliang; Hada; Harry Wu and all the other Laogai prisoners; He Depu; Hu Shigen; Huang Jinjiu; Huang Qi; Jia Zhiguo; Jigme Gyatso; Jigme Tenzin Nyima; Kong Youping; Korash Huseyin; Kunkhyen; Li Chang; Li Ying; Liu Jie; Liu Zhihua; Lu Wenbin; Lu Gengsong; Lupoe Adak; Mao Hengfeng; Nurhahmat Yusup; Nurmuhemmet Yasin; Phurbu Rinpoche; Qi Zhiyong; Qin Yongmin; Runggye Adak; Shi Enxiang; Shi Tao; Shuang Shuying; Su Zhimin; Sun Xiaodi; Tao Haidong; Tashi Gyatso; Tenzin Delek; Tohti Tunyaz; Wang Ling; Wang Sen; Wu Lihong; Xu Zerong; Yang Chunlin; Yang Maodong; Yang Tongyan; Yang Zili; Yao Fuxin; Ye Guozhu; Zeng Jinyan; Zhang Lin; Zhang Rongliang; Zhang Shanguang; Chen Guangcheng; Guo Feixiong; Lu Gengsong;

As well as all other Chinese and Tibetans who have fought against repression from the authorities.