

TAKE ACTION: Please cut and paste this letter onto your personal or Institutional letterhead calling for the release from prison of writer Hu Shigen.

27 April 2007

His Excellency Hu Jintao
President of the People's Republic of China
State Council
Beijing 100032
P.R. China

Excellency,

I wish to add my name to this appeal from PEN Canada, the Canadian centre of the international writers' organization, International PEN. PEN Canada is writing to demand the release from prison of writer **Hu Shigen**.

He was among dozens of China Freedom and Democracy Party (CFDP) and China Free Trade Union (CFTU) members to be detained in April and May 1992 for planning 4 June memorial activities in many of China's major cities. As a founding member of both the CFDP and CFTU, Hu Shigen drafted a number of key documents for both parties and was active in calling for government accountability for the violent suppression of the Democracy Movement in June 1989. Hu Shigen was detained in Beijing on 27 May 1992, and formally charged on 27 September 1992, with "counter-revolutionary crimes". He was convicted on 16 December 1994, by the Beijing Intermediate People's Court of "leading a counterrevolutionary organisation" and "counterrevolutionary propaganda". As a senior member of the CFDP, Hu received the heaviest sentence: 20 years in prison and five years' subsequent deprivation of political rights. His sentence was upheld on appeal by the Supreme Court on 15 June 1995.

The conditions of Hu Shigen's detention are reportedly very harsh, and his health is said to have deteriorated greatly since his incarceration. He reportedly suffers from intestinal and heart problems, malnutrition and chronic migraines. He is said to require a hearing aid and to be extremely weak. He also has back problems caused by the dislocation of several vertebrae, which remain untreated. Requests for medical parole by his family have been ignored by the authorities. His refusal to show remorse for his political activities has reportedly contributed to his poor treatment in prison.

PEN Canada considers Hu Shigen to be detained in violation of his right to freedom of expression and calls for his immediate and unconditional release in accordance with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which China is a signatory, and on humanitarian grounds. PEN Canada demands that Hu Shigen be given all necessary medical care and treated humanely in detention.

Sincerely,

[Your name and address]

Copies to:

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Also c/o:

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Please send copies of your appeal to the following Canadian authorities:

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