

China human rights lawyer Yu Wensheng jailed for 4 years over ‘inciting subversion

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China human rights lawyer Yu Wensheng has been sentenced to four years imprisonment and deprivation of political rights for three years following a conviction for *“inciting subversion of state power.”*

Yu was arrested in Xuzhou in January 2018 and was also charged with obstructing the duties of public officers. He previously circulated an open letter calling for reforms to China’s constitution and said President Xi Jinping’s regime amounted to *“totalitarian rule.”*

Yu Wensheng represented human rights activists including Falun Gong activists and lawyer Wang Quanzhang.

Wang – who was among hundreds of rights activists and lawyers targetted in a 2015 crackdown – was convicted of subverting state power, though the trial only began in January last year. He was released in April after four and a half years behind bars.

Yu’s wife Xu Yan told DW News that the trial was conducted in secret and she had yet to receive the judgement. *“I think the court will not hand down a judgement to me. They have never given me any bill of indictment nor documents since Yu Wensheng went missing. China authorities’ secret trials are under the table,”* she said. *“And they lack the courage to disclose any facts. Their practices demonstrate that Yu Wensheng is innocent.”*

Xu Yan posted a video on Twitter and said Yu Wensheng’s trial began in May last year. She said Judge Liu Mingwei did not respond to her enquiries.

‘Political persecution’

Amnesty International Asia-Pacific Regional Director Nicholas Bequelin said the sentencing was political persecution dressed up as legal process. *“While the Chinese government’s zero-tolerance policy towards critics is well-known, the secret sentencing of yet another human rights lawyer marks a new low for what is left of the rule of law in China.”*

He urged the authorities to release Yu immediately as his prosecution was baseless and his lawyer was not permitted to attend the sentencing hearing.

P.S.

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