

**INTERNATIONAL PEN  
WRITERS IN PRISON COMMITTEE  
DAY OF THE IMPRISONED WRITER**

**15 NOVEMBER 2006**

**China  
Yang Xiaoqing  
Journalist**

Journalist Yang Xiaoqing was sentenced on 15 June 2006 on extortion charges for his reporting on official corruption. He was accused of posting 'defamatory' articles on 'illegal' websites as part of an alleged attempt to blackmail local officials. Yang is known for his writings in support of minorities and his strong sense of social justice. Hundreds of local residents gathered at the Longhui County Court on the day of the trial to support thirty-seven-old Yang and protest his sentence.

Yang Xiaoqing, a reporter with the *Zhongguo Chanjing Xinwenbao* (*China Industrial Economy News*), was arrested by the Public Security Bureau of Longhui County, Hunan Province, on 22 January 2006 after investigating and reporting the alleged corruption of Longhui County officials. According to Yang's wife Gong Jie, Yang received threats and intimidation by local officials prior to his arrest, and had been in hiding for several months.

Yang was accused of posting defamatory articles on the Internet after failing to extort up to 800,000 Yuan (US\$100,000) from Longhui County officials. His detention is thought to be linked to two articles written in May 2005 alleging corruption in the sale of a state-owned company by county officials. According to his lawyer, the authorities have failed to produce any evidence to support the charges against him, which he believes are fabricated.

Yang Xiaoqing is held at the Longhui County Detention Centre, Hunan Province, where his health is said to have deteriorated significantly since his detention. He is said to have been diagnosed with Hepatitis B, and there are also reports that he is denied treatment for an undiagnosed growth that could be malignant.

Yang's wife, Gong Jie, explained during an interview with *The Epoch Times*, "...Mr. Yang is an innocent and honest reporter who is being retaliated against for exposing the corruption of Longhui County officials of Hunan Province. We are determined to file an appeal to the higher court. And if that doesn't work, we will continue on to the Central court."

The Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN protests the one-year prison sentence handed down to journalist Yang Xiaoqing on 15 June 2006 on extortion charges for his reporting on official corruption. International PEN considers journalist Yang Xiaoqing to be detained in violation of Article 19 of the International Covenant

on Civil and Political Rights, to which China became a signatory in 1998, and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

Appeals to:

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