

Head of Shanghai Women's Prison
Sijing 610-401, Songjiang District, Shanghai
People's Republic of China

Dear Prison Director,

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the imprisonment of petitioner and women's rights defender Mao Hengfeng, who was convicted of intentional damage of property on January 12, 2007, and sentenced to two-and-a-half years' imprisonment. Mao Hengfeng is currently detained at your prison. She has reportedly been beaten and is in poor health as a result excessive confinement indoors. Mao also suffers from joint problems and has developed high blood pressure.

Mao Hengfeng's sentence is disproportionate to her convicted offense. She broke two lamps and other items while in custody, and her lawyers have disputed the value of these items attributed to them at trial, as well as the validity of other major evidence used. I believe that the heavy sentence levied against Mao Hengfeng is a means to silence her and punish her for invoking her lawful right to petition the government. Her right to criticize the government as guaranteed in the Chinese Constitution has been violated: I believe that she and other people detained for peacefully invoking their lawful petitioning rights should be immediately released.

I urge you to ensure that Mao Hengfeng is given immediate and appropriate medical treatment for her deteriorating health, and that she and all others in your facility are treated in a humane manner consistent with the PRC Prison Law and international law and standards, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment, and the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Sincerely,
[your signature]