

URGENT ACTION

TIBETAN ACTIVIST SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN JAIL

Prisoner of conscience Tashi Wangchuk was given a five-year prison sentence for “inciting separatism” on 22 May 2018. Forbidden from seeing his family, human rights defender Tashi Wangchuk was detained for almost two years before his case went to trial.

Tashi Wangchuk was sentenced to five years in prison for “inciting separatism” by the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai province, northwest China, on 22 May 2018. In the verdict, the main evidence against him was a short video documentary produced by *The New York Times* in 2015, which detailed Tashi Wangchuk’s campaign for Tibetan language education in schools.

Tashi Wangchuk has already indicated his intention to appeal the verdict. While there is no further information about the appeal at this stage, it is expected that he will remain in the detention centre throughout the process. He has had no access to his family since being detained in January 2016.

Before his arrest, Tashi Wangchuk voiced concerns that many Tibetan children are unable to use their native language fluently and that this was contributing to the gradual extinction of Tibetan culture. The documentary told the story of his trip to Beijing to seek legal assistance in filing a lawsuit against local officials over the lack of Tibetan language education in schools in Tibetan-populated areas.

Tashi Wangchuk is a human rights defender and prisoner of conscience who used the media and China’s own legal system to peacefully defend Tibetan language, culture and identity. Given that the court has handed down its first verdict, the procuratorate’s role in initiating the prosecution, supervising the criminal trials and sentencing of the court has come to an end. Therefore, there is no longer a need for urgent action on his case. However, Amnesty International will continue to demand Tashi Wangchuk’s immediate and unconditional release.

Many thanks to all who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the third update of UA 79/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/5901/2017/en/>

Name: Tashi Wangchuk

Gender m/f: M

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