

CHINESE HIV POSITIVE ACTIVIST TIAN XI TO GO ON TRIAL ON TRUMPED UP CHARGES

By *moderator*

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CALL FOR THE DROPPING OF CHARGES AND HIS IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On September 21st 2010 Chinese activist Tian Xi will go on trial in Henan Province charged with ?suspicion of intentional destruction to property.? Tian Xi is HIV positive and was infected with HIV as a child as a result of a blood transfusion at the time when thousands of people in Henan and other provinces were infected with HIV through state-sponsored blood selling programs in the 1990s. In an unprecedented action, activists from across China will attend Tian Xi?s trial to express solidarity with him. The Treatment Action Campaign calls on UNAIDS and civil society organisations worldwide to monitor the trial of Tian Xi and to issue statements calling for his immediate release. We call for UNAIDS executive director, Michel Sidibe, to urgently intervene to secure Tian Xi?s release.

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On September 21st 2010 Chinese activist Tian Xi will go on trial in Henan Province charged with ?suspicion of intentional destruction to property.? Tian Xi is 23 years old. He is HIV positive and was infected with HIV as a child as a result of a blood transfusion at the time when thousands of people in Henan and other provinces were infected with HIV through state-sponsored blood selling programs in the 1990s. In an unprecedented action, activists from across China will attend Tian Xi?s trial to express solidarity with him.

For the last five years Tian Xi has been campaigning for compensation for himself and others, as well as for the Chinese government to admit its culpability in the blood scandal and hold those directly responsible to account. Tian Xi?s crusade has drawn the ire of the Chinese authorities and he has been frequently harassed and detained. However, he has never been charged before and we fear that his trial will be used to put him out of sight for a number of years as has happened with other outspoken human rights activists such as Hu Jia, currently still in prison after nearly three years.

The charge of ?suspicion of intentional destruction to property? arises because Tian Xi appears to have been lured back to Henan with an official offer of trying to resolve his complaints. However when he got there he was refused meetings and in a fit of anger broke several minor objects in a hospital office where he had gone to meet the hospital director and collect his ARV medicine.

Tian Xi and other activists? frustration arises from the fact that Henan provincial courts refuse to accept any lawsuits relating to HIV, leaving victims of the disaster with no recourse except petitioning. In Chinese tradition, in a case of no other recourse, citizens may bring complaints against local officials to higher-ranking government offices. However, only a tiny percentage of these petitions ever receive a favorable response, and many petitioners, including Tian Xi, have been detained and tortured in what are known as ?black jails?.

Although the Chinese authorities say that he is being charged on ordinary criminal grounds - ?suspicion of intentional destruction of property? ? it is obvious from the circumstances surrounding this case, Tian Xi?s communications with various organisations, and the documents he obtained from township officials ordering his detention, that he was

arrested because of his ongoing and persistent HIV/AIDS petitioning, not because of the hospital incident.

The Treatment Action Campaign calls on UNAIDS and civil society organisations worldwide to monitor the trial of Tian Xi and to issue statements calling for his immediate release. We call for UNAIDS executive director, Michel Sidibe, to urgently intervene to secure Tian Xi's release.

We call on civil society organisations in South Africa to write letters of protest to the Chinese Ambassador, Zhong Jianhua at:

225 Athlone street,
Arcadia
Pretoria
Fax: 012 342 4244

We call on the Chinese government to respect the human rights of campaigners for justice in China and for the South African government to raise this issue formally with the Chinese government because it is a violation of human rights and contrary to the Constitutional principles that govern South Africa's international relations with countries that are our political and economic partners.

For further information contact: Nathan Geffen at 084 542 6322

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