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China: Li Yanxiang in extremely poor health, authorities deny medical parole

On 24 March 2018, Li Hongcai, the husband of human rights defender **Li Yanxiang** (李延香) revealed that the defender's physical condition has drastically deteriorated. Li Yanxiang is currently serving a two-and-a-half year sentence at the Qingdao No. 2 Detention Centre on the charge of "picking quarrels and provoking troubles." In protest against her charge and sentencing, Li Yanxiang has been refusing food for four months. She is now very weak, and can no longer walk unsupported.

[Li Yanxiang](#)'s work in the promotion and protection of human rights in China involves participating in demonstrations to highlight cases of illegal land appropriation by local authorities. She has supported other petitioners in preparing and submitting their cases for government attention. In one case, she accompanied an assaulted petitioner to the hospital to ensure his wellbeing. In 2014, she joined advocacy efforts for the cases of human rights defenders and victims of forced eviction, Fan Mugen and Ding Hanzhong. She has also supported advocacy efforts for human rights lawyer [Pu Zhiqiang](#) during his December 2015 trial.

Since early December 2017, Li Yanxiang has been refusing to consume food, in protest against the unfairness of the charge and sentence against her. The defender argues that she did not conduct "illegal petitioning", as the public prosecution has alleged, nor do her actions constitute "picking quarrels and provoking troubles." On 24 March 2018, Li Yanxiang's husband reported that after months of hunger strike, the defender's physical condition has drastically deteriorated. The human rights defender's lawyer has submitted two requests for medical parole for Li Yanxiang, who has reportedly lost 50 pounds since beginning her hunger strike in early December 2017. Chinese detention centres have a notorious track record of failing to provide proper medical attention to ailing detainees, and Li Yanxiang's husband is deeply concerned about the defender's health.

On 17 August 2017, Li Yanxiang was detained in Beijing during a petitioning trip and later accused of "picking quarrels and provoking troubles." Following her trial in January 2018, the defender was sentenced to two and a half years in prison, which her lawyer described as "excessively severe." Li Yanxiang has appealed the sentence.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern for the health of Li Yanxiang and calls on the Chinese authorities to immediately release the defender. Front Line Defenders believes that Li Yanxiang's charge and sentence are both specious attempts to stop her peaceful work defending her and others' rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in China to:

1. Immediately release and drop all charges against Li Yanxiang;
2. While Li Yanxiang remains in detention, ensure that she receives necessary medical care and attention;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in China are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.