

We strongly condemn China's ruling regime for sentencing, on January 26th, 2014, internationally respected scholar and rights activist Xu Zhiyong to four years of imprisonment. The conviction for "gathering a crowd to disturb public order" represents a shameful escalation of the Communist leadership's suppression of the citizen movement demanding the public disclosure of government officials' assets, a universally accepted practice for preventing government corruption in all civilized countries worldwide.

Xu Zhiyong and his colleagues Zhao Changqing, Ding Jiayi, Hou Xin, among others, fought for the general public's desire and right to be involved in their own government's decisions. Their speech and actions, lawfully exercised under Clause 35 of China's constitution, demonstrated some of the most valuable and necessary qualities within the Chinese public today. Xu Zhiyong and his colleagues had called on the public to believe in freedom, justice, and love. Their subsequent conviction and imprisonment is a humiliation and embarrassment to China.

### **Regime's lofty promises**

The Communist leadership regrettably excludes Xu Zhiyong and those like him from their vision of the "Chinese Dream". In viewing citizen movements as a disturbance and threat to their authoritarian ambitions, the ruling elites have overwhelmingly suppressed citizen actions and thereby inviting the public's outraged reactions. The reality of the regime's relentless suppression is a cautionary tale to those who remember newly installed Xi Jinping's lofty anti-corruption promises. A country can never bloom under those lacking integrity and trustworthiness. Under Communist rule, corrupt officials have accumulated to the hundreds of thousands, citizen rights are mercilessly abused, economic rights and public interests are shamelessly exploited, and the state apparatus has made its own people "enemies" to maintain the ruling elite's hold on power. Dissidents, independent intellectuals, defense lawyers, peasants, and victims of forced land seizure and demolitions, victims of forced abortions, veterans, Tibetans, Uygurs, Inner Mongolians, Christians, Falungong practitioners, and many more have all become the opposition forces to the Chinese regime and its political system.

We believe that the efforts to suppress the Chinese citizen movement only has strengthened the opposition forces against the authoritarian Communist regime. At this critical moment, *Citizen Power for China*

urges those in all walks of life in China to continue to push for the values of "Freedom, Justice, and Love", defiantly and without any illusions. The different opposition forces must work together to seek consensus for a robust democratic opposition in China, as it is fundamental for transforming China's political system. China's hopes and future depend on citizen power and cooperation.

## Statement on Xu Zhiyong Sentence

Citizen Power for China

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