

Tiananmen Square Persecution Continues to This Day

John Kusumi

We have at hand an issue — inattention to which demonstrates how the international community has sunk to lows of being inattentive to China's human rights crisis and the plight of China's pro-democracy movement, which garnered so much sympathy in the wake of 1989's Tiananmen Square massacre.



Hong Kong icommemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the

Tiananmen Square Massacre (Alex Lam/The Epoch Times)

Indeed, for the first decade after Tiananmen, Western news organizations constantly featured Chinese dissidents, abuses committed by the regime there, and high profile cases of prisoners of conscience. Then, for the second decade after Tiananmen, Western news largely did a 180-degree turn, and while prisoners of conscience continued to suffer, newscasters themselves seemed to have no conscience.

The Tiananmen crackdown is not over. The case of Zhou Yongjun is particularly galling because it can represent the entire Tiananmen Square student movement. Why? Because as the first student leader actually elected to lead the Autonomous Students' Federation of Beijing Universities, Mr. Zhou already once did represent the entire Tiananmen Square student movement.

What happened, and continues to happen to Zhou, is emblematic of China's handling of political dissidents from 1989 all the way up to the present day. Zhou is now in his third stint as a political prisoner in Mainland China. Twice before, he was arrested and imprisoned.

He was first arrested by Chinese authorities soon after the massacre of June 4, 1989. The international community raised pressure for his release, which happened in 1991 after about 1.5 years' imprisonment. In 1992 he made his way to Hong Kong and in 1993 he resettled in the United States. He became a legal permanent resident and also applied for citizenship. He now has two children who are U.S. citizens.

In 1998, he attempted a return visit to China, was arrested in Guangzhou, and became a political prisoner for the second time. He was sentenced to three years in a laogai ('reform

through labor') camp. He was released about six months early in 2001, because the Chinese government was bidding for the Olympics to be awarded to Beijing. By making a token release of political prisoners, Beijing was able to display a fakey, staged impression of "human rights improvement." Zhou then returned to the United States in 2002.

Three times a prisoner

Now, he is in his third stint as a prisoner of the Chinese government. Homesickness and his ailing father led Zhou to attempt another return to China in September, 2008. He was detained by Hong Kong immigration authorities as he attempted to enter Hong Kong from Macao. At that point, he could have been turned away just like other dissidents. (Yang Jianli and Wuer Kaixi have also tried to re-enter China recently, and they were put onto airplanes that returned them to Taiwan.) Instead — and unlike their handling of other dissident cases — the Hong Kong immigration authorities turned him over to Mainland police.

To enter China, Zhou had obtained a Malaysian passport which bore the name Wang Xingxiang. Authorities in China have charged him with "financial fraud," solely on the basis of a letter that is alleged to be from Wang Xingxiang to Hang Seng Bank in Hong Kong requesting to withdraw money. Zhou has made it clear that he did not author that letter, but it is the basis for the Chinese regime to continue to hold him now.

In this case, several objections are immediately obvious.

- 1.) Even if some crime were committed against Hang Seng Bank in Hong Kong, that would be for Hong Kong authorities to prosecute. At the time he was detained, Zhou had not even set foot in Mainland China, so absolutely no crime could have been committed within their jurisdiction.
- 2.) The Hong Kong authorities are not prosecuting the case. No government outside of China is charging him with a crime. Just as no crime was committed inside of China, neither did Zhou commit any crime outside of China.
- 3.) Zhou Yongjun is not Wang Xingxiang. Even if the Wang letter was real and not manufactured by Chinese authorities, the matter pertains to someone else, not Zhou. China's authorities are using slimmer-than-slim evidence to press trumped-up charges against Zhou in the absence of legal jurisdiction over the allegation that they complain about.
- 4.) Zhou was held incommunicado, with no legal representation and no notification to his family, for the first seven months of his current incarceration. This violated a Chinese law that a prisoner's family must be notified within 24 hours that a prisoner is held.
- 5.) Zhou suffered mistreatment in prison and his family was subject to harrassment, threats, and intimidation.
- 6.) The family hired famous attorney Mo Shaoping who is known for defending Chinese dissidents. Then, the authorities threw Mo off the case, depriving Zhou of legal representation

and due process of law.

7.) I also object to how the U.S. State Department and the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama handled this case. The case is so thin as to be transparent. Instead of demanding Zhou's immediate release, the State Department made a mild bleating noise. They may have muttered something about how they hope Chinese authorities will handle this case fairly in accord with due process of law and international human rights norms — but, the spokesman might as well have said “Baaa” or “Moo.” Hillary Clinton herself, and Barack Obama likewise, said even less than that. We have at hand a case that shows the ineffectiveness of the U.S. State Department in defending human rights, and that displays how the U.S. executive branch is little more than a shoe shine boy for the Chinese regime.

8.) I object to how U.S. newscasts have shown no interest in this case, which is in fact Tiananmen Square persecution carried forward into the present day.

Under the Criminal Procedure Law of China, Zhou should have been given a trial by August 27, 2009. There is no word of any such proceeding having occurred in recent days; hence, the regime in China is once again violating its own laws in the handling of this case.

Pattern of crimes against humanity

This case displays flagrant and egregious abuse by the Chinese government of Zhou's human rights. It falls into a pattern of crimes against humanity by the Chinese government. Not only political prisoners, but religious prisoners and other prisoners of conscience are swept up by the Chinese government. And clearly, the pushing and shoving in the matter of 1989's student uprising and June 4 massacre continues.

The China Support Network demands the immediate release of Zhou Yongjun. We also insist that it is time for the Chinese government to say “uncle” to the pro-democracy movement, and to implement the reform suggestions that have appeared in Charter 08 (a tract published in 2008, attributed to Liu Xiaobo, another detainee whose release we also demand) and the writings of Xu Wenli (co-founder of the Chinese Democratic Party) and other top Chinese dissidents. Xu Wenli called for a “Future of China” conference to be held this fall in Beijing; the China Support Network echoes that call and encourages the Chinese leadership to enable and implement that conference. To enable the conference, dissidents abroad must be permitted to go home from exile. We also urge that step to be undertaken.

A public statement by John Kusumi, [China Support Network](#) director emeritus, September 1, 2009.