



**Amnesty International**

**Group 524**

**February 2025**



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## **Good News-Prisoner Releases China IAR Case Tunisia- Urgent Action**

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### **Welcome**

We hope the winter weather hasn't been too hard to deal with. (darn Punxsutawney Phil). The focus this month is on some good news and our continuing work for Yu Wensheng and an Urgent Action. We hope to see you at the Commons on February 18 at 6pm.

### **Prisoner Releases**

We have good news to share! Yu Wengsheng's wife **Xu Yan** has been released at the end of her sentence. See page 2. Also Dorgelesse Nguessan, whose case we wrote about in the 2022 Write for Rights action and Salma al-Shehab have been released. See page 3.

### **China Case**

We will continue our group's Individual At Risk case, **Yu Wensheng** in China. We will sign cards of solidarity and send our letters this month. An updated letter to the prosecutor is on page 5

### **Urgent Action**

A Tunisian human rights defender needs our support. Details are on page 4 and a letter on page 6.

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Amnesty International Group 524

Meeting Schedule: Third Tuesday of the month, at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Location: The Commons Residence Providence Heights  
9000 Babcock Blvd.



Contact John Belch ([joheb@aol.com](mailto:joheb@aol.com) or 412-766-1894) for more information on material in this mailing, or visit the Amnesty USA web site ([www.amnestyusa.org](http://www.amnestyusa.org)) and Group 39's Amnesty Pittsburgh web site ([www.amnestypgh.org](http://www.amnestypgh.org)).

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## IAR China: Activist Xu Yan released

On 13 January, activist Xu Yan was released after completing her prison sentence and returned to Beijing. Her son had been living alone under strict surveillance by the police and suffered from severe depression since his parents were arrested.

After Xu Yan's release, she was finally able to reunite with her son and accompany him to the hospital for a check-up. According to reports, Xu Yan has lost 30 pounds since her detention. During her imprisonment, she was subjected to torture and other forms of ill-treatment, which resulted in a herniated disc that compressed her nerves, causing her left leg to be completely immobile four times. After her release, she went to the hospital for a check-up.



Despite her release, based on the past record of brutal treatment of her family and other human rights defenders by the Chinese authorities, Amnesty is urging the Chinese authorities to:

- Ensure the full freedom of Xu Yan and her family, protecting them from any form of harassment or intimidation;
- Ensure that Xu Yan and her family receive appropriate medical treatment to restore their physical and mental health;
- Immediately and unconditionally release her husband, human rights lawyer **Yu Wensheng**.



## GOOD NEWS!

### Dorgelesse Nguessan Released!

*We wrote letters on her behalf in 2022 and 2024.*

Today we celebrate the release of Cameroonian hairdresser and single mother Dorgelesse Nguessan after more than four years of detention for peacefully demonstrating.

In September 2020, over 500 people, including Dorgelesse Nguessan, were arrested for participating in protests organized by the opposition party ‘Movement for the Renaissance of Cameroon’ (MRC) in several cities across the country.



Dorgelesse Nguessan, now 39 years old, had never been politically active yet joined a protest in Douala, having grown concerned about Cameroon’s economy. She was charged with “insurrection” and “public demonstrations”, among other charges, before being sentenced to five years in prison by a military court on 7 December 2021.

Amnesty International has denounced the arbitrary nature of her detention and called for her immediate and unconditional release. Dorgelesse was also among 10 cases featured in Amnesty International’s [2022 Write for Rights campaign](#) .

### Salma al-Shehab Released!

Responding to the release of Salma al-Shehab, a Saudi Arabian woman, who has spent more than four years imprisoned on terrorism-related charges for posting tweets in support of women’s rights, Amnesty International’s Middle East Researcher, Dana Ahmed, said:



“Salma al-Shehab’s ordeal in prison is finally over. For more than four years she has been subjected to one gross injustice after another including at one point being handed an egregious 34-year prison sentence for her social media posts. She spent almost 300 days in prolonged solitary confinement, was denied legal representation, and was then repeatedly convicted on terrorism charges and handed a decades-long sentence. All just because she tweeted in support of women’s rights and retweeted Saudi women’s rights activists. Saudi Arabia’s authorities must now ensure she is not subjected to a travel ban or any further punitive measures.

“Salma’s release would not have been possible without the tireless campaigning of human rights activists around the world.”



## **Individual At Risk Case**

Our group has been selected to work of **Yu Wensheng** of China. We will have more information and letter writing opportunities at the meeting.

### **URGENT ACTION**

#### **HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ON HUNGER STRIKE**

On January 14, 2025, the 14th anniversary of the Tunisian revolution, prominent human rights defender, Sihem Bensedrine, announced an open-ended hunger strike to protest her arbitrary detention since August 2024 solely for exercising her human rights.

On January 26, she was hospitalized due to health complications. On January 28, her lawyers learned that a Tunis investigative judge has extended her pre-trial detention for another four months on charges of “fraud”, “forgery”, and “abuse of official capacity” in relation to her role exposing alleged corruption as President of the Truth and Dignity Commission (IVD).

Authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Sihem Bensedrine, drop all the charges against her and end the misuse of the criminal justice system to target her.

Group 524  
February 2025



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Chief Procurator Zhu Yapin  
People's Procuratorate of Beijing Municipality  
No. 9 Jianguomen North Street  
Dongjeng District, Beijing, 100010  
People's Republic of China

Dear Chief Procurator Zhu:

On April 13, 2023, prominent human rights lawyer **Yu Wengsheng** and his wife Xu Yan were taken into police custody while en route to meet the delegation of the European Union to China in Beijing, where they were to attend a meeting with the EU's Ambassador to China, Jorge Toledo Albinana, and another senior EU official. On October 29, 2024, Suzhou Intermediate Court sentenced Yu Wengsheng to three years in prison and Xu Yan, to one year and nine months in prison for "inciting subversion of state power." Vague and overly broad charges such as these are often used in China to prosecute persons who were merely exercising their guaranteed human rights.

Yu is being held at a detention center in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province. His lawyers have been denied access to him and his case files. Without regular access to lawyers of his choice and verified information about his condition and wellbeing, Yu is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

According to a reliable source of information, Yu's case was transferred to the second branch of the Beijing municipal public prosecutor's office on December 6, 2023, but there has been no information about when the trial will take place.

On January 6, 2025, the Suzhou Intermediate People's Court rejected Yu Wengsheng's appeal against his three-year prison sentence for "inciting subversion of state power", passed down in a trial in October 2024. His wife, activist Xu Yan, was sentenced to one year and nine months in prison for the same offense and was released on January 13, 2025.

I urge you to take the following actions in this case:

- Immediately and unconditionally release **Yu Wengsheng**, unless there is sufficient, credible and admissible evidence that they have committed an internationally recognized criminal offense;
- pending his release, allow him regular access to his family and lawyers of his choice;
- pending his release ensure that his lawyers can exercise their rights of defense properly, including legal access to their file, etc., and are free from harassment and intimidation; and
- pending his release, ensure that he has access to adequate medical care, and is not subject to torture and other ill-treatment.
- Ensure the full freedom of **Xu Yan** and her family, protecting them from any form of harassment or intimidation.
- Ensure that **Xu Yan** and her family receive appropriate medical treatment to restore their physical and mental health.

Respectfully yours,

Group 524  
February 2025



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**His Excellency Kais Saied**  
President of the Republic of Tunisia  
Place du Gouvernement  
La Kabash, 1030  
Tunis  
Tunisia  
Email: [contact@carthage.tn](mailto:contact@carthage.tn)  
Twitter/X: [@TnPresidency](https://twitter.com/TnPresidency)

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern over the ongoing arbitrary detention of prominent human rights defender, **Sihem Bensedrine**, who has been held in arbitrary detention since her arrest on August 1, 2024. On January 14, 2025, Sihem announced an open-ended hunger strike to protest her arbitrary detention. She is detained solely in relation to her work as President of the Truth and Dignity Commission (IVD) from 2014 to 2018.

Since Sihem started her hunger strike, her health, which was already vulnerable due to pre-existing health conditions, has rapidly deteriorated.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Sihem Bensedrine, drop all the charges against her, and end the misuse of the criminal justice system to target her. Pending her release, she must be granted adequate access to qualified health professionals. Ensure she also has access to her family, lawyers and is held in conditions that comply with international standards.

Yours sincerely,

**CC: Tunisian Embassy in the United States**  
**Ambassador Mrs. Hanene Tajouri Bessassi**  
1515 Massachusetts Avenue,  
NW, Washington DC 20005  
Email: [AT.Washington@Tunisianembassy.org](mailto:AT.Washington@Tunisianembassy.org)