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CHINA | Imprisoned Christian Rights Activist Denied Medical Parole

Imprisoned Chinese housing rights activist, Ni Yulan, has been denied medical parole despite suffering from a number of serious health problems including an untreated thyroid tumor, her daughter said. Ni, who is a Christian, is serving a two-and-a-half-year sentence for “causing a disturbance.”

Ni began practicing law in 1986. She worked on a variety of rights-related cases, including a number relating to religious freedom. She began specializing in housing rights in 2001. In 2002, she was beaten and tortured for more than 50 hours while in police detention. As a result, she was permanently disabled and is unable to walk without crutches.

After her release, Ni continued to represent petitioners, despite having been disbarred, and was detained on several occasions between 2004 and 2008. On April 14, 2010, Ni was released but left homeless, living with her husband in a donated tent near Tiananmen Square. On April 7, 2011, Ni and her husband were detained by police and she was formally charged with "provoking trouble" in 2012.

In October 2012, Ni's family and lawyer submitted an application for medical parole which the authorities rejected in March 2013. On a visit to Ni in June, her daughter noticed that an untreated thyroid tumor detected in 2012 had swollen considerably.

In December 2011, Ni was awarded the Dutch Government's Tulip Award for Human Rights Defenders following her nomination by Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) and China Aid. Her daughter, who planned to attend the ceremony on her behalf, was stopped at the airport en route to Amsterdam and prevented from attending.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, “CSW is deeply concerned at the Chinese authorities' refusal to grant medical parole to Ni Yulan. CSW believes that Ni has been detained for her defense of basic rights and that the charges brought against Ni are unjust. In light of her deteriorating condition, CSW calls on the Chinese government to grant her access to appropriate medical care. In addition, we urge the government to review her case without further delay.”