



10.9.13

CHINA | Christian Rights Activist Released From Prison

Chinese human rights lawyer, Ni Yulan, was released from prison on Oct. 5 after completing a two-and-a-half year sentence. She is reported to be in ill-health as a result of an illness left untreated during her imprisonment.

Ni Yulan, a Christian activist and lawyer, was tried in 2011 and sentenced in 2012 to two years and eight months in prison for “fraud” and “creating a disturbance”. The fraud conviction was later dropped and her sentence was reduced by two months. Her husband was sentenced to two years.

Before she was disbarred, Ni worked on a variety of rights-related cases, including a number relating to religious freedom. From 2001 onwards, she specialized in housing rights, defending victims of forced eviction. In 2002, she was beaten and tortured for more than 50 hours while in police detention. As a result, she has been left permanently disabled and is unable to walk without crutches. After her release, Ni continued to represent petitioners, 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.

In 2012, Ni Yulan was awarded the Dutch Government’s Human Rights Defenders Tulip Prize after being nominated 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.

In July 2013, CSW reported that an application for medical parole submitted by Ni’s family and lawyer had been rejected. A tumor, detected in 2012, appears to have gone untreated, leaving Ni currently in poor health.

CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, “We welcome the release of activist Ni Yulan, who has suffered beatings, torture and imprisonment as a result of her peaceful defense of human rights in China. We urge the Chinese government to allow Ni and her family to live in peace, without any further harassment, intimidation or restriction. We further call on the Chinese

authorities to immediately begin an investigation into the possible use torture and ill-treatment during Ni's previous periods of detention."