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## Human Rights Now

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Secretary General, Kazuko Ito

### For Immediate Release

## **Criminal charges against Pu Zhiqiang and others: HRN, based on international human rights standard, urges an immediate release of those who were detained**

1. It was revealed on May 6<sup>th</sup> that the prominent human rights lawyer Pu Zhiqiang has been detained by the Beijing police on charges of “creating a disturbance”<sup>1</sup>. Together with a dozen other scholars, lawyers, and writers, Pu was attending a seminar in Beijing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, one month prior to the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre (back in 4<sup>th</sup> June 1989), requesting a probe into the truth of the incident.

The night of the 4<sup>th</sup> of May, Pu was taken away from his home by the Beijing police and on the 6<sup>th</sup> he was sent and criminally detained at Beijing Number 1 Detention Centre. It has been reported that many other seminar attendees were questioned and at least scholars Xu Youyu and Hao Jian and dissidents Hu Shigen and Liu Di, were also put under criminal detention on the same charge.

2. Pu is one of the most influential human rights lawyers in China. He has been dealing with a number of lawsuits related to human rights issues. He has constantly been urging the importance of rule of law and freedom of speech. He has also criticized the legality of a system of re-education through labour which the Chinese authority has abrogated at the end of last year.

Human Rights Now (HRN) has invited Pu for his lecture last February. Despite the heavy snow that day, a large audience was present and Pu’s unflinching faith and activism aroused great sympathy amongst them. Pu has been working with tremendous effort for a realization of a society and a nation based on rule of law.

The detention of Pu and others cannot be tolerated based on an internationally established human rights standard such as securing freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. Even Chapter II Article 35 of the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China provides that “Citizens of the People’s Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration.” Restraining intellectuals, let alone criminal detentions, is extremely regrettable since it reveals not only the Chinese government’s inaction in inspecting human rights violations but also indicates its active suppression of discussion within civil societies.

3. For the Chinese government, HRN requests to release the attendees of May 3<sup>rd</sup> seminar including Pu, based on an

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/05/06/china-free-activists-held-marking-massacre>,  
<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20140506p2g00m0in064000c.html>

international human rights standard. HRN also calls for securing the rights which are established under international human rights laws, including: securing the health of Pu as well as Xu Youyu who have diabetes; humanitarian treatment against all the detainees of this incident; interviews with lawyers and so on.