

**Exposing CPC Tyranny and Running to the Free World:  
My Statement on Leaving China**

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In the afternoon of January 11, 2012 in the Beijing airport, my family of three boarded a plane bound for the United States. We were escorted from our home to the boarding gate by five state security officers who then demanded to take a photo with me, after which they stalked off.

The choice to leave China was a difficult one for me to make. It also took a very long time.

Since I published *Fire and Ice* in 1998 when I was still in university, I have been closely watched by the Central Propaganda Department and police. After receiving an M.A. from Peking University in 2000, I was unable to find a job due to governmental interference and had to make a living as a “not-free writer.” During the Jiang Zemin era [1989-2002], I had been able to publish some of my works in China—there was still a certain space for free speech in China. After Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao took power in 2004, I was totally blocked. Since that time, no media in mainland China would print a single word by me, and articles by others which mentioned my name would be deleted. Though I was physically in China, I became an “exile at heart” and a “non-existent person” in the public space.

Despite that, I still did not stop writing. As an independent intellectual, I continued to criticize the CPC's autocratic system and became good friends with Liu Xiaobo, with whom I fought side by side. I have published fifteen or so books and over a thousand articles overseas. For this, I have been repeatedly harassed—summoned, placed under house arrest, threatened—and things worsened over time. In those years, during my visits to the U.S. and Europe, my friends would try to persuade me to stay, but I would answer, “So long as my life is not in danger, I will not leave China.” As a writer, freedom of speech and the freedom to publish are most fundamental. As a Christian, freedom of religion is essential. As an ordinary person, the freedom to live without fear is indispensable.

But I lost these most basic freedoms on October 8, 2010, after they announced that my best friend Liu Xiaobo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; illegal house arrests, torture, surveillance, tracking, and being taken on “trips” became part of my everyday life. After over a year of inhumane treatment and painful struggle, I had no choice but to leave China, to make a complete break from the fascist, barbaric, and brutal regime of the Communist Party of China.

This is what I have experienced over the past year: On October 8, 2010, the day that the Nobel Peace Prize for Liu Xiaobo was announced, I was on a visit to the U.S. I had given a speech at University of Southern California that day and heard the news that night. I was immensely excited and encouraged at the time, and immediately began preparations to return to China. Some friends warned me that the government must be in a rage from the humiliation, and, as a result, the human rights situation in China would worsen rapidly, and tried to persuade me to remain in the U.S. for a while. But for a decade, Liu Xiaobo had been my brother and closest friend; when he was the president of the Independent Chinese PEN Center, I was vice president; and I had personally experienced almost all of the human rights activities that he participated in. After Liu Xiaobo was arrested in December 2008, I was authorized by his wife, Liu Xia, to write his biography. That was why I urgently wanted to return to China and continue with my interviews of Liu's friends and family, so that I could complete this important work as soon as possible.

On October 13, five days after the Nobel Peace Prize was announced, I returned to China. As soon as I stepped off the plane, I was put under house arrest by Beijing's state security officers. Four plainclothes policemen watched the entrance to my home 24 hours a day, even pressing a table against the main door and installing six cameras and infrared detectors at the front and back of my house. They surrounded us like a dragnet, as if facing a formidable foe.

For the first few days my wife was still able to go to work. Liu Xia had asked Liu Xiaobo's brother and my wife to buy some clothing and food for Liu Xiaobo. Unfortunately, one day the police found a note from Liu Xia to my wife when searching Liu's brother. After that, my wife's mobile phone was abruptly shut down and she was similarly put under house arrest round-the-clock and not allowed to go to work.

One day, my wife got sick with a fever of over 40 °C [104 °F]; though she was nearly unconscious, the police would not allow her to go to the hospital. A state security officer from the Chaoyang

District Public Security Bureau named Hao Qi (郝琪) threatened viciously, “Even if you die at home, I wouldn't let you out. If you die, someone from the higher up will come and deal with it!” Extremely anxious, I turned to the Internet for help, and a kind friend saw my call for help on Twitter and called an ambulance. But the police still blocked the medics at the door. Thankfully, the doctor persisted and eventually they were allowed in to take my wife's temperature. The doctor said that her temperature was dangerously high and that she must go to the hospital for IV treatment. After several rounds of negotiations, my wife was finally taken to the hospital in the ambulance in early morning. Six police officers followed her closely, but I was not allowed to go with my wife.

The situation only continued to worsen. At the beginning of November, my phone, Internet, and mobile services were all cut off, so no one could contact us; my wife and I were at home in a state of total isolation. The everyday items that we needed, we could only write them down on a piece of paper and the state security officers would buy them for us, and then we would pay them. We did not know anything that was happening outside. We could not contact our parents or our child. This continued day after day, and we did not know when it would end and felt that it was even worse than being in prison. In prison, you have a specific prison term; you have the right to family visits; and each day you are let out for exercise. But we had basically fallen into an endless black hole, and every day felt like a year. This continued for almost two months.

December 9, the day before the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, was the darkest moment in my life. Just after 1 p.m., Wang Chunhui (王春辉), a state security officer from Chaoyang District whom I had been in contact with regularly, knocked on my door with Deputy Director Ma of the Dougezhuang substation—my local police station—and said, “Our boss wants to talk to you.” I did not suspect at all that this was a trap; I put on a coat over my house clothes and went with them.

I realized as soon as I went downstairs that something was up. Over a dozen plainclothes officers and several cars were waiting there. Immediately, two burly men charged at me, slapping the glasses from my face and covering my head with a black hood, and then forcing me into the back of a car. The car left at once, and two plainclothes officers sat on either side of me, twisting my hands, not allowing me to move.

After more than an hour, we arrived at some secret location. One of the state security officers wedged my head under his armpit and dragged me into a room. They ordered me to sit on a chair and

not move—if I did, they'd beat me. I was wearing the black hood the entire time, so breathing was very difficult.

At around 10 p.m., they removed the black hood. Just as I was taking a breath, several of the plainclothes officials came at me again and began beating me in the head and the face without explanation. They stripped off all my clothes and pushed me, naked, to the ground, and kicked me maniacally. They also had a camera and were taking pictures as I was being beaten, saying with glee that they would post the naked photos online.

They forced me to kneel and slapped me over a hundred times in the face. They even forced me to slap myself. They would be satisfied only when they heard the slapping sound, and laughed madly. They also kicked me in the chest and then stood on me after I had fallen to the ground. One of my ribs hurt for a month, as if broken; even bending to get out of bed was very difficult.

They forced me to spread out my hands and bent my fingers backwards one by one. They said, “You've written many articles attacking the Communist Party with these hands, so we want to break your fingers one by one.” They also brought lit cigarette butts near my face, causing my skin to burn with pain, and they insultingly blew their cigarette smoke in my face.

They verbally abused me nonstop with vulgar language, calling me a traitor to the state and to the Chinese people, and trash. They also insulted my friends and family. Then they forced me to use their words to insult myself; if I did not, they would beat and kick me harder.

The head state security officer announced, “There are three charges against you: one, you took an active part over the past ten years in all of the reactionary things that Liu Xiaobo had done; you both were tools of imperialism used to subvert China. Two, in a book you published in Hong Kong, *China's Best Actor: Wen Jiabao* (《中国影帝温家宝》), you viciously attacked a leader of the Party and state; you did not listen to any of our good advice, so we can only use violence against you. Three, you're even writing Liu Xiaobo's biography; if you publish this book, we're definitely going to send you to jail.”

He went on, “If the order comes from above, we can dig a pit to bury you alive in half an hour, and no one on earth would know. Right now, foreigners are awarding Liu Xiaobo the Nobel Peace Prize,

humiliating our Party and government. We'll pound you to death to avenge this." He added, "As far as we, state security, can tell, there are no more than 200 intellectuals in the country who oppose the Communist Party and are influential. If the central authorities think that their rule is facing a crisis, they can capture them all in one night and bury them alive."

I do not know for how many hours the physical and verbal abuse continued. Then I fainted and my body would not stop twitching. They drove me to a hospital to try to rescue me. At that time, I was largely unconscious and only heard hazily that this was a hospital in Changping in the outskirts of Beijing. I heard the doctor say that I was severely injured, that they didn't have the wherewithal to treat me, and that the police had to try at a larger hospital in the city. The police said, "Then you send him in an ambulance; we'll pay." The doctor said, "Our ambulance doesn't have the equipment he needs. You need to immediately get one from the city that has emergency care equipment, otherwise he won't be saved."

Soon, an ambulance from the city arrived and took me to a hospital for Party elites, Beijing Hospital. The police gave me the fake name of Li Li (李力) and told the hospital, "This man is having epileptic seizures."

I was wrestled from the brink of death after several hours of emergency treatment. Early the next morning, a doctor came to my room on his rounds and asked about my condition. Just as I struggled to say, "They beat me," a policeman beside me quickly pulled the doctor aside. Another leaned close and hissed into my ear, "If you talk this kind of nonsense again, we'll pull out all the tubes from your body and let you die."

In the afternoon of December 10, they said that I was out of danger, so they checked me out of the hospital and took me to the hotel next door, where I rested for the afternoon. That night they told me that their boss wanted to see me, so they took me to another suite. The official who came to see me said his name was Yu and he was the deputy director of the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau and head of the State Security Brigade. He said deceitfully, "What happened yesterday was a misunderstanding—my subordinates' mistakes. Don't tell anyone outside about this." For the next few days, I stayed in a place on the outskirts of Beijing that they had arranged. There they interrogated me every day about what I had done over the past few years, what I had written. They forced me to write a statement of promises, including not meeting with foreign reporters, not

accepting interviews, not contacting anyone from the foreign embassies, and not criticizing by name the nine members of the Standing Committee [of the CPC's Politburo] in my articles.

On December 13, 2010, I was released. For the following two weeks, my wife and I were able to leave our home, though we had to inform the state security officers stationed downstairs on a 24-hour watch where we were going and when we would return home. At the end of December, I went to my hometown in Sichuan, and they escorted me to the airport. I stayed there at my former home for four months. While I was there, state security officers would come by every half month or so to interrogate me about what I was up to. Someone who said his name was Jiang and that he was a department head, another person who said his name was Zhang and that he was a section chief, and some other junior officers—they were the “team” in charge of my case.

For the following year, at any “sensitive moment,” such as a holiday, a memorial day, an opening day for a major governmental meeting, or a day when foreign dignitaries would be visiting, I would be illegally placed under house arrest in my home or asked to leave the city on a trip. This happened nearly every few days, so for nearly half the time I lost my freedom totally or partially. I was also forced to stop publishing articles overseas almost entirely, because every time I published an article, state security would come to my door at once with threats. There are three people in my family, but we were forced to live in three separate places: I was put under surveillance away from home; my wife worked in Beijing; and my son was being cared for by my parents in my hometown in Sichuan. Soon my wife lost her job because state security police put pressures on her company three times, and this was not the first time this kind of thing occurred. Most of the time, I was also unable to go to church or attend Bible study meetings and could not regularly practice my faith as a Christian. To me, this was an extremely painful thing.

During this time of great difficulty, when even the basic way of life could not continue, when the family could not live together, when I lost my freedom to write totally, when personal safety could not be guaranteed, and after persisting for 14 years as an intellectual in China speaking the truth, I was forced to make the decision to leave China.

However, in summer 2011, when I made the request to go abroad with state security authorities, they informed me that their superiors would not permit me and my wife to leave the country. We talked back and forth until finally I was told that they would consider my request after Christmas. After Christmas, I bought plane tickets to the U.S. and told the state security police that I would go no

matter what, and if they detained me at the airport, I would do everything in my power to resist and tell everything. They said that they would do their best to get their superiors to remove the ban on my wife and me to leave the country.

On January 9, two days before I was to leave for the U.S., Jiang, the department head at the Beijing State Security Brigade, informed me the new deputy director of the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau (and head of the State Security Brigade) wanted to see me. On January 10, they took me to a suite in a hotel. The official said his name was Liu and was the successor to Yu, the official I had met previously. He told me to write a letter of guarantee, and then they would consider my request. He said, "China is growing stronger by the day, while the U.S. is getting weaker by the day, so why go there?" Would he dare question Vice President Xi Jinping about his sending his daughter to Harvard to study?

After finishing the letter of guarantee that I was forced to write, I was approved to go. This senior official cautioned me, "Do not think that you'll be free once you get to the U.S. If you say or do something that you shouldn't, you won't be able to return home. You still have family here in China, and won't you want to come back to visit them? You need to continue to be careful in what you say and do." That a regime could go so far as to use withholding a citizen's constitutionally-conferred right to enter and leave the country as a threat only shows its hypocrisy and impotence.

And that is how, on January 11, my family boarded a plane to the U.S. under the tight monitoring of state security officers.

I am now in the United States, a free country. Here, I solemnly state that [what I said in] the interrogations and the letter of guarantee that I wrote were produced under torture and coercion, and against my will, and they are completely null and void.

I further state that I shall make public to the international community all that I have endured over this past year and that I shall file a complaint with the United Nations Human Rights Council and other international agencies. I shall continue to criticize the Communist Party dictatorship in my writings. This increasingly fascist, barbaric, and brutal regime is the greatest threat to the free world and the greatest threat to all freedom-loving people. I vow to continue to oppose the tyranny of the Communist Party of China.

After arriving in the U.S., my main writing plans for the near future are: publish the Chinese edition of Liu Xiaobo's biography two months from now and various foreign language editions afterwards. I began writing the biography in early 2009, and it is the only biography of Liu Xiaobo authorized by Liu Xia. I hope, through this biography, to comprehensively introduce Liu Xiaobo's life, philosophy, and creativity, and give readers around the world, including those inside China, a deeper understanding of the Nobel Peace Prize laureate. I will use this book as an opportunity to call on people on every possible occasion to continue to pay close attention to Liu Xiaobo's and Liu Xia's fates so that they can be freed as soon as possible.

I also plan to publish a new book, *Hu Jintao: Cold-Blooded Tyrant* (《冷血暴君胡锦涛》), within the next six months. This will be the companion book to *China's Best Actor: Wen Jiabao* and will be a eulogy for Hu Jintao as he exits the stage of history. *Hu Jintao* will be a comprehensive analysis of Hu's governance and provide analysis and commentary on the major features of the Hu era, including "harmonious society," "the rise of a great nation," "China model," and "stability maintenance." It will enable readers in China and beyond as well as the international community to see the truth behind China's economic growth—reckless autocracy, rampant corruption, deterioration of human rights, damage to the environment, moral decline—and that Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao are sinners of history whose sins cannot be forgiven.

After I left China, many friends there showed sympathy for and understanding of my decision and offered me encouragement and hope. I am deeply touched and encouraged by this. In the free world, I can access even more information, so my writing and thinking not only will not regress, rather, they will advance and improve. I believe that I will continue to write good works that will not betray the expectations of my friends.

On the other hand, I will put forth my voice on the broader international platform on behalf of the struggle for democracy and freedom in China. In particular, I shall urge the international community to pay more attention to the situation of those deprived of their liberty, e.g., Liu Xiaobo, Liu Xia, Chen Guangcheng, Gao Zhisheng, Hu Jia, and Fan Yafeng, as well as those relatively unknown, such as Liu Xianbin, Chen Wei, Chen Xi, and Yang Tianshui. I have already attained my hard-won freedom and security; to speak out for my compatriots who have neither freedom nor security is a responsibility and a mission that I cannot shirk. Be bound with those who are bound, and mourn with those who mourn—this too is God's teaching to Christians.

I am a true patriot. There is a line in *Macbeth* that goes, “I think our country sinks beneath the yoke; / It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash / Is added to her wounds.” I worry and suffer about this. I will make exposing and criticizing the tyrannical rule of the CPC my life’s cause. For each day that this government that has robbed and plundered China’s riches and enslaved and crippled the Chinese people does not fall, I will not stop exposing and criticizing it. I further believe that in the near future I will return to a China that has achieved democracy and freedom. Then, our lives will be like those described in the Bible, “[Behold,] how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” And those kleptocrats and traitors who wrought tyranny, from Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao to every wicked state security officer, will be put on trial to await an even more shameful end than that of Saddam Hussein, Hosni Mubarak, and Muammar al-Gaddafi. Let us work together so that that day may come as soon as possible.