

Beijing Artist and Falun Gong Practitioner Xu Na Handed 8-Year Sentence for Reporting on COVID-19 Outbreak

[visiontimes.com/2022/01/20/beijing-artist-and-falun-gong-practitioner-xu-na-handed-8-year-sentence-for-reporting-on-covid-19-outbreak.html](https://www.visiontimes.com/2022/01/20/beijing-artist-and-falun-gong-practitioner-xu-na-handed-8-year-sentence-for-reporting-on-covid-19-outbreak.html)



Beijing artist and Falun Gong practitioner Xu Na was sentenced to eight years in prison for reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. (Image: via The Epoch Times/Screenshot)

Well known Falun Gong practitioner and Beijing-based painter Xu Na has been sentenced to eight years in prison on Jan. 16 after a sham trial — the latest round of abuse she has endured in the 20 years of persecution that saw her lose her husband to the Chinese communist regime.

Xu, 54, was accused of “illegally” taking pictures and videos that reported on the initial outbreak of COVID-19 in China. She was first arrested on that charge in Beijing on July 19, 2020 along with a dozen other Falun Gong adherents over unknown charges.

Along with the sentence, Xu was ordered to pay 20,000 yuan (about US\$ 3100) and deprived of political rights for one year.

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Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is a Chinese traditional spiritual discipline practiced by tens of millions of people in China and around the world since its introduction to the public in 1992.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) began a massive campaign to eradicate the popular faith in July 1999, incarcerating millions of people over the following decades. Thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have since died from torture and abuse, with the number still on the rise.

Heavy punishment for a nonexistent crime

“Others are sentenced to five years, and some are sentenced to four years. This time the sentence is heavier,” Xu’s original defense attorney Liang Xiaojun said. “The court called to inform us that the sentence has not been received yet. The problems I think we have to wait until the verdict is received before we can give a concrete answer.”

Liang received notice on Dec. 21 that his license to practice law was being revoked due to his work defending Falun Gong practitioners and other marginalized groups in China.

Authorities said that he had “vilified and discredited the fundamental system and principles established by the constitution,” describing his behavior as egregious and not in keeping with Party policy.

“There are many different takes on why I was disbarred. Some say it was because of the cases I represented: after all, the cases of the artist Xu Na and 11 others are still in progress, and Dr. Xu Zhiyong is about to go to trial,” Liang said on Jan. 6 prior to Xu’s sentencing.

The CCP has been known to arrest, imprison and even torture human rights lawyers and activists in the country, as well as imposing arbitrary restrictions on freedom of movement – including both domestic and international travel bans.

Recently, renowned human rights attorneys Tang Jitian and Guo Feixiong both reportedly “disappeared” after being disbarred years ago for their activist work defending disenfranchised members in Chinese society.

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[Renowned Chinese Lawyer Tang Jitian Disappears After Years of Standing Up for Falun Gong, Other Persecuted Groups](#)

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Activists in both China and abroad have also pointed out that Xu's arrest is another example of the CCP's clamp down on human rights and coincides with the upcoming Winter Olympics, scheduled to begin in Beijing on Feb. 4.

Wu Shaoping, a Chinese human rights lawyer now living in the United States, called upon the International Olympic Committee to "open its eyes to the human rights situation under the CCP's rule. They shouldn't keep collaborating with the Communist Party, this is a shame for the IOC," he told the Chinese-language edition of The Epoch Times.

Wu also called upon the international community to hold Beijing responsible for its human rights violations: "The countries of the world should boycott the Beijing Winter Olympics, as these Games go against the internationally recognized principle of human rights."

Xu Na's case "shows that the CCP has always been covering up the pandemic and preventing the people from spreading true information about the contagion. In fact, the Party's doing this doesn't help stop the epidemic."

He believes that Xu was found guilty of "undermining the implementation of law" and given such a lengthy sentence solely because of her adherence to Falun Gong. "This kind of verdict is an obvious violation of the law," Wu said. "Xu Na should have been found innocent to begin with. Not only is she not guilty, she has done a service [to the public.]"

Repeatedly harassed for over two decades

Xu and her husband, folk singer Yu Zhou, were among 13 Falun Gong practitioners who peacefully demonstrated against media slander near the Zhongnanhai residences of Chinese leaders in Beijing on April 25, 1999 – this protest then led to the start of the persecution in July of that year.



(L) Yu Zhou was a well known folk singer in Beijing and was persecuted to death in 2008 for upholding his faith in Falun Gong. (R) his wife Xu Na was sentenced to eight years in prison for reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic in China.

The couple was again arrested in August 1999 and detained for more than 40 days in a state facility. In 2001, Xu was once again detained and sentenced to five years in prison for upholding her faith in Falun Gong. She was released in 2006 but continued to remain under police watch.

At the end of January 2008, disaster struck when Xu and Yu were both arrested for having a Falun Gong book in their car. While being detained for 11 days, Yu was tortured to death by Chinese authorities. He was only 42 years old.

During this time, Xu was illegally sentenced to 3 years in prison and did not get to see her husband before his death at the hands of those designed to protect them.

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