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WANG WUQIN (王武琴) AND ELECTED VILLAGE LEADER GAO QIANG (高强) CONVICTED AFTER A TRIAL RIFE WITH VIOLATIONS

-- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE --

CHINESE URGENT ACTION WORKING GROUP (人权卫士紧急救援协会) -- Beijing, China, April 1, 2011

– After a trial that has been ongoing since November 11, 2010, Wang Wuqin and Gao Qiang, of Ganzhai village (Dazhao township) outside Xi'an city, Shaanxi province, was today convicted to 1 year and three months and 2 years of imprisonment respectively, on charges of 'Picking Quarrels and Provoking Troubles'.

Gao, a popular and re-elected local village leader, and Wang Wuqin, a woman's rights activist, were detained after organizing a protest of February 27, 2010 against a local brick kiln company that were not paying out rent to village land it has been using in its operation. A gang of hired thugs attacked the protesters and broke up the gathering. Gao has become unpopular with the local party committee after continuously addressing the concerns of the villagers, and we strongly believe, based on the charges, and the many irregularities in the legal process, that this has been done in order to depose Gao from his position.

The case was sent back to the Police by the Procuratorate for further evidence gathering, and the trial has been adjourned a total of 4 times, always when the defense counsel were about to present counter evidence and arguments. The lawyer of Gao, Dong Qianrong (董前勇) was physically attacked by court personnel on December 6, 2010 and Wang's lawyer Wang Quanzhang (王全章) was threatened by the Prosecutor when delivering his final pleading on January 20, 2011.

During the trial (December 5), another four villagers who partook in the protest were detained. An appeal is being considered. Verdict was, according to the judge, to be delivered before Spring Festival, at which point the process had already dragged on beyond the limits established by the Chinese legal system, but the date for announcing the verdict was continuously postponed even after that, until April 1.

– END OF PRESS RELEASE –

More information can be found at '<http://China-Action.org>'

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ABOUT THE CHINESE URGENT ACTION WORKING GROUP

The Chinese Urgent Action Working Group (人权卫士紧急救援协会) undertakes direct interventions on behalf of Human Rights defenders in distress through investigations, public advocacy, communication with international institutions and organizations, and through providing legal aid. The group is located inside mainland China, and was formed as a response to increased persecution of Human Rights defenders during 2008 and 2009. The organization also regularly releases reports and background briefs on issues concerning Human Rights, and especially Human Rights defenders, in China.

关于人权卫士紧急救援协会

人权卫士紧急救援会从事的是代表置身于危难中的人权卫士而进行的研究调查，公共宣传，与国际机构和组织交流，提供法律援助等的直接干预。该组织位于中国大陆，其成立的初衷是对2008年北京奥运会的举办而造成的对人权维护者更多迫害的一个回应。该组织还定期就中国人权维护者的问题发布报告和背景简要。

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