

University Senate

Proposed. Draft

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE RELEASE
OF FORMER VISITING SCHOLAR JAMYANG KYI FROM DETENTION IN TIBET (CHINA)
REAFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY
TO THE RIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND DEFENSE OF
CULTURAL IDENTITY

WHEREAS the Tibetan writer, musician and women's rights expert, Jamyang Kyi, was detained from her workplace on April 1st; with no information since as to her whereabouts, her welfare or any charges against her

WHEREAS Columbia feels a special connection to her as the first Modern Tibetan Studies Visiting Scholar at the University in 2006, and as a continuing source of support for its scholars and students since her return

WHEREAS it is known that she had no connection to any protests or acts of violence and has been detained solely for reasons relating to the pursuit of knowledge, the defense of cultural identity and the expression of ideas

WHEREAS Columbia University is dedicated to the free expression of ideas and open debate, the respect for diversity of opinions and beliefs, and encouragement of the defense of cultural identity by all peoples

BE IT RESOLVED that the University Senate expresses regret over the detention and disappearance of Jamyang Kyi and any others similarly detained solely for exercising those rights;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University Senate requests the immediate release of Jamyang Kyi without punishment, and reaffirms the University's ongoing commitment to supporting the intellectual and cultural rights of its community of scholars, both former and present.

Proponent:

RATIONALE FOR REQUESTING THE RELEASE OF FORMER VISITING SCHOLAR JAMYANG
KYI FROM DETENTION IN TIBET (CHINA)

AND REAFFIRMATION

OF COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING THE RIGHTS OF THE COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS

It is proposed that the University Senate reaffirm Columbia University's commitment to defending the moral and intellectual rights of its scholars and students to pursue their studies, express views and support their cultural identities without hindrance, within the limits prescribed by international law.

Columbia has an important role as a leading institution with global standing to use its voice where the rights of former or current scholars and students are being threatened. Its silence in a situation where a member of its own scholarly community has been detained without due cause renders it liable to accusations of compliance or neglect.

Jamyang Kyi, who works as an editor at a Tibetan language television news station, became a prolific writer on Tibetan women's issues immediately after her return to Tibet (China) following her visit to Columbia. She gave lectures and a concert during her time as a Visiting Scholar at Columbia, her first and only trip abroad. Columbia is the only international institution to have links with her. She met with Columbia students in Tibet to help them with their studies ten days before her disappearance.

She is believed to have been detained because of her writing about Tibetan culture or Tibetan women, and has been questioned about those she met and conversed with while at Columbia. No news has been heard of her since April 5.

Public appeals for her release have been made by Amnesty International, Reporters without Borders, the Committee for the Protection of Journalists, Human Rights in China, the International Federation for Human Rights, and International Pen. A statement is forthcoming from Human Rights Watch. A website calling for her release is being established by a Columbia student group. The case has been profiled in the International Herald Tribune (April 15), USA Today (April 15), the New York Times (April 18), the Washington Post (May 5), and others