

2011 Annual Report
of the
COMMITTEE OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

During 2010, the Committee of Concerned Scientists continued to advocate on behalf of scientists, academics, and their organizations. We wrote in concern for over 35 individuals or organizations, located in 15 countries. We generally addressed our letters to the heads of state, as well as to the ministries or local authorities with jurisdiction over the case when we were able to identify them. We contacted the ambassador of the country involved, as well as the US embassy or the US State Department where we could hope for their assistance.

The following summaries will give you an idea of the grave risks our colleagues are running in exercising their human rights, as well as of the rare victories we achieved on their behalf. Even as we write, some of the countries involved in our efforts are reverberating with unprecedented demands by their own populations for greater respect for their human rights.

BAHRAIN

Professor **Abdul Jalil Al-Sigace**, who taught mechanical engineering at the University of Bahrain, was arrested upon his return from the United Kingdom, where he had addressed the House of Lords concerning human rights in Bahrain. Al-Sigace also directed the Human Rights Bureau of the Haq Movement for Civil Liberties and Democracy, an opposition Bahraini political movement. We wrote to protest his arrest at the airport on August 13, 2010 and detention without charges, as well as his inability to get medical treatment. Dr. Al-Sigace suffers from polomyelitis. According to Amnesty International, he was eventually charged with sedition and he faces the death penalty for expressing his views, in violation of Article 19 of the UN International Convention on civil and political rights, to which Bahrain is a party.

BELGIUM

We requested Belgian authorities to investigate allegations of police brutality during the arrest in Brussels of Professor **Marianne Maeckelbergh**, a US citizen and a Professor of Cultural Anthropology at the University of Leyden. Her work focuses on immigration policy and practices. Professor Maeckelbergh was photographing arrests of activists during an immigration protest called the “No Borders” camp. Belgian police allegedly dragged her by her hair, chained her to a radiator and kicked and spat on her, as well as threatening her with sexual assault. After confiscating her camera and ID card, the police released her.

In response, Belgium’s Prime Minister Yves Leterme wrote to CCS on November 10, 2010, that he was deeply concerned about the allegations reported and that the Belgian Committee P, the Permanent Oversight Committee of Police Services,

has started an independent investigation of alleged use of police brutality againsts border camp demonstrators.

BULGARIA

We joined European science organizations and individual scientists in protesting proposed further budget Government cuts to the **Bulgarian Academy of Science** and its elimination. This independent, 141-year old institution contributes almost 60% of the country's science research and works with many international organizations, according to its defenders. The Bulgarian Parliament was set to review legislation that would dismantle the Academy into separate institutes under government control. The Academy alleged that the reason for this move was to nationalize and sell the property of the Academy, on the model of a similar nationalization in Georgia. In our appeals to the Prime Minister and the Chair of Parliament, we invoked Article 15 of the International Convention on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights (to which Bulgaria is a signatory), recognizing the right of everyone to the benefits of science and of international contacts and cooperation in science.

CHINA

In the weeks after the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to human rights activist **Liu Xiaobo**, who sponsored Charter 08, calling on China to respect its human rights obligation, and whose arrest and detention we had protested, the Chinese government arrested or put under house arrest many of Xiaobo's supporters and signatories of the Charter. Among these were **Ding Zilin**, a former professor of philosophy and spokesperson for the Tiananmen Mother, and her husband **Jiang Peikun**. Their associates were unable to contact them after October 8, 2010, although they were not charged or accused of any crime. A number of other human rights advocates were placed under house arrest or restricted in their movements or communications. We particularly protested the house arrest of **Liu Xia**, the wife of Liu Xiaobo, and urged the government to respect Chinese and international law and to suspend these arbitrary arrests.

Good news: On December 20, Ding Zilin told friends and supporters that she and her husband were able to return to their home in Beijing. "The two of us vanished from the face of the Earth, our voices silenced and all contact with relatives, fellow activists, and friends at home and abroad cut off," they wrote in an e-mailed account of their experience. Ding described how for most of the time, she and her husband were confined to a house they had built in Wuxi, in Jiangsu province, and prohibited from returning to Beijing by the Wuxi office of the State Security Bureau. Their computer was seized and their telephone lines were cut, and the few family members allowed to visit them were forced to sign a "promise" not to provide them with means of communication or to reveal their whereabouts, they said. During one confrontation with security officers, Ding fainted and later went to a local hospital suffering from a memory lapse. But the

security officials rejected the elderly couple's repeated requests to return to Beijing for medical treatment.

According to press reports, most activists arrested in connection with the Nobel award were released at about the same time. However, **Liu Xia**, the wife of Liu Xiaobo, remains under house arrest. We will continue to protest her detention.

We wrote in grave concern about imprisoned human rights activist **Hu Jia**, who has served two years and three months of his sentence, which punished him for peacefully exercising his rights. Hu Jia has cirrhosis of the liver and lately his condition has deteriorated. Hu Jia, his wife Zeng Jinyang and his mother Feng Juan applied to the Beijing Municipal Prison Administration Bureau for medical parole on April 7, 2010, Jia's mother was willing to be a guarantor and will be responsible for covering all the living and medical expenses during Hu Jia's medical parole. We strongly urged prison and legal authorities to grant Hu Jia's application for medical parole under these tragic circumstances.

We wrote in concern about Chinese American geologist **Xue Feng**. Xue, after working for a US energy-consulting firm, was sentenced to eight years in prison for trying to buy a database that reportedly showed the location and condition of oil and wells belonging to China's government-owned National Petroleum Corporation. Previously, Xue had been jailed and tortured, including burning on his arms with cigarettes and bashed in the head. His arrest two and a half years ago, torture, and long sentence violate the most basic human rights of individuals under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to which China is a signatory. We urged the Chinese government to immediately release Xue Feng on humanitarian grounds and allow him to return to the United States.

Good news: President Barack Obama raised Xue's case at his Beijing summit with Chinese President Hu Jintao in the latest and highest-level intervention, said a White House official on the trip, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information.

We wrote to Google's CEO Eric Schmidt and its co-founder Sergey Brin to support **Google Corporation's** unwillingness to comply with Internet censorship in China in view of attacks on Google e-mail systems in China that compromised the privacy of communications by human rights activists. We gave examples from the work of CCS of how peaceful expressions in China of almost any political views that the authorities characterize as subversive have been punished by long prison sentences. We applauded Google's efforts to avoid giving support to suppression of the rights of the Chinese people.

Good news: In January, 2010, Google issued the following statement: "Earlier today we stopped censoring our search services—Google Search, Google News, and Google Images—on Google.cn. Users visiting Google.cn are now being redirected to Google.com.hk, where we are offering uncensored search in simplified Chinese,

specifically designed for users in mainland China and delivered via our servers in Hong Kong.”

On October 16, 2009, Sugian Intermediate People's Court in Jiangsu Province sentenced **Guo Quan**, former Nanjing Normal University associate professor and former member of China Democratic League (one of the eight state-approved "democratic" parties) to ten years in prison for "subversion of state power." Between 2007 and 2008, Guo Quan published articles and an open letter on the Internet covering social problems in China such as those of laid-off workers demobilized military cadres, and peasants who lost their land. "This sentence is indefensible from a legal perspective, because using peaceful and rational means to petition cannot be considered 'subversion of state power.'" according to Guo Quan's lawyer. In 2007, Guo Quan had been fired by the university from his position as associate professor. We strongly urged Chinese authorities to reverse the sentence against Guo Quan and to order reinstatement in his academic position at Nanjing Normal University.

A signer of Charter 08, Professor of economics **Wang Quingying**, was forced to resign under pressure from the authorities of Huali College at Guangdong University of Technology. Wang had participated in a picnic with other dissidents and had worn a t-shirt bearing the slogan "One Party Dictatorship is a Disaster." CCS wrote to the educational authorities protesting his firing in retaliation for his peaceful expression of opinion.

Cui Weiping, a professor at the Beijing Film Academy, had planned to lecture at Harvard University and attend a conference sponsored by the Association of Asian Studies but the director of her school told her that she had been forbidden to travel. We urged the Chinese authorities to drop all travel restrictions against Cui Weiping, in accordance with Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which China is a signatory.

We wrote to support House Resolution 953, introduced by Congressman James McGovern of Massachusetts, which calls for the US to raise the issue of **Uighur** rights with Chinese officials, for an independent investigation in the July crackdown on Uighur protesters, as well as for the establishment of a US consulate in Urumqi and the opening of a meaningful dialogue with China's government.

CUBA

Good news: One of the dissidents released in July, 2010. after the intervention of the Vatican, is Dr. **Gabriel Garcia Paneque**, one of several dissident doctors imprisoned and in poor health on whose behalf we have been advocating for a number of years.

Dr, whose arrest before a human rights demonstration we had protested in 2009, was sentenced in June to house arrest for three months and to probation for another

year. Dr. Ferrer had been providing health care for the poorest Cubans who do not get adequate service from the State.

CZECH REPUBLIC

We wrote to the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic to inquire about the situation of Dr. **Ladislav Andrey**, a physicist and mathematician, whose employment at the Institute of Computer Science at the Czech Academy of Sciences was discontinued in 2010. According to Dr. Andrey, a political dispute in 2008 led to threats of firing from the Institute of Computer Science. We expressed concern that political issues in the past may have played a role in his situation.

In Response, Professor Jiri Wiedermann, Director, The Institute of Computer Science of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic explained that Dr. Andrey was given due process in following independent evaluation of his productivity, resulting in negative findings about his continued retention at the Institute. Dr. Wiedermann added that Dr. Andrey refused the Institute's offer to stretch out his employment until he reached retirement.

EGYPT

Two visa denials by Egypt to Israeli scientists attempting to attend international conferences elicited our protests. Professor **Ben Artzi's** request for a visa to attend the Euro-Mediterranean University's convention on June 11 and 12 in Alexandria was denied without any explanation. The Euro-Mediterranean University's Rector, Professor Joseph Mifsud, reportedly sent a letter of protest to Egypt's authorities.

Similarly, Dr. **Uri Seligsohn**, professor of hematology and director of the Amalia Biron Research Institute of Thrombosis and Homeostasis at Tel Aviv University, was prevented by Egyptian authorities from attending the 56th Scientific and Standardization Committee meeting of the International Society on Thrombosis and Homeostasis in Cairo. We pointed out that denial of these visas violates Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Egypt is a signatory. Article 15 requires states to recognize the benefits of international contacts and cooperation in science.

IRAN

Good news: Iranian-American sociologist **Kian Tajbakhsh** was able to celebrate the Persian New Year with his family on March 13, 2010, and on April 3 allowed to stay longer. Tajbakhsh, who was sentenced to 15 years for espionage, over our and others' protest, had to post bail in the amount of \$800,000. His sentence has been reduced to five years. The State Department last month told Columbia University, where

Tajbakhsh was supposed to teach this year, that it will continue its diplomatic efforts on behalf of the Iranian-American.

In conjunction with the Committee on Human Rights of the American Physical Society and the National Academies, we asked the International Council for Science (ICSU) to undertake an impartial and internationally sanctioned investigation of the assassination of the Iranian physicist Dr. **Masoud Alimohammadi**, a supporter of the opposition candidate Moussavi. Dr. Alimohammadi was the victim of a targeted murder in Iran on January 12, 2010. The government of Iran has alleged that he was assassinated by Israel and the United States due to his participation in Iran's nuclear program. According to *Science*, the publication of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dr. Alimohammadi's field of study was quantum physics, a field entirely distinct from nuclear physics. In 2008, the Iranian government picked Dr. Alimohammadi to represent Iran to an international scientific facility being built in Jordan, the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME), raising his death to a matter of international concern.

In Response: The International Council for Science (ICSU) referred our complaint to its Committee on Freedom and Responsibility in the Conduct of Science in June, 2010.

We welcomed the release on bail of Professor **Emaddedin Baghi** after 189 days in prison. Our previous letter to Iranian authorities described his health problems. According to Reporters Without Borders, however, he is barred from political activity for five years. He is also awaiting a second trial by the Intelligence Ministry relating to his appearance on BBC Persia together with the late government critic Grand Ayatollah Hosseinali-Monatazeri. We urged Iranian authorities to unconditionally drop all charges against Professor Baghi, including the bar on further political activity. Exercising his rights to peacefully express his views is protected under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to both of which Iran is a signatory.

INDIA

We wrote again to protest the sentence to life imprisonment on Dec. 25, 2010 of Dr. **Binayak Sen**, a pioneer of health care to poor and indigenous communities in Chhattisgarh state and a human rights activist. According to Amnesty International, Dr Sen was convicted under laws that are impermissibly vague and fall well short of international standards for criminal prosecution. In 2009, local authorities had imprisoned him without filing charges for seven months and kept him in solitary confinement for three weeks, refusing his request to be transferred to a hospital because of recurrent chest pains. Central authorities in India ordered Dr. Sen's release on bail in order to receive medical attention, after protests by us and by international human rights groups, intellectuals and doctors. We urged government authorities to follow up on their earlier laudable actions to remedy local prosecution and injustice

against Dr. Sen and to order state and federal authorities in India to immediately drop these politically motivated charges and to release Dr. Binayak Sen_

We urged Indian authorities to investigate and to explain restrictions on Professor **Richard Shapiro**'s travel to India, whose visa was abruptly withdrawn when he arrived to Delhi airport and forced to return to the US without reimbursement of his fare. Professor Shapiro is Chair of the Department of Anthropology at the California Institute of Integral Studies, where he is an Associate Professor. On November 1st, 2010, Professor Shapiro traveled to India with his wife, Professor Angana Chatterji. Both had traveled to India before and to Kashmir, where Shapiro had met with human rights defenders. Professor Chatterji is a co-convenor of the International People's Tribunal for Human Rights and Justice in Kashmir. Her husband might have been denied entry as a way of intimidating her. We pointed out that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which India has ratified, protects freedom of expression, right to travel and scientific exchange. Freedom of travel is one of the most important avenues for furthering scientific and academic exchange.

ISRAEL

Dr. **Abu-Khalaf** is an engineer working in the United States. He was born and raised in Jerusalem. In 2005, he received his Ph.D. in electrical engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington, specializing in optimal control theory and adaptive intelligent systems. In 2008, the Israeli Interior Ministry revoked his residency status, the legal status of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. At this point he can visit Israel only by obtaining a US travel document and a tourist visa, but he cannot work or live in his native country, unlike other Israelis. Dr. **Emad Hamadeh**, also a lecturer in electrical engineering, was born in East Jerusalem and left to study in the United States. Since his return to Israel, Dr. Hamadeh has been living in Jerusalem illegally, without under constant danger of being arrested and deported. We urged the Israeli government to reinstate Dr Abu-Khalaf's residency permit, as well as the permit of Dr. Hamadeh. We also suggested asking the Knesset to reconsider any statutes that make it impossible for Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem to work overseas without losing their residency permit.

Good news: The office of Israel's Prime Minister wrote to CCS on November 3, 2010, that our letter had been forwarded to officials at the Population, Immigration and Border Crossing Authority for response. On February 17, 2011, Dr. Abu-Khalaf finally got an interim court order with a 30-day entry permit to Israel to attend his hearing on his residency permit, a permit that had been denied twice earlier by the Israeli Interior Department.

LIBYA

We wrote in concern for Professor **Rasheed Mohammad Omar El-Meheeshy**, of Misurata University in Zilten City, who was jailed after an allegation of sexual harassment by students. The accusations seemed to have been made in retaliation for Dr. El-Meheeshy's actions as head of a committee investigating the issuance of fake diplomas by Libyan universities. The committee found 150 fake bachelor degrees, with 22 universities involved. Dr. El-Meheeshy expelled the students involved and fired 11 faculty members. In jail, the professor suffered a stroke and wasn't hospitalized until he lost consciousness. He was released as the students retracted their allegations but was still awaiting trial. We urged authorities to drop all criminal charges against Dr. El-Meheeshy.

Good news: Abdul Hamid al-Ghizzawi, the Libyan meteorologist on whose behalf we wrote to US authorities in 2007 because of his hepatitis was released from Guantanamo in 2010 after eight years without charge and transferred to Tbilisi, Georgia. Al-Ghizzari suffered from serious health problems but remained in solitary confinement until cleared for release, even though a Guantanamo tribunal had determined that he was not an enemy combatant.

PAKISTAN

Nazima Talib, an assistant professor of media and journalism in the Department of Mass Communications at the University of Balochistan in Quetta, Pakistan, was killed in a drive-by shooting on Tuesday, April 27, 2010, and died before she could receive medical attention. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), a nationalist organization seeking secession from Pakistan, has reportedly claimed responsibility for the murder. We urged the Government of Pakistan to immediately investigate this crime and to bring the perpetrators for justice.

RUSSIA

Good News: We welcomed the release of Dr. **Igor Sutyagin**, the Russian academic, who served more than a decade in prison in Siberia on espionage charges that we protested starting in 2001 as unfounded. Sutyagin was an arms control researcher for a British company to which he provided published and openly available information. In July of 2010, he was released and flown to London in the high level exchange negotiated by Russia and the US after the discovery of Russian spies in New Jersey, although the US continued to support Sutyagin's claim that he was never a spy.

In his August interview with The Guardian in London, Dr. Sutyagin credited pressure by human rights groups as responsible for his inclusion in the swap. To view the video interview with Sutyagin, see <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/video/2010/aug/17/russia-russian-spy-ring>.

At Dr. Sutyagin's suggestion, we wrote to protest the detention without trial of Drs. **Bobyshev and Afansyev**, professors at Baltic State Technical University in St. Petersburg, who have been detained since March without a trial at Moscow's Lefortovo maximum-security prison. They reportedly have been accused of spying and passing state secrets to unidentified Chinese citizens. The accusations stem from a cooperative relationship Baltic State Technical University has with Harbin Engineering University in China, which allowed the professors to give lectures at the Chinese university. According to the chairman of Drs. Bobyshev and Afanasyev's academic department, the lectures they gave did not contain state secrets. In September 2010, the Lefortovsky district court extended the professors' pretrial detention for an additional four months to allow the Federal Security Service officers to better prepare their case. We pointed out that indefinite pretrial detention of Svyatoslav Bobyshev and Yevgeny Afanasyev on espionage charges contravenes international standards of due process, fair trial and detention procedures, as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Russia is a signatory. We urge the Russian authorities to reconsider whether the charges have any basis, and to ensure their wellbeing pending their earliest release.

We wrote in concern about **Boris Nemtsov**, a physicist and former Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation, who was arrested on December 31, 2010, while participating in a peaceful rally in Moscow. A court sentenced him to 15 days in jail for "disobeying police instructions." According to news reports, Nemtsov tried to appeal his sentence as violating his human rights to a fair trial but the court refused to hear the appeal during its New Year's holiday, even though it had sanctioned Nemtsov's and other demonstrators' arrests during the same period and handed down their sentences. Nemtsov has appealed to the International Court of Justice in Strasbourg claiming violation of his rights under the European Convention on Human Rights. His jail sentence also violates the prohibition on arbitrary arrest of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, to which Russia is a signatory. We urged Russian authorities to reverse his sentence, even if Dr Nemtsov has completed serving his jail term, to compensate him for the damage inflicted upon him, and allow citizens of the Russian Federation to peacefully exercise their human and political rights to free speech.

Retired teacher **Mukhmed Gazdiev**, a resident of Karabulak, Ingushetia, has been trying to find out what happened to his son, Ibragim Gazdiev, who disappeared on August 8, 2007, after being seized by armed men in camouflage. The men who abducted him are believed to be members of the Russian Federal Security Services. The criminal investigation into Ibragim Gazdiev's disappearance has been suspended.

Gazdiev's attempts to find his son have resulted in intimidation and harassment. Gazdiev is elderly, disabled and in poor health. In November 2007, he was ill treated during a demonstration he had helped to organize against human rights violations in Ingushetia. In May 2008, Russian Federal Security Services searched his home, using a warrant issued for a neighbor's house. We urged authorities to reinstate the investigation of what happened to Ibragim Gazdiev and to provide justice for his family..

In 2009, we wrote in grave concern about journalist and human rights activist **Alexandr Podrabinek**, who had to go into hiding because of death threats after publishing an article about the current government's defense of the former Soviet Union's crimes against its own people. We called on the government to warn against violence to Podrabinek's family or person and to prosecute such harassment.

Good news: We received four letters in Russian responding to our complaint (translated for CCS by Board Member Eugene Chudnovsky)" two from the Office of the Russian Attorney General, and two more from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We were advised that the decision of the local prosecutor not to pursue the harassers of Podrabinek was reversed by the central Russian authorities.

UNITED STATES

We urged Kenneth T. Cucinelli II, Attorney General of the State of Virginia, to immediately withdraw his actions concerning Professor **Michael Mann**, Director of the Earth System Science Center at Penn State University. In requiring the University of Virginia to turn over data and scientific documents related to Dr. Mann's climate change research between 1999 and 2005 at UVA, Cucinelli claimed to find out whether Dr. Mann committed fraud under state grants against Virginia's taxpayers. This move appeared to have no basis in fact and to be entirely motivated by disagreement with Mann's conclusions concerning climate change.

Good news: The University of Virginia resisted the request for documents and on August 30, a Circuit Judge of Albermarle County sided with the University, stating that the Attorney General had not made any showing to back up allegations that Dr. Mann might have committed fraud.

We wrote for the second time to the President and to the President of the Board of Trustees of Columbia College Chicago, in concern about Professor **Zafra M. Lerman**. Our earlier letter concerned obstacles placed by Columbia College to Dr. Lerman's access to funds for the biennial Malta conference, designed to promote peace in the Middle East, that she had pioneered and administered for a long time. We later learned that Dr. Lerman was dismissed in October of 2009, after 32 years of distinguished service as a tenured faculty member of Columbia College Chicago, without any written notice or explanation. We urged the College to reconsider its dismissal of Dr. Lerman and provide her with reinstatement, back pay, benefits, and access to her materials, and

recommended that the College follow its own procedures and policies in providing her with due process.

In Response: the provost of Columbia College Chicago responded that Dr. Lerman had been treated with full due process. Professor Lerman has sued the college for discrimination based on age, gender and religion.

Executive Director's Note:

I want to resume the past practice of expressing gratitude for the unstinting assistance and wise counsel provided throughout the year by the co-chairs of the Committee of Concerned Scientists -- Joel Lebowitz, Paul Plotz, and Walter Reich. I also owe thanks to Board Members such as Joseph Birman and Edward Gerjuoy for bringing cases to our attention, and to Eugene Chudnovsky for translating many bureaucratic letters from Russian. Finally, the website would not be useful to our public without the assistance provided by Board Member Alexander Greer and former Executive Director Maud Kozodoy.

Sophie Cook, Executive Director, CCS