

China jails 3 online activists; many show support

April 16 2010, By GILLIAN WONG , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- A Chinese court jailed three people Friday who posted material on the Internet to help an illiterate woman pressure authorities to reinvestigate her daughter's death, one defendant's lawyer said, in a trial that attracted scores of supporters.

The court in southern Fuzhou city found the Internet activists guilty of slander, sentencing to jail self-taught legal expert Fan Yanqiong for two years. Two others, You Jingyou and Wu Huaying, were each handed one-year sentences, said You's attorney Liu Xiaoyuan, in a phone interview. The court did not name individuals allegedly slandered by the three, saying instead that this was a matter that seriously affected the interest of the state.

The three defendants posted information and videos online in a bid to help Lin Xiuying, a woman who believed her daughter died after being gang-raped two years ago by a group of thugs with links to the police in Fujian province's Mingqin county. Police had ruled that the 25-year-old woman died from an abnormal pregnancy.

It is the latest example of Chinese [Internet users](#) being targeted for their budding grass-roots activism - ordinary people spreading word of grievances from every corner of the country with postings on Twitter, microblogs and other Web sites.

"The court said the three people's actions have seriously affected the interest of the state, which is laughable," said Liu, the lawyer, adding

that he worried the verdict could cause public unhappiness in the southern province. "It infringes on the people's [freedom of speech](#), which is the legal right of citizens."

Fan had met Lin, 50, when the mother was sobbing outside a government office last summer. Fan took down the details of the case from Lin and then posted them online. Wu and You spoke to the mother and posted their video interview online.

The trial prompted at least several hundred Internet users from around [China](#) and other people to travel to the Mawei District People's Court Friday in a show of support, waving banners and singing songs, people at the scene said. Some bloggers at the scene estimated up to 2,000 people turned up.

Many of them provided "live" coverage of the courthouse demonstrations by posting messages on Twitter from their mobile phones, updated every few minutes. Bloggers who were unable to attend forwarded the Twitter postings to their own readers, adding messages of support and advice for staying out of trouble with police, who had set up cordons and were stationed around the supporters.

China blocks online materials it deems to be harmful, which frequently includes information that contradicts the views of the ruling Communist Party. But there is a vibrant community of tech-savvy users who are a minority of the 384 million people online in China yet among the most vocal: young, educated, liberal-minded and unafraid of questioning the Communist government.

©2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: China jails 3 online activists; many show support (2010, April 16) retrieved 27 April

2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-04-china-online-activists.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.