

Network of Concerned Historians				NCH
Campaigns				
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Name
2017		86	Iran	Xiyue Wang
	2017			

*Announcement*

In April 2017, Chinese-born American history student Xiyue Wang from Princeton University (United States) was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in Iran on trumped-up charges of espionage. He was doing archival research about the history of the Qajar dynasty (1785–1925). In August 2017, Wang's appeal was denied. On 5 December 2017, Hua Qu, his wife, learned that he was transferred to a more extreme prison.

Please see a NCH summary of the case below, followed by Hua Qu's letter.

*You are kindly asked to distribute her message and act upon her suggestions as much as possible.*

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**NCH SUMMARY OF THE CASE (as of 5 December 2017)**

On 7 August 2016, Xiyue Wang ([1980–]), a fourth-year graduate student in the Department of History at Princeton University and a China-born naturalized United States citizen since 2009, was detained and confined to Evin Prison in Tehran while in Iran to study Farsi and do Ph.D. research into late 19th and early 20th century Eurasian history, particularly regional governance practices across multiple countries. After he left Iran he was planning to continue his research in Russia. Wang was interested in archives about the administrative and cultural history of the Qajar dynasty (1785–1925) in Tehran and Mashhad. He spent his first eighteen days in solitary confinement. In February 2017, Wang was charged with two counts of espionage, widely believed to be fabricated. In April 2017 he was convicted and sentenced to

ten years' imprisonment. On 16 July 2017, the Iranian judiciary's Mizan News Agency said that he was "sent" by Princeton University to "infiltrate" Iran, that he had connections to American and British intelligence agencies. The agency also declared that Wang had digitally archived 4,500 pages of Iranian documents and had done "highly confidential research for the U.S. Department of State, Harvard Kennedy School and British Institute of Persian Studies." Wang's appeal of his sentence was denied later in August 2017; a court upheld his conviction and ten years' imprisonment. On 5 December 2017, Wang was transferred to Ward 7; he was told that he would be with Taliban and other prisoners who have badly beaten him in the past.

[Sources: "[Academic Statement for the Release of Xiyue Wang](#)" (petition); personal communication Trudy Peterson (18 July 2017); personal communication Eleanor Hubbard (24–25 July 2017); Princeton University, "[Frequently Asked Questions about Xiyue Wang](#)" (20 July 2017; updated 28 July 2017); Rick Gladstone, "[Iran Sentences U.S. Graduate Student to 10 Years on Spying Charges](#)," *New York Times* (16 July 2017); Carly Baldwin, "[Iran Convicts Princeton Grad Student Of Spying](#)," *Princeton Patch* (16 July 2017); Mitch Gerber, "[Iran Sentences Princeton Ph.D. Student to 10 Years in Prison](#)," *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (16 July 2017); Saeed Kamali Dehghan, "[Iran Sentences Chinese-born American to 10 years in Jail on Spying Charges](#)," *Guardian* (16 July 2017); AFP, "[Iran Sentences Chinese-American Princeton Historian Xiyue Wang to 10 years for Espionage](#)," *South China Morning Post* (17 July 2017); "[Iran Denies Graduate Student's Appeal of 10-Year Sentence](#)," *Town Topics* (23 August 2017); "[Iran Court Upholds 10-year Jail Sentence of US 'Spy'](#)," *BBC News* (3 September 2017); Hua Qu (Xiyue Wang's wife), "Xiyue Wang Transferred to More Extreme Prison" (5 December 2017).]

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## **XIYUE WANG TRANSFERRED TO MORE EXTREME PRISON**

*December 5, 2017*

Dear friends,

We woke to bad news today: Xiyue Wang learned that he's being transferred to Ward 7 or another, more extreme prison in Iran. Wang was told he'll be with Taliban and other prisoners who have badly beaten him in the past. We think it's quite clear the Intelligence Agency is trying to mentally torture him; this is unconscionable treatment of an innocent father and student.

More broadly, it's likely the US government and Iranians may discuss the American detainee issue at the upcoming nuclear deal meeting in Vienna around December 13th. That's the last meeting this year, after 6 months' waiting.

**WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

Please circulate and spread news about the events today as well as the recent news articles about Wang's case (see below) to groups and organizations in your network. Please show your support by promoting these articles on social media and calling for his quick and safe return.

December 31st will be Wang's birthday. I hope we can have him back before then. I am making every endeavor to make the day of his return sooner than later. Thank you for joining the efforts to make it happen.

\*\*1. New York Times: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/29/world/middleeast/iran-prisoners.html>

\*\*2. AFP: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-5136991/Wife-US-academic-held-Iran-begs-Trump-help.html>

\*\*3. VOA: <https://www.voanews.com/a/wife-of-princeton-scholar-held-in-iran-asks-trump-to-intervene/4146360.html>

\*\*4. WSJ: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/video-of-princeton-student-imprisoned-by-iran-raises-concerns-1511898264>

Thank you so much!!!

Hua Qu (Wang's wife)

(List manager: Malin Pinsky: [malin.pinsky@gmail.com](mailto:malin.pinsky@gmail.com))

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*Our mailing address is:*

Free Xiyue Wang

167 Hamilton Ave

Princeton, NJ 08540

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