

## Lawyers Describe Abuse Outside Chinese Activists' Trial

By [AUSTIN RAMZY](#), The New York Times

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Lawyers representing a group of Chinese activists on trial in Jiangxi Province say they and the daughter of one defendant were harassed and roughed up outside the court on Wednesday.

Liu Ping, Wei Zhongping and Li Sihua are facing charges of illegal assembly in connection with their public call that government officials reveal their personal assets. The trial in the city of Xinyu is the first of activists associated with the New Citizens Movement, a loosely organized campaign of legal scholars and grassroots volunteers pushing for rule of law and greater public transparency in China.

The case has gained international attention as an indicator of whether China's new leadership, which has made combating corruption a top priority, will show any more tolerance of calls for independent monitoring of official wealth and power.

Liao Minyue, the daughter of Ms. Liu, said that the Xinyu courthouse was surrounded by at least 200 people Wednesday, and when she tried to enter she was surrounded and pushed to the ground. Ms. Liao said an officer warned her Wednesday she could face also face charges if she protested the treatment of her mother.

"One of the court officials told me to stay quiet otherwise I will be locked up for faking testimony and disrespecting the court," Ms. Liao said in a phone interview. "How can I be locked up for faking testimony if I'm not even a witness?"

Zhou Ze, a lawyer representing Mr. Li, said that ahead of the hearing Wednesday a car carrying six lawyers was blocked at a checkpoint outside of the courthouse for nearly an hour, and eventually the lawyers had to leave the vehicle and walk the 500 yards to court carrying files. After stepping out of the car, the lawyers were besieged by bystanders who called them "traitors" and "hoodlum," Mr. Zhou wrote in a post on the Sina Weibo microblog service.

Another lawyer representing Mr. Li, Pu Zhiqiang, said that police didn't respond as the crowd outside showered insults on the lawyers as they made their way to the court, calling them names such as "scum of the Chinese people."

"Over so many years, I have experience of what it's like inside and outside a court," Mr. Pu wrote in a microblog post that was later deleted. "This is the first time I've experienced a din and clamor like that." Defense lawyers have been arguing that photos the three accused took of themselves with signs shouldn't constitute illegal assembly, said Si Weijiang, a lawyer who represents Ms. Liu. "Now our only hope is that court still has some regard for the law," he said.

Two high-profile activists connected with the New Citizens Movement in Beijing are also likely to face prosecution. The police detained the legal scholar Xu Zhiyong in July and an investor, Wang Gongquan, in September.

*Mia Li contributed research.*

*An earlier version of this post gave the wrong province where the trial is taking place. It is in Jiangxi Province, not Jiangsu.*