

Prominent Chinese Lawyer Convicted for Subversion



Summary: Zhou Shifeng is the latest lawyer to be convicted by the Chinese government for subversion.

The Chinese government has convicted attorney Zhou Shifeng. Zhou founded a Chinese law firm that frequently represented high profile cases, and according to the BBC, the government has found him guilty of subversion.

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China's state-controlled media said that it was concluded in court that Zhou "played a major role in a group of activists who attempted to manipulate public opinion and damage national security by spreading subversive thoughts."

Zhou's big cases included suing a powerful Chinese company that allegedly sold tainted baby milk formula and representing people persecuted for their religious or political beliefs. He caught the government's attention when he encouraged protestors to gather in support of his defendants. In China, 99.9% of cases result in a conviction.

Since last year, almost 300 lawyers and activists have been arrested, and 20 are still being held. Some such as Hu Shigen and Zhai Yanmin were convicted this week of the same charge as Zhou, 52.

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Xinhua reported that Zhou will not appeal the ruling.

On Monday, Zhou's colleague Wang Yu was released on bail after she renounced her legal work on video. She also denounced Zhou and said he was letting "foreign forces" influence him to discredit the government.

The BBC reports that China has been cracking down on human rights advocacy groups and lawyers who represent cases involving freedom of speech, religion, or abuses of power.

Will Zhou's conviction affect the legal system in China? If so, how? Let us know in the comments below.

Source: BBC