

Nobel winner Liu Xiaobo's lawyer 'to sue China'



Mo Shaoping said many people had been stopped from leaving the country recently

A Chinese lawyer who represents jailed Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo has told the BBC he intends to file a lawsuit against the Chinese authorities for preventing him from leaving China.

Mo Shaoping said the decision by Chinese police to stop him attending a conference in London was unlawful.

Mr Mo says he was told that his leaving China could "threaten state security".

But he says authorities suspected he could have been planning to receive the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of Liu.

China has reacted with fury to the awarding of the Nobel prize to Liu, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison in December 2009 on subversion charges, after co-authoring a petition calling for political reform which was signed by thousands.

The lawyer said immigration officials had stopped him at Beijing's airport as he prepared to board a flight to the UK to attend a lawyers' conference.

He told the BBC he was taken to a room and told he could not travel overseas as it could "threaten state security".

"I asked for a written notice, but the policeman said they didn't have anything on paper, but had orders from the Beijing Public Security Bureau that we could not leave China," Mr Mo told the Chinese Service.

"We will follow the judicial procedure in China and file a lawsuit against them... that reason doesn't hold water. It's against the law," he said.

Awards 'obscenity'

Mr Mo said officials did not explicitly cite the award as the reason he was denied permission to travel, but he believed his connection to Liu was the reason he was stopped.

He said he wanted visiting British Prime Minister David Cameron to raise the issue of Liu Xiaobo during his current visit to China.

Mr Mo said he believed he was among a group of people who had recently been prevented from leaving China, apparently out of fear that one of them would seek to accept the award on Liu's behalf at the 10 December ceremony in Norway.

Chinese authorities have called the selection of Liu by the Nobel Committee an "obscenity" and tantamount to "encouraging crime".

Liu's wife Liu Xia has been placed under house arrest, and diplomats in the Norwegian capital Oslo say they have received letters implicitly warning them not to attend the prize-giving.

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