

# Rallying For Democracy

<http://www.rallyingfordemocracy.org>

---

## 2010 SHANGHAI WORLD EXPO

26/04/2010 20:19 by admin

Reporters Without Borders inaugurates its "Garden of Freedoms";

It is hard to imagine a "Better city &dash; Better life"; in a country that censors the Internet and jails human rights activists on such a wide scale as China. The Expo 2010 Shanghai slogan is meaningless when a government imposes so many curbs on its citizens' freedom of expression. "City under surveillance &dash; Lives under surveillance"; would be a better slogan for this World Expo in China.

As Shanghai prepares for the official opening of its World Expo on 1 May, Reporters Without Borders is today inaugurating its own online Garden of Freedoms.

Reporters Without Borders invites Internet users all over the world to come to its website ([http://en.rsf.org/shanghai\\_en.html](http://en.rsf.org/shanghai_en.html)) and visit its Garden of Liberties, a Shanghai World Expo virtual pavilion in Chinese, French and English that is dedicated to freedom of expression. Visitors will be able to explore the cyber-police pavilion, the Tibet pavilion and the prisons of conscience enclosure, where they will be able to sign petitions for their release.

The Garden of Freedoms will be the only place in the Shanghai World Expo where you will be able to discover the realities that the Chinese authorities go out of their way to hush up. Several dozen Shanghai human rights activists are currently under close police surveillance to prevent them meeting the foreign journalists who will be covering the inauguration.

A World Expo is meant to bring people together around such values as progress, humanism and culture. What kind of universal values is China offering us when it jails such advocates of democracy as the intellectual Liu Xiaobo? Why do the representatives of the democratic countries including French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who will be at the inauguration, say nothing about China's dark side?

"The silence coming from the Paris-based International Bureau of Exhibitions (BIE) is deafening," Reporters Without Borders said. "Why doesn't its president, who used to be France's ambassador to China, intervene publicly to get the Chinese authorities to display some tolerance during this Expo?";

Reporters Without Borders wrote to BIE president Jean-Pierre Lafon urging him to press the Chinese authorities to stop censoring the Internet and release dissidents for the Shanghai Expo. There was no reply. Similarly, journalists have received no response from the BIE to requests for interviews about the forced evictions that took place in Shanghai while the exhibition was being prepared.

Two Reporters Without Borders representatives, including the organisation's secretary-general, Jean-François Julliard, have just been denied visas to visit Shanghai. "The authorities in Beijing have just instructed us to refuse you visas," an official at China's consulate in Paris said. "The reason? You know why.";