

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST FORMALLY ARRESTED AFTER 6 MONTHS

Human rights defender Zhen Jianghua was formally arrested on 29 March 2018 on the charge of “inciting subversion of state power”. Denied access to his lawyers, Zhen Jianghua continues to be at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Zhen Jianghua’s formal arrest was approved on 29 March 2018, by the Zhuhai City People’s Procuratorate following the expiration of his six-month incommunicado detention, according to one of his lawyers. The authorities continue to deny lawyers’ requests to meet him and refuse to disclose to his lawyers Zhen Jianghua’s location and current state of well-being. On 2 April, Zhen Jianghua’s family informed his lawyer that they received the written notice of Zhen’s formal arrest, however they have not revealed its content. His family has been under police pressure not to talk with his lawyers nor speak publicly about his case.

The Procuratorate still needs to decide whether to proceed and indict him on the charge of “inciting subversion of state power”. While no deadline has been given for this, Zhen Jianghua could face up to 15 years behind bars if convicted.

Zhen Jianghua is a human rights defender with over 10 years’ experience working for marginalized communities in China and has been detained several times as a result of his activism. Initially put under criminal detention on suspicion of ‘inciting subversion of state power’ on 2 September 2017, Zhen Jianghua was moved, less than four weeks’ later, into ‘residential surveillance in a designated location’ - a measure enabling police to detain criminal suspects for up to six months without access to legal counsel, their families or others.

Since his arrest, and throughout his detention, Zhen Jianghua has not been allowed access to his lawyers, raising further concerns that Zhen Jianghua is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Please write immediately in Chinese, English or your own language urging the authorities to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Zhen Jianghua who is a prisoner of conscience and drop all charges as he has been detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Ensure that, pending his release, Zhen Jianghua is protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in detention, and that he is allowed, without delay, effective access to lawyers of his choice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 MAY 2018 TO:

Procurator

Guan Yingyan
Zhuhai City People’s Procuratorate
166 Xianghualu
Xiangzhouqu
Zhihai Shi
Guangdongsheng 519000
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Procurator

Director

Zhuhai City Public Security Bureau
Meihuaxilu
Xiangzhouqu
Zhuhai Shi
Guangdongsheng 519000
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security
Guo Shengkun Buzhang
Ministry of Public Security
14 Dongchanganjie
Dongchengqu Beijing Shi 100741
People’s Republic of China
Tel: +86 10 66262114 (Chinese Only)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR LIU XIAOMING, Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, 49-51 Portland Place W1B 1JL, 020 7299 4049, press_uk@mfa.gov.cn

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

This is the second update of UA 235/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/7824/2018/en/>;

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Zhen Jianghua, also known by his online pen name “Guests Zhen”, serves as executive director for Human Rights Campaign in China, a virtual organization that campaigns for human rights defenders at risk and helps rights holders to document and publicize the human rights violations they experienced. Zhen Jianghua is also the executive editor and founder of ATGFW.ORG, a website which advocates against Internet censorship and teaches people how to access censored information by circumventing the Great Firewall of China. In addition, he has also led a HIV/AIDS prevention education project in Zhuhai city, hosted by Hong Kong AIDS Foundation.

On 3 September 2016, Zhen Jianghua travelled to Wukan village, Guangdong province, in support of the protest against illegal land grabbing by the local government. As he was about to leave Wukan, he was detained and questioned by the police for over 24 hours on suspicion of inciting a protest in Wukan village. Upon his release, on 7 September, Zhen Jianghua published an online public statement about his detention and, that same night, was detained again until the following day for interrogation on suspicion of “inciting participation in illegal rallies, marches and demonstrations”.

Over the years, China has made further efforts to reinforce its already oppressive internet censorship architecture. Thousands of websites and social media services are forced to censor their content, while some platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are blocked. China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology announced in January 2017 that the government had launched a 14-month campaign to crack down on 'unauthorized' Internet platforms. The Government's pre-approval is required for offering VPN services, a tool used to evade China's internet censorship, and according to local media several people have been prosecuted in 2017 for supplying and selling VPN products and services.

In addition, a number of citizen journalists and directors of local news outlets that publicize articles and information about human rights incidents in China have been detained and imprisoned. Six journalists from Sichuan-based website “64 Tianwang” (64tianwang.org) were detained for covering protests in relation to the G20 Summit in Hangzhou in September 2016 while its founder, Huang Qi, has been detained since November 2016, and formally arrested for “leaking state secrets” in December 2016. The founder and director of Hubei-based human rights website “Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch” (www.msguancha.com), Liu Feiyue, was formally arrested for “inciting subversion of state power” in December 2016. Lu Yuyu and his girlfriend Li Tingyu, who managed a blog (wickedonna.blogspot.com) and a Twitter account (@wickedonna) that compiled and released data on strikes, protests and rural unrest in China, were both criminally detained on 15 June 2016 on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”. Li Tingyu was released on bail after a court trial on 10 April 2017 while Lu Yuyu was sentenced to four years imprisonment for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.”

The authorities continued to use “residential surveillance in a designated location”, a form of secret incommunicado detention that allowed the police to hold individuals for up to six months outside the formal detention system, without access to legal counsel of their choice, their families or others, and placed suspects at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. This form of detention was used to curb the activities of human rights defenders, including lawyers, activists and religious practitioners.

Activists and human rights defenders continued to be systematically subjected to monitoring, harassment, intimidation, arrest and detention. Police detained increasing numbers of human rights defenders outside of formal detention facilities, sometimes without access to a lawyer for long periods, exposing the detainees to the risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Further information on UA: 235/17 Index: ASA 17/8157/2018 Issue Date: 4 April 2018