

URGENT ACTION

POOR MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR DETAINED ACTIVIST

Huang Qi, founder and director of Sichuan-based human rights website “64 Tianwang”, has told his lawyer that his health has further deteriorated due to the lack of appropriate medical treatment in the detention centre. Already facing the possibility of life imprisonment, Huang Qi has been notified that he will also be charged with “leaking state secrets”, which carries a maximum sentence of seven years in prison.

Huang Qi told his lawyer on 23 October 2018 that doctors and detention centre officers provided false reports of his blood pressure, undermining the extent of his critical medical conditions. The 53-year-old human rights defender suffers from chronic kidney disease, hydrocephalus and several heart and lung conditions. His aging mother is very worried that he could eventually die in custody due to his poor health and lack of appropriate and adequate treatment.

After having his blood pressure checked by an officer in the detention centre on 18-19 October, Huang Qi noticed that his blood pressure had risen significantly (measuring 221/147 mm Hg, with 140/90 mm Hg considered normal) compared to previous check-ups performed by a doctor. While officials at the detention centre have refused to give Huang Qi the results of three blood tests taken in August, the doctor has said that the record of the blood tests is with the director of Mianyang City Public Security Bureau, who appears to be tracking Huang Qi's health.

First taken away on 28 November 2016, Huang Qi's family received notification two weeks later that he had been formally arrested for “providing state secret to a foreign entity”. Almost two years later, in mid-October 2018, his lawyer received an unexpected notification from the Mianyang City Procuratorate that Huang Qi would be facing an additional charge of “leaking state secrets”, which has a maximum sentence of seven years imprisonment.

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

- Grant Huang Qi prompt, regular and unrestricted access to adequate medical care on request or as necessary;
- Release Huang Qi unconditionally and immediately unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that he has committed an internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards;
- Ensure that Huang Qi is protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in detention; that there is a prompt and impartial inquiry, including a medical examination for his allegations of torture or other ill-treatment, and that he is allowed, without delay, regular access to his family.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 DECEMBER 2018 TO:

Director

Qiao Yuejun
Mianyang City Detention Centre
Jianmenlu, Peichengqu,
Mianyang Shi, Sichuan Sheng 621000
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 816 2377600

Salutation: Dear Director

Director

Ren Shilin
Mianyang City Public Security Bureau
17 Jiefangjie, Peichengqu,
Mianyang Shi, Sichuan Sheng 621000
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 816 2498088

Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security
Zhao Kezhi Buzhang
Gonganbu
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 fifth update of UA 284/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/8311/2018/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During a meeting with a lawyer on 28 July 2017 – his first since being detained in 2016 – Huang Qi stated that he was being ill-treated and was made to stand for hours at a time and repeatedly questioned, and often insulted, by in total 36 police officers. Huang Qi told his lawyer on 3 November 2017 that he had been beaten up by other detainees at the Mianyang City Detention Centre, Sichuan Province, on 24-26 October, with knowledge of at least one of the detention centre's officers.

His arrest in late 2016 was Huang Qi's third detention that year. He was first taken away following protests by land eviction victims on 22 and 24 July 2016 at the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in Chengdu, when state security police (*guobao*) took him away for "forced travel" – a common practice in which activists and petitioners are taken outside of their towns during sensitive periods. The second occasion was on 24 October 2016, when Huang Qi was questioned by public security officers from Chengdu during the Sixth Plenum of the 18th Chinese Communist Party Central Committee in Beijing on 24-27 October 2016. He was released the following day.

"64 Tianwang", founded by Huang Qi and his wife Zeng Li in 1998, is one of the few major mainland-based websites that reports and documents petitioners' protests in China. Most of the website's contributors were petitioners before becoming citizen journalists to report on other petitioners' protests and arrests. The international NGO "Reporters Without Borders" announced on 7 November 2016 that "64 Tianwang" had won the 2016 Press Freedom Award, along with detained Chinese bloggers Lu Yuyu and Li Tingting and Syrian reporter Hadi Abdullah.

Over the years, Huang Qi and other "64 Tianwang" contributors have been frequently detained or harassed by the Chinese authorities. Huang Qi has been imprisoned twice. He was first detained in June 2000 – the 11th anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown – before being convicted of "inciting subversion of state power" and sentenced to five years in prison in May 2003. He was again detained and later imprisoned for three years after exposing the substandard building scandal following the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan.

According to "64 Tianwang", their citizen journalists have been questioned or placed under brief detention more than 100 times since President Xi Jinping took power in 2012, and at least 30 have been imprisoned or criminally detained. Ten journalists from "64 Tianwang" are currently in prison, including Wang Jing, Zhang Jixin, Li Min, Sun Enwei, Li Chunhua, Wei Wenyuan, Xiao Jianfang, Li Zhaoxiu, Chen Mingyan and Wang Shurong.

Huang Qi's lawyers have also faced retaliation by the authorities. His former lawyer Sui Muqing, based in Guangzhou, was disbarred in February 2018 as he received notification from the Guangdong Provincial Department of Justice. The lawyer believed it was related to his legal representation for human rights defenders, including Huang Qi's case. Huang Qi's current lawyer, Liu Zhengqing, also based in Guangzhou, was notified by the Guangzhou City Lawyers Association on 17 October that he was under investigation for violating regulations by giving several packs of cigarettes to Huang Qi when he met him in Mianyang City Detention Centre on 30 July. Liu has been threatened with revocation of his license and criminal investigation in connection with this.

Name: Huang Qi
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 284/16 Index: ASA 17/9297/2018 Issue Date: 25 October 2018