

URGENT ACTION

SINGER-SONGWRITER ACTIVIST FORMALLY ARRESTED

Xu Lin was formally arrested for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” on 2 November while fellow singer activist, Liu Sifang, was released on bail. Without regular contact with his family and a lawyer, Xu Lin is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Xu Lin’s formal arrest, for “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”, was approved by the Guangzhou City Nansha District Procuratorate on 2 November 2017, over one month after he was first detained. After twice rejecting the requests of the family-appointed lawyer to meet with him, claiming that Xu Lin had not hired a lawyer, officials finally allowed a brief meeting on 30 October. According to Xu Lin’s wife, who accompanied the lawyer to the detention centre on that day, Xu Lin told the lawyer that he did not want legal representation for the time being. The meeting was conducted in the presence of a detention officer and it is unclear whether he was under pressure to refuse hiring a lawyer.

The other detained songwriter activist Liu Sifang was released on bail on 2 November. Yet, he is still regarded as a criminal suspect and can legally be questioned at any time over the next 12 months. While he has decided to stay low-key for the moment, he did ask a friend to convey his thanks to his lawyer and friends who assisted and cared for him and his family. Liu Sifang said he will be paying close attention to the situation of Xu Lin and hopes that he will be released soon.

Xu Lin’s friends believe that he has been persecuted because he has refused to repent and maintained his innocence of the charge. While the procuratorate and police normally have two months to investigate a case and after that the procuratorate has another month to decide whether to indict the individual, there is precedent for extended delays on this process.

Xu Lin and Liu Sifang have both been active democracy activists and artists. Over the years, they have made songs together about social injustices such as forced eviction, detention of lawyers and activists, the death of Liu Xiaobo and the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. Their songs are popular among activists in China.

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

- Release Xu Lin 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 and
- Ensure that Xu Lin is protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in detention, and that he is allowed, without delay, regular access to his family and a lawyer of his choice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 21 DECEMBER 2017 TO:

Director of Nansha District Detention Centre

Fuyongcun Gonganjidi
Shawanzhen
Panyuqu
Guangzhoushi
Guangdongsheng 511483
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

Director of Guangzhou City Nansha District Procuratorate

Zhao Jian Jianchazhang
1 Gangqianadao
Nanshaqu Guangzhoushi
Guangdongsheng 511458
People’s Republic of China
Email: info@gdga.gov.cn
Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security
Zhao Kezhi Buzhang
Gonganbu
14 Dongchanganjie
Dongchengqu Beijingshi 100741
People’s Republic of China
Tel: +86 10 66262114 (Chinese Only)
Email: gabzfwz@mps.gov.cn

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 first update of UA 245/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/7336/2017/en/>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Xu Lin and fellow singer-songwriter activist Liu Sifang were criminally detained on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” on 29 September 2017 in Nansha District Detention Centre in Guangzhou City.

Among the many songs Xu Lin and Liu Sifang have released on the internet, recent songs have made mention of Liu Xiaobo’s death, lawyers in China who stand up for social justice and the “Twitter Party” – referencing the Twitter followers of Guo Wengui, a self-exiled billionaire currently in the USA who has launched an online campaign accusing Communist Party top officials of corruption and keeping mistresses. In addition to writing songs, both are vocal on various social issues and have taken street action to support human rights defenders at risks in China. In the past years, they have been frequently detained, harassed and followed by the authorities.

According to a pre-recorded video released by Radio Free Asia following his detention in early October, Xu Lin stated that he would not plead guilty or commit suicide if he were detained (see the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxqiUn5XOxc> (in Chinese)).

Following their detention, the wives of the two activists have been under close surveillance and were warned by the police not to hire their own lawyers and speak out about their husbands’ detention.

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: 245/17 Index: ASA 17/7414/2017 Issue Date: 9 November 2017