

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST ARRESTED FOR “LEAKING STATE SECRETS”

Huang Qi, founder of Sichuan-based website “64 Tianwang” (www.64tianwang.com), who has not been heard from since he was taken away on 28 November, has been formally arrested for “leaking state secrets”. He still does not have access to a lawyer.

The family of **Huang Qi** received a written notification from the Mianyang City Public Security Bureau on 16 December, over two weeks after he first went missing, that he was being detained at Mianyang City Detention and has been formally arrested for “leaking state secrets”. No further explanation about the allegations were provided.

Pu Wenqing, Huang Qi’s 83-year-old mother, returned home on 16 December after having not been heard from since she was taken to a hospital in Sichuan on 30 November. The circumstances surrounding her hospital visit remain unclear, however sources confirm that she now remains under tight surveillance.

Huang Qi, 53, was taken from his home in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, by 15 public security officers from three cities in Sichuan: Mianyang, Neijiang and Chengdu, on 28 November.

Huang Qi’s detention has occurred amid a recent crackdown on human rights defenders in China and, without access to a lawyer of his choice, there are still fears that he could be subjected to torture or ill-treatment. Further concerns for his wellbeing have been raised as Huang Qi suffers from acute nephritis, a kidney disorder, and needs daily medication.

Please write immediately Chinese, English or your own language urging the authorities to ensure that Huang Qi is:

- Protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in detention, and that he is allowed, without delay, effective access to his family and a lawyer of his choice;
- Tried in line with international fair trial standards;
- Granted prompt, regular and unrestricted access to medical care on request or as necessary.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 FEBRUARY 2017 TO:

Director

Qiao Yuejun
Mianyang City Detention Centre
Jianmenlu
Peicheng Qu, Mianyang Shi 621000
People’s Republic of China

Fax: +86 816 2377600

Salutation: Dear Director

Director

Ren Shilin
Mianyang City Public Security Bureau
17 Jiefang Jie
Peicheng Qu, Mianyang Shi 621000
People’s Republic of China

Tel: +86 816 2498088

Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security

Guo Shengkun
14 Dong Chang’an Jie
Dongcheng Qu,
Beijingshi 100741
People’s Republic of China

Tel: +86 10 66262114

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 284/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/5352/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

“64 Tianwang”, founded by Sichuan activist 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 first petitioners before becoming citizen journalists to report on other petitioners’ protests and arrests. Reporters Without Borders announced on 7 November 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.

This is the third time Huang Qi has been detained this year. He was first taken away for “forced travel” – a common practice where state security police (*guobao*) take activists and petitioners outside of their towns during sensitive periods - following protests by land eviction victims on 22 and 24 July at the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting in Chengdu. The second occasion was on 24 October when Huang Qi was questioned by the public security officers from Chengdu, during the Sixth Plenum of the 18th Chinese Communist Party’s Central Committee in Beijing on 24-27 October. He was released the following day.

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 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 journalists, who are mostly petitioners turned 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. Eight of “64 Tianwang”’s journalists are currently in prison, including Wang Jing, Zhang Jixin, Li Min, Sun Enwei, Li Chunhua, Wei Wenyuan, Xiao Jianfang and Yang Dongying.

Huang Qi’s disappearance coincided with the disappearance of Beijing human rights lawyer Jiang Tianyong, who was last heard from on 21 November and is said to also be in police custody for allegedly “leaking state secrets”, as well as the detention of Hubei-based “Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch” website founder Liu Feiyue, who is criminally detained on suspicion of “subverting state power” on 18 November.

Further information on UA: 284/16 Index: ASA 17/5410/2016 Issue Date: 22 December 2016