

URGENT ACTION

FALUN GONG PRACTITIONER AT RISK OF TORTURE

Qin Wei, a Falun Gong practitioner, was taken into police custody after he distributed commentary criticizing the Chinese Communist Party. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.



Qin Wei was taken away by plainclothes police in Haidian District in Beijing on 18 May after he distributed a copy of “The Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party” – a series of nine editorials critical of the Chinese Communist Party’s history from the Yan’an Rectification Movement in 1942-1944 to the present. He was later criminally detained on suspicion of “using an evil cult to undermine law enforcement”

Qin Wei is currently detained at Haidian District Detention Centre. His lawyer has written to Haidian District Public Security Bureau and Haidian District Procuratorate to demand the authorities drop the charge against Qin Wei and release him from criminal detention citing the fact that freedom of religion and belief and freedom of expression are enshrined in the Chinese Constitution and that no state agency has ever officially declared that Falun Gong is an evil cult.

It is the eighth time Qin Wei has been detained because of his beliefs. The longest time he was previously detained was a five and a half years imprisonment in 2004. He was placed under solitary confinement, and subjected to “brainwashing” and forced labour. In his other previous detentions, he was tortured with electric batons to his face and was subjected to long periods of sleep deprivation, once according to sources for up to five months during the period of October 2003 – May 2004. After this he developed an irregular heartbeat leading to a cardiac arrest. He is currently at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

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

- Demanding that the authorities immediately and unconditionally release Qin Wei, as he has been detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of belief and expression;
- Urging them to ensure that while detained Qin Wei is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and that the conditions of his detention adhere to international law and standards.
- Calling on the authorities to ensure Qin Wei have regular access to his family and lawyers.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 JULY 2016 TO:

Director

Haidian District Detention Centre
25 Wenyanglu
Sujiatuo Town
Haidianqu, Beijing
People’s Republic of China 101400
Telephone: +86 10 62400850 (Chinese only)

Salutation: Dear Director

Minister of Public Security

Guo Shengkun
No 14. Dong Chang’an Jie
Dongchengqu
Beijing 100741
People’s Republic of China
Email: gabzfwz@mps.gov.cn
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Premier

Li Keqiang
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie
Xichengqu, Beijing 100017
People’s Republic of China
Email: english@mail.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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The spiritual movement Falun Gong was banned in China as a "threat to social and political stability" after its practitioners held a peaceful sit-in on Tiananmen Square in July 1999. The government established a dedicated office, referred to as the "610 Office", responsible for overseeing the crackdown on the Falun Gong and other "heretical cults", with offices operating from the central level down through provincial and local party and government organs.

Since then, tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been arbitrarily detained where the mission is to "transform" them by forcing them into renouncing their spiritual beliefs, often through the use of torture and ill-treatment. The vast majority of Falun Gong practitioners were held in Re-education Through Labour (RTL) facilities until this form of administrative detention was abolished in 2013. The Chinese authorities are increasingly using alternative channels of arbitrary detention, as well as criminal prosecutions of individuals who previously may have been sent to RTL.

Torture and other ill-treatment are endemic in all forms of detention, although China ratified the UN Convention Against Torture in 1988. Amnesty International also receives regular reports of deaths in custody, many of them caused by torture, in a variety of state institutions, including prisons and police detention centres. Other inmates and cell bosses are used by detention centre and prison authorities to monitor the behaviour of fellow inmates and mete out punishment including subjecting resistant detainees to sleep deprivation, stress positions, as well as other physical and mental forms of torture or other ill-treatment.

The criminal justice system in China is roughly divided into three distinct phases: the investigation phase conducted by the police; the prosecution phase, in which the prosecutors approve of the initial evidence needed to arrest a suspect and engages in further investigation to decide whether to indict a suspect; and the final trial phase carried out by the courts. In China in 2015, the conviction rate was higher than 99.9%, as in previous years. It is strategically important to voice concern in earlier phases of the criminal justice process – most notably, before the decisions to arrest or indict suspects are made.

UA: 140/16 Index: ASA 17/4275/2016 Issue Date: 17 June 2016