

URGENT ACTION

VILLAGE LEADER DETAINED AHEAD OF ASSEMBLY

Lin Zuluan, 72, a village chief in Wukan village in Guangdong province, has been detained right before a planned village assembly and protest related to illegal land grabs. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment and unfair trial.

In the early hours of 17 June 2016, more than 10 men took **Lin Zuluan** away from his home. They did not show police ID or an arrest warrant. Later that day, the Public Security Bureau in Lufeng city, which has jurisdiction over Wukan, posted an open letter stating that Lin Zuluan was under “compulsory criminal measures” on suspicion of “taking advantage of his position to accept bribes”. However, the family has received no formal notification of the detention.

Lin Zuluan was elected the village chief in 2012 after leading protests in 2011 against illegal land grabs. In June 2016, Lin Zuluan prepared an application to the county level government, alleging that government officials and businessmen have colluded to illegally sell the earlier confiscated land. He also criticized the government for failing to settle these land disputes over the past four years. Lin planned to hold a village meeting on 19 June 2016, to have all households vote and endorse a plan to engage in a peaceful protest to petition the county government on 21 June 2016.

Lin’s detention has aroused anger in the village. Video footage shows rows of riot police in helmets and shields watching, as hundreds of villagers protested for the release of Lin Zuluan on 19 June 2016. The police took away and later released Lin Zuluan’s grandson **Lin Liyi** on 20 June 2016 to question him about who had organized the village meeting and the mass protest.

On 21 June 2016, the government organized a press conference and broadcasted a video showing Lin Zuluan “confessing” to receiving bribes while acting as village leader. During the press conference, the authorities also accused Hong Kong-based news outlets Apple Daily and Initium Media of “inciting, planning and directing” events in Wukan.

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

- Urging authorities to not charge Lin Zuluan for simply exercising his rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly; and if tried ensure it is in line with international fair trial standards;
- Urging authorities to ensure that while in detention Lin Zuluan has regular, unrestricted access to his family and lawyers of his choice, and is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment;
- Urging authorities to end illegal land seizures.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 AUGUST 2016 TO:

Director

Shanwei City People’s Procuratorate
Tengfei Lu,
Shanwei Shi 516600
Guangdong Sheng,
People’s Republic of China
Tel: +86 660 336 6370 (Chinese only)
Salutation: Dear Director

Minister of Public Security

Guo Shengkun
14 Dong Chang’an Jie
Dongcheng Qu, Beijing Shi 100741
People’s Republic of China
Tel: +86 10 66262114 (in Chinese only)
Email: gabzfwz@mps.gov.cn
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Premier

Li Keqiang Guojia Zongli
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyou Jie
Xicheng Qu, Beijing Shi 100017
People’s Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 65961109

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

MR LIU XIAOMING, Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, 49-51 Portland Place W1B 1JL, Fax 020 7299 4049

Email press_uk@mfa.gov.cn Salutation His Excellency

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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

URGENT ACTION

VILLAGE LEADER DETAINED AHEAD OF ASSEMBLY

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Late in 2011, the village of Wukan, in China's southern province of Guangdong, made international headlines. For months, villagers there had been protesting what they said was the local government's latest attempt to secretly sell off their farmland to developers, as well as what they said was a village committee instated after unfair elections. In media interviews the villagers said the local Communist Party officials had not consulted them on the sale and that they only learned of it after construction on their farmland began. Residents said they had endured the theft of their land by local officials for nearly forty years and they had had enough. In September, villagers staged a demonstration, storming government office buildings.

In December, a thousand police descended on Wukan to arrest five people they claimed had organized the September protest. Villagers blocked police from entering, but finally police arrested Xue Jinbo, 43, and four others. On his third day in police custody, Xue Jinbo died. Family members and villagers told reporters that Xue Jinbo appeared to have been tortured, as he had dark bruises and cuts on his face. Officials from Shanwei city, which oversees Wukan, said they interrogated Xue Jinbo twice in custody, during which he "confessed" to being part of the September incident. Officials said that on his third day of custody, he appeared ill and they sent him to the hospital, where he died from cardiac failure.

After Xue Jinbo's death, enraged villagers chased their Communist Party leaders out of town. To quell the unrest, provincial authorities stepped in, promising Wukan could hold new village elections. In March 2012, villagers elected Lin Zuluan and another individual who had helped lead the land protests. Many in China celebrated the election, saying it marked a peaceful resolution to the stand-off and could serve as a democratic model for China. But the optimism might have been premature. To this day, there has been no independent investigation into Xue Jinbo's death.

Name: Lin Zuluan (m) Lin Liyi (m)
Gender m

UA: 146/16 Index: ASA 17/4308/2016 Issue Date: 22 June 2016