

URGENT ACTION

TORTURE FEARS FOR MISSING WEBSITE FOUNDER

Huang Qi, founder of Sichuan-based website “64 Tianwang” (www.64tianwang.com), was taken from his home in Chengdu, Sichuan Province by 15 public security officers on 28 November. His whereabouts are unknown and is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Huang Qi, 53, was taken from his home in Chengdu, Sichuan over two weeks ago on 28 November and his family have yet to receive any information or written notification from the public security bureau about his whereabouts or the allegations brought against him. Fifteen public security officers, from three cities across Sichuan Province; Mianyang, Neijing and Chengdu, were involved in Huang Qi's removal and the raiding of his home.

During questioning, volunteers of “64 Tianwang” were told by public security officers that Huang Qi had been criminally detained, however they failed to provide any further details about his situation. Pu Fei, a website volunteer, was taken away by public security officers on 28 November following a tweet about Huang Qi's disappearance, which was later deleted. He was released on 4 December.

Huang Qi's 83-year-old mother, Pu Wenqing, was last heard from on 30 November after being taken to a hospital in Sichuan. Her current location and condition are unclear. Huang Qi's disappearance has occurred amid a recent crackdown on human rights defenders in China and the longer it takes to hear news about his situation, the graver the fears that he is being subjected to torture or ill-treatment.

Further concerns for Huang Qi's wellbeing have been raised as he suffers from acute nephritis, a kidney disorder, and needs daily medication. According to China's Criminal Procedure Law, if Huang Qi has been criminally detained, the public security bureau has 37 days to decide whether to formally arrest, or release him.

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

- Urging the Chinese authorities to order an immediate, impartial, independent and effective investigation into Huang Qi's fate and whereabouts, publicly disclose its findings and bring those responsible to justice;
- Insisting that, if Huang Qi is in state custody, that he is immediately released, or, if credible evidence of an internationally recognized crime exists, is transferred to an official place of detention, charged promptly and remanded by an independent court, in line with international human rights standards;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and that he is allowed access to his family, a lawyer of his choice and adequate medical care.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JANUARY 2017 TO:

Director
Deng Yong
Sichuan Provincial Public Security
Department
9 Jindunlu
Chengdushi, Sichuan Sheng
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 28 86301114
Email: scgaxx@163.com
Salutation: Dear Director

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
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Li Keqiang Guojia Zongli
The State Council General Office,
2 Fuyoujie, Xichengqu,
Beijingshi 100017,
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 65961109 (c/o Ministry of
Foreign Affairs)

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

“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 before supposedly boarding a train back from Changsha, Hunan, to Beijing after visiting detained Hunan lawyer Xie Yang’s family, and 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.

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