

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER FACES CHARGES FOR REPORTING TORTURE

Human rights lawyer Chang Weiping was officially charged with “subversion of state power” on 16 April 2021, six months after police officers took him away for publicly detailing incidents of torture that he experienced during an earlier detention in January 2020. He is currently being held incommunicado at Feng County Detention Centre. Given his isolation and the reports of the torture Chang previously endured, there are grave concerns for his physical and mental wellbeing.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Director He Dong
Baoji City Public Security Bureau
57, Zhongshanxilu,
Weibin Qu, Baoji Shi,
Shaanxi Province,
721001
People’s Republic of China

Dear Director He:

I am writing to express my concern for human rights lawyer **Chang Weiping (常玮平)** who, according to an arrest notice received by his family on 16 April 2021, has been charged with “subversion of state power” (颠覆国家政权). As he appears to have no access to a lawyer of his choice and has previously been subjected to torture while in detention, I am deeply worried for his current and future wellbeing. Chang is currently being held at Feng County Detention Centre.

Taken away by the authorities on 22 October 2020, Chang Weiping’s detention came six days after he had publicly detailed incidents of torture that he experienced during the 10 days he previously spent under “residential surveillance in a designated location” in January 2020.

I find it distressing that the only visitor Chang Weiping has been allowed to see since he was taken away was his father on 25 November 2020. Allowed to talk for only 10 minutes, Chang reportedly behaved in such a peculiar way that his family fears he might again be subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. Despite multiple applications, all requests by Chang’s lawyers to see him have been rejected.

Meeting lawyers of one’s own choosing is an integral part of right to a fair trial and a fundamental safeguard for the prevention of torture and other ill-treatment. Denying Chang Weiping access to legal representation and to family members is in contravention of international human rights, including the Basic Principles for the Protection of All Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment.

I am also concerned that Chang’s parents and other family members have faced ongoing surveillance and intimidation. Followed whenever they leave their house, their phones have been taken away and any visitors they receive are questioned by the police. Alarming, Chang’s wife was threatened that she might lose her job if she continues to speak out on Chang’s case.

I therefore call on you to:

- **Release Chang Weiping immediately and unconditionally, 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;**
- **Pending his release, ensure that Chang Weiping has regular, unrestricted access to family and lawyers of his choice and is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment;**
- **Immediately stop surveillance, harassment and intimidation against the family members of Chang Weiping.**

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Chang Weiping is a human rights lawyer in Baoji City, Shaanxi, who is known for his work defending the rights of people facing discrimination based on their health status, sex/gender identity and sexual orientation. Due to his outspokenness and the sensitivity of his work, the Baoji City Judicial Administration Bureau suspended his law licence in October 2018. As a result of continued pressure and interference from the authorities, Chang Weiping was unable to obtain employment at other law firms in 2019. Finally, in January 2020, the authorities officially revoked his law licence.

Chang Weiping was taken away by the authorities on 22 October 2020. As he was living alone at the time, no one knew about the arrest until the authorities informed Chang's wife through a phone call later that evening. The authorities have yet to provide any documentation about the details of Chang's arrest.

On 26 October, Chang's father and lawyers Chang's family had appointed to represent him went together to Gaoxin District Branch of the Baoji City Public Security Bureau to seek information regarding Chang's arrest. All their requests – including for legal documentation, access to Chang and an application for bail – were rejected. Since then, Chang's lawyers submitted multiple applications to visit Chang, all of which were rejected.

The authorities allowed Chang's father only once to see him for 10 minutes on 25 November 2020. During the short visit, Chang seemed to be unusually discreet about his condition. He told his family not to speak up about his case and expressed his wish that they would take care of each other. According to his father, it sounded like he was saying farewell to them. His family are very worried that Chang might have once again been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

Prior to being formally arrested, Chang Weiping was held under “residential surveillance in a designated location” (RSDL). He had been previously detained for 10 days in January 2020 after attending an informal and private meeting in the city of Xiamen in December 2019 at which human rights activists discussed the situation of civil society and current affairs in China. [Ding Jiayi](#), another human rights lawyer who also attended the Xiamen meeting, has been detained since 26 December 2019.

Chang Weiping was taken into custody six days after releasing a [video clip on YouTube](#) in which he shared details of how he had been subjected to torture during his detention in January 2020. Chen Weiping said that police tied him to a restraining device known as a “tiger chair” for 24 hours a day and that he was interrogated 16 times. He also reported being subjected to heavy surveillance after his release.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or Chinese
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 28 June 2021
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Chang Weiping (He/Him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/3333/2020/en/>