

# URGENT ACTION

## LABOUR ACTIVIST DETAINED WITHOUT LAWYER

**Wei Zhili**, an editor of “New Generation” (*xinshengdai*) a website which monitors and reports on internal migrant workers in China, was taken away by police from his home in Shenzhen on 20 March 2019. No direct contact has been made with him since his arrest and, without access to a lawyer of his choice, he is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

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

*Director of Shenzhen City Pingshan District Public Security Bureau, Song Yiya  
1 Longping Lu, Pingshan Qu, Shenzhen, 518118,  
People's Republic of China*

*Dear Director Song,*

*Wei Zhili*, was taken away from his home in Shenzhen by a group of public security officers at around 2am on 20 March 2019. No arrest or search warrant was shown by the police while they were searching Wei Zhili's room and questioning him for an hour prior to his arrest.

*The police officers told Wei Zhili's father that they took him away based on the allegation of “disturbing social order”. Confiscating his computer and his mobile, the police said that Wei Zhili would be criminally detained and that they would send the family a formal criminal notification in a couple of days.*

*A police officer further threatened Wei's father that they would “educate” Wei Zhili in the detention centre, accusing him of “not having a proper job although graduating from a good school and being “brainwashed” to engage in anti-Communist and counter-revolutionary activities that disturb social order”.*

*Without any contact with Wei Zhili since he was taken away, his wife and family-appointed lawyers visited several public security authorities in Shenzhen and Guangzhou to seek information. Finally, on 26 March, Shenzhen Ping Shan District Police told his wife over the phone that Wei Zhili was detained in Shenzhen City No. 2 Detention Centre on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble”. There are fears that, without access to a lawyer of his choice, Wei Zhili is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.*

*Ke Chengbing*, another editor of the website “New Generation” (*xinshengdai*), also went missing on 20 March however it is unclear whether he has also been detained by the police.

**Therefore, we call on Director Song to:**

- *immediately and unconditionally release Wei Zhili unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that he has committed an internationally recognized offence and are granted a fair trial in line with international standards;*
- *ensure that Wei Zhili is not subjected to any torture or other ill-treatment and has regular and unrestricted access to a lawyer of his choice and are able to communicate with family members, without interference unless justified in line with international human rights law.*

*Yours sincerely,*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Wei Zhili is an editor of “New Generation” (*xinshengdai*), a website on monitoring and reporting the situation of rural migrant workers in China. New Generation also uses other mainland Chinese social media platforms to disseminate information about employment and labour laws and occupational safety and health. A lot of his recent work was focused on the plight of the workers from Hunan province who contracted silicosis due to lack of occupational health safety protection in the factories.

Wei Zhili has been committed to labour rights and feminist issues since he graduated from university in 2010. Upon his university graduation, he worked in Hand-in-Hand Workers’ Activity Centre (手牵手工友活动室) in Shenzhen providing legal advice, representation and organizing support to workers. *A blog by Tian Yu, a Foxconn suicide survivor, recalled that Wei Zhili was so attentive and kind and that he and a group of students had supported and accompanied her and her family to get through the hardest time of her life.*

Wei Zhili was also previously threatened by police about his work on labour issues. In that incident, police reportedly told him and other labour activists that labour activism is “disturbing social order” and “speaking for workers is anti-Communist and counter-revolution”.

Activists and human rights defenders continue to be systematically subjected to monitoring, harassment, intimidation, arrest and detention. Police detain an increasing number of human rights defenders outside of formal detention facilities, sometimes without access to a lawyer for long periods, exposing the detainees to the risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Since July 2018, China has arbitrarily detained and questioned dozens of student organisers, labour rights activists and factory workers in at least five cities in what appears to be intensified repression against the emerging labour movement in the country.

Over the years, China has made further efforts to reinforce its already oppressive internet censorship architecture. Thousands of websites and social media services are forced to censor their content, while some platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are blocked. In addition, a number of citizen journalists and directors of local news outlets that publicise articles and information about human rights incidents in China have been detained and imprisoned.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Chinese, English.

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 8 May 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Wei Zhili (he/him)