

URGENT ACTION

CHINESE LABOUR ACTIVISTS REMAIN BEHIND BARS

Four labour activists in China have been formally arrested on charges believed to be solely as a result of their legitimate activities defending workers' rights in Guangdong province, south-east China. Two labour activists detained with them have since been released.

Zeng Feiyang, the director of Panyu Workers' Centre and one of the region's most influential labour rights leaders, and activists **Zhu Xiaomei** and **Meng Han**, were formally arrested for "gathering a crowd to disturb social order" on 10 January. Activist **He Xiaobo** has also been formally arrested for embezzlement. They have all been detained since 4 December, alongside **Deng Xiaoming** and **Peng Jiayong** who were released on 10 January, and **Tang Jian**, whose location and legal status remain unclear.

Zeng Feiyang, Zhu Xiaomei and Meng Han are detained at Guangzhou City No. 1 Detention Centre, while He Xiaobo is held at Nanhai District Detention Centre in Foshan. None of them have had access to their lawyers since they were first detained, in violation of Chinese law.

Their detention and arrest forms part of a coordinated crackdown on the labour movement in Guangdong Province, at a time of escalating industrial tensions in the region. Thirty-three activists were also questioned as part of the crackdown, and then released. Official state media appears to be conducting a smear campaign against the activists, with several outlets accusing them of inciting workers to strike and of accepting funding from foreign organizations.

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

- Demanding the authorities immediately and unconditionally release Zeng Feiyang, Zhu Xiaomei, He Xiaobo, Meng Han and Tang Jian;
- Calling on them to immediately disclose the whereabouts and legal status of Tang Jian;
- Pending their release, urging them to grant all the detainees regular, unrestricted access to their family and lawyers, and ensure they are not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 MARCH 2016 TO:

Procurator-General of Guangdong
Provincial People's Procuratorate
Guangdong Provincial People's
Procuratorate

Huaqianglu, Tianhequ,
Guangzhou, Guangdong province
People's Republic of China

Tel: +86 20 8711 8999 (Chinese only)

Salutation: Dear Procurator-General

Director

Li Chunsheng

Guangdong Provincial Public Security
Department

No. 97 Huanghualu

Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province

People's Republic of China

Email: xf@gdqa.gov.cn,

info@gdqa.gov.cn

Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Premier

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. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 281/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/3089/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The industrial province of Guangdong, situated in south-east China, has been dubbed the “factory of the world” due to the numerous factories in the province that make up the supply chains of major global industries including textiles, electronics, consumer goods, and toys.

In recent years, China has enacted legislation and regulations to protect workers’ rights, but there is poor implementation of the laws. Independent unions are banned, and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) is the only body allowed to represent workers in China. ACFTU-affiliated unions at the enterprise level are often controlled by factory management, thus giving them little capacity to protect workers’ interests.

Numerous labour NGOs have formed over the past decades in order to help workers protect their legal rights. Labour leader Zeng Feiyang, who is currently under criminal detention, first founded his NGO in 1998. While labour NGOs have at times faced harassment by authorities and resistance from local factories, to a large extent they have been tolerated, and even encouraged, by the local and provincial governments, because they are recognized for their ability to bring greater social stability by helping workers through legal education training, filing lawsuits, assisting workers who have suffered industrial injuries, and providing other social services.

However, over the past year or more, labour activists have faced greater harassment and even physical threats and attacks, as the economy slows down in China, and many factories leave Guangdong province due to higher costs. China Labour Bulletin, a labour advocacy group in Hong Kong, recorded 301 strikes in China in November, which was an all-time high number. A total of 56 strikes were in Guangdong province, which was more than double the number of strikes in any other province.

The crackdown on labour NGOs also comes after an unprecedented crackdown on lawyers and activists beginning in the summer of 2015, in which over 250 were targeted, to date 18 have been formally arrested.

Name: Zeng Feiyang (m), Zhu Xiaomei (f), He Xiaobo (m), Peng Jiayong (m), Meng Han (m), Deng Xiaoming (m), He Minghui (m) and Tang Jian (m)

Gender m/f: Both

Further information on UA: 281/15 Index: ASA 17/3346/2016 Issue Date: 1 February 2016

