

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER SHARES ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE, DETAINED

Human rights lawyer Chang Weiping, known for defending the rights of people facing discrimination, was taken away by police officers in Baoji City, Shaanxi Province, on 22 October 2020. He is being held incommunicado under “residential surveillance in a designated location” (RSDL) on suspicion of “inciting subversion of state power”. The arrest came six days after Chang posted a video on YouTube sharing details about his experience of torture during the 10 days he spent in RSDL detention in January 2020. The fact that Chang was subjected to torture before and is being denied access to his family and lawyer increases the risk that he might be subjected to torture or other ill-treatment.

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 was taken away by police officers from Baoji City on 22 October. Chang is currently being detained incommunicado under “residential surveillance in a designated location” (指定居所监视居住) on suspicion of “inciting subversion of state power” (煽动颠覆国家政权). I am deeply worried that he might be subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while in police custody.

On 26 October, Chang Weiping's father went along with family-appointed defence lawyers to request information from the Gaoxin District Branch Public Security Bureau. Their requests for legal documentation, access to Chang and submitted the application bail were all rejected. Arbitrarily detaining Chang for practicing his freedom of expression and refusing him access to his lawyers and family members violate the principle of equality before the law and equal protection of the law under Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is distressing to learn that 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. The fact that Chang has previously been subjected to torture while in detention has significantly increased my concern for his current and future wellbeing.

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;**

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 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 lawyer's licence.

Chang Weiping was taken away by the authorities on 22 October 2020. As he is now living alone, 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 toget. All their requests – including for legal documentation, access to Chang and an application for bail – were rejected.

This is not the first time this year that Chang Weiping has been held under “residential surveillance in a designated location” (RSDL). He was 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. Another person who attended the Xiamen meeting, [human rights lawyer Ding Jiayi](#), remains in detention after being detained by police on 26 December 2019.

Chang Weiping was arrested six days after releasing a [video clip on YouTube](#) in which he shared that he had been subject 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 was interrogated 16 times. He also reported being subjected to heavy surveillance after his release.

“Residential surveillance in a designated location” is a measure that, under certain circumstances, enables criminal investigators to hold individuals for up to six months outside the formal detention system in what can amount to a form of secret incommunicado detention. When held without access to legal counsel of their choice, their families or others, suspects placed under this form of “residential surveillance” are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment. This form of detention has been used to curb the activities of human rights defenders, including lawyers, activists and religious practitioners. Activists and human rights defenders continue to be systematically subjected to monitoring, harassment, intimidation, arrest and detention.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English or Chinese

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 16 January 2021

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Chang Weiping (He/Him)