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## **Chinese state media reports that Chinese human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng will be sent back to prison 'shocking'**

“This is truly shocking news. We have not heard from Gao Zhisheng in 20 months - his family has not known if he is dead or alive and now the authorities send out a cryptic announcement that his so-called probation has been revoked,” said Catherine Baber, Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific Deputy Director.

“There is nothing lawful about the way the authorities have handled Gao Zhisheng's case. The authorities have tortured Gao Zhisheng, subjected him to 20 months enforced disappearance, held him captive and separated him from his family, causing unbelievable stress to his loved ones. This inhumane treatment must stop. He has suffered enough. His family has suffered enough. He must be freed.

“The authorities’ belated attempt to cast a veneer of legality over their treatment of Gao Zhisheng is truly shameful. Through a combination of illegal house arrest followed by enforced disappearance, Gao Zhisheng has already been captive for nearly double his original "suspended" sentence.

“The international community, diplomats, politicians and others have made Gao Zhisheng a high priority case in meetings with Chinese officials. But this has not been enough. We urge the international community to continue to press the Chinese government for Gao's release.

“The international community must not let up in their condemnation of this travesty of justice,” she said.

### **Background**

Gao Zhisheng is a prisoner of conscience. Since 2006, he has been repeatedly tortured. He remains at high risk of further torture and other ill-treatment.

In December 2006 Gao Zhisheng received a suspended three-year prison sentence for "inciting subversion." The authorities' tight control over him went far beyond the restrictions that may lawfully be placed on those under a suspended sentence. Initially he was held under illegal house arrest, then, following publication of an account of his torture, police took Gao Zhisheng away from his family home on 4 February 2009.

Fourteen months later in late March 2010, Gao Zhisheng briefly appeared in Beijing after the authorities came under domestic and international pressure to disclose information about him. At the time, rumours about his possible death at the hands of the authorities had begun to circulate. He gave a televised interview to the Associated Press on 7 April 2010 at a Beijing teahouse. In the interview, Gao Zhisheng said that "I don't have the capacity to persevere. On the one hand, it's my past experiences. It's also that these experiences greatly hurt my loved ones. This ultimate choice of mine, after a process of deep and careful thought, is to seek the goal of peace and calm."

Two weeks later, sometime between 9-12 April 2010, Gao Zhisheng was seen leaving his Beijing home and getting into a vehicle parked outside his building. He was carrying just a backpack when he left. This was last time he was seen or heard from. From then on, Gao was subjected to enforced disappearance, with spokespersons for the government denying all knowledge of his detention.