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China must reveal whereabouts of missing Mongolian activist

Amnesty International has called on the Chinese authorities to immediately reveal the whereabouts of Hada, a missing Inner Mongolian human rights activist, who was due to be released last Friday, and two of his family members.

Hada's wife Xinna and son Uiles have reportedly been detained in an unknown location for at least 10 days by the Inner Mongolian Public Security Bureau. Hada appears to have joined them since at least last Friday.

"China is using enforced disappearance to keep activists and their family members out of the spotlight while the world's attention is focused on China's first Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo" said Catherine Baber, Amnesty International's Asia-Pacific Deputy Director.

Hada, who like many ethnic Mongolians goes by a single name, was scheduled for release on 10 December 2010 after serving 15 years for "splittism" and "espionage" due to his involvement in the Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance. Amnesty International considered him a prisoner of conscience.

His wife Xinna and son Uiles were detained by authorities on 4 December and their family bookstore raided. The Public Security Bureau told relatives that Xinna was held on suspicion of running an illegal business, and Uiles was accused of drug-dealing.

The authorities urged Uiles to "clearly draw a line" between himself and his parents and not to engage in separatist activities. He was released later that day, only to be detained again on 5 December.

According to the Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center, Hada's sister-in-law Naraa received an anonymous CD of photographs of the three missing family members eating together, date stamped 10 December.

On 14 December she was reportedly summoned to the Public Security Bureau and informed that the three missing relatives were being held in a five star hotel. She was not told which hotel or for how long they would be held.

"The Chinese authorities must immediately clarify Hada and his wife and son's current status and whereabouts. They cannot simply hide people they find embarrassing or inconvenient" said Catherine Baber.

Hada served his sentence in Chifeng Prison in Ulaanhad, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. In 2004, an inmate who was released from Chifeng Prison reported that Hada was routinely abused there, subjected to disciplinary punishments ranging from solitary confinement to being chained onto a metal "shackle board".

In November, authorities placed writer and activist Huuchinhuu under illegal house arrest. She had been planning a party for Hada upon his release.

Before he was arrested in 1995, Hada was the general manager of the Mongolian Academic Bookshop in Hohhot, and involved in the Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance, which aimed to promote human rights, Mongolian culture and “a high degree of autonomy for China’s minority nationalities, as guaranteed in [China’s] Constitution”.