

URGENT ACTION

LAWYER SUPPORTING CHURCHES IN CHINA DETAINED

A prominent human rights lawyer and his two assistants have been detained in China as part of a wider crackdown on activists who are resisting the removal of crosses from churches. Zhang Kai has been placed under 'residential surveillance' in an unknown location, which means he can be held for up to six months without access to his lawyers or family.

Prominent human rights lawyer **Zhang Kai** was taken away by police from a church in Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, in south-east China on 25 August. Two legal assistants of his, **Liu Peng** and **Fang Xiangui**, and several members of a local congregation, including pastors, were detained at the same time. Some have since been released, but Zhang Kai has been placed under 'residential surveillance', that allows the authorities to hold him for up to six months at a location outside of the formal detention system, without access to his lawyers or family.

Zhang Kai is being held under suspicion of 'stealing, spying into, purchasing, or illegally providing state secrets or intelligence' to foreign actors and 'disturbing public order'. Liu Peng is said to be under 'residential surveillance' for the same charges, but this has not been confirmed. Their lawyers attempted to meet with them but were denied by the authorities. Fang Xiangui is facing a lesser charge and is currently being held at a detention centre.

Zhang Kai has been offering legal support to a number of churches in Zhejiang province after the authorities began demolishing churches and removing crosses and crucifixes in late 2013. This has intensified in recent months, and activists say over 1,200 crosses have been torn down and several churches destroyed. There have been a series of protests against the campaign, and it is feared the recent detentions are intended to deter any further resistance.

Zhang Kai is one of over 200 lawyers and activists that were targeted as part of a nationwide crackdown that began in July. According to his colleagues, he was released after being questioned, but was warned not to hold law lectures or continue representing any churches.

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

- Demanding the authorities immediately and unconditionally release Zhang Kai, Liu Peng and Fang Xiangui;
- Pending their release, urging them to grant Zhang Kai, Liu Peng and Fang Xiangui regular, unrestricted access to their family and lawyers, and ensure they are not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment;
- Calling on them to ensure the right to freedom of religion and belief is respected in China, with individuals protected and allowed to practise their faith free from fear, intimidation and attack.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 OCTOBER 2015 TO:

Minister of Public Security
Guo Shengkun
Ministry of Public Security
No. 14, Dong Chang'an Jie
Dongcheng Qu, Beijing 100741
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 1066262114 (Chinese only)
Email: gabzfwz@mps.gov.cn
Salutation: Your Excellency

Secretary for State Administration for Religious Affairs
Wang Zuo'an
Xicheng Qu, Houhai Bei Lu 44 hao
Beijing 100009
People's Republic of China
Fax: + 86 106409500
Salutation: Your Excellency

Wenzhou Police Chief
Huang Baokun
Wenzhou Police Station
Zhejiang Sheng, Wenzhou Shi
Jinqiao Lu 2 hao
325000
People's Republic of China
Fax: + 86 057789980149
Email: wzgj@wenzhou.gov.cn

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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Over 200 human rights lawyers and activists were detained, missing, or brought in for questioning as part of an unprecedented nationwide crackdown which began in July. Thirty people are still in detention or are unaccounted for. At least ten people are being held on suspicion of 'inciting subversion of state power', which carries a prison sentence of up to 15 years. The crackdown was accompanied by a smear campaign in state media, with lawyers and activists accused of being part of a criminal operation to 'undermine social stability'.

Local authorities in Zhejiang province are removing crosses from churches on the pretext of a wider urbanization and beautification campaign which is targeting illegal structures. However, the removal of over 1,200 crosses has led to a series of protests organised by Church activists in recent months. This has included sit-ins in churches and singing hymns to security officials. Several churches have said they have been subjected to audits and financial reviews, with some pastors detained on suspicion of 'embezzlement', after they resisted the removal of crosses.

Zhang Kai is a very important figure in combating the campaign against Christianity in Zhejiang. He published a small booklet to inform people of their rights in trying to defend the Cross (*shi jia weiquan shouce*). He also launched the Protecting the Cross Lawyers Group in July, just after being targeted in the crackdown against human rights lawyers. He was also representing many churches in their legal struggles to defend their rights.

Name: Zhang Kai (m), Liu Peng (m), Fang Xiangui (m)

Gender m/f: Male

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