

URGENT ACTION

CHINESE JOURNALIST FEARED DETAINED

A Chinese journalist who went missing in Thailand on 11 January is feared to be detained in China. His partner received a call from him on 3 February in which he said he had “voluntarily” returned to assist with an investigation, but she believes he was forced to go back.

Journalist **Li Xin** had not been seen or heard from since 11 January, when he sent an SMS message to his partner saying that he was travelling to the border between Thailand and Laos. On 2 February his partner received a call from Chengguan Town Police Station, Li Xin's hometown in Henan province, and was told she would receive a call from him the following day. He called on 3 February and told her to "lead a stable life" and "not to communicate with people outside", and that he "would try his best to return as soon as possible". He did not say where he was.

Li Xin fled from China in October 2015, firstly to India, where he revealed in media interviews that Chinese state security officials had put him under intense pressure to act as an informant against his colleagues and friends, and threatened to imprison him if he did not do so. After initially cooperating, Li Xin refused to continue, which he believed put him and his family at risk, so he decided to leave China. His partner, who remains in China, is taking care of their two-year-old son and is pregnant. After failing to be granted asylum in India, he travelled to Thailand where he was planning to apply for refugee status and seek settlement in another country.

Li Xin appears to be the latest of a series of cases where dissidents and members of ethnic minorities have been forcibly returned to China from countries in South East Asia.

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

- Demanding that the Chinese authorities immediately disclose Li Xin's whereabouts and legal status;
- Urging the authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally, unless he is formally charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offence;
- Pending his release, urging the authorities to ensure that he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment in detention, and that he has regular, unrestricted access to his families and lawyers.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 MARCH 2016 TO:

Director

Chengguan Town Police Station,
Xinjianjie,
Hui xian,
Xinxiangshi,
Henan Province,
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 373 6255110 (Chinese only)

Salutation: Dear Director

Director

Department of Public Security of Henan
Province,
9 Jinshuilu,
Jinshuiqu,
Zhengzhoushi,
Henan Province, 450003
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 371 65991155 (Chinese only)

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 first update of UA 24/16. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa01/3348/2016/en/>

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

South East Asian countries are increasingly violating the *non-refoulement* principle following pressure from the Chinese government. This principle prohibits the transfer of people to any country or jurisdiction where they would be at real risk of serious human rights violations or abuses. It is enshrined in numerous international instruments, and has achieved the status of customary international law, binding on all states regardless of whether they have ratified the relevant treaties, such as the UN Refugee Convention, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, or the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

A number of countries have forcibly returned dissidents and members of ethnic minorities who had fled China, in violation of their obligations of *non-refoulement*. In November 2015, Jiang Yefei and Dong Guangping, two Chinese activists recognized as refugees by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), were deported from Thailand to China, and are at grave risk of torture and other ill-treatment, as well as unfair trials (see UA 259/16: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/2880/2015/en/>). In July 2015, the Thai authorities forcibly returned to China some 100 individuals, mainly ethnic Uighurs of Chinese citizenship who were at risk of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment upon return. In December 2012, Malaysia forcibly returned six Uighurs, whose claims for asylum were pending with the UNHCR. In December 2009, the Cambodian authorities forcibly returned 20 ethnic Uighur asylum seekers. Of these 20, five are reported to have been sentenced to life imprisonment, while eight others are reported to have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from 16 to 20 year, after closed trials.

In addition, other persons known to be critical of the Chinese leadership, or who are linked to them, have vanished from South East Asian countries in recent months in unclear circumstances. For instance, Gui Minhai, a Swedish national of Chinese origin, went missing in Thailand in October 2015 and activists have voiced fears he was removed to China. On 17 January 2016, Gui Minhai appeared on Chinese state television CCTV making a “confession”, which may have been made under duress. Also in October 2015, 16-year-old Bao Zhuoxuan, the son of Chinese lawyer Wang Yu, and Chinese activists Tang Zhishun and Xing Qingxian, were taken away by uniformed officials and plain-clothed individuals from a town in Myanmar close to the Chinese border. After several days during which there was no information about their whereabouts, Bao Zhuoxuan was returned to his grandparents’ home in Ulanhot, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, in northern China. It is believed that the two men travelling with him are being held by Chinese authorities.

Name: Li Xin
Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 24/16 Index: ASA 17/3374/2016 Issue Date: 3 February 2016