

URGENT ACTION

CHINA RELEASES SWEDISH NGO WORKER

A Swedish national who had been held in secret detention since 3 January on suspicion of “endangering state security” has been released and deported to Sweden. His girlfriend has also been released, and remains in China.

Peter Dahlin, a Swedish national and cofounder of the NGO the Chinese Urgent Action Working Group, was released and deported on 25 January. He was detained in Beijing on 3 January while on his way to the airport. He was held without access to his lawyers or family and initially denied consular visits by the Swedish embassy, but was later granted at least one visit. On 19 January, Xinhua, the state-run news agency, broadcast him making a “confession”, in which he stated that he had “violated Chinese law through my activities here, ... caused harm to the Chinese government, ... (and) hurt the feelings of the Chinese people”. It is possible that this “confession” was made under duress.

Peter Dahlin’s girlfriend, **Pan Jinling**, went missing on 3 January and was also believed to have been held by the authorities. She has also now been released, but it is unclear at this stage what restrictions may be placed upon her.

The detention of Peter Dahlin and his “confession” has sent a chilling threat to civil society groups. It comes at a time when China has enacted or drafted a series of sweeping laws and regulations under the pretext of enhancing national security. Of particular concern is the draft Foreign NGO Management Law, which if enacted in the form presented for public consultation in May, would give the authorities – especially the Ministry of Public Security and the police – wide discretion in overseeing and managing the work of NGOs, and raises the risk that it could be misused to intimidate and prosecute human rights defenders and NGO workers. The draft law would severely restrict the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the case and take further action as appropriate.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 8/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/3249/2016/en/>.

Name: Peter Dahlin (m), Pan Jinling (f)
Gender m/f: Both

Further information on UA: 8/16 Index: ASA 17/3330/2016 Issue Date: 27 January 2016

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