

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED ACTIVISTS AT RISK OF TORTURE

Xu Zhiyong, a legal scholar and activist, has been detained in Beijing since 16 July, alongside two of his associates, **Li Huanjun** and **Li Gang**, on suspicion of “gathering a crowd to disturb social order”. Another of **Xu Zhiyong’s** associates, **Song Ze** has gone missing and his family believes he may be detained. All four are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

According to the detention notice, a copy of which has been circulated online, **Xu Zhiyong** was detained on 16 July 2013 by the Public Transportation Safety Protection Branch of the Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau and is held at the Beijing No. 3 Detention Centre. According to fellow activists, the authorities have taken his computers, mobile phone and some other possessions from his home. The lawyer who tried to visit Xu Zhiyong on 18 July also now appears to have been detained.

Li Huanjun and **Li Gang**, both associated with Gongmeng, an NGO Xu Zhiyong founded, were detained on 12 July 2013, also in Beijing. Li Huanjun is held at Beijing No. 1 Detention Centre and Li Gang at Beijing No. 3 Detention Centre. Further, **Song Ze** (also known as Song Guangqiang) who has been volunteering with Gongmeng, has been missing since 12 July. Friends and family believe that he too may have been detained.

In 2012, Xu Zhiyong authored a piece, *China Needs a New Citizens’ Movement*, published in English in May 2012 on the blog Seeing Red in China. In the article, he advocates for the rule of law, greater freedoms and democracy, and suggests activities for “new citizens” interested in pushing forward the “New Citizens’ Movement”. In recent months, dozens of people who have loosely associated themselves with the New Citizens’ Movement have been detained in Beijing, Jiangxi and Hubei. Some of them have been formally arrested for “inciting subversion,” “unlawful assembly” and “gathering a crowd to disrupt social order”.

Xu Zhiyong was director of an NGO, the Open Constitution Initiative (OCI; or Gongmeng), set up in 2007 to provide legal advice and assistance to the general public. It has now closed. In 2009, the authorities arrested him for “tax evasion” but he was released on bail to await trial. Since then, Xu Zhiyong has continued his human rights work and has frequently been called in for questioning by the police, or placed under illegal “house arrest”.

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

- Urging the authorities to release Xu Zhiyong, Li Huanjun and Li Gang immediately and unconditionally;
- Urging them to clarify Song Ze’s status and whereabouts;
- Calling on them to ensure that the four are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and have regular access to their families and lawyers of their choice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 AUGUST 2013 TO:

Director, Beijing Public Security Bureau

Fu Zhenghua Juzhang
Beijingshi Gong'anju
9 Dongdajie, Qianmen
Dongchengqu
Beijingshi 100740
People's Republic of China

Fax: 011 86 10 65242927

Salutation: Dear Director

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Zhang Yesui
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
3505 International Place, NW, Washington DC 20008, USA
Tel: 202 495-2266 | Fax: 1 202 495-2138 | Email: chinaembpress_us@mfa.gov.cn

Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Network office if sending appeals after the above date.

Minister of Public Security

Guo Shengkun Buzhang
Gong'anbu
14 Dongchang'anjie
Dongchengqu
Beijingshi 100741
People's Republic of China
Tel: 011 86 10 66262114 (Chinese only)
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Premier

Li Keqiang Guojia Zongli
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie, Xichengqu,
Beijingshi 100017,
People's Republic of China
Fax: 011 86 10 65961109 (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Xu Zhiyong teaches at the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications. After he was released on bail to await trial, Xu Zhiyong, along with several human rights lawyers including Teng Biao, in 2010 set up another initiative to continue their rights defence work which is called “Citizen” (‘Gongmin’ in Chinese, although in China people continue to refer to this initiative by the name of Xu’s previous NGO, Gongmeng).

In December 2012, Xu Zhiyong wrote an article expressing his condolences to ethnic Tibetans who had burned themselves to death in protest against repressive government policies, and their families. In February 2013, he distributed leaflets at one of the Beijing metro stations calling for people to gather to call for equal education rights. He was soon interrogated by the Beijing state security police. Between 12 April and 16 July 2013, Xu Zhiyong was put under house arrest.

In his article *China Needs a New Citizens’ Movement*, Xu Zhiyong describes the “New Citizens’ Movement” as a cultural, social and political campaign. The activities he suggests people take include disseminating the “New Citizen Spirit” online and in the streets; practicing “New Citizen Responsibility” by rejecting corruption and by doing good for society; using the “Citizen” sign or other identifying methods; participating in civic life by holding meetings to discuss the political situation; helping the weak; and uniting to share and coordinate work.

The article is available online at: <http://seeingredinchina.com/2012/07/11/china-needs-a-new-citizens-movement-xu-zhiyongs-%E8%AE%B8%E5%BF%97%E6%B0%B8-controversial-essay/>

The charge of “gathering a crowd to disturb social order” carries a maximum penalty of seven years imprisonment if the person is deemed to be a ringleader; “inciting subversion” and “unlawful assembly” five years. Ringleaders or those who are found to have committed major crimes on charges of “inciting subversion” will receive a minimum five year sentence.

Name: Xu Zhiyong (m), Li Huanjun (f), Li Gang (m), Song Ze (m)

Issues: Arbitrary arrest, Abduction, Freedom of expression, Incommunicado detention, Risk of ill-treatment and torture

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