

URGENT ACTION

TAIWAN NGO WORKER ARRESTED FOR SUBVERSION

Lee Ming-cheh, the first foreign NGO worker detained after the new Foreign NGO Management Law came into effect, has been formally arrested on suspicion of “subverting state power”. Detained incommunicado, he remains at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

According to an announcement made on 26 May 2017, **Lee Ming-cheh** has been formally arrested on suspicion of “subverting state power” by state security authorities in Hunan province, southern China. An Fengshan, the spokesman for the State Council’s Taiwan Affairs Office, provided no further information about Lee Ming-cheh’s whereabouts, however he did confirm that Lee Ming-cheh was detained by state security authorities when he entered China on 19 March 2017.

An Fengshan went on to state that, according to the state security authorities’ investigation, Lee Ming-cheh had made frequent visits to China since 2012 and “colluded with relevant individuals in the mainland, laying down an operational program, establishing an illegal organization and planning and implementing activities to subvert state power”. It was further alleged that Lee Ming-cheh and others admitted that they had “engaged in activities endangering national security”, however no information about who ‘the others’ referred to was provided.

This is only the second time the Chinese authorities have officially announced information about Lee Ming-cheh’s situation since he was detained in March. His detention was first officially confirmed by Ma Xiaoguang, a spokesman for the State Council’s Taiwan Affairs Office, on 29 March 2017, ten days after he first went missing. Answering questions at a press conference, Ma Xianguang stated that Lee Ming-cheh was under investigation on suspicion of “engaging in activities to endanger national security”.

Manager of an NGO in Taipei, Wenshan Community College, Lee Ming-cheh has supported civil society organizations and activists for many years in China. However, on this occasion, Lee Ming-cheh was visiting China for personal matters, arranging medical treatment for his mother-in-law.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Immediately disclose Lee Ming-cheh’s whereabouts;
- Immediately release Lee Ming-cheh as he has been detained solely for peacefully exercising his human rights;
- Ensure that Lee Ming-cheh is protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and that he is allowed access to his family, a lawyer of his choice and adequate medical care.

Contact these two officials by 14 July, 2017:

Director of Hunan Provincial Department of State Security
No. 162 Wanbao Dadao
Xianghukaifa Qu
Furong Qu
Changshashi
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

Ambassador Tiankai Cui
Embassy of the People’s Republic of China
3505 International Place NW, Washington DC 20008
Fax: 1 202 495 2138
Phone: 1 202 495 2000
Email: chinaembpress_us@mfa.gov.cn
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 71.17*

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**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Lee Ming-cheh is the first foreign NGO worker who has been detained under the Foreign NGO Management Law, which came into effect on 1 January 2017.

Lee Ming-cheh first went missing on 19 March 2017 after crossing the Gongbei border from Macao to Zhuhai, Guangdong, southern China. After a few days of no communication, his wife contacted the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Macao for assistance, however they were only able to confirm that he had left Macao. In addition to Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council also got involved and was able to confirm that Lee had entered China at 23:51 on 19 March 2017 and found no subsequent record of a hotel check-in or official arrest.

Lee Ming-cheh's wife Lee Ching-yu repeatedly asked the Chinese government to disclose Lee Ming-cheh's whereabouts, but she has not received any response to date. She only indirectly learned from Taiwan officials late on 27 March 2017 that Lee Ming-cheh was being held by state security officers. She traveled to the United States on 16-18 May to lobby the US Congress and the US government to call for Lee Ming-cheh's release.

The Foreign NGO Management Law created additional barriers to the already limited rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression. Although the law was ostensibly designed to regulate and even protect the activities of foreign NGOs, it transferred to the Ministry of Public Security – the state policing agency – the responsibility to oversee the registration of these NGOs, as well as supervise their operations and pre-approve their activities. The wide discretion given to police to oversee and manage the work of foreign NGOs raised the risk of the law being misused to intimidate and prosecute human rights defenders and NGO staff.

During the consultation period, Amnesty International made a submission to the Chinese government, urging that the draft law be withdrawn or substantially amended in order to make it compatible with international human rights law and standards, see: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/1776/2015/en/>.

Name: Lee Ming-cheh
Gender m:

Further information on UA: 71/17 Index: ASA 17/6401/2017 Issue Date: 2 June 2017