

URGENT ACTION

SIX HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS RISK TORTURE

Six human rights defenders are detained in eastern China, on suspicion of “gathering crowds to disturb social order”. They are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Ding Hongfen, Qu Fengsheng, Shen Aibin, Xu Haifeng, Wu Ping and Zheng Bingyuan, were among 30 people who on 22 June broke into a guesthouse in Wuxi city, in the eastern province of Jiangsu where a private security firm, working for the local authorities, were detaining five petitioners illegally. According to fellow activists, the group broke down doors and released the five people detained there, among them relatives of Ding Hongfen and Xu Haifeng. About 50 people in civilian clothes, apparently sent from a nearby police station, tried to seize Ding Hongfen and Xu Haifeng.

The next day, approximately 100 people, half in security personnel uniforms and half in civilian clothes, took Ding Hongfen, Xu Haifeng, her husband Qu Fengsheng and several others away. Police took Wu Ping, Shen Aibin and several others away on 26 June. Altogether 16 people involved in the "rescue action" were taken away in the following days, but only these six are still in detention on suspicion of having committed a crime.

After about 10 days arbitrarily detained incommunicado in secret detention facilities, Ding Hongfen, Xu Haifeng and Wu Ping were moved to regular detention centres on 3 July. Wu Ping is held at Wuxi City No.1 Detention Centre, Ding Hongfen and Xu Haifeng at Wuxi City No.2 Detention Centre. Amnesty International has been unable to confirm the whereabouts of Qu Fengsheng, Shen Aibin and Zheng Bingyuan.

Ding Hongfen, Xu Haifeng, Wu Ping and Shen Aibin have been assigned lawyers by their families. Lawyers for Ding Hongfen and Xu Haifeng were denied access to them on 9 July, but Ding Hongfen's lawyer was able to meet her on 11 July: she said she had been held in three different "black jails" between 23 June and 2 July. On 1 July, a man in civilian clothes claiming to be a police officer from the Wuxi city public security bureau interrogated her after handcuffing and shackling her to a "tiger bench" - a common form of torture in China. The following day, she was taken to a local police station before being transferred to Wuxi City No.2 Detention Centre.

Please write immediately in Chinese or your own language urging the authorities to:

- Ensure that Ding Hongfen, Qu Fengsheng, Shen Aibin, Xu Haifeng, Wu Ping and Zheng Bingyuan are not tortured or otherwise ill-treated, and have regular access to their families and lawyers;
- Ensure the six detainees are promptly informed of any charges against them and receive a fair trial, in line with international standards and without recourse to the death penalty. They should be released promptly if they are not to be charged with an internationally recognized crime
- Order an independent investigation into allegations that Ding Hongfen was tortured and otherwise ill-treated, and that Ding Hongfen, Xu Haifeng and Wu Ping were arbitrarily and secretly detained incommunicado.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 02 SEPTEMBER 2013 TO:

Director, Wuxi City Public Security Bureau

Zhao Zhixin Juzhang
Wuxishi Gong'anju
58 Chongninglu, Wuxishi 214002
Jiangsusheng
Fax: +86 510 81133034
Email: wxga_bgswgk@163.com
Salutation: Dear Director

Director, Jiangsu Provincial Department of Public Security

Wang Like Juzhang
Jiangsusheng Gong'anting
1 Yangzhoulou, Nanjingshi 210024
Jiangsusheng
Fax: +86 25 83526577
Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security
Guo Shengkun Buzhang
Gong'anbu, 14 Dongchengqu
Beijingshi 100741
People's Republic of China
Tel: +86 10 66262114. (Chinese only)

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

"Black jails" refers to a range of informal practices that authorities across China use to detain people illegally, outside recognized places of detention and beyond the protection of the law. They have primarily been used to detain petitioners (people seeking redress from the authorities for perceived injustices) without any due process and incommunicado. They are often run by local government officials but tolerated by the police. People held in "black jails" are often tortured or subjected to other ill-treatment. "Black jails" may be in hotels, hostels, mental hospitals, nursing homes and other unofficial sites. According to activists, local authorities in Wuxi city, Jiangsu province, have been arbitrarily detaining petitioners in some local guesthouses, schools and vacant houses in order to curb petitioning.

The five people who were released from the "black jail" in Wuxi city on 22 June had been petitioning the authorities for compensation for being forcibly evicted.

"Tiger bench" is an interrogation technique commonly used in China, although it violating the absolute prohibition on torture and other ill-treatment. It involves strapping a person's arms behind their back or behind a back support, while they are sitting on a low bench with their legs straight in front of them and strapped to it. A series of objects, usually bricks, are pushed under their feet so that their knees bend upwards. This can cause severe pain and injury.

The 2012 amendment to the Criminal Procedure Law formalizes the unlawful practice of secret detentions in China and may facilitate incommunicado detention and enforced disappearance. This is inconsistent with China's obligations under international human rights law. The authorities also impede detainees' access to families and lawyers, often in contravention of the new law, thereby increasing the risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Names: Ding Hongfen (f), Qu Fengsheng (m), Shen Aibin (f), Xu Haifeng (f), Wu Ping (m) and Zheng Bingyuan (m)

Gender m/f: both

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