

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS REMAIN IN DETENTION IN CHINA

Two activists associated with a prominent anti-discrimination NGO continue to be held in a detention centre in Henan province. They have been detained on suspicion of ‘illegal business operations’, but it is believed this is solely due to their connection with the organization Yirenping, as part of a wider crackdown on civil society groups in China.

Guo Bin, director of Zhongyixing (also named ACTogether), an advocacy NGO promoting the human rights of disadvantaged groups, and **Yang Zhangqing**, who has worked on Hepatitis B carriers’ rights and is involved in activism on consumer rights, were taken away by police in Guangdong province on 12 June. Both activists have previously worked for Yirenping, one of China most famous NGOs, which fights against the discrimination of women, disabled people, LGBTI people and those with pre-existing health conditions.

On 15 June, the activists were transferred to Henan province. Their families and lawyers were unable to find out their exact whereabouts until 19 June, when their lawyer were able to visit them at the Zhengzhou #3 Detention centre. According to the lawyer, Guo Bin has not been allowed to receive medication he needs for a skin condition or his glasses. Yang Zhangqing also reported being subjected to prolonged interrogations.

Yirenping’s office was raided by police in March, and many former employees and volunteers have reported being harassed or intimidated by the authorities in recent months. After five female activists also associated with Yirenping were released on bail in April following a month in detention, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that Yirenping would be “punished”.

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

- Calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Guo Bin and Yang Zhangqing;
- Calling on them to ensure that pending their release, Guo Bin and Yang Zhangqing have regular, unrestricted access to their lawyers and families, to any medical treatment they may require, and are protected from torture and other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 AUGUST 2015 TO:

Governor of Henan Province

Xie Fuzhan
Henan Sheng Renmin Zhengfu
Nongye Lu Dong 28 hao
Hennan Ribao Baoye Dasha
11 Lou Dong Bangongting
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Governor

Director of Zhengzhou #3 Detention centre

Zhengzhou Shi Disan Kanshousuo
Gu Xu Lu,
Huiji Qu,
Zhengzhou Shi, Henan
People’s Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Director

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security
Guo Kunsheng Buzhang
14 Dongchang’an jie
Dongcheng Qu
Beijing Shi 100741
People’s Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 6626 2550
Salutation: Your Excellency

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 137/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/1885/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

NGOs across China – in different provinces and working in different fields – have come under intense scrutiny in recent years by state security, who often question them repeatedly about any links to foreign funding. Some NGOs have simply been shut down. Weizhiming, a Hangzhou-based NGO working on women's rights and corporate and social responsibility, had to shut down in late May due to the pressure put on it when its director, Wu Rongrong, was detained along with other female activists earlier in the year. The Transition Institute, one of China's few independent research institutions on social and economic issues, was forced to shut down and its former staff members have faced intimidating police interrogation.

Both Guo Bin and Yang Zhangqing had previously worked with Yirenping, one of China's most famous NGOs working on anti-discrimination issues on behalf of people with pre-existing health conditions, people living with HIV/AIDS, and LGBTI issues. Guo Bin was the director of Yirenping's Zhengzhou office from 2007 to 2009, and he oversaw much of the organization's employment discrimination lawsuits on behalf of people who have Hepatitis B. Yang Zhangqing ran the legal section of China's most popular Hepatitis B support website – Gandan Xiangzhao, and he later was the director of Zhengzhou Yirenping.

China is seeking to further restrict the operations of NGOs. In May, the authorities released for consultation the draft Foreign NGO Management Law, which if promulgated in its current form, would jeopardize the activities or existence of numerous organizations and have a chilling effect on Chinese civil society. It would also give police new unchecked powers over foreign NGOs, with the very real risk that the law could be misused to intimidate and prosecute human rights defenders and NGO workers for their legitimate work. 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: Guo Bin and Yang Zhangqing

Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 137/15 Index: ASA 17/2005/2015 Issue Date: 6 July 2015