



Christian Lawyer tortured and imprisoned in China

July 2010

Chinese Christian lawyer Gao Zhisheng was abducted by Chinese security agents from the Public Security Bureau in his home village in Shaanxi province on 19 January 2009. He was taken into incommunicado detention.

He 'reappeared' in late March 2010 and was paraded before the international media.

Mr Gao spoke to reporters after resurfacing, saying he did not want to discuss his disappearance and whether he had been held or mistreated by the authorities. He stated that he hoped to be reunited with his family and he would be giving up his human rights activism.

"I don't have the capacity to persevere. On the one hand, it's my past experiences. It is also that these experiences greatly hurt my loved ones. The ultimate choice of mine, after a process of deep and careful thought, is to seek the goal of peace and calm", said Mr Gao.

On 20 April 2010 he was placed on a plane by four Chinese police officers and has not been seen since.

Gao Zhisheng authorized advocacy group China Aid Association to release his account of 50 days of torture he was subjected to by Chinese authorities in September and October 2007. The account was released on 9 February 2009.

Gao wrote the account in November 2007 while under house arrest in Beijing after prolonged beatings, including with electric shock batons, and electric shocks on his mouth and genitals. "Every time I was tortured", Gao wrote, "I was always repeatedly threatened that if I spelled out later what had happened to me, I would be tortured again, but I was told, 'This time it will happen in front of your wife and children'".

He was also told "Your death is sure if you share this with the outside world."

Over the years Chinese authorities have harassed Gao Zhisheng's family including psychologically intimidating and beating his daughter, his wife and detaining and harassing a teenage nephew.

Gao was under constant surveillance after receiving a suspended sentence for "inciting subversion" in 2006. However, on 9 January his wife and children (Geng He, 16-year-old daughter Geng Ge, and five-year-old Gao Tianyu) were able to escape from China and arrived safe in the USA via Thailand on 11 March.

As a lawyer, Gao has defended house-church Christians, coal miners and members of the Falun Gong in Chinese courts.



Gao Zhisheng's family in the US

Gao, who at one time had been honoured by China's Justice Ministry as one of its top ten lawyers for his service to the poor, resigned his membership of the Chinese Communist Party in 2005 to protest the banning of the Falun Gong.

What you can do

Write polite and respectful letters to (a letter to China will cost \$1.50 using a stamp marked 'International Post'):

Premier of the People's Republic of China
Wen Jiabao
Guowuyuan
9 Xihuangchenggenbeijie
Beijingshi 100032
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Mr ZHANG Junsai
Ambassador
Embassy of the People's Republic of China
15 Coronation Drive
Yarralumla, ACT 2600
Salutation: Your Excellency
E-mail: chinaemb_au@mfa.gov.cn

Mr. Yang Jiechi
Minister of Foreign Affairs
No. 2, Chaoyangmen Nandajie
Chaoyang District
Beijing, 100701
People's Republic of China
Salutation: Dear Minister
E-mail: webmaster@mfa.gov.cn

The Hon Stephen Smith
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600
Salutation: Dear Minister
(Ask the Minister to raise the points below with the Chinese Government)

Points to make in your letters:

- Express deep concern at the arrest and incommunicado detention of Gao Zhisheng who was arrested at his home in Shaanxi province on 19 January 2009, reappeared in late March 2010 and disappeared again while in the custody of four police officers on 20 April 2010.
- Call for his immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for exercising his internationally recognized human right to freedom of expression.
- Ask that his whereabouts be made immediately public.
- Seek assurances that he has been treated humanely while in detention.
- Also express concern at reports that Gao Zhisheng had been subjected to torture in September and October 2007 while in detention and ask that these reports be thoroughly investigated with anyone found responsible for carrying out the torture against Gao Zhisheng being brought to justice.

In addition you can sign an on-line petition to the Chinese Government advocating for Gao's release at <http://www.FreeGao.com/>

Gao's letter describing his 50 days of torture in 2007 can be viewed at <http://www.chinaaid.org>

Acknowledgement: The Justice and International Mission Unit would like to thank Tears of the Oppressed, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch for the information in this action.



Gao Zhisheng © CHRD