

29 November 2016

China – Disappearance of human rights defender Jiang Tianyong

Human rights defender Mr **Jiang Tianyong**, has not been heard from since the evening of 21 November 2016. He has previously been spontaneously detained, arrested, and forcibly disappeared by Chinese authorities for his support of high profile human rights defenders. Jiang Tianyong's wife, Jin Bianling, and associates believe that he has been disappeared again under similar circumstances. On 23 November, Jiang Tianyong's family members reported his disappearance to police in his home town of Zhengzhou, Henan Province. However, officials refused their attempts to file a missing persons report, instructing them to seek information in Beijing. However, Beijing police also refused to file a missing persons report.

[Jiang Tianyong](#) is a human rights lawyer who works to support marginalized members of Chinese society, such as Falun Gong practitioners and HIV carriers, as well as other human rights defenders and human rights lawyers, by providing legal assistance and advice. The human rights defender had his license to practice law revoked in 2009 as a result of his legitimate human rights work. Jiang Tianyong has also been engaged in advocacy and solidarity activities with those affected by the [709 crackdown](#) on human rights defenders, including prominent Chinese human rights lawyers [Chen Guangcheng](#) and [Gao Zhisheng](#). In May 2016 Jiang Tianyong also participated in the [Guo Feixiong Hunger strike relay](#) and the campaign for the imprisoned human rights defender, Guo Feixiong to receive a medical examination following a severe deterioration in his health.

At the time of his disappearance, Jiang Tianyong was concluding a visit to a Hunan Province detention centre in order to inquire about the status of Xie Yang, a lawyer detained in China's 2015 "709" crackdown. At 10:22 pm on 21 November 2016, Jiang Tianyong informed his wife that he had purchased his return train ticket from Changsha to Beijing, which was scheduled to leave 30 minutes later. This was Jiang Tianyong's final communication with his wife. Since that time, none of Jiang Tianyong's family, friends or colleagues have seen or spoken to him, and all attempts to reach him or identify his whereabouts have failed. On 23 November, family members reported Jiang Tianyong's disappearance to the Tongbolu Branch of the Zhengzhou Public Security Bureau. However, officials refused to file a missing persons report, citing jurisdictional constraints because although Jiang Tianyong is a resident of Zhengzhou, it is unclear where he was last seen. Officials told Jiang Tianyong's family members to contact Beijing police to seek information; however, Beijing police also refused to take up the case.

Over the past several years, Jiang Tianyong has been arrested, detained, tortured, and beaten by Chinese authorities on numerous occasions. As a result of his ill-treatment in detention, he has suffered a hearing impairment and broken bones. Front Line Defenders has previously advocated for Jiang Tianyong following his [2014 detention](#) for investigating an unofficial detention centre in China's Heilongjiang Province.

Jiang Tianyong's mistreatment is part of a larger wave of Chinese government repression of human rights lawyers, who over the past 18 months have been systematically and persistently targeted by government officials and law enforcement. Dozens of lawyers have been interrogated, detained, accused of spurious charges, and arrested. A number of those detained have been incommunicado for

months.

Jiang Tianyong's wife and local human rights organizations believe that Jiang Tianyong has been taken by authorities without any notification made to his family, as is required under Chinese law. If this is the case, Front Line Defenders strongly urges Jiang Tianyong's arresting authorities to notify Jiang Tianyong's family of his whereabouts and the reason for his arrest. If not, Front Line Defenders urges Chinese authorities to take all necessary steps to investigate Jiang Tianyong's missing persons case and effect his secure return to his family.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in China to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the disappearance of Jiang Tianyong and allegations of enforced disappearance by Chinese authorities with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. If Jiang Tianyong is currently in the custody of Chinese authorities, immediately inform his family and lawyer of the place of his detention, and allow them immediate and unfettered access to him;
3. Make all efforts to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Jiang Tianyong and guarantee his physical and psychological security and integrity;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in China are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.