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China: Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch editor Ding Lingjie detained by police incommunicado

On 22 September human rights defender **Ding Lingjie (丁灵杰)** went missing from the home of a family member in Zibo City, Shandong Province. Local police have told associates of the defender that she was arrested by police of Beijing's Shijingshan District, but Shijingshan police have refused to respond to inquiries about the defender.

[Ding Lingjie](#) has worked for several years as an editor and reporter for **Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch (民生观察)**, one of the most active platforms for documenting government violations of civil rights in China. In 2017, she founded "**Petitioner Voice (访民之声)**", a subsection of Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch focusing on government oppression against Chinese citizens who travel to major cities petitioning violations of civil rights to higher authorities. She has reported on abuses against petitioners and several other sensitive cases, including Nobel Prize winner [Liu Xiaobo](#), arrested founder of Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch [Liu Feiyue](#), and Chinese lawyers targeted in the "[709 crackdown](#)" of July 2015.

On 22 September 2017, family members who had been hosting Ding Lingjie in their home in Zibo, Shandong, returned home to find the defender and many of her belongings missing, as well as signs that the house had been searched. No arrest or search warrant was provided to the defender's family, in violation of Chinese law. When family members contacted local authorities to report the disappearance, local police informed them that, according to their internal computer system, Ding Lingjie had been arrested by police of Beijing's Shijingshan District. A fellow human rights defender made multiple calls to Shijingshan police seeking information about Ding Lingjie's location and status however Shijingshan police refused to provide any information.

Ding Lingjie's arrest coincides with preparations for the Chinese Communist Party's 19th National Congress, a major political event in Beijing in October. Chinese authorities frequently conduct extensive detention and arrest campaigns in preparation for these meetings and several sources have reported that Ding Lingjie's may be one such arrest.

Front Line Defenders demands that Chinese authorities inform Ding Lingjie's family of the defender's whereabouts and status, along with the reason for her arrest. Front Line Defenders further calls on Chinese authorities to restore Ding Lingjie's liberty, as it believes that her arrest is solely an attempt by Chinese authorities to hinder her work raising awareness of human rights violations in China.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in China to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Ding Lingjie;
2. Inform Ding Lingjie's family of her location and status, and provide all required documentation explaining the reason for her arrest;

3. Allow Ding Lingjie immediate and unfettered access to lawyers, and ensure that her treatment adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;

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.