

28 March 2017

### **China: Taiwanese human rights defender Lee Ming-cheh detained by Chinese authorities**

On 27 March 2017, nine days after the disappearance of Taiwanese human rights defender, **Lee Ming-cheh (李明哲)**, it was confirmed that he is currently being detained by the Chinese authorities. The human rights defender was travelling to the People's Republic of China in a personal capacity, related to the illness of a close family member.

[Lee Ming-cheh](#) works as an administrator at Wenshan Community College, where he has maintained an active role in supporting human rights, democracy, and the work of non-government organizations. He is a member of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party. Lee Ming-cheh's activism focuses on both Taiwan and China; he maintains a chat forum on transitional justice in Taiwan, and he has provided advocacy and other support for families of human rights lawyers in China.

On 27 March 2017, Lee Ming-cheh's wife, Lee Ching-yu, received notice from the Taiwanese authorities that the human rights defender had been detained by Chinese state security forces, nine days after his disappearance. Family and friends have been searching for information about Lee Ming-cheh's whereabouts since 19 March 2017 when he failed to meet a friend who had travelled to greet him in the arrivals hall of the Macau International Airport. Lee Ming-cheh had boarded an Evergreen Airlines flight from Taiwan to the Macau Special Administrative Region at approximately 8 am on Sunday, 19 March 2017 and was scheduled to land in Macau at 10:40 am. Family members were also able to learn from immigration records that, despite not appearing in the Macau airport, Lee Ming-cheh had crossed from the island of Macau onto the Chinese mainland later in the morning of 19 March 2017. This crossing likely took place in the company of Chinese state security.

In addition to Lee Ming-cheh's deprivation of liberty, he also faces an elevated health risk while in detention. The human rights defender suffers from high blood pressure, and his wife has expressed serious concerns about Lee Ming-cheh's access to medication.

Front Line Defenders expresses immense concern and strongly condemns the abduction and incommunicado detention of Lee Ming-cheh as it is believed that they are solely as a result of his peaceful activities encouraging the work of human rights defenders, civil society, and non-government organizations.

#### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in China to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Lee Ming-cheh;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Lee Ming-cheh, while in detention, 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;
3. Guarantee Lee Ming-cheh's access to representatives of the Straits Exchange Foundation, the Taiwanese body responsible for issues of shared concern between Taiwan and China;

4. Inform the family and lawyer of Lee Ming-cheh of the place of his detention and the reason for his detention, and allow them immediate and unfettered access to him;
5. Provide all necessary medical treatment for Lee Ming-cheh;
6. 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.