

29 November 2016

China – Human rights defender Liu Feiyue detained in an unknown location for receiving foreign funding

Human rights defender Mr **Liu Feiyue** has been in detention in an unknown location in Suizhou, Hubei Province since 17 November 2016. In response to their inquiries, Liu Feiyue's colleagues were informed that he had been accused of the crime of subverting state power, although no official warrant has been produced. According to Chinese law, persons found guilty of subverting of state power may be punished with life sentences. This criminal accusation has elicited severe concern from Liu Feiyue's family and members of the human rights community.

[Liu Feiyue](#) is the founder of the **Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch (Minsheng GuanCha - 民生观察网)**, which was launched in 2005 and has documented cases of forced eviction, secret detention and other instances of human rights violations from all over the country. He has been repeatedly harassed, detained and subjected to periods of house arrest because of this work. Liu Feiyue first drew government attention for publishing essays on state corruption and non-violent movements, for which he was detained for 15 days in 1996.

On the evening of 17 November 2016, Liu Feiyue sent a message to a colleague at Civil Rights and Livelihood Watch indicating that he had been forcibly detained by Suizhou authorities. In a later message, Liu Feiyue stated that he was brought to a house, and was being placed under residential surveillance. Following Liu Feiyue's detention, Suizhou authorities also conducted a raid of Liu Feiyue's home, without presenting a search warrant and confiscated pay stubs and other documents. Suizhou authorities informed Liu Feiyue's colleagues via text message that he was under investigation for subverting state power, on the basis of his receiving foreign funding for the website.

On 18 November Liu Feiyue's family went to the police station to ask about his whereabouts, and to see the official warrant for his arrest. However, police refused to say where he was being detained, and to provide the arrest warrant, stating that Liu Feiyue is being criminally detained and that he may be indicted for inciting subversion of state power. Authorities have also refused subsequent requests from Liu Feiyue's family for information. Neither his family or colleagues have been able to make contact with Liu Feiyue since his disappearance on 17 November 2016.

A human rights lawyer commenting on the legality of the case, expressed bafflement at the suggestion that receiving foreign funding could be construed as a means of subverting state power, and stated that such an allegation was "completely illogical".

This is not the first time that Liu Feiyue has been targeted because of his human rights work. The human rights defender has been regularly questioned, detained, and arrested by Chinese authorities. He has been frequently targeted in the past four years for extended detentions during key events and times of increased international attention, such as the 2016 G20 Hangzhou summit in September 2016, and plenary sessions of China's key government bodies. In 2016 alone, Liu Feiyue has already been detained by authorities in four separate instances. Front Line Defenders has advocated for Liu Feiyue during two such detentions in [2013](#) and [2014](#).

Front Line Defenders believes Liu Feiyue's detention to be motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work to defend human rights, in particular due to his role as a critical advocate for victims of human rights violations in China.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in China to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Liu Feiyue, as Front Line Defenders believes that his imprisonment is solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Inform the family and lawyer of Liu Feiyue of the place of his detention, and allow them immediate and unfettered access to him;
3. Ensure that the treatment of Liu Feiyue, 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;
4. Return the documents confiscated during the raid, as they are manifestly not linked to any criminal activity;
5. 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.