

Open letter from global civil society: China must release student activists and workers

18 December 2018

On 9 and 11 November, only days after China underwent a UN review on its human rights situation, Chinese authorities carried out a massive crackdown, forcibly disappearing student activists in five cities across the country. The missing activists are supporters of workers at Jasic Technologies, in Shenzhen, who have been fighting for their rights. This is the most severe case of repression against workers and students in China in recent years.

Today, marking the end of 37-day pre-charge detention period according to Chinese law, the undersigned groups call on China to release these students, activists and workers.

The Jasic workers' struggle started in May 2018, when a group of workers attempted to form a trade union according to the law; yet, in the months that followed, both the employer and local government denied workers' constitutional rights to freedom of association. Finally, police physically assaulted and arrested the workers in late July. Soon after the arrest of the Jasic workers, university students and worker supporters around the country formed a support group to back the workers, staging demonstrations to draw attention from the general public and calling for the release of the workers.

On 24 August, riot police with full gear and shields raided an apartment in Huizhou, Guangdong Province, where members of the support group were staying. They took away over 50 students and worker activists. On the same day, at least three activists from the support group were arrested in Beijing. International labour organisations [raised the alarm](#), and some media outlets covered these cases.

However, the crackdown has accelerated in recent weeks. On 9 and 11 November, the police carried out another mass arrest of members of the Jasic support group and labour activists: this included the forcible disappearance of 18 young activists and workers in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Wuhan. A recent graduate of Peking University and a member of the Jasic support group, was even physically assaulted on the school's campus; instead of protecting him, the University's response was to excuse the act of the police.

Thus far, the four workers taken into police custody in July, and one labour NGO worker arrested in August, have been charged with 'gathering a crowd to disturb social order'; their lawyers have been denied access to their clients since at least October. Four activists have been charged with 'picking quarrels and provoking troubles'. They are currently being held in 'residential surveillance in a designated location', with no access to lawyer; are in 'residential surveillance in a designated location', which UN experts consider may constitute a form of forcible disappearance; or have been simply disappeared. The eighteen activists and workers taken in early November are still missing, with no official notification to lawyers or family members.

We are gravely concerned not only about the blatant violation of freedoms of association, assembly and expression and the targeting of activists and workers, but also about the personal safety and wellbeing of these individuals. As seen in the many cases of the rights lawyers and human rights defenders previously detained, especially since the '709

crackdown' in July 2015, victims of incommunicado and arbitrary detention are at serious risk of torture.

We call on the Chinese authorities to:

- immediately and unconditionally release all workers and human rights activists who are detained or disappeared;
- ensure that anyone in state custody is free from any torture or cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, and has regular access to his family and to a lawyer of his or her choice; and
- end the use of physical assault, threats, and forcible disappearance to punish and deter anyone who seek to undertake work to promote human rights.

Annex – Names of the detained

1. **Mi Jiuping**, male, Jasic worker, charged with criminal offence and awaiting trial since July
2. **Yu Juncong**, male, charged with criminal offence and awaiting trial since July
3. **Liu Penghua**, male, charged with criminal offence and awaiting trial since July
4. **Li Zhan**, male, charged with criminal offence and awaiting trial since July
5. **Shen Mengyu**, female, Graduate of Sun Yat-sen University, forcibly disappeared since August
6. **Yue Xin**, female, Graduate of Peking University, forcibly disappeared since August
7. **Gu Jiayue**, female, Graduate of Peking University, under “residential surveillance in a designated location” since August
8. **Xu Zhongliang**, male, Graduate of University of Science and Technology Beijing, under “residential surveillance in a designated location” since August
9. **Zheng Yongming**, male, Graduate of Nanjing Agricultural University, under “residential surveillance in a designated location” since August
10. **Shang Kai**, male, Editor of a left media site “HongSeCanKao”, arrested in August
11. **Fu Changguo**, male, Staff of a workers’ center “Da Gong Zhe”, detained since August
12. **Yang Shaoqiang**, male, Graduate of University of Science and Technology Beijing, under “residential surveillance in a designated location” since August
13. **Tang Jialiang**, male, Postgraduate student of Beijing Institute of Technology, arrested in early September - **RELEASED**
14. **Wu Lijie**, male, Editor of a left media site “HongQi”, arrested on October 24th
15. **Zhang Shengye**, female, Graduate of Peking University, arrested in Beijing on November 9th
16. **Sun Min**, female, Graduate of Peking University, arrested in Guangzhou on November 9th
17. **Zong Yang**, male, Graduate of Peking University, arrested in Beijing on November 9th
18. **Liang Xiaogang**, male, Worker Supporter, arrested in Shanghai on November 9th
19. **Tang Xiangwei**, male, Worker Supporter, arrested in Wuhan on November 11th - **RELEASED**
20. **Zheng Shiyu**, male, Worker Supporter, arrested in Wuhan on November 11th
21. **Zheng Yiran**, male, Graduate of Peking University, arrested in Beijing on November 9th
22. **Lu Daxing**, male, Graduate of Nanjing University of Science and Technology, arrested in Beijing on November 9th
23. **Li Xiaoxian**, female, Graduate of Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine, arrested in Beijing on November 9th
24. **He Pengchao**, male, Graduate of Peking University, founder of Qing Ying Dreamworks Social Worker Center, arrested in Beijing on November 9th
25. **Wang Xiangyi**, female, Graduate of Peking University, founder of Qing Ying Dreamworks Social Worker Center, arrested in Shenzhen on November 9th
26. **Jian Xiaowei**, female, Graduate of Remin University, staff of Qing Ying Dreamworks Social Worker Center, arrested in Shenzhen on November 9th
27. **Kang Yanyan**, female, Graduate of University of Science and Technology Beijing, staff of Qing Ying Dreamworks Social Worker Center, arrested in Shenzhen on November 9th - **RELEASED**

28. **Hou Changshan**, female, Graduate of Beijing Foreign Studies University, staff of Qing Ying Dreamworks Social Worker Center, Arrested in Shenzhen on November 9th
29. **Wang Xiaomei**, female, Graduate of Nanjing University of Information Science and Technology, staff of Qing Ying Dreamworks Social Worker Center, Arrested in Shenzhen on November 9th
30. **He Xiumei**, female, Supporter of Qing Ying Dreamworks Social Worker Center, Arrested in Shenzhen on November 9th
31. **Zou Liping**, female, Local trade union staff, Arrested in Shenzhen on November 9th
32. **Li Ao**, male, Local trade union staff, Arrested in Shenzhen on November 9th