

URGENT ACTION

NGO WORKER MISSING IN CHINA

Zhuang Lu, a woman who works for the legal aid and research organization, the Open Constitution Initiative (OCI, known as *Gongmeng* in Chinese), in the Chinese capital, Beijing, has been missing since 22 August. She may be in police custody and is at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Twenty-seven-year-old **Zhuang Lu**, the OCI's Finance Secretary, was detained by police on 29 July, along with male lawyer Xu Zhiyong, one of the founders of the OCI. On 13 August, both Zhuang Lu and Xu Zhiyong were formally arrested on suspicion of "tax evasion".

On 23 August, Beijing police released Xu Zhiyong on bail pending investigation. The police told Xu Zhiyong that Zhuang Lu had been released a day earlier. However, her exact whereabouts are unknown. On 26 August, Zhuang Lu phoned her mother, telling her that she had been released on bail, but that she was still being monitored by police, and was not allowed to return to her home or leave Beijing. Her family and colleagues have not heard from her since then. Amnesty International fears that she may still be in police custody.

On 17 July, the Beijing authorities announced that they would be shutting down the OCI office, as it had not registered properly as a civil society organization.

Sources in China believe that Chinese authorities released Xu Zhiyong to silence domestic protests concerning the closure of the OCI. Sources are also concerned that Zhuang Lu is being detained in an attempt to keep OCI staff and volunteers from speaking publicly about the closure, and to halt OCI's human rights work.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Mandarin Chinese or your own language:

- √ Calling on the authorities to release Zhuang Lu immediately and unconditionally unless she is charged with an internationally recognizable offence;
- √ urging the authorities to guarantee that Zhuang Lu is not tortured or ill-treated while she remains in custody;
- √ urging the authorities to provide information on her whereabouts, and the reasons and legal basis for her continued detention.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 OCTOBER 2009 TO:

Director of the Beijing Public Security

Bureau

MA Zhenchuan Juzhang
Beijingshi Gong'anju
9 Qianmen Dongdajie
Dongchengqu
Beijingshi 100740
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 85222320
Salutation: Dear Director

Minister of Public Security of the

People's Republic of China

MENG Jianzhu Buzhang
Gong'anbu
14 Dongchang'anjie
Dongchengqu
Beijingshi 100741
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 63099216 (it may be difficult to get through, please keep

trying)

Salutation: Your Excellency

AND COPIES TO:

Prime Minister
WEN Jiabao Guojia Zongli
The State Council General Office
2 Fuyoujie
Xichengqu
Beijingshi 100017
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 65961109

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of China accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/ASA17/043/2009/en>.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 14 July, the OCI received notices from the national and Beijing taxation bureaus ordering it to pay a fine of 1.42 million yuan (over US\$200,000) for tax violations, an amount that is five times higher than the taxes that the authorities said the OCI had not paid. On 17 July, when representatives from the Beijing Civil Affairs Bureau came to the OCI's office to announce that it would be closed down, they took away computers and other office machines, as well as files and documents. OCI's representatives have made attempts to pay the fine but it remains unclear whether these payments have been accepted and how this will affect the government's investigation.

Since its establishment in 2003, OCI has provided legal assistance to victims of human rights violations including those of forced evictions and families of victims of the scandal around poisoned milk. It recently used the national Regulation on Open Government Information to request various government branches to be transparent about their spending of public money.

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