



## Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD)

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Promoting human rights and empowering grassroots activism in China

### China Human Rights Briefing

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#### Arbitrary Detention

##### **Activist Zhu Chengzhi Arrested for “Inciting Subversion,” Had Questioned Circumstances of Li Wangyang’s Death**

Hunan activist Zhu Chengzhi (朱承志), who has been detained incommunicado for over two months, was arrested on a charge of “inciting subversion of state power,” according to an official police notice dated July 25. Zhu’s arrest is likely tied to his questioning of suspicious circumstances around the death of 1989 labor leader Li Wangyang (李旺阳), which police ruled a suicide. After Li was found dead in a hospital room in Shaoyang City on June 6, many of his supporters called for accountability from authorities who later ordered an autopsy of Li’s body and cremation without his family’s permission. Of those who have sought to demand clarity for Li and his family, Zhu Chengzhi was the first person known to have been formally arrested, and he has remained in custody at the Shaoyang City Detention Center.<sup>1</sup>

##### **Activist Detained, Tortured for Seeking Information on China’s Human Rights Action Plan**

More than a dozen activists were recently seized by police in Beijing for trying to submit an application for public disclosure about China’s second “[National Human Rights Action Plan](#),” with one activist being criminally detained and

reportedly tortured. On August 13, officers dragged away activists en route to the State Council Information Office and temporarily held them at police stations. Peng Lanlan (彭兰岚) of Hunan Province, who had surveyed petitioners in order to append their insights to the application, remains detained on a charge of “obstructing official business.” Police have also tortured Peng by tying her to a “tiger bench,”\* according to an activist who had been released. State Council representatives have cited “instructions from above” in refusing to accept appeals to reveal information about the action plan, such as who formulated it and whose views were solicited in its creation. Observers of China’s deteriorating human rights situation doubt that the new plan, released in June and to be in effect through 2015, will bring about any better progress than the first one, which was officially implemented in 2009 and 2010 but widely criticized for falling well short of achieving rights protections.<sup>ii</sup>

### **Petitioner’s Son Criminally Detained, Held Incommunicado Almost Three Months**

Shen Huai (沈淮), son of petitioner Shen Hongxia (沈宏霞), has been criminally detained and held incommunicado for nearly three months in apparent retaliation against his mother’s quest for child support that she has been seeking from her ex-husband. Shen Huai was detained on suspicion of “undermining official business” on May 17 after he tried to free his mother from the grasp of officers who had seized her in Hefei City, where she had gone to air her grievance. Shen Huai is being held at the Hefei No. 2 Detention Center. Shen Hongxia, who at one time was told that her son had been released, has not learned anything about his conditions in detention, and speculates that authorities are holding him in order to keep her petitioning in check.<sup>iii</sup>

### **Law & Policy Watch**

#### **Lawyers’ Call for “Adjustments” to RTL Covered in Official Media**

A group of 10 Chinese lawyers have sent a joint letter to China’s Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Public Security calling for “adjustments” to the Re-education through Labor (RTL) system. Notably, the attorneys’ views have been widely [reported](#) (Chinese) by official media. The letter’s authors, including human rights lawyers Li Fangping (李方平) and Liu Weiguo (刘卫国), have recommended changes after the story of a Hunan woman, Tang Hui (唐慧), grabbed national attention. Tang was initially sent to RTL for challenging the prison sentences of men who raped her daughter. In the lawyers’ letter, they push for procedural improvements for hearings, greater openness about typically secretive decisions, and more accountability for RTL authorities. The lawyers further recommend that attorneys be granted more involvement in RTL cases, including the right to meet with clients. For years, human rights lawyers and activists have pushed for the abolition of RTL. While there has been speculation that the National People’s Congress will reform or even dismantle the administrative detention system, RTL continues to be used to retaliate against outspoken Chinese citizens.<sup>iv</sup>

## Special Notice

### CHRD Makes UN Submission in Behalf of Imprisoned Activist Li Tie

CHRD has submitted allegations of human rights violations to Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council in behalf of human rights activist [Li Tie \(李铁\)](#), who is serving a 10-year prison sentence after being convicted of “inciting subversion of state power” in January 2012. The [submission](#) about Li, which was sent on August 13, alleges arbitrary detention as well as violations of freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and independence of judges and lawyers. Detained in September 2010, Li was tried in April 2011 but not sentenced until eight months later. “Evidence” presented against him at trial included articles he wrote criticizing the government, his membership in the China Social Democracy Party, his participation in discussions hosted on “reactionary” websites, and his “reactionary” comments made at gatherings with friends. During the past decade, Li Tie has written many articles promoting democracy, constitutional government, and direct local elections. He has also organized activities to honor the memory of Lin Zhao (林昭), the well-known Beijing University student jailed in the 1950s and executed by the government in 1968 for her views and writings.<sup>v</sup>

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Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) is a China-based, non-political, non-governmental network of grassroots and international activists promoting human rights and empowering grassroots activism in China. CHRD’s objective is to support human rights activists in China, monitor human rights developments, and assist victims of human rights abuses. CHRD advocates approaches that are non-violent and based on rule of law. CHRD conducts research, provides information, organizes training, supports a program of small grants to human rights activists and researchers, and offers legal assistance.

*Chinese Human Rights Briefing* (CHRB) is a newsletter providing the latest information on China's human rights developments. Our information originates from Chinese human rights defenders and groups at the grassroots. CHRD is responsible for all information published in CHRB. A compilation of each week’s CHRBs, updated daily, is available on our website.

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<sup>i</sup> “Rights Activist Zhu Chengzhi Arrested for ‘Inciting Subversion of State Power’” ([紧急关注：维权人士朱承志被以“煽动颠覆国家政权罪”逮捕](#)), August 9, 2012, WQW; “Zhu Chengzhi, Who Questioned Li Wangyang’s Death, Held Again in Detention Center After Punishment Expired” ([关注李旺阳死因的朱承志拘留期满又被关押进看守所](#)), July 19, 2012, WQW; “Hunan Rights Defender Zhu Chengzhi Given 10-Day Detention for Refusing to Promise to Stop Questioning Circumstances of Li Wangyang’s Death” ([湖南维权人士朱承志因拒写不过问李旺阳事件保证书被拘留 10 天](#)), June 10, 2012, WQW; “National Security Forces Barge Into Home, Take Away Ms. Huang Lihong for Showing

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Concern About Li Wangyang” ([紧急关注: 湖南关注李旺阳的黄丽红女士被国保砸门带走](#)), June 11, 2012, WQW; “Several Hunan Democracy Activists Taken Away by Police Over Li Wangyang Matter” ([湖南多名民主维权人士因李旺阳事件被警方带走](#)), June 9, 2012, WQW; “Li Wangyang Autopsy Perhaps Already Conducted, Li’s Family & Fellow Shaoyang Activists Under Tight Control” ([李旺阳可能已被尸检, 李旺阳家属及邵阳维权人士受到严密控制](#)), June 8, 2012, WQW; “Friends of Li Wangyang Come to Shaoyang & Fall Under Police Control, Li’s Death Declared ‘Suicide’” ([到邵阳想送李旺阳的朋友被控制, 李旺阳被宣布“自杀”](#)), June 7, 2012, WQW; “Li Wangyang’s Family Urgently Seeking Legal Assistance” ([李旺阳家属急求律师仗义援助](#)), June 7, 2012, WQW; “Family Requests Relevant Experts Perform Autopsy on Li Wangyang” ([李旺阳家属强烈要求由相关专家对李旺阳进行尸检](#)), June 6, 2012, WQW; “Special Alert: June Fourth Victim Li Wangyang’s Corpse Taken Away by Police” ([特别关注: 六四受害者李旺阳的遗体被警方强行运走](#)), June 6, 2012, WQW; “Shaoyang Democracy Activist, June Fourth Victim Li Wangyang Suddenly Passes Away” ([邵阳民主人士, 六四受难者李旺阳突然离世](#)), June 6, 2012, WQW

ii “Hunan Rights Activist Peng Lanlan Criminally Detained for Surveying Opinions on Human Rights”

([紧急关注: 湖南维权人士彭兰岚因征集人权调查表在北京被刑事拘留](#)), August 15, 2012, WQW;

“Many Seized by Police While Applying for Public Information Disclosure of ‘National Human Rights

Action Plan” ([因参与《国家人权行动计划》的信息公开申请多人被警方扣押](#)), August 14, 2012,

WQW; “Cao Shunli, Others Seized by Police on Way to Submitting Application to State Council

Information Office” ([曹顺利等人欲向国务院新闻办递交申请书被警方扣押](#)), July 1, 2012, WQW;

“Cao Shunli, Other Rights Defenders Apply for Information Disclosure From State Council

Information Office” ([曹顺利等维权人士向国务院新闻办申请信息公开](#)), June 25, 2012, WQW

[\*Tiger bench: A torture victim is forced to sit upright on a long bench with hands tied behind their back. Their thighs are fastened to the bench while feet are raised off the floor by bricks, putting extreme strain on the knees. Torture using a “tiger bench” is extremely painful, especially when conducted for a long period of time.]

iii “Anhui Petitioner Chen Hongxia’s Son Criminally Detained Incommunicado for Nearly Three Months” ([安徽访民沈宏霞儿子被刑拘, 近三个月无音讯](#)), August 13, 2012, WQW

iv “Letter by 10 Lawyers to Ministry of Justice Points Out Five Ills of RTL System” ([10名律师上书司法](#)

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[部直指劳教制度五弊病](#)), August 15, 2012, Xinhua; “Rights Defense Network: Abolish RTL, Implement Rule of Law, Safeguard Human Rights” ([维权网：废除劳教 实行法治 保障人权](#)), August 14, 2012, WQW

<sup>v</sup> [Submission to UN on Case of Li Tie – August 13, 2012, CHRD](#)