

“SWEEPED UNDER THE RUG”

Systemic Failures
to End Torture in
the People's Republic
of China



CHINESE
HUMAN
RIGHTS
DEFENDERS

Promoting human rights &
reempowering grassroots activism in China.

September 16, 2026

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Executive Summary

In cases involving human rights defenders, it is normal for Chinese authorities to employ torture to extract confessions, fabricate evidence, violate legal procedures, manufacture wrongful convictions, and subject individuals to criminal persecution.

- Family member of currently imprisoned rights activist, April 2026¹

Beatings, electric shocks, solitary confinement: although the Chinese government signed the United Nations Convention against Torture forty years ago,² and adopted some domestic prohibitions against these abuses, periodic reviews by international bodies and documentation from independent civil society demonstrate that torture by those authorities persists. Prisoners of conscience are at especially grave risk.

The Committee against Torture (CAT) last reviewed the Chinese government's record on those abuses in 2015. At that time, the Network of Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) found that flawed, contradictory, and incomplete laws and regulations, and authorities' lax implementation and weak enforcement, enabled ongoing, widespread torture.³ CAT concluded at the end of the review that the "practice of torture and ill-treatment is still deeply entrenched in the criminal justice system."⁴

New CHRD research—examining more than 200 cases involving torture during deprivation of liberty between 2016 and 2025—reveals that Chinese authorities persist in their reliance on torture, typically to extract confessions from prisoners of conscience. Dozens of human rights defenders, lawyers, and family members described horrific treatment at the hands of authorities, suggesting that legislation enacted since 2015 has done little to end those abuses.

Between 2016 and 2025, prisoners of conscience were most commonly tortured through the deprivation of adequate medical care. Thirty-five percent of the cases of prisoners of conscience reviewed by CHRD reported such treatment; 16 died in detention as an apparent result of the lack of medical care. One out of 5 prisoners of conscience alleged they had been beaten, and 15 percent said that they had been tortured to force a confession. CHRD documented cases of torture in every single province, region, municipality, and special administrative region except for Macau.

Torture persists because Chinese authorities typically refuse to investigate and prosecute allegations made by prisoners of conscience; in some cases, complaints lead to further punishment. CHRD found that in only one percent of the cases examined for this report

¹ CHRD interview with family member of imprisoned human rights defender, April 2026.

² The Chinese government signed the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 1986 and ratified it in 1988.

³ CHRD and a Coalition of NGOs, "Joint Civil Society Report Submitted to UN Committee against Torture", October 2015, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/11/joint-civil-society-report-submitted-to-un-committee-against-torture-october-2015/>

⁴ Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations on fifth periodic report of China, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 20.

was there any official indication of investigations into the allegations, and found no information suggesting actual prosecutions or other disciplinary actions for those responsible. The Chinese government's 2025 report to the Committee against Torture included no information regarding accountability for officials alleged to have tortured prisoners of conscience.

Beijing is increasingly belligerent in rejecting allegations of torture from international human rights bodies, and thwarts international accountability efforts that seek to improve the human rights situation through suggested legislative and policy changes. The government makes demonstrably false statements to UN bodies with blanket denials of abuses that are contradicted by its own data and documentation, such as this response to a United Nations (UN) human rights body in 2021: "China is a country governed by the rule of law...the risk of being 'subjected to torture,' etc., does not exist."⁵ This combative approach weakens the domestic legal system and allows torture to flourish.

The Chinese government is now overdue to be reviewed by the CAT—an exercise that helps shed critical light on the scope and scale of these abuses across the country. It is also one of the only means of redress available to torture victims and survivors. Beijing submitted the required state report for this review five years late, indicating disinterest in ending the practice of torturing prisoners of conscience.

The Chinese government has the necessary legislative and policy tools to end torture; what it lacks is the willingness to end reliance on confessions and to hold perpetrators accountable. UN bodies and concerned governments can pressure Beijing to end the scourge of torture by calling in bilateral and multilateral forums for investigations into specific cases, and appointing an independent expert to monitor and report on human rights abuses in China. They should also increase support for human rights defenders and civil society, who are some of the only sources of independent documentation on rights abuses in China.

⁵ CHN/HR/2023/65, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=37627>.

Methodology

This report is based upon allegations of torture and other ill-treatment made by 209 prisoners of conscience between 2016 and 2025. That information is drawn from CHRD's Prisoners of Conscience Database.⁶ This report focused only on people whose allegations of torture and ill-treatment post-date CHRD's last major analysis of torture in China, and the last review of the Chinese government by the CAT.⁷

CHRD also spoke with 25 human rights defenders (HRDs), family members, and lawyers in China who have experienced, witnessed, or filed complaints related to torture during the period under consideration.

This report draws on post-2015 CHRD research documenting alleged torture of HRDs and due process rights violations, including eight submissions to UN Special Procedures filed between 2017 and 2025 concerning 10 people who had been subjected to torture;⁸ a 2017 submission to the Committee against Torture;⁹ and three submissions to the Human Rights Council during Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) of China in 2018 and 2024.¹⁰

⁶ CHRD reviewed 562 cases involving torture exported from the database but excluded from this analysis the 353 cases that involved allegations of torture from 2015 and earlier. CHRD, "Prisoners of Conscience, Mainland China," <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/> (accessed March 4, 2026).

⁷ CHRD and a Coalition of NGOs, "Joint Civil Society Report Submitted to UN Committee against Torture", October 2015, <https://www.nchrd.org/2015/11/joint-civil-society-report-submitted-to-un-committee-against-torture-october-2015/>.

⁸ CHRD, "CHRD update on arbitrary detention and torture of Chinese lawyer Xie Yang," January 31, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/02/january-31-2017-chrd-update-on-arbitrary-detention-and-torture-of-chinese-lawyer-xie-yang/>; CHRD, "Communiqué Alleging Torture of Chinese lawyer Li Heping," July 2017 <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/08/submission-to-un-on-li-heping-july-2017/>; CHRD, "Communiqué Alleging Arbitrary Detention and Torture of Huang Qi," September 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/09/communiqué-alleging-arbitrary-detention-and-torture-of-huang-qi-september-2017/>; CHRD, "Update to UN on Chen Yunfei," October 25, 2017, <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/10/update-to-un-on-chen-yunfei/>; CHRD, "CHRD Communiqué Alleging Torture of Chinese lawyer Wang Quanzhang," August 26, 2020 <https://www.nchrd.org/2020/10/chrd-communicue-alleging-torture-of-chinese-lawyer-wang-quanzhang-august-26-2020/>; CHRD, "CHRD Follow-Up Communiqué Alleging Torture or Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of former Chinese lawyer Ding Jiayi, activists Xu Zhiyong, Li Qiaochu, and lawyer Chang Weiping during periods of their Enforced Disappearance and Arbitrary Detention," April 21, 2021, <https://www.nchrd.org/2021/04/chrd-follow-up-communicue-alleging-torture-or-cruel-inhumane-or-degrading-treatment-or-punishment-of-former-chinese-lawyer-ding-jiaxi-activists-xu-zhiyong-li-qiaochu-and-lawyer-chang-weiping-during/>; CHRD, "CHRD and The Rights Practice Communiqué Alleging Arbitrary Detention of Two Human Rights Defenders JI Xiaolong and CHEN Pinlin," September 10, 2024, <https://www.nchrd.org/2024/09/chinese-human-rights-defenders-chrd-and-the-rights-practice-trp-communicue-alleging-arbitrary-detention-of-two-human-rights-defenders-ji-xiaolong-and-chen-pinlin-for-exercising-right-to-freedom-of/>; CHRD, "CHRD Requests Urgent Action and WGAD Review for Detained Lawyer Xie Yang," November 11, 2024, <https://www.nchrd.org/2024/11/chinese-human-rights-defenders-communicue-alleging-violations-of-human-rights-of-xie-yang-a-citizen-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-requesting-urgent-action-and-review-by-the-working-group/>

CHRD, "Chinese Human Rights Defenders Communiqué Alleging Violations of Human Rights of Niu Tengyu,," May 2025, https://www.nchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/WGAD-Questionnaire-NiuTengyu_20250513_forweb.pdf.

⁹ CHRD, "Civil Society Follow-Up Report Submitted to UN Committee against Torture," June 2017 <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/06/civil-society-follow-up-report-submitted-to-un-committee-against-torture-jun-2017/>

¹⁰ CHRD, "Submissions for 3rd Universal Periodic Review of China," October 2018 <https://www.nchrd.org/2018/10/submissions-for-3rd-universal-periodic-review-of-china-october-2018/>; CHRD, "China's Disqualifying Human Rights Record: UPR Mid-Term Assessment Finds China Unfit for Human Rights Council Membership," October 7, 2020, <https://www.nchrd.org/2020/10/chinas-disqualifying-human-rights-record-upr-mid-term-assessment-finds-china-unfit-for-human-rights-council-membership/>; CHRD, "Submissions for 4th Universal Periodic Review of China – October 2024," October 1, 2023, <https://www.nchrd.org/2023/10/submissions-for-4th-universal-periodic-review-of-china-october-2024/>

CHRD also conducted desk research, including reviewing the Chinese government report submitted to the CAT in February 2025, and references to torture in other UN human rights mechanisms' reviews of the Chinese government's human rights record. CHRD additionally looked for evidence of prosecution of police or prison authorities for torture in state media and the February 2025 government report.

CHRD defines a prisoner of conscience as a person detained for defending or exercising human rights.

In considering what constitutes torture, CHRD employs the definition as set out in the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (hereafter "Convention"):

... any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.

Legal Obligations Regarding Torture

Domestic Law

In 2012, the Chinese government amended the Criminal Procedure Law (CPL) to prohibit torture used to extract confessions. The Criminal Law (CL) contains a similar prohibition and mandates that police officers or guards who physically abuse detainees face criminal sanctions. The CPL requires that evidence obtained through torture be excluded from court proceedings.

But both laws reflect a foundational problem: they prohibit torture only when it is used to extract confessions, not in the other circumstances or for the other purposes set out in the CAT definition. In this way Chinese law is overly narrow, and not in conformity with the Convention against Torture.

The Supreme People's Court (SPC) also passed a related interpretation in 2012.¹¹ The SPC issued Opinions in 2013 and 2017 which state that illegal methods of evidence collection include “freezing, starvation, exposure to the sun, burning, or prolonged interrogation” and “violence and threats” against suspects.¹²

CPL Articles 57-58 require prosecutors and courts to investigate if they suspect torture was used. The CPL also requires the defense lawyer to “provide relevant leads or other materials” when applying for evidence obtained through torture to be excluded (Article 58). The SPC defines leads and materials as “the person, time, place, method, content and other information suspected of illegal collection of evidence.”¹³ This approach can place the burden of proof on the defendant to provide materials in certain circumstances, in contrast to international human rights standards.

Chinese law requires detention centers to facilitate defense lawyers' access to detainees within 48 hours of a request being made unless the person is suspected of an “endangering national security” crime (CPL, Article 39), though this provision is a violation of international human rights standards on access to a lawyer. Defense lawyers may view and copy case files once the procuratorate starts reviewing the case for prosecution, which may come months or even years after a suspect is detained (CPL, Article 40); the delayed access to those materials is also a violation of international human rights standards. Article 54 of the 2021 SPC Interpretation of

¹¹ The Supreme People's Court's Interpretation on the Application of the PRC Criminal Procedure Law, December 20, 2012 https://www.spp.gov.cn/sscx/201502/t20150217_91462.shtml.

¹² Supreme People's Court, “Opinions of the Supreme People's Court on Establishing and Improving Work Mechanisms to Prevent Unjust, False, and Erroneous Criminal Cases” [《最高人民法院关于建立健全防范刑事冤假错案工作机制的意见》], October 2013 and Supreme People's Court, “Implementing Opinions on Comprehensively Advancing the Reform of the Criminal Litigation System Centered on Trials” [《关于全面推进以审判为中心的刑事诉讼制度改革实施意见》], February 2017. Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, 3 February 2025, para. 62.

¹³ Article 127, Supreme People's Court, Interpretation on the Application of the “Criminal Procedure Law of the PRC” [最高人民法院关于适用《中华人民共和国刑事诉讼法》的解释], 26 January 2021, <https://www.court.gov.cn/fabu/xiangqing/286491.html>; Article 5, SPC, SPP, MPS, MSS, MOJ, “Regulations on Pre-court Meetings for Handling Criminal Cases” and the “Regulations on the Exclusion of Illegal Evidence for Handling Criminal Cases” [《办理刑事案件庭前会议规程》和《办理刑事案件排除非法证据规程》], September 3, 2024, <http://gongbao.court.gov.cn/Details/6673a4919703f72ce026f8e28fdb3.html>.

the CPL requires the courts to provide audiovisual recordings of interrogations used as evidence to the defense lawyer upon application.¹⁴

The CPL also requires notification to family members within 24 hours of a person being taken into custody (Article 85). But in violation of international human rights standards, the law also permits exceptions if the person is suspected of national security crimes, if “there is no way to contact [the family],” or if such notification may “hinder the investigation.”

Article 2 of the CPL enshrines the principle of innocent until proven guilty though there is no presumption of bail in China. Articles 66-67 of the CPL establish when a person can be released on bail pending furthering investigation, including if the person may be sentenced to controlled release or short-term detention, their release will not endanger society, or if the person has a serious illness, are pregnant or nursing and their release will not endanger society.

The Detention Center Regulations, issued by the State Council in 2012, and the Ministry of Public Security’s Measures for the Implementation of the Detention Center Regulations, issued the same year, set out the procedures for health checks of incoming detainees.¹⁵

Article 75 of the CPL establishes “residential surveillance at a designated location,” a de facto form of enforced disappearance. In June 2025, the Supreme People’s Procuratorate (SPP) and Ministry of Public Security (MPS) jointly issued provisions on “Regulating the Application and Supervision of Residential Surveillance at a Designated Location in Accordance with Law.” These revisions are the first regulations on the RSDL system, and they include a provision that requires RSDL to be enacted with protections for human rights.¹⁶ The RSDL regulations add a new requirement that family members and lawyers must be notified of the specific address of the RSDL facility with contact numbers for the relevant personnel. However, these regulations fail to address the key concern with the RSDL system, which is that it holds detainees outside of recognized detention facilities, and that detainees may not be granted access to a lawyer depending on what type of charge is filed. Family members still may not be notified under the vague clause “where it is impossible to notify the family members.” These loopholes remove key due process protections for detainees which help protect them from torture.

While torture is defined solely within the context of extorted confessions under Chinese law, the Criminal Law forbids “criminal abuse of a person in detention” (Article 248). Supervisory personnel in correction institutions are banned from “beating, inflicting corporal punishment

¹⁴ Article 54, Supreme People’s Court, Interpretation on the Application of the “Criminal Procedure Law of the PRC” [最高人民法院关于适用《中华人民共和国刑事诉讼法》的解释], 26 January 2021. See also various regulations cited by the government in its report to the Committee against Torture. Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, February 3, 2025, paras. 6, 7, 13, 63.

¹⁵ Article 18, State Council, “Regulations on Detention Centers” [拘留所条例], April 1, 2012, https://www.gov.cn/gongbao/content/2012/content_2092452.htm; Article 16, Ministry of Public Security, “Measures for the implementation of the Detention Centre Regulations” [拘留所条例实施办法], December 14, 2012, https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2021-12/25/content_5712894.htm

¹⁶ Articles 1 and 2. SPP and MPS, “Provisions of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate and Ministry of Public Security on Regulating the Application and Supervision of Residential surveillance at a designated location in Accordance with Law”, 最高人民检察院公安部, 关于印发,《最高人民法院、公安部关于依法规范指定居所监视居住适用和监督的规定》的通知, No. 168, June 30, 2025.

upon, or mistreating persons under their supervision” with a potential prison sentence of up to 10 years, or longer if the prisoner dies.

The 2013 Mental Health Law prohibits forced confinement in psychiatric hospitals except on very narrow grounds, though this law has not effectively prohibited involuntary psychiatric detention of human rights defenders.¹⁷

In June 2025, the SPP established a “Prosecutorial Investigation Department” to handle crimes that “violate citizens’ rights,” including illegal detention, torture to extract confessions, and illegal searches, according to the official announcement.¹⁸ The SPP stated the department’s establishment reflected CCP’s Party Central Committee commitment to “judicial fairness.” In an interview in February 2026, the director of the department stated that between January and November 2025, procuratorates across the country investigated 1,100 cases involving more than 1,300 people. He specified that 102 cases were “major cases” of job-related crimes committed by country or department-level officials. He made no mention of investigations into illegal detention, torture or other violations of citizens’ rights.¹⁹

Laws pertaining to prisoners

The CPL says that prisoners may temporarily serve their sentences outside of prison on a few select grounds, including if they have a serious disease requiring medical parole or are pregnant or nursing an infant (Article 265). Government hospitals at the provincial level or above must issue a certificate confirming these medical conditions. The Prison Law (1994) requires all prisoners to undergo a physical examination prior to being admitted to the prison. If the examination shows they have a serious illness, the prison must submit a recommendation for temporary release to the prison administration authority for approval (Article 17). Prisons must also have medical facilities and provide medical care to prisoners (Prison Law, Article 54).

The Prison Law prohibits prison police officers from torturing detainees to extract confessions, corporal punishment or abuse of prisoners, insulting the character of prisoners, and beating or condoning others to beat prisoners (Article 14). Prison police officers are also forbidden from handing over the power to supervise criminals to others under the Prison Law (Article 14).

The Prison Law underwent revisions in 2025. The National People’s Congress passed the proposed changes on April 30, 2026, and those will go into effect from November 1, 2026.²⁰

¹⁷ CHRD, “Six Months after Mental Health Law Took Effect, Involuntary Psychiatric Commitment Continues,” November 14, 2013, <https://www.nchr.org/2013/11/chrb-six-months-after-mental-health-law-implemented-involuntary-psychiatric-commitment-continues-118-13-2013/>.

¹⁸ SPP, “The Procuratorial Investigation Department of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate was officially established” [最高人民法院检察院检察侦查厅正式挂牌成立], June 24, 2025, https://www.spp.gov.cn/xwfbh/wsfbh/202506/t20250624_699069.shtml

¹⁹ China.com, “Interview with the Director of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate in 2026—Safeguarding Judicial Fairness through High-Quality and Efficient Procuratorial Performance,” [最高检厅长访谈 2026——以高质量检察履职守护司法公正], February 6, 2026, http://www.china.com.cn/zhibo/content_118332885.htm.

²⁰ Xinhua News Agency, “China adopts revised Prison Law,” April 30, 2026, <https://english.news.cn/20260430/81b38d49734e42ff97d0c0770ddcc0da/c.html>.

The revisions expanded the previous version from 78 articles to 121 articles. The articles cited above remain substantively unchanged. The new version fails to establish an independent supervisory mechanism to ensure prisoners are not mistreated (Article 6). It also uses national security as a pretext to restrict prisoners' rights to letter correspondence (Article 68) and expands the use of solitary confinement and restraints and allows unchecked prison labor (Articles 65 and 84).²¹ These provisions enable practices that amount to torture.

Hong Kong Law

In Hong Kong, Article 42(2) of the National Security Law states that those held on national security charges will not be granted bail “unless the judge has sufficient grounds for believing that the criminal suspect or defendant will not continue to commit acts endangering national security.”

International Law

The Chinese government ratified the Convention Against Torture in 1988. It is one of the six (out of ten) major human rights treaties that Beijing has joined.²² Each treaty has a committee—also called a treaty body—which reviews the State party's implementation of its obligations under the convention. Since acceding to the Convention against Torture, Chinese authorities have been obliged to adhere to the Convention's provisions prohibiting, investigating, and punishing acts of torture, and to the articles for reporting to and being reviewed by the Committee.

The Committee against Torture reviews signatories' compliance with the Convention through a periodic review process where it receives information from the State party and from independent civil society. CAT last reviewed the Chinese government's record on torture in 2015.²³ As part of that process, CAT received dozens of submissions from independent civil society organizations, including CHRD.

The Convention against Torture requires State parties to conduct prompt and impartial investigations when there are reasonable grounds to suspect torture (Article 12). The Convention also states that anyone who alleges they have been subjected to torture has the right to file a complaint, and that that complaint will be promptly and impartially examined by competent authorities without retaliation (Article 13). Article 14 confirms a victim's right to redress (Article 14).

²¹ CHRD, “Revised Prison Law fails to address systemic human rights concerns in Chinese prisons,” October 10, 2025, <https://www.nchrd.org/2025/10/revised-prison-law-fails-to-address-systemic-human-rights-concerns-in-chinese-prisons/>. The article numbers in the revised law have undergone further minor adjustments since this analysis was published.

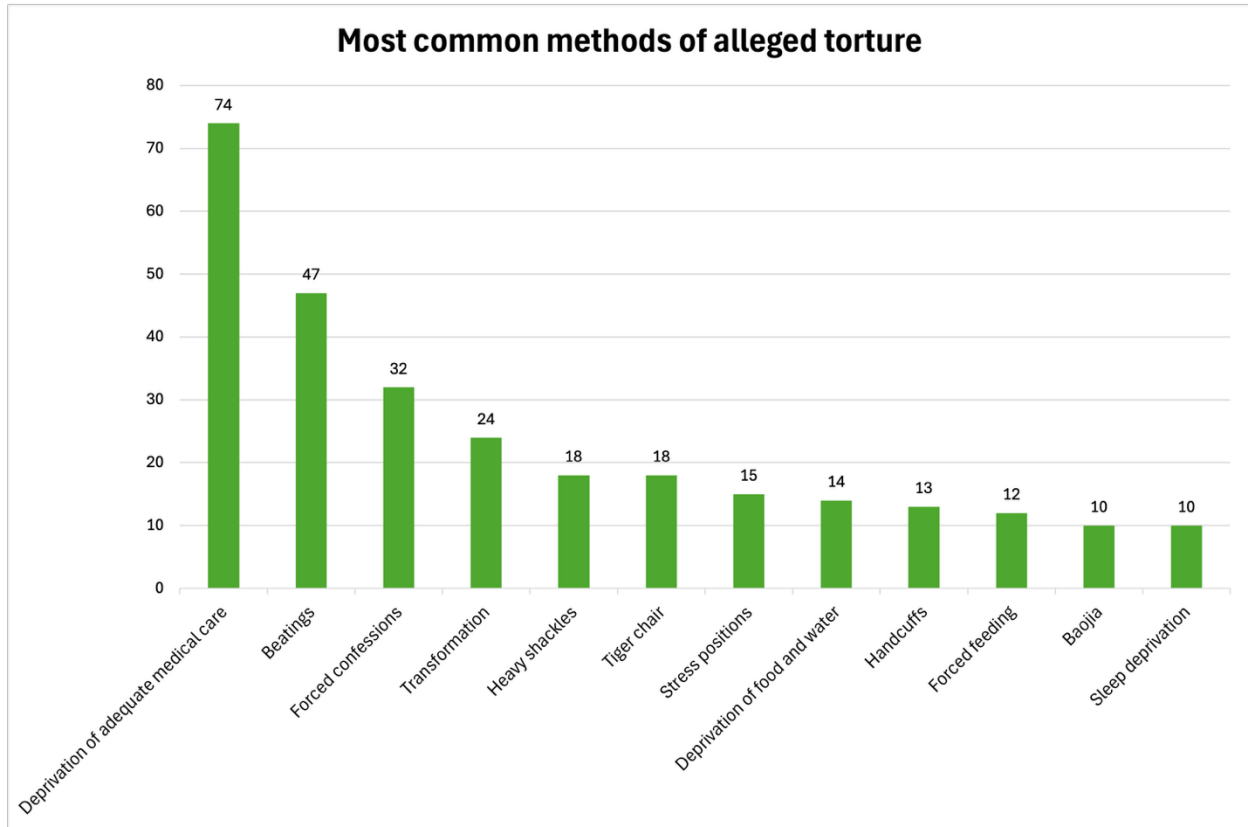
²² Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (ratified in 1980), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ratified in 1981), Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (ratified in 1988), Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified in 1992), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ratified in 2001), and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ratified 2008). In 1998, China signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights but has not ratified, though is expected as a signatory to not defeat the objectives of the treaty.

²³ Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations on fifth periodic report of China, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FC%2FCHN%2FCO%2F5&Lang=en

Most Common Methods of Torture and Ill-Treatment of Prisoners of Conscience (2016-2025)

In the 209 cases CHRD reviewed, Chinese authorities most commonly tortured or ill-treated prisoners of conscience by depriving them of adequate medical care. Thirty-five percent alleged they suffered this abuse. Approximately 1 out of 5 prisoners of conscience alleged they were beaten, and 15 percent that they had been tortured to force a confession.

The chart below lists the most common methods of torture from the 209 cases CHRD examined.



(Most common methods of alleged torture of prisoners of conscience, 2016-2025. Source: CHRD)

“Transformation” refers to a process of pressure through “physical and mental torture” on Falun Gong practitioners to get them to renounce their beliefs.²⁴

CHRD’s review found other alleged forms of torture included:

- solitary confinement,
- locked in iron cages,
- subjected to freezing temperatures,

²⁴ Amnesty International, “The State of the World’s Human Rights Report 2012”, May 24, 2012, p. 109, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/001/2012/en/>.

- forced to stand for long hours,
- being hanged from a high position, usually by the wrists,
- subjected to electric shocks,
- having toxic liquids thrown in their face,
- abusive prison labor,
- assaults by other inmates,
- forced to sleep on the floor, and
- poor quality or insufficiently nutritious food.

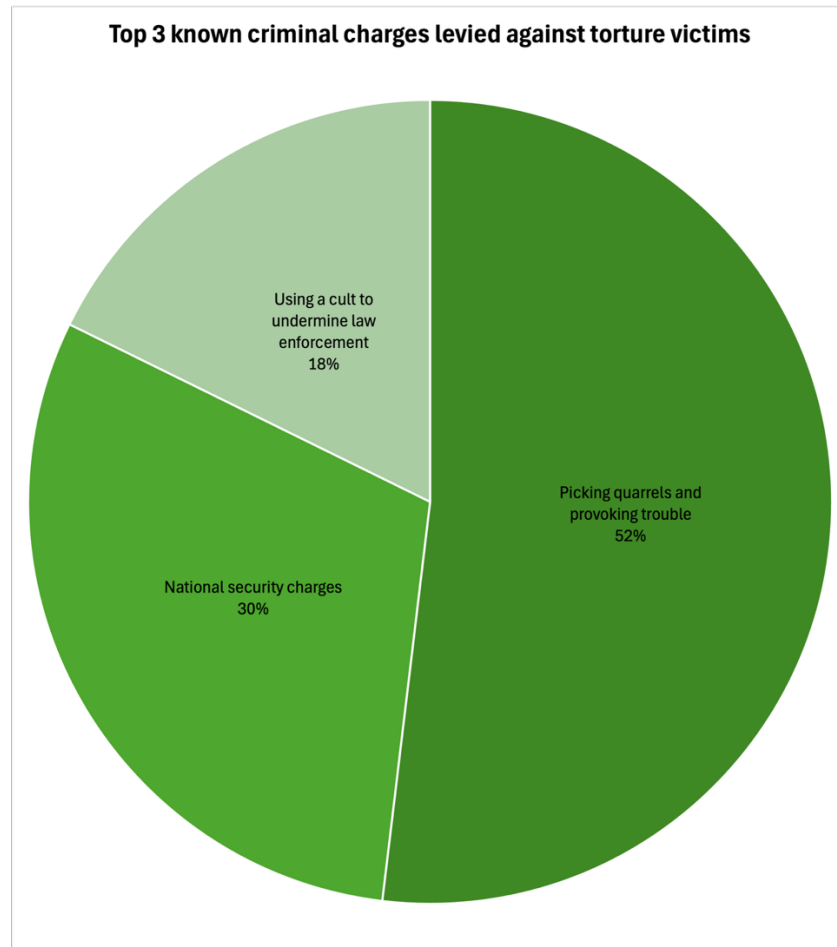
Victims frequently alleged that torture takes place in pre-trial detention and in prison. CHRD found that 117 people held in prison alleged torture, slightly more than the 112 prisoners of conscience who made such allegations related to when they were held in pre-trial detention. This underscores the deficiencies in the legal definition of torture which is narrowly focused on the extraction of confessions (which occurs in pre-trial detention). The lack of a legal definition of torture that prohibits torture in prison allows such abuses to flourish.



(Place of alleged torture of prisoners of conscience, 2016-2025. Source: CHRD)

CHRD found that many of the alleged torture victims had been held on the same criminal charge: over half had been charged with the offence “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” (Article 293 of the Criminal Law). This charge has been criticized by UN human rights experts as “vague and imprecise, allowing for the criminalization of conduct protected under international human

rights law.”²⁵ In September 2025, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk called on the Chinese government to repeal the offense.²⁶



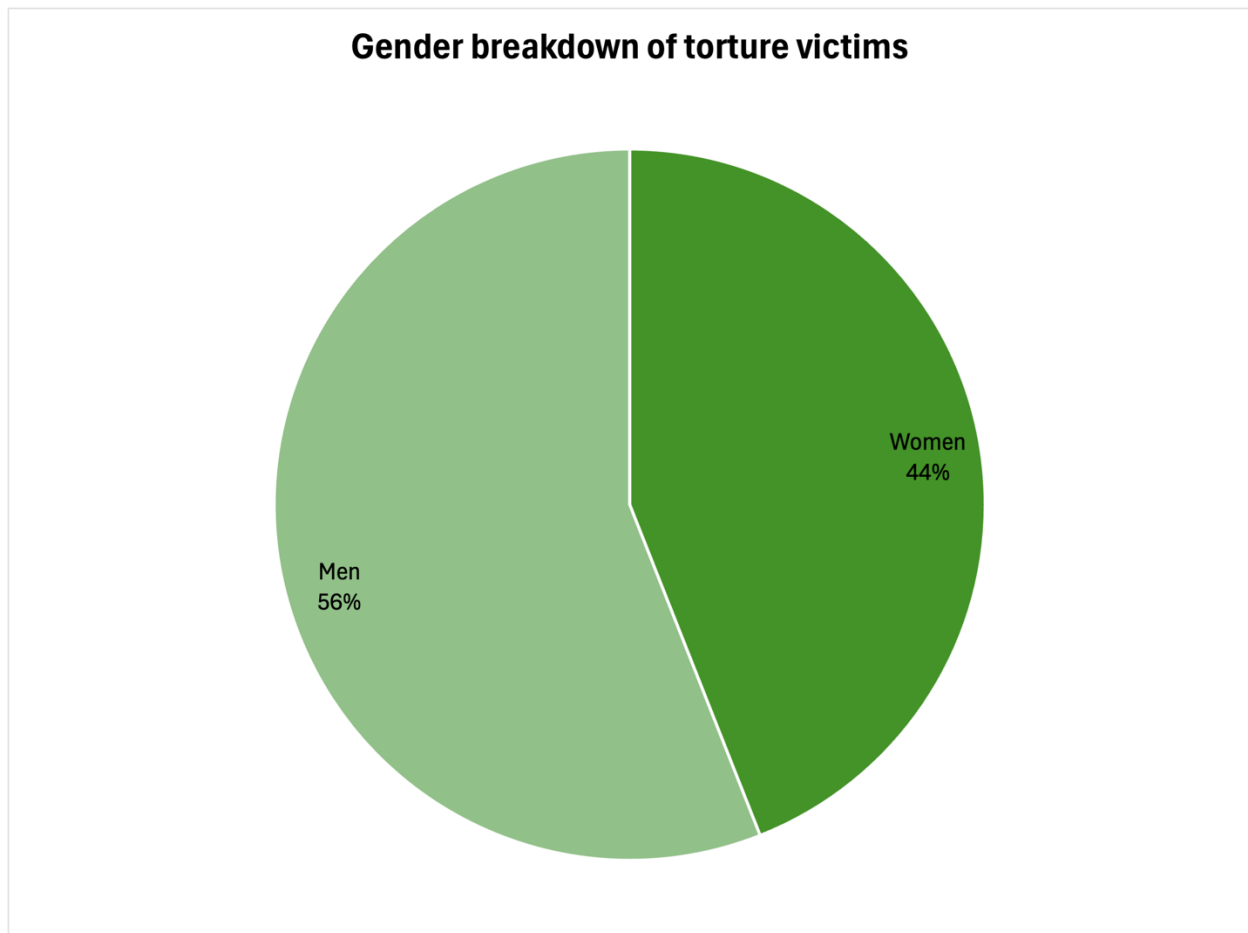
*(Top three known criminal charges levied against prisoner of conscience alleging torture, 2016-2025.
Source: CHRD)*

One-third of the known charges were national security crimes, such as “inciting subversion,” “subversion,” “inciting separatism,” or “separatism.” Chinese law grants police wide discretionary powers to suspend due process rights to people held under such charges, such as holding them under RSDL, not permitting access to a lawyer, and not notifying their families. As this report demonstrates, these due process rights are important safeguards against torture.

²⁵ Human Rights Council, “Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its 102nd session, 1–10 April 2025 Opinion No. 9/2025 concerning Ji Xiaolong and Chen Pinlin (China)”, A/HRC/WGAD/2025/9, May 29, 2025 para. 89, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/detention-wg/opinions/session102/a-hrc-wgad-2025-9-aev.pdf>

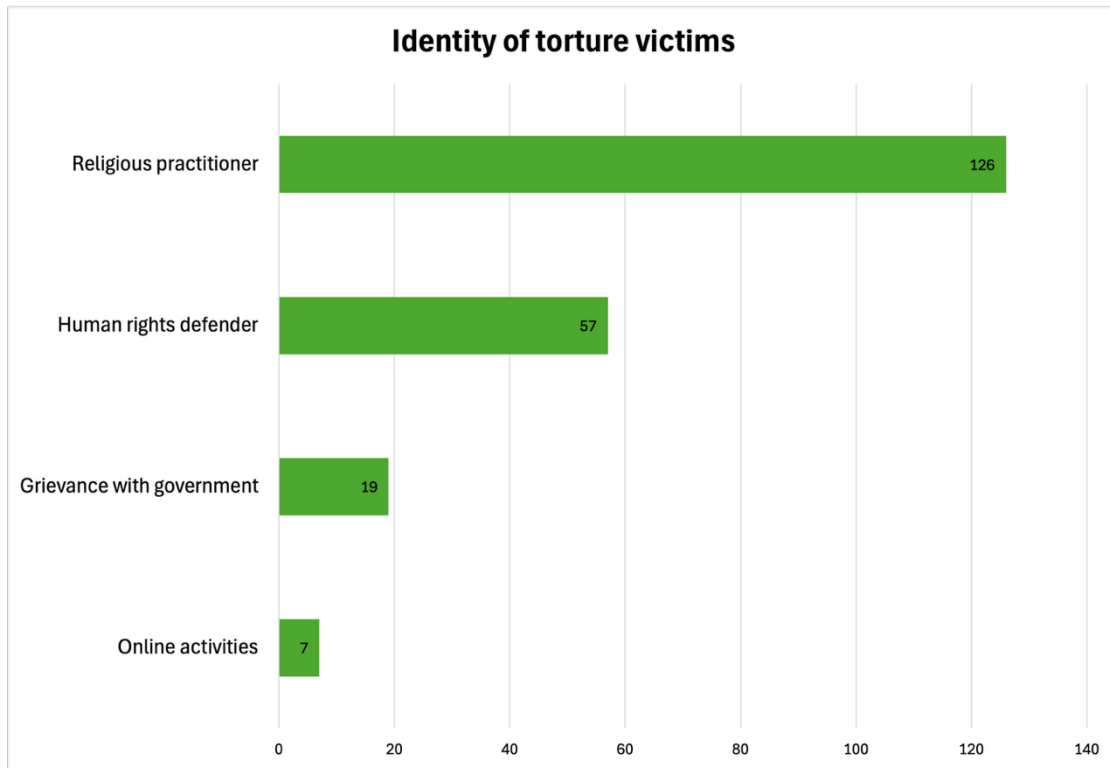
²⁶ OHCHR, “China: Second sentencing of Zhang Zhan deeply disturbing,” September 21, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/china-second-sentencing-zhang-zhan-deeply-disturbing>.

CHRD found that 56 percent of those alleging torture were men, and 44 percent women.²⁷ Over half of the prisoners of conscience who alleged torture were held because of their religious beliefs, and nearly one third are human rights defenders.



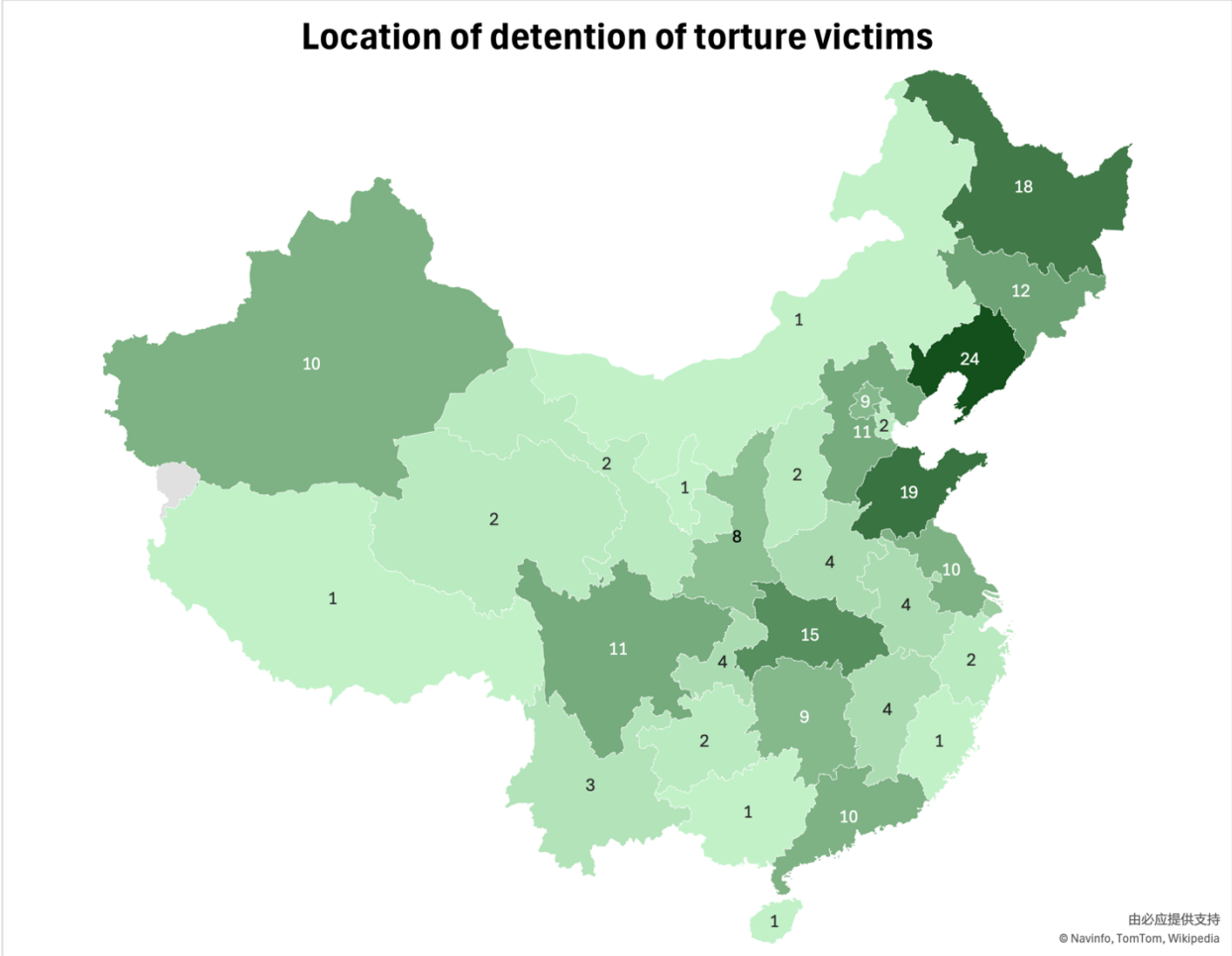
(Gender breakdown of prisoners of conscience who alleged torture, 2016-2025. Source: CHRD)

²⁷ 56 percent of all 2016-2025 prisoners of conscience in CHRD's database are women; 42 percent are men; and the rest are of unknown gender.



(Identity of prisoners of conscience who alleged torture, 2016-2025. Source: CHRD)

The map below shows how widespread the alleged torture of prisoners of conscience is, with a case in every province, region, municipality and special administrative region (except for Macau).



(Location of detention of prisoner of conscience who alleged torture, 2016-2025. Source: CHRD)

Government Obstruction of Torture Redress

When faced with clear and obvious instances of illegal torture or coerced interrogation, the procuratorate and the courts often turn a blind eye and a deaf ear—offering no response or remedial action—and simply allow the matter to be glossed over and swept under the rug.

-Human rights lawyer in interview with CHRD, March 2026

The following chapters detail how Chinese authorities ignore, undermine, or violate the Convention against Torture's main accountability methods: the ability of victims to file complaints, investigations into allegations of torture, and punishment for those found guilty of torturing prisoners.

The Committee against Torture noted in 2015, as it had in 2008, that the Chinese government had provided no information on the number of torture-related complaints, of investigations into torture allegations initiated by procuratorates or as a result of information reported by doctors, or the number of criminal and disciplinary sanctions imposed on offenders.²⁸ The Committee repeated the request for this data, yet the Chinese government did not include that information in its February 2025 report.

The only data relevant to this issue that the government reported in its February 2025 report is the number of “corrective opinions” issued between 2013-2018. Those address “abuse of coercive measures, illegal evidence collection, extortion of confessions by torture and other violations of the law in investigative activities,” an expansive category that does not specifically focus on torture or respond to the Committee’s concerns.²⁹

That data, while incomplete, showed a decrease in corrective opinions issued between 2013 to 2016 (from 72,370 to 34,230); no data was provided for 2017; in 2018 procuratorate corrective opinions rose to 58,744. The government data also said that in 2016 procuratorates refused 560 arrests and 169 prosecutions due to the exclusion of unlawful evidence, which might indicate that only a miniscule number of the corrective opinions actually involve torture. In March 2026, a Chinese media article reported data from the SPC that between 2021 to 2025, courts acquitted only 3,221 defendants.³⁰ The SPC touted this low number as a measure of judicial competence, though a deputy to the National People’s Congress argued in the article that low acquittal rates breed public doubt about human rights safeguards in the criminal justice system.

Chinese Authorities Deny Access to Lawyers and Case Files

In 2015, the Committee against Torture recommended that the Chinese government “adopt effective measures to ensure, in law and in practice, that detainees are afforded all legal

²⁸ Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 22-23.

²⁹ Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, 3 February 2025, para. 66.

³⁰ Zhou Dongxu, “Commentary: Why China’s Plummeting Acquittal Rates Spook Entrepreneurs,” Caixin, March 12, 2026, <https://www.caixinglobal.com/2026-03-12/commentary-why-chinas-plummeting-acquittal-rates-spook-entrepreneurs-102422286.html>.

safeguards from the very outset of the detention.” Yet many defense lawyers and prisoners of conscience are blocked from filing complaints because they are routinely denied access to each other and to case files.

CHRD spoke to five Chinese defense lawyers in March 2026. All reported that authorities had imposed restrictions on their right to meet with clients if that person was seen as “politically sensitive,” including prisoners of conscience. Some lawyers faced more restrictions than others. One lawyer (lawyer “C”) told CHRD,³¹

In every case where a meeting was requested, there was not a single instance in which permission was granted within the stipulated two days. Meetings were permitted only after frequent complaints had been filed and the detention center came under pressure; typically, the process took around two weeks.



Lawyer Ding Jiayi

Prisoners of conscience who were denied access to lawyers of their choice have alleged that they were tortured during that period. Yantai City police officers took human rights lawyer Ding Jiayi into custody in December 2019 and held him under RSDL until June 2020 in Shandong Province.³² During these six months, Ding alleged he was subjected to interrogations for 73 days straight. He said he was tied to a “tiger chair” with a band around his chest to restrict his breathing, deprived of sleep, food, and access to the bathroom, and subjected to loud noises. Ding was not allowed to meet his lawyer until 13 months after he was first detained.

Lawyers that take on cases of prisoners of conscience who have alleged torture also face harassment. As a result of authorities’ relentless harassment, computer programmer Niu Tengyu has had 16 different lawyers represent him between 2019 and 2025.³³ His first three lawyers faced threats of disbarment from Maoming City Justice Bureau.

His third lawyer—who represented Niu at trial—was told that his license to practice law would be revoked if Niu pleaded “not guilty.”³⁴ Other lawyers Niu’s family tried to hire for his appeal were warned by national security police officers against taking on the case.

Lawyers, and by extension their clients, have also faced retaliation for filing complaints about alleged torture. Police in Jilin Province subjected Falun Gong practitioner Jiang Yongqin to

³¹ CHRD interview with defense lawyer C, March 2026.

³² CHRD, “CHRD Follow-Up Communiqué Alleging Torture or Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of former Chinese lawyer Ding Jiayi, activists Xu Zhiyong, Li Qiaochu, and lawyer Chang Weiping,” April 2, 2021, <https://www.nchrd.org/2021/04/chrd-follow-up-communicue-alleging-torture-or-cruel-inhumane-or-degrading-treatment-or-punishment-of-former-chinese-lawyer-ding-jiaxi-activists-xu-zhiyong-li-qiaochu-and-lawyer-chang-weiping-durin/>.

³³ CHRD, “Chinese Human Rights Defenders Communiqué Alleging Violations of Human Rights of Niu Tengyu,” September 2025, https://www.nchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/WGAD-Questionnaire-NiuTengyu_20250513_forweb.pdf.

³⁴ Despite the threat, the lawyer still defended Niu at trial as he pled not guilty to the charges.

torture, including sexual assault and gender-based violence, after taking her into custody in June 2022.³⁵ Her lawyer filed complaints with the local justice bureau, but the complaints were ignored. She was tried in July 2023, and her lawyer was blocked from attending the hearing. Jiang was eventually convicted and sentenced to five years in prison.

The importance of access to a lawyer to protecting victims of torture is underscored in comments made from a Chinese defense lawyer (lawyer “B”) to CHRD in March 2026.³⁶

I have filed motions and have lodged complaints—and even formal accusations—regarding torture. Although these actions did not result in a formal resolution of the issue, they were effective in halting the continued use of torture against the client.

Another lawyer (lawyer “C”) told CHRD that authorities deny torture has taken place despite complaints from lawyers.³⁷

Unless there are visible physical injuries, such evidence [obtained through torture] is generally not excluded. When my complaints regarding torture are filed, the authorities typically engage in systematic cover-ups—shielding one another at every level—and attempt to downplay serious incidents until they eventually fade away unresolved.

Often prisoners of consciences’ lawyers are denied access to essential case files—a violation of the legal right to review and copy case files, an essential protection against torture. For example, human rights lawyer Xie Yang’s defense lawyer repeatedly protested during pre-trial hearings, held in September 2024 and July 2025, that the lawyer had not been given access to the case files. Authorities had classified them as “confidential” even though the files did not bear a “secret” classification.³⁸

Xie Yang, who has been detained since January 2022, has alleged torture while held in RSDL and other forms of custody. In September 2024, several UN Special Procedures raised concerns with Chinese authorities about these allegations.³⁹ The Chinese government replied on November 12, 2024, but did not respond to any of the specific allegations of torture.⁴⁰ The Changsha Intermediate Court in Hunan Province eventually tried Xie Yang in July 2025 on charges of “inciting subversion of state power” without his lawyer present and behind closed

³⁵ Jiang Yongqin (姜永芹), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3738> (accessed April 2026).

³⁶ CHRD interview with defense lawyer B, March 2026.

³⁷ CHRD interview with defense lawyer C, March 2026.

³⁸ CHRD, “China: Halt Sham Trial and Release Human Rights Lawyer Xie Yang,” July 30, 2025, <https://www.nchrd.org/2025/07/china-halt-sham-trial-and-release-human-rights-lawyer-xie-yang/>; CHRD, “Chinese Human Rights Defenders Communiqué Alleging Violations of Human Rights of Xie Yang,” November 11, 2024, <https://www.nchrd.org/2024/11/chinese-human-rights-defenders-communicue-alleging-violations-of-human-rights-of-xie-yang-a-citizen-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-requesting-urgent-action-and-review-by-the-working-group/>.

³⁹ AL CHN 13/2024, September 20, 2024,

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29346>.

⁴⁰ CHN/HR/2024/68, November 12, 2024, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=38937>.

doors. In February 2026, the WGAD found Xie Yang's detention to be arbitrary.⁴¹ It noted that the Chinese government denied any torture had taken place, but also that its response was "insufficient to rebut the detailed and serious allegations made." Weeks later, in March, a Changsha court convicted him and sentenced him to five years in prison.

Authorities also violate requirements to provide audiovisual recordings of interrogations used as evidence to the defense lawyer.⁴² This further weakens lawyers' ability to provide the "clues and materials" when applying for illegal evidence to be excluded.

During a focus group discussion, participants told CHRD one of the biggest challenges to using the Convention against Torture and domestic legal provisions to protect themselves after facing torture is the lack of access to the evidence substantiating their torture claims.⁴³ All video and audio recordings from their interrogation sites remain under the exclusive control of the authorities.

Prisoners of conscience are also vulnerable to torture because authorities do not promptly notify family members when a person is detained. Communication with families can also protect victims of torture by bringing outside attention to their conditions in detention. Police sometimes demonstrate their awareness of the relationship between family access and protecting a detainee's rights.

Petitioner Jiang Zhongchun was held under RSDL in Zhenjiang province on suspicion of "disturbing the work order of state agencies" from April 10 to July 17, 2025.⁴⁴ His wife did not receive an RSDL notice until four days after he was taken away. She asked Jurong City Public Security Bureau officials where he was being held, but they refused to tell her and said lawyers were not allowed to visit him while under RSDL. After his release, he said he had been continuously interrogated and tortured in a manner that left him with a cervical spine injury. According to Jiang, police threatened to arrest his wife if she filed complaints about Jiang's torture.

Authorities Ignore Torture Complaints Filed by Victims

Although the law unfairly places the burden of proving torture on the victims and their lawyers, prisoners of conscience still regularly try to file complaints to halt and remedy harms. Of the 209 cases reviewed, CHRD found that 34 people had filed complaints. The true number may be higher as CHRD does not have access to full case files for all 209.

⁴¹ Human Rights Council, "Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its 104th session, 10–14 November 2025 – Opinion No. 73/2025 concerning Xie Yang," A/HRC/WGAD/2025/73, February 25, 2026, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/detention-wg/opinions/sessions104/a-hrc-wgad-2025-73-china-advance-edited.pdf>.

⁴² Article 54, Supreme People's Court, Interpretation on the Application of the "Criminal Procedure Law of the PRC" [最高人民法院关于适用《中华人民共和国刑事诉讼法》的解释], 26 January 2021. See also various regulations cited by the government in its report to the Committee against Torture. Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, February 3, 2025, paras. 6, 7, 13, 63.

⁴³ CHRD obtained permission to view and refer to the focus group discussion, which took place in January 2026.

⁴⁴ Jiang Zhongchun (蒋湛春), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1332> (Accessed March 4, 2026).

Human rights lawyer Xie Yang was detained in January 2022, convicted of “inciting subversion,” and sentenced to five years in prison in March 2026.⁴⁵ During his pre-trial detention, Xie told his lawyer he had faced repeated acts of torture from police officers and guards. He alleged he had been chained and beaten, denied food, and shackled in a crouched position. He filed a complaint in December 2023 with the resident procuratorate office at Changsha No. 1 Detention Center, where he had been subjected to these abuses, but no action was taken. In March 2024, Xie attempted to contact the resident procuratorate to protest rights violations in his case. But, according to Xie, the guard on duty would not allow him such contact unless he paid bribe through his lawyer.⁴⁶

A human rights lawyer (lawyer “B”) described in March 2026 their unsuccessful efforts to file complaints. Those outlined violations of their rights as a lawyer to meet with their client or review case files.⁴⁷

More than 90% of my complaints went unresolved. Of those, 95% received absolutely no response whatsoever, while the remainder received only a brief telephone reply or a standardized, template response via an online system.

Another lawyer (lawyer “E”) described his attempt to file a complaint about the denial of his right to visit with his client.⁴⁸

My complaints were not resolved; in fact, [at least one time] the acceptance of my complaint materials were explicitly refused on the spot.

In September 2024, the defense lawyer for filmmaker Chen Pinlin described a failed attempt to file a torture-related complaint with the resident procuratorate over the ill-treatment of his client, who was held at Baoshan District Detention Center in Shanghai. Chen had told his lawyers that the facility only allowed detainees outside once a month for fresh air and that his cell was so overcrowded that detainees had to sleep on their sides.⁴⁹

Since this matter concerned our client's legitimate rights, we drafted a formal meeting record and had the client sign it for confirmation. Subsequently, we formulated a written legal opinion and sought out the resident procuratorate stationed at the facility to report the situation, hoping they would verify the facts and legally safeguard the rights of the detainees. However, the resident

⁴⁵ CHRD, “Legal and human rights organisations condemn the conviction of Chinese human rights lawyer Xie Yang,” April 2, 2026, <https://www.nchrd.org/2026/04/legal-and-human-rights-organisations-condemn-the-conviction-of-chinese-human-rights-lawyer-xie-yang/>.

⁴⁶ CHRD, “Communiqué Alleging Violations of Human Rights of Xie Yang,” November 11, 2024, <https://www.nchrd.org/2024/11/chinese-human-rights-defenders-communique-alleging-violations-of-human-rights-of-xie-yang-a-citizen-of-the-peoples-republic-of-china-requesting-urgent-action-and-review-by-the-working-group/>.

⁴⁷ CHRD interview with defense lawyer B, March 2026.

⁴⁸ CHRD interview with defence lawyer E, March 2026.

⁴⁹ Lawyer Yuan Mao, “[Relevant Provisions of the Detention Center Regulations and Their Implementing Measures Should Not Be Allowed to Lie Dormant] — The “White Paper” Case of Chen P.L.” [【看守所条例及其实施办法的相关条款不应该沉睡】白纸陈 PL 案], Weibo post, September 26, 2024, screenshot saved by Rights Defense Network, <https://x.com/weiquanwang/status/1840903002351419641>.

procuratorate's office was empty; aside from photographs of staff members on the wall, there were no names or contact details for any prosecutors.

The lawyers subsequently filed their complaint with the “12309 Service Center” at Baoshan District Procuratorate. According to the government, this portal was opened in June 2018 for the public to make “complaints, appeals and reports smoother and more convenient.”⁵⁰ The lawyers never received a response to their complaint. Chen later told his lawyers that the detention center did allow them more time outside for fresh air.



Filmmaker Chen Pinlin

A human rights defender told CHRD in July 2025 about their previous experiences trying to file complaints with the procuratorate office at the prison where they were held.⁵¹

One time I reported a situation to the procuratorate during its inspection tour. They said that reporting problems would affect my future application for sentence reduction.

Beijing's February 2025 report to the Committee against Torture pointed to measures and provisions issued by the SPP in 2014, 2019, and 2020 on the handling of complaints, grievances,

⁵⁰ Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, 3 February 2025, para. 49.

⁵¹ CHRD interview with human rights defender, July 2025.

or suggestions,⁵² including the ineffective “12309 Service Center.” It did not provide information on the number of complaints made or investigated.

Denial of Bail Prolongs Detention, Increasing Risk of Torture

Chinese law enshrines the principle of innocent until proven guilty. Yet bail—the procedural expression of that idea—is routinely denied to prisoners of conscience. According to CHRD’s review of 209 cases involving prisoners of consciences’ allegations of torture, only seven people were granted bail.⁵³ Six of those seven people were later re-arrested.

Following torture that he said left him with internal injuries to his cervical spine, petitioner Jiang Zhanchun was released on bail in July 2025 and is currently bedridden. Three people given bail but then re-arrested are Christians affiliated with the Xi'an Abundant Church. They had alleged they had been tortured while in an RSDL facility in Shaanxi Province after being detained in August 2022 on charges of “fraud” in relation to their religious activities.⁵⁴ They were released on bail in April 2025 but then re-arrested in November.



Rights activist Li Qiaochu

Shandong authorities detained WHRD Li Qiaochu in February 2021 on charges of “inciting subversion of state power” for publicly exposing details of the torture in detention of her partner, prominent activist Xu Zhiyong. While detained, Li gained 13lb from an endocrine imbalance disorder, experienced auditory hallucinations, stopped getting her period, and struggled with mental health. Li’s lawyer applied for bail ten times, yet every application was rejected.⁵⁵

In February 2021, UN Special Procedures wrote to the Chinese government about Li’s detention and conditions. In April 2022, Chinese authorities replied, claiming, “China is a State based on the rule of law, and in accordance with the law, it guarantees all the rights of the accused.”⁵⁶ The letter made no mention of an investigation into her detention conditions, and CHRD is unable to find any evidence that an investigation was

⁵² Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, 3 February 2025, para. 62, 65.

⁵³ Jiang Zhanchun (蒋湛春), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1332>; Wei Shuyuan (魏淑燕), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3904>, Chen Deguang (陈德光), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3744>, Wen Yunfei (温云飞), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1704>.

⁵⁴ Lian Changnian (廉长年), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/2758> (Accessed April 2, 2026); Lan Xuliang (廉旭亮), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/2759>; Fu Juan (付娟), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/2760>.

⁵⁵ Li Qiaochu (李翘楚), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1322> (Accessed April 3, 2026), CHRD, “CHRD Follow-Up Communiqué Alleging Torture or Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of former Chinese lawyer Ding Jiayi, activists Xu Zhiyong, Li Qiaochu, and lawyer Chang Weiping during periods of their Enforced Disappearance and Arbitrary Detention,” April 21, 2021, <https://www.nchrd.org/2021/04/chrd-follow-up-communicue-alleging-torture-or-cruel-inhumane-or-degrading-treatment-or-punishment-of-former-chinese-lawyer-ding-jiaxi-activists-xu-zhiyong-li-qiaochu-and-lawyer-chang-weiping-during/>.

⁵⁶ April 1, 2022, reply from Government of China, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=36931>

conducted. Despite the lack of an investigation, authorities refused to grant bail to Li and in February 2024 convicted and sentenced her to three years and eight months in prison.

In Hong Kong, following Beijing's imposition of the National Security Law on the territory on June 30, 2020, local courts overturned Hong Kong's longstanding presumption in favor of bail in a February 2021 ruling. Following that decision, people held on national security charges are denied bail as a matter of course and held in pre-trial detention for years before facing charges.



*Hong Kong lawyer Chow Hang-tung
(photo credit: BBC)*

Two HRDs, former media owner Jimmy Lai and lawyer Chow Hang-tung, had been denied bail while awaiting trial. Hong Kong authorities arrested Lai in 2020 and Chow in 2021. Lai had been granted bail after his arrest but the government appealed the decision and the Court of Final Appeal ruled against Lai and issued an interpretation of the National Security Law that reversed the presumption of bail.⁵⁷ This interpretation was used to deny Chow bail after she was arrested in September 2021. Lai and Chow were held in pre-trial detention before being put on trial in December 2023 and January 2026, respectively. Lai was convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison in February 2026 and Chow's trial is ongoing at the time of writing.

Complaints about Torture in 'Designated Locations' Ignored

In 2015, the Committee against Torture called on the Chinese government to urgently repeal the "residential surveillance at a designated location" (RSDL) system which multiple UN experts have stated is tantamount to enforced disappearances. The government has not done so and continues to hold detainees under RSDL and outside of official detention facilities, where the risk of torture is high.

According to Chinese government data cited by the UN, authorities put an estimated 23,700 people under RSDL between 2013 and 2021.⁵⁸ CHRD documented 18 prisoners of conscience, out of the 209 cases reviewed, who alleged torture within the RSDL system between 2016 and 2025.

⁵⁷ Hong Kong Watch, "Denial of bail to Jimmy Lai marks a 'legal watershed' as Court of Final Appeal confirms it cannot consider constitutional challenges to the NSL," February 9, 2021, <https://www.hongkongwatch.org/all-posts/2021/2/9/denial-of-bail-to-jimmy-lai-marks-a-legal-watershed-as-court-of-final-appeal-confirms-it-cannot-consider-constitutional-challenges-to-the-ns/>.

⁵⁸ Human Rights Council, "Communications transmitted, cases examined, observations made and other activities conducted by the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances," A/HRC/WGEID/132/1, April 11, 2024, pg. 30, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/WGEID/132/1>.

Computer programmer Niu Tengyu was repeatedly tortured while held under RSDL in 2019-2020.⁵⁹

Maoming City police in Guangdong Province detained Niu Tengyu, then 20 years old, in August 2019. They held him in an unidentified RSDL facility in Foshan City, about 200 miles from Maoming City, for 45 days between December 2019 and January 2020. At the RSDL facility, Niu reported that the police officers used a lighter to burn his genitals and photographed the abuse, suspended him for hours from a high place using handcuffs padded with cotton cloth while simultaneously whipping him, verbally humiliated him, and poured scalding hot candle wax over his body. They also injected saline solutions into his body. As a result, Niu said, he suffered nerve damage in two fingers, leaving them immobile, and his body was covered in wounds, severe skin ulcerations, and burns which resulted in a widespread infection. Niu was sent to hospital in January and March 2020 for emergency treatment.



Computer programmer Niu Tengyu

Niu's defense lawyer argued at trial that Niu's confession and evidence obtained from torture should be excluded, but the court dismissed the defense's argument without explanation and let all evidence stand. Niu was later convicted and sentenced to 14 years in prison.

In a video he posted online, human rights lawyer Chang Weiping detailed torture he alleged he suffered while held under RSDL for ten days in January 2020 in Shaanxi Province.⁶⁰ The online

⁵⁹ CHRD, "Chinese Human Rights Defenders Communiqué Alleging Violations of Human Rights of Niu Tengyu," September 2025, https://www.nchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/WGAD-Questionnaire-NiuTengyu_20250513_forweb.pdf.

⁶⁰ CHRD, "CHRD Communiqué Alleging the Enforced Disappearance and Arbitrary Detention of lawyer Chang Weiping," October 30, 2020, <https://www.nchrd.org/2020/11/chrd-communicue-alleging-the-enforced-disappearance-and-arbitrary-detention-of-lawyer-chang-weiping-october-30-2020/>.

video highlights the difficulty in filing complaints through legal channels, and how prisoners of conscience use public exposure to try and raise awareness and accountability.

Baoji City Public Security Gaoxin District Sub-bureau held Chang at the Baotai Hotel in Baoji City between January 12-21. Chang stated in the video he posted online on October 16, 2020 about the torture he allegedly suffered. Chang also said that police took statements from him 16 times in the ten days he was held there.⁶¹

I was severely tortured by the Baoji City Public Security Bureau. I was locked up on a tiger chair⁶² in a room of the Baotai Guest House 24 hours per day for 10 days. It was an extreme form of torture. I still suffer physically.

Baoji police released Chang on bail on January 21, 2020. They then detained him again on October 22, 2020, and put him under RSDL for a second time until formally arresting him on April 7, 2021, on charges of “subversion of state power.” Feng County Court tried Chang in July 2022 and convicted him a year later in June 2023, sentencing him to three-and-a-half years in prison.⁶³ The extensive use of a “tiger chair” in Chang Weiping’s case came despite CAT calling on the Chinese government in 2015 to prohibit their use.⁶⁴

In a focus group discussion in January 2026, participants shared their experiences of being tortured while being held under RSDL.⁶⁵ They recounted facing illegal methods like sleep deprivation, prolonged exposure to intense light, noise harassment, and restrictions on food intake and restroom access; some were denied the opportunity to bathe for months—a restriction that applied even to women while they were menstruating. The participants described the feeling of emerging from RSDL as though they had been “skinned alive.”

Psychological Torture Outside Detention

Authorities also subject prisoners of conscience and their families to psychological torture outside of recognized detention facilities. Defenders and family members face threats, surveillance, harassment and intimidation by police—sometimes for years—causing stress, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). CHRD first documented this collective punishment and its immense psychological toll in a 2024 report.⁶⁶

Human rights lawyers and activists told CHRD about the long-lasting impact a 2015 crackdown on lawyers has had on them and their families. Even though they filed complaints, tried to raise public awareness of violations, and posted about abuses online, authorities took no action to redress past abuses, allowing psychological torture to flourish.

⁶¹ Video released by Chang Weiping, October 16, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dvDjbHr85k>; Transcript, <https://web.archive.org/web/20201024163502/https://twitter.com/chrlcg/status/1320036767257378816>.

⁶² A “tiger chair” is an iron chair where detainees are shackled to the chair at the wrists and ankles.

⁶³ CHRD, “Portrait of a Defender – Chang Weiping,” <https://www.nchrd.org/2021/12/chang-weiping/>.

⁶⁴ Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 27(d).

⁶⁵ CHRD obtained permission to view and refer to the focus group discussion, which took place in January 2026.

⁶⁶ CHRD, “If I Disobey, My Family Will Suffer:” Collective punishment of human rights defenders’ families in China,” April 15, 2024, <https://www.nchrd.org/2024/04/if-i-disobey-my-family-will-suffer-collective-punishment-of-human-rights-defenders-families-in-china/>.

The wife of a human rights lawyer told CHRD in 2025,⁶⁷

Because of the psychological pressure, I don't feel safe.

A lawyer told CHRD that same year,⁶⁸

[The crackdown] has inflicted fear and psychological trauma upon my children and parents.

Another wife of a lawyer shared in 2025,⁶⁹

Personal safety became a source of deep anxiety for the entire family, due to relentless surveillance and shadowing by the police... every family member now suffers from varying degrees of anxiety and depression, including associated physical symptoms.

Psychological torture is also a feature of transnational repression, a tactic used by the Chinese government to silence critics outside the country, including by threatening or arresting family members or the person themselves when they return home.⁷⁰ In 2024-2025, Chinese police arrested two young overseas Chinese students who had been studying in Australia and France, respectively, on separatism charges for their activism abroad for the rights of Uyghurs and Tibetans.⁷¹ News emerged in April 2026 that one received a six-year prison sentence on an unknown date.⁷² Such arrests and sentences are also intended to intimidate and deter others from activism abroad. Uyghurs and other communities are also forcibly separated from their families inside China, leading to isolation, grief and trauma.⁷³

⁶⁷ CHRD interview with wife of human rights lawyer, June 2025.

⁶⁸ CHRD interview with human rights lawyer, June 2025.

⁶⁹ CHRD interview with wife of human rights lawyer, June 2025.

⁷⁰ According to the UN, transnational repression is “acts conducted or directed by a State, or its proxy, to deter, silence or punish dissent, criticism or human rights advocacy towards it, expressed from outside its territory.” OHCHR, “Civic Space Brief: Transnational Repression,” June 18, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/tools-and-resources/transnational-repression>.

⁷¹ Amnesty International, “China: Young student targeted for peaceful activism abroad: Zhang Yadi,” October 3, 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa17/0349/2025/en/>.

⁷² Wing Kuang, “Student allegedly jailed in China for six years after taking part in pro-democracy protests in Australia,” Guardian, April 21, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2026/apr/21/student-allegedly-jailed-china-after-pro-democracy-protests-australia>.

⁷³ Uyghur Human Rights Project, “Fading Ties: Uyghur Family Separation as a Tool of Transnational Repression,” February 23, 2026, <https://uhrp.org/report/fading-ties-uyghur-family-separation-as-a-tool-of-transnational-repression/>.



Hong Kong activist Anna Kwok as a child with her father (photo credit: Anna Kowk)

In February 2026, Hong Kong authorities sentenced the father of exiled Hong Kong activist Anna Kwok to eight months in prison under the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance on baseless charges of “attempting to deal with, directly or indirectly, any funds or other financial assets or economic resources” belonging to an “absconder.”⁷⁴ She wrote on X after the court’s announced its verdict,⁷⁵

Today, my father was convicted simply for being my father... Weaponizing my love for my family will not limit my love for Hong Kong. The Hong Kong government’s retaliation does not and will not discourage me from my ongoing advocacy and activism.

Elfidar Iltebir, the then-president of the Uyghur American Association, testified in 2024 to a body of the United States (US) House of Representatives about the effects of psychological torture from transnational repression.⁷⁶ She discussed how the Chinese government threatens the safety of relatives of Uyghurs living abroad to silence them:

China’s state terror transcends borders. We are also victims of the CCP’s harassment campaign within this free country. It’s brutal for the CCP to physically torture our families back home to inflict psychological torture on us by preventing us from speaking out about its atrocities. China employs tactics akin to kidnappers, targeting us by holding loved ones hostage to compel our compliance with its demands through fear of repercussions on them for our actions.

In cases of transnational repression, victims have little recourse to file complaints with the state perpetrator of these violations. Host countries have a duty to protect citizens and residents from overseas harassment. Some government officials have made statements about transnational repression, including specific cases.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Koh Ewe, “Father of Hong Kong activist sentenced to eight months in prison,” BBC, February 26, 2026, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3ew7d0e382o>.

⁷⁵ Anna Kwok, X posts, February 11, 2026, <https://x.com/AnnaKwokFY/status/2021475527618609569>.

⁷⁶ Tom Lantos Commission, “Elfidar Iltebir’s Testimony on Transnational Repression in the US,” February 15, 2024, https://chrissmith.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2024-02-15-written_testimony_of_elfidar_iltebir.pdf.

⁷⁷ US State Department, “Promoting Accountability for Transnational Repression Committed by People’s Republic of China (PRC) Officials,” Press Statement Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State, March 21, 2022, <https://2021-2025.state.gov/promoting-accountability-for-transnational-repression-committed-by-peoples-republic-of-china-prc-officials/>; Paola Pampaloni (Deputy Managing Director, Asia and Pacific Department at the European External Action Service), “The sentencing of Kwok Yin-sang, father of activist Anna Kwok, to eight months, is another example of the erosion of fundamental freedoms in #HongKong. The first time a family member of an activist targeted with an intl. arrest warrant is prosecuted, a concerning escalation.” X post, February 28, 20226, <https://x.com/PAMPALONIPAOLA/status/2027756022480134428>.

Reprisals for Complaints

CHRD's research also shows that the victims and their family members face retaliation for exposing torture or speaking out against torture of their own or loved one's rights. For example, woman human rights defender Li Qiaochu and human rights lawyer Chang Weiping, were sentenced to prison in part for exposing torture. They then subsequently faced further torture and ill-treatment in custody.⁷⁸



Activist Dong Yaoqing

Dong Jianbiao—the father of activist Dong Yaoqing, who was tortured by being involuntarily committed to a psychiatric hospital—died in prison in 2022. Dong Jianbao had been sentenced to three years' incarceration in retaliation for advocating for his daughter's release.⁷⁹

Computer programmer Niu Tengyu's family faces retaliation for continuing to advocate for Niu's rights and filing complaints with authorities, including about his alleged torture and treatment in custody. After his parents filed complaints over Niu's case with the Guangdong Political and Legal Affairs Commission, his father was physically assaulted in the commission office, and his 13-year-old brother was followed by unknown persons. The family had their utilities shut off, bank cards frozen, and faced harassment from their landlord.⁸⁰

When prisoners and their families face reprisals for trying to exercise their legal rights to complain about abuses, it may lead to others being too intimidated to try to do the same. It also entrenches impunity.

⁷⁸ CHRD, "Follow-Up Communiqué Alleging Torture or Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of former Chinese lawyer Ding Jiayi, activists Xu Zhiyong, Li Qiaochu, and lawyer Chang Weiping during periods of their Enforced Disappearance and Arbitrary Detention," April 2, 2021, <https://www.nchrd.org/2021/04/chrd-follow-up-communicue-alleging-torture-or-cruel-inhumane-or-degrading-treatment-or-punishment-of-former-chinese-lawyer-ding-jiayi-activists-xu-zhiyong-li-qiaochu-and-lawyer-chang-weiping-durin/>.

⁷⁹ Almond Li, "Father of Chinese 'ink girl' Dong Yaoqiong dies in prison, body found covered with wounds – reports," September 26, 2022, <https://hongkongfp.com/2022/09/26/father-of-chinese-ink-girl-dong-yaoqiong-dies-in-prison-body-found-covered-with-wounds-reports/>.

⁸⁰ Rights Defence Network, "Mother of Niu Tengyu: This Evening at the Reception Office of the Central Inspection Team in Guangdong, Niu Tengyu's Father Was Beaten by Approximately Ten Men in Black" [牛腾宇母亲：今天傍晚在中央驻广东巡视组接待处，牛腾宇父亲遭十名左右黑衣人殴打], September 17, 2025, https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2025/09/blog-post_36.html; Rights Defence Network, "Niu Tengyu's Mother: The Guangdong Political and Legal Affairs Commission has been perpetrating widespread unjust imprisonment" [牛腾宇母亲：广东政法委大兴冤狱，我为儿伸冤遭尽迫害，噪音骚扰、来电辱骂、跟踪监视，甚至我13岁的小儿子都难逃其魔爪！], May 22, 2024, https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2024/05/1that3_22.html.

Lack of Investigations into Torture Allegations



Journalist Huang Xueqin

Under the Criminal Procedure Law, investigations must be conducted by the procuratorate or the courts if torture allegations are raised during trial. Despite these provisions, which were written into the law in 2012, in 2015 the Committee against Torture stated its concern that they are inadequate and urged the Chinese government to “establish an independent oversight mechanism.” Specifically, the Committee raised concern about the dual role of procuratorates, noting the “conflict of interest” created by the oversight of both “prosecution and pre-indictment review of the police investigation.”⁸¹ In a 2017 follow up report to the Committee, the Chinese government stated that there was no conflict of interest because “the prosecution and investigation functions are not performed by the same departments,” a response the Committee did not find satisfactory.⁸² The government

continues to ignore the Committee’s recommendation to establish an independent investigative mechanism, leaving victims of torture further harmed.⁸³

Of the 209 cases that CHRD reviewed involving torture of prisoners of conscience, courts only referenced in the verdicts conducting investigations into allegations of torture in two cases, those of human rights lawyer Ding Jiaxi and journalist Huang Xueqin. In both cases the courts said investigations were conducted by the courts in response to allegations of torture raised by defense lawyers. Yet the verdicts for Ding and Huang stated that no evidence of torture was discovered.

Torture-Extracted Confessions Rarely Investigated

Prisoners of conscience allege that they were tortured in pre-trial detention to force them to confess. Despite legal changes made a decade ago to prohibit precisely such conduct, CHRD has documented 30 cases involving torture by police officers.

⁸¹ Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 22-23.

⁸² Committee against Torture, “Information received from China on follow-up to the concluding observations*,” CAT/C/CHN/CO/5/Add.1, February 17, 2017, para. 10; Committee against Torture, “Follow up letter sent to the State party,” August 20, 2018,

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCAT%2FFUL%2FCHN%2F32206&Lang=en

⁸³ Authorities listed different procuratorial measures that conform with the CPL in its February 2025 report. Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, 3 February 2025, para. 40-43.

Human rights defender and online commentator Ji Xiaolong is a victim of these abuses.⁸⁴ Shanghai police detained him in 2022 on charges of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” for posting a letter on Twitter (now “X”) that criticized Shanghai’s COVID-19 lockdown measures. Shanghai Pudong New District Court put Ji on trial in June 2023 and in October 2023 convicted him and sentenced him to four years and six months in prison. WGAD determined in May 2024 his detention was arbitrary in violation of his fundamental freedoms.⁸⁵

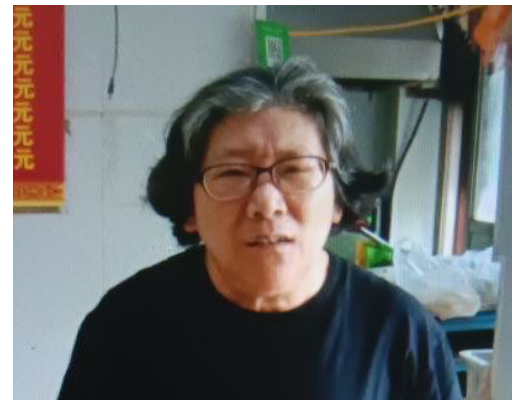
The WGAD noted in its opinion that during pre-trial detention, Ji was subjected to prolonged interrogation, was forced to sit in an iron chair for extended periods, and was handcuffed. His defense lawyers requested the footage of the interrogation, but the authorities did not provide it, stating—contrary to the law—that the interrogation records may not be used as evidence in the trial so they didn’t have to provide it. Ultimately his defense lawyers requested that the court exclude Ji’s statements as they were made under duress and following ill-treatment, and therefore unlawfully obtained. The court agreed to exclude the extracted confession—the only instance CHRD found amongst the 209 cases examined of unlawfully obtained evidence being excluded by the court—but convicted Ji anyway.

In Ji Xiaolong’s verdict, the prosecutors and courts noted that he had not confessed, but did not clarify that his confession had been excluded over illegal collection methods. Instead, the verdict relied on the lack of confession as an element to support the argument that Ji was a recidivist who should be punished more harshly. There is no information that the officers who illegally collected evidence from Ji were investigated or what, if any, action was taken against them.

The Yangzhou Municipal Intermediate People’s Court in Jiangsu Province tried WHRD Xu Qin on charges of “inciting subversion of state power” in November 2022. She said at the trial that evidence being used against her had been illegally obtained through torture, including sleep deprivation. The court convicted Xu Qin on March 29, 2024 and sentenced her to four years in prison.

In its verdict, the court claimed that Xu Qin and her defense lawyer:

Failed to provide clear clues or materials regarding their application to exclude illegally obtained evidence, therefore their application is not accepted,



Activist Xu Qin

⁸⁴ Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD) and The Rights Practice (TRP) Communiqué Alleging Arbitrary Detention of Two Human Rights Defenders JI Xiaolong and CHEN Pinlin for Exercising Right to Freedom of Expression about COVID-19 Pandemic, September 2024, <https://www.nchrd.org/2024/09/chinese-human-rights-defenders-chrd-and-the-rights-practice-trp-communicue-alleging-arbitrary-detention-of-two-human-rights-defenders-ji-xiaolong-and-chen-pinlin-for-exercising-right-to-freedom-of/>

⁸⁵ Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Opinion No. 9/2025 concerning Ji Xiaolong and Chen Pinlin (China), May 29, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/detention-wg/opinions/session102/a-hrc-wgad-2025-9-aev.pdf>

The court made no mention of an investigation being conducted into her allegations. Several UN Special Procedures wrote to the Chinese government in June 2024 to express concern about her arbitrary detention and allegations of torture.⁸⁶

Xu Qin's case stands in direct contrast to the statement made in the Chinese government's February 2025 report that "the burden of proof as to the legality of the collection of evidence shall be borne by the people's procuratorate."⁸⁷

A Chinese defense lawyer (lawyer "A") told CHRD in March 2026 about the challenges to exclude evidence based on torture in cases they have worked on.⁸⁸

The courts are unlikely to conduct investigations into allegations of torture [to extract confessions when it is raised].

Another lawyer (lawyer "E") described to CHRD the difficulty of getting their motions to exclude evidence obtained through torture excluded from court trials.⁸⁹ They highlighted how the deficiency in the definition of torture hampers alleged instances of torture from being excluded from evidence.

In court proceedings, the procuratorate or the courts typically reject such motions on the grounds that the alleged conduct does not meet the specific statutory criteria for "torture or coerced interrogation." Yet, the relevant provisions within the Criminal Law regarding torture and coerced interrogation are broadly worded and vague, rendering them difficult to apply in practice.

A third Chinese defense lawyer (lawyer "B") told CHRD in March 2026.⁹⁰

Opportunities to successfully exclude evidence on these grounds remain rare.

In 2015, the Committee against Torture called on the Chinese government to "to end practices whereby confessions are relied on as the primary and central element of proof in criminal prosecution."⁹¹ Beijing's February 2025 report did not mention making any such changes.

No Evidence of Investigations into Denial of Medical Care Allegations

Chinese laws and regulations require detention centers and prisons to not admit anyone with a serious illness, and to provide timely medical treatment to detainees. Yet 74 of the 209 people whose cases CHRD documented had been denied adequate medical treatment while held in pre-trial detention (30 people) or prison (44 people).

⁸⁶ AL CHN 10/2024, June 11, 2024,

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29124>.

⁸⁷ Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, 3 February 2025, para. 64.

⁸⁸ CHRD interview with defense lawyer A, March 2026.

⁸⁹ CHRD interview with defense lawyer E, March 2026.

⁹⁰ CHRD interview with defense lawyer B, March 2026

⁹¹ Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 20(d).

The Committee against Torture raised concerns in 2015 about the denial of adequate medical treatment to detainees and prisoners, which in some instances have resulted in the deaths of detainees. CAT called on the government to ensure that “detained persons have access to adequate medical care, including to a doctor of their choice.”⁹² In January 2026, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders raised concern about a “demonstrable pattern” of denying medical treatment to imprisoned HRDs in a letter to the Chinese government.⁹³

Yin Dengzhen is a 58-year-old petitioner who was being treated for lymphoma in December 2024.⁹⁴ In January 2025, days after her diagnosis, Beijing police arrested and administratively detained her. After her release, police from her hometown of Shiyan City picked her up in Beijing and brought her to Hubei Province, where they put her under criminal detention. In July 2025, Shiyan City Court sentenced her to 4.5 years in prison on charges of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.”



HRD Yin Dengzhen

Yin was held at Shiyan City Detention Center from January to July 2025 during pre-trial detention; her health deteriorated to the point that she was no longer able to walk or eat on her own. She was admitted twice to Shiyan People’s Hospital and hospitalized for three months. In July, when she was transferred to the hospital, Yin weighed approximately 80lbs, was bedridden, and had to be fed through a nasogastric tube.

In September 2025, Yin was transferred from the hospital to Wuhan Women’s Prison, where she remains incarcerated at the time of writing. The prison claimed to her family that month that the standard prison-admittance physical had “showed that she was in very good health, without any

disease, and that her lymphatic system was normal. After being admitted to prison, her mental state was also very good.” In February 2026, Yin’s family said prison authorities contacted them and confirmed her lymphoma diagnosis but refused to answer specific questions about her current condition. Prison authorities also continued to refuse to provide her adequate medical treatment, including not sending her to a hospital.⁹⁵

⁹² Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 24-25

⁹³ AL CHN 1/2026, January 29, 2026,

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30713>.

⁹⁴ Yin Dengzhen (尹登珍), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/4031>; Rights Defence Network, “Yin Dengzhen continues to suffer from a worsening condition of lymphatic cancer; her physical state is a cause for grave concern” [即将在武汉女子监狱中度过 58 岁生日的湖北省十堰市维权人士尹登珍淋巴瘤病情持续恶化 身体境况令人担忧], April 6, 2026,

https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2026/04/blog-post_29.html.

⁹⁵ Rights Defence Network, “Yin Dengzhen, a human rights activist from Shiyan City, Hubei Province, continues to deteriorate in Wuhan Women’s Prison” [湖北省十堰市维权人士尹登珍在武汉女子监狱病情持续恶化], February 17, 2026,

https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2026/02/blog-post_17.html.

Yin, her lawyer, and her family members applied for medical bail ten times while she was held in pre-trial detention; only two replies were received and all requests denied. The procuratorate stated the activist had a “tendency to go on hunger strikes to commit suicide,” which would “endanger society.” Yin and her family have repeatedly requested medical parole since she had been in prison, but these have also been denied. There is no information about any investigation conducted into the provision of medical treatment to Yin in custody, despite numerous complaints from her family.

61-year-old writer Xu Lin has been serving a three-year-and-nine-month sentence since August 2025.⁹⁶ A Guangzhou court convicted him of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” for writing songs and comments on WeChat about human rights, democracy and rule of law. After being sentenced, Xu was transferred to Yingde Prison in Guangdong Province. As of December 2025, Xu has suffered from various medical conditions. Due to poor food and nutrition, his weight has dropped to less than 100lbs and his levels of potassium and calcium are low. He also reported that he did not receive adequate medical treatment while held at Guangzhou Nansha Detention Center and has developed a heart condition, lumps in his breasts, and dental problems.⁹⁷ There is no publicly available information about authorities conducting any kind of investigation into whether he is receiving adequate medical care in custody.

Pregnant or nursing women should not be held in custody unless they are deemed “a danger to society” by authorities. Yet Huixian authorities detained activist He Fangmei in October 2020, when she was five months pregnant, and never granted her bail.⁹⁸ She gave birth to a daughter in February 2021 while in detention. Her family learned in March 2022 that the child had been placed in a psychiatric hospital on an unknown date. That same month, He’s family received an arrest warrant, stating that He had been detained on suspicion of “bigamy” and “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” (a catch-all charge that is often used against human rights activists).⁹⁹ Neither crime appears to indicate that He Fangmei’s release from prison while pregnant or nursing would have “endangered society.” There is no publicly available information about an investigation into He’s treatment in custody.

CAT expressed concern in 2015 that the arrangements for the health checks in detention centers create a conflict of interest. Police and custodial authorities can review the results of the health exam and potentially put pressure on the doctors into changing results to facilitate detention.¹⁰⁰ CHRD documented two prisoners of conscience who were admitted to a detention center despite

⁹⁶ Xu Lin (徐琳), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/963>.

⁹⁷ Rights Defence Network, “Mr. Xu Lin—Renowned Pro-Democracy Activist and Human Rights Defender Sentenced to 3 Years and 9 Months—Currently Detained in Division 1, Ward 14 of Yingde Prison, Guangdong Province” [获刑 3 年 9 个月著名民主人士、人权捍卫者徐琳先生目前被关押在广东省英德监狱十四监区一分监区], December 11, 2025, https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2025/12/39_11.html.

⁹⁸ AL CHN 17/2025, January 3, 2025, https://www.nchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/AL-CHN-17_2024-HFM.pdf.

⁹⁹ In September 2025, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights called on China to repeal the crime of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble” for being incompatible with its human rights obligations. OHCHR, “China: Second sentencing of Zhang Zhan deeply disturbing,” September 21, 2025, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/china-second-sentencing-zhang-zhan-deeply-disturbing>.

¹⁰⁰ Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 16-17.

failing health checks. Police falsified medical records and threatened the doctors conducting the examination to find the person medically eligible for detention.¹⁰¹

Only two of the 209 prisoners of conscience CHRD documented were released on bail or to house arrest after undergoing and failing the health check upon admittance. Both were eventually imprisoned.¹⁰² In one of those cases, Mudanjiang City police criminally detained Zhao Jun, a Falun Gong practitioner from Heilongjiang Province, in December 2022.¹⁰³ The detention center rejected him for having severely high blood pressure, but authorities then placed him under “residential surveillance” at home. The Aimin District Court convicted him in April 2024 and sentenced him to four years in prison. There is no publicly available information suggesting that Zhao’s treatment in custody has been investigated.

No Known Investigations into “Black Jails” and Psychiatric Institutions

The Chinese government denied the existence of “black jails,” or unofficial places of detention, during its 2015 interaction with the Committee against Torture. The Committee was not convinced and issued a recommendation calling on the government to ensure no one is held in secret detention, including forced hospitalizations or confinement on medical reasons.¹⁰⁴ CHRD’s research ahead of the 2015 review helped expose the use of “black jails” and forced confinement of human rights defenders in psychiatric hospitals.¹⁰⁵

CHRD has identified 11 people who had been subjected to these types of abuses since 2016. In five cases, police held people in an extralegal facility—such as a hotel or unknown location—before moving them into a detention center. In the other six cases, people were held involuntarily in hospitals, of which four were held in psychiatric hospitals. Three people never faced formal charges; two were held in psychiatric institutions and the third is currently being held in a hospital (at the time of writing). People held in such facilities—away from family, lawyers, or legal protections—are at extreme risk of torture.

Plainclothes Guangdong police officers held then-20-year-old computer programmer Niu Tengyu in a hotel for three days in August 2019 after seizing him from his home. He said they stripped him naked, turned the air conditioning to the lowest temperature, and beat him continuously throughout the first night.¹⁰⁶ National security police from Huangshi City, Hubei Province detained Chen Dicai from his home in July 2019 after finding Falun Gong materials on his

¹⁰¹ Shi Wenzhou (史文卓), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3508> (Accessed April 3, 2026); Ge Lingren (葛玲仁), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/302> (Accessed April 3, 2026).

¹⁰² Zhao Jun (赵军), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3875> (Accessed April 3, 2026); Wei Shuyan (魏淑燕), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3904> (Accessed April 3, 2026).

¹⁰³ Zhao Jun (赵军), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3875> (Accessed April 3, 2026).

¹⁰⁴ Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 42-43.

¹⁰⁵ CHRD, “The Darkest Corners”: Abuses of Involuntary Psychiatric Commitment in China, August 22, 2012, <https://www.nchrd.org/2012/08/the-darkest-corners-abuses-of-involuntary-psychiatric-commitment-in-china/>; CHRD, “We can Beat You to Death With Impunity” Secret Detention & Abuse of Women in China’s Black Jails, October 21, 2014, <https://www.nchrd.org/2014/10/chrd-releases-well-beat-you-to-death-with-impunity-a-report-about-secret-detention-abuse-of-women-in-chinas-black-jails/>.

¹⁰⁶ CHRD, “Chinese Human Rights Defenders Communiqué Alleging Violations of Human Rights of Niu Tengyu,” September 2025, https://www.nchrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/WGAD-Questionnaire-NiuTengyu_20250513_forweb.pdf.

phone.¹⁰⁷ They took him to Juxiang Hotel, and beat him repeatedly for three days and nights without letting him sleep. Both men were later taken to detention centers and convicted and sentenced to 14 and 7 years in prison, respectively. There is no indication that police who illegally held Niu and Chen in hotels and allegedly abused them were investigated or faced any punishment.

Authorities have reportedly subjected Zhang Wenhe, a pro-democracy dissident in his 70s, to involuntary psychiatric confinement in retaliation for his human rights activities.¹⁰⁸ Zhang, who is a Hui Muslim, fled to the Bahrain in 2018 to try and seek asylum. He was detained in September that year and deported back to China. In October 2021, police officers from Tongzhou District in Beijing took him into custody and placed him in the Tongzhou District Psychiatric Hospital—his last known whereabouts. CHRD is unable to ascertain his current status or location, or whether he has ever been formally charged with a criminal offense or had his case heard by a judge.

Another activist, Dong Yaoqing, was detained after live-streaming a video of herself splashing ink on a portrait of Chinese leader Xi Jinping in 2018.¹⁰⁹ She too has never been formally charged but has been held involuntarily in the psychiatric wing of Zhuzhou No. 3 Hospital in Hunan Province. Her father's efforts to have her released resulted in authorities sentencing him to prison for three years; he died in prison in 2022 in suspicious circumstances.¹¹⁰ There is no indication her involuntary confinement or his death has ever been investigated.

Despite the Committee's recommendation, and legislation like China's 2013 Mental Health Law, which prohibits forced confinement in psychiatric hospitals except on very narrow grounds,¹¹¹ authorities continue to use "black jails" and extralegal detention facilities to deprive prisoners of conscience of their liberty. Supervisory bodies have failed to investigate ongoing reports of their use.

Concerns over Abusive Solitary Confinement Not Investigated

Life in solitary confinement can only be described as a living hell—a state of utter darkness and misery, worse than death itself.

- Chinese activist Chen Yunfei describing his experience of being held in solitary confinement in a Chinese prison.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Chen Dicai (陈迪才), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1455> (Accessed April 9, 2026).

¹⁰⁸ Zhang Wenhe (张文和), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/2119> (Accessed April 9, 2026).

¹⁰⁹ Dong Yaoqing (董瑶琼), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/266> (Accessed April 9, 2026).

¹¹⁰ Almond Li, "Father of Chinese 'ink girl' Dong Yaoqiong dies in prison, body found covered with wounds – reports," September 26, 2022, <https://hongkongfp.com/2022/09/26/father-of-chinese-ink-girl-dong-yaoqiong-dies-in-prison-body-found-covered-with-wounds-reports/>.

¹¹¹ CHRD, "Six Months after Mental Health Law Took Effect, Involuntary Psychiatric Commitment Continues," November 14, 2013, <https://www.nchr.org/2013/11/chrb-six-months-after-mental-health-law-implemented-involuntary-psychiatric-commitment-continues-118-13-2013/>.

¹¹² Rights Defense Network, "Chen Yunfei: A True Record of my Situation in Prison" [陈云飞：我狱中情况实录], July 7, 2025, https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2025/07/blog-post_7.html.

People held in solitary confinement are vulnerable to torture, and the prolonged (over 15 days) use of solitary confinement can itself be a form of torture.¹¹³ The Committee called on the Hong Kong government to “reduce the maximum duration of solitary confinement” and for both the Chinese and Hong Kong governments to “limit its use as a measure of last resort.” CHRD found that nine out of the 209 prisoners of conscience alleged they had spent prolonged periods in solitary confinement.

Authorities subjected eight of those nine to solitary confinement while they were in prison. This includes Uyghur writer Abduqadir Jalalidin, who was detained in 2018 and at an unknown date sentenced to 13 years in prison on charges of “inciting subversion.”¹¹⁴ His family are worried about his physical and psychological wellbeing, especially as he has often been held in solitary confinement. CHRD is not aware of reasons for such isolation, or of any investigation into his treatment in custody.



Jimmy Lai (photo credit: Anthony Wallace/AFP/Getty Images)

Hong Kong prison authorities have frequently subjected Jimmy Lai and Chow Hang-tung to solitary confinement so prolonged that the treatment may constitute torture or ill-treatment. As of 2025, Jimmy Lai had been held in solitary confinement for over three-and-a-half years. Chow had been repeatedly subjected to solitary confinement, including for a total of 82 days in 2023.¹¹⁵ According to a local news report, she has been punished with solitary confinement for receiving too many letters, having an extra package of candy, or possessing notebook.¹¹⁶

The WGAD has ruled that both Jimmy Lai and Chow Hang-tung are being arbitrarily detained.¹¹⁷ Family members, international lawyers, and supporters have raised alarm about the repeated placement of Lai and

¹¹³ Committee against Torture, “Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of China with respect to Hong Kong, China*”, CAT/C/CHN-HKG/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 18-19; Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations, CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, December 3, 2015, para. 26-27.

¹¹⁴ Abduqadir Jalalidin (阿不都卡德尔·加拉里丁), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/4409> (accessed May 6, 2026).

¹¹⁵ AL CHN 23/2025, January 7, 2026, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=30657>.

¹¹⁶ Hans Tse, “Detained Hong Kong activist Chow Hang-tung allegedly in solitary confinement again after receiving ‘too many letters’,” Hong Kong Free Press, December 18, 2023, <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/12/18/detained-hong-kong-activist-chow-hang-tung-allegedly-in-solitary-confinement-again-after-receiving-too-many-letters/>; Human Rights Council, “Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its 100th session, 26–30 August 2024 – Opinion No. 34-/2024 concerning Jimmy Lai Chee-ying”, A/HRC/WGAD/2024/34, September 26, 2024, para. 117, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/detention-wg/opinions/session100/a-hrc-wgad-2024-34-china-hong-kong-advance.pdf>.

¹¹⁷ Human Rights Council, “Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its 100th session, 26–30 August 2024 – Opinion No. 34-/2024 concerning Jimmy Lai Chee-ying”, A/HRC/WGAD/2024/34, September 26, 2024, para. 117; Human Rights Council, “Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its ninety-sixth session, 27 March–5 April 2023 Opinion No. 30/2023 concerning Ms. Hang Tung Chow,” A/HRC/WGAD/2023/30, May 1, 2023, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4021368?ln=en&=&v=pdf>.

Chow in solitary confinement, and have appealed to UN human rights mechanisms.¹¹⁸ Despite international human rights bodies raising directly with the Chinese government concerns about the prolonged use of solitary confinement, the Hong Kong government has not made public any investigation into these abuses.

During Jimmy Lai's trial in February 2026, the prosecutor claimed that Lai had requested to be placed in solitary confinement for his own safety but made no mention of investigating his detention conditions.¹¹⁹ The Hong Kong government replied to the WGAD regarding Chow Hang-tung in February 2023 but its reply "did not address substantive points raised by the source" according to the Working Group.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Doughty Street Chambers, "Jimmy Lai's international legal team files Urgent Appeal with the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture," September 12, 2024, <https://www.doughtystreet.co.uk/news/jimmy-lais-international-legal-team-files-urgent-appeal-un-special-rapporteur-torture>; Hong Kong Free Press, "Rights NGO concerned as Hong Kong Tiananmen activist Chow Hang-tung allegedly faced solitary confinement 6 times since June," October 31, 2023, <https://hongkongfp.com/2023/10/31/rights-ngo-expresses-concern-as-hong-kong-activist-chow-hang-tung-allegedly-put-in-solitary-confinement-6-times-since-june/>.

¹¹⁹ Alexandra Stevenson, "Lai has been held in solitary confinement for more than 1,800 days," New York Times, February 8, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2026/02/08/world/jimmy-lai-sentenced-hong-kong/lai-has-been-held-in-solitary-confinement-for-more-than-1800-days>.

¹²⁰ Human Rights Council, "Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention at its ninety-sixth session, 27 March–5 April 2023 Opinion No. 30/2023 concerning Ms. Hang Tung Chow," May 1, 2023.

Perpetrators of Torture Enjoy Impunity

None of the cases of torture of prisoners of conscience reviewed for this report resulted in any known criminal or disciplinary punishment for perpetrators. The government's February 2025 report does not list any data on prosecutions of perpetrators or cases regarding measures against perpetrators of torture. Instead, it cites legislation like provisions in the Criminal Procedure Law that have existed since 2012, or the 2021 Provisions on Circuit Inspection Work of the People's Procuratorate.¹²¹

The government did note that between January 2013 and May 2021 courts concluded 25,562 criminal compensation cases, though there is no indication of how many of these relate to torture and no mention of investigations into such allegations.¹²²

Some anecdotal evidence of investigations or criminal prosecutions stemming from allegations of torture is available via state media. CHRD found information about 13 alleged perpetrators facing criminal sanctions for torture of suspects held under RSDL; abuses in that system have faced some scrutiny from authorities. In June 2024, the SPP issued a batch of guiding cases (cases used to standardize instruction for prosecutors), including an RSDL case from 2019 in Taizhou City, Jiangsu Province. According to the SPP, police tortured detainees using illegal restraints, prolonged interrogations, starvation, sleep deprivation, and denial of medical treatment.¹²³ The confessions of the detainees, which had been obtained through this torture, were excluded at trial. However, the procuratorate ordered further investigation into the criminal case, such that the torture victims were still convicted. The SPP said that two police officers were held criminally accountable, though no specific punishment was noted.

State media also reported on another case involving the torture of nine members of a family held in RSDL in Baoding City, Hebei, one of whom died as a result of his treatment.¹²⁴ Authorities arrested 11 police officers; they were convicted in September 2025 of "intentional injury" and "torture to extract confession," and sentenced to between 16 and two years in prison. Ten of the 11 officers appealed their convictions.

But most prisoners of conscience face a total lack of accountability for the abuses they endure. For example, a woman human rights defender (WHRD) who was active in filing complaints against government authorities and trying to leverage international mechanisms for

¹²¹ Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, 3 February 2025, para. 20-21.

¹²² Committee against Torture, Sixth periodic report submitted by China under article 19 of the Convention, due in 2019, CAT/C/CHN/6, 3 February 2025, para. 54.

¹²³ SPP, "The Supreme People's Procuratorate 53rd Batch of Guiding Cases" [最高人民法院第五十三批指导性案例], June 13, 2024, https://www.spp.gov.cn/xwfbh/wsfbt/202406/t20240613_656853.shtml#2; Xing Haiyang, "Supreme People's Procuratorate Releases Case Study: Suspect Subjected to Torture to Extract Confession; Confession Excluded and Investigators Held Accountable" [最高检发布案例：嫌疑人遭刑讯逼供，口供被排除、侦查人员被追责], *Beijing News*, June 13, 2024, <https://m.bjnews.com.cn/detail/1718263722129144.html>.

¹²⁴ Zhu Yuanxiang, "Shadow Investigation | Torture and Forced Confessions in a Hotel: One Detainee Dies Under "Designated Residential Surveillance," 11 Investigators Sentenced" [影子调查 | 宾馆里的刑讯逼供：1名“指居”者死亡，11名办案人员被判刑], *The Paper CN*, October 29, 2025, https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_31851854.

accountability told CHRD in March 2026 about torture she suffered after being taken into custody. She said that her “confession” was fabricated and written by the police officers working her case.¹²⁵ She was sentenced to four years and six months in prison, but no official is known to have been held accountable for her treatment.

That evening [of my arrest], with a black hood placed over my head, I was transported to a small room where—cut off from all sense of day or night, time or place—I was subjected to torture and death threats for [the] 64 days [I was held in RSDL].

I was denied proper meals and sleep and had to endure the torment of starvation and severe sleep deprivation. I was forced to sit on a stool for prolonged periods, which caused my buttocks to develop open sores; despite my injuries, and even without receiving any medical treatment, the police continued to forcibly press me down onto the stool...

The documents titled "My Repentance" and "My Reflections"—which appear in my first-instance court judgment—were, in fact, not written by me. They were the work of the police officer assigned to my case.

No Evidence of Accountability for Deaths in Detention

CHRD documented 16 prisoners of conscience who died in detention between 2016 and 2025, and found no evidence that any official was investigated or held accountable for these deaths.

The consequences for prisoners of conscience who reported they suffered the most common form of torture—being denied adequate medical treatment—can be deadly. Liu Xiyong, a Falun Gong practitioner from Liaoning Province, was detained in April 2021, apparently on the basis of his religious beliefs.¹²⁶ Dalian City authorities later convicted him of “using a cult to undermine law enforcement” on an unknown date that year. Liu had alleged he was deprived of adequate medical care both in the detention center and while serving the four-year prison sentence, and died in detention in December 29, 2021. CHRD was unable to find evidence of an investigation into his death or any punishment for those responsible.

In 2017, Nobel Laureate Liu Xiaobo died in custody while serving a 11-year prison sentence for “inciting subversion of state power.”¹²⁷ He had been diagnosed with liver cancer and only moved to a hospital for treatment two months before his death. Other HRDs have died in custody: activist Ji Sizun in 2019, writer Yang Tongyan in 2017, Tibetan monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche in 2015, and activist Cao Shunli in 2014; they had all reported before their deaths that they had been denied adequate medical care in detention.¹²⁸ CHRD has found no evidence that authorities

¹²⁵ CHRD interview with woman human rights defender, March 2026.

¹²⁶ Liu Xiyong (刘希永), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/587> (Accessed April 3, 2026).

¹²⁷ CHRD, “Portrait of a Defender – Liu Xiaobo,” <https://www.nchrd.org/2017/07/prisoner-of-conscience-liu-xiaobo/> (Accessed April 7, 2026).

¹²⁸ CHRD, “Portrait of a Defender - Ji Sizun (纪斯尊),” <https://www.nchrd.org/2016/07/ji-sizun/> (Accessed May 14, 2026); Human Rights Foundation, “HRF mourns the death of Chinese blogger Yang Tongyan” November 14, 2017,

have conducted investigations into these deaths or that any individual has been held accountable for the deaths in custody of these defenders.

Impunity for Prison-Deputized Inmates

Under Chinese law, prison police officers are forbidden from handing over the power to supervise criminals to others. Baojia (包夹), which means “to surround” or “double team,” refers to the practice of guards tasking inmates to monitor other inmates. These deputized inmates control the daily activities of the people subjected to “baojia,” such as their sleeping arrangements, rest periods, and labor, and often subject them to threats, humiliation, or physical abuse.¹²⁹ CHRD documented 10 prisoners of conscience who reported having been subjected to this treatment. CHRD was unable to find any evidence of investigations or punishment for the prison officers violating the law and the inmates charged with controlling them.



Activist Xu Zhiyong

Prominent activist Xu Zhiyong has been subjected to “baojia” while serving a 14-year prison sentence in Lunan Prison in Shandong Province.¹³⁰ Xu told his family during a June 2025 visit that he had been transferred from a 12-person cell to a four-person cell, and that the other three inmates had been tasked by prison authorities with monitoring and controlling him through “baojia.” He told his family that these other inmates keep Xu under round-the-clock surveillance. The inmates forbid him from speaking to anyone while he participates in prison labor, and when he is not engaged in labor, they prohibit him from leaving his cell—activities which are permitted for other prisoners. Xu requires these inmates’

approval—and their physical accompaniment—to use the restroom. They also referred to him solely by the code number “003” instead of his name.

<https://archive.hrf.org/hrf-mourns-the-death-of-chinese-blogger-yang-tongyan/>; TCHRD, “TCHRD statement on the death of Tenzin Delek Rinpoche in Chinese prison,” July 15, 2015, <https://tchrd.org/2015/07/15/tchrd-statement-on-the-death-of-tenzin-delek-rinpoche-in-chinese-detention/>; CHRD, “Chinese Government Must Be Held Accountable for Death of Activist Cao Shunli,” March 14, 2014, <https://www.nchrd.org/2014/03/chinese-government-must-be-held-accountable-for-death-of-activist-cao-shunli/>.

¹²⁹ “Baojia” was reportedly originally devised to target Falun Gong prisoners of conscience who refused to undergo “transformation” or confess to alleged crimes while incarcerated. Rights Defence Network, “Prominent Human Rights Defender Xu Zhiyong, Sentenced to 14 Years, Subjected to Strict Supervision and ‘Baojia’ Abuse at Shandong’s Lunan Prison; International Community Must Pay Close Attention to the CCP Prison System’s ‘Institutionalized Torture’ [获刑 14 年的著名人权捍卫者许志永在山东鲁南监狱遭严管、「包夹」虐待 国际社会须高度关注中共监狱的“制度化酷刑”], July 6, 2024, <https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2024/07/14.html>.

¹³⁰ Xu Zhiyong (许志永), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1326> (Accessed April 8, 2026); Rights Defence Network, “Prominent Human Rights Defender Xu Zhiyong, Sentenced to 14 Years, Subjected to Strict Supervision and ‘Baojia’ Abuse at Shandong’s Lunan Prison; International Community Must Pay Close Attention to the CCP Prison System’s ‘Institutionalized Torture’ [获刑 14 年的著名人权捍卫者许志永在山东鲁南监狱遭严管、「包夹」虐待 国际社会须高度关注中共监狱的“制度化酷刑”], July 6, 2024, <https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2024/07/14.html>.

Xu told his family that he had written them numerous letters, which his family confirmed they had not received, and that he was prohibited from calling them. Xu later went on a hunger strike to protest this cruel and inhumane treatment.¹³¹ Several UN Special Procedures wrote to the Chinese government on November 20, 2024 to express concern that the constant monitoring of Xu “violates his right to privacy and deprives him of his dignity.”¹³² The Chinese government replied, claiming prisoners are supervised and rehabilitated in “strict accordance” with the Prison Law, and failing to respond to the specific concerns about Xu’s treatment.¹³³

A former prisoner of conscience told CHRD in April 2026 about his experience with “baojia.”

Initially, I was consumed by anger—feeling as though I was being subjected to a form of torture or suffocating over-regulation...the presence of these monitors inevitably creates a sense of confinement and restriction.

Online commentator Ji Xiaolong at Tilanqiao Prison in Shanghai, democracy activist Huang Xiaomin at Jinjiang Prison in Sichuan Province, activist Chen Yunfei at Guangyuan Prison in Sichuan, and Falun Gong practitioner Chen Jing at Heilongjiang Province Women’s Prison have all alleged torture and ill-treatment through “baojia.”¹³⁴ CHRD has also tracked prisoners of conscience subjected to “baojia” in Tianjin, and in the provinces of Hubei, Jilin, and Liaoning, suggesting prison authorities employ the practice across the country despite the legal prohibitions.

¹³¹ CHRD, “Urgent Action: Provide Life-Saving Care to Prisoner of Conscience Xu Zhiyong during Hunger Strike,” October 24, 2024, <https://www.nchr.org/2024/10/urgent-action-provide-life-saving-care-to-prisoner-of-conscience-xu-zhiyong-during-hunger-strike/>.

¹³² UA CHN 16/2024, November 20, 2024, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29524>.

¹³³ CHN/HR/2025/3, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=38853>.

¹³⁴ Ji Xiaolong (季孝龙), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/415>; Huang Xiaomin (黄晓敏), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/392>; Chen Yunfei (陈云飞), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1832>; Chen Jing (陈静), <https://tenchu.org/pocd/public/pocs/204> (All accessed April 8, 2026).

Thwarting International Accountability

The torture of prisoners of conscience persists because authorities violate domestic laws with impunity. In addition, Beijing fails to meet its international obligations to prevent torture, and fails to respond to United Nations interventions on this matter. Since 2016, in mandated interactions with key United Nations agencies—treaty bodies, the Human Rights Council, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Special Procedures—Chinese authorities consistently refused to provide factual responses to specific allegations regarding torture. Thwarting these review processes entrenches impunity.

CAT's 2015 review of the Chinese government's implementation of the Convention against Torture included recommendations. Four of those required further government responses, which under the Committee's follow-up procedure were due by December 2016. While the government sent a follow up report in January 2017, its responses failed to indicate any changes in legislation, policies, or practices to address the Committee's concerns.¹³⁵ In August 2018, the Committee sent a letter in response to the government's follow up report, expressing regret over the government's failure to make progress on the key issues of concern: restrictions on access to lawyers, the 2015 crackdown on human rights lawyers, and independence of investigations into torture allegations.¹³⁶

The Chinese government was expected to submit its sixth periodic report on its progress in implementing the Convention against Torture to CAT in December 2019 but only submitted the report in February 2025. As a result of that delay, and a financial crisis at the UN, the next review for the Chinese government's record on torture remains unscheduled.

In 2018, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) reviewed the Chinese government's implementation of the related convention. The Committee called on the government to prevent the torture of ethnic minorities and to fully implement recommendations from the Committee against Torture.¹³⁷ In response, Beijing defended the legislation and policies about which the CERD had raised concern, and said it hoped the Committee would gain a "more comprehensive and objective understanding of [its] efforts and progress."¹³⁸ In 2022, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held a similar review, raising the right of persons with disabilities to be free from torture, including from forced medical procedures and treatment, the arbitrary deprivation of liberty of persons in psychiatric institutions or "Vocational

¹³⁵ Committee against Torture, "Reply from the Government of China on the follow-up to the concluding observations of the United Nations Committee against Torture," CAT/C/CHN/CO/5/Add.1, January 24, 2017, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT%2FC%2FCHN%2FCO%2F5%2FAdd.1&Lang=en.

¹³⁶ Committee against Torture, "Follow up letter sent to the State party," August 20, 2018, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCAT%2FFUL%2FCHN%2F32206&Lang=en.

¹³⁷ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, "Concluding observations on the combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China (including Hong Kong, China and Macao, China)," CERD/C/CHN/CO/14-17, September 19, 2018, para. 38-39.

¹³⁸ Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, "Information received from China on follow-up to the concluding observations on its combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports," CERD/C/CHN/FCO/14-17, October 8, 2019, pg. 7.

Education and Training Centers” in the Uyghur region, and forced institutionalization.¹³⁹ In response, the government said the Committee had “chosen to accept inaccurate even false information, distorted narratives regardless of the truths and made flawed comments in the concluding observations and politicized the Considerations.”¹⁴⁰

In 2023, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights raised repeated concern about allegations of torture of human rights defenders, women and Muslim communities in the Uyghur region.¹⁴¹ The government rejected the Committee’s recommendations, including those about torture, stating that they were “untruthful, full of bias and double standards.”¹⁴²

That same year, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women reviewed the Chinese government’s record, suggesting that “coercive family planning practices” in the Uyghur region may constitute torture. The Committee also highlighted the high number of women in detention across the country, noting that they are at risk of “gender-based violence, torture and abuse.”¹⁴³ Chinese authorities responded that the Committee’s concluding observations cited “false information,” and that some of the Committee’s recommendations were “not in line with the facts,” though did not specify which ones it was referring to.¹⁴⁴

All United Nations member states are expected to participate in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. Every four to five years each country’s human rights record is reviewed at the Human Rights Council based on information from the state under review, from other UN assessments of the country, and from independent civil society. The process includes an interactive dialogue in which other governments can offer assessments of and recommendations to the state under review. The Chinese government has been reviewed twice since 2016.

During China’s third and fourth UPRs, in 2018 and 2024, respectively, several governments raised concerns over allegations of torture. In 2018, Australia, Denmark, Estonia, and Honduras made recommendations on preventing torture. Australia called on the government to “strengthen measures preventing torture and ill-treatment” while the other three governments called on Beijing to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, which establishes a

¹³⁹ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, “Concluding observations on the combined second and third periodic reports of China,” CRPD/C/CHN/CO/2-3, October 10, 2022, para. 32-35.

¹⁴⁰ Government of PR China, “Position paper of the Chinese Delegation on the Concluding Observations by Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the Combined Second and Third Periodic Reports of the People’s Republic of China,” August 9, 2022, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCRPD%2FCOB%2FCHN%2F49943&Lang=en.

¹⁴¹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, “Concluding observations on the third periodic report of China, including Hong Kong, China, and Macao, China*,” E/C.12/CHN/CO/3, March 22, 2023,

¹⁴² Government of PR China, “Comments on CESCR Concluding Observations on the Third Periodic Report of China,” March 3, 2023, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCESCR%2FCOB%2FCHN%2F51887&Lang=en.

¹⁴³ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, “Concluding observations on the ninth periodic report of China*,” CEDAW/C/CHN/CO/9, May 31, 2023, para. 43(d), 57

¹⁴⁴ Government of PR China, “Comments on CEDAW Committee’s Concluding Observations on the Ninth Periodic Report of China,” June 1, 2023, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=INT%2FCEDAW%2FCOC%2FCHN%2F52838&Lang=en.

regular inspection system to places of detention.¹⁴⁵ The Chinese government accepted only Australia's recommendation and rejected the others, stating "China maintains that human rights should be promoted and protected mainly through the efforts of national governments, rather than through visits to state parties."¹⁴⁶

In 2024, five governments made recommendations relating to torture, including following CAT's recommendation to repeal RSDL (Australia), ratifying the Optional Protocol (Denmark), investigating allegations of torture in camps and detention facilities (Montenegro), ceasing persecution of Tibetans and Uyghurs including through torture (United Kingdom) and ending torture (United States).¹⁴⁷ The Chinese government did not accept any of these recommendations, and specifically rejecting the recommendations from Montenegro, the US, and UK as based on "false information."¹⁴⁸

In 2022, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) published a report on the human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region ("Uyghur region"), suggesting that the government's violations may amount to crimes against humanity.¹⁴⁹ Twenty-six former detainees of the "Vocational Education and Training Centers" told the Office they had been subjected to treatment that amounts to torture. OHCHR recommended that the Chinese government "Promptly investigate... allegations of human rights violations in VETCs and other detention facilities, including allegations of torture, sexual violence, ill-treatment, forced medical treatment, as well as forced labour and reports of deaths in custody." The Chinese government responded on the same day as the report was released and dismissed the entire report as based on "disinformation and lies."¹⁵⁰ Its 131-page rebuttal did not reference investigations into any of the allegations included in the assessment that would substantiate Beijing's conclusion.

The UN Special Procedures, or independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council, wrote 49 communications between 2017 and 2026 involving allegations of human rights abuses affecting 19 of the 209 prisoners of conscience whose cases CHRD reviewed. The Chinese government replied to communications involving 15 of 19 prisoners of conscience, but in every case denied all the allegations. Often the government's reply simply

¹⁴⁵ Human Rights Council, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – China," A/HRC/40/6, December 26, 2018, para. 28.2, 28.13, 28.170, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g18/446/59/pdf/g1844659.pdf>.

¹⁴⁶ Human Rights Council, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - China Addendum Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review," A/HRC/40/6/Add.1, February 15, 2019, paras. 28.2, 28.13, 28.170, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g19/041/01/pdf/g1904101.pdf>.

¹⁴⁷ Human Rights Council, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – China," A/HRC/56/6, March 11, 2024, paras. 22.17, 22.101, 22.110, 22.112, 22.120, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/56/6>.

¹⁴⁸ Human Rights Council, "Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review - China Addendum Views on conclusions and/or recommendations, voluntary commitments and replies presented by the State under review," A/HRC/56/6/Add.1, May 31, 2024, paras. 22.17, 22.101, 22.110, 22.112, 22.120, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/56/6/Add.1>.

¹⁴⁹ OHCHR, "OHCHR Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China," August 31, 2022, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ohchr-assessment-human-rights-concerns-xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region>.

¹⁵⁰ Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office in Geneva, Note Verbale, No.GJ/56/2022, August 31, 2022; Information Office of the People's Government of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, "Fight against Terrorism and Extremism in Xinjiang: Truth and Facts," August 2022, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/countries/2022-08-31/ANNEX_A.pdf.

stated that people were treated “in accordance to the law” without responding to specific allegations.

Chinese authorities’ response to serious accusations of torture and ill-treatment of human rights lawyer Chang Weiping raised by Special Procedures is typical of these replies. On September 23, 2022, the mandates of the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention wrote to the Chinese government, detailing ongoing violations to Chang since his 2020 detention and highlighting they had previously sent two communications on his case in 2020 and 2021.¹⁵¹ A November 2022 reply from the Chinese government asserted, “China is a country based on the rule of law... There is no forcing of confessions by torture and there are no situations of torture,”¹⁵² without reference to an investigation. The reply’s blanket denial of torture does not even align with the government’s February 2025 report to the Committee against Torture—covering a period since 2015—which does acknowledge that there have been instances of torture and forced confessions in the country.

The Chinese government’s responses to the treaty bodies—which review implementation of Conventions which Beijing freely signed—is part of its approach to dismiss and attack UN human rights bodies that should serve as crucial international mechanisms of accountability. The Chinese government has been elected to the Human Rights Council six times since that body’s establishment in 2006, yet it ignores recommendations the Council makes through the UPR process. Council members are expected to “uphold the highest standard of human rights” but the Chinese government has been accused of committing crimes against humanity by the UN’s highest human rights office. Despite being a Council member, it fails to address substantive allegations of human rights violations raised by the independent experts the Council appoints. The failure to advance redress through UN mechanisms leaves the victims doubly harmed, and the perpetrators confident in their expectations of impunity.

¹⁵¹ AL CHN 8/2022, September 23, 2022,

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=27546>.

¹⁵² HRC/NONE/2022/SP/59, <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=37272>.

Recommendations

To the Government of China:

- Urgently bring Chinese laws and regulations into conformity with the Convention against Torture, especially the definition of torture under Article 1, ahead of the next CAT review or the end of 2026, whichever comes first.
- Establish an independent investigative mechanism empowered to investigate complaints and allegations of torture.
- Reform the Criminal Procedure Law and related regulations to ensure that when a detainee files for exclusion of evidence based on torture, the burden of proof is not placed on the alleged victim to prove their allegations, and that an independent investigative mechanism promptly investigates the allegations.
- Ensure that lawyers are granted prompt, confidential access to their clients, that they can review all materials and files relevant to the case from the start of their client's detention, and that they do not face retaliation for their efforts to defend their clients.
- Amend the Criminal Procedure Law to allow family members of detainees to communicate with their loved ones in pre-trial detention, and ensure the provisions of the Prison Law on communication rights for family members are respected.
- Drop all charges and quash convictions against prisoners of conscience, including human rights defenders, who are wrongfully detained for exercising or advocating for human rights.
- Allow access for independent international human rights investigators to conduct impartial investigations into allegations of torture.
- Publish government data from 2016 to 2025 on the number of complaints of torture, the number of investigations conducted into allegations of torture, and at least the number of criminal and disciplinary sanctions taken against perpetrators if not also substantive details of the cases.
- Permit unrestricted country visits from Special Procedures, prioritizing visits from the Special Rapporteur on Torture, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, and the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances. They should be allowed to investigate all allegations of torture and ill-treatment, especially deaths in detention and the widespread prevalence of deprivation of adequate medical care in detention to prisoners of conscience.

- Adopt all of the relevant recommendations from United Nations human rights bodies, including the 2018 and 2024 Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review process, from OHCHR’s 2022 Xinjiang Assessment report, and from treaty body reviews, including the CAT, CERD, CRPD, CESC, and CEDAW by the end of 2026, if not sooner.
- Commit to adopting the January 2026 Charter of Rights of Victims and Survivors of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment by the end of 2026, if not sooner, and publicly lay out a timeline for amendments to domestic laws, policies and practices to integrate its provisions.

To the United Nations:

Committee against Torture:

- Prioritize scheduling the review of the sixth periodic report from China.
- Raise concern about the widespread nature of torture of prisoners of conscience in public statements.
- When the review of China’s sixth periodic report is scheduled, ensure that the Committee members meet with independent civil society, human rights defenders, and family members and victims of torture in manner free from potential reprisals.

High Commissioner for Human Rights

- Brief the Human Rights Council on work done since the publication of the August 2022 Xinjiang report to make progress towards investigations into OHCHR’s allegations of torture and possible crimes against humanity in the country.
- Urge the Human Rights Council to follow the June 2020, June 2022, and September 2022 recommendations by 50 special procedures in support of a special session and new standing mandate focused on Chinese government human rights violations.

Human Rights Council

- Pursue a special session to examine Chinese government human rights violations, including but not limited to torture.
- Establish a new standing mandate (Special Rapporteur) to monitor, document, and report on the human rights situation in China.

- Request a briefing by the High Commissioner on what progress, if any, has been made by the Government of China to implement the recommendations made by the Office of the High Commissioner's 2022 report.
- Strengthen the minimum requirements for HRC membership to exclude any government that has been identified by UN bodies as possibly committing crimes against humanity and have taken no measures to end such actions.
- Create and seize opportunities to highlight human rights defenders from China, Hong Kong, Tibet, the Uyghur region, and other areas in HRC initiatives, including briefings, side events, and joint statements.

Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Special Procedures:

- Use the collective voice and expertise of the dozens of Special Procedure mandate holders, to call on the Human Rights Council to convene a special session on China and to establish a mandate focused on Chinese government human rights violations and to highlight non-cooperation with their mandates.
- Issue public statements on individual cases, including long-term cases, on social media and through OHCHR's website to provide comfort for family members and raise awareness.
- Continue to make requests to visit China and send the government reminders, and consider joint action with other mandate holders when met with long periods of non-response, such as holding a remote meeting with local human rights defenders, academics, journalists and other members of civil society.

To Governments Concerned about Human Rights in China:

- Increase support to human rights defenders from China, Hong Kong, Tibet, the Uyghur region, and other areas.
- Vigorously advocate for the end of torture against detained human rights defenders, including using high-level meetings to publicly call for the release of specific people by name, and support structural investigations into alleged acts of tortures.
- Consider whether engaging with individual Chinese officials credibly alleged to be complicit in torture is consistent with governments' stated opposition to torture.
- In keeping with the calls made from 50 UN human rights experts, actively support a special session at the UN Human Rights Council and the appointment of a new standing mandate focused on Chinese government human rights violations.

Annex: List of Torture Victims Subject of Letters from UN Special Procedures to Chinese Government

Name	Criminal charge	Sentence	Detention location	Alleged torture and/or ill-treatment	UN special procedure communication to Chinese government	Chinese government response if available	CHRD database link
Zhang Zhan (张展)	Picking quarrels provoking troubles	4 years	Shanghai Municipality	Forced feeding	JUA CHN 12/2021 (15 Nov 2021) WGAD Opinion No. 25/2021 (26 Oct 2021) JAL CHN 15/2024 (14 Nov 2021) JAL CHN 22/2025 (23 Dec 2025)	Reply to WGAD (28 Dec 2020) CHN/HR/2025/2 (13 Jan 2025) Awaiting translation (10 Mar 2026)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1357
Lu Siwei (卢思位)	Illegally crossing state borders	11 months	Sichuan Province	Denied adequate medical care	AL CHN 10/2025 (25 Jun 2025) JAL CHN 9/2025 (24 Jul 2025)	CHN/HR/2025/53 (25 Aug 2025)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3247
Xu Yan (许艳)	Inciting subversion of state power	1 year and 9 months	Jiangsu Province	Threats, beatings, stress positions, cold exposure, inadequate food	JAL CHN 6/2024 (8 Apr 2024)	N/A	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3039
Chen Pinlin (陈品霖)	Picking quarrels provoking troubles	3 years and 6 months	Shanghai Municipality	Denial of outside time, cramped conditions	JAL CHN 12/2024 (11 Sep 2024) WGAD Opinion No. 9/2025 (29 May 2025)	CHN/HR/2024/67 (14 Nov 2024) Reply to WGAD (25 Nov 2024)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/3551
Ji Xiaolong (季孝龙)	Picking quarrels provoking troubles	4 years and 6 months	Shanghai Municipality	Solitary confinement, extorted confession, baojia	JAL CHN 12/2024 (11 Sep 2024) WGAD Opinion No. 9/2025 (29 May 2025)	CHN/HR/2024/67 (14 Nov 2024) Reply to WGAD (25 Nov 2024)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/415

Xie Yang (谢阳)	Inciting subversion of state power	5 years	Hunan Province	Extorted confession, solitary confinement, beatings, stress positions, food deprivation, denied adequate medical care	JUA CHN 3/2017 (22 Mar 2017) WGAD Opinion No. 59/2017 (13 Oct 2017) JAL CHN 13/2024 (20 Sep 2024) JAL CHN 15/20254 (14 Nov 2024) AL CHN 10/2025 (25 Jun 2025) WGAD Opinion No. 73/2025 (25 Feb 2026)	Reply to WGAD (4 Aug 2016) Reply to JUA CHN 3/2017 (18 Apr 2017) CHN/HR/2024/68 (12 Nov 2024) CHN/HR/2025/2 (13 Jan 2025) CHN/HR/2025/53 (25 Aug 2025)	<a href="https://tenc
hu.org/pocd
/public/poc
s/2232">https://tenc hu.org/pocd /public/poc s/2232
Huang Xueqin (黄雪琴)	Inciting subversion of state power	5 years	Guangdong Province	Extorted confession	JAL CHN 10/2022 (1 Dec 2022) JAL CHN 18/2023 (2 Nov 2023) JAL CHN 15/2024 (14 Nov 2024)	CHN/HR/2023/3 (12 Jan 2023) CHN/HR/2025/2 (213 Jan 2025)	<a href="https://tenc
hu.org/pocd
/public/poc
s/1278">https://tenc hu.org/pocd /public/poc s/1278
Li Qiaochu (李翹楚)	Inciting subversion of state power	3 years and 8 months	Shandong Province	24/7 lights, stress positions, threats, denied adequate medical care	JAL CHN 4/2021 (28 Apr 2021) JAL CHN 2/2022 (3 Feb 2022)	No. GJ/36/2021 (26 Jun 2021) Reply to JAL CHN 2/2022 (1 Apr 2022)	<a href="https://tenc
hu.org/pocd
/public/poc
s/1322">https://tenc hu.org/pocd /public/poc s/1322
Xu Qin (徐秦)	Inciting subversion of state power	4 years	Jiangsu Province	Extorted confession, solitary confinement, denied adequate medical care	JAL CHN 10/2024 (11 Jun 2024)	CHN/HR/2024/55 (7 Aug 2024)	<a href="https://tenc
hu.org/pocd
/public/poc
s/2135">https://tenc hu.org/pocd /public/poc s/2135
Xu Zhiyong (许志永)	Subversion of state power	14 years	Shandong Province	Baojia, sleep deprivation, tiger chair	JAL CHN 8/2020 (7 May 2020) WGAD Opinion No. 82/2020 (2 Mar 2021) JAL CHN 4/2021 (28 Apr 2021) JAL CHN 2/2022 (3 Feb 2022)	Reply to WGAD (1 July 2020) Reply to JAL CHN 8/2020 (6 Jul 2020) No. GJ/36/2021 (26 Jun 2021) Reply to JAL CHN 2/2022 (1 Apr 2022)	<a href="https://tenc
hu.org/pocd
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s/1326">https://tenc hu.org/pocd /public/poc s/1326

					JAL CHN 5/2023 (12 May 2023) JUA CHN 16/2024 (20 Nov 2024) AL CHN 10/2025 (25 Jun 2025)	CHN/HR/2023/65 (21 Jul 2023) CHN/HR/2025/3 (13 Jan 2025) CHN/HR/2025/53 (25 Aug 2025)	
Go Sherab Gyatso (果·喜饶嘉措)	Inciting separatism	10 years	Tibet	Denied adequate medical care	JAL CHN 7/2021 (16 Jul 2021)	No. GJ/43/2021 (27 Aug 2021)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/2406
Chang Weiping (常玮平)	Subversion of state power	3 years and 6 months	Shaanxi Province	Tiger chair, prolonged interrogations, denied adequate medical care	JAL CHN 20/2020 (4 Dec 2020) JAL CHN 4/2021 (28 Apr 2021) JAL CHN 2/2022 (3 Feb 2022) AL CHN 8/2022 (23 Sep 2022)	No. GJ/74/2020 (28 Dec 2020) No. GJ/36/2021 (26 Jun 2021) Reply to JAL CHN 2/2022 (1 Apr 2022) Reply to AL CHN 8/2022 (28 Nov 2022)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/2709
Ding Jiaxi (丁家喜)	Subversion of state power	12 years	Shandong Province	Tiger chair, sleep deprivation, prolonged light and noise exposure, food deprivation, poor conditions	JUA CHN 6/2020 (9 Mar 2020) JAL CHN 20/2020 (4 Dec 2020) JAL CHN 4/2021 (28 Apr 2021) WGAD Opinion No. 30/2021 (12 Nov 2021) JAL CHN 2/2022 (3 Feb 2022) JAL CHN 5/2023 (12 May 2023) JAL CHN 5/2025 (28 Feb 2025) AL CHN 10/2025 (25 Jun 2025)	Reply to JUA CHN 6/2020 (2 Apr 2020) Reply to WGAD (14 Dec 2020) No. GJ/74/2020 (28 Dec 2020) No. GJ/36/2021 (26 Jun 2021) Reply to JAL CHN 2/2022 (1 Apr 2022) CHN/HR/2023/65 (21 Jul 2023) CHN/HR/2025/29 (29 Apr 2025) CHN/HR/2025/53 (25 Aug 2025)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1289

Chen Jianfang (陈建芳)	Inciting subversion of state power	4 years and 6 months	Shanghai Municipality	Hooded, sleep deprivation, stress positions, denied adequate medical care	JUA CHN 16/2019 (19 Aug 2019)	Reply to JUA CHN 16/2019 (10 Oct 2019)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/201
Yu Wensheng (余文生)	Inciting subversion of state power	4 years	Jiangsu	Beatings, stress position, poor conditions, denied adequate medical care	JUA CHN 5/2018 (6 Mar 2018) WGAD Opinion No. 15/2019 (29 May 2019) JAL CHN 16/2020 (13 Aug 2020) JAL CHN 6/2024 (8 Apr 2024) AL CHN 10/2025 (25 Jun 2025)	Reply to JUA CHN 5/2018 (15 Mar 2018) No. GJ/63/2020 (23 Oct 2020) CHN/HR/2025/53 (25 Aug 2025)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1034
Rahile Dawut (热依拉·达吾提)	Separatism	Life sentence	Uyghur region	Denied adequate medical care	JAL CHN 18/2025 (3 Sep 2025)	N/A	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/2153
Li Yuhan (李昱函)	Picking quarrels provoking troubles; fraud	6 years and 6 months	Liaoning Province	Threats, denied food and water, excessive shackles, denied adequate medical care	JAL CHN 11/2023 (21 Jul 2023)	CHN/HR/2023/77 (25 Sep 2023)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/518
Yuan Bing (袁兵)	Picking quarrels provoking troubles	3 years	Hubei Province	Hanging, denied adequate medical care	WGAD Opinion No. 5/2017 (28 Jul 2017)	Reply to WGAD (23 Mar 2017)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/1038
Huang Qi (黄琦)	Illegally disseminating state secrets overseas; intentionally leaking state secrets	12 years	Sichuan Province	Beatings, stress positions, denied adequate medical care	WGAD Opinion No. 22/2018 (27 Jun 2018) JUA CHN 17/2019 (27 Aug 2019) JAL CHN 4/2021 (28 Apr 2021) JAL CHN 5/2025 (28 Feb 2025)	Reply to WGAD (19 Jan 2018) No. GJ/36/2021 (26 Jun 2021) CHN/HR/2025/29 (29 Apr 2025)	https://tenc.hu.org/pocd/public/pocs/390

