

Dear Director,

I am writing this letter to express my grave concern for the prominent human rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng , who have been missing for more than three months. An officer of the Security Maintenance Office in Gao Zhisheng's hometown told Radio Free Asia on 11 November that Gao Zhisheng was in the custody of the local national security office in Jia county and his condition was fine. However, none of Gao's family has been told about this. Given his previous treatment in detention, and without access to a lawyer, he is at high risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Gao Zhisheng if he has been detained solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Pending his release, I also urge you to immediately disclose the whereabouts of Gao Zhisheng, and ensure that he is detained in an official place of detention, is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment; and he has regular, unrestricted access to his family, lawyers of his choice, and medical care on request or as necessary.

Moreover, I call on you to allow the peaceful work of Human Rights Defenders and their families to continue without fear of hindrance, intimidation, arbitrary detention or imprisonment, in line with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Sincerely yours,