

Zhou Hongjun, Director of Hunan Provincial Department of State Security
300 Shanyue Lu, Kaifu Qu,
Changsha Shi, Hunan Sheng, 410000
People Republic of China

Dear Director Zhou,

I am writing to express my grave concern for the detention of Cheng Yuan, Liu Yongze and Wu Geijianxiong, anti-discrimination NGO workers in Changsha. Denied any access to their families and a legal counsel of their choice, I fear that the three men are at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Cheng Yuan, Liu Yongze and Wu Geijianxiong are members of the public interest law NGO, Changsha Funeng, and have been criminally detained on suspicion of "subversion of state power" since 22 July 2019. The three men are being held at the Hunan Provincial State Security Bureau Detention Centre.

I also wish to raise my concern regarding the continued harassment and persecution of the families of the three activists. Threatened by the police, they have been told to not post anything online and to stop speaking to the media about the men's detention. Cheng Yuan's wife, Shi Minglei, was also interrogated on 22 July and has since been held under residential surveillance for "suspicion of subverting state power". During the interrogation, the national security officers threatened to harm the couple's three-year-old child and to detain other people she knows if she did not collaborate with them. Later, on 8 August, Cheng Yuan's brother, Cheng Hao, was summoned for questioning after he made public appeals for his brother's release.

Changsha Funeng is an NGO based in Changsha co-founded in 2016 by Cheng Yuan. The organization advocates for the rights of marginalized groups, including people with disabilities and combats employment discrimination against people living with HIV and Hepatitis B through legal litigation.

The men are prisoners of conscience and have been detained solely for carrying out their professional work and peacefully defending human rights. Therefore, I call on you to:

- 1) immediately and unconditionally release Cheng Yuan, Liu Yongze and Wu Geijianxiong and drop the charges against them as they have been detained solely for carrying out their professional work and peacefully defending human rights.
- 2) ensure that they have regular, unrestricted access to a lawyer of their choice and their family and ensure that while in detention they are not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment; and
- 3) end all harassment and persecution against their family members.

Your sincerely,