

Director Wang Xiaohong
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Dear Director Wang:

I am writing to express my ongoing concern for Chen Mei (陈玫), one of the contributors to Terminus2049 (端点星计划) taken away by police on 19 April 2020. It is distressing to learn that Chen's family only received information about his whereabouts 54 days after being taken into police custody. According to information provided by the authorities, Chen is understood to be detained at Chaoyang Detention Centre in Beijing on charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" (寻衅滋事罪).

Terminus2049 (端点星计划) was a project working to archive articles related to the COVID-19 outbreak in China earlier this year. It is upsetting to learn that Chen Mei seems to have been arrested simply for collecting and archiving public information, especially as freedom to information is an integral part of the right to freedom of expression as recognized in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

Furthermore, I find it very worrying that Chen's family-appointed lawyer has not been granted permission to meet with Chen, despite having already submitted the necessary application documents. The failure to ensure Chen Mei's access to his family during his detention has apparently resulted in his being unaware that they arranged legal representation for him and seriously hindered his ability to seek protection of his rights.

With no access to a lawyer, or any information about Chen Mei's condition, I am gravely concerned that he is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

I therefore call on you to:

- Release Chen Mei immediately and unconditionally unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that he has committed an internationally recognized offence and is granted a fair trial in line with international standards;
- Pending his release, ensure that Chen Mei has regular, unrestricted access to family and lawyers of his choice and is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment;

Yours sincerely,