

**CHINA: SINGER-SONGWRITER ACTIVISTS CRIMINALLY DETAINED**

**Activists Xu Lin and Liu Sifang have been criminally detained since September 2017 on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” Over the past few years, the two men have published many songs about human rights and democracy. They are at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.**

Singer-songwriter activists Xu Lin and Liu Sifang have been criminally detained since 29 September 2017 in Nansha District Detention Centre in Guangzhou City on suspicion of “picking quarrels and provoking trouble.” Xu Lin was brought into police custody while visiting his family in Hunan on 26 September and Liu Sifang taken from his home in Jiangxi Province the following day. The police have searched the homes of both activists and confiscated their computers and phones.

Liu Sifang told his lawyer during a visit on 13 October that he had been interrogated for 48 consecutive hours. He further expressed that he had not committed any crime, asserting that putting his songs online is a legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression. Three days later, on 16 October, the detention authority rejected Xu Lin’s lawyer’s request to meet with him saying that Xu Lin had written a note to his wife asking her not to hire a lawyer for him. It is unclear whether Xu Lin’s wife received the note and if the note was written by Xu Lin voluntarily.

Among the many songs Xu Lin and Liu Sifang have released on the internet, recent songs have made mention of Liu Xiaobo’s death, lawyers in China who stand up for social justice and the ‘Twitter Party’ referencing the Twitter followers of Guo Wengui, a self-exiled billionaire currently in the USA who has launched an online campaign accusing Communist party top officials of corruption and keeping mistresses.

Following their detention, the wives of the two activists have been under close surveillance and were warned by the police not to hire their own lawyers and speak out about their husbands’ detention. According to China’s Criminal Procedure Law, the police need to decide within 37 days of the criminal detention whether they will apply to the procuratorate to formally arrest the activists or will use other restrictive measures or release them.

**Please write immediately urging authorities to:**

- \* Release Xu Lin and Liu Sifang unconditionally and immediately unless there is sufficient credible and admissible evidence that they have committed an internationally recognized offence and are granted a fair trial in line with international standards and
- \* Ensure that Xu Lin and Liu Sifang are protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in detention and that they are allowed, without delay, access to their family and a lawyer of their choice.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS TO:**

Director of Nansha District Detention Centre

Fuyongcun Gonganjidi

Shawanzhen

Panyuqu  
Guangzhoushi  
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People's Republic of China  
**Salutation: Dear Director**

Director of Guangdong Provincial Department of Public Security

Li Chunsheng  
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**Email: info@gdga.gov.cn**  
**Salutation: Dear Director**

**And copies to:**

Minister of Public Security

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His Excellency Shaye Lu  
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#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Xu Lin and Liu Sifang have both been active democracy activists and artists. Over the years, they have written songs about social injustices such as forced eviction, detention of lawyers and activists, the death of Liu Xiaobo and the 1989 Tiananmen Square Crackdown. Their songs are popular among activists in China. In addition to writing songs, both are vocal on various social issues and have taken street action to support human rights defenders at risks in China. In the past years, they have been frequently detained, harassed and followed by the authorities.

According to a pre-recorded video released by Radio Free Asia following his detention in early October, Xu Lin stated that he would not plead guilty or commit suicide if he were detained (see the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxqiUn5XOxc> (in Chinese)).

Activists and human rights defenders continued to be systematically subjected to monitoring, harassment, intimidation, arrest and detention. Police detained increasing numbers of human rights defenders outside of formal detention facilities, sometimes without access to a lawyer for long periods, exposing the detainees to the risk of torture and other ill-treatment.