

20 March 2018

China: China Human Rights Observer member Xu Qin placed under “residential surveillance”

On 14 March 2018, the lawyer of human rights defender **Xu Qin (徐秦)** learned that the defender has been placed under “residential surveillance in a designated location” (RSDL). [Residential surveillance](#) is a frequently abused judicial measure, employed by Chinese authorities to cut off detainees from all access to family and legal counsel. Cases of torture and inhumane treatment during RSDL are frequent.

[Xu Qin](#) is a leading member of human rights group, **China Human Rights Observer**, and the related group **Rose China**. She is a tireless advocate for victims of human rights violations, enforced disappearance, and arbitrary detention, traveling great distances across China to support victims and their families. She recently took a lead role in collecting signatures for a petition in support of [Yu Wensheng](#), a human rights lawyer who was also recently placed under RSDL.

On 10 February 2018, several of Xu Qin’s colleagues noticed that she was not responding to messages; on 22 February 2018, Xu Qin’s son confirmed via telephone that his mother had been placed under criminal detention by the authorities of her hometown, Gaoyou, Jiangsu Province, on charges of “*picking quarrels and provoking troubles*”. Xu Qin’s arrest warrant is dated 9 February, but Xu Qin’s son only received a copy of the warrant over ten days later. Aside from the criminal charge of “picking quarrels”, an umbrella accusation used extensively and arbitrarily to target activists and human rights defenders, no clear reason has been given for Xu Qin’s detention. Some of Xu Qin’s colleagues suspect that the defender’s detention may be a result of her support for Yu Wensheng, or her attempt to attend a hearing on the stripping of human rights lawyer [Sui Muqing’s](#) legal license.

On 14 March 2018, Xu Qin’s family granted power of attorney to lawyer Peng Jian, who immediately attempted to visit his client. Upon arriving at the Yangzhou City Detention Centre, he was informed by facility staff that Xu Qin had been transferred to residential surveillance on 11 March, three days prior, and could not be visited.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern for the well-being of Xu Qin and calls on Chinese authorities to immediately release the defender. Front Line Defenders believes that Xu Qin’s detention is an arbitrary act by the Gaoyou Public Security Bureau to stop her peaceful work in support of human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in China to:

1. Immediately release and drop all charges against Xu Qin;
2. While Xu Qin is under criminal detention, immediately restore her from residential surveillance in a designated location to an official detention centre, where her whereabouts can be ascertained at all times;

3. Ensure that Xu Qin is granted full access to her lawyer, and uphold all of Xu Qin's procedural rights under Chinese and international law;
4. Ensure that the treatment of Xu Qin, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
5. Provide prompt and thorough information to Xu Qin's family and lawyer of all changes of her detention status, in accordance with Chinese and international law;
6. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in China are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.