

23 January 2017

China – Torture of human rights defender Chen Yunfei

Human rights defender, Mr **Chen Yunfei**, has been incarcerated since 25 March 2015 and repeatedly subject to torture in the Chengdu detention centre where he is being held. On 13 January 2017 Chen Yunfei informed his lawyer that because he refused to extend standard greetings to detention officers, his hands and feet were cuffed and shackled on two separate occasions. Chen Yunfei's lawyer was forbidden from collecting photographic evidence of the human rights defender's injuries during this visit to the prison.

[Chen Yunfei](#) was in his second year at the Agricultural University in Beijing during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. For years, he has been engaged in campaigning for the rights of children. He has also campaigned against environmental degradation, highlighted human rights abuses and spoken out on behalf of the families seeking justice for those killed in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. As a result of his work, he frequently drew the ire of the Chinese government and became a victim of physical assault from interrogators. He was placed under house arrest for six months in 2007 for publishing an advertisement in a Chengdu newspaper expressing solidarity to the mothers of victims of Tiananmen. In 2008, he was regularly targeted and harassed by government officials for his investigations into the collapse of school buildings during the 2008 Sichuan earthquake.

Chen Yunfei's has now been held in detention without trial for 22 months. No warrant was produced at the time of Chen Yunfei's arrest and the human rights defender's family were not given notification of Chen Yunfei's detention or whereabouts for days following his arrest. During his detention, Chen Yunfei was denied access to a lawyer for six months, and his current lawyer, Sui Muqing, has been detained twice for visiting his client. During Sui Muqing's most recent visit, the lawyer was detained for twelve hours and documents, including a letter from Chen Yunfei to his wife, were confiscated by staff of the detention centre.

In March 2015, Chen Yunfei organized a memorial ceremony to commemorate victims of the Tiananmen Massacre. After visiting the grave of Tiananmen victim Wu Guofeng, Chen Yunfei and 20 other activist participants were arrested by a squadron of over 100 armed police. Chen Yunfei was arrested on charges of "picking quarrels and provoking trouble" and "incitement to subvert state power", charges typically used by the government against dissidents to silence or remove them from public view.

Chen Yunfei's trial at Chengdu's Wuhou District People's Court has been postponed twice, in June 2016 and December 2016.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about Chen Yunfei's prolonged detention and limited access to legal counsel as it violates his right to due process under Chinese law. The torture he has suffered while detained at the Xinjin County Detention Center is illegal, and Chen Yunfei should be provided with all necessary medical treatment and protection.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in China to:

1. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical security and psychological integrity of Chen Yunfei;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Chen Yunfei, 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;
3. End the harassment and obstruction of Chen Yunfei's lawyers;
4. 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.