

Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission

Defending Freedoms Hearing
Highlighting the Plight of Prisoners of Conscience around the World

Thursday, January 16, 2014
10:00 AM - 12:00 PM
HVC 210, US Congress, Washington DC

Testimony of Geng He, Wife of Gao Zhisheng

Respected Co-Chairman Wolf, Co-Chairman McGovern, Members of the Commission, and Ladies and Gentlemen,

Concern about my husband's wellbeing, the attorney Gao Zhisheng, has become part of my daily life. Having come to the United States almost five years ago, this kind of desperate, helpless, and hopeless feeling remains in heart day and night. I deeply worry about whether he has been tortured, abused, or even killed. Moreover, I worry that he may be forgotten by the international community. Because the persecution to our family was done by a comprehensive state-run machine, I am personally powerless to do anything. Only the international community, represented by the United States, can speak with a voice of truth that can provide help to my husband. Therefore, I am particularly grateful to you, for holding this hearing, which gives me and Gao Zhisheng the strength to continue our journey on the road to justice.

Gao Zhisheng is a Chinese lawyer. He always protected the interests of vulnerable groups and does his best to provide free legal services for the poor. Through his profession as a lawyer, he has disseminated the concept and practice of justice and human rights to general public. His legal knowledge and skills, and eloquence in the courts, have brought justice to victims many times. As a result, he has won the respect of the Chinese people.

In 2005, he began to handle cases of persecuted Christians, persecuted Falun Gong, and other victimized groups in China and the authorities began to target him. The government shut down his law firm and revoked his license as an attorney. In August 2006, the police illegally kidnapped him. On December 22, 2006, he was charged with the crime of "inciting subversion of state power," and sentenced to three years imprisonment, suspended for a five-year probation period. During this five-year probation, he was disappeared more than 6 times. The longest disappearance was twenty months. Every disappearance was accompanied by various types of torture and abuses. Four days before the end of his probation, the state-controlled *Xinhua News Agency* reported that Gao Zhisheng would spend the next three years in prison. At the end of 2011, he was secretly transferred to an extremely remote prison in Xinjiang province.

Ever since Gao Zhisheng was moved to prison in Xinjiang, our family has experienced difficulty visiting him. Finally, he was allowed to meet with our family, but he was prevented from telling us anything about his situation. The first and second visits were ten months apart – our family in China had to travel more than 24 hours by train to get to Xinjiang each way and they

were given 30 minutes to meet with Gao. The last family visit to see him was more than a year ago now. The authorities have used different excuses to refuse family visits.

There are new leaders in China, but nothing has improved for Gao Zhisheng. If such an internationally-known and domestically high-profile lawyer still suffers injustice and persecution to such a degree, it is not difficult to understand the size and scale of human-rights violations in China. It can be clearly seen that Gao Zhisheng is still a political prisoner tightly-controlled by Chinese Communist officials. The consistent, strong efforts of the international community are his greatest protection.

My family has been subjected to brutal persecution for eight years. During this time, the police lived in my house, watched over me and my children, and prevented my daughter from attending school. All this caused me and my children severe mental and psychological trauma, and ultimately forced us to flee the country. To me and my children, the crimes of the Communist regime are an unforgettable nightmare. The government rules by terror and deception. The law has simply become a tool for their violence and a lie to its people. Shame on Chinese Police! Shame on CCP!

Today I stand here in the U.S. Congress. I ask President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry to publicly express concern about Gao Zhisheng. Your voices of justice will not only shine in the dark prison of Gao Zhisheng, they will light up and inspire all those who suffer in China for the freedom and human rights they have long deserved.

I also want to urge members of the U.S. Congress, Members of European Parliament, and the leaders of other democratic countries, to use your efforts to rescue Gao Zhisheng. Whenever you write a supporting letter, whenever you mention his name in your speech, whenever you make a request to meet with my husband—all of these efforts provide support, encouragement, and protection to Gao Zhisheng. Further, every word, deed, and action to help Gao Zhisheng will also help and support to the pursuit of democracy and freedom for all Chinese people.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to all the individuals and organizations that care about and support our efforts to rescue Gao Zhisheng. I especially want to thank the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission and Congressmen Wolf and McGovern for selecting Gao Zhisheng among the first "Defending Freedom" prisoners. I would like to close by citing a paragraph of Congressman Wolf's letter to my husband, quoting the words of Martin Luther King Jr.: "Ultimately, we remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends." I hope that at this critical moment, President Obama and Secretary Kerry will not be listed as Gao Zhisheng's silent friends.

Thank you all.

尊敬的沃尔夫议员、各位先生们，女士们，大家好！

对我先生的日夜忧心，已经成了我日常生活中的一部分。来美国近五年了，那种绝望无助的感觉仍时时涌上心头。我担心高智晟遭酷刑、甚至虐待致死，更担心国际社会遗忘了他。因为这是一个国家对一个家庭的迫害，我个人根本无能为力，只有以美国为代表的国际社会发出正义的声音，才能对我的丈夫提供实质性的帮助。所以我格外感谢各位沃尔夫议员举办的这次听证会，你们支持着我和高智晟在寻求正义的路上继续走下去。

高智晟是一名中国律师。他始终为弱势群体维护权益，尽其所能地为穷人免费服务。依靠律师职业的方便之处向大众传播公义和人权的理念。他以自己娴熟的法律知识和雄辩的口才为受害人讨回公道，因此而赢得很高的声望和民意。

自 2005 年起，他开始为受迫害的基督徒、法轮功及其它受迫害团体办案，中国当局也公开对他进行打压和迫害，政府关闭了他的律师事务所，吊销了他的律师执照，2006 年 8 月，警方非法绑架他，并 2006 年 12 月 22 日，以“煽动颠覆国家政权罪”给高智晟判刑三年，缓刑五年，缓刑五年期间，就有 6 次以上强制失踪，其中最長一次失踪达二十个月，每次失踪都伴有各种酷刑，就在缓刑到期的前四天，中共新华社对外报道：“未来三年高智晟在监狱”。并在 2011 年底秘密地把高智晟律师转移到异常边远的新疆阿克苏地区沙雅县监狱关押。

自高智晟被关押在新疆监狱，第二次见面与第一见面次相隔十个月，终于得到警方允许家人与他的见面，但警方禁止家人在见面时询问他的任何情况，从上次家人见到高智晟到现在又有一年了，他们以各种理由拒绝家人探视。新一届领导人的上任，丝毫没有改善高智晟的任何境遇。如果这样一位在国际、国内都有很高知名度的律师都在遭受迫害，中国普遍的人权状况也就可想而知。

由此可知，直到现在，高智晟仍旧是中共官方严密控制的政治犯。因此，国际社会对高智晟持续不断的关注就是对他最大的保护。

高智晟遭受残酷迫害已第八年了，在过去的八年里，警察住过我家、警察监视着我和孩子、不让女儿上学等，给我和孩子造成极大的精神及心理创伤，最终不得不逃离中国。我和孩子对中共专制政权的无法无天的劣行可谓刻骨铭心，他们以谎言和暴力维持他们的专制统治，法律也成了他们施行暴力和谎言工具，真是无耻至极。

今天我在这里，殷切希望奥巴马总统和 Kerry 国务卿能公开表达对高智晟的关切。你们的声音不仅会给身处黑暗监狱中的高智晟以光明和鼓舞，也会给国内那些渴望自由和人权的中国人民以光明和鼓舞。

我也希望美国的议员、欧洲的议员、各国的政府官员都能通过你们方便的方式对高智晟提供帮助。每当你们写给他的一封信、每当你们提及他名字的每一个讲话、每当你们要求会见高智晟的一个申请，都对他是莫大的支持和保护。你们对高智晟的帮助，也是对所有追求民主和自由的中国人的帮助。

最后，我向那些为高智晟呼吁的人们表达我心中的谢意，感谢汤姆-兰托斯人权委员会将高智晟列为“捍卫自由”项目的第一人选。我还感谢要沃尔夫(Wolf) 议员，您在给高智晟的信中引述马丁路德金的话：“最终我们记住的，不是我们的敌人所说的话，而是我们朋友的沉默”。我希望在这个关键时

刻，高智晟沉默朋友的名单上没有奥巴马总统和 Kerry 国务卿的名字。

谢谢。耿和 1/16/2014