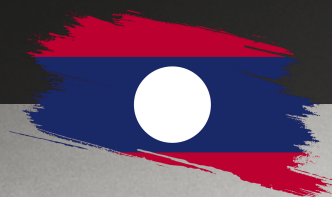


1 August 2023

# JOINT STATEMENT

NGOS CALL ON GOVERNMENTS & LAO  
AUTHORITIES TO ENSURE THE **IMMEDIATE**  
**RELEASE OF CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**LAWYER LU SIWEI**



PICTURE SOURCE: TWITTER/陳建剛CHEN JIANGANG

# NGOs and Lawyers Groups Call on Governments & Lao Authorities to Ensure the Immediate Release of Chinese Human Rights Lawyer Lu Siwei

## A Joint Statement

### For Immediate Release

(1 August 2023) Lao authorities have reportedly arrested and detained well-known Chinese human rights lawyer **Lu Siwei** since 28 July 2023. We are gravely concerned that he is at serious risk of forced repatriation to China where he faces the high likelihood of torture and other ill-treatment.

Southeast Asian governments have frequently been pressured into forcibly returning vulnerable individuals back to China, where they have faced arbitrary detention, unfair trials, torture, enforced disappearances, and other ill-treatment. Our organizations have documented numerous cases, ranging from the [2009 forced return of Uyghurs from Cambodia](#) to the [August 2022 disappearance](#) of Chinese democracy activist Dong Guangping from Vietnam into Chinese custody. Gui Minhui, a bookseller, was disappeared in [Thailand in 2015](#) only to resurface in China without his passport. These [individuals](#) are effectively disappeared for extended periods, with family members and colleagues unable to obtain information until months or years after.

### We urge third party governments to:

- 1. Ask Lao authorities to immediately halt Lu Siwei's repatriation and to move quickly to ensure he has access to the relevant UN authorities and a lawyer of his choice; and,**
- 2. Publicly call on Chinese authorities to drop any potential charges against Lu Siwei.**

By handing Lu Siwei over to the Chinese authorities, the Lao government would be putting Lu Siwei at grave risk of torture and inhuman treatment. UN rights experts have found that the Chinese government frequently subjects rights defenders and lawyers to torture and inhuman treatment.<sup>1</sup> Under international customary law and as a state party to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) since September 2012, the Lao PDR government has a non-refoulement obligation as stipulated in Article 3 of the CAT not to return a person to a state where they are at high likelihood of being subjected to torture.

### We urge the Lao government to:

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<sup>1</sup> E/C.12/CHN/CO/3, CESCR Concluding observations on the third periodic report of China, including Hong Kong, China, and Macao, China, 2 March 2023; and CAT/C/CHN/CO/5, CAT Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of China, 3 February 2016.

- 1. Halt all processes of repatriation for Lu Siwei and release him immediately according to its international human rights obligations;**
- 2. Arrange for him to meet with the relevant UN authorities and a lawyer of his own choosing;**
- 3. Allow him to meet with diplomats from the United States and other countries, as needed, to help him resume his journey to reunite with his family currently in the United States; and**
- 4. Pending the above, to disclose his whereabouts and ensure his personal safety as well as his physical and mental well-being.**

**Lu Siwei** is a renowned rights defender and lawyer in China, advocating for vulnerable groups and representing numerous political dissidents. As the Chinese authorities have become increasingly intolerant of independent rights advocacy, they have targeted Lu with intimidation and harassment, including disbarment in January 2021 for online speech that allegedly “endangered national security”. Lu Siwei was also physically attacked while traveling to the hearing for his disbarment. Since then, Lu has been closely monitored by the Chinese authorities and subject to an exit ban since May 2021. It is understood that Lu was in Laos en route to joining his family in the United States.

**Undersigned, in alphabetical order**

1. Amnesty International
2. ALTSEAN-Burma
3. Asia Democracy Network (ADN)
4. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
5. ARTICLE 19
6. Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales
7. Bytes For All, Pakistan
8. Campaign For Uyghurs
9. ChinaAid
10. China Change
11. Chinese Human Rights Defenders (CHRD)
12. Civic Initiatives
13. CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation
14. Committee for the Abolition of Illegitimate Debt (CADTM)
15. Committee for Freedom in Hong Kong Foundation
16. CSW
17. Exile Hub, Thailand, Myanmar

18. FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
19. Focus on the Global South
20. Foundation for Media Alternatives
21. Free Expression Myanmar
22. Freiheit für Hongkong e.V.
23. Fresh Eyes, United Kingdom
24. Front Line Defenders
25. Georgetown Center for Asian Law
26. Gill H. Boehringer, Professor, Chair, Australian Branch, IAPL
27. Hong Kong Watch
28. Hongkonger in Deutschland e.V.
29. Humanitarian China
30. Human Rights in China
31. Human Rights Online Philippines (HRonlinePH)
32. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
33. ILGA Asia
34. Indonesia Save Uyghur
35. Innovation for Change-East Asia
36. Innovation for Change South Asia
37. International Association of People's Lawyers (IAPL) Monitoring Committee on Attacks on Lawyers
38. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
39. International Society for Human Rights
40. International Tibet Network Secretariat
41. Internet Policy Observatory Pakistan
42. Judicial Reform Foundation
43. Lawyers for Lawyers
44. Manushya Foundation
45. Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)
46. New School for Democracy Association
47. Open Net (Korea)
48. PakVoices.pk
49. PEN America
50. Public Virtue Research Institute
51. Safeguard Defenders

52. Social Innovations Advisory
  53. Society of Young Social Innovators (SYSI)
  54. Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet)
  55. Taipei Bar Association Human Rights Committee
  56. Taiwan Bar Association Human Rights Protection Committee
  57. Taiwan Support China Human Rights Lawyers Network
  58. Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy
  59. Tibet Initiative Deutschland e.V.
  60. 29 Principles
  61. Uyghur Human Rights Project
  62. Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation
  63. Wang Dan, Dialogue China
  64. We The Hongkongers
  65. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
  66. Young Leadership for Social Change Network
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