

Statement at the 54th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Item 3: General debate

Speaker: Luo Shengchun

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Mr./Ms. President,

Three years ago, I reported to the 45th Human Rights Council that my husband, **Ding Jiayi**, had been forcibly disappeared, secretly detained, and denied access to lawyers *in December 2019* for advocating for Chinese citizens to practice their rights enshrined in international treaties and the Chinese Constitution. I am here today to report to you that my husband was tortured during his secret detention. *In June last year*, the Chinese authorities secretly tried Ding Jiayi for subversion of state power, and *in April this year* secretly sentenced him to 12 years' imprisonment, *yet we have so far not yet received the judgement*. More than five months after Ding Jiayi appealed his acquittal, the authorities have failed to hold a public second trial in accordance with Chinese law.

'Subversion of state power' is a crime against national security, and once the government invokes national security, any basic human rights and legal procedures protected under Chinese law and international treaties ratified by the Chinese government immediately disappear. Human rights defenders face disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture, deprivation of basic rights, secret trials, and long-term imprisonment when charged with crimes against national security.

In addition to my husband, I have witnessed the authorities use this charge to persecute many human rights lawyers, NGO staff, religious believers, *online experts, entrepreneurs, poets, journalists, and other human rights defenders, such as Gao Zhisheng, Xu Zhiyong, Li Qiaochu, Cheng Yuan, Wang Yi, Wang Zang, Zhang Zhan, etc.* I have witnessed *them preventing lawyers from meeting their clients, forcing them to sign confidentiality agreements, and preventing them from practicing their profession normally.* I have also witnessed countless friends and their relatives being prevented from leaving the country at airports, and human rights lawyer Lu Siwei suddenly disappearing in Laos amidst intense international and *media scrutiny.*

If the international community allows this to continue, *China will have no human rights lawyers to defend the economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights of its citizens, and China's commitment to achieving the rule of law will become completely void.*

I call on the international community, *including this Council*, to demand that the Government of China release detained human rights defenders as soon as possible, and to stop the Government of China from abusing national security as a justification to crash the hopes of Chinese citizens for a fair and equal society!

Thank you.