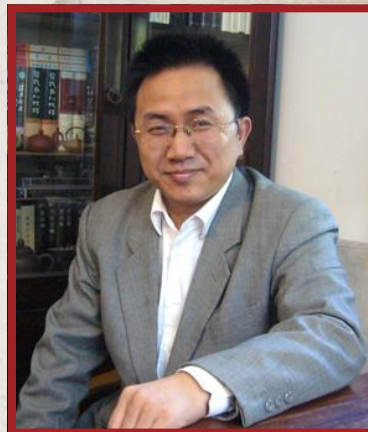


Prisoners of faith

release
PRISONERS

EMAIL ALERT OCTOBER 2011

Dr Fan Yafeng Christian lawyer China



Dr Fan Yafeng Photo: ChinaAid

Dr Fan Yafeng, founder and head of Christian Human Rights Lawyers of China, the Beijing Shengshan Church and Shengshan Culture Research Institute, has been the target of serious persecution by the Beijing Government since October 2010. As one of China's foremost human rights lawyers he has been involved in providing legal defence for a series of high-profile cases, and is increasingly active in the defence of persecuted Christians. He has also been teaching house church leaders to use the law to protect themselves.

In 2005, *Newsweek* magazine named him 'Person of the Year in Asia'. However, in China the response has been somewhat different. In the past 12 months Dr Fan and his family have been under increasing government pressure.

On October 12, 2010 officers from the Shuangyushu police station violently seized Dr Fan because he had given an interview to the American radio station National Public Radio (NPR) about the Chinese delegation to the Lausanne Congress. That was the beginning of the Beijing government's systematic persecution of Dr Fan.

On October 20 and 30, Dr Fan was seized twice and brought to the local police station for questioning and released the same day. On October 23, police searched Dr Fan's home. On November 1, police began to enforce a house arrest order. On November 7, because he insisted on holding a Sunday worship service in his home, Dr Fan was again taken in for questioning.

On November 24, Dr Fan, his wife, and their three-year-old son were all taken to the police station for interrogations that lasted into the early hours of the morning before they were returned home. During the detention, authorities confiscated Dr Fan's cell phone and the key to his home. At 2 am he was released. After he returned home, Dr Fan discovered that his home had been ransacked and that someone had been using his computer when he was in police custody.

On the morning of December 9, Dr Fan was taken away by police and held for nine days before he was returned home to house arrest. On December 18, some Christian lawyer friends went to visit Dr Fan and were violently stopped by police, who took three of them into custody for questioning before releasing them. On December 23, Teng Biao and several other people going to visit Dr Fan's mother were beaten by police and hauled off to the local police station.

To date, Dr Fan remains under house arrest, with his landline phone and internet connection cut. Observers in China are concerned that Dr Fan could be treated like prominent human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, who experienced torture, imprisonment and abduction before disappearing in April 2010.

HELPING CHRISTIANS IMPRISONED FOR THEIR FAITH

'I am in chains for Christ' Philippians 1:13

release
international
voice of persecuted christians

PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ That God will strengthen, protect and give wisdom to Dr Fan Yafeng and his family.
- ▶ For the release of Dr Fan's friend and colleague, Gao Zhisheng.
- ▶ For house church leaders and Christian lawyers across China.

PLEASE WRITE

When writing please do not mention Release International, advance your political opinions or include anything which could be insulting to the authorities.

Send a card of encouragement to Dr Fan Yafeng C/O Release International, PO Box 54, Orpington, BR5 9RT.

You may also send a letter to the Chinese Ambassador in the UK, expressing your concern at the growing number of arrests and the increased harassment faced by Christian human rights lawyers in China.

Sample letter:

His Excellency Mr Liu Xiaoming
Embassy of the People's Republic of China, 49-51 Portland Place, London W1 1JL.

Your Excellency,

I would like to express my concern at the house arrest or so-called 'soft detention' of one of China's leading Christian human rights lawyers, Dr Fan Yafeng. Dr Fan, who was named one of Asia Newsweek's 'Persons of the Year in Asia' in 2005, is under constant surveillance by the police and effectively cut off from the outside world. Dr Fan and his family are law-abiding citizens and yet appear to have been targeted in this way simply because of their desire to see human rights respected in China. Many in the International community are concerned that the actions of the Chinese authorities are both unconstitutional and unjust.

I respectfully petition your Government to allow Dr Fan to continue practising law and to free both him and his family from house arrest.

Yours sincerely,

Release International produces the Prisoners of Faith alert every month as part of its ministry to support persecuted Christians. To receive your own copy free of charge by email, please register your details at www.releaseinternational.org/signup.

If you would like to make a financial donation to support Christian Prisoners of Faith and their families, you may give securely online at www.releaseinternational.org/donate, or by calling 01689 823491. Registered Charity 280577.

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