

## Rights Attorney, Family Members Go Missing After His Scheduled Release

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by Christian Newswire

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ZHENGZHOU, HENAN, China—A human rights attorney and two of his family members went missing after he was scheduled to be released from prison yesterday, according to BBC News. Published Monday, 04 March 2019 14:22 By Christian Newswire

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Initially, authorities told the family of imprisoned human rights attorney Jiang Tianyong, who just finished a two-year prison sentence on a trumped-up subversion of state power charge, he would be relocated to Zhengzhou after his release and not allowed to return home. Some of his supporters traveled to the jail on the day of his scheduled release, expecting to pick him up, but the officials told them he had already been moved to another, unknown location. They did not disclose who had moved him.

Since then, his wife, Jin Bianling—who fled to the United States—has not been able to contact him. A public security bureau officer told Wang Qiaoling, the wife of persecuted human rights attorney Li Heping, that Jiang being "relocated to somewhere other than his hometown" is legal since he was sentenced to two years in prison with three years' of political rights deprivation. However, this is a violation of Chinese law.

In addition, his father and sister's phones have been shut off, and no one has been able to reach them.

Both of his missing family members planned to meet him outside the prison.

Jiang was initially taken into police custody while returning home to Beijing after visiting the wife of Xie Yang, another human rights attorney who was imprisoned for his work, in November 2016. He stood trial in August 2017.

In the past, Jiang advocated for the rights of people groups commonly suppressed by the Chinese government, including religious minorities and lawyers caught up in China's 2015 crackdown on legal professionals who defend people imprisoned for their beliefs. His activism has landed him in jail multiple times, according to TIME Magazine, and he reported suffering torture.

TIME also cited human rights scholars from the United Nations, who "expressed fear for Jiang's alleged ailing health, saying that he suffered memory loss and was possibly drugged while in detention."

These claims match testimonies from other released human rights lawyers, who say they were forced to take unknown medication during their time behind bars.

ChinaAid calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Jiang and his father and sister, since their arbitrary detention and forced disappearance are unequivocal violations of international human rights legislation and China's own laws. In addition, those who enacted this abuse must be held accountable as violators of Chinese law and the international human rights agreements of which China is a signatory.