

Christian Human Rights Activist Detained in China

The group China Aid is reporting that Christian human rights attorney Zhang Kai has been taken into police custody for a second time in a little more than a year.

According to the human rights group, the attorney and prominent human rights advocate was summoned to a local police station on Tuesday, local time. His mother claims he has not yet returned home.

The following is a translation of a message his mother sent out Wednesday:

Emergency: My son, Zhang Kai, was summoned by the municipal police station at 10:00 a.m. on December 27 and has not yet returned, and now it has been more than 36 hours! During this period, staff from the Zhejiang Provincial Public Security Bureau, the Guizhou [Provincial] Public Security Bureau, the Wenzhou [Municipal] Public Security Bureau, and the Inner Mongolia [Provincial] Public Security Bureau have been to my house to have a "conversation." The Beijing Municipal Public Security Bureau went to my daughter's work place to have a "conversation" (they wanted to take video, but my daughter stopped them). They urged us to persuade Zhang Kai to keep quiet and cooperate with them! Whether Zhang Kai can go home or not depends on his attitude! Our family is in the midst of waiting anxiously. ... I hope Zhang Kai returns safely. Please pay urgent attention!

Zhang was previously taken into police custody on the night of Aug. 25, 2015, after he legally represented 100 churches affected by a cross demolition campaign in Zhejiang. After spending six months in an unofficial "black jail" in an unknown location, he resurfaced on a television broadcast on

Feb. 25, where he was forced to confess to disturbing public order and endangering state secrets.

He was officially criminally detained a day later, and then released on bail.

Black jails are used by local officials to manipulate, coerce and silence local citizens who seek a redress of grievances under the centuries-old "petitioner" system. Under the communist system in China, local officials receive demerits for having too many petitioners come from their areas.

As a civil rights attorney, Zhang frequently acts as the voice for Christian petitioners who are being persecuted. Persecution of Christians is becoming a major issue in China, where there are an estimated 100 million people who have committed their lives to Christ.

President-elect Donald Trump's Presidential Transition Team has not yet responded to requests for comment regarding this new development.