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## CHINA CSW calls for release of Pastor Shi Enhao as EU-China human rights dialogue begins

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As the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue gets underway today in Beijing, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) is calling for the release of Pastor Shi Enhao, Deputy Leader of the Chinese House Church Alliance, who disappeared on June 12 after being released from administrative detention. He was taken away by police to an unknown location after his release from the Suqian detention centre.

According to China Aid, Pastor Shi had been detained on May 31 in Jiangsu province and was detained for 12 days. He was detained along with other church leaders, most of whom were released within 24 hours. Pastor Shi and female leader, Chang Meiling, were given 12 day administrative detention sentences. On 1 June, Pastor Shi's home was raided by police, who took away books and papers.

The Chinese system of administrative detention allows police to detain individuals without trial. The system is often used to detain individuals deemed to be a threat to security without the need to take a case to trial.

Pastor Shi is deputy chairman of the Chinese House Church Alliance, a large umbrella organization for many thousands of house churches across China. Leaders from the group have faced severe persecution in the past, including arrest, imprisonment and harassment.

The disappearance comes at a time of increased crackdown on political activism in China. For the past few months, there has been a marked increase in arrest, detention and disappearance of political activists, lawyers, bloggers and artists. Four leaders from Beijing's Shouwang Church remain under house arrest, and Dr. Fan Yafeng, leader of the Chinese Christian Human Rights Lawyers Association has been under house arrest at his Beijing home since October 2010. He reported being beaten and tortured during questioning by police.

At the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue today in Beijing, EU diplomats are expected to raise concerns about the continuing deterioration in human rights in China, as well as discussing individual cases of concern.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "CSW condemns the disappearance of Pastor Shi Enhao and calls upon the Chinese government to release him immediately. CSW is increasingly concerned about the situation for religious freedom and human rights in China and urges the EU to make strong statements to the Chinese at the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue."