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CHINA | Human Rights Lawyer Returned Home

Chinese human rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng, is reportedly back at home, according to organizations that have spoken with his wife.

His reappearance follows reports Sept. 24 that he was kidnapped by authorities. He is reportedly safe at home but subject to restrictions on his travel and access to medical care.

On Sept. 24, China Aid Association alleged that Gao Zhisheng was kidnapped by authorities after two interviews with Gao, recorded after his release from prison Aug. 7, 2014, were published by AP and China Aid. In those interviews, Gao revealed he was tortured in prison.

Gao Zhisheng is a prominent Christian human rights lawyer who is best known for his work defending Falun Gong adherents, Christians, and other persecuted social groups. As a result, the government shut down his law firm and revoked his lawyer's license.

In August 2006, Gao was illegally detained by the police. On Dec. 22, 2006, he was sentenced to three years in prison with a probation period of five years, on the charge of "inciting to subvert the state power." During his probation, he was forcibly disappeared six times and severely tortured in detention. In April 2010, Gao disappeared again while visiting his in-laws in Xinjiang. On Dec. 16, 2011, the Chinese news agency Xinhua reported that Gao had violated the terms of his probation and had been returned to prison for three years. Gao's wife, Geng He, has asylum in the U.S. where she lives with their two children.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "While we welcome the news that Gao Zhisheng is now safely at home, we are deeply concerned by the reports of his kidnapping and the lack of due process in his case, as well as the restrictions on his travel and access to medical care. His allegations of torture must be investigated immediately and the perpetrators, regardless of their rank or position, must be held to account in accordance with Chinese and international law. The treatment of Gao and other lawyers who have been arrested in the crackdown on human rights lawyers since July are a damning indictment of China's disregard for rule of law, which must not go unchallenged."