

Human Rights Council 33rd session

ITEM 4 GENERAL DEBATE

19 September 2016

Speaker: Angela Gui

Thank you, Mr President.

We heard last week that China is a rule of law country ‘opposed to unlawful detention’ and that China’s Criminal Procedure and other laws have ‘strict provisions’ regarding the use of detention. We heard that the Chinese government cooperates actively with various Special Procedures.

This is a China that has strong Constitutional guarantees; a China that seeks to ensure attention to economic, social and cultural rights, as well as civil and political rights; a China that appears to play by the rules.

But this is not a China I know.

My father Gui Minhai, a Swedish citizen, was abducted from Thailand and brought into detention in China last October. He paid with his freedom for his work as a publisher, and defender of free expression.

Neither our family nor the Swedish embassy have received any detention notice, nor been told where he is. I am denied regular contact with my father, and have not been given any information on his treatment, health, or legal status. In January this year, my father was paraded on Chinese state-owned television, claiming to have travelled to China voluntarily to hand himself in for a crime supposedly committed thirteen years ago.

My father’s case is emblematic of a broader crackdown on dissent and human rights defenders.

I am here to ask the Council to make sure that my father’s case, and the situation of the growing number of unlawfully detained dissidents in China, stays a priority in its work.

As a member of the Council China is expected to uphold the highest human rights standards. We call on you, Mr President, to formally engage with the Government and request clarification and regular updates on my father’s detention.

I further call on the Council and the delegations here to ensure that China is held to account for its conduct, both at home and abroad, when its actions violate universal human rights and undermine the international human rights system.

Thank you.